

They Lived by the Sea, by M. Elizabeth Squires, p. 47

In July 1821, William was established as a merchant who owned and operated the firm of W. Bemister & Co. at Carbonear. The firm subsequently opened a branch operation at New Perlican. William's partners in this enterprise were John and William Howell. They were merchants, ship-chandlers, suppliers to the inshore and Labrador fishermen, importers and exporters, ship owners and Master Mariners. The vessels which were owned by the firm prosecuted the seal fishery and the Labrador fishery.

William was an active supporter of the Carbonear Wesleyan Methodist Church. On 11 November 1816 he was one of the proprietors of the Methodist Chapel and Dwelling House when they deeded the property to the Trustees of the Methodist Church Conference at Carbonear. The proprietors were those persons who had used their land and their own money to finance and build the first Wesleyan Methodist Church in Carbonear. The original deed had been written in 1816, but because the document was slowly decaying a copy was written on 21 Jun 1833, by William Willis Bemister, in his clear and precise handwriting. [see "Blackfoots" Bethany & Park Avenue United Churches, Carbonear, Newfoundland Our History, by Bert Parsons, p 31-35 for copy] Both deeds were duly registered. In 1833, William was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Carbonear Wesleyan Methodist Church and on Monday, 13 May 1833, was sworn in as Health Warden for Carbonear....

William went back to England to settle his father's affairs, and returned to Carbonear on 21 Sep 1833, aboard the *John & Isaac* from Poole, England. He again went to England after the death of his mother...and arrived back on 17 Sep 1839, also via the Brig *Victoria*...

On 1 May 1843, William's partnership with the Howell family was dissolved by mutual consent. His new partners were his son, Joh, and Benjamin Thomas H Gould, and trade was continued under the name of W.W. Bemister & Co...

For over twenty years had held a commission as Justice of the Peace.

*Harbor Grace Standard & Conception Bay Advertiser* January 13, 1864

- "At Carbonear on Wednesday the 30th ultimo, William W. BEMISTER Esq., a native of Corfe-Mullen, Dorsetshire, England, aged 74 years, over 69 of which were spent in this Island, principally in Carbonear. Mr. BEMISTER was for more than 40 years engaged in mercantile business, and always regarded as a man of honor and integrity, of unassuming manners, sincere friendship, and no man's enemy."

In 1840, in partnership with William Willis Bemister, George Forward purchased the premises of the bankrupt firm of Slade, Biddle and Co, a prime piece of property known collectively as "the dock", situated in the heart of Carbonear. The premises consisted of a carpenter's shop, a fish store, a retail store, a salt store, a pork store, a counting house, a wharf and a section of a beach plus access to a common long wharf and a crane wharf which were also utilized by Nicholas Nicholls, John Rorke, and Edward Walmsley. This company became one of the principal mercantile firms in Conception Bay, engaging in the import-export trade, supplying and operating vessels in the cod and seal fisheries, purchasing fish, seal skins and other commodities, and dealing with fishing families as the truck (or credit) system.

Ships owned: *SUCCESS, FOX, BRITANIA, CORFE MULLEN, CHARLOTTE, VICTORIA, MARY AND ANN, ORIENT.*

William Bemister purchased a 57 foot schooner when he was 33. It was owned between 1822 and 1839. The ship was built in Carbonear in Newfoundland and had a registered tonnage of 60. The name was "*Success*".

He also owned "*Brittania*", a 63 foot schooner built in Trinity Bay which was lost at sea. The ship's tonnage was 94 and owned by William Bemister between the years of 1826 and 1852.

"*Corfe Mullen*" was named by William Willis Bemister for the town in England where he was born, she was constructed in 1832 at Carbonear, and was a 60 foot schooner that would serve him until 1859. She was the longest serving schooner in the Bemister fleet, tying brig "*Victoria*" for long service at 32 years.

"*Charlotte*" was the first Prince Edward Island ship brought by the Bemister family, built at Yorke Point which is within Charlottetown harbour. She was a 59 foot schooner constructed for William Willis Bemister in 1834. She was lost at sea in 1843.

"*Victoria*" was comparatively a big ship and not the familiar schooner rigging that had been the mainstay of the family fleet. A ship that would outlive its owner, William Willis Bemister. The 65 foot brig was built for him in New Perlican in 1837. She would serve for 32 years before she would be lost at sea in 1869.

"*Elizabeth Ann*" was likely to replace the loss of the "*Charlotte*" which William Willis Bemister faced in 1843, the schooner "*Elizabeth Ann*" probably was a replacement as she was purchased the same year. Built in Bonavista Bay, she was already an older ship. In any case, she served him for 6 years before she was broken up in 1869.

"*Mary and Ann*" like its name, was a joint venture between three owners, William Willis Bemister, and his sons, John Bemister and Willis Bemister. Built in New Perlican in 1843, a massive schooner at 777 foot, she had a tonnage of 143 tonnage but lasted only ten years for the owners. Her documents indicate that she was destroyed by fire in 1853. Named after his mother Mary and wife Ann.

"*Orient*", an 85 foot brigantine built in St. Peter's, Prince Edward Island and would be the last ship that William Willis Bemister would buy. Purchased in 1853, she was registered in his name for just three years until 1856. The "*Orient*" appears to be a replacement for the "Mary and Ann", yet was registered only in the father's name. His son, John, had entered a political career the year before, having been elected to the provincial government.

In 1840, in partnership with George Forward, they purchased the premises of the bankrupt firm of Slade, Biddle and Com, a prime piece of property known collectively as "the dock", situated in the heart of Carbonear. The premises consisted of a carpenter's shop, a fish store, a retail store, a salt store, a pork store, a counting house, a wharf and a section of a beach plus access to a common long wharf and a crane wharf which were also utilized by another group of men. They sold large quantities of provisions, dry goods and supplies for outfitting the fishery and purchased quantities of fish, seals and other commodities.

W.W. Bemister was a member of the administrative committee of the Mutual Insurance Company of Conception Bay in 1843.

Came to Newfoundland about 1803 (age 14) as a clerk in the employ of the Poole merchant firm of George and Jas. Kemp. It was in the spring of 1803 in the midst of the Peace of Amiens - a break in the Napoleonic Wars - that provided just the opportunity for William to take an apprenticeship in the distant colonial outpost of Newfoundland, far from French privateers and English press gangs.

WW Bemister came to be ship's apprentice with George and James Kemp - who went back to England with a huge fortune from salt fish trade. Edward followed about 10 years later. They made their real fortune running the blockade in to Spain against Napoleon's army. George and James Kemp house still in Pool, England. George's ships

ran Napoleon's blockade to Spain, got casks of liquor, sold it by the bottle in England.

Apprentice to George Kemp. William Willis took over business when 20.

Huge upsurge in trade in March 1803 during Peace of Ameen during Napoleon war.

Obituary: St. John's Courtier, 13 Jan 1864

Died--At Carbonear, on Wednesday the 30th ultimo, William W. Bemister, Esq., a native of Corfe Mullen, Dorsetshire, England, aged 74 years, over 60 of which were spent in this island, principally in Carbonear. Mr. Bemister was for more than forty years engaged in mercantile business, and always regarded as a man of honor and integrity, of unassuming manners, sincere friendship, and no man's enemy. In the political struggles which have taken place in the Colony he took but little interest, and in those scenes especially which have to a certain extent given the place of his residence an unenviable notoriety. He was looked upon as one on whose judgment implicit reliance could be placed. For more than twenty years he held a commission as Justice of the Peace, and in that capacity was regarded with confidence. During his long life he bore an unblemished reputation, and on his death and burial was honored. He has left a large family of children and grand-children, some of whom are in Canada and the United States, to tread in his steps.

Proprietors of Chapel at Perry's Cove 10 Sep 1842 to Trustees for Conference

William Willis Bemister

William very quickly learned to manage a mercantile business which ran successfully for many years. In the 1840s William bought out the

Garland premises in New Perlican and ran a ship building operation in the town as well as mercantile trade under the direction of his sons John and Reuben.

Bemister Lands in Corfe Mullen

Tithe apportionment 1839 (Dorset Co Record Office)

Owner: William Beaminster

Occupier: Henry Jenkins

<u>lot</u>			<u>acre</u>	<u>rod</u>	
<u>perch</u>	<u>aprox</u>	<u>acr</u>			
32	Home Close	pasture	0	3	37
3					
37	House, homestead, garden & orchard		0	1	
39	.5				
57	Plot	garden	0	0	18
.1					
59	A Close	pasture	0	2	3
.5					
144	Cogdean Lane Close	arable	2	1	
28	2.4				
146	Cogdean Close	arable	2	1	
28	2.4				
441	Allotment in Corfe Mead	meadow	0	1	
23	1				
584	Allotment in Longdown Mill		7	1	
5	7				
<hr/>			15	0	31
15					

William (Willis) Bemister of Carbouneer was admitted customary tenant for the term of his life at the will of the Lord for the customary rents, heriots [tribute of best live beast or money payment] works and services and he performed his fealty 20 Jul

1839 for the property listed above. This property was held by copy of court roll dated 3 Mar 1795 by John Bemister and Mary his wife. (Manor of Corfe Mullen, court book [D/WIM:JO4])

Bemisters of Carbonear Family Reunion, 1999

William Willis returned to England after the death of both his father and mother. In 1833 he returned to Carbonear with a Bible, still in the family today, published in 1599. "This Bible was rebound by William Willis Bemister in Poole."

William Willis came to Carbonear in 1803 as an apprentice for the firm of George and James Kemp.

William very quickly learned to manage a mercantile business which ran successfully for many years. In the 1840s William bought out the Garland premises in Ner Pelican and ran a ship building operation in the town as well as mercantile trade under the direction of his sons John and Reuben.

Family Names of the Island of Newfoundland, E.R. Seary, Midwest Genealogical, Bemister -- Family traditions John Bemister (1747-1832), probably the first Bemister to winter in Carbonear, started the family which survived there until recently, and was buried at Corfe Mullen (Dorset); William Willis of Harbour Grace 1817; Edward, planter of Freshwater (Carbonear) 1823; Reuben, of New Perlican 1859.

Newfoundland records:

1825 James Howell with William Willis Bemister of Carbonear planters own new with William "fox" 24 tons