

HANT'S HARBOUR WILLOW TREE WALK

SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR

The Willow Tree Heritage Society operates the Willow Tree Museum, the Willow Tree Cemetery, and the Registered Historical Fishing Premises in the town of Hant's Harbour, Trinity Bay—a town with a history dating back to the migratory fishery of the early 17th century. The town's rugged charm is accentuated by stories of shipwrecks, shared history, and resilience in community.

**Please proceed with caution when hiking. Trails are used at your own risk.*

LEGEND

1. LIGHTHOUSE

2. CUSTARD HEAD FISHING PREMISES

3. THE "GREAT WALL"

4. OLD POST OFFICE

5. WILLOW TREE MUSEUM

6. WILLOW TREE CEMETERY

7. FISH PLANT

8. THE POINT

9. CAPELIN COVE

 PICNIC TABLE

 WILLOW TREE WALK

 OTHER TRAILS



WILLOW TREE
HERITAGE

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HANT'S HARBOUR LIGHTHOUSE

Built in 1881 on Custard's Head, the original Hant's Harbour Lighthouse was a white, octagonal wooden tower guiding vessels into the horseshoe-shaped harbour. The keeper, W. Soper, was the first to tend the light. Over the years, the lighthouse underwent updates, including a new lens in 1893 and a switch from kerosene to acetylene gas in 1931. The current lighthouse was replaced in 2014 and was transported to the site by helicopter. It retains its historic charm, with elements from the original tower still in place. It remains a beacon of the town's maritime heritage, now complemented by a scenic walking trail and picnic site.



CUSTARD HEAD FISHING PREMISES

The Custard Head Fishing Premises, built in 1905, is one of the last remaining traditional fishing stage in Hant's Harbour. Donated in 1999 by Melvin Green and Freeman Francis, it has been designated a heritage structure, preserving the legacy of the inshore fishery. This site reveals how families processed cod—cleaning, salting, and curing—essential for their livelihood. The importance of fishing to the community is captured in the story of Sister Lydia's 1868 prayer meeting during a fish famine. Following her heartfelt prayer, fish miraculously returned, reaffirming the community's faith and the sea's central role in their lives.



THE "GREAT WALL" OF HANT'S HARBOUR

The "Great Wall" of Hant's Harbour is a mysterious stone structure stretching nearly 20 kilometers through the woods from Lead Cove to New Perlican. Theories abound about its origins, from ancient caribou fences to pirate hideouts; however, archaeological evidence suggests it was likely constructed by early European settlers, possibly as land-clearance or hunting structures. While the name "Great Wall" is used with a touch of local humour, the site itself is no joke—inviting visitors to ponder the many layers of history hidden within Hant's Harbour's rugged landscape.



POST OFFICE AND TELEGRAPH SITE

The Post Office and Telegraph Building, once the heart of Hant's Harbour's communications, operated from the early 1920s until 1955. It was a lifeline for the community, connecting residents to the outside world through morse code and mail. During WWII, it even served as an Aircraft Detection Corps post, monitoring skies for enemy aircraft. Clarence Snook, who served as Postmaster and Telegraph Operator for 11 years, described it as a "gathering place" where people came not just for mail but for news and social connection. The site remains a symbol of the town's role in Newfoundland's communication history.



WILLOW TREE MUSEUM & HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Willow Tree Museum, housed in a former Salvation Army Citadel from the 1880s, opened in 2002 thanks to the dedication of the Willow Tree Heritage Society. Formed in 1994, the society was inspired by the willow tree planted in memory of the 1835 Fanny shipwreck victims. The museum showcases artifacts from Hant's Harbour's fishing past, along with items from WWI and WWII. The original founders of the Society started a recycling program in 1996 and used the funds from collected bottles and cans to purchase the museum building. Their efforts highlight the community's commitment to preserving its heritage.



WILLOW TREE CEMETERY

The Willow Tree Cemetery is the final resting place for many of Hant's Harbour's early residents, but its most poignant story is tied to the 1835 Fanny shipwreck. The sloop, captained by William Kelson Jr., was lost in a storm, claiming seven lives. Elizabeth Kelson, William's widow, sent a slip of a willow tree in 1837 as a thank you and it was planted at the site of their burial, inspiring the name of the Willow Tree Heritage Society. A bronze plaque now commemorates these lost sailors, serving as a reminder of the sea's dangers and the resilience of those who called Hant's Harbour home.



FISH PLANT

At one time, the fish plant in Hant's Harbour was pivotal to the community's economy. Operated by P. Janes and Sons from the 1960s until 2012, it became Newfoundland's largest crabmeat processing plant, marking the town's transition from cod to shellfish. The plant provided steady employment and helped sustain the town during challenging times. Nowadays it is used mainly as a distribution hub. The plant's evolution reflects the adaptability of Hant's Harbour's fishing industry in the face of changing markets and environmental challenges.



THE POINT

The Point in Hant's Harbour offers breathtaking views of the Atlantic and is an ideal location to enjoy the sunset. Historically, The Point served as a lookout for fishermen, watching for incoming vessels and changes in the weather. It's a place where the community gathered, from spotting whales to sharing stories of the sea. The Point remains a beloved spot for both residents and visitors, offering a glimpse into the daily rhythms of life in a traditional Newfoundland outpost, where the ocean's beauty and danger are ever-present companions.



CAPELIN COVE

Capelin Cove, part of Hant's Harbour, holds the heartfelt story of Abbie Whiffen (née Ellis), whose childhood memories were captured in the Abbie Table project by Andy Jones. Growing up in the 1920s-1950s, Abbie's life reflected the resilience and self-sufficiency of families engaged in the fishery. Her family's homestead was once filled with the bustling activity of fishing life. As modernization swept through Newfoundland, Capelin Cove transformed, but Abbie's story preserves the spirit of a bygone era when the sea dictated the rhythms of life.

Sherry's Seaside Store



"A little bit of this,
a little bit of that."

Main Road Hants Harbour



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