Isle Valen

- Population 1940: 161, 1966: 173
- Fishing-farming settlement on the west side of Placentia Bay, inside of Merasheen Island.
- 121 miles from Agrentia
- Coast boat "Home" carrying passengers, freight, and mail
- 1 radio (based on annual $2.00 fee paid)
- Post office with no telegraph or money order
- A formerly populated island approximately 7 km long and 3 km wide at its widest point, Isle Valen, also known as Isle of Valen, lies approximately 1km off the western shore of Placentia Bay to the west of Merasheen Island.
- It is not known when this community was first settled but, we do know it became an important trading centre when Spurrier and Company set up business there around 1800.
- By 1831, when the company went bankrupt, its holdings included a 300 ft. wharf, two stages, stores, beach front premises on which to dry 400 quintals of fish, a shop, a sail loft and a house.
- Spurrier brought both Englishmen and Irishmen to work in Isle Valen and in 1835, the census reflects this reporting a population of 167 of which 83 were Protestant and 84 Roman Catholic.
- In 1843, the St. John's Church of England Church was consecrated and by 1845 a school had been built and the population had grown to 218.
- In 1831, the business of Spurrier and Company left Isle Valen and a new business was operated by John Cosenus who had a business in Bar Haven in the premises vacated by Spurrier.
- Later the premises were bought by Bennett & Co. of St. John's who operated it until after the 1860s.
- By 1857, the population of Isle Valen had peaked at 289 and then began a gradual decline.
- At that time, there were eight people living in Isle Valen who had been born in England and thirteen who had been born in Ireland.
- When the people resettled in the 1960s, the population had decreased to 173.
- The former principal settlement, also known as the Isle Valen, was located on the southwestern end of the island, along the shores of a well-protected but rather shallow harbour. Smaller settlements also sprang up from time to time in smaller coves around the island.
- The origin of the island's name is obscure. LeMessurier claims that the island was called after ''a courtier of Louis XIV's time who was deported to Placentia and given some grants of Newfoundland to remove him from the temptations of Parisian society." However, Howley claimed that the name was '' a corruption of Ille et Vallaine [sic], the name of department of Brittany."
- Local tradition supports the idea that early settlers were French. Seary claims that early Isle Valen Bennetts were Benoits who had anglicized their names.
- During the first two decades of the nineteenth century it is believed that both English and Irish settlers arrived on the island following the establishment there of a branch of the Poole firm of Christopher spurrier and company.
- By 1831 Spurriers holdings at Isle Valen included a 300-foot wharf, two stages, stores, beach front premises to dry 400 quintals of fish, a shop, a sail loft and a house.

- The company went bankrupt, however, in the 1830s and sold out to Newfoundland's interests. By this date Isle Valen's population was 167 and the settlement was considered one of the most important fishing and trading centers in the inner Placentia Bay area.
- The population continued to grow and by 1857 it consisted of 289 people (186 roman catholic and 103 church of England)
- The fishery, exploiting both cod and herring, remained one of the largest in the area.
- Trade was now carried on by C.F. Bennett & Co. as well, educational and religious services had begun.
- The Rev. William Jeynes was appointed missionary in 1840 and three years later the St. Johns church of England church was consecrated.
- A school was also begun by the Newfoundland school society about 1842. In the late 1850s or early 1860s a Roman Catholic church was also constructed.

- During the second half of the nineteenth century the population of Isle Valen declined.
- By 1884 there were 236 people (44 in Storehouse Cove, 23 in Francis Cove and 169 in Isle Valen);
- By 1891 there were only 141 people.
- Names of settlers reported about this time included Bennett, Leonard, Lockyer, Gaulton, Brown, Caul and Hamilton.
- Isle Valen importance as a trade center also diminished as Harbour Buffett and Sound Island became regional centers for that part of Placentia Bay. Nevertheless, mercantile premises were maintained throughout the century.
- During the early twentieth century the lobster fishery continued to grow and by 1911 there were eight factories employing fifteen men and nine women. As the lobster fishery declined, by the 1930s cod remained the most important species and fish was sold to outside merchants, notably in Harbour Buffett.
- Throughout the twentieth century church services for the Roman Catholics of the island were held at nearby St. Kyrans on the mainland, the church in Isle Valen last being reported in the 1901 census.
- Schooling was given at two one-room institutions – one Roman Catholic and one Church of England.
- In 1967 Isle Valen began to resettle and by the end of the 1960s all of the island residents had moved to another community in Placentia and trinity Bays.

H.C Brown (1974).M.F Howley (1911a) H.W LeMessurier (1910) Debbie Lockyer (1978) Michael McCarthy (1979a) C.F Pascoe (1901) E.R Seary (1976) B.J Williams (1969;1969a) Edward wix (1836) census (1836-1966) Lovell's Newfoundland Directory (1871) sailing directions Newfoundland (1890)

statistics, Federal-Provincial Resettlement Program (1957), Hand Book Gazetteer and Almanac, Newfoundland 1940, Arnold's Cove: A Community History (1997)