

NHS Newsletter

Spring 2004

A publication of the
Newfoundland
Historical Society

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Questions, comments and
membership enquiries
may be addressed to:

NHS Office
P.O. Box 23154
Churchill Square
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J9

☎ 709 722 3191

☎ 709 729 0578

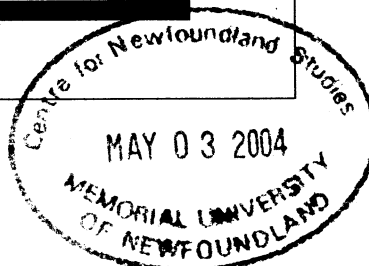
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NEWFOUNDLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

News, resources and events for Newfoundland & Labrador's history community



Symposium 2004

The Symposium on the history of health care in Newfoundland and Labrador was off to a successful start on Thursday evening, when Peter Twohig delivered his talk entitled *Beyond Grenfell and Toward a Regional History of Health and Medicine* to an assembled crowd of more than a hundred. In his presentation, Twohig dealt with both history and current concerns. He maintained that historians

must move beyond local studies and the history of "Great Men" and significant institutions. He advocated new regional studies that would explore the neglected history of nursing and other "fluid" professional roles, as well as past health care innovations. Such studies, he hoped, might help move current debate away from limiting "crisis" mentalities so that we may look not only to defend

medicare but to expand and extend it.

On Friday evening, the crowd showed up again to hear surgeon Dr. Georgie Chalker, pharmacist Brian Healy, nurse June Russell and family doctor David Parsons talk about their personal experiences in the province's health care system starting in the days before Confederation.

Continued on page 2

President's Remarks

Spring 2004 has been a wild one for heritage in the province. Unbelievable news came forward - that the government would postpone the opening of The Rooms and that almost half of the archives and museum staff would be laid off. Then the public service strike hit.

The combined crises will certainly delay scholarly, and private research and publishing for some time. Of course, we can survive in the short term without archives and museums. Long-term denial of access to public documents becomes a serious problem for the

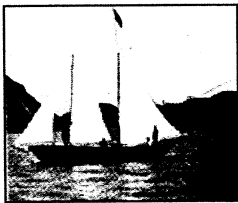
functioning of society. We hope that the new provincial archives and museum will be able to open by June 2005.

The society hosted a full slate of 6 lectures and a symposium on the history of health care during the May 2003 - April 2004 year; we reprinted Jim Hiller's *Confederation* booklet, sold many copies of our other titles and published 3 issues of the newsletter. We continued to lobby for the return of history to the school curriculum and maintained a presence on the Provincial Department of

Education's history in the schools working committee, the Newfoundland Quarterly Foundation, the Association of Heritage Industries Partners Group and on the Folk of the Sea monument committee.

In April I finish up a two-year term as president of the society. The position has certainly allowed me to meet wonderful people. People who are very interested in Newfoundland history, who regularly and reliably attend the lectures and

Continued on page 3



The schooner **Albatross**, used by Dr. Conrad Fitzgerald who served the people of Fortune Bay from 1873-1928.

"In Labrador, 80% of the population of Okak and 20% of the population of Cartwright died as a result of the virus known as the Spanish Flu."

PASSAGES

On March 25, we were very sad to learn of the death of Gert Crosbie, long-time member of the Historical Society, frequently seen at the Society's lectures and symposia. Member Colin Karasek also passed away recently. Colin was a member of the Society for more than 20 years.

We offer our condolences to their families and wide circle of friends. They will be missed.

Tributes will appear in the Fall Newsletter.

Symposium 2004

(continued from front page)

Bert Riggs, head archivist at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, introduced the panellists. After their entertaining and informative presentations the general discussion was quite lively, with audience members relating their own experiences and asking questions. Listeners were loath to leave the Hall, even though a wine and cheese reception awaited them. On Saturday morning, the crowd was smaller, but still enthusiastic. The morning began with a session on the very timely issue of health care and health policy in the province, presented by three leading co-investigators of the Coasts Under Stress initiative. Dr. Linda Kealey, professor of History at the University of New Brunswick, provided an overview of the restructuring of the health care system in the province during the period from Commission of Government to the adoption of Medicare in 1969 (*From Mosdell to Medicare: Health Care in Newfoundland, 1930-70*). Three overarching themes framed her discussion: the "shifting dialectic" between centralization and decentralization; the dialogue between local and external

models in organizing health care; and the relationship between health issues and economic conditions.

Dr. Stephen Bornstein of Memorial University's Centre for Applied Health Research and Dr. Stephen Tomblin of the University's Political Science department then provided a sweeping 'tag-team' presentation of contemporary trends in the organization of health care services, with particular focus on the stakeholders, the levels of discussions, and the various social, economic, and political factors in play as policy is formulated for the delivery of health care at national and provincial levels (*Trends in the Organization of Canada's Health Systems since 1980: Where Newfoundland Fits*).

The second session was entitled Crises in Health Care and included papers by Ron Knowing on the Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and Terry Bishop-Stirling on the incidence of tuberculosis in Newfoundland and Labrador from 1900-1950. Knowing spoke of the intensity and enormity of the so-called Spanish Flu, tracing its origins in the animal

population through to a human mutation in China or possibly Kansas in the US, which then spread to Europe and back to the Eastern US and St. John's. More than 30 million people died from this influenza worldwide, Newfoundland losing nearly two thousand of its population of 250,000. In Labrador, 80% of the population of Okak and 20% of the population of Cartwright died as a result of the virus. He spoke of the rise of spurious "remedies" and "cures" (injections of creosote and iodine), advertisements for which started to appear with frequency in the local papers. He also spoke of the "crisis in faith" noted by those working as missionaries and religious counselors.

Bishop-Stirling gave an illustrated presentation of the occurrence of the dreaded TB from 1900 to 1950. She spoke of the rise of volunteerism during that period and the changing thinking among the popula-

Continued on page 4

Membership Committee Report

The members of the membership committee for this past year were Debby Andrews, Emma Butler and Rosemary Healy. Most of the meetings were held by phone or e-mail and consisted of discussing ways to increase membership and issues around increasing

membership fees to meet the rising costs of managing the Society's activities. Several notices were sent out to remind members that fees, essential to the Society's operating budget, were overdue.

At a special meeting to discuss the finances of the

Society held in April, it was decided to increase the fees from \$24 to \$28 starting next year.

Our membership now stands at 530, and we hope to increase that number to 600 by 2005.

Rosemary Healy, Chair

Devotion to Duty of the Highest Order

The following was sent to the editor by Miss Jean Lewis, retired nurse:

Miss S. Squires, Director of Departmental Nursing Services wrote the following in her 1941 annual report.

"It is interesting to note that in all the great marine disasters the Departmental nurses have played an active part, yet from their terse monthly reports one would never gather that they did anything over and above their line of duty. Yet, the display of courage, heroism and devotion to duty has been of the highest order.

An instance passes in review: A tidal wave brought sudden and terrifying devastation to inhabitants of the South Coast. The report sent in by the parish priest at that time says:

The nurse, scantily clad and wearing house slippers (all her belongings being lost) went from house to house, tending the sick and injured, quelling fears and restoring confidence. She attempted to travel, but roads were blocked by boulders and wreckage. She secured a horse and rode it until it dropped, then she continued on

foot. Soaked, chilled to the marrow, she continued her work of mercy all night and part of the next day.

This nurse's report to headquarters was

Well, but busy."

The nurse in question was Margaret Giovanini.

Editor's Note:

Miss Lewis read this excerpt at the conclusion of the first afternoon session of the Health Care Symposium on March 27, 2004. It was followed by a standing ovation for Mrs. Giovannini.

"She secured a horse and rode it until it dropped, then she continued on foot."

President's Remarks (continued from front page)

who care about the history and continuation of the society. Thank you for this interest and for all your kindnesses to me personally.

Particularly helpful to the society with monetary and in-kind gifts over the past couple of years were His Honour the Lieutenant Governor Ed Roberts, Sen. Bill Rompkey, Andy Wells, Paul Johnson, Barbara Doran, Robert Forsey, Hon. Fabian O'Dea, John O'Dea, W.H.Whiteley, Dr. Ian Rusted, Jeffrey Vile, June Russell, Helen Reid, Mary Bridson, David Cumming, Andrew Cook and Peter Twohig. All the

speakers, chairs and introducers have been very good to us as well and I extend an expression of thanks to them from the society.

The executive and the chairs and members of the society's committees hope you have enjoyed the events they worked to bring you this past year. We hope we see you at the Annual General Meeting on April 29 and at the Labrador Fishery Symposium at Bay Roberts on June 4-5.

After you have enjoyed a wonderful summer we hope to see you at the first lecture of the new season,

on Thursday, September 30, 2004.

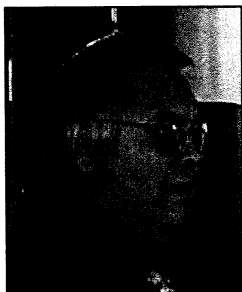
Yours in scholarship,
Joan Ritcey



Boys on the wharf in
St. Anthony.
PANL photograph

Symposium 2004 (continued from page 2)

"Dr. Crellin delighted the crowd with a show of old patent medicine ads."



Chief Misel Joe

tion about what government should do for them. She spoke of the APC (Association for the Prevention of Consumption) and its objectives, which were threefold: to arrest increase in the number of deaths from TB, to educate the public about the disease and "to induce the Legislature to take the matter in hand as a national work". By 1912, the APC recognized its inability to cope and was calling for legislation to force government to deal with the epidemic. Bishop-Stirling spoke of the various camps and sanatoria that were established during this period and of the beginning of measures that eventually would bring the epidemic under control. The audience responded with 25 minutes of questions for the speakers.

The afternoon sessions were attended by more than 150 people who came to hear about Female Health Practitioners and Traditional Medicine. The first session, ably facilitated by former NHS President Eleanor Dawson, herself a registered nurse and midwife, consisted of papers by nurse Janet Story (*Myra Taylor: Matron of the General Hospital 1916-1939*), Heidi Coombs (*Profile of a Forthright Grenfell Nurse*), and Kay Matthews (*The History and Politics of Midwifery in Newfoundland and Labrador*). The papers were much appreciated by the audience, but it was centenarian Margaret Giovannini, former public health nurse, who stole the show. Responding to more than a dozen questions from the floor, she spoke about her experiences as a midwife, dentist and general practitioner in La Scie and on

the Island's South Coast. Jean Lewis, retired nurse, read an excerpt describing Giovannini's work during the 1929 Tidal Wave from the annual report of the Director of Departmental Nursing Services which prompted the audience to come to their feet, applauding loudly (see "Devotion" page 3).

The second session, chaired by Dr. Jeff Webb, dealt with Traditional Medicine and was capably handled by Dr. John Crellin, retired History of Medicine professor, who spoke on *Home Medicine and the Newfoundland Character* and Chief Misel Joe of the Conne River Mi'Kmaq Band, who explained and described the healing practices and traditions of his people. Dr. Crellin delighted the crowd with a show of old patent medicine ads. It was interesting to see what local companies sold and what preposterous claims they made. His slides pointed out how medicine makers play on one's sense of weakness - that one needs building up, that one's "nerves" need nutrients. Some of the text looked very similar to the claims we see in cereal ads today. Members of the audience asked questions afterwards and one older gentleman recounted a very unpleasant experience with Carter's Kidney Pills when he was a boy, to everyone's amusement. Sagamaw Misel Joe roamed over many topics and drew from childhood memories of how his family, neighbours and playmates viewed health matters but always kept his focus on bodily health, medicines from the land, mental health, family wisdom and the Great Spirit. It was a gentle and philosophical note

on which to end the day's activities.

It was a beautiful, crisp night as a group of 26 people assembled for the symposium dinner at the Battery Hotel. The symposium's keynote speaker, Peter Twohig, was in attendance, as were speakers Brian Healy, Ron Knowling and Terry Bishop-Stirling. They dined on the traditional menu - salad, poached salmon and berry custard tart. John O'Mara delivered the after-dinner speech, a well-prepared short history of medicine in Newfoundland. The overview was serious but the anecdotes were humorous, so the laughter was loud and long, even raucous. Everybody had a good time.

We would be glad to receive any comments about the Symposium from those of you who were in attendance. Did you feel comfortable and welcome? Were the sessions informative and entertaining? Could you hear all the speakers? Do you have suggestions for future symposia? Take the time to drop us an e-mail or a phone call or a note in the regular mail to let us know what you think.

"...one older gentleman recounted a very unpleasant experience with Carter's Kidney Pills when he was a boy, to everyone's amusement."

National

The Canadian Encyclopedia can answer all of your questions about

Canadian people, events, geography, history, arts, innovation and more in French or English at <http://www.histori.ca>

The Canadian Encyclopedia has been put online and it is always free and open for business. With advanced search functions, a detailed subject tree and thousands

of interactive maps and graphs, The Canadian Encyclopedia is the one online resource that all librarians and teachers should know about.

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detailed timeline feature.

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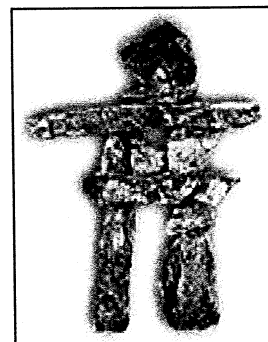


Illustration of Inukshuk from the Canadian Encyclopedia.

Publications Committee Report

The Publications Committee juggles various mediums and projects every year: a thrice-yearly newsletter production; the long-running *Aspects* section in the *Newfoundland Quarterly*; a website to provide information to those near and far; publication of books on important themes in Newfoundland and Labrador. This year has been no exception.

We continue to produce an attractive and informative newsletter for our wide membership, keeping us all up-to-date on NHS activities and events. The "Beyond the Overpass" feature is a great addition.

Jeff Webb, as editor of the ever-popular *Aspects*, is both able and encouraging, providing supportive feedback to those wishing to publish with NHS. New and more seasoned scholars are offering material for

inclusion in *Aspects*. This work requires many hours of careful reading and communication with authors, and we appreciate Jeff's hard work.

Our webmaster, Mark Ferguson had to give up his duties with the Committee earlier this year and we thank him for his sense of humour and the informative website he created over the years.

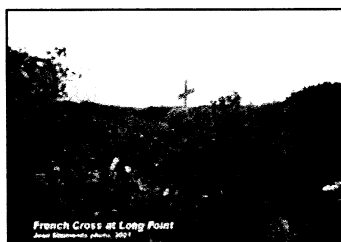
Our fantastic Office Manager, Melanie Martin, is currently learning all about web production and will be continuing the good work. Check our site for future events and notices! Another Committee member, Jerry Bannister, secured a great job in Halifax, but unfortunately it's too far to commute to our meetings so, with great regret he also left the NHS and the province. Finally, Jim Hiller continues to contribute

ideas and inspiration to the Publications Committee and we thank him for his on-going support. Our books continue to sell very well across the province. Jim Hiller's *Confederation: Deciding Newfoundland's Future, 1934 to 1949*, has proved to be so popular that we issued a third printing in the summer of 2003. *The Beothuk*, by Ingeborg Marshall, is also selling well and may go to second printing in Fall 2004. We are pleased to report that the Department of Education has listed both these publications in the new history curriculum. The Committee is considering a new publication for 2005, should funding be available.

Thanks to all the dedicated Committee members who make this work pleasurable! Have a wonderful summer and see you in the Fall.

The Beyond the Overpass column is a "great addition" to the NHS Newsletter. We need more news from your community. Send your copy to the editor [abest@mun.ca].

Cinq cent ans d'histoire



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La première présence connue d'un navire de pêche français dans les eaux de Terre-Neuve remonte à 1504. Basques, Bretons et Normands y seraient même venus beaucoup plus tôt selon certains historiens. Une chose est sûre, Terre-Neuve devint rapidement un lieu de pêche d'importance et l'île trouva même sa place dans le vocabulaire français de la mer puisque les pêcheurs des Grands Bancs prirent le nom de terre-neuvas. Pêcheurs de Saint-Malo, Saint-Brieuc, Granville et Fécamp continuèrent à pêcher sur le Grand Banc jusque dans les années 1990, date à laquelle la ressource de morue qu'on disait autrefois éternelle manqua pour tout le monde.

Durant les siècles de découvertes alors que la France étendait son contrôle sur l'Amérique du Nord, Terre-Neuve prit également un intérêt particulier comme lieu de

défense de ses possessions. C'est ainsi que Plaisance devint établissement de pêche, puis capitale française de la Terre-Neuve, entre 1660 et 1713.

Mais il ne faut pas croire que le départ des Français de Plaisance et la perte des possessions françaises à Terre-Neuve signifient la disparition du fait français dans la province. D'abord, après le Grand Dérangement de 1755, bon nombre d'Acadiens à la recherche d'une terre d'asile, s'installèrent sur la côte ouest de Terre-Neuve, de Codroy, à Saint-Georges, puis à Stephenville et enfin sur la péninsule de Port-au-Port. Leurs descendants y vivent encore aujourd'hui. La France conserva aussi, jusqu'en 1904, des droits exclusifs de pêche le long de certaines côtes de Terre-Neuve, droit dont elle fit bon usage. Des milliers de pêcheurs français venus de France et de Saint-Pierre et

Miquelon continuèrent de venir chaque printemps à Terre-Neuve et certains choisirent même d'y faire souche. Avec les Acadiens ils forment la base de la communauté franco-terre-neuvienne.

En 2004 cela fera donc 500 ans que Français et Acadiens sont présents dans notre province. Les Acadiens fêteront alors le 400ième anniversaire de la fondation de l'Acadie qui représente également le commencement de la Nouvelle-France en Amérique. Il y a bien de quoi à fêter!

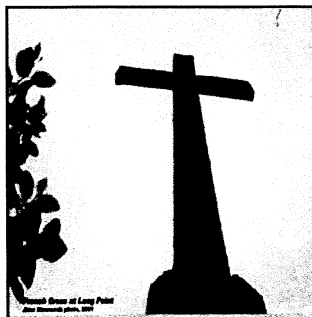
Fiers de leur patrimoine, les franco terre-neuviens - unis à tous les francophones qui ont décidé au fil des années de s'établir à Terre-Neuve et au Labrador - ont obtenu la reconnaissance de leurs droits. Les célébrations de 2004 veut leur donner les moyens de faire découvrir et reconnaître par tous, la richesse de leur histoire.

Fall Symposium—Advance Notice

A symposium focusing on "Newfoundland and the Entente Cordiale, 1904-2004" is being planned for September 17-18, 2004, in St. John's, continuing in Corner Brook on September 19-20. This is a joint project of the NHS,

PANL, the MUN History Department and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. There will be sessions on researching the province's French heritage; the making of the entente; and its impact on

Newfoundland and St. Pierre. In Corner Brook, there will be additional sessions relating to the West Coast. Details will be made available as soon as possible.



Beyond the Overpass

The Gateway Interpretation Center in Labrador City has now been opened to the public for nine months and we are overwhelmingly pleased with the enthusiastic response from visitors who have experienced our facility from, literally, around the globe. Attendants at the Exhibit Hall have been very impressed with our displays and information on our local history, culture and heritage. Business at the Heritage craft and gift shop have been brisk as we continue to promote Labrador artists in paintings and

sculptures along with a wide variety of relevant articles.

Gateway has also launched its website at www.gatewaylabrador.ca and we invite all to visit us there. Also in March the TV program "Beyond Your Backyard", which is produced by Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, did a feature on the Gateway and other tourist attractions in our area.

Gateway is also actively seeking traveling exhibits to provide a changing atmosphere to our facility.

Currently we are displaying the Inuit Exhibit "Labrador, Through Moravian Eyes -- 250 years of art, photographs and records".

Gateway Labrador Inc. is an initiative of the Height of Land Branch of the Labrador Heritage Society.

*Joyce Montague, President
Gateway Labrador Inc.
Labrador Heritage Society*



Ed Montague gives Prime Minister Paul Martin a tour of the main exhibit hall at the Gateway Interpretation Center, Labrador City

THE GEORGETOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

invites you to the launching of Wallace Furlong's *GEORGETOWN: AN HISTORIC CORNER OF OLD ST. JOHN'S* (Flanker Press, 2004)

Place: The Lantern, 35 Barnes Road
Time: 7:00 p.m on Tuesday, May 11th, 2004.

Mack Furlong will discuss the author and read from the book. Refreshments will be served.

NHS PROGRAM COMMITTEE

This past year was a busy and successful one for the the program committee. Lectures began in September with Andrew Cook's discussion about the British admiralty's Newfoundland survey in the nineteenth century. Roberta Buchanan's lecture in October was about Leonidas Hubbard, followed in November by Robert Mellin's talk on Tilting. In January Larry Coady guided us through parts of Labrador recounting the travels of Hesketh Prichard. The following month the society hosted Jerry Bannister's lecture and book launch of "The Rule of the Admirals." Our final lecture is in April with Ronald Rompkey, who will

deliver this year's George Story lecture.

March was the month of our symposium on Health Care. Topics included health history, personal experience in health care, diseases, female health practitioners and traditional medicine.

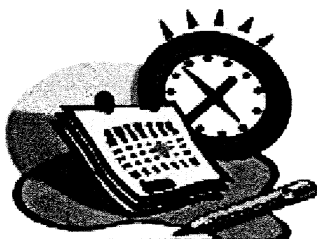
We will be ending the year in Bay Roberts with a symposium about the Labrador Fishery. Come and join us Saturday June 5 at 9 am at the Bay Roberts Lions Club. Contact the NHS office if you would like dinner or luncheon tickets (722-3191). Thank you to all the speakers and program committee members for making 2003/04 a successful year.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

*Debby Andrews, CHAIR
Terry Bishop-Stirling
Bert Riggs
Rosemary Healy
Willeen Keough
Jim Hiller
Emma Butler
Betty Jerrett*

PUBLICATIONS

*Linda Cullum, CHAIR
Jim Hiller
Jeff Webb
Anita Best
Mark Ferguson
Joan Ritcey
Jerry Bannister*



NHS Calendar

April 29, 2004

Time: 8 p.m.

Place: Hampton Hall
NHS Annual General Meeting and Lecture at Hampton Hall. Ronald Rompkey will give a lecture entitled: From the French Perspective: Some Writers of the 19th Century

June 4-5, 2004

Bay Roberts Symposium

Place: Bay Roberts Lion's Club

Symposium in Bay Roberts: June 4-5

The Newfoundland Historical Society is going Beyond the Overpass to Bay Roberts for a June Symposium on the Labrador fishery—a very important chapter in the history of this country.

The event is entitled **Down on the Labrador: Fishing off the Coast of Labrador**. Speakers

include: historian Shannon Ryan; Yukon archivist Clara (Sullivan) Rutherford and journalist Maudie Whelan among others.

The program for the event will be available soon, but we are told it includes a panel discussion comprising community experts Eric Jerrett, Greta

Hussey, David Hiscock, Arthur Menchions and Robert Clark.

Also on the program are songs and stories from our local poets, walking tours, art gallery visits and a sumptuous banquet with a prominent guest speaker to finish off the program.

See you there!

Note from the Membership Committee

Dear Reader,

The Newfoundland Historical Society depends upon membership fees to pay for all its services to its more than 500 members, including a subscription to the

Newfoundland Quarterly, a seasonal lecture series and an annual Symposium on some aspect of our history. In addition, we operate an office and provide reference services to the public by telephone, e-

mail and in person.

Please take time to renew your membership, or to become a new member of our Society. See the form below.

We are counting on your support.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL _____

Membership Fees:

Regular \$24 Life \$400 Institutional \$24 Student (no Quarterly) \$15

Donations to the Newfoundland Historical Society are always welcome

Fee _____ Donation _____ Total _____

Visa Card Number _____ Expiry Date _____

Signature _____

Payment may be made by VISA, cheque or money order to the Newfoundland Historical Society. Please clip this form and send it, with your payment to the address on the front page. US subscribers please pay in US funds to cover postage. International subscribers please pay 18 pounds sterling, or Canadian equivalent.