

Newfoundland Historical Society

1905 - 2015

The oldest non-profit, independent heritage organization in the province.

Newsletter



Winter 2015

Trinity Historical Society Receives Heritage Award

On November 8, 2014 the Trinity Historical Society celebrated its 50th Anniversary in the old Parish Hall at Trinity. Mr. Jim Miller, emcee for the event, made an excellent presentation on the history of the Trinity Historical Society and its accomplishments.

Highlights of the event included: presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to the Trinity Historical Society by the Hon. Ross Wiseman, Minister of Finance and Minister of the House of Assembly (MHA) for Trinity North, on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador; presentation of the Newfoundland Historical Society's annual Heritage Award by Mr. Frederick Smith, President of the Newfoundland Historical Society; and greetings from the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador by Mr. Jim Dempsey.

The Newfoundland Historical Society Heritage Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the preservation and presentation of the history and heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Heritage Award recognizes the Trinity Historical Society's tremendous accomplishments with respect to its fifty years of building heritage projects at Trinity including:

The Lester Garland House
The Trinity Museum
The Green Family Forge
The Cooperage
The Court House, Gaol and General Building
The Fort Point Military Site
The Trinity Historical Society Archives and
the very informative Trinity Historical Society website
<http://www.trinityhistoricalsociety.com>

Nominations for recipients of the annual Heritage Award can be made by any member of the Newfoundland Historical Society. All nominations are reviewed and the winner selected by the Executive Board of the Society.

If you would like to make a nomination or join the Newfoundland Historical Society please fill out the application form on page 8. For further information visit the Society's website at nlhistory.ca



Fred Smith, president of the Newfoundland Historical Society, presents the Society's Annual Heritage Award to Ian White, president of the Trinity Historical Society

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2015 Lecture Series

Date	Presenter	Title
Jan. 29	John E. FitzGerald	<i>History of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislature.</i>
Feb. 26	Doug Letto	<i>Death of the National Dream: Fred Alderdice and His Default Plan.</i>
Mar 26	Lisa Rankin	<i>Trading and Raiding: Understanding Early French/Inuit Relationships in Southern Labrador</i>
Apr. 30	Olaf Janzen	<i>The Pirate Who Never Was? Eric Cobham and Invention in History.</i> 2014 George Story Lecture.

Lectures are scheduled for 8:00 p.m. Thursday evenings on the last week of the month at Hampton Hall, Marine Institute, Ridge Road. Cancellations due to poor weather will be posted on the CBC Storm Centre web site at cbc.ca/nl.

Abstracts

History of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislature.

John E. FitzGerald

The Parliament of Newfoundland is unique in the history of parliaments in the Westminster tradition in that it was both created and abolished within a century. Based on the author's forthcoming history of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland, this illustrated lecture will explore the circumstances surrounding the creation and the early days of the House of Assembly, and the remarkable circumstances which led to its demise in the era before confederation with Canada.

Death of the National Dream Fred Alderdice and His Default Plan

Doug Letto

In October 1932, the newly elected Prime Minister of Newfoundland made a dramatic plan known to the British government. Fred Alderdice told the Secretary of State for the Dominions that the government had little choice but to partially default on more than \$5 million a year in debt payments. Britain reacted angrily. Its subsequent offer of a lifeline to pay a share of the year end interest on the debt, and the appointment of a royal commission to examine the future of Newfoundland's financial situation and prospects, put the Dominion on a path that would see its constitutional status irreversibly changed.

Could Alderdice have played his cards differently? Could he have preserved Newfoundland's constitutional independence? Did Newfoundlanders let down the dream and promise of a nation?

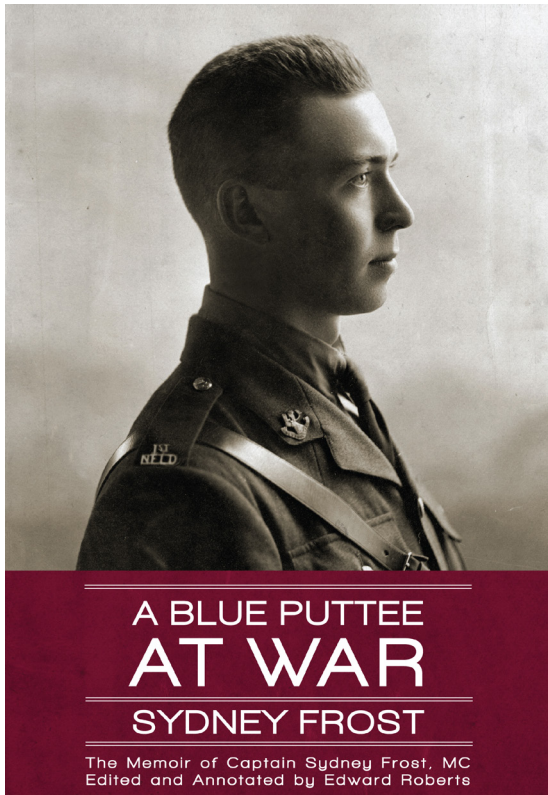
Presenter Doug Letto poses those questions and challenges a common view, of how Newfoundland went from Dominion status to province of Canada.

Trading and Raiding: Understanding Early French/Inuit Relationships in Southern Labrador

Lisa Rankin

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries the social and economic life of the Labrador Inuit was increasingly entwined with French fishermen and settlers. While crew on French fishing ships traveled annually to southern Labrador to make use of good harbours, French settlers from Quebec began to develop large concessions of land for the purposes of sealing, furring and trading. As a result of these activities, French-Inuit interactions became increasingly commonplace. The Inuit had settled in southern Labrador by the sixteenth century, likely as a deliberate strategy to obtain European materials, which they re-purposed to suit their own cultural needs. This presentation elaborates on recent archaeological findings that illuminate the nature and extent of these complex interactions.

A Blue Puttee at War: The Memoir of Captain Sydney Frost, MC



A new book has recently been published by Flanker Press. The book, which is based on the personal memoirs of Captain Sydney Frost, was edited and annotated by Newfoundland Historical Society member Edward Roberts.

Captain Sydney Frost, a young Nova Scotian, was working in St. John's at The Bank of Nova Scotia when the First World War began in August 1914. He joined the newly revived Newfoundland Regiment on 21 August 1914, the first night that volunteers were accepted. Assigned Regimental Number 58, he became one of the First Five Hundred, often known as the Blue Puttees. He served with the Regiment throughout the entire War, rising from the rank of Private to that of Captain. He led one of the two Companies of the Regiment that marched in the Triumphal March of the Dominion Troops through London on 3 May 1919 and returned to St. John's with the Regiment on 1 June 1919.

Frost was one of the few original members of the Regiment who survived to fight throughout the entire War. He recorded, on Christmas Eve 1917, that fewer than thirty of the Blue Puttees were still in active service. That was eleven months before the end of the War in November 1918; those months saw the Regiment take heavy casualties in the fighting during the last "One Hundred Days" before the 11 November Armistice, as the British advanced through

northern France and into Flanders and Belgium.

Sydney Frost was awarded the Military Cross for his heroism during the action at Keiberg Ridge, in Belgium, on 29 September 1918. Frost returned to The Bank of Nova Scotia at the end of the War and rose steadily through its ranks. He became its President and Chief Executive Officer in June 1956 and retired as President in 1958, at the age of sixty-five. He remained a Director until January 1969, when he became an Honorary Director. He died in 1985, at the age of ninety-two.

Late in life Sydney Frost wrote a memoir, which he specifically instructed his family was not to be published. They disregarded his admonition and authorized Edward Roberts to edit the memoir and to publish it. The memoir is unique. It is by far the most complete account of World War I by any member of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. Frost's account is frank, detailed, and authoritative. It is enriched greatly by the extraordinary archive of Regimental history he assembled over his lifetime. His service in the Regiment was a central feature of his long life. He kept every scrap of paper that came his way, together with a detailed record of his daily activities between 21 August 1914 and 2 June 1919. His scrapbooks, which he later donated to the Regimental Museum in St. John's, contain thousands of items, including newspaper cuttings and published articles of every description about the Regiment and the men with whom he served.

Articles

Do you have a short but interesting historical article, or an announcement of a historical related event that you would like to see included in the Newfoundland Historical Society's Newsletter?

If so, please send it by email to nhs@nf.aibn.com

Articles should be in Word format with graphics included as separate files. Due to limited space please restrict articles to between 500 - 1000 words.

All articles published will be at the discretion of the Executive of the Newfoundland Historical Society.

Annual Gilbert Higgins Lecture

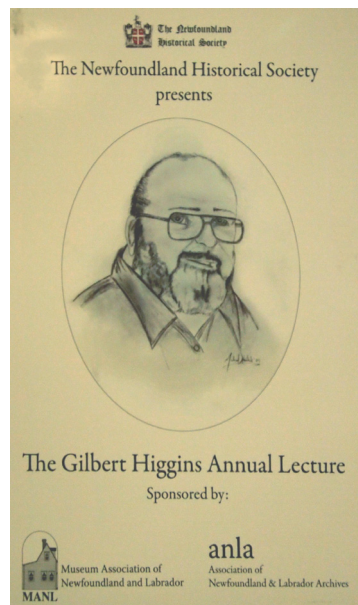
The annual Newfoundland Historical Society's (NHS's) Gilbert Higgins Lecture was held on November 27, 2014. The lecture is cosponsored by the NHS alternating with the Museum Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MANLA) and the Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Archives (ANLA). This year the ANLA was cosponsor.

Mr. Frederick Smith, President of the Newfoundland Historical Society, began the evening by welcoming everyone to the event.

Ms. Emily Gushue, president of ANLA, also welcomed the audience. Ms. Gushue remarked that MANLA and ANLA jointly sponsored two (2) yearly Gilbert Higgins lectures; one on the west coast of the province with the West Coast Historical Society, near Gilbert Higgins home in Stephenville, and the other with the Newfoundland Historical Society on the East Coast.

Ms. Gushue spoke briefly of Mr. Gilbert Higgins stating that he was a noted historian, teacher, librarian and archivist, as well as an avid collector of maps, papers, files, letters and books, who amassed a significant collection of historical treasures related to the Bay St. George area. Further, she remarked that Mr. Higgins was the first president of the MANLA and a member of the NHS, the Heritage Foundation and the Heritage Trust as well as a founding member of ANLA.

In conclusion, Ms. Gushue noted that from the age of ten (10) years, Mr. Higgins attended NHS lectures with his father Mr. John Gilbert Higgins and that in April 1988, just months before his death, the NHS presented him with its prestigious Heritage Award. The award was presented in recognition of Mr. Higgins' lifelong commitment to the preservation of the culture, heritage and history of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Mr. Allan Byrne, Vice-President of the NHS and Chair of the Society's Program Committee, introduced Mr. Patrick Mannion, the guest speaker for the evening. Mr. Byrne informed the audience that Mr. Mannion is an executive member of the NHS and had received his PhD History from the University of Toronto in 2013. Mr. Mannion's dissertation was titled *The Irish Diaspora in Comparative Perspective: St. John's, Newfoundland, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Portland, Maine, 1880-1923*.

The title of Mr. Mannion's lecture was *An Irish-Nationalist Resurgence in St. John's? The Self-Determination for Ireland League of Newfoundland, 1919 – 1922*. The lecture drew on Mr. Mannion's research work completed as part of his PhD requirements.

During the lecture Mr. Mannion spoke of a little known Irish organization active in St. John's from the autumn of 1920 to 1922, *The Self Determination for Ireland League*. He discussed the League's primary objective of lobbying and disseminating information and its relationship to other Leagues in Canada. He stated that by the early 1900s, Irish Newfoundlanders had lost interest in the politics of their ancestral homeland, probably due to their strong identity as Newfoundlanders and British citizens. After the end of World War 1, when Ireland struggled for self-determination, nationalist networks including the Self Determination for Ireland League, again thrived in St. John's, and there was much public engagement on the Irish question. The participation of thousands of Newfoundlanders in the League's meetings resulted in a strong anti-nationalist movement organized by the Orange Order and intense public debates.

Mr. Mannion concluded his presentation with a number of observations:

- Irish identities in Newfoundland did not evolve in isolation, but rather were strongly influenced by external nationalist associations.
- The ethnic connection to Ireland in Newfoundland was reinvented in a thoroughly British North American context as opposed to direct trans-Atlantic connections to Ireland.



Patrick Mannion Gilbert Higgins lecturer

- Irish ethnicity and identity in Newfoundland, while highly individual and personal, existed in a spatial context as well as a temporal one, with the impetus for engagement with Ireland diffusing in North America from west to east.
- External influences did not entirely invent the surge in Irish Catholic ethnicity in Newfoundland between 1920 -1921. Passion for the old country was there from the outset and was passed on through family, church and education.
- There was a lack of involvement of Catholic clergy in the Self-Determination for Ireland League of Newfoundland, probably due to the highly sensitive nature of the League's activities.
- The Self Determination for Ireland League in Newfoundland was not a radical organization. Despite

the fact that its leaders may have been radical, the rank and file were not, and the organization never publicly supported an independent Irish Republic.

Mr. Mannion's informative and entertaining lecture was well received by the audience and followed by a lively question period with a number of insightful and informative queries posed.

Dr. Calvin Hollett Lecture



Dr. Calvin Hollett presenting lecture

On the evening of October 30, 2014, Dr. Calvin Hollett presented the first lecture of the Newfoundland Historical Society's 2015 lecture series.

Dr. Hollett's lecture was titled

*"These Ignorant and Excited Fishmongers":
Popular Resistance to Bishop Feild in Transatlantic
Newfoundland and Labrador.*

The lecture considered the impact of Bishop Edward Feild on the Newfoundland Church of England; specifically, his efforts after his arrival in 1844, to place a tractarian stamp of the then evangelical Newfoundland Church of England. The lecture outlined the steps taken by Bishop Feild to achieve his goal, the actions taken by others who opposed him and the public debate surrounding the issue.

Dr. Hollett's very informative and entertaining lecture was well received by the audience and was followed by a lively audience discussion.

Remember To Join The NHS!

Fill out the form on page 8 and visit <http://www.nlhistory.ca> to find out how you can benefit!

Previous Newfoundland Historical Society Heritage Award Winners

1975 - 1976	Bobbie Robertson	1996 - 1997	Paul Johnson
1976 - 1977	Agnes O'Dea		Marguerite Linthorne
1977 - 1978	Joseph R. Smallwood	1997 - 1998	Gilbert Higgins
1978 - 1979	Tod Drover		Janet Story
1979 - 1980	Ronald Seary		Raymond W. Guy
1980 - 1981	Frederick W. Rowe	1998 - 1999	Ena Farrell Edwards
1981 - 1982	Louise Whiteway	1999 - 2000	William J. Kirwin
1982 - 1983	George Story	2000 - 2001	Alley O'Brien
1983 - 1984	Doris Saunders	2001 - 2002	No recipient
	Joe Goudie	2002 - 2003	No recipient
1984 - 1985	Paul O'Neill	2003 - 2004	James Tuck
	Michael Harrington		Roland Abbott
1985 - 1986	Harry Cuff		Baccalieu Trail Heritage Society
1986 - 1987	No recipient	2004 - 2005	No recipient
1987 - 1988	Burnham Gill	2005 - 2006	Gordon Bradley
1988 - 1989	Hal Andrews	2006 - 2007	No recipient
1989 - 1990	Ed Coady	2007 - 2008	William F. Coaker Heritage Foundation
1990 - 1991	Leslie Harris		
1991 - 1992	No recipient	2008 - 2009	No recipient
1992 - 1993	No recipient	2009 - 2010	No recipient
1993 - 1994	Otto Tucker	2010 - 2011	James K. Hiller
1994 - 1995	Naboth Winsor	2011 - 2012	No recipient
	Peter Neary	2012 - 2013	No recipient
1995 - 1996	Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador	2013 - 2014	No recipient
	Gordon Handcock	2014 - 2015	Trinity Historical Society

Newfoundland Historical Society is on Twitter

You don't have to actually tweet to enjoy the Newfoundland Historical Society's twitter account. You can contribute, or just listen in to retrieve information on current events, monthly lectures, annual symposia and much more. It's easy to create an account, just type "<http://www.nlhistory.ca/twitter>" into your search engine and follow the link to join up!

The Newfoundland Hotel



Newfoundland Hotel 1920s³

In the late 1920s, the Government of Newfoundland, in an effort to diversify industry in Newfoundland¹, promoted the tourism industry through the construction of roads and a modern hotel at St. John's. As a result, the Newfoundland Historical Facilities Ltd. undertook the construction of a new \$1,000,000 hotel. The hotel was constructed at the site of the 17th century Fort William Army Base, St. John's, and was named the Newfoundland Hotel. Although the Newfoundland Hotel Facilities Ltd. was a private company, their construction capital was partially raised through a \$450,000 first mortgage guaranteed by the Government of Newfoundland². In addition, the Government also provided the Fort William site free of charge.

The Newfoundland Hotel, an eight (8) story brick structure was opened on July 1st, 1926. By 1930, despite the fact that the hotel showed a profit on operating expenses, the Newfoundland Hotel Facilities Ltd. ran into financial difficulties and was liquidated. On November 30th, 1931, in order to protect its interest, the Newfoundland Government purchased and operated the hotel. Unfortunately, due to a world depression, the hotel lost \$17,000 after its first year under Government operation. In addition to facing an operational loss, the Government was also liable for financial obligations related to interest on the construction capital.

When Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, ownership of the hotel was transferred to Canadian National Railways. In the 1960s, the hotel was renamed Hotel Newfoundland, as part of the Canadian National Railways bilingualism policy. In 1982, Canadian National Railways replaced Hotel Newfoundland with a new hotel of the same name built adjacent to the original Hotel Newfoundland. In the 1983, the original Hotel Newfoundland was demolished and its replacement was purchased by the Canadian Pacific Hotels chain. In 2001 the Canadian Pacific Hotels chain purchased Fairmont Hotels and continued to operate the hotel under the Fairmont name. In 2008, Fortis Inc. purchased the hotel and renamed it to Sheraton Hotel Newfoundland, as we know it today.



**Newfoundland Hotel demolition
1983⁴**

Sources:

1. Brother Christopher. The Influence of Economic Factors on Newfoundland's Entrance into Confederation. M. A. Thesis University of Ottawa 1957. Retrieved from University of Ottawa Web Site: <https://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/21800/1/EC55559.PDF>
2. Amulree, Magarth, and Stavert, William (1933). The Newfoundland Royal Commission 1933 Report. London H.M.S.O., 1933 (Amulree Report). Retrieved from <http://collections.mun.ca/u/?cns>, 19695
3. Newfoundland Hotel. 1920s. Memorial University of Newfoundland. Libraries. Archives and Special Collections Division. Retrieved from MUN Digital Archives Initiative Web Site: http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/singleitem/collection/arch_geog/id/2916/rec/11
4. Rhodenizer, Dean. Personal Photo. Demolition of Newfoundland Hotel. 1983. jpg.

Did You Know?

From 1939 to 1949, the sixth floor of the Newfoundland Hotel served as the home of the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland (BCN). The BCN was a government owned radio station that was absorbed into the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation after Confederation.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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Membership Fees: Regular or Institutional \$40.00 / Life \$400.00. membership entitles you to 30% off Heritage Canada Membership.

Note: Membership includes a subscription to the Newfoundland Quarterly and three (3) newsletters per year, and is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of payment of the fee. Your expiry date will appear on the bottom left of your mailing label (the figures on the bottom right are a mailing code).

Donations are always welcome! And remember that membership makes a great gift. Gift cards are available from the Newfoundland Historical Society's office.

Membership fees are the NHS's only steady source of revenue and are used in support of our lectures and symposium. When starting or renewing your membership please consider encouraging a friend or spouse to join as well.

Would you like to save paper and receive our newsletter electronically (in colour)?

☐

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N

Would you like to be added to our list to be notified of upcoming events?

☐

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Would you like to be removed from the list of those receiving notification of upcoming events?

☐

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