

Newfoundland Historical Society

1905 - 2016

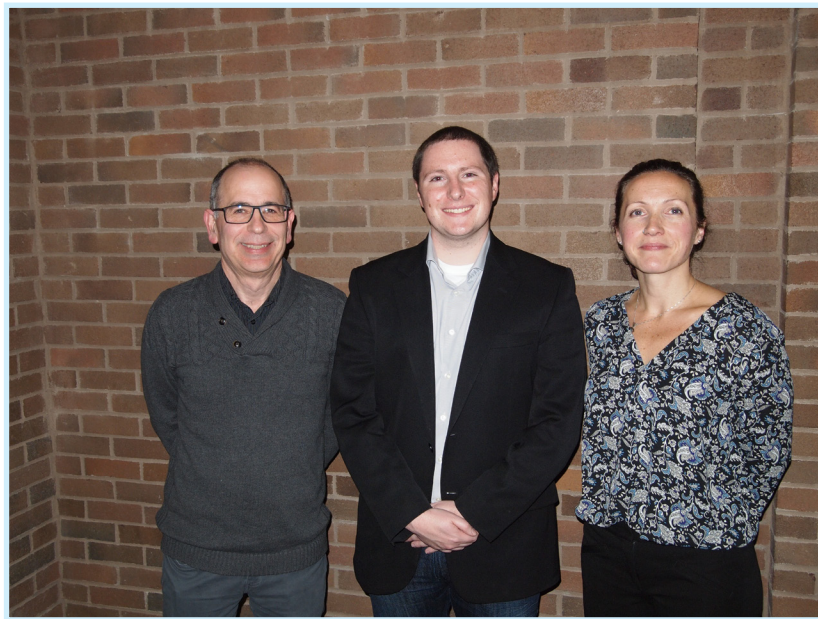
The oldest non-profit, independent heritage organization in the province.

Newsletter



Winter 2016

The Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB) and the Newfoundland Historical Society (NHS) Co-sponsor Panel Discussion



L-R Dr. Jeff Webb, Dr. Patrick Mannion and Dr. Vicki Hallett

On October 29, 2015, the Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB) and the Newfoundland Historical Society (NHS) co-sponsored a panel discussion titled *Lives Lived: Person and Place in Newfoundland Biographical Writing*.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Patrick Mannion of the NHS, the panel's chair, presented an overview of the DCB noting the DCB's influence on Newfoundland and Labrador historical writing. He explained that the DCB was useful in understanding some of Newfoundland and Labrador's more significant historical figures, and in identifying primary source literature related to them. Dr. Mannion also pointed out some shortcomings of the DCB, such as the low number of entries about women and aboriginal people.

The first presenter was Dr. Jeff Webb of the History Department, Memorial University Of Newfoundland (MUN), whose presentation was titled *Rethinking the Individual Biographies of Collaborative Circles*. His talk included examples from his recently published book *Observing the Outports: Describing Newfoundland Society and Culture, 1950-1980*.

Dr. Webb made a case for thinking of biography as a network of relationships rather than a running narrative about an individual. Further, Dr. Webb pointed out that the DCB entries contain many cross-references to business associates, clients, patrons, allies and competitors, which allow the reader to deduce information about the individual's social, commercial and intellectual networks that would be very difficult to glean from a narrative biography of the individual.

The second presenter was Dr. Vicki Hallett, Assistant Professor, Department of Gender Studies, MUN, whose presentation was titled *Life Narrative, People and Place: Why I Didn't Write a Biography of a Newfoundland Poet*.

Dr. Hallett stated that she engaged in life writing because she is interested in people's life stories, how and why we tell them, and what the stories can tell us about our continually evolving sense of ourselves and our world. Dr. Hallett noted her idea of "self" is related to a sense of Newfoundland and Labrador, and that when she writes about others she looks at them through this lens.

During her presentation Dr. Hallett used the example of Phoebe Florence Miller, poet and post-mistress of Topsail. She remarked how studying Miller's life was not a biography, although it included biographical elements, and how writing about Miller became in some small way, writing about herself and in a larger way, the life of this place. Miller's family, writing style, education, career and literary works were discussed. It was noted that as an educated person, telegraph operator and post mistress, Miller had access to information that placed her in the unique position of being a key communicator and liaison for her community to the outside world, yet in some ways she was also a kind of stranger in her community. Dr. Hallett observed that the concept of being a stranger appeared in Miller's literary works and that Miller pined for like-minded people who spoke her own kind of language. This desire led Miller to the "Blue Castle" where she could freely express her ideas and be her full self.

Dr. Hallett concluded her presentation by stating that instead of writing biography, she sees herself engaged in something more akin to "a mapping of autobiography".

Following the panel presentation the audience engaged in a lively discussion and question period.

2016 Lecture Series

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.

Date	Presenter	Title
Jan. 28	Cabot Martin	<i>How Things Get Forgotten: An example from Newfoundland. The 17th century Welsh colonizers.</i>
Feb. 25	Shirley Scott	<i>Cuffs, Vamps, Trigger Mitts and Drawers: The Knitted Heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador.</i>
Mar. 24	Kurt Korneski	<i>The West in the East: The Early Years of the Hudson's Bay Company in Labrador</i>
Apr. 28	Margot Duley	<i>Margaret Duley (1894-1968) as a Critic of the Great War.</i>

Abstract

Margaret Duley (1894-1968) as a Critic of the Great War.

April 28, 2016

Presented By

Margot Duley

The writings of Margaret Duley, Newfoundland's first novelist and one with an international readership, can be read as romances but they also contain biting social critiques. The Great War prompted little overt criticism in Newfoundland. Duley's work stands as an exception. Historian, Dr. Margot Duley, will examine the familial, personal and historical context of her aunt's views on World War One.

NHS President Allan Byrne Kicks Off the NHS Fall Lecture Series



Allan Byrne

On September 24, 2015, Allan Byrne, President of the Newfoundland Historical Society (NHS), presented the first lecture of the fall 2015 NHS lecture series entitled *A Beautiful Sight: Stories from the Port of St. John's*.

Byrne's presentation was based on his research work for a book of the same title. The research was based on oral interviews of thirteen (13) individuals who worked at the Port of St. John's. In his research, Byrne used St. John's Harbour as a common thread to relate a group of disparate topics in which the harbour played a pivotal role.

During the presentation Byrne noted that 2015 was the 50th anniversary of the inclusion of St. John's Harbour with the National Harbours Board of Canada (NHB), noting that this inclusion resulted, for the first time, in a local port authority administering and overseeing the maintenance and future planning of St. John's Harbour. Prior to 1965, there were many privately owned wooden finger piers in the harbour used mainly for the

salt fish trade. By the 1950s, many of these piers had become dilapidated and the harbour was in need of modernization, which occurred post 1965 when the Federal Department of Public Works initiated a twenty million dollar project on the north side of the harbour. This project resulted in the marginal pier, Harbour Drive and the finger pier that we see today.

During his presentation Byrne used some of the interesting and colorful oral recordings obtained during his research to demonstrate his discussion points. Discussion points included: the affect WWII had on the harbour, the role the harbour played as both a retail and wholesale commercial hub for St. John's, how shipping and cargo handling has evolved in the port, the changing role of fishery related activity in the port in light of more prominent industrial activity related to the oil industry, and the past presence of the Portuguese White Fleet in the harbour.

The presentation was thoroughly enjoyed by all and was followed by lively audience discussion period.

Remember To Join The NHS!

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



Beaver Pond showing a section of Harbour Breton in the background

Putting Up Ice Beaver Pond, Harbour Breton, Nfld.

By
Doug Wells

Beaver Pond is located in the Arm area of Harbour Breton, not too far from the shoreline. Its historical significance is connected with the cutting of ice in the pond. It is fairly small in size, shallow and produced thick ice. Cutting ice in Beaver Pond went on for many years, from the Newman & Co. time period to the mid 1900s.

Cutting ice was quite a business as fishing schooners used it to ice down their bait. With so many Nova Scotia and

Newfoundland schooners coming to Harbour Breton, there was a great demand for ice. They could obtain ice from the Pierces, Elliotts, Coadys, or from Mr. John Rose, all of whom cut ice in Beaver Pond for sale to the banking schooners and for their own local businesses. Ice was cut, hauled to the ice house near the shore, and stored for later sale. Also, some local individuals cut ice for the bankers. Mr. George Chapman and his two sons, Tom and Bill, “put up ice” for four or five years during the 1930s.

Ice was sawn out in square blocks, approximately 18 or 20 inches square, with a pit saw. The blocks were put on a slide and hauled to the ice house for storage. In the ice house the ice was covered with sawdust from Bay d’Espoir and the house was surrounded with boughs to shade it from the sun.

During the 1930s, it was common to cut at least 20 dory loads per ice house. This amount would be cut in about two weeks. It was not unheard of to get \$5.00 for a dory load of ice during the 1930s. The demand for ice declined after the caplin run was over during the latter part of June.

Bill Arch Chapman tells a story about an incident in Beaver Pond as a result of cutting ice. “So many people cutting ice, left a rather large area bare of ice and one morning, Patty Martin, on his way in the woods and not watching where he was going, found himself stepping off the ice and into the water. Fortunately for Patty, Hughie Bullen was coming behind him and pulled him to safety.” Crossing Beaver Pond in the winter time to go in the woods was normally the route to use because good wood existed a little farther away, in the Bungay’s Pond and Bobby’s Droke (Moonlit Valley) areas.

Because of its close proximity to the community, Beaver Pond is still used today, not for ice cutting but as a recreational area for ice skating and snowmobiling. Unsure of the origin of its name, one would assume that beavers used the pond at some point in time.



Cutting Ice: A Newman & Co. photo, c.1887. Believed to be Cluett’s Pond, near the Newman Premises in Gaultois. (Photo courtesy of Newman & Co. Photo Album, Town of Harbour Breton, NL)

Nunatsiavut Heritage Forum

From

Dave Lough

The Nunatsiavut Heritage Forum is an annual gathering of community heritage organizations, Nunatsiavut Government leaders and staff members, academics, local experts, funding agencies, and community members involved in heritage preservation, interpretation, and celebration. The week-long meeting took place in Hopedale in 2015, from October 25 - 29th, and over fifty participants from across Nunatsiavut, Upper Lake Melville, St. John's, and beyond gathered to discuss ongoing and planned heritage initiatives, possible collaborations, and policy issues. The theme of the 2015 Forum was *UllusiugutiKannik Siagunitanik NunakKatigenni: Celebrating Heritage through Community Connections*. The Forum helped to create and foster community connections in a number of ways. Representatives from heritage groups from each of the Nunatsiavut communities, academic researchers, and heritage organizations gave presentations on ongoing and planned initiatives, Forum participants engaged in community events and activities, and provincial program support agencies connected with local organizers. This year, four elected officials participated in the Forum. Minister Kemuksigak, Minister Flowers, Minister Lyall, and Speaker of the Nunatsiavut Assembly Tyler Edmunds contributed their expertise to the dialogue, and provided participants with the opportunity to discuss heritage issues directly with decision-makers. The resulting degree of mutual understanding and progress was encouraging, and it is hoped that the same level of political participation will continue in future years. The fundamental importance of the Inuit language to Nunatsiavut and the need to support speakers and learners was the core message of the 2015 Heritage Forum. With so many exciting new heritage initiatives, this is an ideal time to strengthen the resolve to ensure that Inuttitut remains at the core of Nunatsiavut heritage. A summary report titled the *Nunatsiavut Heritage Forum 2015 Report* has been prepared in both digital and hard copy format. If you are interested in reading this report and would like to receive a copy please email a request to dave.lough@nunatsiavut.com



Uli Brown

Welcome To Our New Office Manager

The Newfoundland Historical Society is pleased to welcome Ulrike (Uli) Brown to the position of Office Manager. Uli is taking over from Colleen Shea who left the position at the end of October 2015. A big thank you to Colleen who did a wonderful job running the office and impressed us all with her organizational skills. Uli is a retired English teacher and brings fantastic skills to the position. We are all looking forward to working with Uli and welcome her to the team. Be sure to drop by our information table at the monthly lectures and say hello to Uli.

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!

Dictionary of Newfoundland English

Word-file Digitization Project

One of the goals of the English Language Research Centre (ELRC), part of the MUN campus, (also known as the Dictionary Room), is to promote the investigation of the English language in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Centre's research has resulted in a number of publications, including the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, a historical dictionary that gives the pronunciations and definitions for words that the editors have called "Newfoundland English". The central and largest collection in the ELRC is the lexical files compiled for the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*. These files were begun in the late 1950s and remain an active project to this day. The collection consists of more than 100,000 slips and cards, each containing an example of a local word in its actual usage, or a commentary on a word by the dictionary's editors and contributors.

In 2002, the ELRC started a Dictionary of Newfoundland Word-file Digitization Project. The goal of the project is to digitize these files with the intention of preserving them and making them available to others in a searchable database.

The Story Of The S. S. Marsland

By
Charles Stirling

The Grounding

After departing Cadiz with a cargo of 5000 tons of salt, the *Marsland's* twelve day voyage to St. John's was uneventful. By the morning of July 02, 1933 the ship was approaching its final destination. It was 5.00 a.m. as the *Marsland* approached St. John's Harbour. There was no sign of the Harbour Pilot, however Captain Williams was confident of his abilities and decided to navigate the Narrows. Using his binoculars he observed the two harbour range lights as they came into alignment. This was something he had done countless times before at other ports, just manoeuvre the ship on a course that brought the two lights into alignment, and once on that course, keep them aligned and follow the buoys into the safety of the harbour. "There" he said to himself as the two lights aligned, and then said with authority to the helmsman "Steady as she goes". Everything was set as he navigated the confined shipping channel through the Narrows into the safety St. John's Harbour. Things were as they should be. Then as he passed Amherst Light on his port, he saw it. A schooner under sail, beating from side to side, as it made its way out to sea through the Narrows. Immediately he foresaw a collision, the sinking of the smaller wooden boat and the snuffing out of the lives of those on board. Without hesitation and out of options, he firmly rang the ship's telegram to full astern. Almost immediately the engine room reacted. The powerful ship shuddered and shook from the cavitation as its propellers churned the waters to a boiling cauldron astern of the ship. Slowly the *Marsland* stopped and then came astern. Suddenly there was a dreadful crunching sound that no Captain wants to hear. The *Marsland* had lost manoeuvrability and backed up onto the Vestal Rock on the south side of the Narrows, punching holes through the vessels Nos. 2, 4 and 5 holds. With a falling tide, the water began to pour in and the *Marsland* was firmly aground. The Fort Amherst Lighthouse keeper Robert Sheppard, alerted by a shrill blast from the ship's whistle, immediately notified the authorities.

Recovery Efforts

Within an hour, the tug *Hugh D.*, tug *Mouton* and the *Arras* arrived, attached hawsers and attempted to pull the *Marsland* off the Vestal Rock from different directions. Realizing the futility of their attempts, they soon abandoned their efforts. Later, the *Meigle* arrived with pumps and attempted to refloat the *Marsland*. To further lighten the ship, its owners ordered its cargo of salt jettisoned. Many locals from the Battery and nearby benefited from this decision as they carried away boatloads of good salt for their own use. A large crowd of observers formed at Fort Amherst and Signal Hill and it was rumoured that many wagers were made as to the success or failure of this and future rescue attempts.

On July 05 at 4:20 p.m., a second attempt was made to refloat the *Marsland* and tow her off the rocks. The *Nova Scotia* using a rocket put five hawsers onboard the stranded vessel. The *Argyle* was ahead of the *Nova Scotia* and towed in a north east direction, the *Meigle* attached a line and towed at right angles. After ten minutes the towing effort of these three ships managed to pull the stern of the *Marsland* outward by fifty feet. Then suddenly, the hawsers from the *Nova Scotia* snapped and the *Meigle* ended up pulling the *Marsland* back to its original position. (See photo). Further efforts were abandoned.

On July 09 the famous tug *Foundation Franklin* arrived and used its powerful pumps in an attempt to refloat the *Marsland*. Although the *Foundation Franklin*'s efforts were partially successful in refloating the *Marsland*, she was not freed from the Vestal Rock. From that point on it seems that no other efforts were made to free the *Marsland*. The *Foundation Franklin* remained alongside, and during late summer and fall carried out a salvage operation to remove machinery and items of value from the *Marsland*. It was rumoured at one point that the *H. M. S. Norfolk*, which was visiting, would blow up the *Marsland*, however this did not occur.

Then suddenly one night in the fall of 1933, the *Marsland* was gone when she silently and unobservedly slid off the Vestal Rock into the waters of Fort Amherst.



Marsland Towing Operations July, 05, 1933

Marsland

Built: 1926 Lithgows Limited

Port Glasgow

Owner: Walmar Steamship Company Ltd.

Agent: Bowring Brothers

Length: 385 ft. Breadth: 52 ft. Draft: 26 ft.

Epilogue

In Dec. 1968, 35 years after the *Marsland* incident, the salvage vessel *Leaside* owned by Capt. Frank Puddister, recovered two of the *Marsland*'s condensers and a propeller. *Leaside* divers reported that other than this the *Marsland* had completely disappeared.

Sources:

Photograph "Argyle," "Hugh D," "Nova Scotia," "Meigle," "Novalite," "Marsland" (Ships) in The Narrows at the entrance to the harbour at St. John's, Newfoundland, July 05, 1933, Maritime History Archive Public Photo Catalogue, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Accessed Feb. 21, 2016, <https://www.mun.ca>

Harrington, Michael. "Wreck Of The Marsland 1933" *Evening Telegram*, May 17, 1970. Ships Files, Newfoundland Historical Society Archives.

Thomas, Tony. "Ill Fated Voyage Of The S. S. Marsland" Unknown Newspaper, July 17, 1970. Ships Files, Newfoundland Historical Society Archives.

Thomas, Tony. "S. S. Marsland Big News In '33 Lies Now Off St. John's Harbour" *Here in Newfoundland*, April 1956, Vol. 1(1), pp. 19, 25. Ships Files, Newfoundland Historical Society Archives.

O'Neill, Paul. *A Seaport Legacy*, Press Porcupine 1976, p. 985

Author Unknown. "S. S. Marsland Meets Mishap Entering Port" *Evening Telegram*, July 03, 1933. Ships Files, Newfoundland Historical Society Archives.

Unknown Authors. "Extracts From The St. John's Daily News And Others". Ships Files, Newfoundland Historical Society Archives.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

EXECUTIVE (2015-2016)

President:

Allan Byrne

Vice President:

Larry Dohey

Past President:

Fred Smith

Accountant:

Corey Button

Office Manger

Uli Brown

Councillors:

Terry Bishop-Stirling

Larry Coady

John Cheeseman

Heidi Coombs-Thorne

Joan Ritcey

Charles Stirling

Jeff Webb

Patrick Mannion

Gerona McGrath

Regional Representatives:

Betty Jerrett (Bay Roberts)

Jim Miller (Trinity)

Robert Parsons (Grand Bank)

Doug Wells (Harbour Breton)

Sandra Wheeler (Corner Brook)

Dave Lough (Labrador)

**Questions, comments,
letters to the Editor, and
membership inquiries may be
addressed to:**

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

(709) 722-3191 (phone)
(709) 739-6458 (fax)

e-mail:
nhs@nf.aibn.com/

Internet:
<http://www.nlhistory.ca/>

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

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 or at monthly lectures.

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 receive our newsletter electronically
(in colour)?

☐
Y

☐
N

Would you like to be notified of upcoming events?

☐
Y

☐
N

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 complete and send this form with your payment to the address below. USA subscribers please pay in US funds to cover postage. International subscribers please pay nineteen (19) pounds Sterling or the Canadian equivalent.

Newfoundland Historical Society
P.O. Box 23154
Churchill Square
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J9
<http://www.nlhistory.ca>