

Fall 2008

The Newfoundland Historical Society

1905-2008



Newsletter

EXECUTIVE

President:

Melanie Martin

Vice President:

Larry Coady

Past President:

Terry Bishop-Stirling

Treasurer:

Nancy Snedden

Councillors:

Vicki Barbour

David Bradley

Gordon Bradley

Terry Carlson

Larry Dohey

Allan Dwyer

Betty Jerrett

Glenn Keough

Martha MacDonald

Mekaela Mahoney

Robert Parsons

Cathy Rice

Joan Ritcey

Fran Warren

Jeff Webb

Doug Wells

Sandra Wheeler

Mike Wilkshire

OFFICE

ADMINISTRATOR:

Allan Byrne

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

(709) 739-6458

email:

nhs@nf.aibn.com

Internet:

www.infonet.st-johns.nf.

ca/nfldhist

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello everyone and welcome back from wherever your travels have taken you over the summer season! Fall is an exciting time of year. A time for new beginnings, seeing old friends, and jumping into new projects. The NHS has an exceptional group of volunteers, and, with a few new faces this year; we are returning rejuvenated and full of enthusiasm for 2008-2009! The NHS has faced a few challenges this year, mainly monetary, but we are working very closely with other key heritage organizations and the Provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to overcome them. Throughout this process, we are forging new partnerships and providing valuable input to help re-shape a programme that will benefit all heritage organizations over the coming years. As the Federal government continues to pull back its support of culture and heritage across Canada, now, more than ever, we have to find new and creative ways to work together and with our own government to secure the future success of our heritage organizations.

The Newfoundland Historical Society had an exceptional year with a variety of lectures that ended with our annual symposium celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Fisherman's Protective Union in Port Union, Trinity Bay. A warm thank you to all speakers who willingly shared their scholarship with us, to members of the Coaker Foundation and our own Programme Committee, and to you the members, who came out in the hundreds! It was also our pleasure to award the Coaker Heritage Foundation the Newfoundland Historical Society Heritage Award for all their work in restoration and preservation of the sites in Port Union affiliated with Coaker and the FPU.

Our Programme Committee really worked double duty this year thanks to Chair, Larry Coady, who has a full slate of lecturers in place for the coming season. I would like to say thank you and farewell to long-time member of the NHS executive, Debby Andrews. Debby has worked on and chaired several committees and was always willing to jump in wherever needed. We hope you will continue to come out to events and enjoy just being a member!

The NHS is anxiously awaiting the publication of our latest work, *A Short History of Newfoundland*, which we hope will be available in time for the Christmas market. As always we have a jam-packed year ahead of us with new and exciting topics. Remember our lectures are always held the last Thursday of every month at Hampton Hall, Marine Institute; they are always free to the general public, as is parking. See you on September 25th!

Melanie Martin, President, NHS

Lecture series, Fall 2008

All lectures are at Hampton Hall at the Marine Institute, Ridge Road, St. John's, 8.00 pm.

25 September 2008: Derek Wilton – “Oscar Lieber's trips to Labrador and observations of the 1860 eclipse”

30 October 2008: P. Whitney Lackenbauer: “An Environment of Cooperation and Conflict: The Military Presence in Newfoundland and Labrador from the Cold War to the War on Terror”

27 November 2008: Jeff Webb: “The Voice of Newfoundland - a History of the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland” (book launch)

Note: the titles are a general indication of the topic and subject to change.

Resettlement Room at the Sunny Cottage Heritage Centre ~ Resettlement: Looking Back ~

Many tiny communities in Newfoundland and Labrador were dependent, almost exclusively, on the fishery. These communities, for the most part, were isolated and this made it extremely difficult for the government to provide the necessary public services to the people. The government's resettlement program (1954-1975) relocated many of these communities. People were forced to leave and abandon these communities and move to larger growth centres where services and opportunities were greater. For many, they had to pack up and leave the only place they had ever lived in and known. During the period of the resettled program approximately 30,000 people were relocated and more than 300 communities abandoned. As for the Fortune Bay – Hermitage Bay region, twenty plus communities were resettled and Harbour Breton became the receiving centre for many families from these communities, substantially increasing the town's population. The Resettlement Room at the Sunny Cottage Heritage Centre tells stories of the people that resettled to Harbour Breton. Fourteen communities are highlighted and visitors can see several artifacts from these communities, photos, stories, map location, etc. The research table gives more history, photos, stories, and census of the fourteen communities. One can see an old pump organ from Pushtrough, a model of the school and church from Jersey Harbour, a church lamp from Great Harbour, a provincial plaque won by the Church of England School on Sagona Island in 1938, and more. Our plan is to tell the social history of these communities and so far the room has created much interest from both locals and tourists alike.



Sunny Cottage Heritage Centre



Pump organ

Text and photos supplied by Doug Wells, Sunny Cottage Heritage Centre, Harbour Breton, NL

TO EACH HIS OWN: 100th Anniversary of the Formation of the Fishermen's Protective Union.

The Newfoundland Historical Society and the Sir William Ford Coaker Heritage Foundation co-hosted a two-day symposium at Port Union, Trinity Bay, May 30-31, 2008. The event was held at The Factory in Port Union, home to a number of Union activities, including the Fishermen's Advocate newspaper. It is today a spacious interpretation centre, gift shop and community centre. Adjoining Union premises are slated for restoration and provincial and federal politicians took advantage of the symposium to announce sizeable funding support. Community participation in the sessions was high with visitors from around the province, in particular the Bonavista Peninsula.

A reception was held Friday evening with welcoming addresses from Bruce Sweetland (Coaker Foundation) and Melanie Martin (Historical Society). Terry Bishop-Stirling (History, MUN) provided an overview of Coaker and FPU milestones and timelines and the Coaker Foundation was presented with the Newfoundland Historical Society's Heritage Award.

There were four presentations on Saturday:

- James Hiller (MUN History) spoke on the Bond-Coaker alliance and the election of 1913;
- Desmond McGrath, a founding member of the Fish, Food and Allied Worker's Union, explained differences in the approaches taken by the FPU and FFAWU;
- Edward Roberts (former provincial politician and Lt. Governor) outlined events associated with the failure of the Coaker Regulations in the early 1920s; and
- Sean Cadigan (MUN History) provided insights on Coaker's nativism and disillusionment in later years.

The lunch break on Saturday featured the launch of a new book 'To Be My Father's Daughter' by the Educational Resource Development Cooperative with presentations by Sharon Halfyard, Carmelita McGrath and Marion Cheeks.

A community panel was organized by the Foundation with three ladies from the community (Betty Mason, Cornelia Sweetland, Millie Johnson) describing life in a union town and taking questions from the floor, entertaining everyone with tales from a bygone era and taking a standing ovation at the end of the session.

A banquet was held on Saturday evening with Patrick O'Flaherty the after-dinner speaker. He spoke on political events in Newfoundland in the period 1934-1938, following what he described as "the great debacle".

Regional symposia such as these require effective coordination with community organizers and the NHS deeply appreciated the support of Edith Sampson and her co-workers in making this symposium such a great success. The Society also received funding support from the Smallwood Foundation at Memorial University.

Larry Coady, Chair, Programme Committee



A session at the symposium



NHS President Melanie Martin presents the society's heritage award to Bruce Sweetland of the Coaker Foundation

Photos by Allan Byrne



“Mermaid in St. John’s Harbour” by Theodor de Bry (1528-1598), a Belgian engraver known for his representations of North America based on accounts and paintings by others. De Bry brought Newfoundland to the attention of a wide audience.

QE II Library, Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University, image ref. CNS-10003

MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Membership Fees: Regular \$28 / Life \$400 / Institutional \$24 / Student (no Quarterly) \$15 **Donations 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 send this form 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.

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