

Winter 2008

The Newfoundland Historical Society

1905 - 2008



Newsletter

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RIPPLES FROM RECENT MEETINGS

The Continuing Mystery of Herman Koehler

At the September 2007 lecture on the disappearance of Herman J. Koehler in Labrador in 1931, Peter Armitage explained that Koehler's remains were found a few years later in Labrador and taken by the Newfoundland Rangers to their Whitbourne headquarters. When that was closed, the remains were transported to St. John's on the back of a motorcycle. The audience was surprised to hear a gentleman rise at the end of the talk to explain that he was the driver of that motorcycle, and that he had taken the remains to the new Rangers' headquarters near Bowring Park. Even more curious, a woman in the audience knew what had happened to the remains after those headquarters closed down too! However, when Peter realized that he did not have any contact information for her, she had already left. He would very much like to get in touch with her, so if you can assist, please call or email the NHS office (addresses in the column on the left).



Peter Armitage at the podium

Postal History of Labrador

Those present at the October meeting at The Rooms will remember the remarkable exhibit that Kevin O'Reilly brought for the occasion. A completely revised version of this award-winning exhibit, printed from electronic files, is now available as a book, *A Postal History of Labrador Before Confederation, 2007*, by Kevin O'Reilly. It contains much useful information otherwise unavailable about this region. For details go to http://www.iankimmerly.com/boutique/bnaps_book_s2.html#exhib or contact Ian Kimmerly Stamps, 62 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5A8
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Kevin O'Reilly and part of a panel from his exhibit

Your Newsletter

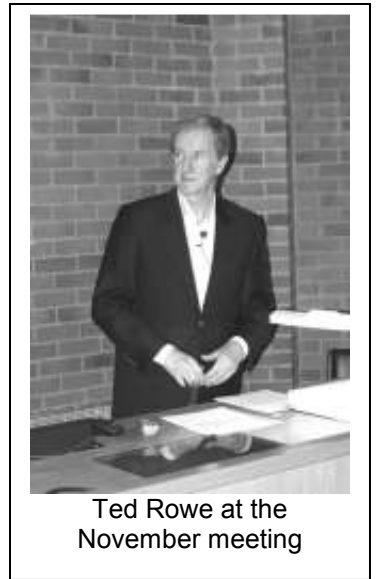
If you have an item of news, an anecdote, a picture from the past, an old saying, an event of historical interest happening in your corner of Newfoundland and Labrador, why not share it with fellow members in your NHS Newsletter? Simply mail your contribution to the postal address on the first page or email it to nhs@nf.aibn.com.

Symposium: May 2008

The NHS, in conjunction with the Sir William F. Coaker Heritage Foundation, is organizing a symposium to be held in late May on William Coaker and the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Fisherman's Protective Union. It will be held in Port Union, Trinity Bay (the only union-built town in North America). The Programme Committee is currently at work preparing the content, and further information will be provided both at the monthly meetings (see the schedule elsewhere in this Newsletter) and on the NHS webpage (www.infonet.st-johns.nf). In the meantime, feel free to explore the Foundation's website at <http://www.historicportunion.com/en/foundation.html>.

A Happy Coincidence

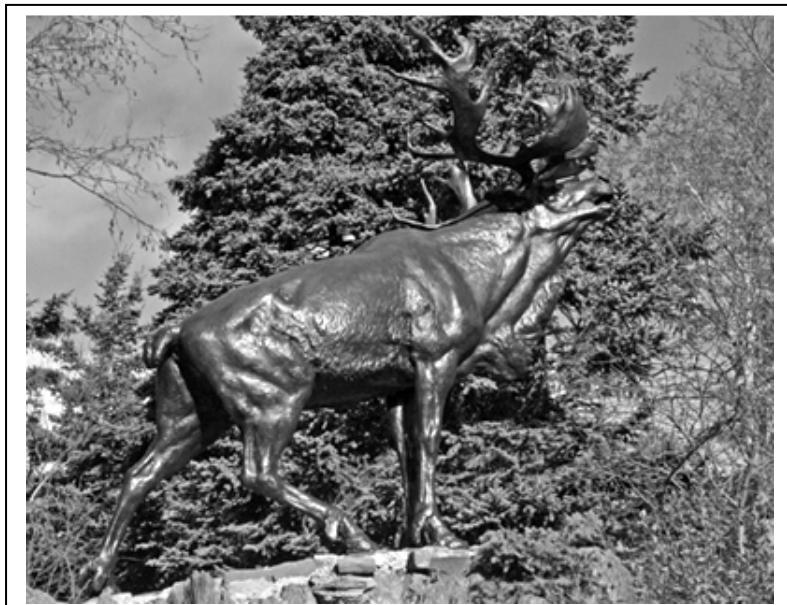
Joan Ritcey of the Centre for Newfoundland studies at Memorial University Libraries attended Ted Rowe's November 22 lecture on Heart's Content and the laying of the transatlantic cable. And to her surprise the next day she discovered that two cable-related items had been donated to the CNS by Michael Harrington's widow, Katherine Harrington. "Ocean telegraphy: the twenty-fifth anniversary of the organization of the first company ever formed to lay an ocean cable," N.Y., 1879, 64 pages long, was not previously known to the Centre. And Bishop Feild's "A sermon, preached on board the Great Eastern, in her passage from Newfoundland to England, after laying the Atlantic telegraph cable of 1866, and recovering and completing that of 1865". London : Metchim & Son, 1866, 12 pages long, was known to the Centre but not previously held. Two great acquisitions, found the very week of Ted's talk.



Ted Rowe at the November meeting

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE REGIMENT

The Faculty of Arts of Memorial University is offering an extraordinary opportunity to delve into the experience of the Newfoundland Regiment through a 12-day journey of remembrance and reflection to France and England. The journey is hosted by Kevin Major. The project begins in St. John's with an introduction to artifacts and records of the men and women who served overseas. The group then flies to England for a visit to a variety of sites of interest, followed by a ferry trip to France to visit battlefields there. There are only 15 places available and the trip is fully subscribed for 2008, but a repeat performance is planned for 2009. See <http://www.mun.ca/arts/alumni/majortrip/> for details.



The Caribou, Bowring Park – symbol of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment

SOUTH COAST DEVELOPMENTS

At the October 2007 meeting of the Executive of the NHS, Doug Wells presented a report on a variety of projects planned or under way in this region. These include:

- the Cook's landing site and the war museum in St. Alban's (see <http://www.thecoaster.ca/index.cfm?sid=49857&sc=319>)
- the impressive Elliott premises in Harbour Breton, consisting of two separate buildings (Pierce's Store, an old fish store, and the Elliotts dry goods store, which now includes a theatre and the Newman's Company museum). These have been melded into one centre (see <http://www.harbourbreton.com/elliottpremises/news.html>)
- an exhibition on resettlement (a theme which resonates strongly in local communities and which has become a prominent feature of the artwork of Angela Baker), and
- exploration with the Conne River band of a commemoration of the Cormack trans-Newfoundland trip with a pull-off on the Bay d'Espoir highway and a view of Mount Sylvester.

Allow space in your schedule for visiting these locations when travelling in the area.

Program of Lectures, Winter 2008.

Thursday 31 January at 8.00 pm, Hampton Hall, Marine Institute.

Ron Rompkey: *The Trials and Tribulations of Charles Riballier des Isles, French Consular Agent in St. John's Before the Entente Cordiale*

Thursday 28 February 28 at 8.00 pm, Hampton Hall, Marine Institute.

Keith Mercer: *Nursery of Seamen: Naval Impressment and the British-Newfoundland Fishery, 1699-1815*

Thursday 27 March at 8.00 pm, Hampton Hall, Marine Institute

Raoul Andersen: *A New Schooner for the Captain from Newfoundland*

Thursday 24 April at 8.00 pm, Hampton Hall, Marine Institute.

AGM and George Story Lecture. Neil Rosenberg: *Studying Vernacular Music in Newfoundland: The MUNFLA Song Title Index*

May 2008: **Symposium: William Coaker and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Fisherman's Protective Union.** See p. 2 for further details.



Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives
Coll. 137 (The Geography Collection), image 21.03 – Boatbuilding at Grey River, c. 1900

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Membership Fees: Regular \$28 / Life \$400 / Institutional \$24 / Student (no Quarterly) \$15 **Donations are always welcome!**

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