Three Steps towards a History of the Book in Newfoundland

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This essay forms part of a continuing attempt to lay out in a general way what is currently known about the culture of the book in Newfoundland and Labrador. Over ten years ago, I was asked to prepare a sketch of the facts and problems as part of a series of preliminary studies for the *History of the Book in Canada*, now published in three volumes.¹ That paper, which I wrote with the assistance of Sandi Hannaford (now Sandi Tulk), is still online,² and parts of it were used for an entry in volume 1 of the *History*.³ In what follows I have freely used the older essay, supplementing it with new material, taking into account discussion in the *History of the Book in Canada*. This could be called version 1.3, though this is the first full appearance in print. The question still remains, even after the appearance of the great synthetic *History of the Book in Canada*: Where are we in relation to a history of books for Newfoundland and Labrador? Despite the broad frame of information that the *History* now provides, I still argue that a Canadian history does not, indeed cannot, tell the local history for any region in the country.

The *History of the Book in Canada* has not altered the basic local narrative we set forth in the earlier version of our article. This narrative is in three parts. In what follows, I begin with a brief chronological account, divided into two main divisions. The first considers the long period that extends from the late sixteenth century before continuous

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1 Patricia Lockhart Fleming and Yvan Lamonde, eds., *History of the Book in Canada*, 3 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004–07).

2 William Barker and Sandra Hannaford, "Towards a History of the Book in Newfoundland," Background Paper for the History of the Book in Canada / Histoire du livre et de l'imprimé au Canada Project, [1998], http://www.hbic.library.utoronto.ca/fconfnfd_en.htm.

3 William Barker, "Books and Reading in Newfoundland and in Labrador," in *History of the Book in Canada, Volume One: Beginnings to 1840*, ed. Patricia Lockhart Fleming, Gilles Gallichan, and Yvan Lamonde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 361–68.

settlement, up to the time of the first known printing in the colony in the early nineteenth century. The second goes from the first decade of the nineteenth century, in which there was a remarkable growth of journalism and other written forms, up to the time of Confederation (1949), a period of activity for the propagation of reading and literature in middle- and upper-class milieus, and the growing spread of literacy in the working classes. Though both periods may seem to be overly extended for meaningful discussion, it seems as though there is a continuity in each.

Finally, there is a third period, certainly the richest in terms of documentation and remembered history, and the most promising area of research for new scholars, though the least well treated here. From Confederation onwards, there was expansion of other media and at the same time a rapidly and vastly developed book-based school system including the university, now extended to all social groups, and another attempt (remarkably similar in some ways to that of the late nineteenth century, but now marked more strongly by a social scientific and educational impulse) to define the culture in its own terms, to preserve and to rewrite the history, and to publish works that are oriented specifically towards local culture and politics. Though the direction was local, it was however strongly encouraged by federal directions and policies as well as the general growth of Canadian publishing in other provinces. Of course, there are now in 2010 many new stresses and strains in the book world, as we live through an accelerated transition to new models of publication and dissemination of text. The book in Newfoundland and Labrador is going through the same remarkable adjustment found throughout the book world over the past decade, with the rise of Amazon and the decline of the local bookstore, and the shift to electronic delivery systems.

The periods are not precise, and indeed may be subject to some change. But they do represent important shifts in the cultural as well as the political history of Newfoundland and Labrador – three transformations of the public sphere that provide a thematic analysis for those interested in the history of the book.

Though one is able to spot very general trends, it must be admitted from the outset that resources for a history of the book in Newfoundland and Labrador are in some research areas minuscule. There are few publishers' and booksellers' records, the collections of private owners were hardly ever catalogued, and there is almost no consistent record of the importation of books, perhaps the most

important resource one would like to have for the earlier periods. But there are some significant bodies of material: local publications, newspapers, and journals all contain interesting and sometimes voluminous evidence towards a history. Resources in education and religion are also considerable. And for the most recent period there are the untapped memories of many readers and writers, people employed in the book trades, libraries, and so on. There are adequate resources for such a history, even if only in outline, along with a principal resource in the material evidence of the books themselves. But in comparison with what is available for other places, this history will seem thin. In part this is because there is not much of a recorded history (though the history of books in Newfoundland and Labrador is old, Breakwater Books, founded in 1973, was the first publisher to sustain a long-term business devoted solely to books).

The problem is further exacerbated by the paucity of previous research. There is a sprinkling of articles, some of them in the popularly written *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* (ENL), and there is a comprehensive *Bibliography of Newfoundland*, the latter of especial help.⁴ A record of the printing history of Newfoundland is also found in the bibliographies of the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*.⁵ But there is no extended study that attempts to make scholarly sense of the data available for a possible history of the book. The only synoptic treatment of the history of printing is the 1993 article by Jean Graham in the ENL.⁶ Newfoundland rated three references in George Parker's groundbreaking *Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada*.⁷ Sandrine Ferré's *L'Édition au Canada atlantique: Le défi de publier une région* (1999) provides a much broader attempt from the 1950s onwards, but again draws the book history of the province into a regional, not local, analysis.⁸ Other than my short

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- 4 *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, ed. Joseph R. Smallwood et al., 5 vols. (St John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers [and others], 1981–94); Agnes O'Dea, comp., and Anne Alexander, ed., *Bibliography of Newfoundland*, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), cited in the text as "O'Dea."
 - 5 G.M. Story, W.J. Kirwin, and J.D.A. Widdowson, eds., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982; 2nd ed., 1990).
 - 6 Jean Graham, "Printing and Publishing," in ENL, 4: 452–60.
 - 7 See George L. Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 7–8, 34–35, 115.
 - 8 Sandrine Ferré, *L'Édition au Canada atlantique: Le défi de publier une région* (Paris: Collection des thèses du Centre d'Études canadiennes de l'Université de Paris III – Sorbonne Nouvelle, no. 5, 1999).

article in the *History of the Book in Canada*, treatment of the subject is sporadic, and understandably so, given the sheer volume of material under discussion for the national scene.

Probably the most learned person ever on the subject of Newfoundland printing history was Dr George Story, who died in 1994 at the age of 66. Story was trained at Oxford in the New Bibliography and was an aggressive and serious collector (among other things, nineteenth-century British book sale catalogues). Story had also written on the history of printing and of book collecting (for instance, a delightful article on Richard Heber, the early nineteenth-century British bibliomaniac⁹). He had, together with his co-editors William Kirwin and J.D.A. Widdowson of the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, examined just about every scrap ever printed in Newfoundland and Labrador up to about 1989 (the *DNE* appeared in 1982, revised edition 1990). A couple of years before his death, I mentioned to him the possibility of writing on the history of the book in this province. He was quite skeptical and suggested there might be enough out there for an article, or maybe, as he put it, “a very slim volume.” Unfortunately George is not around to guide subsequent researchers, but his ghost is warning us not to assume too much. There is a great deal of material that could be used towards a still-to-be-written history of print – the folklorists have already done much with the nexus of orality and print – but for the book as a medium, there is very little.

We tend, for whatever reasons, to privilege the book as a communicative medium, to endow it with a prestige. And it does seem that as a medium for meditation on and sustained experience of the Written, the book is exceptional. Nevertheless, the book must be seen as part of a continuum of communication. The history of the book in Newfoundland really makes that plain. There is much evidence for a history of reading and writing. Yet the book, with the possible exception of the Bible in Protestant communities, was not at the centre of much of the cultural life, but at the margin.

9 G.M. Story, “Heber the Magnificent: A Portrait of a Bibliophile,” *Bulletin of the Humanities Association of Canada* 32 (1961): 6–15.

The First Period – Heterogeneous Cultural Sphere

In the logbook of the HMS *Pegasus*, for the year 1786, there is a watercolour¹⁰ that depicts the seven islands in the harbour of Placentia, in the foreground a boat manned by four oarsmen, and in the distance two sea-going vessels. On the hillside, overlooking the well-treed islands of this harbour are seated two figures. One is sketching the scene, and the other is reading. The man's book from its size is an octavo or small quarto, and the reader holds it up about 30 cm from his face, clearly concentrating on the text. The outdoors is seen as a place in which reading – real reading – can be done. There is the possibility of a focused leisure, even in the unpopulated landscape of the New World.

We know that this book in this picture was not printed in Newfoundland, for printing did not begin in the country until 1807. The book was imported from England. And in this way, it is typical of all books in Newfoundland until a later time. From the late sixteenth century onwards, there were a range of visitors and colonists. Some of them brought books. But most, it must be emphasized, whether they came in the early years, before continuous settlement, or as part of the first hesitant plantations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or even later, were poor, working-class, and probably illiterate or barely literate (the vexed term “literate” defined here as “unable to read books”), despite their great skills for living in the New World. Thus, Laurence Coughlan in 1776: “I have known a Man, who could not read a Letter in a Book, go into the Wood, and cut down Timber, bring the same with the Help of a Servant, and build a Boat, rig it, and afterwards go out to Sea with the same Boat.”¹¹

Some few would have known how to read, but the reading, especially Protestant reading, would have been limited to the Bible or the reading of simple texts. Most of the highly fluctuating population of just a few thousand¹² was temporary, and most of these people were

10 PAC/C2522; Peter Neary and Patrick O’Flaherty, *Part of the Main: An Illustrated History of Newfoundland and Labrador* (St John’s: Breakwater Books, 1983), 48.

11 Laurence Coughlan, *An Account of the Work of God in Newfoundland, North-America, in a Series of Letters, to which are Prefixed a Few Choice Experiences; Some of Which were Taken from the Lips of Persons, Who Died Triumphantly in the Faith ...* (London: W. Gilbert, 1776), 19, <http://www.mun.ca/rels/meth/texts/lc.html>, accessed 14 July 2010. Hereafter cited in text.

12 Keith Matthews, *Lectures on the History of Newfoundland 1500–1830* (St John’s: Breakwater Books, 1988), 84; see also W. Gordon Handcock, *So Longe as There*

indentured or fisheries servants and working-men, brought over by a small number of committed planters. Only a minority of the settlers were educated. They would have brought with them the books for reading on hillsides.

The first book of poetry known to have been written in Newfoundland and, for that matter, what is now Canada, is Robert Hayman's *Quodlibets* (1628), written while Hayman was governor of the colony in Harbour Grace.¹³ Hayman would have had at least one book with him when he arrived – John Owen's *Epigrammata*, for the second half of Hayman's book is a translation of Owen's neo-Latin epigrams. So books for amusement – and one should remember that other bags packed just before travel might contain some choices equally as odd as Hayman's copy of Owen's popular volume of Latin verse.

William Vaughan's *Newlanders Cure* (1630) and other books pretended to offer advice to potential settlers, especially regarding medicine or practical aspects of building. No matter that Vaughan himself never came to the New-found-land. An educated reader would take comfort in such books, even if many of the cures are doubtful. Some of the other books from the early seventeenth century – such as the books by Whitbourne, who had actually been here, and the anonymous T.C. in Dublin (1623), who hadn't – are similarly an odd mix of fact and fiction. In his *Discourse* (1620) Whitbourne gives accurate depictions of local flora and fauna – and then describes the mermaid he saw in St John's harbour. One must remember that books written about Newfoundland in the early seventeenth century are not about Newfoundland as such – they are about the need in Britain to raise capital and stimulate investors in the project of colonization. But I would argue that the advice contained within them, however unrelated to the experience on arrival, must be counted as part of a general history of the book in Newfoundland, if only because there is a constant reference back to these texts, especially by the twentieth century, as providing a shaping mythology of discovery and colonization. They show that in the European culture one of the responses to new experiences was to place these in a book.

Comes Noe Women: Origins of English Settlement in Newfoundland (St John's: Breakwater Books, 1989).

13 William Barker, "Hayman, Robert," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>.

Yet the founding written culture was primarily commercial and bureaucratic. The earliest documents to do with Newfoundland are mostly all manuscript materials – ships’ logs and rosters, maps, commercial paper, ledgers, various land grants and commissions, and the like (the kind of material in Colonial Office 194 [Newfoundland]). None of this voluminous material moved into print.

It was only with permanent settlement and a growth in population in the later mid-eighteenth century that a culture of the book begins to find a foothold in the life of the inhabitants. Education and religion, not to be separated, were the prime motivators. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts sent out a number of ministers in certain areas of the island. Laurence Coughlan and William Thoresby are two significant figures. Both wrote memoirs of their work (*An Account of the Work of God* [1776] and *A Narrative of God’s Love* [1799], respectively). In Coughlan’s memoir of his few years in Carbonear and Harbour Grace from 1766 to 1773, it is clear that there were readers of Scripture. John and Jane Noseworthy, for instance, fell under the spell of Coughlan, and John says, “When I first heard you preach, I went and searched the Scriptures, to find if these Things were so; and I found, that your Preaching and the Word of God agreed ...” (87). But the interesting thing about this testimony is that it had to be written down by someone else, because apparently John Noseworthy did not write (87, 94). Coughlan’s book was published in London several years after his controversial departure. It includes at the end a letter from a former parishioner, a woman with the initials D.O.:

Dear Sir, remember my kind Love to all my Brethren unknown; tell them, that I am poor, and beg them to send me over one Book for my daily Use. I have three of my little Children still with me. I am ashamed, that I have Nothing more to send, but please to accept of my little Fish and Berries, which I am sure you will. I remain, Your unworthy Child in the Lord,

D— O—

P.S. Sir, I thank you for the good Books you sent us. (168)

When one notes on the title page that Coughlan’s book was to be “Sold at Cumberland-Street Chapel” (A1r), Coughlan’s new parish, the cynic wonders if this pathetic request for books has not been especially written for the London readers and Coughlan’s own fundraising, and may not reflect the actual needs of D.O. and the others back in Harbour Grace or Carbonear.

Reading, so important to the Protestant faith, was brought to the Labrador coast by the Moravians at a slightly later time. In his *Account of the Manner in Which the Protestant Church of the Unitas Fratrum or United Brethren Preach the Gospel*, the Reverend August Gottlieb Spangenberg notes, "The brethren likewise take pains to make the heathen acquainted with the holy scriptures," following the old tradition of the church that "an ignorant heathen be first taught to read, and afterwards instructed in all the points of Christian doctrine."¹⁴ They introduce the congregation to passages in the Scriptures in the oral homilies, and by that way draw them into the literate culture. This is the same condition of literacy via orality that is very old in the European tradition, and is described in Natalie Davis's well-known article "Printing and the People," where she shows how the illiterate in sixteenth-century France would have been made familiar with the written culture through oral reading.¹⁵ The Moravians also taught reading to children and even to adults, but always with one aim in mind – "that they may learn to read the holy scriptures."¹⁶

In our first period book reading in Newfoundland was oriented mainly to religious practice. This was to change with the rise of settled habitation and the rise of a middle class at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Second Period – The Homogeneous Cultural Sphere

In the period shortly after 1800, Newfoundland was now a place with a settled and growing population. For most of the inhabitants, however, it was a grim life. There was an increasing difference in prosperity between the small outports and the larger centres, such as St John's, Placentia, Harbour Grace, or even Trinity. Over the next decades, with the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, there was a sudden shift in prosperity, as Newfoundland became a principal supplier of fish to

14 Rev. August Gottlieb Spangenberg, *An Account of the Manner in Which the Protestant Church of the Unitas Fratrum or United Brethren Preach the Gospel and carry on their Missions among the Heathen*. [Translated from the German.] (London: H. Trapp, for the Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, 1788), 81, 74, <http://www.ucc.mun.ca/~rollman>.

15 Natalie Zemon Davis, "Printing and the People," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 189–226.

16 Spangenberg, *Protestant Church of the Unitas Fratrum*, 81.

much of Europe. Moreover, there was the development of the seal hunt. The year-round population grew swiftly to 40,000.¹⁷ With the growth of a middle class, there was also a development in education, literary societies, and the like. With these changes, the story becomes much more complicated, because it is no longer the story of individuals, but of groups too. The rest of the century shows an increasingly established and growing population. St John's is a small but busy capital; some of the other towns maintain their prosperity; outside of the main centres, however, the local settlements are not well off, though there are schools founded through local charity or by religious groups.¹⁸ The literacy rate grows substantially during the century, though it never gets substantially over 50 per cent,¹⁹ and the completion rate for schools is extremely low. The pressure is always there that family members contribute to the work in the fishing economy.

The first printing in St John's was undertaken by John Ryan.²⁰ By then the city was established as the capital, and the business of government had for some time required the appointment of a King's Printer. Ryan, who had been King's Printer in New Brunswick, was given the job. *The Royal Gazette* was first printed on 27 August 1807. Though there were attempts to discourage other printing, a second newspaper, *The Newfoundland Mercantile Journal*, began publishing in 1814. Soon other newspapers started up operation – e.g., *The Public Ledger and Newfoundland General Advertiser* (1820), *The Newfoundlander* (1827), *The Newfoundland Patriot* (1833). And by 1830 there were also papers in Harbour Grace and Carbonear, two flourishing centres in Conception Bay.²¹

17 Matthews, *Lectures on the History of Newfoundland*, 145.

18 See for instance Anthony Hamilton's 1827 report, *Account of the State of Schools*.

19 George Corbett, "Literacy," in *ENL*, 3: 316–19.

20 E.J. Devereux, "Early Printing in Newfoundland," *Dalhousie Review* 43 (1960): 57–66. Recent archaeological excavation has uncovered type from the *Royal Gazette*: Gerald Penney, "'Under the Street': Archaeology and the Harbour Interceptor Sewer Project: An Illustrated Talk Delivered at The Rooms, 24 February 2010"; see slide 31 from online presentation, <http://www.thetelegram.com/documents/Telegram/UndertheStreetsofStJohns2010.pdf>. For important context and detailed description of early print, see Patricia Fleming, *Atlantic Canadian Imprints: A Bibliography 1801–1820* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 47ff.

21 For all of these papers, see Suzanne Ellison, *Historical Directory of Newfoundland and Labrador Newspapers 1807–1987* (St John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland Library, 1988).

Where there are newspapers, there is also an interest in books and other printed matter. The newspapers themselves offer evidence of this interest. One early example, *The Star and Conception Bay Journal*, was published by D.E. Gilmour. In issues from 1834, we see advertisements of school books for sale ("Murray's Grammar, Guy's Orthographical Exercises, Entick's Dictionary, Carpenter's Spelling"), and in another advertisement, more advanced texts ("... History of Greece, History of Rome, Chemistry, Latin Grammar, Navigation, The Charter House [*sic*] Latin Grammar, School Prize Books (handsomely bound), Sturm's Reflections of the Works of God ..."). All this was for sale at the office of the newspaper itself. In another ad, immediately nearby, we read that the Carbonear Academy, run by Mr Gilmour will soon open. And just below, "Mrs. Gilmour begs to intimate to her friends and the public that her Seminary for YOUNG LADIES, will re-open, after the Christmas Recess, on Monday, January 13, 1834." Apparently, the Gilmours were, all at once, booksellers, stationers, newspaper publishers, and school teachers (the paper was however taken over by John Thomas Burton early on). The books they offer for sale do not seem to go beyond those necessary for school teaching.

But of even more interest is a public announcement in the same newspaper, dated Carbonear, 1 January 1834: "The Gentlemen who have subscribed to the establishment of a PUBLIC READING ROOM, in Carbonear, are requested to attend at the House of Mr. GAMBLE, on SATURDAY Evening next, at 7 o'Clock." This very early public library is the association described in his journal by Philip Henry Gosse (father of the well-known Victorian writer Edmund Gosse).²² Gosse lived in Carbonear from 1827 to 1835 as a clerk to a fish merchant. He describes in considerable detail the reading he did at the time (novels of Walter Scott, books of natural philosophy, and so on). The small library is clearly enough of a going concern that another announcement of March 10 requests the return of the first volume of the *Scottish Chiefs* to the Carbonear Book Society, "to which Society the BOOK belongs." Libraries were established in a number of communities about this time. In the early nineteenth century there are now societies and activities organized around the book as a cultural object.

22 Philip Henry Gosse, "Philip Henry Gosse's Account of his Years in Newfoundland, 1827-35," ed. Ronald Rompkey, *Newfoundland Studies* 6, no. 2 (1990): 210-66.

The largest and most active of these organizations appears to have been the Athenaeum in St John's. The movement to establish a cultural club, with library and public reading room, was found all over the English-speaking world in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Louise Whiteway's 1971 article in *The Dalhousie Review* gives a valuable broad sketch of the movement and many particulars of the Athenaeum in St John's (though, frustratingly, this article has no footnotes or other references).²³ Briefly, after a false start in 1851, the organization was established ten years later in 1861, fairly late for a foundation of this kind (the Boston Athenaeum was founded in 1807; the Halifax Athenaeum in 1834; the Toronto Athenaeum in 1843). Usually the Athenaeum was a gentlemen's club. The St John's Athenaeum was founded by R.J. Pinsent, Robert Kent, Daniel Prowse, the Reverend Moses Harvey, Adam Scott, Thomas McConnan (a bookseller), James Seaton, John Bowring, and others. Some of these names, especially Pinsent, Prowse, Bowring, and Harvey, are well known in Newfoundland political and cultural history. The drive behind the society had a patriotic dimension. One of the earliest lectures by the newspaper editor J.T. Burton was "Newfoundland As it Is and As it Might Be," reprinted in his *Telegraph* on 18 May 1862.

The Athenaeum grew out of earlier institutions. As early as 1810 there is reference to a library in St John's.²⁴ By 1827 the St John's Library Society was founded, which in 1842 became the St John's Reading Room and Library. On 9 June 1846 there was a great fire in St John's, which destroyed the Mechanics Hall, the Reading Room and Library, and McMurdo's Circulating Library.²⁵ Apparently a number of these institutions regrouped, and by 1849 the Reading Room and Library had absorbed a Mechanics' Institute founded some time earlier than 1849.²⁶ But it did not take in the Young Men's Literary and Scientific Institute, which Moses Harvey had started just a few years before in 1858. The Athenaeum managed to raise the funds for a building on Duckworth Street – this held the Institute, the Library and Reading Room, and an auditorium for a thousand. Alexander Pindikowsky, a Polish refugee who as part of a jail term

23 Louise Whiteway, "The Athenaeum Movement: St John's Athenaeum (1861–1898)," *Dalhousie Review* 50 (1970–71): 534–49.

24 *Royal Gazette*, 15 November 1810.

25 *Royal Gazette*, 15 June 1846; Colonial Office Papers series 194 Nfld 125, fol 297v; reference from John Fitzgerald.

26 Ruth Konrad, "Libraries," in *ENL*, 3: 289–94. Some of this contradictory history may need to be re-examined.

was required to paint the ceiling in the old House of Assembly, and is still known today for this unexpectedly grand work, also painted the ceiling of the Athenaeum auditorium. The Library had about 2,500 books (the St John's Library Society had about 2,400 in 1855). By 1891, the library had grown to "over 6000 well-selected volumes of History, Science, Art, Travel, Fiction, General Literature and Books of Reference."²⁷

There is extant a *Catalogue of Books in the Athenaeum Library* (with constitution and bylaws prefixed)²⁸ published in 1876 by the *Morning Chronicle*; it serves as an excellent guide to the reading tastes of the time. The books are to be chosen by members, though "All books of an immoral character or infidel tendency shall be excluded. The Committee in all cases to decide, and without appeal" (iv). The books were organized by subject, but each book was given an accession number, with the numbers ranging from 1 (Nicolas's *Chronology of History*) up to 4406–7 (John Morley's *Life of Rousseau*), though some numbers in the sequence appear to be missing. The emphasis was on history, biography, voyages and travel, and novels, tales, and romances (writers such as G.P.R. James and Mrs Gore mixed in with Trollope, Dickens, and Melville).

In 1892 there was another great downtown fire, and the Athenaeum was destroyed. But the organization was intact and they rebuilt, though on not so nearly grand a scale. A thousand volumes were gathered quickly by donation, and just a few years later, there were 1,800 volumes in the library. But the Athenaeum was not to last. The organization was founded on public lectures (a number were published in pamphlet form²⁹), and the fashion for these seems to have fallen off by the 1890s. Other organizations supplied the public with different kinds of cultural activities. The Athenaeum shut down in 1898. Though founded as a kind of general cultural institution, in

²⁷ Whiteway, "Athenaeum Movement," 546.

²⁸ A copy is in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

²⁹ See, for instance, Henry Hunt Stabb, *Aspects of Life, European and Colonial: A Lecture Delivered before the St John's Athenaeum, March 6, 1865* (St John's: J.W. M'Coubrey, 1865) (O'Dea 706); Alexander Murray, *The Economic Value of a Geological Survey, Being a Popular Lecture Before the Athenaeum of St. John's, Newfoundland, Delivered the 15th February, 1869* (Montreal: John Tovell, 1869); Alexander Murray, *Roads: A Popular Lecture Delivered Before the Athenaeum Institute on March 26, 1877* (St John's: Robert Winton, 1877); or Moses Harvey, *This Newfoundland of Ours* (St John's: F.W. Bowden, 1878). All were published locally, though Murray (1869) was printed in Montreal.

which lectures, music, scientific inquiry as well as books all played a part, it also had great importance as a library, as an institution organized around the book. After the Athenaeum, there was to be no public library in St John's until 1936.

The Athenaeum was one kind of literary institution of the time. In St John's there were scores of societies, many of which promoted culture and reading, such as the St John's Literary Society and Bible Class Library (book list issued 1890, with 286 volumes, with a mix of the morally uplifting to the morally entertaining to the morally instructive – *John Knox and his Times*, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, and *Worship of Bacchus*) and the Ladies' Reading Room and Current Events Club, started c. 1898 (later the Old Colony Club). There were also library and other organizations for reading in communities around the country, especially in the more prosperous area of Carbonear and Harbour Grace. One of these, an odd one, is the Heart's Content Literary Society. Many of the books for this society are still in a collection in Heart's Content, and have been listed by Sandra Hannaford.³⁰ What makes the Society odd is that it was established as a library for the families who had earlier been connected with the trans-Atlantic cable, which started up as a permanent installation in 1866. The facilities for the workers at the station had been built in 1873, and by 1884 the local minister, Rev. Henry Lewis, mentioned "a literary institute and also a hall for concerts and other entertainments, with a well furnished library."³¹ In fact, the locals were not allowed to use many of the facilities of the station, not even the Literary Society. The books, many of which have tickets from Gilbert and Fields, a London bookseller, and only one of which came from Samuel Garland, the St John's bookseller, provide an interesting glimpse into light reading from about 1890–1920: Frances Hodgson Burnett (*Secret Garden*), Marie Corelli, J.S. Fletcher, Rider Haggard, William LeQueux, Jack London, Talbot Baines Reed, Edgar Wallace,

30 Sandra Hannaford (now Sandra Tulk), Computer listing of books in the Heart's Content Literary Society Library (St John's, [1998]). Author's copy.

31 *Evening Mercury*, July–December 1884; article in the Heart's Content Community File, Centre for Newfoundland Studies. Physicians hired for the cable company in Heart's Content also developed their own small library that was passed down until donated to the Historical Collection Reading Room, Health Sciences Library at Memorial University: J.K. Crellin, "Medical Books: For Information or Learning? Reflections on the Books of Three Newfoundland Physicians, c. 1860 to c. 1970," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 12 (1995): 339–50.

Florence Warden, and scores of other names, many forgotten but in their time popular novelists.

A closely related phenomenon is the private collector who has undertaken to build a library. The record for many of these collections is lost (e.g., Bishop Michael Anthony Fleming's library, which he lost in the fire of 1846³²). But some records survive. A number of these collections laid the basis for public collections on the death of the collector. We may cite as specific examples for an earlier period Bishop John Thomas Mullock (d. 1869), much of whose library laid the basis for the Episcopal Library in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St John's, and towards the end of the period W.G. Gosling (d. 1930), upon whose books was formed the Reference collection of the Provincial Library. This phenomenon is carried on well into this century: J.R. Smallwood was a passionate collector, with some 18,000 volumes in his library;³³ many of his books have moved to the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University.

Mullock's library is fascinating.³⁴ He signed his books and often dated them. Though there is no record of any purchases during his early years at a Franciscan seminary in Spain, by the time he returned to Ireland for 14 years as a parish priest he had begun to purchase books in earnest. The earliest books are dated by him 1833. He continued to buy books even after his arrival in St John's in 1848. The largest number of dated purchases are in 1850, the year he was installed as Bishop of St John's. About 290 separate works are still extant, some of them however in many volumes. Mullock's sets of the *Patrologia Latina* and *Patrologia Graeca* run to hundreds of volumes.³⁵ Mullock was an eclectic and broad-minded collector who had almost as many books in each of French, Spanish, and Latin as in English. Perhaps the most interesting feature is the surprising breadth of Mullock's reading: in addition to the obvious and not so obvious works of theology, there are books by Byron, Machiavelli,

32 Raymond J. Lahey, "Fleming, Michael Anthony," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online / Dictionnaire biographique du Canada en ligne*, <http://www.biographi.ca/>, accessed 24 May 2010.

33 Robert W. Pitt, "A Politician and His Hobby," in *"The Book Disease": Atlantic Provinces Book Collectors*, ed. Eric L. Swanick (Halifax: Dalhousie University School of Library and Information Studies, 1996), 93–98.

34 John Gushue, "The Personal Library of John Thomas Mullock, Bishop of Newfoundland: An Incomplete Short-Title List" (typescript, St John's, 1988). Personal copy of W. Barker.

35 These books, unlike all the others, are now in the Library of Memorial University and are not included in Gushue's list.

Pierre Bayle, and other well-known heretics. Indeed, the oldest book seems to be an edition of the Paraphrase of Mark by Erasmus – hardly normal fare for a Catholic bishop; though the copy lacks the title page, the print seems pretty clearly that of Basel or some other Northern town, c. 1520–1530, and there are some 16 other books dating from later in the same century. When one looks through these books, one can see the impulse for liberal education that drove Mullock to found St Bonaventure's College, for a long time the flagship Catholic boys' school in Newfoundland.

Another interesting collector, though of a later period, was W.G. Gosling, a one-time mayor of St John's, a man extremely active from the 1890s in both cultural and political life. In 1935 a Public Libraries Act was finally passed;³⁶ the first public collection was the Gosling Memorial Library. Gosling's widow donated 1,800 volumes to lay the basis for this new library.³⁷ Much of the Gosling donation is now in the Reference Library in the Arts and Culture Centre in St John's. It shows literary interests typical of his time, but with special concentration in works on Newfoundland and Labrador, and a few books on books, including Dibdin's *Bibliomania* and Burton's *The Book Hunter*. Gosling was an important figure for setting a standard for private collecting. There were other collectors before him: one would like to know the contents of the libraries of P.K. Devine, Moses Harvey, Michael J. Howley, and D.W. Prowse, and other late-nineteenth-century writers. Did their books end up in public collections too? The relation between private collector and public institution is long-standing in Newfoundland as in other places.

Collectors must have had a difficult time of it in St John's. Mullock's books were all shipped from overseas or purchased on trips abroad.³⁸ Gosling in later years did however buy some of his books locally.

36 The effort to create such an institution had been underway for 30 years; see Konrad, "Libraries."

37 The works are catalogued in an Accession List, now in the Provincial Library; Melvin Baker and G.M. Story, "Book Collectors in Newfoundland: The Case of W.G. Gosling," in *"The Book Disease": Atlantic Provinces Book Collectors*, 87.

38 Mullock's personal records were destroyed at his death, according to R. Howley; see Rev. R. Howley, "Irish Missionary Types – II. The Right Rev. Dr. Mullock, O.S.F.," *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* [Dublin] ser. 3, 10 (January 1889): 12–26.

There was a small but thriving book business in St John's and the immediate area. The evidence for this trade is given in the newspaper advertisements for the time, and often the newspaper publisher ran a bookstore and stationery shop as well. We have already noted the information in the 1834 issues of *The Star and Conception Bay Journal*. John and Bernard Duffy published the short-lived *Record* between 1861 and 1862.³⁹ They also published, via the *Record*, Bishop Mullock's sermon on the death of George Furey during the election of 1861. Duffy's (self-described as "The most extensive book establishment in Newfoundland") was active in the late 1850s, with such entertaining ads as "Do, Mamma, please buy me the Mother's Keepsake for 1859: a Series of moral and amusing tales. It is such a pretty Book. I have seen it in Mr. DUFFY'S windows. Oh! Mamma, do, come and see all the handsome Books he has got for CHRISTMAS PRESENTS!"⁴⁰

Most booksellers sold a range of goods. The venerable St John's firm of Dicks and Company, for instance, began when Robert Dicks took over the stationer's business of Alexander McIver, in 1840; the family only began to sell books in 1864, and continued their business to the end of the next century "at the Sign of the Book" at different Water Street addresses.⁴¹ The company survives today by having reverted to its original business as a stationery distributor. There were other businesses, such as the London Bookstore of James Joseph Graham which opened in 1847, with books brought in via the usual shipping trade.⁴² The largest of these arrived much later when Samuel Garland started his St John's business in 1888; he kept it going at a number of different locations until the 1920s.⁴³

Information about the bookstores and what they had to offer is abundant in the newspapers for the period. A number of years ago, Sandra Hannaford prepared an undergraduate honours essay surveying the book advertisements in the *Evening Telegram* for just one year, 1890.⁴⁴ Local booksellers, principally at that time Samuel

39 Ellison, *Historical Directory*.

40 Advertisement in *The Newfoundlander*, 23 December 1858.

41 See Bert Riggs, "At the Sign of the Book: Dicks and Company of St John's," in *History of the Book in Canada, Volume Two: 1840–1918*, ed. Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming, and Fiona A. Black (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 226–29.

42 *Public Ledger*, 7 December 1847, p. 3.

43 Ellen M. Dinn, "Garland, Samuel," in *ENL*, 2: 482.

44 Sandra Hannaford (now Sandra Tulk), "An Analysis of Books Offered for Sale in 1890, as Recorded in *The Evening Telegram*, St. John's, Newfoundland" (Honours

Garland and Dicks and Company, regularly listed recent books that had come into their stores. Just for 1890, for this one St John's newspaper, there are hundreds of books named; carefully analyzed, they provide an index of the reading interests of the time. There are of course a few dangers in using this kind of data: the publishers are trying to sell books and they may be advertising to dump overstock. But it is likely that some kind of market condition would have required them to attend to the interests of consumers. The list for 1890 includes a great deal of popular fiction, but even more non-fiction. The leading book for the year was Henry Stanley's account of his meeting with Livingstone in Africa – a book whose interest would have been generated by American and British publishers. The significance of the book was also promoted in the news section of the paper.

The history of the book dealers and stationers of St John's and the major outports may never be written. There were a number of companies but their records have not survived. In part the lack of materials may be due to the usual disinterest in businesses to retain archives, but more significant may be the major fires in St John's (1817, 1846, 1892). Where they obtained their books is not known, though customs records list general book imports in weight and value, and sometimes give origins.

In the preceding commentary the importance of newspapers as a source for book history has been noted. Newspapers are also significant because of a relationship that no longer really exists with books: they often serialized longer books and provided a venue for essays, poems, and other literary material that were later gathered into a book. The newspapers were the testing grounds for fledgling writers. And they were also the place where pieces by well-established writers were published. In one issue of a newspaper, one might find a local poet and, two columns over, a short poem, lifted from an English or American poet, even someone quite famous like Tennyson or Browning. The relationship between books and newspapers goes further: the newspaper firm in Newfoundland also served as the printer and publisher of most nineteenth and early-twentieth-century books. The relationship is found as early as 1851, with the publication of the first book of poetry actually printed in Newfoundland, George Webber's *The Last of the Aborigines: A Poem Founded upon*

thesis, Department of English, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1990). Copies in possession of W. Barker and S. Hannaford.

Facts. In Four Cantos,⁴⁵ which came from the office of *The Morning Post*, the first daily to be published in Newfoundland. The literary importance of the approximately 85 different newspapers from 1832 to 1900 has never been properly explored, though the folklorists have carefully combed these publications for any evidence for oral material (ballads and the like) in printed form, and they have been thoroughly surveyed for evidence of the political life by historians.⁴⁶ The newspaper then as now had the reviewing function, but as a source of new literary and even scientific publication, the newspaper was of paramount importance. To understand book publishing in Newfoundland, one must also first understand the operation of the newspaper, its machinery, its personnel and organization, its political and religious affiliations, its cultural affiliations, and how the office of the newspaper fits into the social relations of the time.

There are few detailed accounts of the work of those producing the newspapers. One that stands out is W.H. Goodland's "Thirty Years of Journalism" published in the St John's *Trade Review* in January of 1906. Subtitled "Evolution of the Printing Office – The Newspapers and Printing Business of a Quarter Century Ago, Compared with these of the Present Day," Goodland claims that less than 30 years earlier "we had no power presses in Newfoundland. The *Morning Chronicle* was the only rotary, and it was hand driven, a Hoe Railway press, self-inking, two operators." The situation evolved slowly, with new machinery and organization (including the founding of the St John's Typographical Union in 1883). The fire of 1892 brought in new presses in a number of establishments. The biggest improvement was the introduction of the Cox Duplex Perfecting Press at the *Herald*, and a Simplex stereo printing machine at the *Telegram*. At the *Daily News* a Duplex machine "capable of printing 6,000 complete four, six, or eight-page papers per hours has been installed in the last few months [i.e., late 1885]." Goodland, who was one of the proprietors of Gray and Goodland, also claimed that "In addition to our Newfoundland job-printing (which has received flattering criticism both in England, Canada, and United States) ruling, box-making, book-binding and rubber stamp making are now done in the city, and although we are

45 George Webber, *The Last of the Aborigines. A Poem Founded on Facts. In Four Cantos* (St John's: Printed at the Office of the Morning Post, 1851). One copy, New York Public Library (O'Dea 560).

46 The most recent retrospective survey is Maudie Whelan, "The Newspaper Press in Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland: Politics, Religion, and Personal Journalism" (PhD diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2002).

so much handicapped by our 'splendid isolation,' visitors from abroad will find here an enterprising colony of the 'art preservative' – one of the surest indications of a spirit of progress amongst a people."⁴⁷

Newspaper presses also helped to produce another absolutely crucial source of evidence for the literary life in the country from 1880 onwards, namely the Christmas annuals. These were analyzed and catalogued by Peter Churchill and Jeff Monk in 1989.⁴⁸ Like the newspapers, they were a gathering place for highly heterogeneous material – short historical essays, reminiscences, stories, poems, dialect sketches, photography, drawing, accounts of dramatic productions, and so on. The material was clearly a product of genteel classes, and the annuals were clearly differentiated from the more rough and tumble world of the newspaper. They mediate between the timeliness of the newspaper and the timelessness of the book. Yet they are grounded in the literary activity of the community and thus serve as important indexes of creative work and popular taste. *The Newfoundland Quarterly*, founded in 1901, was closely linked with the earlier serial publications. A mix of reviews, reports, fiction, and informed local history, the *Quarterly* is still a significant source for cultural life.⁴⁹

So far, much of what has been considered for book history in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Newfoundland is not quite what one would talk about if one were addressing the topic for London or Boston. Where, one must ask, are the Newfoundland books themselves? Who are the writers? the editors? the publishers? Here we suddenly encounter a remarkable silence. There are, so far as we know, no publishers' records from the nineteenth century. So we must turn to the books themselves. Many locally produced books and pamphlets have been listed in the chronological section of the O'Dea bibliography.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the first separate publications were either broadsheets or pamphlets put out by the

47 W.H. Goodland, "Thirty Years of Journalism," *Trade Review* [St John's] (27 January 1906 [the "Annual"]): 3.

48 Peter Churchill and Jeff Monk, "Newfoundland Christmas Annuals: A Preliminary Index Guide" (typescript, St John's, 1989). Copies available from W. Barker and on deposit, Centre for Newfoundland Studies.

49 The *Quarterly* is indexed in the Newfoundland Periodical Article Bibliography (PAB) project, directed by Joan Ritcey of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies. See also: Harry Cuff et al., *The Newfoundland Quarterly: Its Evolution over an 85-year Period, 1901–1986* (St John's: Harry Cuff Publications, 1985).

King's Printer. This continues throughout the century. Most of the little there was (an average of three or four items a year, sometimes rising to a dozen) consisted of laws, reports of commissions and proceedings, and the like. The other main area of separate publication was sermons. There was virtually no other local publication. The little that is out there is therefore of some interest. There is W.C. St. John's *History*, published in 1835 (O'Dea 422a). We have already noted George Webber's poem, *The Last of the Aborigines*, published in 40 pages in 1851 (O'Dea 560). Cormack's journal was published here in 1856 (O'Dea 358a). Joseph Noad's *Lecture on the Aborigines of Newfoundland, Delivered before the Mechanics Institute, at St John's*, was a typical short pamphlet, reprinted no doubt from the *Newfoundland Patriot* (whose office published it); this came out in 1859 (O'Dea 640). Henry Hunt Stabb's pamphlet *Aspects of Life of 1865* had a similar genesis (O'Dea 706). There were a couple of scientific pamphlets, likewise also probably lectures: T.A. Verkruzen's *Mollusca Dredged and Collected in 1876 in the Neighbourhood of St John's*, 1877 (O'Dea 864), and James P. Howley's *The Origin Derivation and Composition of Soils*, 8 pages published at the office of the *Daily Colonist* in 1889 (O'Dea 999). *The Sporting Notes of Captain W.R. Kennedy, RN*, were published by the Queen's Printer, J.C. Withers (O'Dea 903); these were letters written for the British journal *The Field*; after their republication in St John's in 1881, they again appeared, in 1885, from *Blackwood's* in Edinburgh. This kind of shared publication is also found in Moses Harvey's *Newfoundland As It Is in 1894. A Handbook and Tourists' Guide*; it was co-published in St John's by J.C. Withers, Queen's Printer, and in London by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner in 1894 (O'Dea 1122). The same thing is true of Harvey's *Newfoundland in 1900*, co-published by The South Pub. Co. in New York and S.E. Garland, the bookseller (O'Dea 1231a). There was no proper outlet for works of significant length: D.W. Prowse's still highly readable *History* was published in London by Macmillan in 1895.⁵⁰

Apparently the first novel to attain local publication was Anastasia English's *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*, her first, dated 1899. The extant edition is however a bibliographical curiosity, as it was printed by Manning and Rabbits, whose work is only known from the 1930s. It is also in physical production (font, running heads, rules, drop caps,

50 D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland, from the English, Colonial, and Foreign Records* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1895). It contains an interesting bibliography indicating the author's background reading.

etc.) remarkably similar to the edition of another novel by English, *When the Dumb Speak*, which is “copyright 1938.” Though there is very good evidence to believe that an edition of *Only a Fisherman’s Daughter* did indeed first appear in 1899 (the book is said on the title page to have been “Entered according to the Act of Legislature of Newfoundland, in the year 1899, on behalf of the author, at the Colonial Secretary’s Office”), the extant edition is apparently a later reprint (thus providing an example of the way bibliographical examination of material copies can provide useful information to the literary historian). Two other works by English, *Faithless: A Newfoundland Romance* (1901) and “*The Queen of Fairy Dell*” and *Other Tales* (1912), were published by newspaper firms in St John’s, and thus follow the older production of Newfoundland fiction.⁵¹

During the period 1900–1930, there is a great increase of writing about Newfoundland and Labrador, often from a touristic or frontier adventure point of view (Dillon Wallace, Grenfell, Millais, Mina Hubbard, and so on), but all of this was published in New York and London. Even local writers continued to publish abroad. Like Prowse’s history, W.G. Gosling’s *Labrador* (1910) and *Life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert* (1911) were published in London. Robert Gear MacDonald’s *From the Isle of Avalon* (1908) contains many poems published locally in the Christmas annuals and the newspapers, but it seems that to have the work properly “finished,” publication must be sought abroad. One subject that remained local, however, was the songbook – there are collections by Johnny Burke, James Murphy, and Gerald S. Doyle (four times reprinted⁵²) that attest to a local interest in local culture – the kind of thing that is also treated by P.K. Devine and others in articles in the annuals and the newspapers.⁵³

51 See Iona Bulgin, “‘Trials and Triumphs’: The Heroine in Selected Novels of Anastasia English” (MA thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1994).

52 Gerald S. Doyle, *Old-time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland* (St John’s: [Manning and Rabbits], 1927) was three times republished up to 1966 (O’Dea 1878a–d); the fifth reprinting, published in 1978, was still available for sale within the past few years. In 2008, it was reprinted as *A Facsimile Reprint of the 1940 Edition*, With a New Introduction by Anna Kearney Guigné (St. John’s: Folklore and Language Publications, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2008).

53 For background, see Neil V. Rosenberg, “The Gerald S. Doyle Songsters and the Politics of Newfoundland Folksong,” *Canadian Folklore canadien* 13, no. 1 (1991): 45–57. P.K. Devine (Doyle’s cousin) published many short pieces in the Christmas annuals; some of his work was assembled in *Devine’s Folk Lore of*

In Newfoundland and Labrador, there was no sustained publishing industry for books, though there was publishing, mostly of government tracts, reports, commissions, and pamphlets. Some writers, such as James P. Howley, the naturalist, were able to publish works locally, though there were few books (his *Geography of Newfoundland. For the Use of Schools* was published by Edward Stanford in London in 1877). Now and then some titles were locally published, such as the various directories by the King's Printers. This situation stands until some time after Confederation. The interesting question is how the publishers and printers learned to produce books, which require a different technology, financing, and system of distribution than a newspaper. A thorough bibliographical examination of copies of books (paper, type, binding, and layout) would give information to answer in part some of these questions (and perhaps raise further questions, as with the case of Anastasia English's first novel).

Publishing history for this middle period has yet to be examined, even in a preliminary way. Though the literacy rate has been estimated as 35 per cent in the early nineteenth century, and over 70 per cent about 1900 – in other words, fairly low – there were growing numbers of schools, requiring regular supplies of textbooks.⁵⁴ The schools were all denominational (despite attempts in the 1830s for a non-denominational schooling, the Education Acts of 1874 and 1876 settled the direction for the education system), and some denominations, like the Catholics and Methodists, got an early start, though others, like the Anglicans, were slower (as Bishop Feild asked in 1866, "Of our Schools I might almost ask where are they"⁵⁵).

The textbooks were not produced locally, even though by the end of the century there would have been active sales in certain texts, though apparently not enough to sustain a local business. Importing books such as the Royal Readers (published by Thomas Nelson in Britain from the 1870s until the early twentieth century) was easier. This even applies to books on local history for schools: Moses Harvey wrote a textbook *Short History of Newfoundland* (1885, 1890,

Newfoundland in Old Words, Phrases, and Expressions, Their Origin and Meaning (St John's: Robinson Printers, 1937; rpt. St John's: Folklore and Language Publications, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1997).

54 David Alexander, "Literacy and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland," *Acadiensis* 10, no. 1 (1980): 3–34; for the figures, see graph, "Decline of Illiteracy 1836–1900," on p. 20.

55 Edward Feild, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of Newfoundland, 25 June, 1866* (London: Rivington's, 1867), 21.

1890) (O'Dea 945a, 945b, 945c) – all the editions were published in London. It is only in recent times that textbooks have been locally manufactured. A study of imported textbooks would give useful information for a history of reading and literacy.

The Third Period – Attempts to Define an Autonomous Culture

After Confederation in 1949, the story of the book in Newfoundland becomes far too complex to be presented in this article. A number of main themes have however evolved from the earlier period.

Books continue to be important tokens of nationalism, but now as part of a Canadian nationalism as well as that of Newfoundland and Labrador. The phenomenon is described by Sandrine Ferré for the Atlantic region. The real liftoff occurred around 1967, the anniversary of Canadian Confederation. Federal and provincial governments across Canada began around this time to supply funds to publishers as part of a drive to encourage a specifically Canadian cultural life at a national and local level. This development had an important impact in Newfoundland and Labrador. Memorial University's Institute for Social and Economic Research, founded in 1961, was an early beneficiary of the mandate to publish books, and today ISER is a small though still active house. Though the university, the school system, and the library system were now well established, there was a dramatic push to support, by aggressive funding, publication of local materials. Breakwater Books, started by Clyde Rose, along with a community of writers including Al Pittman and Tom Dawe, got its start in 1973 to produce literary and educational materials. Jespersen Press, which began in 1969 under Ivan Jespersen, a United Church minister originally from Saskatchewan who was located in Fogo, developed into a full-fledged publisher, and moved to St John's (the business ended in 1990, with its stock transferred to Breakwater). Harry Cuff was another publisher who started business about the same time in 1980 (he too has finished with publishing, after having produced some 200 books). Behind these figures there was J.R. Smallwood, not only a formidable collector, but an editor and a publisher too, and a strong force for change. Smallwood's *Book of Newfoundland* (two volumes in 1937, and four more in 1967–75) was a series of patriotic compilations that evolved into the five-volume *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* (1981–94), whose publication by volume three was taken over by Cuff.

Government subsidies to support publication have allowed these publishers and others to operate during recent times. And largely because of this intervention, we see the development of a sustained publishing business in books. Breakwater Books and ISER are now the older firms, but there are more recent enterprises including DRC Publishing (general literary, 1998), Creative Publishers (general publishing, with its literary Killick and Tuckamore imprints, 1983), Flanker Press (general publishing, 1994), and Boulder (general publishing, beginning with a reprint of Prowse's *History* in 2002). And along with these there is a dedicated private press, Marnie Parsons' Running the Goat Books & Broadsides (2000) which produces hand printed limited editions along with some commercial publication. Rattling Books (2003) produces audiobooks of Newfoundland poetry and historical readings. These living enterprises have a strong sense of the heritage and connection to their past and their activities are now being well documented through the work of local scholars and collectors and through the work of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial.

Though the local culture of publishing has flourished, an old trend has also continued. Out-of-province publication was now however no longer in the United States or England, but in Canada. The tendency was and continues for many creative writers to begin with local publication, then to move to publishers on the mainland. Some academic projects do not get a local start. The most iconic cultural-academic project of the post-Confederation period was the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, modelled on the *Oxford English Dictionary* (though more adventurous in its use of collected oral materials), an extraordinary storehouse of local language and cultural history. This work was published by University of Toronto Press in 1982, and returned in a sense to Newfoundland only when it was reprinted by Breakwater in 1994. Nevertheless the local academic publishing scene has attained considerable maturity not only with the scholarly journal *Newfoundland Studies* (est. 1985, now *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*) but even with such privately published works as Patrick O'Flaherty's exceptional narrative history of the province, produced to high academic standards not previously found in many locally published books of popular history.⁵⁶

56 Patrick O'Flaherty, *Old Newfoundland: A History to 1843* (St John's: Long Beach Press, 1999); Patrick O'Flaherty, *Lost Country: The Rise and Fall of Newfoundland, 1843–1933* (St John's: Long Beach Press, 2005).

Government intervention in publishing has been paralleled by a similar intervention in the world of libraries. The extraordinary resources of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University began with Smallwood's naive but profoundly felt desire to collect every interesting scrap to do with his province. That impulse was already alive in the intellectual life of the 1890s, and still persists, now shaped by international professional standards.

The development of what I am calling an autonomous cultural sphere in relation to the book is, then, autonomous only in the sense that there is continuous local publication and that local publication is now a normal thing. External practices are however directing and shaping the local impulse for culture. Publishers and scholars take the tools and techniques found elsewhere and apply them to the local scene. This is a continuing process and is how a local culture is built and sustained. It was apparent in the local intellectual renaissance of the late nineteenth century, with the interest in language, science, history, and geography directed to the local scene.

Conclusion

Thus ends an attempt to describe a tripartite structure in the historical record for the history of the book in Newfoundland and Labrador. This short narrative is not entirely unlike the teleological scheme for the country's history laid out by Moses Harvey in 1878 in *This Newfoundland of Ours*: "The course of Newfoundland history may be divided into three periods – first the chaotic or anarchic period; second, the transitional; and third the period of maturity."⁵⁷ Of course any such scheme is a fiction. But perhaps it can be seen as a useful fiction.

For the three periods that have been outlined, the first is basically closed to us. There may be a few more scraps of information, but what there is cannot be developed into a proper narrative or even series of micro-narratives. I have largely dwelt on the nineteenth century in this account because it has such interesting research possibilities. For this second period a careful reading of the newspapers and serial publications will yield much interesting material for a history of reading and books in Newfoundland and Labrador.

57 Harvey, *This Newfoundland of Ours*, 13.

Obviously the post-Confederation period is the richest period for researchers. Many of the persons involved in the small though developing book trade are still alive and many of the records are still extant. There is an exciting narrative in the rise of a local scene of publishing and writing that completes a direction that has its foundations in the late nineteenth century. Before that time, most people could not read and, even of the ones who did, many were not caught up in a bookish culture. Life was very tough for most inhabitants, and reading was a luxury. Nevertheless, there were in some areas active readers and writers of books, even communities of readers. To some extent, the culture of the book was determined sometimes by what was happening elsewhere (especially London), but there were continuous attempts to create books for a local readership from the late nineteenth century onwards. This process was really well developed by the end of the twentieth century.

Finally, what does it mean to write a history of the book for Newfoundland or even Canada? The political entities to which we grant a history are not stable. Newfoundland was not a consistent entity until the early nineteenth century. And before it was a province, Newfoundland and Labrador was both colony and country; to many the province still has status as a place apart from Canada. Also, it was and is still an agglomeration of disparate communities, strongly aware of difference. As the above account shows, what looks like a history of the book in Newfoundland may become, if one is not careful, a history of the book in St John's.

This is even more true with the nation, or – perhaps we should say – notion of Canada. To pretend that the present political entity is somehow a whole seems strange from the Newfoundland perspective. The history of anything to do with Newfoundland and Labrador culture must be written first from the province's own perspective, then from that of Britain and the United States and Canada, and other trading partners. The *History of the Book in Canada* demonstrates that many features of the book history in Newfoundland and Labrador had parallel developments in the rest of the country. Yet, these developments are not "Canadian" so much as global and can be paralleled in other English-speaking countries. For instance, in the example of the book advertisements in 1890, the publishing interest in Livingstone was created in London, and exported, along with the books, to the colonies. (Even today, even in Canada generally, not just in Newfoundland, one is aware that a local culture of the book is also to a great degree the culture of the book of the United States or Britain.)

Despite these problems in defining the boundaries to the narrative, there is value in describing shared problematics in the history of the book. One example: can we ask to what extent did reading represent leisure or even wasted time in communities burdened by hard labour on farms or in outports? Where did one find the time, the space, the light to read? Was reading a work of solitude, or were texts read aloud? Was there a community around the book? And what happened in smaller communities as the values of high literacy grew to displace the values of physical labour? Such questions, which are very old, are still relevant in many parts of the world, and rural Newfoundland and Labrador was one such place until fairly recently. Such a history is further complicated by the mass media. Television and the Internet both supplement and displace the book, increasingly in those very bookish and somewhat old-fashioned institutions, the high school and the university. There is a history currently in the making. Can a history of the book in Newfoundland, or Canada, make sense of some of these persisting themes, to enlighten our present condition?

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SOMMAIRE

Cet article passe en revue les diverses possibilités de recherche qu'offre l'étude de l'histoire du livre à Terre-Neuve à travers trois périodes distinctes. Une première qui s'étend des plus lointaines années de la colonisation jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle, une autre traversant le XIX^e siècle et la première moitié du XX^e avec la mise en place d'un gouvernement local et enfin la dernière couvrant les décennies postérieures à l'entrée de la province dans la Confédération canadienne. La documentation sur la première période est peu nombreuse contrairement à celle de la deuxième plus abondante, disponible en partie grâce à des journaux et des monographies, tandis qu'on ne compte plus pour la troisième période l'amas d'informations qui attend à être colligé et analysé. Cette étude met l'accent sur la deuxième période tout en soulignant qu'à une époque où la circulation

des livres était de portée nationale voire internationale, on vit à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, à l'instar d'autres régions similaires, des projets locaux s'y implanter et qui durent être pris en compte pour trouver place dans une histoire du livre comme objet culturel.