"THE COMMUNITY IS THE CULTURE":

FESTIVITY, COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND

ETHNICITY AT THE ANTIGONISH HIGHLAND GAMES

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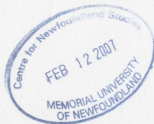
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Abstract

This thesis is an ethnography of the Antigonish Highland Games which have existed since 1863, hosted by the Highland Society in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. An historical perspective contextualizing the province's Scottish immigrations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the phenomenon of Highland Games in general introduces this study. Using the 1999 Games as a performance text, this event is proven a festival as elucidated by Falassi, Stoeltje, Abrahams and Bauman. The Games act as an authentic vehicle to express the community's identity. This identity is: co-operative in spirit ensuring the Games' successful presentation each year, resilient to the annual influx of tourists, and inextricably tied to the area's ethnic past by displaying participants' connection to their Scottish ancestors and history. Authentic expression of ethnicity is an integral part of Antigonish's identity. Antigonish's current ethnicity is read through Stern and Cicala's concept of creative ethnicity which contrasts with invented traditions as discussed by McKay, Trevor-Roper, Hobsbawm and Ranger.

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Chapter 1

The Antigonish Highland Games and the Ethnographic Process

1.0 Introduction

This thesis attempts an ethnography of the Antigonish Highland Games, arguing that it is an authentic expression of claimed community identity, and ethnic identity, for members of the Antigonish Highland Society, the group that presents the Antigonish Highland Games each year in July. In this introduction, I ground my study of the Highland Games by using performance theory and semiotics, provide a synopsis of some source literature which shaped my thoughts on the Highland Games, and offer an explanation of my research techniques. I also include a brief history of my own dance career as a Highland dancer, as well as notes on my role as a folklorist in Antigonish. Transcription techniques are also discussed.

The central question is why has the festival known as the Antigonish Highland Games maintained its continuity for over one hundred and fifty years. In order to explore the event's longevity, I locate the Antigonish Highland Games in their past and present community context. I believe that the Antigonish Highland Games continue to thrive because they provide an outlet for participants to place themselves within the community's history and to lay claim to a Nova Scotian Scottish ethnic identity. This is accomplished in a variety of ways depending on who is involved. For my informants, the Games

may fulfill the desire to compete and participate, the need to feel connected to others in the community or the wish to feel pride in helping such a long-standing event continue.

1.1 Performance Theory, Semiotics and the Antigonish Highland Games

The most important task in the creation of this thesis was selecting the type of framework through which to view all the events of the Antigonish Highland Games. Most obviously, the Antigonish Highland Games are an excellent example of a festival. As I learned more about the nature of festivals, I realized that my other chapter divisions of community identity, and ethnicity, all depended upon the idea of viewing the Antigonish Highland Games as a festival. Beverly J. Stoeltje notes, "festivals reflect the diversity of American traditions, including ethnic celebrations, religious fiestas and festivals connected with region or occupation. Traditions from both the ancient and the more recent past are celebrated, as well as those that fuse the two" ("Festival in America" 239). In other words, festivals are often about the expression of a group identity, whether it be through ethnic affiliation, or a sense of community identity based on a geographic location.

As a Highland dancer, I wanted my topic to include dance, as it has been a constant in my life. I explain how I chose to research the Antigonish Highland Games through my involvement in Highland dance. As a young dancer, I competed at this event for some time. In developing my thesis proposal, my

focus expanded to include the entire experience of the Antigonish Highland Games, and not just the dance competitions. I began to look at the event as a whole rather than just one part. This endeavour has led to my thesis becoming more than simply about Highland dancing. I will argue that the Antigonish Highland Games are an example of an authentic, community driven, ethnic expression of Nova Scotian Scottish culture.

The planning, presentation and occurrence of the Antigonish Highland Games and the performances contained in it each year can be considered a text. Just as anthropologist Clifford Geertz locates and reads the occurrence of the cockfight in Bali (1972), I attempt to read the Antigonish Highland Games as a festival which celebrates the community of today and its links to the past as it celebrates a current ethnic identity which is tied to the Scottish pioneers who came to the area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The 1999 incarnation of the Antigonish Highland Games has become my primary document which I read as one example of festivity, community identity, and ethnicity. This concept of performance as a primary document for research is particularly apt for the Antigonish Highland Games because so much of the action – in the competitive arenas of dance, piping and drumming and the heavy events, in the many concerts and ceilidhs, and the opening parade – focuses on performance.

In seeking to locate the Highland Games within their current context, the effects of differentiation and centralization must be considered. Richard Bauman in "Folklore and the Forces of Modernity" (1983) uses a definition of social differentiation provided by Dean MacCannell which refers to the constant division and organization of social groups in ever more complex categories (155). At the Antigonish Highland Games, this process of differentiation is shown on a personal, micro level within the Games where one person may move through different categories such as spectator, competitor, organizer and judge. For example, Scott Williams, one of my informants, watched the Highland Games as a child, became involved in bagpiping and consequently competed at the Highland Games, then became a member of the Highland Society and organized events at the Games and now participates as a bagpiping judge. The process of differentiation can also be seen on a community-wide, macro level in a variety of ways. Most relevant to this study is through the ethnic composition of the inhabitants with Irish, English, German and Dutch as well as those of Scottish descent comprising the community as a whole. In addition, differentiation can be seen in the ways that the community is organized along occupational, educational and status lines with a university community of academics, students and religious, within the town of Antigonish with its business and industry groups.

According to Bauman, the opposite of social differentiation is centralization, which is the process where "levels of social interdependency and integration grow successively higher and local structures are progressively incorporated into more and more centralized ones" (155). In the case of the Antigonish Highland Games, there is a great deal of interdependence shown. In order for the Highland Games to run successfully each year, cooperation is a must. On a personal level, organizers select the portion of the Highland Games that most interests them and which they feel they can manage well. In this way, skilled individuals are matched with particular tasks associated with the Highland Games. For example, another informant, Bill Kiely, had a background in media as well as education, so he became involved in "emcee" duties and advertising. These individuals may also draw on contacts in their area of expertise for assistance; Bill mentioned speaking to various radio stations and requesting advertisements for the Highland Games. In this way, additional, not necessarily "Scottish," individuals become incorporated into the activity of the Antigonish Highland Games. On a larger scale, the business community and local government also cooperate with the Society by sponsoring the event and in the case of some businesses, hosting events like clan receptions in conjunction with the Games.

In learning about the community context of the Antigonish Highland Games, performance theory assisted greatly. By looking at all the performance

situations at the Highland Games, I was able to better understand that performance is a communicative event or an "aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience" (Bauman "Performance" 41). Because these performances can be understood as communications, interpretation of the messages became a key responsibility for me. As Beverly J. Stoeltje comments, "these expressive vehicles represent the style, focus, and interest of the culture, they organize the basic elements of expressivity into esthetic forms, and through these forms communicate the primary messages of the event" ("Semiotics of Folkloric Performance" 591). I interpret the performances which use these esthetic forms such as music, dance, competition, and costume at the Antigonish Highland Games as a vital expression of a Highland Scottish identity in Nova Scotia. These esthetic forms of bagpipe music, Highland dance, and tartan kilts are symbols that are firmly entrenched in Antigonish and they are an understood semiotic code which denotes Scottishness in Nova Scotia.

1.2 An Overview of Some Source Literature

For this thesis, I have reviewed books, articles, videos, newspaper articles and advertisements, and archival materials. While I have focused on folklore, I have also made use of works in history, anthropology, and sociology. For the purposes of this overview, I have chosen to discuss these materials according to the chapters in which I used them.

The first chapter of this thesis focuses on emigration from the Scottish Highlands and Islands to Nova Scotia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and provides an overview of the phenomenon of Highland Games in Scotland and Nova Scotia. Therefore, the sources used in this section are mainly from history. I have considered historians' perspectives from both Scotland and Nova Scotia in order to gain opinions from both sides of this theme. This chapter aims to lay the groundwork for the following chapters and provides the reader with some understanding of the circumstances associated with Scottish emigration to Nova Scotia and its effects on the province.

Fortunately for me, I was fairly familiar with the phenomenon of Scottish emigration to Nova Scotia before beginning this thesis. While studying for my B.A. at University College of Cape Breton, I participated in several Celtic History courses. These courses allowed me to learn a great deal about Scottish history and, more specifically, become aware of the reasons for Scottish emigration to Nova Scotia. Therefore, I recognized the prominent scholars of this area of the discipline.

Because so many people left the Highlands and Islands, and their numbers were not documented well, many historians have attempted to ascertain population figures. In my chapter on emigration, the work of sociologist Donald Fraser Campbell, historian Raymond A. MacLean, and geographer Stephen Hornsby among others, is drawn on to provide figures

which I use to show when groups arrived in Antigonish and how they chose the places that they did in Nova Scotia.

This chapter highlights two schools of thought regarding Scottish emigration to Nova Scotia and provides an historical context for the development of Highland Games in Scotland and Nova Scotia. One group of scholars focuses on the social reasons for leaving the Highlands such as the decline of the clan system. Another group concentrates on economic factors which caused the large-scale emigration from the Scottish Highlands and Islands. Some of these factors include changes in the farming systems of the Highlands and Islands, the introduction of sheep, and the collapse of the kelp industry. Clearly, social and economic factors are intertwined. Social historians note the effects of economic factors on emigration, just as economic historians make mention of social aspects of emigration. There is no single reason for the mass emigration from Scotland to Nova Scotia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Only by considering both economic and social factors together will one gain an understanding of these events. Sociologist Grant Jarvie's study of Highland Games in Scotland and how their meaning changed was helpful in elucidating how the form of the Highland Games developed.

The literature I reviewed for the chapter devoted to festival helped to define what a festival is and to identify its various components. Because I had attended the Antigonish Highland Games before, I knew that observing and researching it

would be difficult. In fact, some of my informants described the activity on Columbus Field during Games weekend as a "three-ring circus," and they could not be more right. Because I knew there would be a lot to see and do, I wanted to learn whether there were certain occurrences to which I should pay particular attention. Most importantly, I wanted to find a framework through which to view and describe all the elements that are contained in the Antigonish Highland Games.

To that end, Alessandro Falassi's essay, "Morphology of the Festival" from the volume Time out of Time: Essays on the Festival was most helpful. His list of festival characteristics made it much easier for me to understand what I saw at the Highland Games and to see how these combined aspects created a festival. For example, Falassi noted that festivals often contain rites of passage. In this chapter, I describe an incident where I met a new father and his two week old infant daughter. He proudly showed her off to me as I took a picture at his clan tent. While I would not think of this as a usual rite of passage, Falassi's description allowed me to realize that because of this man's participation in the Games by bringing his daughter, he was proclaiming the Games' importance to him and seeking an opportunity for people to meet his new daughter. Works by Roger D. Abrahams and Beverly J. Stoeltje were also helpful in defining and describing other markers of festival such as periodicity, alteration of physical

spaces, sound and movement, food and drink, and visual cues such as costuming.

The community identity chapter seeks to define what a community is in folkloristic terms, and how a community comes to identify itself. I include several definitions of community from folklore scholars in my effort to describe the community of Antigonish, such as Dan Ben-Amos's noting of the need for individuals to be within the same situation and reference group and Alan Dundes's concept of at least one common linking factor. Further, I look to Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" to delineate the physical community of Antigonish, the feeling of belonging engendered by the occurrence of the Antigonish Highland Games, and the existence of the Antigonish Highland Society. The idea of celebration as it defines community is considered after perusal of the works of anthropologist Celeste Ray and historian James Hunter among others. Finally, Regina Bendix's study of Swiss folklore display events was extremely helpful in showing that the strength of a host group's internal value system often plays a large part in the authenticity of a display event. The Antigonish Highland Society's work in organizing the Games is shown to be focused on making the event about the community first.

The ethnicity chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I try to show the process of research that I undertook in order to gain some understanding of ethnicity. To that end, I considered works from many

disciplines that examine ethnicity. Elliott Oring provided me with a starting point with an historical sketch of the meaning of the term and an argument that ethnicity included the ideas, speech, and actions based on an ethnic identity which was defined as the sense of relationship between individuals and an ethnic group. I then examined alternate definitions of ethnicity from sociologists and anthropologists such as Wsevolod W. Isajiw, Richard H. Thompson, Alan B. Anderson and James S. Friders, and William C. McCready. While their definitions of ethnicity varied, each noted factors such as common ancestry, cultural traits, language, religion, and foodways, and each of these scholars helped to provide me with a better understanding of ethnicity and their methodologies for learning about it. In consequence, I chose to combine several approaches in my fieldwork where I hoped to create a clearly drawn portrait of ethnicity in Antigonish. I thought it would be most useful to have several strategies for discovering ethnic affiliations, since not everyone would identify with the same components of ethnicity.

In the second section of my ethnicity chapter, I respond to Ian McKay's article, "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954." I take issue with his main assertion that Scottishness in Nova Scotia was used and promoted primarily for touristic purposes by the provincial government. While there is no doubt that images of a Scottish element in Nova Scotian life (such as tartan, bagpipes and fiddles) are advertised heartily in the

tourism industry, I believe it is of paramount importance to remember that some people within the province accept these symbols as their own and ascribe their own meaning to them. It is this ownership of symbols by individuals that is a counter-argument to McKay's statements.

Historians Eric Hobsbawm, Terrence Ranger and Hugh Trevor-Roper's comments on invented tradition are also questioned in this chapter. They seem to leave little room for participants' beliefs when studying invented traditions. I believe that while the Highland Games form is "invented," belief and meaning in the Games are injected by the participants so that, in their eyes, the Games are not in any sense "false" or "fake." Anthropologist Celeste Ray's work is brought up again since she discusses authenticity issues at an American Highland Games and authenticity issues with regard to tourism are discussed through an analysis of Dean MacCannell's work on tourism. The Games are a vital, believable expression of a Nova Scotian Scottish ethnic identity.

The third and last section devoted to ethnicity focuses on the work of Stephen Stern and John Allan Cicala who developed the concept of "creative ethnicity" as a process of understanding, enlivening and replicating folk expressions in a multicultural society. In order for this process to occur, ethnic individuals employ a variety of symbols and strategies to create their own understanding of ethnicity. This process stands in direct opposition to the work of McKay and I believe is a more appropriate vehicle for studying the Antigonish

Highland Games. I apply their concepts to the Games to show how the process of creative ethnicity works.

1.3 A Brief Description of Research Techniques

This thesis has encompassed archival, library and fieldwork research in Antigonish, and Sydney, Nova Scotia and St. John's, Newfoundland. I have been fortunate to be able to glean published information from libraries at University College of Cape Breton in Sydney, Nova Scotia; St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia; and Memorial University of Newfoundland's St. John's campus. I was also able to collect background information about the Antigonish Highland Games at the Beaton Institute of Cape Breton Studies at University College of Cape Breton (UCCB) and at the archives of St. Francis Xavier University during trips made over the course of the summer of 1999. Because Cape Breton Island is part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Antigonish, and UCCB was the satellite campus of St. Francis Xavier University before becoming a university college in its own right, there was some very useful information found in Sydney before I traveled to Antigonish. This documentary background helped to prepare me for the field research that took place in Antigonish in two separate trips in July 1999 and January 2000.

My first foray into fieldwork in Antigonish occurred during Highland Games week which occurred July 11-18, 1999. This trip was extremely busy in that I was able to observe the town's change from small university town in the

middle of a blisteringly hot summer to bustling centre of activity for the Highland Games weekend and back to small town. I spent the majority of my time at Columbus Field (named for the Knights of Columbus) in observing the weekend's competitive events as well as taking in as many other activities as I could. Some of these included a Highland dance concert, a Concert Under the Stars, a night-time Tattoo, ceilidhs and concerts under the beer tent, the opening Games parade through the center of the town and the opening and closing ceremonies of the Highland Games proper. Most of this trip was observational in nature. I spent a great deal of time taking photographs, talking with other spectators informally, meeting people through my aunt and uncle who are members of the Highland Society, and trying to record everything I saw at the Highland Games. During this trip, I completed one interview on the Monday which was July 19, 1999 after the Highland Games finished on Sunday. The atmosphere of the town was too chaotic for me to accomplish formal interviews during the week. Everyone involved in the Games is very busy at that time and I was not comfortable imposing on their time. I was also concerned that the interviews take place in a manner that was relaxed for both my informant and me. As a new fieldworker, I was still gaining confidence in conducting interviews. I did not want to feel rushed or pressured to complete an interview because everyone was so busy. I also did not want to have technical problems because I did not take my time. I determined that a second trip to Antigonish

would be in order and I returned in January 2000 to interview the majority of my informants and to reflect on the 1999 edition of the Highland Games. Ultimately, my strategy of returning in January 2000 worked well, except that I had technical difficulties with my tape-recorder on two occasions.

Upon my return to Antigonish in January 2000, I spent another week contacting and interviewing the majority of my informants. Scott Williams, who I had met earlier in the summer, was first on my list. He then suggested that I contact Bill Kiely. Bill Kiely introduced me to Iain Boyd who offered to ask his daughters to be interviewed. Iain's daughter, Susan, put me in touch with her dance teacher, Shelly Grant, while I cold-called Janice MacQuarrie, another local dance teacher, on my own. Iain Boyd also suggested Kathryn Chisholm who suggested additional people to contact. As I have shown, once people knew about my project they were more than willing to help and suggest other people to meet. My only regret was that I could not stay longer and meet everyone. Kathryn Chisholm suggested several men who are merchants in the town and long-time members of the Highland Society. I tried to contact them, but did not get a response in time. On the day I was leaving Antigonish, one gentleman returned my call and I could not meet with him as my bus was departing within a half-hour's time.

I tried to keep my interviewing style as open as possible to allow my informants to feel comfortable. I also wanted them to feel that they could tell me

what they felt was important and not that I had a set list of questions that I needed to have answered. Because of this, individuals were able to digress into specific areas of interest to them and often my questions were to further probe an interesting point that they had brought to my attention. My approach was one in which I tried to be as well-informed and prepared as possible, but I was still willing to be led in directions that were unexpected. This is not to say, however, that I did not have some idea of what the shape of the interview should be. I did have a list of questions that I referred to and tried to have what I felt were important points to be brought up within the context of the interview. I also tried to use my questions as leads that my informants might follow if they were struggling with what exactly to tell me. Obviously, each interview was different, based on the personality and knowledge of the informant. Over the course of my fieldwork, I interviewed a fourteen year old girl, an elderly lady, several men with varying responsibilities and interests in the organization of the Games, and a good friend whom I have known for ten years.

1.4 Portrait Gallery of my Informants

In seeking informants for my research, I wished to speak to people who had some knowledge of, or experience with, the Antigonish Highland Games. Therefore, my informants included several of the Antigonish Highland Society members who had competed in the Games in piping and drumming and track and field, one of the first female members of the Highland Society, a current

piping competitor, a current Highland dance competitor, and my dance troupe's bagpiper, who is an Antigonish native and former piping competitor who now resides in Sydney. I also spoke to two Highland dance instructors, but I was destined to have technical difficulties when talking to dance-related informants. My tape-recorder malfunctioned during each of these interviews but I did not find out until after the interview was completed. Therefore, I will not be relying heavily on their testimony since I do not have transcriptions of their words. Each of the people that I successfully interviewed is at a different stage in their association with the Games. Most importantly, all of my informants self-identify with their Scottish heritage and recognize the importance the Games play in the town of Antigonish.

Dan MacInnes is a sociologist in his late fifties who teaches at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish. I conducted my interview with him on July 19, 1999 after the Games had concluded. His main interest lies with the bagpiping competitions and that is most often the area in which he works during the Games. He has also held positions on the Executive of the Highland Society as President and Chief of the Clans (Past President).

Scott Williams was the first person that I interviewed upon my arrival in Antigonish in January 2000. I had met him briefly during the 1999 Highland Games with Valentina Bold, a researcher from Scotland, who was studying North American Highland Games. After reintroducing myself through an e-mail

note, I asked would he consent to an interview. He was most pleased to do so and he and his wife, Maureen, could not have been friendlier to a somewhat nervous interviewer! Williams is a naturally ebullient man who had all sorts of stories to tell and valuable information to relate. He has been involved with the Antigonish Highland Society for many years. He could not pinpoint the exact date of joining the Highland Society, but remembers that he became a member of the Board of Directors in 1973. The Board of Directors is the group that is most involved with running the Games and each person has a different responsibility.

Williams' area of expertise lies in the bagpiping world. He has been a judge of piping since the early 1970s and is the Highland Society's official piper. As a retired elementary school-teacher, he now devotes a fair amount of his time to teaching bagpipes. Williams also spent nine years organizing the evening outdoor tattoos that take place at Columbus Field. He has since given that duty up in order to do other tasks. At the 1999 Games, he played in the opening ceremonies and judged the piping competitions.

Kathryn Chisholm is an elderly lady who was one of the first women to join the Highland Society in the 1950s when the Society first began admitting women. She also worked at St. Francis Xavier University's library for many years. While she no longer attends many of the Highland Society's meetings or functions due to a stroke that has limited her mobility somewhat, she still maintains strong personal ties to her Scottish ancestry.

Bill Kiely is a retired educator living in Antigonish. An alumnus of St. Francis Xavier University, he now works on various projects for the Alumni Department at St. F.X. His main area of experience with the Antigonish Highland Games lies in the heavy events and athletics portion of the competitive activities. Currently, Bill Kiely serves as the announcer for the heavy events. As such, he identifies the various competitors, by naming them, announcing their hometown, and any other related information, such as whether they are record-holders in each event. He also explains what the competitors are attempting to do, announcing the results for height, distance or accuracy as each competitor completes the event.

Iain Boyd is a native of Antigonish and an alumnus of St. Francis Xavier University. At the time of our interview, he was the university's Director of Development. He kindly agreed to an interview at his office after Bill Kiely suggested that I speak to him as well. I had the opportunity to meet Iain Boyd through my uncle, Dave MacLean, at the 1999 Games, but due to the week's hectic pace, I did not interview him during the summer.

Andrea Boyd, Iain's eldest daughter, was a seventeen year old bagpiper at the time of our interview. She is a very accomplished piper, attaining the highest status of Grade One as a solo bagpiper and winning several major awards as a soloist and as a member of several pipe bands. She was extremely articulate and helpful to me in learning about current piping competitions at Antigonish.

While Andrea has not joined the Highland Society, she acknowledges the possibility of becoming a member later in life (Personal interview, 12 January 2000). Susan Boyd, the younger daughter of Iain Boyd, was a fourteen year old Highland dancer when I conducted my interview with her.

Michael Campbell is a native of Antigonish now living in Sydney. His experience at the Antigonish Highland Games stems from eleven years as an individual competitor in the "pibroch" or classical bagpipe music and "ceol beag" or "small music" of piping competitions. Over the years as an individual piper, he progressed through the various levels to Grade One which is the highest class before one is considered a professional. He has also played with several bands over the course of his career and played at their respective grade levels.

1.5 My Life as a Dancer and Its Influence on This Thesis

When I began trying to choose an M.A. thesis topic, I thought that I would enjoy studying a topic that was related to Highland dancing. Highland dancing has played a large role in my life and the year 2000 marks the beginning of the creation of this thesis and the twentieth anniversary of my dancing career. Being involved in Highland dancing has given me the opportunity to make lifelong friends, travel the world, and learn valuable lessons about life. I consider the other girls that I dance with to be like sisters; we are and have been close friends for years. While we were originally brought together through our dance lessons,

our friendships extend far beyond the dancing world now. We have grown up together and we are entering a new phase of our lives. At the wedding of one of my close dancing friends, she said, "I had to invite you all because we've done things together that no one else has done." She was referring to the difficulty of containing the number of guests at a large wedding while recognizing the special bond that we, as dancers, have. We have had experiences together that no other friends have been lucky enough to have.

Over the years, I have been fortunate to visit Scotland and England in 1992; Florida, USA in 1995; Utah, USA in 2000 and many places throughout the Maritime provinces over the course of my dancing career. When a person travels in a group like this, everyone bonds by having the unique travel experience that each tour is. Highland dancing has also taught me to have perseverance, to work hard to achieve my goals and to be a good sport. It has also given me self-confidence and the ability to present myself well to people in performance situations and everyday life.

To start at the beginning of my dancing story, one must know how I became involved. My mother told me a story in which I am three years old. I visited a local Sydney, Nova Scotia, shopping centre with my babysitter and had happened to see a group of Highland dancers performing there. Apparently, I was captivated by what I saw and immediately said that I wanted to do that too. My baby-sitter informed my mother and then Mom inquired about lessons with

well-known dance teacher Eileen Forrester, with whom she had attended high school. Eileen explained that at the age of three, I was still too young, but advised my mother to enrol me when I turned four. Accordingly, I turned four in May 1980 and began lessons in September 1980. I have been involved in Highland dancing ever since. While I have no memory of seeing those dancers at the mall, this incident proved to be extremely important and set me on a path that I have followed all of my life.

In competitive Highland dancing, each participant moves through a series of difficulty levels which are *Primary* (for those under age seven), *Beginner*, *Novice*, *Intermediate* and *Premier*. The number of dances performed at a competition increases as the difficulty level increases. In order to advance, dancers must place at a set number of competitions before moving into the next category. Competitions take place under various boards of Highland dancing around the world. For the Antigonish Highland Games, and for my entire career, I have been involved in competitions governed by the *Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing (SOBHD)*.

I began competing in Highland dance at approximately age seven. I had the opportunity to attend many competitions all over the Maritimes. Some of the places which held Highland dancing competitions include: Sydney; Sydney Mines; St. Ann's; St. Peter's; Port Hawkesbury; Antigonish; New Glasgow and Halifax in Nova Scotia as well as Nackawic, Rothesay and Saint John in New

Brunswick. For the majority of these competitions, I traveled to the venue with my mother or sometimes, my whole family. In addition to these family outings, my dance teacher arranged dance competitions trips to New Brunswick and I traveled with her and a group of students annually for several years. Most competitions were held in school auditoriums or gyms.

I have chosen to mention some highlights of my dance career to show that I am an educated observer of the Antigonish Highland Games. I wish to show the extent of organization and ability levels involved at the Games and am most familiar with the rules and regulations regarding Highland dance competitions and so have chosen to describe these. In fact, divisions exist for all competitive events at the Antigonish Highland Games. As an individual with insider knowledge of the Games, I am familiar with the set-up of rules and regulations and perhaps did not focus on them as much as someone who was not as familiar may have. However, while I focus here on the Highland dancing competition rules, over the course of my fieldwork I became familiar with the levels of piping and drumming and heavy events. I believe these divisions show the extent of the Games' internal structuring, commitment to fairness and concern for the boundaries of competitive rules.

The only outdoor competition that I ever attended was the Antigonish Highland Games. They made a strong impression on my memory for a number of reasons. The Antigonish Highland Games were a unique competitive

experience for me because of several factors including the outdoor site, live music for dancers provided by several solo pipers, competitions in all events that took place simultaneously throughout the day all over the field and the presence of my aunt and uncle who are members of the Highland Society and had the opportunity to see me compete in Antigonish. I also felt that there was a great deal of prestige associated with this competition; I knew that it was a very old competition. Also, the Antigonish Highland Games have a reputation for drawing world-class competitors in all events and as a child, I remember watching Gregor Bowman who went on to become a World Champion Highland dancer. I remember him especially because he was a fantastic dancer and in my experience, it was quite unusual to see a male dancer.

One of my most vivid memories of the Antigonish Highland Games is when I won my dance category. I remember how it felt to be on the platform on a beautifully sunny day. There were large cumulus clouds in a bright blue sky with a slight breeze blowing. I glanced at the judge sitting at a desk on a smaller platform before me and quickly looked beyond her before I had the chance to become really nervous. The piper standing directly behind me began and I was slightly startled at the volume; I was not used to dancing to live pipers. However, I began my Highland Fling. The dance itself is a blur, seemingly over as soon as I had begun, although I distinctly remember focusing my eyes on two large elm trees as I went through my dance. One stood to the right and the other

to the left in the distance and they were helpful in making sure I was using the appropriate second position of the head. Second position of the head is when the dancer turns his or her head to the diagonal right or left and lifts the chin slightly. When I was younger, I would forget to use my head positions because I would concentrate on coordinating all the arm and foot movements. During that dance, I had such a feeling of calm, almost a joyousness where I knew I had done my best. I do not remember having quite the same feeling at any other competition and there are really no words to describe exactly how it felt. I also competed in the Sword Dance that day, but I do not remember it at all.

In an attempt to better convey what the Highland Fling felt like for me on that day, I looked to other sports figures. Two-time pairs figure skating Olympic gold medallist Ekaterina Gordeeva describes her experience at the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics in the following way:

> It's nice when you're thinking when you skate, when you're not just doing things automatically, like a robot. It's nice for the audience, too. I enjoyed skating the *Moonlight Sonata* in Lillehammer. I remember everything. You cannot describe these four minutes of skating in words, but I was aware of every movement that I was making, conscious of the meaning behind these movements and conscious of what Sergei [her partner] was doing. It is a clarity that one so seldom finds elsewhere in life, a clarity any athlete can relate to, moments in time that we remember the rest of our lives. I believe it is why we compete. (Gordeeva and Swift 224).

Gordeeva's description of her experience at the Olympics is as close to what I have experienced at the Antigonish Highland Games as a ten-year-old that I have found. Her description is especially pertinent, because, for me, the Antigonish Highland Games were like the Olympics of Highland dancing. There are certainly more prestigious competitions, and indeed, Highland dancing holds championships at the provincial, national and international levels each year. However, I never competed in these events. The Antigonish Highland Games were the most special and important for me personally. I have competed and performed at hundreds events over the course of my career, but for some indefinable reason, that performance of a simple four-step Highland Fling as a ten year old has stayed with me as no other performance has. I have performed in many larger and more awe-inspiring places, but my memory of those concerts is a mere muddle when compared to that day in Antigonish. I remember the astonishment I felt at the volume of the piper standing directly behind me when he started to play. I remember how the platform felt, springing beneath my feet. I remember how the breeze felt blowing on my face and can still see the birds in the sun-drenched sky. In my mind's eye, I can see the large crowds, the runners on the track and the big men competing in the heavy events while I danced. Most of all, I remember the complete security and confidence I felt when I made the dance's final turn and bowed to the judge before leaving the stage. Perhaps it is that feeling of well-being and confidence that has allowed that dance to stay

with me for so long. I knew that on that day, at that particular time, I had done my absolute best.

Later that day, I won the high aggregate trophy in my category in the ten year old Beginner group. After the day's dances were completed, I left my mother in the grandstands and went to the back of the dancing platform in the middle of the field with the other girls. The announcer called, "first place in the Highland Fling goes to number 212," which was my number and I remember being absolutely stunned and not moving for a moment. How am I able to remember the number I wore for that competition? I have no idea! One of the other competitors, Erin Lynch who was also from Sydney River said, "Erin, that's your number; go up!" And then I did. I think I did not quite believe that I heard my number for that split-second after it was called. I also placed third in the Sword Dance which gave me the most points to win the high aggregate trophy. Of all the <u>competitive</u> medals and trophies I have been fortunate enough to receive, I am most proud of that one from Antigonish. I competed at Antigonish for about five years, from around the ages of eight to thirteen. But, I never had such success as I had when I was ten.

After the account I have just given, I may not be believed when I state that I was never particularly enamoured of competition. I enjoyed competing in that I saw friends, loved to dance and was proud when I did well. But I do not know if I ever had the "killer instinct" needed for tough competition and was never

truly heartbroken if I did not place. I may have been disappointed but I think I was content to know that I usually did the best I could. Even if something untoward happened, I was usually able to take it in stride.

When I joined my dance school's performance troupe in 1988 at the age of twelve, I did not continue competing for much longer. I found more pleasure and joy in performing than competing and retired from actively performing with "Forrester's Cape Breton Scottish Dance Company" after completing my twenty-fourth season in 2004. I continue to offer backstage assistance as needed for larger performances and remain in close contact with my instructor and fellow dancers. There was and is a great deal of camaraderie within the dance troupe. While I often got "butterflies in my stomach" before going out onstage to perform, I was comforted to know that I was not the only one performing. Competition can be lonely and nerve-wracking in that one competes against others but also against oneself. I did not find the same support system in competition as I have in performance. Nervousness before performance stems from wanting to do well for all the other dancers as well as yourself, but there is not the sense of judgment as in competition. In my eyes, performance while serious is more for pleasure of the performer and audience.

As I reflect on my experiences at the Antigonish Highland Games and my observations at the 1999 Games, I am aware of the juxtaposition between the competitive elements of the Games and the entertaining, fun aspects of the

Games. As a child competitor, I recall attending the Concert Under the Stars on Friday evening with my mom, aunt and uncle and then getting up the next day for the dance competitions. I remember running to the concession stand to get a popsicle and hurrying to finish it to be prepared for my next dance. As I grew older, I remember meeting my other dancing friends and wandering through the vendors' booths, looking at jewellery inspired by Celtic motifs, t-shirts and audio cassettes and CD's of Scottish and Atlantic Canadian artists and then scurrying to the dance platform as we heard our competitive category being announced over the loudspeaker. I believe that the competitions and entertainment found at the Antigonish Highland Games are two sides of the same coin. One half does not exist without the other in this context. The Games' wide variety of activities allows them to appeal to the largest range of people who wish to participate: from spectators and competitors to all other groups in between. This style of events also allows each individual to pick and choose those activities that most interest them. There are those that are most interested in the competitions, be it piping and drumming, heavy events or dancing while others prefer to attend the Concert Under the Stars and the opening parade, while others are most interested in attending the ceilidhs under the beer tent on Columbus Field.

1.6 My Role as a Folklorist in Antigonish

My role as a folklorist in Antigonish is complicated to describe. As someone from Sydney (which is two hours away from Antigonish by car), I am an outsider in the formal sense of the word; I cannot be described as an intimate insider of the community because I do not hail from there. However, as a Highland dancer who attended the Highland Games, I have certain insider knowledge and understanding of the Games and the area which came from my participation as a child competitor. This makes me something of an insider to the community. Often, people would make comments such as, "you remember that at the Highland Games we do this" or "I'm sure you are familiar with this happening at the Highland Games." I was treated as someone with a certain amount of previous knowledge and experience. I believe that this made it easier for my informants because they did not have to explain every small detail of the Highland Games. However, I would ask for clarification when necessary which goes to show that while I did know quite a lot about the Games, I certainly did not know everything!

At the same time, my status as someone known to the community was assisted by my relationship to Hinda and Dave MacLean, my aunt and uncle. They are well-known residents of Antigonish; my uncle Dave manages CJFX, the local radio station and my aunt Hinda works at the National Philatelic Centre there. They have been involved in the Antigonish Highland Society for as long

as they have lived in the town which is approximately twenty-five years. At the beginning of my fieldwork, Dave and Hinda suggested many individuals to talk with to gain further insights and information about the Antigonish Highland Games. They also introduced me to several people and somehow let it be known what I would be doing. Several times, as I introduced myself, individuals would say, "Oh you're Dave and Hinda's niece, right?" or "aren't you related to Hinda and Dave?" Another common comment was that "Hinda and Dave mentioned that you might be getting in touch!" I believe that their position in the community helped people to feel more comfortable and at ease with me. I did not feel as though I was viewed as a complete stranger and I really felt that people went out of their way to be helpful and informative to me. In this way, I was a curious mix of insider/outsider to the community of Antigonish.

As a folklorist in Antigonish, I was privileged to speak with many other people who are involved in the Antigonish Highland Games in one way or another – as organizers, as spectators, or as competitors. All of the people whom I had the pleasure of interviewing were most helpful and interested in my project. Indeed, I was passed throughout the community from one informant to the next. When one person found out about my project and was interviewed, invariably they would introduce me to the next person as well. In this way, I had very little difficulty in finding people to talk to; if anything, I was sorry that I could not speak with everyone!

1.7 A Note on Transcription Style

In my transcriptions of these interviews, I have striven for accuracy and readability. I deleted "ums" and "aahs" and false starts that I judged insignificant. I listened carefully to what was said and punctuated my sentences accordingly. I placed commas at short pauses for breath and periods where it seemed as though the speaker had come to the end of a thought. I have used a dash for longer pauses where the speaker may have been thinking of how to phrase an answer or looking for a specific word to convey their meaning. Occasionally, I have used ellipses when I could not decipher what was being said.

Chapter 2

Scottish Migration to Nova Scotia and an Historical Examination of the Highland Games in Scotland and North America

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will provide background information about the Highland Scottish emigrations to Nova Scotia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to the phenomenon of Highland Games in general. Consideration will be given to the history of migratory waves of emigrating Highland Scots, their reasons for leaving Scotland, and the patterns of migration from particular areas of Scotland to specific locales in Nova Scotia. In addition, the various Scottish settlements of Antigonish County will be discussed. The beginning of the Antigonish Highland Society and its Games will be placed in a historical context among others in Scotland and North America. Issues of romanticization will be examined as well as the links between Nova Scotia and Scotland which influenced the construction of the Antigonish Highland Games. This historical information is included to indicate the prevalence of Scottish settlement in the area and to define the actual continuity of a Highland Scottish presence in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Their Highland Games developed from the strong presence of Scottish settlers in Antigonish and that presence remains unquestionable today through their many descendants who still call Antigonish home.

2.1 Timing and Locations of Scottish Settlement in Nova Scotia

It can be said that the majority of Highland emigration to North America occurred over the course of approximately eighty years. In discussing the time periods for emigration to Nova Scotia, historians have ascertained three to four groupings. They are: 1770 to 1803, 1803 to 1820, 1820 to 1838 and 1838 to 1853. These groupings can be considered to be somewhat arbitrary however, with various scholars arguing the significance of particular turning points. For example, Campbell and MacLean discuss the period of 1783 to 1803 within a larger context because 1803 was the year that, "marks the first serious government effort to regulate the emigrant trade to America" (16).

Also, census data is incomplete for the period, and so many numbers are estimates. For example, Flewwelling quotes Martell's study of emigration between 1815 and 1838 where he accounts for 43,000 people (75). She studies the period of 1839 to 1851 and arrives at a total of 16,000. Studies such as these are dependent on documentary sources and, in many cases accurate records were not kept at the time of entry. Sometimes emigrants disembarked in the wilderness, far from the somewhat more established areas of Halifax, and Sydney, or the newly developing Pictou where they might have been counted. However, "no definite records were being kept in either Pictou or Sydney. Customs officers did not keep lists in Sydney prior to 1821 . . ." (Campbell and MacLean 21). Therefore, no records exist documenting these arrivals.

However, records for Pictou County as a whole between 1817 and 1838 show an increase from 8,737 persons to 21,449. For the period of 1815 to 1838, in the same county, 21,833 emigrants out of 39,243 appear to be of Scottish descent. (Campbell and MacLean 22). Sometimes, ships' records give the number of emigrants being transported. Walsh notes that "the ship 'Nora' arrives in Pictou from Fort William, Scotland, with 500 . . . on the 'Sarah' and the 'Dove', 300 more . . ." (33). As one can see, determining the exact number of emigrants is extremely difficult.

Several scholars have described this movement as wave-like. Flewwelling states that, "the growth of the movement was spasmodic" (75) while Adam notes that, "the emigration proceeded, not in a steady unbroken stream, but in waves, separated from each other by intervals of comparative inactivity" (73). Within the above-noted time spans, there were surges in the movement of people. Some years saw a large influx while in other years there were fewer people emigrating. For example, the flow of emigration was just beginning in the early 1770s. This was disrupted by the American Revolution and its consequences. During the war, ocean crossings were dangerous for civilians because Scottish men might be impressed into service by the British forces. Later, a new wave of settlement arose with the arrival of the Loyalists in the 1780s (Bumsted 70). Highland Scottish emigration then resumed in the 1790s and early 1800s, with fourteen ships landing in Nova Scotia between 1790 and 1803 (C. MacDonald 43-4).

2.2 The People Who Came to Nova Scotia

The people that made up these migratory waves occupied various social and economic positions within Highland Scottish society. Usually, those emigrants with capital and resources emigrated first while those with fewer resources and opportunities followed at a later date. Campbell and MacLean state:

> Generally, those who left during the period [1770 to approximately 1800] were not "the wretched, helpless exodus that was to come in the next century." They were of varying trades and occupations, they went largely on a voluntary basis, and they traveled unassisted (16).

Adam also notes the differing social statuses of the Scottish emigrants. She observes that:

> tacksmen, the instigators of the movement of the seventies, still existed in many parts of the Highlands and Islands and some certainly moved after 1783 . . . . Still, in the main, it is true to say that before 1775 the chief impulse to emigrate came from above . . . after 1783 the impulse was from beneath . . ." (73-4).

The tacksmen were the chief's "principal supporters, frequently blood-kin who officered the clan regiment and recruited companies among their sub-tenants" (Prebble 13). According to Hunter, generally, a tacksman was:

> a man 'of education and of considerable endowments.' His home . . . was usually well supplied with books, fine furniture and other evidence of his generally superior standing. His knowledge of the wider world

was anything but limited (40).

Before Culloden, when the clan was a military unit, the tacksmen played an important role in leadership. In addition to their military role, these men were intimately involved in the land-holding system of the Highlands. Land was leased from the chief to the tacksmen, who in turn rented it to the ordinary clansmen. As one can see, the tacksmen's roles included functions in the economic and military systems of the Highland Scottish social structure. In essence, the tacksmen were a link between the chief and his clansmen. When the tacksmen's economic and militaristic roles ended with the demise of the clan system, they naturally looked to improve their situation through emigration to North America.

Those people who left Scotland in the latter decades of the eighteenth century were those who were able to choose to do so. They could be considered the "middle class" group and were comprised of tacksmen, artisans and craftspeople -- those with some type of skill. Whether their skills were helpful to them in the beginning is questionable as, "they were generally unprepared for the 'primeval forest' " (Campbell and MacLean 3). Many of the emigrants, who came later, well into the nineteenth century, emigrated because they had little other choice. According to Ross, "broadly speaking, in the eighteenth century people go from the Highlands, in the nineteenth, they are sent" (162).

2.3 Reasons for Scottish Emigration to Nova Scotia

Reasons for Highland Scottish emigration to North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are complicated and intertwined. Within the historical field, there is debate concerning the degree of importance to be placed on the varying factors which affected emigration. Simply put, the mass emigrations from the Scottish Highlands occurred because the area could not sustain its population. Ross states:

> . . . Scotland is low down in the scale of food-
> producing countries and quite unable from that
> source to support even a moderately large population
> per square mile. And this is particularly true of the
> Highlands. I have stressed this point because it has
> to be constantly kept in mind in any consideration
> of Highland emigration . . . (156).

Several other interconnected factors added to the imbalance between people and resources. The natural population increase swelled due to the cessation of warfare after 1746, medical advances, the introduction of the potato, and an improving standard of living. Fewer people were dying violently in war or clan in-fighting. People's health was slowly improving with fewer smallpox outbreaks (Adam 87). The Highlanders' diet was also augmented with the potato (Adam 87). Bumsted describes its impact:

> Easy to cultivate, the potato's importance cannot
> be overestimated, for it helped balance diets and
> prevent scurvy, provided an alternative to the
> traditional oatmeal, and usually grew during years
> of bad weather which utterly devastated grain crops.

> As a hedge against malnutrition and starvation in
> times of famine the potato was supreme . . . (38).

Bumsted also notes that economic conditions were changing somewhat in the Highlands. Money was entering the Highlands through wages sent by family members working in the Lowlands and those who had enlisted in the Highland regiments, and also from the sale of black cattle and the manufacture of kelp (Bumsted 39). Rather than being invested in improvement of individual family welfare, the money was shared throughout extended families. "Family size was not reduced but . . . expanded . . . . The Highlanders distributed the new income among the members of the extended family, enabling more people to live at a subsistence level" (Bumsted 39). The system of land division also influenced Highland Scottish living conditions. With each successive generation, the arable land was further subdivided among family members until the amount of land allotted was insufficient to the needs of the people living on it.

The land-usage system in the Highlands was also changing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The clan had operated as a feudal or patriarchal system before Culloden. The chief distributed his land to his tacksmen and clansmen who, in turn, owed rent and military service to the chief. Before 1746, it was to the clan chief's advantage to support a large population on his lands. In times of war, the chief would then be able to call on all clansmen to serve in his fighting units. As Ross relates, "it is told of one [chief] that, when

asked what was the rent of his estate, he replied, "Five hundred fighting men" (156). After Culloden, there was no longer any need for excessive numbers of tenants on Highland land-holdings. The wealth of a chief was no longer measured in number of fighting men, but in monetary assets. The land-usage system of the Highlands became commercialized with the introduction of sheep which could provide more income for the chief or landlord. According to Macdonald, ". . . lairds saw the development of single-tenant tacks as sheep farms or the establishment of sporting estates as the most economically promising utilisation of the land" (78).

The precarious state of Highland Scottish food production was further exacerbated by famines which occurred throughout the period under discussion. For example, a quick survey of historical analyses lists famines occurring in 1782, 1783, 1802, 1803, 1837, 1838, and 1846 to 1856 (Bumsted 71, 139; Devine 94; Gray 30; Harper 18, 127). The length of a potato blight between 1846 and 1856 was particularly devastating. The potato had come to be relied upon as a staple food and when the crop failed, conditions were most difficult. Devine states that "the duration of the potato blight was important. The meal crop tended to fail in part and then normally for a season or two. But the potato blight endured in the Hebrides and . . . western Highlands for virtually a decade" (94). These famines also played a role in the mass emigrations from the Highlands.

2.4 Patterns of Scottish Emigration & Settlement in Nova Scotia

Distinctive patterns of Highland Scottish emigration can be observed.

Hornsby has defined these patterns as migratory channels (387); he states that

Highlanders generally followed several large channels of emigration, while

Lowlanders followed many smaller ones. This resulted in Highland settlement

being concentrated in particular areas while Lowland settlement was more

widespread.

> . . . there is evidence to suggest that many
> migrants followed well-defined channels or
> axes of migration. Chain migration linked
> particular Old World hearths to specific New
> World destinations. Family, kin, and friends
> from particular areas of Europe frequently settled
> together in North America, creating distinct
> ethnic or group settlements. Where migration
> links were particularly strong, New World settle-
> ments were essentially "transplanted communities"
> from the Old World (387).

In noting where Highland settlement occurred in Nova Scotia, Hornsby names

the "southwest corner of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, from Pictou County in the

west, through Antigonish and Inverness counties, to Victoria County in the east.

There were . . . subsidiary Highland settlements in . . . Cape Breton, Richmond,

and Colchester counties" (404).

Hornsby has traced the migratory patterns between particular regions in

Scotland to specific places in Nova Scotia. Generally, Highland migration "tied

the central core of the Highlands (northern and western Inverness, parts of

Sutherland and Ross and Cromarty) to eastern Nova Scotia and Prince Edward

Island . . ." (Hornsby 411). More specifically:

> emigrants from northern Inverness (Beauly,
> Kilmorack, Kirkhill, and Urquhart) and
> Sutherland (Loch Broom) went to Pictou
> County, Nova Scotia; those from northern
> and western Inverness (Strathglass, Knoydart,
> Lochaber, Arisaig, and Moidart, and Eigg)
> went to Antigonish County; while those from
> western Inverness (South Uist, Barra, Eigg, Skye,
> Moidart and Lochaber) went to Inverness County
> (Hornsby 412).

These migratory channels developed through overseas communication

between new emigrants to Nova Scotia and those still remaining in Scotland.

Bumsted states, "letters home and word-of-mouth accounts of American success

were the best advertisements" (65). These communications served to educate

those in Scotland about what life in North America was like.

> Communication brought sensitive interaction
> between widely separated groups. Scots could
> be informed with fair accuracy of conditions on
> the other side of the Atlantic; they could compare
> the facts of living as they knew them at home with
> what they might expect in a new country. They
> might receive remittances of money to help them
> on their way. And they would constantly be
> reminded of the old links of kinship and
> neighbourhood (Gray 19-20).

The strength of the Highlanders' connection to family and community

encouraged the emigrants to follow the large established migratory channels

which in turn " . . . made it possible for regional cultural traditions to be maintained in the New World" (Bumsted 70).

In describing Antigonish County's location within the province of Nova Scotia, Rankin states:

> the County of Antigonish is situated in the
> north-east of Nova Scotia proper. It is nearly
> triangular in form, the base of the triangle being
> bounded by the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the
> Bay of St. George, while the apex is wedged
> between the Counties of Pictou and Guysboro" (3).

The first settlement in Antigonish County was led by Colonel Hierlihy in 1784 (Walsh 24). Colonel Hierlihy commanded a regiment in the American Revolution which was evacuated to Halifax in 1783. He, along with eighty-eight others, was granted 26,600 acres around Antigonish Harbour and settled on what was now known as the "Soldier's Grant" (J.W. MacDonald 7). Some of this land was later sold in 1798 and 1800 to several men including, "John Macdonald, Alexander Macdonald, Hugh Macdonald, Malcolm Macdonald and Donald Macdonald" (J.W. MacDonald 8).

Within the county there were several settlements made by Highland Scots. They include Arisaig, Moidart, Knoydart, South River, Ohio Lake and Lochaber Lake (Rankin 12-16). As one can see, many of these places were named in honour of Scottish areas. Arisaig was first inhabited by Angus Macdonald for a short period of time. John Ban Gillies is considered to be "the first permanent

settler on the whole of the gulf shore which lies in the County of Antigonish"
(Rankin 12). Some of the first settlers of Moidart were John Smith and Dugald
Ban McDonald; Knoydart was settled by Martin McDonald, Malcolm McDonald,
and Donald McDonald (Rankin 13). Another Macdonald settled in South River,
while a Fraser lived at West River (Rankin 14-15). McMillans from Lochaber
settled at Lochaber Lake and McInnes, McLeans, and McGillivrays lived at Ohio
River (Rankin 16). In addition to these communities, St. Andrew's and
Heatherton have strong Scottish presences according to Bill Kiely (Personal
interview, 10 January 1999).

Religion also influenced where Highland Scottish emigrants settled in
Nova Scotia. In the beginning, Protestant Highland Scots made homes in Pictou
County while Roman Catholics moved eastward to Antigonish County and Cape
Breton Island. Campbell and MacLean observe that, " . . . there was an earlier
balance [in Nova Scotia] in favor of the Presbyterians, largely because of their
strength in Pictou County, Antigonish County was overwhelmingly Catholic
while Inverness was almost evenly split" (210). Although Protestants and
Catholics generally settled in different areas, this did not seem to impair friendly
relations between the two groups except in certain cases. According to Campbell
and MacLean:

> it can be said with certainty that Scottish
> Catholic [sic] and Presbyterians made good
> neighbours; there was a polite and co-operative

> spirit between them. Nevertheless, there was an
> underlying tension which surfaced at sensitive
> junctures such as jobs, marriage, education and
> political positions (222).

Interestingly enough, this type of polite relationship between Catholic and

Protestant was still visible in the late 1950s and early 1960s, according to Scott

Williams. He related a story about when his father was asked to join the

Highland Society. At that time, the Presidency of the Society alternated between

Catholic and Protestant members. Because Antigonish is a largely Catholic town,

most of the Highland Society members were Catholic. More suitable Protestant

members were needed. Scott Williams' father was thought to be a good

candidate as he was deputy mayor at the time. So his father joined the Highland

Society as Vice-President and eventually became President. Williams called this

a "reverse prejudice" at the time. To me, this is an example of "political

correctness" before the term even came into popular usage! Scott Williams went

on to say that this type of selection process based partially on religion no longer

occurs in the Highland Society. He notes that for anyone of his generation or

younger, it is no longer thought of or a concern. Indeed, the only examples of

religious participation I noted during Highland Games week were opening and

closing services, one at the Roman Catholic St. Ninian's Cathedral, and the other

at St. James United Church. These services conflicted with other events and I

was unable to attend them.

2.5 Highland Games in Scotland through the Years

In attempting to trace the history of the Antigonish Highland Games, one discovers that there are many stories and suppositions regarding the beginning of Highland Games. All these stories act as origin myths which are meant to bolster the status of individual Games, and which try to prove their primacy and longevity through these foundation stories. For example, one school of thought suggests that Highland Games may be connected to annual harvest celebrations where people would gather to trade (Jarvie 31). Another suggestion regarding the Games' origins refers to the Gathering called by King Malcolm Ceann-Mor (pronounced Canmore) on the Braes of Mar in the eleventh century. It is said that King Malcolm used a hill-race event to select the fastest runners to act as postal messengers throughout his kingdom (Jarvie 6; Webster 12). The current Braemar Royal Highland Gathering considers that gathering to be its origin point. Iain Colquhoun and Hugh Machell state that the purpose of Highland Gatherings or Games was "for laird and clansman, crofter and shepherd to meet on equal terms and keep alive the best sporting traditions of their 'races'" (as quoted in Jarvie 3). This extract points to a time when a feudal system of clan order was still in place which would place this type of gathering before the Battle of Culloden in 1746 when Jacobite forces supporting Prince Charles Edward Stuart were defeated by the Duke of Cumberland.

In examining the Antigonish Highland Games, I am looking to locate what the Games mean to individuals on a personal level. In order to do this, I will examine historical information on Highland Games in general in order to better understand the Games in their current context.

Highland Games in Scotland began increasing in popularity and number in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, a Highland Games occurred in Inverness at the Northern Meeting in 1788 (Livingstone 178). Other Highland Games and Gatherings included the Highland Society of London's Gathering at the Falkirk Tryst in 1781 (Brander 27) and the beginning of Braemar by the Braemar Wright's Society in 1817 (Brander 28). A Braemar Highland Society formed in 1832 and they continued conducting Highland Games annually. Further Highland Games were started in various other Scottish towns through the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s.

All of these Highland Games were sponsored by various St. Andrew's Societies, Burns Clubs, and Highland Societies. The purposes of these groups included economic benevolence for members of their ethnic group and social and cultural pursuits. Just as these societies sprang up all over Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, clubs also began to form all over North America as settlements increased and flourished. For example, Charleston, South Carolina's St. Andrew's Society was created in 1729 followed by the formation of groups in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1749; Savannah, Georgia in

1750; New York City, New York in 1756; Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1768; St. John, New Brunswick and Lexington, Kentucky in 1798; Albany and Schenectady, New York in 1803; Baltimore, Maryland in 1806; Glengarry County, Ontario in 1819; Buffalo, New York in 1840; Boston, Massachusetts in 1853; Antigonish, Nova Scotia in 1861; and San Francisco, California in 1866 (Donaldson 23-5). The creation of these groups shows a network of societies which stretched all over North America and Scotland. This reveals the extent of connection and communication between the Old and New Worlds as well as the way in which Highland Games became a dominant mode of ethnic expression. As R.A. MacLean notes in his survey of Antigonish, Nova Scotia's Scottish Catholic newspaper, The Casket, "events in Scotland still received a fair amount of attention, far more than Nova Scotia issues ever received in Scottish newspapers" (24). This Nova Scotian interest in Highland Games in Scotland helps to demonstrate the home country's influence and the desire by Nova Scotian Highland Scots to host a prestigious event like those being held in Scotland. Groups could draw on the experiences of others for models of success in organizing events and know what worked well and what did not.

The profusion of these societies also shows the level of success attained by a particular area. Only a town or city that was fairly well established would be able to plan and host this type of event. To use two Canadian examples, Halifax, Nova Scotia was founded in 1749 and their Society was formed in 1768. This

span of just under twenty years would have allowed for enough growth in the area to support a group such as this and their endeavours. The Antigonish area was first settled beginning in 1784, with the Antigonish Highland Society established in 1861. Historian R.A. MacLean's comments on Antigonish's growth and prosperity state that:

> by the 1850s, the overwhelming majority had left
> the pioneer phase behind. They were involved in
> every phase of public life in Nova Scotia; they were
> happy here with their kindred folk and were, or in
> the state of becoming conscious of the fact that they
> were Nova Scotians of Scottish descent. Much of the
> cultural legacy they brought with them remained but
> the new environment was giving them an opportunity
> to grow and develop in ways that few of them could
> ever have realized in Scotland (25).

The knowledge of the cultural legacy of which MacLean speaks was heightened by The Casket's articles about Scottish subjects and Gaelic columns which were enjoyed by subscribers all over Nova Scotia.

In this section, I will consider sociologist Grant Jarvie's periods of Highland Games development in Scotland in relation to the Antigonish Highland Games. I am most concerned with Jarvie's construction of the second, third and fourth periods, from 1740 to 1820, 1840 to 1920 and 1920 to the present, respectively. These periods influence and mirror the more defined history of the Antigonish Highland Games which began in 1863.

Jarvie believes that three factors affecting the development of Highland Games in Scotland occurred during 1740 to 1820. These factors included the post-Culloden policies of the British state which further accelerated processes of cultural marginalization and Anglicization; Highland emigration caused cultural practices including sporting traditions to be brought to North America; and Highland Societies in Scotland and abroad attempted to retain selective aspects of Highland culture by actively encouraging the increased development of Highland Games.

The first of these factors, policies put in place by the British government after Culloden, refer to the Act of Proscription and the Heritable Jurisdictions Act. At the Battle of Culloden in April 1746, Jacobite forces supporting the restoration of the Stuart line to the throne of England and Scotland were crushed by the Hanoverian forces of the Duke of Cumberland. This had been the second organized Jacobite rebellion, the first occurring in 1715. After Culloden, the English wished to ensure that another rebellion would never take place. Therefore, they enacted laws which were intended to destroy the Highland way of life.

The Act of Proscription enacted in August 1747 banned the following: 1) the wearing of Highland dress; 2) the gathering of Highlanders; 3) the carrying of traditional Highland weapons such as the targe, dirk, claymore and pistols (Jarvie 44-5). It is also argued that the playing of bagpipes was banned although

this is a contested point (Gibson 28-9). A ban against bagpipes was never specifically stated in the law itself but they were judged in court to be an instrument of war. Possessing or hiding such instruments of war was punished (Collinson 171). Clearly, prohibitions against these distinctive elements of Highland society would dramatically alter life in the Highlands of Scotland. These outward symbols that others used to ascertain Scottishness were meant to be stamped out. Those that transgressed these laws were subject to imprisonment and transportation to colonial North America.

The Heritable Jurisdictions Act of 1747 reduced the power of the clan chiefs by helping to sever their ties to their clansmen. The local courts over which the chiefs presided were abolished, effectively weakening the chief's judicial power over the clan. No longer could the chief "marry his clansfolk, order them to take up arms or possess land in the name of the clan" (Jarvie 45). The chief's former patriarchal role toward clan members was transformed into a purely economic role. The chief-clansman relationship that was based on loyalty became a landlord-tenant relationship that was based on the exchange of money. The Heritable Jurisdictions Act also affected the inheritance of property in the Highlands. Chiefs who had supported the Jacobite cause forfeited their estates to the English crown and their land could not be passed on to their descendants. These changes meant that the chiefs were becoming anglicized further and more absorbed in a Lowland way of life.

The second factor affecting Highland Games development in Scotland was the transfer of Highland culture to North America by emigrants. Jarvie notes the creation of Highland Societies throughout the mid-1700s to early 1800s in North America. These societies often had aims and goals similar to those of the Society in Antigonish. The goals of the Antigonish Highland Society included "preserving the marshall [sic] spirit, language, dress, music, games and antiquities of the Caledonian; for relieving distressed Highlanders at a distance from their native homes and for promoting the improvement, and, general welfare of our native country" (MacLean 45). Jarvie believes that a process of transformation occurred in North America which changed how the Highland Games were viewed by those who participated in them. He notes that Highland Games became incorporated into a "way of life which, for many of the Highlanders who left the Highlands during the clearances, held a future promise of prosperity which could not and did not exist back home as a result of the social, cultural, political and economic changes that were taking place" (52). During this period, the Games began to be viewed in a North American context which placed precedence on a Scottish cultural identity, rather than an American or Canadian national sense (Jarvie 55). Overall, Jarvie believes the Highland Games development experience of the emigrant to North America to have been:

> radically disconnected from reality. As older cultural
> and linguistic links with the Highlands gradually
> disappeared, mythology and romance came more

and more to encapsulate this picture of life in the
Highlands (56).

In the case of the Antigonish Highland Games, organizers do their best to

maintain the area's very real ties to Highland Scotland through their event.

While spectators may be caught up in the romanticism of the event, those most

involved try to remember the past and celebrate their town today.

The third factor affecting the development of Highland Games in Scotland

was the selection and encouragement of particular aspects of Highland culture

by Highland Societies which led to the institution of further Highland Games.

Jarvie notes that the people who became members of such Highland Societies of

Scotland were the upper classes of Highland society. As he argues:

> In Scotland, the paradoxical situation developed
> by the early part of the nineteenth century
> whereby many of the descendants of those
> landlords who had contributed to the demise of
> the Highland way of life became the guardians of
> its existence (61).

Jarvie also sees a shift in meaning occurring with regard to several

Highland symbols including the wearing of tartan. Following the repeal of the

Proscription Act in 1782, the wearing of tartan became fashionable. The lens

through which Highlanders were viewed was altered by the writings of

Romantics such as Sir Walter Scott. Highlanders were no longer seen as violent

and uncultured but were now painted in a more idealized light.

According to Jarvie, the period 1840 to 1920 marks a time of popularization for Highland Games in Scotland. He sees two processes at work during this period which helped to promote Highland Games. They are the process of "Balmoralization" or the joining of British royalty to the Braemar Royal Highland Gathering and the process by which the Highlands became a sporting playground where landlords began turning their estates into sheep farms and deer forests. During this time, Queen Victoria visited the Scottish Highlands and eventually bought Balmoral Castle. The British Royal Family was drawn to the Highlands for the possibility of outdoor activities that could not be had in England such as deer hunting. In 1848, she also became a patron of the modern Braemar Highland Gathering which began in 1826, and even invited the organizers to hold the event on the grounds of Balmoral. Jarvie argues that during this era, Highland Gatherings and Games became respectable and associated with loyalty and royalism. Stricter rules for the events were instituted during this time which attempted to keep a fair playing field for all competitors. Many other members of the upper classes followed the Queen's lead and became interested in recreation available in the Highlands.

How do these factors affect the Antigonish Highland Games? The Antigonish Highland Games were instituted in 1863 during the middle of the fourth of Jarvie's periods. The emigration that was discussed during Jarvie's third period had already occurred to Nova Scotia. In order to institute a

Highland Society, there had to have been a certain amount of success in the

Antigonish area to allow for such a leisure activity. If one looks back at the men

who were the founding members of the Antigonish Highland Society, they are

notable members of Antigonish town society. They were doctors, professors,

journalists and merchants who were successes in their professional lives.

2.6 Romanticization of Scottishness in Nova Scotia in the Eighteenth & Nineteenth Centuries

One question regarding the Antigonish Highland Games and Jarvie's

factors is how much was life in the Highlands romanticized in Antigonish by

1863? Since Jarvie believes that life in the Highlands was romanticized by the

emigrants to North America, he would most likely argue that this

romanticization would have occurred in Antigonish as well. It is difficult to

determine the extent of romanticization in Antigonish in 1863, however, it may

not have been as dramatic as Jarvie might think.

A tradition of debate in song was upheld in Cape Breton which may have

been a check on unduly romantic or nostalgic sentiment. It is reasonable to

assume that this style of debate would have occurred in nearby Antigonish as

well. Michael Kennedy examines this debate tradition in his article, "Lochaber

No More: A Critical Examination of Highland Emigration Mythology." He

describes two cousins, John "the Hunter" MacDonald and Allan "the Ridge"

MacDonald, who came from the same locale in Scotland and composed two very

different accounts of their emigration and their feelings about their new home in Cape Breton. John the Hunter's account is a mournful, unhappy and negative lament. He believed that he had left all that was valuable in Scotland:

> I left my country, I left my heritage; my mirth
> remained over there. I left the friendly, hospitable
> place, and my beloved relatives there. I left the
> beauty and the place where it was seen, land of
> the hollow and the cairn. It is the cause of my
> reflection that I could not stay there forever
> (Kennedy 268).

Allan the Ridge, who had emigrated about twenty years earlier, countered John the Hunter's song by asserting that Scotland was now a "land without kindness" whereas Cape Breton was a "land of prosperity" (Kennedy 269). Kennedy also notes the place of the audience in the Gaelic community; he believes that these two men knew that their songs would be heard throughout areas where Scottish emigrants lived (270). More specifically, Kennedy believes that:

> he [John the Hunter] was expressing his own
> very personal outlook, but he fully intended to
> shape public opinion as well. He expected his
> completed work to be sung and intelligently
> discussed by his fellow immigrants at their
> social gatherings . . . Allan the Ridge used his
> own considerable poetic abilities to express
> his personal feelings, but with an obvious eye
> to preventing the sentiments of John the Hunter
> from becoming the dominant theme of the general
> content of John the Hunter's poem . . . (270).

By hearing the songs of these two men, the emigrant groups in Cape Breton and eastern Nova Scotia could discuss and possibly remember the circumstances of

emigration more clearly. In this way, romanticization of life in Scotland may have been lessened and a more accurate picture of life as it was in Scotland may have been maintained in Nova Scotia.

2.7 A Brief History of the Antigonish Highland Society and Highland Games

The Antigonish Highland Society began with its first meeting on August 22, 1861 at the Antigonish Court House (Walsh 72). Originally, the society was called "The Highland Society of the County of Sydney" until 1864 when the county of Sydney was renamed the county of Antigonish (Walsh 72). Accordingly, the society's name changed to the Antigonish Highland Society. The Society's purposes included "preserving the marshall [sic] spirit, language, dress, music, games and antiquities of the Caledonian; for relieving distressed Highlanders at a distance from their native homes and for promoting the improvement, and, general welfare of our native country" (MacLean 45).

The founding members of the Antigonish Highland Society included: Dr. Alexander MacDonald, President; Roderick MacDonald, Vice-President, Hugh MacDonald, Secretary and a D. MacDonald, Treasurer. In seeking to discover more about these gentlemen, I found that Dr. Alexander MacDonald was the first medical doctor in Antigonish County, and Roderick MacDonald was a mathematics professor at St. F.X. before going on to become School Inspector (Walsh 72). A Hugh MacDonald later went on to become the first Member of Parliament for Antigonish. While I have not been able to ascertain absolutely

that this man is the same as the one listed as the Secretary of the original Antigonish Highland Society because there were so many Hugh MacDonald's in Antigonish , it seems to make sense that it could be. In addition, a management committee was struck consisting of D.C. (Duncan) Chisholm, Adam Kirk, and John Boyd, publisher of <u>The Casket</u> newspaper (<u>The Casket</u>, 6 July 1961). D.C. Chisholm and Adam Kirk were well-known merchants in Antigonish; Adam Kirk's son went on to establish the largest store in all of Antigonish. <u>The Casket</u> also notes the membership of lawyer and later judge W.A. Henry, one of the Fathers of Confederation for Nova Scotia and a Dan (Doctor) MacDonald (<u>The Casket</u>, 4 July 1968). All of these men can be considered leaders of the town as doctors, lawyers, school inspectors, merchants and journalists.

This tradition of the Antigonish Highland Society members as leaders of the community continues today. For example, three of my informants and members of the Highland Society are employed at St. Francis Xavier University. At the time of our interview, Iain Boyd was Director of Development, Dan MacInnes was a sociology professor and Kathryn Chisholm had worked as a librarian and in other administrative capacities at the school before her retirement. Further, Bill Kiely and Scott Williams were retired teachers. My uncle Dave MacLean is manager of CJFX, the local radio station. While they may not personally benefit in a direct manner as some of the town's merchants

would, they all understand the economic stimulus provided by the Games and want to see them continue and flourish.

In seeking to preserve the traditions of the Highland Scot in Nova Scotia, the Antigonish Highland Society instituted a Highland Games in 1863. As MacLean notes, "with a few exceptions, notably in wartime, the Highland Games have endured since 1863" (45) which makes the Antigonish Highland Games the "oldest continuous Games and Highland gathering in Canada" (MacLean 51). Every summer, over the course of a three-day weekend, the Antigonish Highland Games are the site of activities that include solo and band bagpipe competitions, Highland dance competitions, "heavy" events (such as tossing the caber), track, workshops and lectures, and an open-air concert. In addition, other events such as genealogical lectures, an evening Tattoo, a kilted golf tournament and a Highland Ball are scheduled during the preceding week leading up to the Games weekend.

2.8 Conclusion

Highland Scottish emigration to Nova Scotia occurred in large wave-like movements in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Broadly speaking, they settled in dense groups in the eastern half of mainland Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island. Subsequent waves of emigration occurred with family following family, neighbours following neighbours. The people who instituted the Antigonish Highland Society and its Highland Games were leaders of their

community. The close links between Scotland and Nova Scotia would have worked to downplay the urge to promote romantic visions of life in Scotland. The Highland Scottish historical presence is still felt today in Nova Scotia and affects the cultural landscape in Antigonish to this day.

The next chapter will examine the Antigonish Highland Games as an example of festival.

Chapter 3

The Antigonish Highland Games as Festival

3.0 **Introduction**

This chapter explores the Antigonish Highland Games as one example of

festival. Beverly J. Stoeltje's research on festivals is incorporated, with special

emphasis placed on the notions of performance and repertoire systems. Roger

D. Abrahams's work on display events provides another outlook by emphasizing

the competitive and touristic aspects of festival. I have provided a diary-style

entry for each day of the Highland Games, in an effort to bring my readers "into

the action" of the Games and describe the energy that pervades small-town

Antigonish for one weekend each year. I have drawn on Alessandro Falassi's

characteristics of festival to provide the salient elements in my description of the

Games. These characteristics will be used to describe and analyze typical

occurrences and events.

3.1 **Festival Repertoire Systems**

In seeking to describe the Antigonish Highland Games, one question that

needed to be answered was "What makes this event 'Scottish'?" or, in other

words, "Why do people in Nova Scotia associate the Antigonish Highland

Games with a Scottish theme?" The clearest answer I can give is that symbols

that are understood to be Scottish in Nova Scotia (such as tartan, bagpipes and

fiddles) are used to reinforce the notion that the Antigonish Highland Games are

a Scottish event and that Antigonish is an area rich in Scottish heritage. Or, as

Stoeltje points out:

> the repertoire of socioaesthetic forms used to
> communicate in festival includes not only all local
> genres, but a multiplicity of codes and scenes for the
> performance of them. Noise, smells, food, costume,
> rhythm, and action bombard the senses, using every
> semiotic code. These are expressed in local genres of
> music and dance, drama, feasts, verbal art, and display
> forms, and presented in multiple scenes, both scheduled
> and spontaneous, many of which occur simultaneously
> (" Festival in America" 240).

I wish to focus on two points quoted in this excerpt. First, it is the notion of a

repertoire of festival forms which provides one understanding of how the

Antigonish Highland Games can be understood as a Scottish event. By using this

multiplicity of symbols or codes, anyone is able to connect this event with their

personal conception of what is understood to be Nova Scotian Scottish culture.

Therefore, if one is a Highland dancer, one will understand the event from the

presentation of, and perhaps participation in, the dance competitions, concerts

and ceilidhs. If one is a bagpiper, one will relate to all the situations where

bagpiping comes to the forefront such as the competitions, busking on Main

Street or numerous ceilidhs on the field and at local homes. There is such a

variety of symbols to choose from that most people would perceive something

as "Scottish" whether it be a tartan kilt, a reel played on a fiddle, a Gaelic song, a

step dance, or a pipe band marching in a swirl of sound. One need not be intimately associated with the event to see these items as Scottish-themed.

Second is the idea that local forms of music, dance and other performance take place. The forms of entertainment that are on display at the Antigonish Highland Games are recognized as Scottish and familiar to the area. People are accustomed to dancing a square set at a ceilidh, hearing a lively round of fiddle tunes or the precision of a pipes and drum band. Further, they are also accustomed to socializing with friends at home and at larger events such as the Games. These types of actions are perceived as normal for Antigonish's inhabitants precisely because the music, dance and other entertainments are seen as part of the social life of Antigonish. Some people have grown up with fiddles and bagpipes and other musical instruments at home. More have been hearing the music, seeing the dancing and participating in these types of activities for many years. Still more may not participate in any visible way but still recognize that these types of activities are popular in Antigonish to those who participate in them. In fact, I believe it would be quite unusual for some people of the area not to enjoy themselves when engaged in these activities. For example, it is understood that a spontaneous square set or step dance will most likely develop out of hearing an exciting fiddle performance. These occurrences are not seen as foreign to the majority of the area's residents and are known to most residents of the area. Because they are known to most people, they are understood to be part

of a repertoire of what Stoeltje refers to as socioaesthetic forms. In using local forms, the people of Scottish descent in Antigonish are able to communicate what it means to be of Scottish descent among their group. They are also able to communicate this message to residents of Antigonish and area with other ethnic affiliations.

Stoeltje also notes the importance of community effort in organizing and presenting festivals of various kinds. As she notes, "systems of reciprocity and of shared responsibility ensure the continuity of and participation in the festival through the distribution of prestige and production" ("Festival" 261). This group effort was clearly in evidence at the Antigonish Highland Games. They are recognized as the oldest continuously held Highland Games in North America and this seems to inspire some of the people to make sure it continues. One of my informants, Iain Boyd, noted his family's involvement in the Highland Games and his sense of personal responsibility for helping to ensure that they continue. The brunt of the work falls on members of the Antigonish Highland Society, like Iain, but other people have also contributed in a variety of ways.

Dan MacInnes, another of my informants, explained that several families have contributed quietly to the success of the Highland Games for years. "Twenty-five years . . . they have done the same job. There are people who you never see, they just come in, and they put up fencing and there's other people

that take care of parking" (Personal interview, 19 July 1999). MacInnes noted that this type of behaviour is common but that there are gradually fewer people who can help as people age and the Highland Society tries to attract new members. Still, for those that do help, I believe it is reasonable to assume that they take pride in helping with the Highland Games in their own way.

Participation and performance are two types of activity that occurred repeatedly at festivals according to Stoeltje ("Festival" 263). At the Antigonish Highland Games, performance and participation often became intermingled. For example, competition events could be considered strictly performance-oriented. However, at other performances such as the ceilidhs at the beer tent, audience participation was a given. There was not a strict divide between performers and audience. Often, musicians encouraged the audience to join in the fun by clapping along or dancing on a low platform in front of the stage. In cases like these, performance then led to greater participation.

The concept of time as it relates to festival is also elucidated by Stoeltje. The connection between past and present is made during the occurrence of festival. In her words, "the messages [communicated at a festival] will be directly related to the present social circumstances as well as the past" ("Festival" 263). The passage of time at the Antigonish Highland Games is easy to see with historical references and evolution of the Highland Games, personal remembrances, and reflections on the area's history. The Games are well-known

as the oldest continually running Highland Games in North America and this fact is advertised in the Highland Games literature such as programs, newspaper articles and advertisements. The march of time is seen in what events are presented each year. As events change, the organizers, participants and spectators can actually view what is new that year and what is familiar. In listening to a lament for two deceased members of the Antigonish Highland Society, members may reflect on the year that has passed and the changes that have occurred since the last Highland Games. Above all, the Antigonish Highland Games provide a time to reflect on the area's history and the Scots' contribution to Antigonish. The presentation of the Antigonish Highland Games each year is a reflection and remembrance of the past, a celebration of the present and a view toward the future.

Roger D. Abrahams discusses the competitive and physical layout components of festival which helped me to understand some of the activities at the Antigonish Highland Games. As Falassi also notes, competitive aspects of festival are highlighted: "with games and sports, the focus is agonistic; conflict produces winners and losers. This kind of activity insists on distinguishing players from spectators" (314). At the Highland Games, the main focus was on the competitions weekend. However, I do not necessarily place all emphasis on competition because I was aware that a whole week of activities had evolved out of the Highland Games competitive weekend.

What was most interesting to me was that while Abrahams was certainly correct in his assertion that the competitions separated the players from the audience, I noticed that spectators had their own favourites who were not necessarily the winners. I overheard several ladies who were watching the Highland dancers make comments like, "oh isn't she cute?!" and "I'm impressed at how high she jumps!" These exchanges showed me the sometimes large divide between participants and spectators which I had not realized since, as a former competitor, I was more familiar with the dance competitions.

Abrahams also highlighted the physical layout of many festivals when he noted that many vendors are "placed at the periphery of the major play activities. The ticket-sellers and vendors are relegated to the margins of "where the action is" . . ." (317). This situation is true and occurs just as Abrahams described (see Figure 3.1). The marketing area of the Highland Games stood directly behind the grandstand bleachers, out of the way of the competitive events. Abrahams' use of the word "relegated" however would not be quite appropriate to describe sellers' locations at the Highland Games. After spending three full days at the Columbus Field site during a very busy Games, and studying the map of the area provided in the souvenir Games program, I believe that where the craftspeople and other vendors were settled was the best place for them. They had a sufficient space between them and the competitive field in order to be heard by their customers over the skirl of bagpipes, the thudding of

heavy events implements, the gasps and groans of the heavy events competitors, the interruptions of the Highland Games emcee, and the general noise of the crowds assembled at the field. In addition, anyone wanting food or drink had to pass by their area and the beer tent was located at an extreme back corner of their section. Anyone wanting the shade of this large tent, or a cool beverage, had no choice but to wander through the marketers' displays. While the vendors were tucked into their own area, they were not in an obscure place. I do not think that this affected their business in a negative manner.
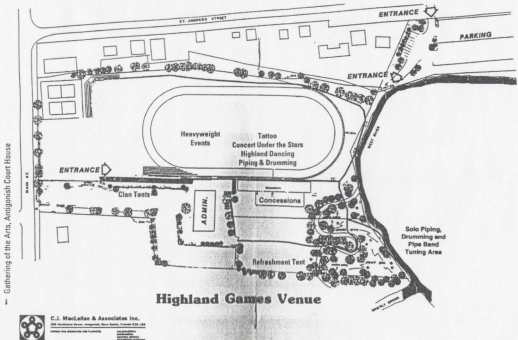
Figure 3.1 Map of Columbus Field showing layout of 1999 Antigonish Highland Games as included in the souvenir program

3.2 Falassi's Characteristics of Festival & Their Application to the Antigonish Highland Games

Falassi's characteristics of festival as outlined in "Festival: Definition and Morphology" are helpful in analyzing the Antigonish Highland Games. His characteristics include a *framing valorization ritual* which opens the festival, *rites of purification, rites of passage, rites of reversal, rites of conspicuous display, rites of conspicuous consumption, ritual drama, rites of exchange, rites of competition* and *rites of devalorization* to close the festival (Falassi 4-6). All traits of festival are not found in every festival and the Antigonish Highland Games are no exception. However, the Highland Games encompass an *opening valorization ritual, rites of passage, rites of conspicuous display, rites of conspicuous consumption, rites of competition* and a *closing devalorization ritual*.

3.3 Day One of the 1999 Antigonish Highland Games, Friday, July 16

Day One of the 1999 Antigonish Highland Games dawned calm and quiet. Events were concentrated in the late afternoon and early evening and consisted of a Highland Dancing choreography competition, road race, and opening ceremonies and Concert Under the Stars. For the 4:30 p.m. start of the choreography competition, I wandered down the length of a still Main Street. Entering a serene Columbus Field, I saw only a small group of people clustered around the dance platform in the centre of the field. This group included spectators and competitors of the choreography competition. I settled in on one

of the plastic chairs facing the platform and prepared for an energetic competition.

Choreography competitions in Highland Dancing focus on newly-created dance sequences as opposed to traditional dances like the Highland Fling, and Sword Dance. Choreography competitions often showcase group numbers with dancers performing in groups of two, three or more. As an audience member, I found this event to be low-key despite excellent performances from dancers in the local MacQuarrie School and Grant School. Contemporary Celtic music wafted over the nearly empty field as dancers wearing brightly coloured slip dresses accented with plaid in a rainbow of colours and modern form-fitting pants and T-shirts excitedly launched themselves into their performances. The small but enthusiastic crowd was most appreciative of their efforts and dancers cheered each other as prizes were awarded at the conclusion of the competition.

Following the choreography competition, I took the opportunity to visit the deserted craft and merchandise area located behind the grandstands. Most of the booths were not staffed, however, I was able to speak briefly with a couple of first-time vendors of Celtic jewelry and the like. The vendors were in the process of setting up their displays and were looking forward to a successful weekend. These vendors spent their summers on a festival circuit, traveling from one event to the next. Since most of the booths were closed and the road race start at 6:30 p.m. was fast approaching, I looked for a new position in front of the bleachers to

best view the race. By this time the field was starting to come to life. More and more people were beginning to fill the bleachers and track.

Approximately one hundred seventy-five contestants ran in four categories of Junior and Senior Male and Junior and Senior Female and the calm of the field was slipping away. The emcee announced the route of the race while runners warmed up on the track with stretching and running in place. I could hear that the growing crowd was becoming noisier, calling out their support to the various competitors. With the crack of the starter's pistol, the mass of runners surged around the track as the crowd roared to life, its supportive cheers echoing throughout the field (see Figure 3.2). Once the hundreds of pairs of feet pounded by for two full laps of the track, spectators subsided into a murmur as the runners exited the field to complete the "road" portion of the race. Eventually, the fastest contestants re-entered the field to another wave of cheering from the crowd to end the race with an additional two laps around the track. Finally, first, second, and third placings were announced in each of the four categories along with record-holding times.
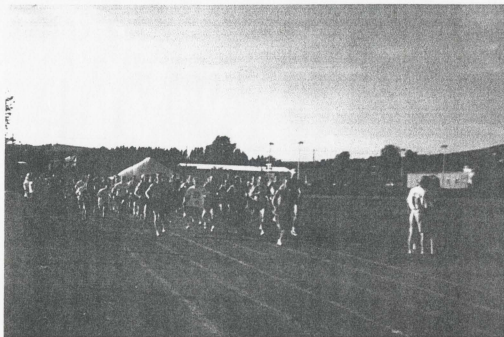
Figure 3.2 Runners at the start of the road race in Columbus Field

As the road race participants wrapped up on the track, I again chose to re-position myself for the opening ceremonies. I moved back to the plastic chairs set up in front of the dance platform to watch the opening ceremonies and Concert Under the Stars. By this time, the warmth of the day was diminishing. As the sun began to set and its light began to filter through the stately elm trees surrounding the field, I heard the sound of bagpipes in the distance. By this time, the chairs around me and the bleachers behind were full of spectators clapping in time to the music. As the music of the Antigonish Highland Society Pipes and Drums came closer, I saw that the band was leading the Antigonish Highland Society executive and members onto the field. I could not see well

because of the crowd obscuring my view, so I hopped up on my chair to snap some quick photographs as the band and the executive followed the curve of the track and moved toward the dance platform (see Figure 3.3). The executive ascended onto the platform and the crowd took their seats and quieted around me to watch.

Figure 3.3 Antigonish Highland Society Pipes and Drums (centre of photograph) leading the Society Executive to the platform for the opening ceremonies at dusk, July 16, 1999

3.4 The Opening Rite

Welcoming speeches were made by the Chief of the Clans, Ronald B. Chisholm, and the President of the Highland Society, my uncle Dave MacLean. During the course of the President's speech, the Games were declared officially

open. The speeches made by the Chief of the Clans and the President were quite short and formulaic and included such sentiments as welcoming the audience members to Antigonish for the Highland Games, offering their hope that the Games would be enjoyed by all who attended, wishing luck to the competitors, and expressing their pride in being part of the group which hosts the Games. The speeches also focused on the many years that the Games have been hosted in the community and the fact that the Games are one of the longest-running in North America. All spectators, both local and visitors, were welcomed and encouraged to take part in the various aspects of the Games. Following the official opening speeches, I was moved by a heartfelt tribute to two prominent Society members, Danny P. Gillis and Florence MacMillan, who had passed away that year - a lament played by Society piper Scott Williams. Overall, the feeling of this ceremony was solemn and formal.

Several other events can be considered opening valorization rituals for the 1999 Antigonish Highland Games. These events include an opening church service at St. Ninian's Cathedral on Sunday 11 July 1999, and the opening day parade on Saturday 17 July 1999. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the church services at St. Ninian's Roman Catholic Cathedral due to their presentation the weekend before the Highland Games proper. The Games' opening parade will be described later in this chapter. These proceedings can be considered a valorization ritual because each "modifies the usual and daily

function and meaning of time and space" (Falassi 4). The opening ceremony and

opening parade mark both time and space by showing Highland Games week as

a time set apart from all other times of the year. This observance happens by

revamping the usage of both Columbus Field where the Games take place and

the main streets of Antigonish while the parade winds its way through the town.

I expect that the church services held at the cathedral would also modify time

and space by noting the occurrence of Highland Games week within the context

of the Sunday Mass. It seems likely that prayers would be offered for a

successful Games week by the attending parishioners.

Usually, Columbus Field contains playground equipment and the

grandstand bleachers for spectators. But by the time of the opening ceremonies,

Columbus Field was clearly marked as the main site of Games activities. As

Falassi explains:

> the framing ritual that opens the festival
> is one of *valorization* . . . To serve as the theater of
> the festive events, an area is reclaimed, cleared,
> delimited, blessed, adorned, forbidden to normal
> activities (4).

Tents dotted the field for various purposes; they included the

beer/entertainment tent, clan tents, and shade tents for competitors. In addition,

the large dancing platform decorated with the Society's crest was erected in the

centre of the field while concession tents and trailers were situated behind the

bleachers. The concession area included music booths, booths with dancing and

piping supplies and souvenir booths which carried jewellery, crafts and other small items. These markers were the highlight of changes made to the physical space, delineating Columbus Field as a special site for the Highland Games.

As twilight gave way to darkness, the aptly named Concert Under the Stars began. This open-air concert has been a part of the Highland Games for the last forty years. The crowd enjoyed local entertainers such as the Antigonish Highland Society Pipe Band, Step-in-Time Ceilidh Dancers, MacGillivray Family (with fiddle, keyboard and dancing), and others during their performances on the dance platform. As the concert wound down a couple of hours later, spectators began to move in one of two directions. Those with young children began heading off the field toward home and rest while the over-nineteen crowd shifted to the beer tent behind the grandstands for a few rousing sets by Slainte Mhath.

Slainte Mhath is comprised of Ryan and Boyd MacNeil (younger brothers of the well-known Celtic band *The Barra MacNeils* from Sydney Mines), Bruce MacPhee, and Lisa Gallant. Each of the members is very talented in their own right. Ryan is best known for his piano and keyboard ability while his brother Boyd plays the fiddle, bodhran and other instruments. Bruce MacPhee was a member of the St. Ann's Gaelic College Pipe Band and plays the great Highland bagpipes and the uillean pipes. Lisa Gallant joined Slainte Mhath after two other members left the group; she plays the fiddle and bodhran as well as step dances.

This concert was an extremely popular one with the band's contagious on-stage energy and sense of fun. The audience was encouraged to join in by dancing, singing along and clapping along to the tunes. This performance was more raucous than those of the Concert Under the Stars because of the more confined area under the tent, the serving of alcohol and the age of the crowd and vitality of the performers. I could not stay for the entire length of this performance because of the early morning start of events the next day. By conducting the opening ceremony and the Concert Under the Stars immediately afterward, the importance of time was heightened to show that the Highland Games week was a special time of year for this area.

3.5 Day Two of the 1999 Antigonish Highland Games, Saturday, July 17

The morning of Saturday, July 17 was bright and warm. As the day progressed, the temperature reached thirty-five degrees. Another event which marked the opening of the Highland Games to the public was the Grand Street Parade on Saturday morning. Many spectators from the town and county attended the parade and for them, this signified the beginning of the Highland Games weekend. This parade was the first of many events to take place on one of the hottest days of the summer in Antigonish and the spectators were dressed accordingly; most wore shorts, T-shirts, tank tops and sunglasses as they stood at least four to five people deep along the parade route. The parade route led from St. Francis Xavier University, down St. Ninian Street through Main Street to

Columbus Field at the far end of Main Street. As the procession wended its way through the town, one was able to see the Scottish flavour of Antigonish in its business district. Many of the businesses allude to a Scottish connection with family names and references prominently displayed on the shops of Main Street. For example, some of the establishments included: Cameron's Jewellery Ltd.; D.D. MacDonald Ltd. (men's wear); Keltic Motors; Highland Stationers and Gifts Ltd.; MacKinnon Pharmacy Ltd. as well as many others. The parade entries included all the kilted pipe bands which would compete later in the day at the Games, community groups like the Royal Canadian Legion, the Shriners, 4-H, and the nurses of local St. Martha's Hospital (see Figures 3.4 to 3.8).
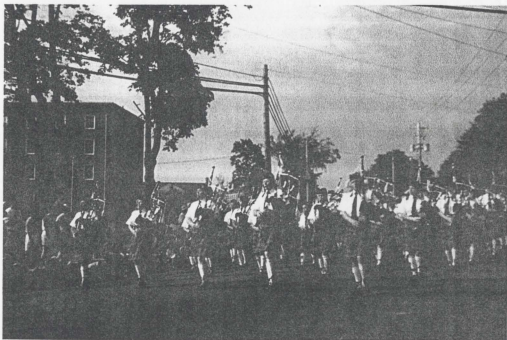
Figure 3.4 One of the pipe and drum bands marching in the parade on July 17, 1999
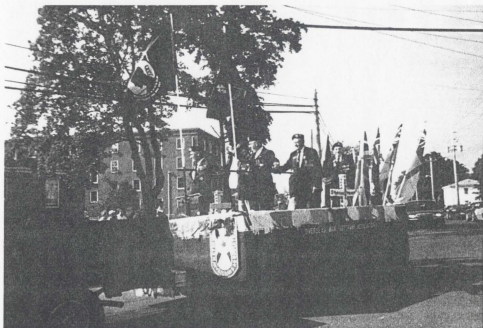
Figure 3.5 Royal Canadian Legion members participating in the parade

Figure 3.6 Shriners on Parade

Figure 3.7 4H members on their float in the parade

Figure 3.8 St. Martha's Hospital staff on their float

For the parade start at 9:00 a.m., I had chosen to view the proceedings at the Y-shaped intersection of St. Ninian Street and Highland Drive. St. Ninian Street was the left-hand branch of the Y while Highland Drive was the right-hand branch. My aunt and uncle's home was quite close to Highland Drive and I had hoped that by being nearer to the parade's starting point, I would avoid the crushing throngs of spectators. I arrived at the intersection by 8:30 a.m. to be met by eagerly waiting parade-goers standing three to four people deep in some places. I maneuvered my way toward a clear space and unpacked my camera to be prepared as the parade went by. As with the opening ceremonies the night before, parade participants were heard long before they were seen, with the sound of the drone and throb of the many pipes and drums preceding participants down the street. As the parade began to pass by, people stood up from their spots on the curb, waving and calling to those they knew in the parade. Children were hoisted onto shoulders for a better view of the parade participants. Float after float of local service organizations, cadet groups, legion members, businesses and heritage groups slowly made their way past, led by the President and Chief of the Clans in convertibles. Interspersed among all these groups were the many pipe bands that would be competing later in the day.

Once the end of the parade was in view, I relinquished my curb side vantage point, struggled my way through other spectators behind me to a clear spot on the sidewalk. I began inching my way toward Main Street and

Columbus Field by following the parade's route from the safety of the sidewalk. Because I was following in the parade's wake, people further along the route were not finished watching. Nearing Main Street, the sidewalk became even more congested and I was forced to zigzag my way through the clusters of people. I ducked into a pharmacy briefly for a Popsicle and a large bottle of water and basked in the air-conditioned confines of the shop. Back out on the street, back into the heat wave, I continued to slither through the thronging crowd. Finally I reached the entrance to Columbus Field at the far end of Main Street.

With a sigh of relief at being free of the many people lining Main Street, I veered to the right, toward the shade of the clan tents and trees. The sun was beating down, lighting the entire field and I was centred in two swirls of sounds both before and behind me. Pipes and drums from the parade were streaming into the field, finishing their musical medleys behind me while I could hear the chatter of the masses just ahead of me. Punctuating these steady walls of sound were the sharper, louder shouts from the spectators, snatches of conversations from the clan tents, engine noises from cars driving by on Main Street and if I listened especially carefully, I could just make out the solo piper playing for the dance competitors.

3.6 Rites of Passage at the Antigonish Highland Games

As I visited the clan tents, I observed a rite of passage occurring at the Antigonish Highland Games. I spoke to many people about why I was attending the Games, signed their guest books, and requested photographs of the members at their corresponding tents. During my visit with Clan MacDougall, I asked them to pose for a photograph, to which they happily agreed. Before I was able to take the picture, one man spoke up and asked me to wait for "the newest member of Clan MacDougall." With that, he brought out his newborn daughter, wearing her first kilt, and the picture was taken (see Figure 3.9). The man was obviously very proud of his daughter and quite excited that she was there. He stressed the significance to him of his daughter's first involvement in the Games and as Falassi notes "they [rites of passage] may be given special relevance by being part of a festive event. These may include forms of initiation into age groups, such as childhood, youth, adulthood . . ." (4). In this case, the newborn was being brought into a contemporary clan organization. While the child would not remember attending her first Games at the age of two weeks, her father most certainly would. This father was publicly announcing his daughter's birth and her entrance into an organization which held deep personal significance to him.

Figure 3.9 The newest member of Clan MacDougall in her father's arms

3.7 Rites of Conspicuous Display at the Antigonish Highland Games

Rites of conspicuous display were also most evident at the Antigonish

Highland Games. These rites allow the "most important symbolic elements of

the community to be seen, touched, adored, or worshipped . . ." (Falassi 4). Over

the course of the entire weekend, observers could see a variety of people wearing

their kilts. These people included the competitors in sundry events such as

piping, dancing and the heavy events, as well as Games organizers and

announcers and clan organization members. There were also many Scottish

concerts which included performances by bagpipers, fiddlers, dancers and the

like. As mentioned above, the Concert Under the Stars was the first official opportunity to view an array of entertainers.

The Antigonish Highland Games Pipe Band Tattoo took place on Saturday 17 July 1999 and according to the Games program, "the annual outdoor tattoo attempts to capture the full character and power of the great highland bagpipes in an after dark setting" (47). The word "tattoo" comes from incidences of drummers marching through the streets to issue a "last call" to soldiers in taverns in Holland in the 17th century. The drum beat would signal the tavern-keepers to "doe den tap toe" or "turn off their taps." This was eventually shortened to "tap toe" and then became "tattoo" (Nova Scotia International Tattoo website). The Antigonish Highland Games Tattoo included many pipe bands, along with local dance groups, the Scotia Highland Dancers and the Janice MacQuarrie Dancers. To denote the military origins of the tattoo, the 78th Highlanders from the Halifax Citadel also participated with a drill demonstration. There was a large crowd of all ages at the tattoo and at the following ceilidh in the beer/entertainment tent. There may have been more people at the ceilidh after the tattoo which featured the young Cape Breton band, Slainte Mhath, but the beer tent was a much more confined space which may have made the same number of people on the field look like many more underneath the tent. In addition, I must admit that I was quite tired after a long hot day of watching many competitive events at the field and I possibly was not

as alert as I could have been. The summer heat over the entire weekend was quite extraordinary for the area at approximately 35 to 38 degrees Celsius and caused rather uncomfortable conditions for competitors and spectators alike. Popsicle and ice cream vendors did a brisk business over the course of the weekend and many people carried large bottles of water. I carried a one litre bottle of water each day myself.

In addition to these more formal performance events, Antigonish was also the site of spontaneous performances throughout the town. It was not unusual to see young pipers busking in the downtown area, trying to earn a little extra money. In fact, one of my informants, Andrea Boyd, spoke about her experiences. As she notes:

> I've done busking during Highland Games week and people are just intrigued with the bagpipes. . . . it's such an unusual instrument and such an interesting one too, I'd say it's the instrument. Not a lot of people know any factual information about the bagpipes so when you're on the street, they're very interested. They don't know anything about it so, it's a lot of fun to explain stuff . . ." (Personal interview, 12 January 2000).

"Piper's Pub," one of the local pubs, also sponsored Scottish-themed entertainment during the Games with somewhat lesser known performers. As its name denotes, "Piper's Pub" is steeped in Scottish flavour. Inside, it is decorated with military regalia such as large swords on the walls and old pictures. The furniture is made of dark wood and patrons may eat in front of a

large fireplace. On the outside of the building, there are large circular disks painted with portraits of Highland dancers, and bagpipers. On the day that I visited the pub, a fiddler and pianist duo was playing with a guitarist joining in for some of the numbers. Rites of conspicuous display at the Antigonish Highland Games feature elements of material culture such as Highland dress, tartan, bagpipes, and fiddles most prominently in these rites' performances.

3.8 Rites of Conspicuous Consumption at the Antigonish Highland Games

According to Falassi, "rites of conspicuous consumption usually involve food and drink" (4). During the Games week, many clan dinners and community suppers took place that were advertised by the Games organizers but were not specifically part of the Games themselves. These foodways events occurred throughout Antigonish town and county. They included Clan Donald Day and Dinner, Heatherton; Clan Chisholm Day; Clan MacDougall Day, Whidden's Bridge; Pomquet Salmon Supper, Pomquet; Clan MacGillivray Reception, Antigonish; and Heatherton Lobster Supper, Heatherton.

While I was unable to attend these dinners due to time and distance constraints, I have been told that these events can range from small and intimate to large, banquet-style affairs. In Antigonish, these events can take place in locations such as a church hall for a smaller group or the university facilities for much larger groups. Before the dinner, grace is offered. The dinner is most often a hot meal such as a turkey dinner with all the trimmings, dessert, tea and coffee.

The serving of haggis and the recitation of Robbie Burns' poem "Ode to a Haggis" is one of the highlights of a clan dinner. The haggis may be piped into the dinner's location, a society member addresses the haggis and then it is served to all present. The haggis is served with "neeps" (turnip) on a bed of lettuce. Clan dinners may also include the Jacobite toast where four men toast Bonnie Prince Charlie by standing with one foot on a chair and one foot on a table and toast the Prince over a large bowl of water. This signifies Charlie's flight from Scotland "over the water" to France after the Battle of Culloden.

In addition to these clan dinners and community suppers, the Games committee sponsored ceilidhs and Scottish pubs at the beer/entertainment tent at Columbus Field. During these performances, alcoholic beverages and soft drinks flowed freely. However, I did not witness any unruly behaviour while at the Games. The drinks offered at the beer tent included typical beer like Alexander Keith's, as well as soft drinks like Pepsi and Sprite and bottled water.

Entertainment included fiddlers Rodney MacDonald and Glenn Graham; Slainte Mhath; Kendra and Troy MacGillivray and local performers who spontaneously joined the slated entertainment. Rodney MacDonald and Glenn Graham are cousins from western Cape Breton and according to Antigonish CJFX radio personality, Ray MacDonald are "vibrant and innovative yet with the old sound that belies their youthful years" (Games souvenir program 41). This descriptive quote shows the local value placed on fiddlers paying homage to

traditional sound while still infusing their music with their individual stamp and trying new interpretations. In describing the Cape Breton band, Slainte Mhath, the Games souvenir program states:

> Slainte Mhath (pronounced slawn-cha va) is the
> Gaelic for "good health." The expression is often
> used for a toast just before taking a dram. Since
> 1994 Slainte Mhath increasingly has come to mean
> as well a group of innovative musicians (42).

Noticeably, the word "innovative" is used in descriptions of Glenn Graham, Rodney MacDonald and Slainte Mhath's performance styles. This highlights the acceptance of experimentation within local music and the understanding that the music is always evolving. Finally, sister and brother duo of fiddler Kendra and pianist Troy MacGillivray are from Lanark, Antigonish County. They were very well received and were joined by their Highland dancing sister, Sabra, at the Concert Under the Stars. Each of these groups sparked excitement in their audiences and encouraged the audience's participation. This exuberant attitude led to audience members dancing in square sets and as individuals. All of these performers have national and international performing experience and provided excellent entertainment during the Highland Games.

3.9 Rites of Competition at the Antigonish Highland Games

Obviously, rites of competition played a large role in the Antigonish Highland Games. Competitors were involved in solo and band bagpipes, drumming, traditional and choreographed Highland dance, Scottish heavy

events, and a five mile road race. Falassi notes that "by singling out its outstanding members and giving them prizes, the group implicitly reaffirms some of its most important values" (5). Moreover, " . . . such games may be seen as display and encouragement of skills such as strength, endurance and precision required in daily work and military occupations . . ." (5).

The most interesting and perhaps most frustrating for me as a first-time ethnographer was the fact that all the competitions on Columbus Field occurred simultaneously. As a child, I remember feeling a great deal of excitement at seeing all the events taking place at once. As a young dancer, to reach the platform in the middle of the field I had to carefully cross the track where all the running events were taking place. It would not do to be in the way when the runners came rushing by! Once that obstacle had been surmounted, I remember passing the heavy events competitors while I could hear the strains of the piping and drumming competitions going on in the nearby Piper's Glen. As a young girl, the heavy events were always a little intimidating to me. It seemed as though the caber could come crashing down on my head if I were not careful, but in reality, I was never that close to the heavy events competitors. It just seemed that way when I had to make my way past them to the dance platform. Some of the people I have spoken to have likened it to a three ring circus, but with organization in what appears to be a confusing group of events.

When I returned to the Games in July 1999 with the purpose of completing my thesis, I was most concerned with being able to see as many of the events as possible with the intent of obtaining as broad an overview as I could manage. So, in trying to observe all the events, it seemed that I was constantly in motion for the two days of competitions. I was lucky in that the heavy events and dancing took place in fairly close proximity to one another. If I positioned myself carefully between them, I could almost view both simultaneously. I also had to take time to go to Piper's Glen which is a somewhat more secluded area of the field. It is surrounded by trees and is bordered by a small stream called Brierly Brook. When one enters Piper's Glen, there is no way to see the rest of the field so I had to plan my time accordingly. I did not want to be in Piper's Glen for indefinite periods of time if there were other events to be viewed in the more open part of the field. I also spent time in the beer/entertainment tent for the ceilidhs and wandered through the concessions area at intervals throughout the day.
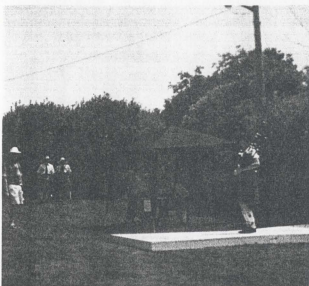
Figure 3.10 Solo piper competing in Piper's Glen with the judge seated underneath the tent and spectators to the left
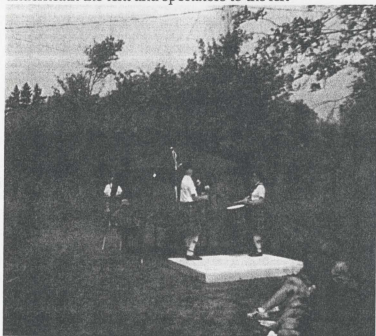
Figure 3.11 A pipe and drum duo competing in Piper's Glen with judges seated underneath the tent and spectators to the right

Competitions in bagpiping occurred in one of three sections -- solo, band, and pibroch. The music played in solo and band competition is considered the "light music" of the pipes. Light music includes strathspeys, marches, reels, jigs and hornpipes. Pibroch is the "great music" or classical music of the bagpipes. Bagpipe competition divisions consist of Novice juvenile, Grades five, four, three, two and one and an open category. These categories descend in the above order according to level of ability and experience. Novice juvenile is the beginners' grouping, while the open category is for those pipers who can be considered professionals. Grades five through one signify increasing levels of difficulty, with grade one piping requirements being much more complex than grade five. This system is in place for both solo and band competition.

Highland dancing competitions took place in traditional and choreographed dances at the Antigonish Highland Games. The traditional dance category was subdivided into Highland and National categories. Highland dances are those which were originally done by men and the costume is the kilt. For competition at the Highland Games, they included the Highland Fling; the Sword Dance; the Seann Triubhas (pronounced shaun trews); and the Reel. National dances are more balletic and graceful, becoming more prominent when women became involved in Highland dancing in the early twentieth century. Its costume is called an aboyne which is meant to represent traditional Scottish women's dress. National dances competed in during the Games included the

Scottish Lilt; the Flora MacDonald's Fancy; the Highland Laddie; Wilt Thou Go to the Barracks, Johnny?; the Village Maid; and Blue Bonnets Over the Border.

Divisions of competition in Highland dancing at Antigonish consist of primary, beginner, novice, intermediate and premier. Primary dancers are those who are under seven years of age. Then, a dancer remains in beginner until he or she records placings at six separate competitions while novice requires three wins. A dancer then remains in the intermediate category for one full year before being automatically moved to the highest competitive category of premier. Dance requirements for the each category vary; the more inexperienced categories mix Highland and National dances in one competition. Premier dancers compete in two different competitions of only Highland and only National dances in Antigonish. During my competitive career, I reached the highest level of Premier which was known as "Open" then.
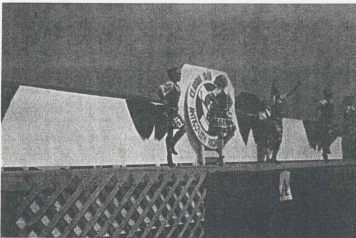
<u>Figure 3.12</u> Highland dancers performing the Highland Fling on the dance platform

Competition also took place in the ancient Scottish heavy events at the Antigonish Highland Games. The heavy events include the stone throw, twenty-eight pound and fifty-six pound weight throw, sixteen pound hammer throw, and the caber toss. The stone throw is a test for distance and requires the athlete to hurl a twenty-five pound rock with one hand in a shot-put style. The twenty-eight and fifty-six pound weight throws are a test for height where an iron block with a chain and ring attached are thrown into the air over a bar until no competitors can clear the bar's height. The hammer throw is also for distance and the athlete must stand still while rotating the hammer above his head and then releasing it. The caber toss is probably the most recognizable of the Scottish heavy events and consists of each athlete shouldering a log and then attempting to heave it end over end. The caber toss is judged with an imaginary clock face; the competitor's feet are considered to be six o'clock and a perfect throw would turn end over end to land at twelve o'clock. All other attempts are measured against this standard. Heavy events competition was divided into junior and senior categories. In the Games I attended, the junior competition took place on 17 July 1999, with the senior competition occurring on the next day.
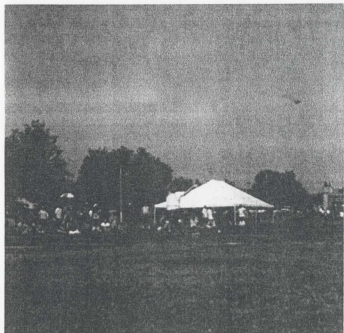
Figure 3.13 The hammer flies through the air (upper right) in this test for distance
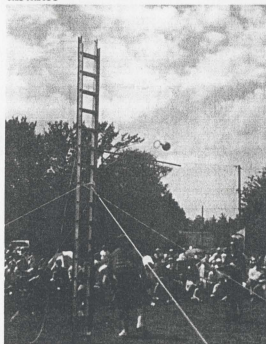
Figure 3.14 The competitor clears the bar in the weight throw for height
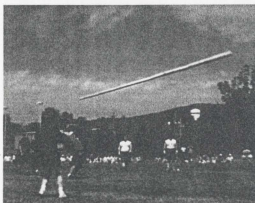
<u>Figure 3.15</u> The caber is hurled by the competitor dressed in red during this test for accuracy

When I was a Highland dancing competitor, the Highland Games also included track and field events. This part of the Games has evolved over the years and the usual track events have been replaced with a five kilometre road race. In 1999, the road race occurred on the afternoon of Friday 16 July before the opening ceremonies later that evening. Competition was divided into Open Male and Female and Junior Male and Female categories among 175 competitors. The route encompassed two laps around the track at Columbus Field, along the area known as Antigonish Landing, then returning for a final two laps around the track at the field.

Rites of competition are the main focus of the Antigonish Highland Games. While many other activities take place during the week, all these occur because of the competitions held at the Games. These additional concerts, ceilidhs, parades, and performances would not happen if not for the Games'

presentation each year. The competitions at the Games also demonstrate the extent of rule boundaries and levels of categorization for each event. Each event, whether it is bagpiping and drumming, Highland dancing, or heavy events have their own conventions which are well-established and followed at the Games. In bagpiping and Highland dancing, certain tune types or specific dances are performed by each competitor to provide a fair competition for all involved. Bagpiping and drumming and Highland dancing also maintain a system where competitors are grouped according to skill from beginner to most advanced. The heavy events contain their own rules of competitors' placement based on measurements of length and height for the throwing events and accuracy for the caber toss.

3.10 Day Three at the 1999 Antigonish Highland Games

Day Three of the 1999 Antigonish Highland Games was Sunday, July 18. The start of my day was somewhat more leisurely than the two previous action-packed days. I skipped the 8:30 a.m. start of more solo piping competition in favour of observing the competition later in the afternoon. I made my way to Columbus Field in the bright sunshine for the 10 a.m. kick-off of the Ancient Scottish Heavy Events Championships and the start of the day's Highland Dance competitions. As on Saturday, I sat mid-way between these two competitions so that I could observe both simultaneously. Over my left shoulder, I watched and listened to their roars of effort as the men heaved the caber end over end, hurled

the weights overhead in a test for the best height, and pitched weights like a shot-put. Over my right shoulder, I watched as dancers proceeded onstage in twos and threes for the day's competitions. As each group of dancers stepped on the stage, I listened for the whine of the bagpipe's drone as the dance piper began the tune afresh.

At lunchtime, I had a hot dog at the concession stands and prepared for the Atlantic Canadian Pipe Band championships. For this competition, I moved away from the centre field and took up a position between the clan tents and the centre field, nearer to the track. From this vantage point, I was able to see the bands form up in their precision marching ranks and march onto the field as a great wave of sound washed over me and the rest of the crowd. Each bass drumbeat echoed in my chest, a thump of a giant heart. The ground thundered with the step of each band member pacing the field.

Figure 3.16 One of the smaller pipe bands competing under the watchful eyes of four judges who are listening to different aspects of the piping and drumming. One judge can be seen on the far left of the photograph (wearing hat), another with his back to the photograph, another on the far right holding a clipboard and the last with white hair behind the band, to the left of the judge on the far right.

The piping championship was the concluding event of the 1999 Antigonish Highland Games after three extremely hot days. I remember wondering if the import of the fact that this was championship piping affected much of the crowd. I know that had I not known that this was a championship, I would have believed it to be simply another run-of-the-mill competition. Perhaps those in the audience who came specifically to hear the piping would recognize the importance of hearing a championship piping event but I do not believe that much significance would have been placed on it by the average spectator.

After all the pipe bands had competed, they marched en masse before the crowd. They then played a few tunes as a large group, but did not continue for as long as they had in past years due to the warmth of the day. Following the massed performance of the pipe band, the Halifax Police Pipe Band (the Grade One champions of the day) began marching off the field toward the beer/entertainment tent for a celebratory, impromptu concert. A large crowd (including me) realized where they were heading and rushed to the beer/entertainment area to beat the pipe band there and get good seats for their round of tunes. After the Halifax Police Pipe Band had finished, many of the members headed to get some drinks while Slainte Mhath took over the fun and continued on for their second concert underneath the tent. A wide variety of people were represented at this ceilidh and everyone appeared to be having a

great time. Slainte Mhath put on excellent shows during both of their performances with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm. However, I did not stay to the very end of this concert as it was the second very hot day of the weekend and I had to prepare to return home the next day.

3.11 The Closing Rite

Concluding the Antigonish Highland Games is a *rite of devalorization* or rite of closing. Falassi states that the closing rite is "symmetrical to the opening one, marks the end of the festive activities and the return to the normal spatial and temporal dimensions of daily life." (6). This is not exactly how events took place in Antigonish during Highland Games week. There was another church service which marked the closing of the Highland Games on Sunday 18 July at the St. James United Church. However, Beverly J. Stoeltje describes a festival as "beginning with the formal and moving to the informal. Often it concludes with dancing in the streets, large feasts, or displays of fireworks" ("Festival in America" 242). This description matches the end of the Highland Games much more closely with the pipe band championship and then the party at the beer tent afterward.

3.12 Conclusion

By examining the Antigonish Highland Games as an example of festival, I was able to discover more about how other scholars defined festival. With the typologies that they had developed, I had a framework in which to observe the

Highland Games. I was then able to analyze what I saw using all the characteristics that they had highlighted. Perhaps most importantly, their words helped to prepare me for the hustle and bustle of a festival and how to successfully research in such a busy environment. There can be no doubt that the Antigonish Highland Games are a festival since they exhibit so many of the traits described and discussed by scholars such as Falassi, Stoeltje and Abrahams. Most importantly, Abrahams concludes that by holding these public display events, "the *use* and value of things and acts is defended, in the face of those who would turn all of life into acts of consumption" (320). These words reinforced my belief that the Antigonish Highland Games are an event that is an event primarily for the people of Antigonish despite the large groups of tourists who come to Antigonish to see the Highland Games each year.

The following chapter will focus on aspects of community identity displayed at the Antigonish Highland Games.

Chapter 4

Community Identity in Antigonish

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses definitions of community and identity, and makes use of Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" as a way to understand community identity. I also explore the links between the community's past and present and their impact on the Highland Games' presentation each year. Finally, I discuss the ways in which the community negotiates the effects of tourism on the event, and how this impacts issues of authenticity.

4.1 Defining Community and Identity

In considering the concept of community identity with respect to the Antigonish Highland Games, one must first define the term "community" and explain its relationship to the study of the Games. Further, one must consider what is meant by the term "community identity." This section will explore ideas about community, and identity as they relate to the experience of the Antigonish Highland Games.

Many folklore scholars have advanced a definition of a folk group. Dan Ben-Amos builds on the idea of a "small group" (12). The small group must share understanding of the same reference points in order for the folkloric communicative process to take place. In his words:

for the folkloric act to happen, two social conditions
are necessary: both the performers and the audience
have to be in the same situation and be part of the
same reference group. This implies that folklore
communication takes place in a situation in which
people confront each other face to face and relate to
each other directly (Ben-Amos 12-13).

Ben-Amos's comments certainly apply to the situation at the Antigonish

Highland Games. People who attend the Games generally have some

understanding of what is happening. Whether their knowledge is in-depth or

not depends on their level of interest and previous experience. As well, during

the events of the Highland Games, many people have the opportunity to

personally interact on the competition field, at the ceilidhs and house parties and

everywhere in between.

A more detailed definition of folk group is given by Alan Dundes who

defines "folk" as:

any group of people whatsoever who share at least
one common factor. It does not matter what the
linking fact is – it could be a common occupation,
language or religion – but what is important is that
a group formed for whatever reason will have some
traditions which it calls its own (2).

As Dundes notes, it is this common set of traditions which assist the group in

having a sense of group identity (2). I refer to identity as the manner in which

people view themselves and the ways in which they relate to a group.

Participation in the Antigonish Highland Games is one way that people may feel

that they are part of a group, part of the community at Antigonish. The Games act as a focal point for those involved to recognize a common identity. Clearly, Ben-Amos' and Dundes' definitions of folk groups have been helpful in clarifying the concept for me.

However, my experience at the Antigonish Highland Games showed that these clearly stated and sharply defined ideas of group are not as simple in practice at this event. In Antigonish, there is a complex overlapping of people and groups which make defining a broader "community" very complicated. There is not just one community at the Antigonish Highland Games; there are many. Richard Bauman's concept of differential identity is also at play at the Games. As he has noted, "the identity feature which is relevant to the participation of one party in a social relationship may be the same or different from that of the other parties to the relationship" (34). It is clear to me that the Antigonish Highland Games may offer the opportunity for interaction between those of shared or differential identities. As he questioned, "does the performance of folklore only occur in interaction between people of parallel, shared identity, or does it figure in relationships between people of differential identity as well?" At the Antigonish Highland Games, the performance of folklore includes the interaction of shared and differential identity groups. Later in this chapter, I will argue that there are several "communities" at the Antigonish Highland Games based on their knowledge of and experience with

the Games. I will also attempt to define each of these groups and describe how they function at the Highland Games.

My understanding of community identity stems from the combining of the terms "community" and "identity." The community is the group, or groups, involved and their identity is how they see themselves and respond in group situations. Community identity is presented at the Highland Games as the overall Antigonish community expresses its ideal vision of itself. According to Carole Farber, who studied festivals in Ontario, festivals are about "identity, whether personal or social, and they are the context and the process of creating links between people in the community, as well as between the community and the wider national and cultural environment" (34).

4.2 The Idea of an Imagined Community

Implicitly understood in this discussion of community and identity is the concept of a "real" versus "imaginary" community as discussed by international studies scholar Benedict Anderson. On one hand, the Antigonish Highland Games are a celebration of a "real" community. Antigonish is "real" in two senses of the word. First, Antigonish exists as an actual place with people living there. Second, the word "real" is used to denote the fact that Antigonish is a small town with the inhabitants having the opportunity to know many of their neighbours as opposed to a larger centre where most people do not know each other even if they live in the same community. According to Anderson, "all

communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined . . . Javanese villagers have always known that they are connected to people they have never seen . . ." (6).   Calling oneself an Antigonisher is not the same as referring to oneself as a Haligonian or Torontonian, for example.   These larger centres have smaller pockets of communities where neighbours know one another and which make up the whole.   However, there is no possible way that everyone in Halifax or Toronto will know each other personally.   This knowledge of one's neighbours is more possible in a place like the town of Antigonish with a population of approximately 5,000 people.

It is this sense of relation to one's fellow citizens that points in the direction of an "imagined" community - one in which people do not know each other personally but still have a sense of one another and belonging to a particular group.   This idea allows people to claim membership in a country, as Canadians, for example.   My experience of being a Canadian is probably vastly different from a Newfoundlander's, a Quebeçois or a British Columbian's experience.   Yet, we are all Canadian.   There is a larger idea to which people feel they belong.

An imagined community is also experienced by people visiting the Highland Games.   At Antigonish, some people come seeking a connection with their past, no matter how slight. Scott Williams relates that:

> You get the clan organizations who set up their
> clan tents and they're really sort of like amateur
> genealogy societies and are trying to be in touch
> with other people that have . . . the same name,
> may have some connection with them in that way.
> You know, they come here from all over the world
> and find "oh you're a Matheson. Oh yes, I'm a
> Matheson, my mother was a Matheson." And
> therefore, may have some of the same interests
> or share some of the same heritage . . ." (Personal
> interview, 9 January 2000).

These people can now be proud that they have located themselves in a larger
context or cultural milieu - as a Matheson, as a person of Highland Scottish
descent. They now may have a stronger sense of family history and an enhanced
sense of their place in a family group (the Mathesons) or a cultural group
(Highland Scottish descendants).

Anthropologist Celeste Ray believes that Highland Games are an event in
which "a very real sense of *Gemeinschaft* may be experienced when an imagined
community physically assembles in celebration of its identity through the
celebration of the past" (98). In addition to an emotional connection or feeling of
belonging, there is a physical presence of a group of people who share the same
ideas and feelings about the past. The Highland Games may help to validate the
emotional attachment that people feel toward personal and cultural history.
Participation in the Games is a tangible way to connect with the past.

4.3 Highland Games as Community Celebration of Past and Present

In his study of the Glengarry Highland Games in Glengarry County,

Ontario, historian James Hunter contends that:

> What is being celebrated at the Glengarry Highland
> Games and similar festivals is the profound sense of
> community generated over the last two hundred
> years in the homesteads and the villages established
> with such difficulty in this little bit of North
> America. The dancers, the pipebands, the hammer-
> throwers, the fiddlers and the singers have the
> vital role of making clear that the Glengarry
> Highland Games are a Highland occasion. But what
> matters much more than the formal proceedings is
> the opportunity which such an event provides each
> year for many thousands of men and women, many
> of them living now in other parts of Canada or in
> the United States, to renew their acquaintance with
> the place which, for several generations, their people
> have called home (Hunter 87).

Hunter's observations regarding the Glengarry Highland Games also ring true

for the sequence of events at the Antigonish Highland Games. With respect to

the sense of community generated and maintained during Games week in

Antigonish, it was clear that the Games are one specific time of the year where

this sense of community is highlighted and celebrated each year. Bill Kiely noted

"during the fall and the winter, we do have St. Andrew's Night, [and] Robbie

Burns' Night in January" (Personal interview, 10 January 2000) which are other

events hosted by the Highland Society during the year. However, these other

events may be considered preludes to the most prominent event of the year in

Antigonish, as far as those of Highland Scots descent are concerned – the Antigonish Highland Games. When the Highland Games are viewed as one part of a continuum within a calendar year, it is easy to see that the Games are the focus of Scottish-themed events in Antigonish.

In noting that many expatriates return home for the Glengarry Highland Games, Hunter was again correct in his observations. Several informants noted that many people living away from home schedule their vacation time so that it coincides with the Highland Games week so that they are able to take part in the festivities. By taking time specifically to come home for the Highland Games, these expatriates are able to reconnect with family and friends as well as show the importance of the Highland Games. Scott Williams believes that ". . . when they leave home, for the rest of their lives the place they left is the most, [the] dearest place in the world. And if people have left Antigonish, it's Antigonish that will always be for the rest of their lives . . ." (Personal interview, 9 January 2000). The pride of place that these people feel for Antigonish affects the choices that they make regarding their return and what they do when they visit.

Hunter's observations on the Glengarry Highland Games and its linkage to a Highland sense of identity extend even further. He realizes that while people of Highland Scottish descent in North America want to acknowledge their connections to Scotland, they also want to celebrate their own pride of place - their homes in North America. Hunter states that:

The Glengarry sense of identity, as far as the county's
Scots-descended families are concerned, is certainly
Highland in origin. But that same sense of identity
and it is a very powerful one – is <u>rooted</u> also in
experiences which owe little or nothing to Scotland;
in the act of emigration; . . . in the years, the
lifetimes really, spent turning forest into farmland;
in all the myriad happenings which have made
Glengarry County what it is today. No, they do
not do things here quite in the style thought proper
back in Scotland. Why should they? Glengarry
folk go partying on their games day not because
they want to play at being Scots but because they
want to celebrate the fact of their being North
American Scottish Highlanders. That is – and
it should be recognized as such – an absolutely key
distinction (Hunter 87).

As the excerpt demonstrates, Hunter understands the combination of loyalties

that North American Scottish Highlanders exhibit. His description of the

Glengarry Highland Games activities is equally accurate for events at

Antigonish. That Antigonishers celebrate by using the Highland Games form

shows a link to their Scottish ancestry. However, they have tailored the

Highland Games form to fit their purposes. North American games, including

those at Antigonish, are not an exact replica of Scottish ones. Similarities can still

be seen between North American and Scottish Highland Games, but differences

are also evident. Many of the organizers of the Antigonish Highland Games and

Highland Society members have had opportunities to visit other Highland

Games in Canada, the United States and Scotland. These organizers use the

format of the Highland Games to offer a festival that encompasses the community at large.

Hunter's comments about community pride are echoed by my informants as well. Bill Kiely discusses Antigonish's history and the Scots contribution to the area by stating that: "Scottish people are very, very proud people for what they have accomplished. . . . they have all the reason in the world to be very proud . . . The forests were right down to the water's edge here in this county when they arrived and these people survived. They cut the trees, they built their homes, they built their families" (Personal interview 10 January 2000). Even Kiely's choice of words (such as "survival") and the images his words convey (such as "trees down to the water's edge") reiterate Hunter. They show the universality of themes relating to emigration and its effects. Whether Highland Scottish people moved to Glengarry County, Ontario or Antigonish County, Nova Scotia, they were faced with similar problems and needed to fashion solutions to these difficulties.

As Hunter asserts, the differences in how Highland Games are presented between the two countries stem from the experiences of the past. People cannot help but change when faced with life-changing events such as immigrating to a new country, constructing another home and succeeding in life in a new place. These are the experiences that the Highland Scottish emigrants to Glengarry County faced. These are also the experiences faced by Highland Scots arriving in

Antigonish County, Nova Scotia. When people change to meet challenges, future generations are affected by the decisions that they made. This is why North American Highland Games differ from Scottish ones. That these people have persevered and endured is cause for celebration. And they do celebrate at the Antigonish Highland Games.

4.4 Past and Present Benefits of Hosting Antigonish Highland Games

Historically, the Highland Games have been involved in and assisted with community ventures. The local newspaper, <u>The Casket</u>, provides some historical information to contextualize the Games. For example, the 1924 edition of the Antigonish Highland Games helped St. Martha's Hospital. According to the newspaper column, the hospital was in urgent need of an expansion. At that time, the facility had fifty beds and was serving more patients. Therefore, in 1924, the Games were held in conjunction with a fundraising bazaar at the grounds of St. Francis Xavier University. This bazaar netted nine thousand dollars, with eighty-seven hundred dollars raised and an additional donation of three hundred dollars promised to the hospital (<u>The Casket</u>, 31 July 1924, 6). I believe that this shows the community-mindedness of the organizers of the Games. In helping the local hospital raise funds, they helped the entire community. A hospital is a very important facility to have within the community and the expansion was an improvement to it. Even today, there is a

relationship between the Games and the hospital. In 1999, St. Martha's Hospital contributed a float to the opening parade (see page 86).

Another community-oriented project took place at the 1940 Antigonish Highland Games. That year's Games were in aid of the Red Cross (The Casket, 1 August 1940, 12). In a newspaper advertisement, a list of events is included along with the notice regarding the Red Cross. There was no further information about this project in the paper. However, when one considers the time frame, it is reasonable to assume that the Red Cross was involved in special projects to aid the war effort.

Alyce Taylor Cheska has made an exhaustive survey of Antigonish's newspaper, The Casket, for her article about the Highland Games. In addition to the hospital fundraiser and cooperation with the Red Cross, she noted other actions which could show the Antigonish Highland Society's concern for their community. They include "the collection of monies for distressed Hebrides Islanders, the needy in Antigonish County, . . . the war memorial, a monument at Arisaig commemorating the landing of the first settlers, and the education of local children and adults" (Cheska 56).

A group which has had an impact on the Highland Games parade is the Coady International Institute at St. Francis Xavier University. Named for Dr. M.M. Coady, the Institute attracts students from around the world to learn about community development. While these students were not part of the 1999 parade,

in the past these students have added a distinct, multicultural flavour to the parade by displaying the native dress of their respective countries and performing in the parade during the many years of the Games. The participation of Coady International Institute students helps to show the place of St. F.X. within the community of Antigonish. In fact, several of my informants are alumni of St. F.X. Antigonish is a university town and it seems that most people are proud of the university and the accomplishments of those who studied and worked there.

For example, St. F.X. was the incubator for the Antigonish Movement which was started by Dr. Coady and Dr. Jimmy Tompkins. The Antigonish Movement was "popular education and community organizing which enabled people to change their lives and their futures" (History and Philosophy of the Coady International Institute website, 22 July 2001). It was begun in the local area in the 1920s and after World War II, the movement spread to developing nations. The institute seeks "to empower disadvantaged peoples with the knowledge and skills they need to shape their own destinies" (History and Philosophy of the Coady International Institute website, 22 July 2001). The institute's work continues today.

It is fair to say that Antigonishers are proud of the university and the Antigonish Movement. According to Bill Kiely, Antigonish is:

a special community . . . the caring for other

people is always here . . . I think it comes from
the university too, you know. We're a university
town where the Coady International Institute is
located and the Antigonish Movement had its start
here through Dr. Coady and the theme of that is
people helping people and I grew up with that. I
knew Dr. Coady as a youngster, as a high school
student and was so impressed with the way that he
felt that people should live their lives. We have to
care about other people. I think that's still very
evident here and we've been very fortunate to
have him as the head of this worldwide movement
now that has people helping people and that
happens everyday in Antigonish, [or] so I think
it is (Personal interview 10 January 2000).

Clearly, the university's community ethic and its aims have been translated to

the people of Antigonish.

Today, people in Antigonish continue to be engaged in their community

and its activities. Participation in the Highland Games was quite visible in 1999

and came from all around the town. Main Street stores were decorated with lots

of tartan fabric, images of bagpipes, drums, and dance slippers as well as

pictures of thistle and heather, common flora from Scotland. Hotels, motels and

campgrounds were full. At the end of the week, the change back to normalcy

was just as quick and just as startling as the beginning hustle and bustle of the

Games. During Highland Games week, it was very difficult to manoeuvre

through the restaurants, shops and sidewalks of Main Street and the downtown

area because of the heightened numbers of people visiting. After the weekend of

competitive events was over, there was much less traffic in the downtown area.

Some of my informants describe a distinct air of excitement surrounding

Antigonish in the time leading up to the Highland Games. They also note the

hectic pace of the town during the Games and then the slowing or "back to

normal" return of the town after the Games excitement. As Michael Campbell

relates:

> It'd be February, March, April, May, there's
> what I find anyway in the piping community
> and people that are involved in the Highland
> Games themselves, whether they be the heavy
> events, or dancing or organizers or whatever,
> seems to be an air of excitement. You can't wait
> until the middle of July for the Games here. . . .
> as it gets closer of course, the excitement builds and
> you always hear people practicing if you walk
> around the streets, . . . You hear kids practicing in
> their backyards and then during the Games, the
> weekend, or actually the week of the Games, but
> particularly the weekend, Antigonish is just a buzz
> of activity. I mean a lot of people come in to participate
> and people from the area. There's people all over the
> place and the music - you can hear it on a competition field
> and at house parties and in pubs and on the
> street corners. Everywhere, it's everywhere and
> once the Games finish up Sunday, late Sunday
> afternoon, and Columbus Field is empty, it's like
> a ghost town. (Personal interview 26 January 2000).

Indeed, I observed such a swell of activity during the Highland Games. I

arrived in the town a few days before the Highland Games week was to begin

and saw the transformation that the town underwent. Columbus Field was

altered from a standard, relatively quiet community area with playground

equipment, running track and green, grassy fields to a busy place filled with tents and teeming with people.

Clearly the activities of bagpiping and drumming, Highland dancing and athletic competitions, ceilidhs and other events during Games week point out that this community event is primarily about and for those community members who are descended from the area's Highland Scottish settlers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, they are more than that too. People who do not claim Scottish heritage also may take part. Or, people of Scottish descent may choose to highlight their involvement with a community-oriented group other than the Highland Society. For example, the Games' opening parade and Concert Under the Stars, includes many other ethnic groups including the Dutch and Acadians who live in the Antigonish area. In addition, community service groups such as the Shriners, hospital groups, and cadets take part in the parade. In this way, there are several layers of participation in one event. A full catalogue of all the parade participants included the President and Chief of the Clans in convertible automobiles near the beginning of the parade, all the pipe bands that competed over the course of the weekend were interspersed at various points, the Shriners, several Royal Canadian Legion groups, several Cadet groups representing sea and air cadets, a group from St. Martha's Hospital, a group from Sherbrooke Village representing the Acadians of the area,

several clan organizations with banners, horses, and clowns who tossed candy to

the children.

Several of my informants note that they welcome various groups to join in

the parade and spoke of why these groups choose to do so. In talking with Bill

Kiely about the various ethnic and community groups that participate in the

Games, he noted:

> I think it's a celebration of our communities
> and the coming together of all of the different
> ancestral peoples because we have a very proud
> Dutch community here who are very, very
> proud of Canadians for liberating them of course,
> during the Second World War. Many of them
> came here to live and they want to be part of this
> celebration even though they have a Dutch heritage
> (Personal interview 10 January 2000).

While the Highland Games as a community event celebrates Antigonish

as an area settled and influenced by Highland Scots, it is also more inclusive to

acknowledge the contributions of all of Antigonish's current population.

Historian James Hunter is correct in observing that North American Highland

Games can be about a community's complete history - how the community was

built, by whom and what it is today. As one of the first major groups to settle the

area, the Scottish influence on the town and county of Antigonish is undeniable.

Individuals of Scottish descent have been in Antigonish for more than two

hundred years. While people of Scottish descent comprise a large portion of

Antigonish's population, there are other residents too, with their own histories.

Recognition and understanding of the area's history would be incomplete if the contributions and influence of all the numerous groups were not recognized in some way at the Highland Games. The Antigonish Highland Society of today recognizes and includes these other groups in the parade and other non-competitive aspects of the Highland Games week. In doing so, these groups are able to bring new elements to the celebration of the Highland Games.

I have ascertained four main benefits to the community in hosting the Antigonish Highland Games event today. First, the Highland Games provide the opportunity to assert the place of the Highland Society in the community. The Games are the major event of the Society as an organization and linkages between the Society and the Games are well-publicized. Second, to expand on the first point, the Games help to solidify the notion that the Antigonish Highland Society is comprised of community leaders. A canvass of Society members in 1999 show members who are teachers, university professors, merchants and members of the press, to name a few. Members of the nineteenth century Society were drawn from the same professions as present-day members and included doctors, lawyers, merchants, teachers and university personnel. The Society and its Games also help to reinforce the idea that Antigonish is known as the "Highland Heart of Nova Scotia." At the Games, the public recognizes the contribution of the Highland Scots in settling Antigonish and the descendants of these people can be seen as the heart of Antigonish today as

community leaders engaged in Society activities. Third, the Games also provide a substantial economic benefit to the town with the numbers of people who come to participate and watch the events. Accommodations and restaurants are full and Main Street shops are always busy. As members of Antigonish's professional and business community, it is to the Society members' benefit to host successful Games each year. By hosting and organizing the event, they help the town as a whole and individual business interests within the town. And fourth, the Games provide an entrée to introduce youth to the Highland Society and its objectives. The Games will continue only for as long as the Society itself remains a vital force within the community. The Games may act as a draw to the young people that compete or otherwise participate in Games activities to consider Society membership as they reach adulthood.

4.5 Structure of Participating Groups and Knowledge of Authenticity

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, a multitude of interest groups exist at the Antigonish Highland Games. Because so many different groups exist, I have developed a structure to categorize their knowledge of, and participation in the Games. I view the structure of those groups that participate in the Games as a series of concentric circles spreading ever wider into the community. These groups could be called a "community of interest," (57-8) as Ranald Thurgood has termed it. In keeping with Thurgood's concept of a "community of interest," it can be said that those that participate in Highland

Games are part of one large, overarching community. However, there are many separate "communities of interest" which make up the whole Highland Games grouping. I think that it is more sensible to think of the groups at the Highland Games as discrete entities with a common purpose. This concentric circle structure describes the place of each group within the Games and their knowledge of issues of authenticity with respect to the Games.

As the concentric circles extend outward, relationships to the Games become more and more general and the number of people included in each circle increases. The innermost circle includes those people who are most intimately associated with the Games and contain the smallest number of people. For example, the innermost circle would be those in the Highland Society who organize and run the Games each year and the judges for the various events. The next circle would be those who compete in the Games while the next circle would be those educated spectators, from the local area and further afield, who attend to watch many of the competitive Games events. Beyond that lies a grouping for those spectators who attend some of the entertainment and community events which occur at Games time. The outermost circle could include tourists to Antigonish who are unfamiliar with the Games and who wish to participate in an event that is outside their realm of experience.

It is important to remember that these groups affect and impinge upon each other. Within this framework, a person is not necessarily bound to one

category. Often, categories of definition may overlap. For example, an individual may compete at the Games and participate in other entertainment offered during Games week. Or, an individual's category in this framework may change over time. Lastly, the extent of an individual's involvement in the Games varies from person to person. A person's involvement may also depend on what circle they inhabit in the framework. Some may watch the opening parade, attend house parties and an evening ceilidh at Columbus Field and feel that they have participated.

In fact, all of my informants have moved throughout various groups found at the Highland Games. For example, Michael Campbell has moved from a bagpiping competitor to an educated spectator at the Games. Iain Boyd once was a drummer who participated in the Highland Games and is now a Highland Society member. His daughters, Andrea and Susan, are competitors now but before they were old enough to compete still came to the Highland Games with their parents as spectators. Susan noted that she had been to every Highland Games in her lifetime except one. Dan MacInnes was an interested spectator who eventually became involved in the bagpiping aspects of the Highland Games as a Society member, as was Kathryn Chisholm who became one of the first women members of the Highland Society in the 1950s. Bill Kiely was involved in the track and field events as a young man and now emcees the heavy events at the Highland Games. Scott Williams has moved through the circles of

bagpiping competitor, Highland Society organizer and bagpiping judge. Janice MacQuarrie and Shelly Grant were both competitive Highland dancers who now teach dancing in the Antigonish area. Their students are now the competitors at the Highland Games.

I view the issue of authenticity at the Antigonish Highland Games as operating on a continuum. This continuum stretches from organizers through competitors through tourists. I believe that understanding of authenticity issues is heightened by participation in the production of the Highland Games. This would mean that the members of the Highland Society who organize the Games each year are most concerned with and most aware of authenticity. The competitors are slightly less aware of authenticity concerns and most tourists may be less aware of authenticity questions.

This idea of an authenticity continuum dovetails with my concept of viewing groups of people and their experience of community identity as a series of concentric circles. If one imagines a series of concentric circles, this would accurately reflect groups at the Highland Games. The smallest group (the organizers of the Games) would be most aware of authenticity issues. Other larger groups would be more or less aware of authenticity depending on their position in a group. A seasoned competitor may have had more opportunity to learn about authenticity questions than a first-time competitor. An educated spectator in the crowd who has some knowledge of what they are observing and

who may have been a competitor themselves would most likely have a more clear-cut understanding of authenticity issues than a tourist who is only briefly visiting the area, looking to participate in an event which highlights "local colour." There is fluidity along this continuum and people may gain insight into authenticity issues with additional participation in the Highland Games. Groupings by one's knowledge are not rigid. Individuals belonging to one group can learn about authenticity issues and change their position in their group or move to another group. The only axiom about one's knowledge of authenticity is that it can only be increased; movement of one's position goes in one direction only.

Members of the Highland Society, who are also organizers of the Highland Games, are most concerned with authenticity issues. They wish to produce a Highland Games that is true to those activities which are marked as Highland Scottish: bagpiping, Highland dancing and heavy events, and true to the area of Antigonish. To that end, members of the Highland Society visit other Highland Games and change certain events such as track and field as warranted. While always keeping the authenticity issue in mind, they also strive to prepare a Games that is fun, entertaining and financially viable each year.

Competitors may understand Goffman's divisions of "front" and "back" regions because they are in the unique position of moving between both (107, 112). They may have a better sense of the "backstage" effort of organizing the

Highland Games through their participation. They interact with various members of the Highland Society's organizing team on competition day and see the coordination that is involved and therefore may realize the effort that is needed. In addition, they understand all the hard work that they themselves put into preparing for the Games. When they compete, these people are part of the "front" that the spectators observe. Because they can be considered as being more intimately involved in the event, competitors straddle Goffman's notions of "front" and "back."

4.6 The Impact of Tourism on the Antigonish Highland Games

Tourism scholar Dean MacCannell discusses the consumption of culture by tourists in The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class. He posits that there are varying degrees of awareness of authenticity issues at sight-seeing venues around the world (96-7). Tourists and other spectators are mostly unaware of authenticity issues because they only see the end result which is the occurrence of the Games themselves each year. They do not see all the thought, planning and effort that go into putting on the event year after year. They come to enjoy the spectacle of the Highland Games and may not realize the personal significance that the Games hold for some people in Antigonish. While they may be aware that Antigonish had been settled by Highland Scottish emigrants, they may or may not make the connection between Antigonish's history and today's events. They may not realize the pride of the Highland Games participants in

remembering the Scottish settlers. They may or may not realize the profound effect that these people had on the Antigonish area.

In fact, I spoke with a retired American gentleman from Massachusetts on Main Street, Antigonish during the Games. He related how much he enjoyed coming to Antigonish for the Highland Games and how he had been coming for several years. For entertainment purposes, he most liked being able to come to a "small town" and enjoy the "wonderful people." He commented on the friendliness of the townspeople and how differently people behaved back in his hometown. He then mentioned enjoying the pipe bands that were part of the Highland Games. Overall, my impression of the conversation was that this particular tourist enjoyed the difference between Antigonish and his hometown in that Antigonish was much smaller, friendlier and quainter. The Highland Games week was a good reason to visit because it was an exciting and fun-filled time.

With the onset of mass tourism in the little town of Antigonish for the Highland Games comes the circular question of whether the elaborate weeklong program of the Highland Games is put on for the community or whether the Games are put on for the tourists. I believe that the Antigonish Highland Games are put on for the community first and that the effects of tourism are a side benefit for the town of Antigonish. For Highland Games week, hotels and

campgrounds are filled to capacity with patrons visiting the restaurants and shops that line Main Street. This is definitely a boost to the local economy. However, Antigonish's Highland Society members who are involved in the Highland Games are the sustaining force of them. Without them, there simply would be no Highland Games. According to Dan MacInnes, there is a dialogue among Highland Society members about where tourism fits into their overall picture. Further to this, when I asked who the Games were hosted for and who they were aimed toward, he answered that the Highland Society members intend the Games to be for the community at large. As he notes, "you can't just have this [the Highland Games] just for tourism . . . we sometimes fight the touristic aspects of this within the Society . . . ." Because the Highland Games are produced each year with a local audience uppermost in organizers' minds, I believe that this helps to preserve a sense of local authenticity for the Antigonish Highland Games.

Or, in the words of Regina Bendix who studied tourism displays in Interlaken, Switzerland:

> the case of Interlaken would seem to suggest that
> internal value systems are sufficiently resilient to cope
> with and confront tourism in the subtle or blatant emblems
> embodied in cultural displays. Interlaken and Swiss
> natives are no different than other host societies in
> their capability to realize what is happening to them,
> by them, for them, and around them (144).

Clearly, the internal value systems of the Antigonish Highland Society are strong enough to withstand pressures from outside tourists. They are aware that tourists visit the Highland Games to have an experience that may be out of their personal frame of reference. They have an ongoing dialogue about tourism's place within their festival. They also realize that the success of their event depends on the support of the local community and that they cannot cater only to tourists. In order for the Games to successfully continue year after year, they must be made relevant to the Antigonish population.

In addition, Bendix also reminds us of the meaning of tradition to those actually involved in it. For these people, it is not so much about whether their tradition is authentic or not; it is about expressing themselves and communicating what they want others to understand about them. As she states:

> Traditions are always defined in the present, and the actors doing the defining are not concerned about whether scholars will perceive a given festival or piece of art as genuine or spurious but whether the manifestation will accomplish for them what they intend it to accomplish (132).

Therefore, it is not for outsiders to decide whether the Antigonish Highland Games are authentic or not. To those involved, at that particular time, they are authentic. By their involvement, Highland Society members and the Antigonish community at large are able to demonstrate their attachment to family history, community history and their community today.

4.7 Final Thoughts on Community Identity

In 1999, one could sense the feeling of community during the Antigonish Highland Games. At Columbus Field, Highland Society members and their friends worked together to prepare the area for the Highland Games and to clean up after the weekend's competitive events. These activities included pitching large tents, setting up stage areas, tables and chairs, ensuring that various aspects of the Games ran smoothly and then dismantling everything at the end of Sunday's festivities. Spectators intently watched competitions in piping, Highland dancing and heavy events and chatted about their observations while the competitors themselves became friends. I have many happy memories of dancer friends from the Games as a child competitor. I often witnessed heavy events competitors congratulating each other on a particularly good toss of the caber or strong hammer throw. Other events that took place during Games week such as the kilted golf tournament and opening parade appealed to a wide cross-section of Antigonish's population and drew people to participate.

A diverse group of people including those native to Antigonish and those not, participate in the Games because the Antigonish Highland Games have grown into a large community-wide celebration. With larger numbers, comes the possibility to interpret the Antigonish Highland Games in a variety of ways. As previously noted, in my conversation with the man from Massachusetts, he was enjoying Antigonish's small town feel which was very different from what

he could expect to experience at home. Spectators may enjoy the parade, and other Games events; competitors like to meet with friends and participate in their chosen activity, whether it is piping and drumming, dancing or the heavy events, while organizers demonstrate their commitment to community success, both cultural and financial by running the Games with careful stewardship. Despite this multitude of possible interpretations, this event continues to be held each year because it offers an authentic view of this community and the activities it values today such as music and dance, cooperation and education.

The expression of the community's ethnicity and ethnic identity using the Antigonish Highland Games as a vehicle is considered in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Highland Scottish Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity in Antigonish

5.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the ethnicity and ethnic identity of my informants who are descended from the Highland Scots immigrants to Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The first portion explores definitions of terms such as ethnic, ethnicity and ethnic identity from a variety of disciplines. This is followed with short biographical profiles of my informants and their reflections on their ethnicity. The third segment is devoted to a discussion of historians Hobsbawm and Ranger's concept of "invented tradition," historian Ian McKay's article, "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954," and issues of authenticity which permeate the concept of tartanism. The last part of this chapter will focus on John Allan Cicala and Stephen Stern's work on symbols and strategies in ethnic expression as a more appropriate lens through which to examine ethnicity and ethnic identity.

5.1 Defining Ethnic, Ethnicity, and Ethnic Identity

What does the term *ethnic* mean? Because of its numerous and varied associations or implications, the word ethnic is most difficult to define. Common understandings of the word ethnic refer to that which pertains to or is characteristic of a people, especially to a speech or culture group. Additional meanings of ethnic cite its connections to the cultural, racial, religious, or

linguistic traditions of a people or country. In addition to the multiple accepted definitions of ethnic, people also imbue this word with their own meanings. Other terms such as *ethnicity* and *ethnic identification* must be considered as well. While each of these three terms is linked, their meanings differ subtly.

When I began my examination of ethnicity, I found these concepts difficult to define. I wanted to find out what others believed to be the components of ethnicity and ethnic identity so that my own research would be as well-informed as possible. I also hoped to learn what strategies others employed to determine ethnicity and perhaps what worked best in learning about ethnicity from informants. Hence, a broad overview of scholarly studies from folklorists, to sociologists and anthropologists, to historians provided a wide selection of information. Delving into these scholars' works only confirmed what I had originally thought about questions of ethnicity: there is not one clear-cut way to define ethnicity. By combining the approaches of these scholars, I hoped to gain as clear a picture as possible of what ethnic identity was in Antigonish.

Despite some differences of opinion amongst these scholars, I discovered that they believed ethnicity to be composed of a common ancestry, cultural traits, language, religion, and foodways (Oring, Isajiw, McCready, Anderson and Friders, Smith). There were a variety of methods used by these scholars to ascertain ethnic affiliations. In trying to learn about the ethnic identities of my informants at Antigonish, I chose to weave all of their methods into my

interview techniques. Therefore, I asked people about their family history, about what ethnic group they believed themselves to belong to (if any), and about memberships in cultural groups which represent an ethnic identity (namely the Antigonish Highland Society). What I found was a wide spectrum of answers to my questions about association and family membership. Some belonged to the Highland Society; some did not. Some acknowledged other ethnic backgrounds in their family histories. All believed, however, that their Scottish family history was highlighted by living in Antigonish, and especially at Highland Games time each year.

Elliott Oring details the history of the meaning of ethnic as a term. From ancient Greek, ethnic is derived from *ethnos* and *ethnikos*, with the former meaning "nation" and the latter implying "heathen" or "Gentile" which ultimately means Other (Oring 23). This meaning of ethnic endured until the mid-nineteenth century when the word's definition moved toward concepts of racial or national groupings (Oring 23). By the twentieth century, the word ethnic became focused on "groupings that were culturally distinguishable from a larger social system of which they formed some part" (Oring 23-4). According to Oring, *ethnicity* includes any "speech, thought or action based upon this sense of [ethnic] identity" (24). For Oring, *ethnic identification* is the "intellectual and emotional sense that an individual has of his relationship to the behaviours, ideas, and values of an ethnic group" (24).

Another very helpful elucidation of ethnicity is provided by sociologist

Wsevolod W. Isajiw. In his article entitled "Definitions of Ethnicity" he whittled

down the number of factors pertaining to ethnicity while still retaining a full

sense of its meaning. To do this he began by defining ethnicity as:

> a group or category of persons who have common
> ancestral origin and the same cultural traits, who
> have a sense of peoplehood and Gemeinschaft
> type of relations, who are of immigrant background
> and have either minority or majority status within
> a larger society (Isajiw 12).

Following this general definition of ethnicity, Isajiw introduced the concept of an

involuntary group which means that an individual is born into a certain group

and socialized within it without their choice of groups in which to be born or

retain membership. Building upon this concept, he arrived at his specific

definition of ethnicity by stating:

> thus ethnicity refers to an involuntary group
> of people who share the same culture or to
> descendants of such people who identify
> themselves and/or are identified by others
> as belonging to the same involuntary group
> (Isajiw 16).

Isajiw's article also shows the complexity of defining ethnicity; his general and

specific definitions of ethnicity are both valid. Therefore, there can be some

difference in how individuals view ethnicity. The emphasis placed on the

sundry components of ethnicity's definition may vary from person to person.

Sociologist McCready discussed the nature of ethnicity in people's lives, where it often exists as an undercurrent:

> Ethnicity, to the extent that it is a factor in
> people's lives, is a factor independent of people's
> consciousness of it. Sociologists call this a latent,
> or hidden effect. Ethnicity is a characteristic that
> resides a bit below the surface of personality. We
> may not acknowledge it very often and we may
> not think of it very often, but it does influence
> many of our thoughts, attitudes and behaviors
> and for this reason is called a "social fact"
> (McCready xviii).

By stating that ethnicity is not acknowledged or thought of very often in daily life, McCready helped to prepare me for my examination of ethnicity. His comment on the latency of ethnicity was corroborated by one of my informants. Dan MacInnes noted that "well, it [Scottishness] wasn't self-conscious, it was just talking to the air."   In day-to-day life, the Scottish ethnicity of his family and neighbours was not in the forefront of his mind; it simply was a fact of his life and because of this fact, it did not need to be considered in any particular way.

According to Tom W. Smith, there are three main approaches to determine ethnic identification. These approaches include the natal, behavioural and subjective modes of inquiry. The natal approach seeks an individual's birthplace and those of his parents and grandparents to help to determine his or her ethnicity (Smith 78-9). The behavioural approach looks to define a person's ethnicity based on certain practices, affiliations or memberships held by that

person (Smith 79). The subjective approach locates the individual's thoughts and feelings by asking to what group he or she considers themselves to belong (Smith 79).

During my fieldwork, I attempted to employ each of the three above strategies to determine the ethnicity of my informants. Most often, I would begin by using the natal approach. Very simply, I asked about where the informant and his or her family were born. Following that, I inquired as to the importance of that background within their family life and their feelings toward their ethnicity. If multiple ethnic groups were mentioned within an informant's life, I asked if more prominence or stress was placed on any one particular group. If the informant noted that there was more emphasis placed on a certain ethnicity, I inquired as to which that was. This encompassed the subjective approach. Lastly, the behavioural approach would help to gauge ethnic identification by determining membership in the Antigonish Highland Society. I often asked whether the informant was aware of the Highland Society, when they joined (if they were indeed a member), why they chose to join and their activity within the Highland Society.

The strength of an informant's identification with their Scottish heritage varies from individual to individual. For example, Dan MacInnes appears to relate very strongly with his Scottish background. In fact, he told me his

genealogical background for several generations when I asked about his family.

As he stated:

> my grandfathers, o.k. now, on the MacInnes side,
> . . . Daniel, son of Katherine, daughter of uh,
> Daniel, son of Donald and Donald came from
> the Old Country, and my father's side, uh, my
> father was Charlie, son of Willie, son of John,
> son of Hector, son of Lauchie and Lauchie came
> from the Old Country.

For MacInnes, knowing one's family background is part of everyday life.

In addition, MacInnes related the specific places within the Highlands where his

ancestors originated. He clearly stated that all his ancestors came from the West

Highland region of Scotland; specifically, he mentioned four areas where his

ancestors originated. According to MacInnes, "Daniel Rankin came from

Lochaber . . . Lauchlin MacInnes came from . . . the Isle of Rhum . . . my

grandmother's people . . . came to Parrsboro [Nova Scotia] from Eigg, the Isle of

Eigg . . . [and] the MacLeans came from . . . Arisaig." When asked about the

importance of his lineage in his life he noted that, "I would say it's an important

part of my personal identity because I mean I've always grown up in the

environment . . . I mean I never considered myself to be Canadian as much as

being a Scot." MacInnes is also a member of the Antigonish Highland Society,

joining in 1980 after having volunteered with the Highland Games in 1977. He

has been the President of the Society and following that, the Chief of the Clans,

and has been involved in various aspects of the Games themselves. Most of his

work with the Games revolves around the bagpiping competitions because that is where his main interest lies.

Scott Williams was also very aware of his genealogy. He explained that:

> Williams is a Welsh name and my Williams'
> ancestor came here about 1784 and he came
> from the United States and we've never been
> able to track back beyond him because of records
> being lost during the wars in the States . . . but, once
> he settled here every single generation has married
> into a Scots family. His wife was a Scot
> from Truro and his son John married a Pushie but
> then there was Munroes, and there were Chisholms
> and there was Camerons and MacDonalds and . . .
> Campbells the whole range in my family tree. So
> I'm probably 99% Scottish (Personal interview 9 January
> 2000).

In addition to being aware of his family ties, Williams says, "I honestly think of myself as being a Scottish-Canadian. So, Scottish being before Canadian as opposed to a Canadian person of Scottish descent." He places great emphasis on his lineage, to the point of placing Scottishness ahead of being Canadian. However, there are other times when he will identify himself as a Canadian citizen, especially when differentiating himself from Americans when traveling abroad. He notes that, "I don't have a great emotional feeling about being Canadian although I'm very defensive about being Canadian when it comes to comparing us with Americans." His responses to my questions about ethnicity demonstrate a certain kind of fluidity.

Kathryn Chisholm first joined the Antigonish Highland Society in the 1950s. Like Dan MacInnes, both sides of her family originated in Scotland and her ancestors are some of the area's earliest settlers, arriving in Antigonish County in 1791. Chisholm displayed a great deal of pride in her heritage and noted the place of the Highland Games within the town.

> . . . it's meaningful and you often hear the
> expression 'oh well, it's the Scot coming out!'
> I think it's just we're proud to be who we are and I
> think we've a right to be. Although the French were
> here long before the Scots, and of course the native
> people were here a long, long, long time before us!
> But yet, Scottish people settled the County . . . it
> was the Celt who stayed (Personal interview 13
> January 2000).

As a member of the Highland Society who held the positions of President and Chief of the Clans, Bill Kiely clearly demonstrates his ethnicity through his involvement in this organization. Clearly, the behavioural approach to determining ethnicity is easily shown to be Scottish. When questioned about his family's heritage, Kiely noted that his surname, Kiely, was "Irish but my mother was a MacDonald and all of my other aunts and uncles and grandparents were Scottish . . . there is an ancestral background to the Scot." Like Dan MacInnes, Kiely identifies closely with his family's history by stating that if he were asked "I do say Irish for Kiely or from Scottish descent . . . it's usually Irish-Scottish rather than Canadian for some reason." In addition to his individual associations, Kiely reminded me that many people in Antigonish "pride

ourselves in being the Highland Heart of Nova Scotia." This quote connotes the

value in being of Scottish descent from a group perspective.

During my interview with Iain Boyd, he told me about his family

background. He acknowledged that he has Scottish connections "strongly on my

father's side and on my mother's side, my mother had a parent who was of

Scottish descent and another parent who had some German descent . . . I don't

know if you can say I'm pure-bred but pretty close to it." He and his family have

spent time charting their family tree. They have discovered that:

> some of my lineage on my father's side [goes] back
> to Scotland . . . Ten years ago there was still some
> living descendants that we were aware of and in fact
> in 1976, I was fortunate enough to be able to visit
> [them] . . . it would have been fourth cousins of mine . . .
> (Personal interview 11 January 2000).

Overall, Boyd is quite aware of his Scottish family connections. When asked

about how he would identify himself, he stated that, "I think I would say I was

Canadian of Scottish descent, there's no question about that."

Boyd also provided me with insight into his experiences as a drummer

and how he came to be involved in the Antigonish Highland Society. As he

explains:

> Well, I grew up in a family where my father
> had been involved in piping and drumming
> . . . in his formative years and I became
> involved with learning to drum in a pipe band
> at 1965, so as a ten year old. And . . . [I] continued
> and progressed along and became involved in

> pipe bands and . . . did travel extensively and
> did travel to Scotland with the pipe band and
> then became involved in the organizational
> aspects of piping and drumming and . . .
> involved very much in the Antigonish Highland
> Society which are very much involved in fostering
> the whole Scottish culture in this region . . . (Personal
> interview 11 January 2000).

One can observe the sense of continuity in the family's involvement in activities

relating to the Scottish culture from Iain Boyd's comments. This became even

more prominent after I ascertained his reasons for joining the Highland Society

and when I spoke to his daughters, Andrea and Susan.

Iain Boyd lists three main reasons for becoming a member of the

Antigonish Highland Society. In his words, he joined because "my father and

mother were members . . . so it was just a normal progression . . ." and that

beyond his parents' involvement, "I think I joined because of my level of

interest." He also notes the importance of contributing to the community by

stating that:

> I think it's important to give something back so
> the Highland Society was important in my younger
> years and to put on the Highland Games in
> Antigonish are considered a very important part
> of the community, an important part of the
> culture and it's something that brings a lot of
> pleasure and joy to people locally and
> internationally. . . . I think that's important
> and I think as a member of the community it's
> important for me to see that that continues (Personal
> interview 11 January 2000).

I also had the opportunity to speak with Iain's daughters, Andrea and Susan Boyd. When I asked elder sister, Andrea, about her family background, she noted a variety of ancestries. According to her, "my mother is of English and Irish descent and my father is of Scottish and German descent." She noted that she emphasizes, "more so my Scottish than any other roots . . . because I live in Antigonish and . . . the majority of people are Scottish and it seems that that culture seems to be emphasized a lot more here than any other" (Personal interview 12 January 2000). She recognizes that Scots-descended people comprise a large portion of Antigonish's population and the contributions they have made over the years. Andrea's piping activities also clearly demonstrate a connection to the Highland Scottish branch of her family tree.

Susan Boyd, at fourteen, had attended all but one of the Highland Games held in her lifetime and had competed in six or seven since beginning her dance career. While she was somewhat shy during the interview, I could see that she was enthusiastic about her dancing. I drew her responses out somewhat as the interview progressed and she announced her intention to "teach dancing . . . when I turn sixteen" (Personal interview 12 January 2000). At this stage in her life, the Highland Games are an opportunity to compete in several dance events and visit with friends that she only sees at competitions. People come from "Halifax and just all over Nova Scotia. And . . . PEI and . . . Ontario." Obviously, she has the same family lineage as her sister, Andrea, and recognizes

that she is of Highland Scottish descent. At the time of our interviews, neither sister was a member of the Antigonish Highland Society, but both can foresee the possibility of joining when they get a little older.

Bagpiper Michael Campbell identifies the Scottish portion of his family ancestry as mostly on his father's side. In ascertaining Campbell's awareness of his ethnic background, he stated that:

> We always listened to programs on the radio "Scottish Strings" and stuff like that, years ago. We were brought up with that and fiddle music. Dad would take us to Glendale [Cape Breton] and always to the Highland Games. . . . And as well, piping and fiddling was in my Dad's family. His father played fiddle and pipes and his uncle played pipes. . . . We always had the eight-track going with Cape Breton Symphony and Winston "Scotty" [Fitzgerald] . . . (Personal interview 26 January 2000).

In identifying himself, Campbell states that he would most likely use the words "Scottish-Canadian" which recognizes his family heritage and the country of his birth. Since Campbell is residing in Sydney at this time, he is not a member of the Antigonish Highland Society. However, if he and his family move back to that area he believes that he would like to join.

As this gallery of portraits shows, understandings and feelings toward ethnicity and ethnic identity vary from individual to individual. Depending on one's life experiences, family life and personal opinions, people of the same ethnic group can have very different outlooks on their ethnicity and its place in

their lives. The Antigonish Highland Games are significant to my informants in that they recognize the Games as an opportunity to connect with the Scottish portion of their family histories. My informants' involvement in, and thoughts on, the Games show that they consider them important and relate to the Games with sincerity. My informants' heartfelt experiences with the Antigonish Highland Games stand in direct opposition to the concept of invented tradition as espoused by historians Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, Hugh Trevor-Roper and Ian McKay. A discussion of invented tradition and McKay's concept of tartanism in Nova Scotia follows.

5.2 Invented Tradition and the Antigonish Highland Games

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger as editors of the influential collection of essays, The Invention of Tradition, view invented traditions as belonging to two distinct types: those that are actually invented and those that emerge in a less clear-cut manner and are quickly established as true (Hobsbawm 1). Their definition of invented tradition is "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Hobsbawm 1).

From a folkloristic standpoint, one difficulty with Hobsbawm and Ranger's understanding of tradition is their reliance on tradition as unvarying and unchanging (Hobsbawm 2). They do not view tradition as a dynamic entity.

Folklorists have come to understand that traditions are not static. In fact, what many folklorists study is the interplay between stability and change in their particular area of research.

Each year, the Antigonish Highland Games are slightly different. Various performers play at the ceilidhs on Columbus Field, new competitors make the competitive field an interesting place and new events may take place. These can all be considered "changes" but the fundamental nature of the Antigonish Highland Games stays the same. Most people would expect to see certain types of events at any Highland Games. These are incorporated at Antigonish. The most visible of these expected events are those competitive events that are now seen to be associated with Scottish culture such as bagpiping, Highland dancing and heavy events. These take place every year without fail and are the mainstay of the entire Antigonish Highland Games.

In his essay, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," Hugh Trevor-Roper argues that the entire Highland Scottish culture is a weak copy of the Irish culture. He states that items such as the kilt as a distinct form of Highland dress and clan tartans were invented in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While the kilt and clan tartan may not be ancient traditions, they have, by now, been in existence for several hundred years. In studying the contemporary Antigonish Highland Games, I came to realize that what people <u>believe</u> to be true is often more important than what is absolutely

historically correct. My thoughts on the question of authenticity's place in the

Antigonish Highland Games were echoed in anthropologist Celeste Ray's study

of the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in North Carolina. She states

that:

> The last two decades have witnessed a scholarly
> frenzy to deconstruct invented traditions, after the
> seminal works of Edward Shils . . . and Eric Hobsbawm
> and Terence Ranger . . . . Merrily exposing the historical
> "realities" behind public myths and celebrations, many
> of these bubble-bursting studies conclude that by their
> invention, such traditions are laughable and invalid.
> Some of what is considered traditional at Scottish events
> could be called invented traditions, and when historical
> origins of some traditions are known, their contemporary
> form or practice can be amusing. This does not, however,
> invalidate the very meaning that their practice now imparts.
> All traditions are invented at some point. Invented traditions
> are designed to be meaningful, and it is this function that
> makes them worthy of respectful study (102).

Are contemporary Highland Games an "invented tradition?" Their form

is, but their substance in Antigonish is not. The Antigonish Highland Games

take place in an area that was densely settled by Highland Scottish settlers and

their descendants make up a large proportion of Antigonish's population today.

The people of Antigonish refer to their area as the "Highland Heart of Nova

Scotia." Antigonish also neighbours Cape Breton Island which is considered to

be one of the last areas in the world where remnants of a Highland Scottish

culture survive outside of Scotland. The people of Antigonish are not inventing

their event wholesale. These people are the inheritors of a Highland Scottish

tradition that was transferred to Nova Scotia with those emigrants who came to eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Antigonish Highland Games are one way that they remember the collective history of the Scottish pioneers of their area. More than that, Antigonishers who participate in the Games have made them into their own event which celebrates their area.

The members of the Antigonish Highland Society who organize the Antigonish Highland Games do their utmost to display an "authentic" Highland Games. These individuals are well-educated and well-read and have been exposed to a wealth of local history. They are not subscribing to a mythic past - they are making a statement about what it is to live in Antigonish. The Antigonish Highland Games are a part of the Antigonish Highland Society's and participants' expression of what it means to be a person of Highland Scottish descent in Nova Scotia and more specifically, a person of that ancestral make-up from Antigonish. The Games are simply the form chosen to express themselves. The Games show that such things as music, dance, community involvement and good will among neighbours are all important to them. It is by the Antigonish Highland Society members' choice that they are making the Highland Games real and true. I believe that it is precisely by the Games' creation, construction and occurrence each year that they are made authentic because the group of people involved obviously believes in what they are doing. They are made

authentic by the people who host them each year and by the people who visit, compete, or otherwise participate in them each year. They are made authentic by their very existence in Antigonish in this day and age.

The Antigonish Highland Games have remained relevant to the community. The Games continue to have meaning to people who participate in them. This may be so precisely for the Highland Society's willingness to change individual events to better the overall experience. A "carnivalesque" atmosphere pervading the Games of the mid-twentieth century included a midway-style amusement area and seemingly non-traditional Scottish events such as tug-of-war. This was gradually altered in the Highland Society's attempt to reflect a more traditional Highland Games. The track and field events evolved over the years so that now there is a single road race held on the Friday evening before the main activities of the weekend begin instead of running events during the Saturday and Sunday of the Highland Games weekend. I believe it is perfectly reasonable to infer that the Games continue to be successful because they are altered slightly as needed or wanted. They are no doubt shaped to fit the purposes of the community. However, these changes do not make the Games inauthentic or invented; they make them vibrant and fun for those who take part each year.

5.3 Considering "Supposed Scottishness"

In his article, "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954," historian Ian McKay discusses the creation of tartanism in Nova Scotia under the leadership of Premier Angus L. Macdonald. Tartanism is the system of signs testifying to the supposed Scottish essence of Nova Scotia (McKay 6). McKay wishes to discuss two questions. They are "how and why did the system of tartanism emerge?" (6) and "why in an advanced capitalist society did traditions and customs - kilts, mods, clans - drawn from pre-capitalist Highland culture attain such prominence?" (8). In seeking to answer these questions, he focuses on three main points: the representations of ethnicity in Nova Scotia before the second quarter of the twentieth century, the construction of tartanism by the state from 1933-54, and an examination of the correlates of tartanism which included a decline of the Gaelic language.

McKay states that the earliest beginnings of the province of Nova Scotia do not lie with the Scottish people. As he notes, in terms of European settlement, the Acadians and Basque fishermen were located in Nova Scotia before the Scots arrived and asks why should a:

> "New Scotland" which was more ephemeral
> than Acadia and of less economic significance
> than the Basque presence in the fisheries . . .
> be considered the most "foundational"
> European presence . . . . (6-7).

Furthermore, the native people were living in what was to become Nova Scotia long before any European presence. Thirdly, although Scottish knight-baronetcies over Nova Scotia had been in place since 1624, physical possession of the land in Nova Scotia was not taken, so a Scottish presence over Nova Scotia was in name only.

McKay also questions the strength of Scottish demographics within the province. After reading McKay's article, one must accept that those persons of Highland Scottish descent do not make up a majority in the Nova Scotian population today. By using statistics and percentages from various time periods and comparisons with other provinces including Ontario and Prince Edward Island, McKay shows that Nova Scotia does not have a majority of Highland Scots-descended people within the province or within Canada. He notes that both Ontario and Prince Edward Island have larger percentages of people of Highland Scots-descent and that arguably, these provinces have a claim to being considered "New Scotland." However, for the purposes of my study of the Antigonish Highland Games, one must remember and recognize that regardless of their numbers, those of Highland Scots extraction <u>do</u> make up a certain substantial portion of the Nova Scotian population. McKay himself recognizes that:

> northern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton (which
> was a separate colony until 1820) did receive
> thousands of Scots . . . . Many settled in the

province's northern counties, particularly
in Pictou and Antigonish counties on the
mainland, and on Cape Breton Island (7).

The area which received the largest number of Highland Scottish settlers is precisely the area on which my study is based. One must acknowledge that these people exist as a prominent group within a particular area of the province. Whether they are the most populous group of people within the province as a whole is irrelevant. What is relevant to this study is that many people of Antigonish County are of Highland Scots descent and that they host the Antigonish Highland Games.

Throughout "Tartanism Triumphant," McKay assigns the invention of tartanism in Nova Scotia and its implications for tourism to Premier Angus L. Macdonald and his government. McKay notes that Macdonald's policies often stemmed from romantic notions about his own Scottish origins (18). However, it does not seem reasonable that every Nova Scotian of Scottish descent would blindly follow Macdonald's lead. Dan MacInnes criticizes McKay's lack of understanding of the agency of the people of Scottish descent. He believes that as a Marxist historian, McKay bases a large part of his argument on the concept of power relations and the view that Premier Angus L. Macdonald maintained a greater control over the power dynamic between himself and the people he represented. In MacInnes's view, McKay overstates the extent of Macdonald's power. He believes that the people's power to resist unrealistic depictions of

their ethnicity is stronger than that to which McKay gives credit. In MacInnes's own words:

> He [McKay] enters another element and he says
> we construct according to power relations. And,
> it's the tone in which he addresses all of this that,
> for example, he understands Angus L. to be
> scheming, . . . and he is very far from the people's
> agency. See, he thinks these things come
> down because some people somewhere . . .
> manipulate and I think that his problem
> is that Marxism . . . has taken away his sense
> of agency. I mean he sees Angus L. doing these
> things but the people just follow? Well, where
> is the people's agency? Where is their will?
> Are they just stupid and kind of like pawns
> of a deliberate attempt to try to construct their
> culture around the Department of Tourism,
> and selling Nova Scotia? (Personal interview 19
> July 1999).

McKay does not seem to allow for the possibility of alternate views, or for people's individual opinions. Rather, he believes that they will respond as a group, with one voice and little opportunity for debate. In contrast to this outlook, the spirit of debate among Scottish people is aptly described by Jamie Fraser, a character in the novel, <u>Dragonfly in Amber</u> with the assertion that "If you've had much to do wi' Highland Scots, . . . then ye'll know it's rare to find two of them in agreement on anything much beyond the color of the sky--and even that is open to question from time to time" (Gabaldon 148). While a group of people may be bound by a shared sense of ethnic identity, this does not mean that all of these people will have the same opinion on any given issue.

An unfortunate process which began in earnest during Premier Macdonald's reign was the decline of the Gaelic language in Nova Scotia. As McKay relates:

> By a savage irony, while Nova Scotia *appeared* to
> become more and more Scottish every year, the Gaelic
> language was fast *disappearing*. The "naturalization"
> of Gaelic in the welcome the province gave to tourists
> (*Ciad Mille Failte* – One Hundred Thousand Welcomes)
> coincided with official neglect of the needs of Gaelic-
> speakers interested in retaining the language. Tartanism
> exploited Gaelic as one of its raw materials. It did not
> sustain it (34).

McKay believes that Premier Macdonald viewed the Gaelic language only as a link to the past and not as a living language. According to him, "When Macdonald thought of Gaelic, it was as the ancient tongue of Caledonia, a direct line to the essence of the Celt, not as an ever-evolving, functional language which might require words for "telephone" and "electricity" . . ." (35).

While there can be no argument that the Gaelic language has declined dramatically in Nova Scotia and that more should have been done to ensure its vibrancy, MacInnes holds an alternate view of the decline of the Gaelic language. According to him:

> This is a change in people's identity that is
> brought about by an encounter with modernity.
> This is what's really going on. People are
> becoming modernized and they're still looking
> for ways to express it because you can't say in
> Gaelic. You can't use your language. So when
> you can't use your language, which immediately

> separates you from everybody else, how do you
> express it? Well, people began then to say,
> "well, the tartan is a way of expressing who I am."
> They began to do it in other ways (Personal interview
> 19 July 1999).

The Antigonish Highland Games began to fulfill this role as an alternate

means of expression of Scottish ethnic identity and continue to do so today.

They are a symbol and a powerful reminder of the contribution made by the

Highland Scots to the province. They are used to maintain a feeling of

connection to Scotland and to those that came before in the Antigonish area.

They are also used to celebrate the present-day reality of life in Antigonish which

now is home to other ethnic groups, but has retained its links to a past that was

shaped by the Highland Scottish emigrants to the area.

5.4 Symbols and Strategies of Creative Ethnicity

In the volume, <u>Creative Ethnicity: Symbols and Strategies of</u>

<u>Contemporary Ethnic Life</u>, folklorists Stephen Stern and John Allan Cicala offer

an alternate interpretation of ethnicity and how individuals express ethnicity in

their everyday lives. I believe their approach is more appropriate as a way to

analyze the Antigonish Highland Games and I apply their theory later in this

section. Stern and Cicala gather examples of what they term *creative ethnicity*.

As they note in their preface, the book "explores how ethnic group

members living in the United States adapt and modify their folklore in response

to living in a pluralistic society" (Stern and Cicala ix). For them and the other

contributors to this work, creative ethnicity is "the process by which members of American ethnic groups absorb, invigorate, modify, and transmit folk expressions in a multicultural, pluralistic society" (Stern and Cicala xi). With this concept, they are looking for new ways in which to view ethnicity. As they note:

> folklorists are searching for ways in which
> ethnic folklore may be viewed as representing
> both the broader historical conditions that
> influence ethnicity as well as the manner in
> which ethnicity shapes peoples' quests for
> meaning (xiii).

The contributors to this volume develop a new approach to ethnicity by suggesting that "folklore offers solutions to problems caused by living in a modern world" (Stern and Cicala xiii). These solutions are created by the appropriate use of symbols and strategies.

According to Stern and Cicala, symbols are "frames of reference and meaning within which ethnics respond to social, political, religious or economic pressures" (xiii). They look to ethnic symbols to provide "ways of bringing real and ideal worlds more closely into alignment. Through these symbols, ethnic men and women define their place and position in regard to their ethnic past and present" (xiii). In <u>Creative Ethnicity</u>, strategies:

> influence how ethnic symbols are applied
> to concrete situations and how they are
> modified to changing contexts and times.
> [Strategies also] bring symbols to life, set the
> stage for their consideration, and highlight
> their significance (xiii).

Most importantly, symbols and strategies help people choose "what cultural features are relevant to their understandings of ethnicity . . . [which] makes it easier for ethnics to choose how and why they relate to their ethnicity" (Stern and Cicala xiv). Ultimately, symbols and strategies make up the "expressive vocabulary of ethnicity, the "social poetics" of ethnic discourse that reveals how folklore creatively expresses these combinations and recombinations" (xiv).

If the theory of creative ethnicity is applied to the Antigonish Highland Games, one must determine what problem is being solved through the Games' performance. This relates to points raised in this chapter's previous section on tartanism. As McKay noted, the Gaelic language was in a period of decline, a fact which he blames on Premier Angus L. Macdonald's neglect. However, another view was that the diminishing of Gaelic was related to the Nova Scotia Scots of Antigonish's encounter with modernity. Therefore, with the lessening of a major component of a culture – the language – other expressive forms began to gain prominence. The Antigonish Highland Games are one of these forms. The Antigonish Highland Games can be seen as a strategy, as described by Cicala and Stern, which helps to define what it means to be of Scottish descent in Antigonish.

As an example of a strategy, the Highland Games at Antigonish do enliven other symbols of Nova Scotian Scottishness. For the Highland Games

week, people do wear their tartan kilts, they do attend ceilidhs on Columbus Field and at private homes, and they do attend the competitions of the Games and participate in all the other activities of Highland Games week in Antigonish. Without the occurrence of the Highland Games, the extent of their ethnic identification would change. The Highland Games are one of the most visible displays of ethnic identification in Antigonish. They are the context in which all these events can take place and make sense in Antigonish at that particular time of year. If the Highland Games were not occurring, it would probably be considered somewhat strange to see hundreds of people dressed in woollen kilts in the heat of July! Likewise, it would be unusual to see pipe bands mass and march down Main Street, athletes throw cabers and Highland dancers compete on the dance platform. The Games help participants to stand out in the multicultural world of today's Antigonish which is filled with alternate ethnicities. By organizing and participating in the Antigonish Highland Games, these people are highly visible for at least one week every summer. The Games are one way for people of Scottish descent at Antigonish to express their ethnicity and ethnic identity. The Games may be their way of stating that they want to be noticed and recognized for their family histories and their present-day prominence in, and their contributions to, the community of Antigonish.

5.5 Selection of Highland Scottish Elements at Antigonish

Further to Cicala and Stern's concept of participants' choice in ethnic elements, the Antigonish Highland Games are an excellent example of this selection process. The Antigonish Highland Games show that the people of Antigonish value music as seen in the bagpiping and drumming competitions, and the many concerts and ceilidhs that take place during the week, and dance as seen in the dance competitions and concerts and ceilidhs of Highland Games week. They also value physical strength as shown in the heavy events as well as strength of character which can be seen in all the competitors of the Highland Games. They value their area's history and seek to preserve continuity with their past and move toward the future in a positive manner. Through the Games, I believe that the people of Antigonish also seek to maintain community ties throughout the town and county areas. They also show that Antigonish values economic vitality because the Games have become a major boost to the area by bringing a large number of people to the town. The Games provide a focal point during which people can participate in a community event if they wish.

5.6 The Role of Memory

The selection process used to determine elements of Highland Scottish culture in Antigonish is influenced by memory. Historian Rusty Bitterman examines the role of memory in the essay "On Remembering and Forgetting: Highland Memories within the Maritime Diaspora." He argues that a selection

process occurred for what to remember and what to forget in the newly-established Highland communities of the Maritimes (253). These memories were also altered over time and were influenced by who was involved in the act of remembrance.

For my purposes, Bitterman's ideas of redefinition and reorganization of Highland identity and history were most engaging. He surmises that "Highland identity was being redefined in the Maritimes in the second quarter of the nineteenth century and, to some extent, Highland history was being recast" (258). If Highland identity and history were being reshaped in Nova Scotia between 1825 and 1850, this would directly affect the Antigonish Highland Society and subsequently, their Games. During this time, a selection process was taking place which would affect Highland Scottish identity in Nova Scotia up to the current day. Those people who led the community of Antigonish were involved in the inclusion and exclusion of symbols of Highland identity. By 1861, the founding year of the Antigonish Highland Society, these symbols would have been well-embedded in the community's understanding of itself.

Does the fact that this selection process took place make the Antigonish Highland Games inauthentic? For those people who were involved in the selection of symbols and shaping of society in Antigonish in the nineteenth century, it must be assumed that the chosen elements had meaning or purpose to them. Antigonish is well-known for its bagpipers today; perhaps the people of

nineteenth century Antigonish held the bagpipes in high esteem. That is why
they lasted in the area or were eventually "chosen" as an integral element of
Antigonish's Scottish culture.

Contrary to Ian McKay's conception of tartanism, I do not believe that this
choice of symbols was necessarily a negative or sinister manipulation of others.
Change is inevitable in most situations and the selection of particular cultural
elements may have been these people's response to their new environment. For
today's members of the Antigonish Highland Society, it is precisely these
selections that were made in the nineteenth century that are their markers of the
Highland Scottish culture in Antigonish. It is impossible to go back in time and
change the selections that were made; therefore, these elements would not be
seen as inauthentic by members of the Antigonish Highland Society today. They
can not be inauthentic because these are the markers of Highland Scottish
identity that are known and understood in Antigonish today. Over the course of
their lives in Antigonish, Highland Society members would absorb these
elements as being essential to a Highland Scottish identity in Antigonish.

5.7 Conclusion

The Antigonish Highland Games are one way in which the Scottish
descended people of Antigonish can express their ethnic identity. Through the
Games, people can remember the history of their area but more importantly,
they can define their place in Antigonish today. The Antigonish Highland

Games are not about the belief that the citizens of Antigonish are Scottish; they are about their understanding and expression of what it means to be a Nova Scotian of Scottish descent. By participating in the events of the Games, these people express to themselves and to others that the Games' elements are part of their conception of what it means to be of Scottish descent in Nova Scotia.

Chapter 6

Concluding Thoughts on the Antigonish Highland Games

6.0 Summary

In this final chapter, three conclusions stemming from this study are offered, and suggestions for further research on this topic are made.

There are three major conclusions stemming from this research project on the Antigonish Highland Games: 1. The Antigonish Highland Society members who organize the Highland Games use the event to express an authentic connection to their community and to their ethnic identity. 2. A display event, such as the festival, is an appropriate means by which to express these connections to community and ethnic identity. 3. This study is biased by my insider knowledge of the event due to my experiences as a Highland dancer.

When I began working on this thesis, I believed that it would be an ethnography of the Antigonish Highland Games. As I conclude this work, I realize that this is an ethnography of those Antigonish Highland Society members who organize the Games each year. An event cannot exist without the people who organize it. This thesis is about the motivations of these people, namely, why they maintain membership in the Antigonish Highland Society, why they participate in the planning and hosting of this event year after year, why they believe it is important to contribute to the presentation of this event each year.

Now, I realize the reasons that the Games continue are all interconnected. In their broadest sense, I see the Games as a festival that allows the Antigonish Highland Society organizers to use their personal repertoire systems to show what it means to them to be of Highland Scottish ancestry in Antigonish. Using festival to express identity enables the community to reveal how it sees itself. Part of the Highland Society's conception of community identity is inextricably tied to ethnicity. Festival is a platform by which participants in the Games express their understanding of community identity and ethnicity.

For some of the people I spoke with, the pull of family connections was especially powerful. Recall Iain Boyd's statement about his parents' membership in the Society, their work for the Games, and his feeling of responsibility toward the Games' presentation. For others, maintaining their connection to the community of Antigonish was paramount. Several people, including Dan MacInnes, noted that the Games were put on as a community event first and foremost. Still others noted the importance of remembering the area's history. Acknowledging the people who comprise present-day Antigonish as well as the indelible impression made by the Highland Scottish pioneers of the area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was important to Bill Kiely and Kathryn Chisholm.

The majority of my informants are the Highland Society organizers who have ensured the longevity of the Antigonish Highland Games. The Antigonish Highland Games is "their" event. They have made it "theirs" by making it about

their expression of community identity, of ethnic identity. It is their connection to and ownership of (meaning their responsibility toward) the event that makes its existence authentic. The Games as festival are a heightened version of their lives and for three days each summer, the Games' occurrence sets their lives apart from the everyday. By participating in the Main Street parade and the competitive and entertainment events of the Games proper, the Society members display their connection to their community and their ethnicity and also provide an outlet for all the other Games' participants to do the same.

It is important to note that this study of the Antigonish Highland Games was undoubtedly coloured by my personal experience of the Games that I brought to the study. Throughout the research and writing of this thesis, my understanding and analysis of the Games was made as one who has participated in one of the major activities of the Games (Highland dancing) and as one who has also competed at these Games. While I have tried to be objective, I suspect this work might have been substantially different if I had no prior knowledge of the Games themselves.

6.1 Some Suggestions for Further Research

The following are some suggestions for further research regarding the Antigonish Highland Games. There is any number of approaches that would add to a better understanding of display events such as the Antigonish Highland Games. This list is not exhaustive, but shows some of the questions that came to mind as I worked through this thesis: 1. For example, one could compare and

contrast how the Games evolve over a set period of time, such as five or ten years. What are the constants? What are the variables? 2. Since the Games are clearly shaped by the organizers, how do the Games change as the Society's membership changes? What new suggestions or new ways of operation might stem from new members? 3. Lastly, I would wonder how the Antigonish Highland Games continue to be affected by tourism and its ongoing debate within the Society.

6.2 A Personal Reflection

When I first began to develop this thesis, I had wanted to examine a topic which would reflect one of my best-loved and longest running personal activities – Highland dancing. As the thesis grew and evolved, it became much more than a piece about Highland dance. It became a piece about why I participated in dance for so many years, and about why a dedicated group of people in Antigonish continue to come together to organize and host the Highland Games each year. This thesis made me realize that I danced for so many years for all the same reasons that the Highland Society organizers host the Highland Games.

Dancing connected me to family, both my blood family and my dancing "family." All the dance-related trips and events in which my family and I participated during my career are memories I will carry with me all my life. Some of these memories include all the competitions that my mother and I attended together including trips to the Antigonish Highland Games when we stayed with my aunt and uncle, my father, who is a broadcast journalist,

emceeing one of the concerts in which I performed, my grandfather videotaping many of my performances over the years, and my grandmother hand-knitting my first pair of kilt hose. Dancing connected me to a family of a different sort as well. I am bound to the girls with whom I danced and my instructor in ways that are everlasting. My husband and I are now the godparents of one of my dance friends' daughters. I continue to celebrate with these women as they graduate from school, marry, and have children just as they celebrated with me when I got married and now, as I await the arrival of my first child.

Dancing has also connected me to part of my own personal history. I, too, can claim connection to some of the Highland Scottish immigrants to Nova Scotia, just as the Games organizers do. In addition, dancing has also connected me to my community. My troupe has proudly performed for all sorts of charitable causes including local food banks, the Izaak Walton Killam (IWK) Children's Hospital Telethon and participated in other projects such as fundraising for breast cancer research and Christmas cheer programs. My instructor always strives to instil a sense of community-mindedness in the dancers and always tries to participate in as many performances as possible for charity.

I have always been proud to call myself a Highland dancer. This thesis has given me the opportunity to reflect on my dance career and all it has given me. While I have always recognized the importance of dance in my life, I now further appreciate its impact on my life.

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