

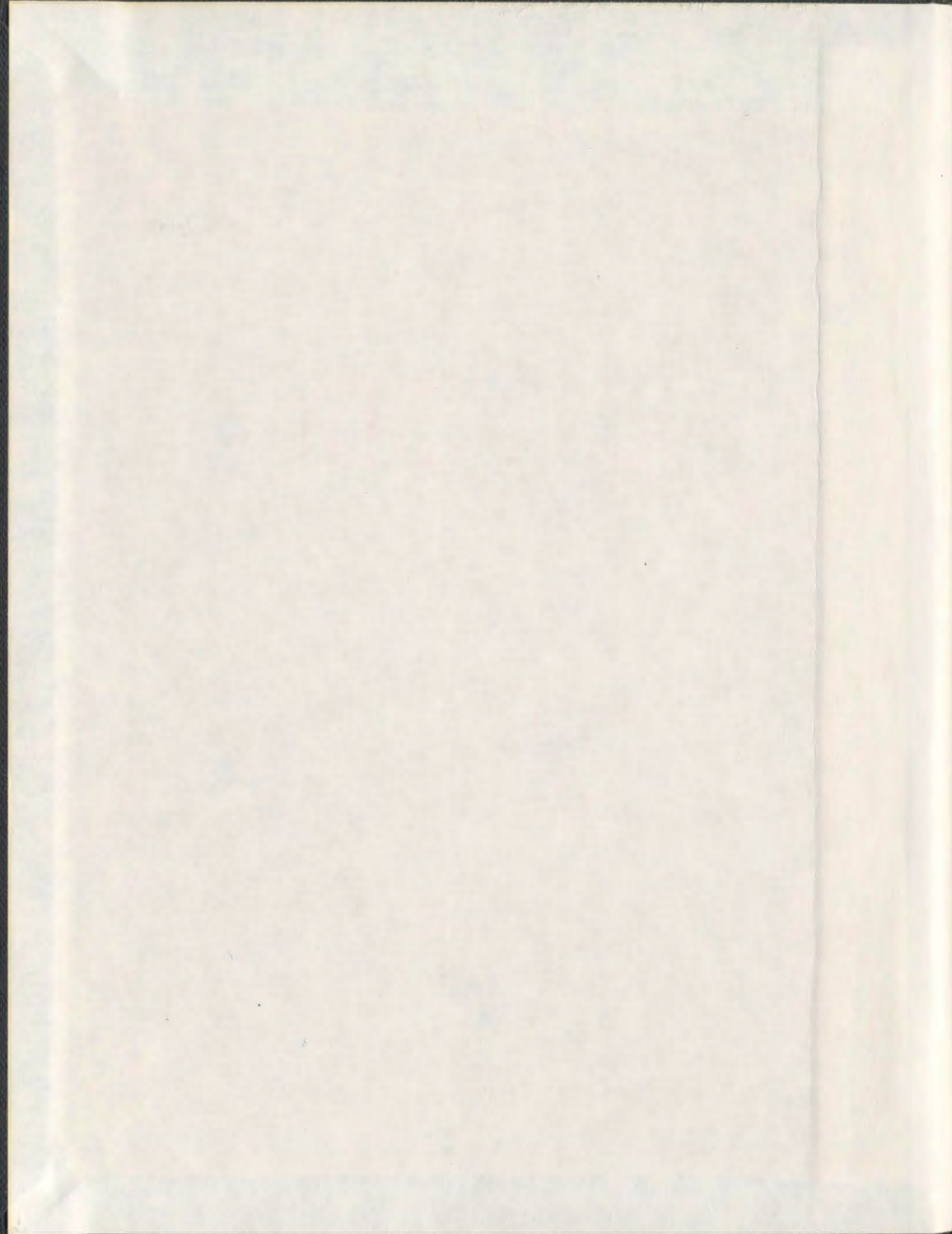
CLASS ACTS:
**CULINARY TOURISM IN NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR**

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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HOLLY JEANNINE EVERETT



CLASS ACTS:
CULINARY TOURISM IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

by

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A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the
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Class Acts: Culinary Tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador

Abstract

This thesis, building on the conceptual framework outlined by folklorist Lucy Long, examines culinary tourism in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The data upon which the analysis rests was collected through participant observation as well as qualitative interviews and surveys.

The first chapter consists of a brief overview of traditional foodways in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as a summary of the current state of the tourism industry. As well, the methodology which underpins the study is presented. Chapter two examines the historical origins of culinary tourism and the development of the idea in the Canadian context. The chapter ends with a description of Newfoundland and Labrador's current culinary marketing campaign, "A Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador." With particular attention to folklore scholarship, the course of academic attention to foodways and tourism, both separately and in tandem, is documented in chapter three.

The second part of the thesis consists of three case studies. Chapter four examines the uses of seal flipper pie in hegemonic discourse about the province and its culture. Fried foods, specifically fried fish, potatoes and cod tongues, provide the starting point for a discussion of changing attitudes toward food, health and the obligations of citizenry in chapter five. The fulfillment of such

ideals through the utilization of wild berries is documented in chapter six, as well as berry products' appeal as markers of socioeconomic status and cultural capital. The concluding chapter includes a review of the main themes and contributions of the study, as well as suggestions for further research in this area.

A major contribution of this thesis is its documentation and examination of the continuing links between social class and food consumption. Interviewees' and survey respondents' comments about Newfoundland and Labrador foodways, in combination with their own preferences and practices, reveal an intercultural dialogue about the pleasures and responsibilities of living in a society in which there is an abundance of food, but only if one has the cultural and economic means to access it. Thus, the study significantly expands upon the role of the socioeconomic Other in current constructions of culinary tourism.

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Chapter One

Introduction

I arrived at the academic study of food almost by accident. Having brainstormed and discarded at least a few dozen doctoral thesis ideas, I decided to take a break from trying to come up with the perfect topic. I had comprehensive exams to study for, and classes to teach. My supervisor suggested that in the course of study, I might come across a topic area or idea that would inspire me. At the same time, she encouraged me to look for a common thread in the ideas I had previously discarded. Upon reflection, I realized that at a very basic level, each of these proposals had the expression of identity through customary behaviour at its core. Moreover, they concerned identity both constructed and viewed through the lens of regional tradition.

Much of my previous work, focused on material culture, built upon similar ideas, examining the production or modification of artifacts (wedding rings, memorials, musical instruments), and the subsequent investiture of meaning in those objects. The investment of traditional, in the sense of collective, localized, meaning from both esoteric (emic) and exoteric (etic) perspectives, in the context of globalization and monoculture, continued to draw my attention. Moreover, the work of Paul Stoller and Kathy Neustadt, among others, prompted consideration of the sensory, ephemeral aspects of expression, experience and memory. Then,

as I ploughed through foodways scholarship in preparation for my exams, the special issue of Southern Folklore devoted to the concept of “culinary tourism” fatefully galvanized my thoughts around food, tourism and identity.

This thesis problematizes the idea of knowing the Other through gustatory experience and the paradigms of knowledge and identity construction that support it. The experience of tourists in Newfoundland and Labrador is documented through participant observation, qualitative interviews and surveys. The collected data demonstrates how food is accepted or rejected as a medium of cultural transmission. Criteria influencing such acceptance or rejection are identified for a greater understanding of the parameters of culinary tourism. Furthermore, in a time when local and provincial governments are investing more money than ever before in the promotion of Newfoundland and Labrador as a tourist destination, my hope is that the data and analysis presented here may be applied in local and regional economic development planning.

1.1 Traditional Foods in Newfoundland and Labrador: An Overview

Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada’s most easterly province, covers 405,720 square kilometers, more than three times the total area of the other three Atlantic provinces. The majority of the population lives on the Avalon Peninsula, where the provincial capital of St. John’s is located. The commercial hubs of Grand Falls-Windsor in central Newfoundland, Corner Brook on the

island's west coast, and Happy Valley-Goose Bay in central Labrador round out the province's major municipalities. The cod fishery—the industry which led to the settlement and development of the province—was severely curtailed by a 1992 moratorium, and further reduced by another moratorium ten years later. Since then, the province has looked toward high tech, natural resource extraction and tourism industries to balance the economic losses suffered by the fishing industry.

Fishing opportunities have drawn various peoples to Newfoundland and Labrador since the sixteenth century, although permanent communities were not established until the early nineteenth century. First a British colony, and for a brief period self-governing, Newfoundland became a province of Canada only in 1949. Foodways in the province are generally characterized as regional adaptations of English, Irish and Scottish culinary practices, with the important addition of indigenous flora, fauna and *fruits de mer* prepared in a variety of ways.¹ As French fishers also worked the waters of Newfoundland's south and west coast, there is an Acadian influence as well, but this has not been as well-documented. In addition, the province is home to three native peoples, including the Mi' Kmaq of Newfoundland, and the Inuit, Innu and Métis of Labrador.² This

¹ The most detailed work to date on Newfoundland foodways, from a folkloristic perspective, is Pamela Gray's master's thesis completed in 1977. In 2001, Maura Hanrahan and Marg Ewtushik published an important foodways and nutrition bibliography that also provides useful sub-topic overviews.

study focuses on the traditional foodways, mainly of European settlers, presented to tourists as typical Newfoundland and Labrador foods.

Area inhabitants have long relied on indigenous plants. Blossoms, fruit and greenery have been utilized for both culinary and medicinal purposes.³ Dogberries, for example, were used to make wine and jelly, as well as to restore the appetite. The bark of the dogberry tree was used in a tonic for 'bad blood' (Crellin 135-6). Applications of various parts of juniper bushes or trees include treatment of backache, infant colic, diarrhea, sore mouth, cough, colds, frostbite, boils, "dirty blood" and urinary problems ("water trouble") (171-2).

Of the province's land mammals, both native and introduced, arctic hare, caribou, moose and snowshoe hare (locally referred to as "rabbit") have been the major game animals, with the moose remaining the most important today (Gray 11). Significant game birds in the regional diet include duck, turr (also known as murre) and partridge (ptarmigan). While imported foodstuffs are available in the province now as never before, many families still consider hunted or fished game an important element of both diet and traditional social activity. Certain individuals within extended families often have developed roles as regular providers of certain types of game.

² Newfoundland's native Beothuks became extinct in 1829.

³ Imported foodstuffs were also utilized in a number of ways. Physician and medical historian John Crellin reports, for example, the use of apples "for the treatment of both diarrhoea and constipation" in different formulations (74-75).

Fish and other sea creatures are perhaps the best known element of the province's typical diet (followed closely by moose and berries). Here, certainly, cod has been king, and this is reflected in both locally and mass-produced cookbooks as well as traditional meal patterns. As an illustration of cod's importance, of the popular cookbook Fat Back and Molasses's⁴ forty-nine seafood recipes, thirty-four, just shy of seventy percent, are for cod.⁵ Other fish locally consumed include brook trout, caplin, halibut, herring and salmon.

Due to a short growing season and unfavourable soil conditions, large-scale agriculture was not prominent in the development of Newfoundland and Labrador's foodways. In addition, farming was officially discouraged during the area's early settlement, as it was feared such activity would detract from the execution of the fishery (H. C. Murray 13-33; Story 12-22). Thus, Gray contends, "There really was not even time to benefit from the potential agricultural resources for during the growing season the men, and many women, were busy with the work of the fisheries" (15; see also Story 21). This is not to say, however,

⁴ Fat Back and Molasses is one of the best-known and widely used cookbooks in the province, now in its fourth printing. Edited by United Church clergyman Ivan F. Jespersen, with drawings by his twelve-year-old daughter, Lorie, the recipes come mainly from members of the United Church. Jespersen notes that he also included recipes from a mimeographed booklet called The Labrador Cookbook.

⁵ There is also the commonly observed fact that in Newfoundland, "fish" means "cod." Other kinds of fish are specified by name (see, e.g., Casselman 25; Jespersen 8; Gray 14; Story 21). Thus, a recipe for fish stew would be understood as meaning cod stew.

that the cultivation of certain foods has not contributed to culinary practice. As Omohundro points out, although horticultural activity was always secondary to fishing and later logging,

there is good evidence that settlers arrived with sufficient horticultural skills and traditions to cleverly exploit what little Newfoundland had to offer the cultivator. If they were poor farmers, the fault lay—at various times and places—with the physical conditions, political pressures, or economic distractions. (102-3)

Root crops, including beets, carrots, onions and turnips, along with potatoes, cabbage and small fruits such as currants, plums and rhubarb have and continue to be important domestic crops (Horan, "Agriculture" 12). Visitors to the province witness this continuing horticultural activity in the form of roadside and gravel pit gardens (Fleming 1; Omohundro 135-39, 297-99). As anthropologist John Omohundro writes, "Self-sufficiency, a basic axiom of Newfoundland culture for hundreds of years, is still valued by home producers" (135). Thus, canning and other means of preserving fruits, meats and vegetables were valuable skills in the early days of settlement and continue to typify domestic practice.⁶

While Newfoundland and Labrador shares Acadian, English, French, Irish and Scottish heritage with other maritime provinces, as well as the influence of aboriginal peoples, it also lays claim to uniquely regional foods. A list of such foods would have to include both homemade and mass-manufactured products

⁶ Hanrahan hypothesizes that aboriginal people aided European im/migrants in adapting to the new environment and realizing the potential of incorporating hunting and gathering into their agriculturally-oriented lifestyle (ii-iii).

ranging from deep fried caplin to Purity Jam Jams cookies.⁷ One example of a dish which has moved from ship's galley to domestic kitchen to commercial kitchen is fish and brewis, also known as fisherman's brewis or simply brewis.⁸ A recipe from Fat-Back & Molasses declares, 'The following recipe is a typical Newfoundland dish which everyone learns to love, even the English Methodist Parsons' (7) and provides four recipes. This is one is described as "famous all over Newfoundland" (7):

Skin and bone fresh fish. Put in boiling salted water and cook until tender. Soak hard bread overnight. Put the soaked bread into cold water; bring slowly to the boil and cook only until tender, 5-10 minutes. Fry out small pieces of fat pork [scrunchins]. Add the cooked fish, then the cooked brewis. Toss lightly and heat thoroughly. (7)

While the recipe assumes the cook's ability to prepare brewis properly, Annie Mugford of Clarke's Beach explains, "To Prepare Brewis: Split cakes of hard bread; allow 1 cake per person. Place in a large saucepan well covered with

⁷ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss in detail every food or drink item that may be considered part of Newfoundland and Labrador foodways. For a more inclusive discussion, see Gray 1977. Philip Hiscock addresses the issue, including the location of authenticity on the sliding scale of commercialism, in a short article, "Caribou or Cucumber: What Exactly is a Newfoundland Food?," written for the local publication Newfoundland Signal (1990).

⁸ Variant spellings for "brewis" include "brews(e)," "broose," "bruis," "bruise" and "bruse" (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 65). During a 2004 trip across the island, I saw it spelled "brewis" and "brews." Bill Casselman provides a popular etymology of the word in his Canadian Food Words (20-21). For an early reference to the popularity of the dish in Newfoundland, see Joseph Banks' description circa 1766 (Lysaght 137).

water. Soak overnight. The next day, using the same water bring to near boil. ([D]o not boil). Drain immediately. Keep hot" (Jespersion 8).⁹

Fish and brewis clearly represents a life dominated by the demands of the fishery in its combination of salt cod and hard tack. Salt cod originated with medieval Basque fishermen as a method of preserving the delicate fish for market (Kurlansky 20-21). England, France and Brittany would also become dependent on the practice that enabled them to sell cod year-round (54-59). World markets developed a taste for salt fish, as did those who made it. Hard tack, also known as ship's biscuit or sea-biscuit, is a dry biscuit or bread containing water and flour, but no salt nor any ingredient capable of putrefaction (Swinburne 310-311). It is generally baked in large rolls. To be edible, it must be soaked in some kind of hot liquid, in this case water. Due to its composition, it can last for months without spoiling, thus making it a natural for sea voyages (Swinburne 311), or other circumstances in which long-term preservation is crucial, such as a harsh Newfoundland or Labrador winter. In any case, its commonplace shipboard use assured its association with the sea.

Although salt cod and hard tack may no longer be crucial to the contemporary local diet, fish and brewis remains a popular dish. Hanrahan writes that it "is often considered the quintessential Newfoundland meal, . . . [and] the

⁹ Jespersen notes that, "As in all such [traditional] dishes an exact recipe is hard to find, each cook having her own way of doing the cooking which gives a slightly different flavour to the finished product" (8).

focus of social occasions for many Newfoundlanders" (i). Gray found it to be the second most cited dish in her survey of "traditional Newfoundland food" (156). I had a plate of fish and brewis in Grand Falls-Windsor in July 2004 (Fig. 1.1). The dish was one of several offered (and one of the first to sell out) at "Newfie Night," the last night of the town's annual Salmon Festival (Fig. 1.2 and 1.3).

Other dishes, having analogues in many other locales, have become fundamental, iconographic elements of Newfoundland and Labrador foodways and culture in general. An outstanding example of this is Jiggs' dinner, a type of boiled dinner common in Atlantic Canada and New England (Doudiet 229), and one which Gray's informants most consistently identified as a traditional Newfoundland food (156-59).¹⁰ Traditionally eaten as the main meal of the day on Sunday afternoon, the one-pot dinner typically consists of salt meat, cabbage, carrot, potato, turnip and peas pudding. A representative recipe from Cookin' Up a Scoff runs as follows:

2 lbs. salt meat or salt riblets	1 medium turnip
6 large potatoes	3 lb. head cabbage
6 carrots	2 cups split peas

Soak salt beef or riblets overnight; drain and add fresh water to cover meat. Put split peas in pudding bag and tie, soak overnight.

¹⁰ A number of popular and academic writers have addressed the origins of the dish's name. For example, while both Casselman (42) and George argue for connections with widespread and localized meanings of the word "jig," Gray traces the name to the "Maggie Jiggs" (also called "Bringing up Father") comic strip which ran in Hearst newspapers beginning in 1913 (160-61). In Labrador, the dish is also known as "Labrador Dinner" (Jespersion 36).

Bring salt meat to a boil for 2 hours, changing the water once or twice to desire[d] taste. Put peas pudding in with salt meat. Prepare the vegetables and wash in cold water. Add cabbage, turnip and carrots. Let boil together for 30-40 minutes then add potatoes. Cook until tender. Cook dumplings on the top of potatoes for the last 7-10 minutes. Put peas pudding in bowl, mash with butter and pepper. (Poole and Jeans 1)

As with the recipe for fish and brewis, a salt-preserved foodstuff is a principal ingredient, harkening back to the hardscrabble early days of the province's European-based settlement. Similarly evocative is the use of root vegetables. In the past, such vegetables would often be gathered from the cook's own garden. Other names by which the dish is known in the province are boiled dinner, cooked dinner, hot Sunday dinner and salt beef dinner (Gray 15).

Such associations with the province's past, and the importance of the meal as a commensal punctuation to each week, resulted in Jiggs' dinner's pride of place in the canon of traditional foods. Jiggs' dinner continues to be an important symbol of family and community. My students consistently cite the meal as a favourite and look forward to enjoying it at home, particularly on Sunday afternoons or evenings. Restaurants in the St. John's area currently offer the dinner as a weekly special.¹¹

¹¹ As of this writing, at least four restaurants offer Jiggs' dinner on Sunday. These are Buddy's Fish and Chips, the Irving Big Stop (Mount Pearl), the Lizard Lounge (Mount Pearl). The Stonehouse Renaissance features Jiggs' dinner on Tuesday night, and the Lizard Lounge also offers it on Thursdays.

1.2 Change and Consistency in Traditional Foodways

While food-related practices are generally considered among the most stable of tradition-directed behaviours (see, for example, Oring 35; Theophano 44), foodways in Newfoundland and Labrador have been affected by factors such as international trade and the rise of agro-industry giants, as have traditional diets the world over. Grocery stores in the province offer apples from New Zealand and oranges from South Africa, as well as locally grown spinach and carrots. Traditional dishes such as Jiggs' dinner, demanding considerable time and effort, vie with the ease, affordability and popular appeal of fast food meals. Food studies scholars have also noted (with concern) the desocialization of eating, particularly in North America (Brumberg and Streigel-Moore 215-16; Kass 229-31; J. L. Smith 40, 183; Visser 123-25). For many, eating is an increasingly solitary and hurried experience.¹²

Environmental conditions and political realities also impinge on traditional diets. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the dependence on cod is necessarily changing due to the decimation of stocks and federally mandated moratoriums. Medical anthropologist Maura Hanrahan has commented on the decline of salt fish in the Newfoundland diet since the 1950s, along with cod in general. "It

¹² Authors such as Greg Critser consider the decrease in commensality a significant factor in the current obesity epidemic, while others see it as simultaneously contributing to the rise of eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia (Blumberg and Streigel-Moore 2002).

seems," she writes, "that fish, salted or otherwise, will never again be at the core of the Newfoundland diet" (iv). Fellow St. John's residents have often remarked to me about the difficulty of getting fresh cod in the last few years. Locals have complained to me that the best fishing is now reserved for native groups, tourists and foreign fishing vessels (e.g., C. Davis, 2002). At the same time, Canadians are being encouraged to eat more fish as part of a healthy lifestyle (Pollon 2004). Moreover, although the local diet now includes more fresh fruit and vegetables, there is more consumption of "junk" food as well.

While the loss of traditional food preparation and commensal practices is certainly a concern, folklorists and other cultural specialists also recognize the dynamism present in foodways systems, and the constant interplay between tradition and innovation. As Hanrahan reveals, "One of the things that I have learned . . . is that, in terms of our diets and foodways, change has been the only constant" (iv). Newfoundland and Labrador's foodways did not develop in isolation. Given the province's long history of international trade and travel, it is not necessarily the origin of an artifact that is most important, but rather the end product, or its imbeddedness in local culture by which its significance is ultimately measured.¹³ Accordingly, Newfoundlanders who move away from the island may pine after both Jiggs' dinner and Fanta Pineapple Soda; mom's fish and brewis

¹³ See Howes (4-8) for a discussion of such creolization with particular reference to Coca-Cola in non-Western societies, and Watson (2002) on McDonald's in China.

as well as fish and chips from the Big R restaurant (Antle 2002).¹⁴ Similarly, visitors to the area identify both traditional dishes such as fish and brewis and commercial products unavailable in their own area, such as Purity Peanut Butter Kisses (Rosenberg 2004), as regionally unique foods.

1.3 Toothsome, Troublesome Travel

Sociologist Jacinthe Bessière writes about the contemporary holiday-maker's desire for something simpler and finer, a "re-activation of well-established stereotypes about nature and purity" in rural France ("Local" 22). Examining Newfoundland and Labrador tourism materials, it is easy to conclude that this is exactly what is being offered, and in turn consumed, both by resident and visiting vacationers. In 2002, for example, Globe and Mail columnist Karen von Hahn declared, "Newfoundland is a trip off the edge of the modern world. . . . Its very remoteness offers not only achingly beautiful natural scenery, but also a last little oasis of authenticity." Bessière explains further that food is often a marker of such authenticity, as "cuisine with a country touch, and 'natural' products have increased in popularity: black bread or bread baked in brick ovens, farm fresh products, country buffets and straight-from-the-farm delicatessen meat. Regional cuisine and country home-style Sunday lunches are often

¹⁴ Gray documented similar emic views of Newfoundland foods, noting that respondents classified commercial products such as Purity brand lemon cream biscuits, and bologna as traditional foods (158-59).

featured at higher priced restaurants" ("Local" 24). While it is true that popular perceptions of the province as well as locally produced tourist information bolster a parallel vision, what tourists seek is actually a complicated mix of typically rural and urban offerings, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

The traveler often desires a delicate balance between the familiar and the exotic. Survey respondents reported various techniques for identifying locally popular eateries. Teri Long of Minnesota wrote, "We watch for local places, usually with someone's name, like 'Bob's,' or with lots of pick-ups, police cars, veterinarians parked outside—especially for breakfast" (2003). Another couple mentioned asking for recommendations at gas stations and grocery stores. While some may attempt an authentically native experience, however, including food, accommodation and entertainment, others simply endeavor to deviate from their usual routines. Thus, an Indian, Lebanese or Japanese restaurant may be equally as attractive as one featuring Atlantic Canadian fare. For example, George and Kathy Sanders, a couple who completed a survey for me by email in the summer of 2003, contacted me again prior to their 2004 visit to the province. We arranged to meet for lunch in St. John's during their time on the Avalon Peninsula. When I asked where they would like to meet, they enthusiastically suggested International Flavours, a small Pakistani restaurant downtown. During lunch, Kathy explained that she had been recently introduced to East Indian cuisine by a co-worker from England. In addition, she said more Indian

restaurants had opened in their area (near Philadelphia), thus enabling her to pursue her new culinary interest more easily.

By contrast, after a day of dealing with unfamiliar streets, businesses and people, the tourist may seek comfort in familiar foods.¹⁵ As Daniel J. Boorstin notes, "The modern American tourist . . . has come to expect both more strangeness and more familiarity than the world naturally offers" (79). Even while enmeshed in their quest for difference, travelers often express surprise when they find it. Visitors from Ontario and Manitoba, for example, are genuinely puzzled by the relative lack of farmland they encounter in the province. This sameness/difference paradox is also at work in the exclamations over the number of fast foods restaurants in the province. Together, the observations declare, "How can things be so different, and yet, so much the same!" While travelers actively seek difference, and thus a different self, they continue to look

¹⁵ It is also important to consider that visitors on a group tour may have little control over their meals. As a respondent from New York City visiting the province on a birding tour plaintively shorthanded, "am on a bird tour and am eating with a group and am at mercy of leader" (Metzner 2004). Likewise, John Webb, traveling with a group of about twenty-five explained, "the priority of the leader is to find some space for the group. This can be a problem in small communities, e.g., Rocky Harbour, and hotel dining rooms are often the only option. This can restrict access to the excellent home cooking in smaller restaurants" (2003). Related "group" concerns are often the primary focus of those traveling with children. As Mike Kocz from New York City wrote, "Our primary test is whether a place can accommodate kids. Secondary consideration is food quality" (Kocz 2004). Similarly, Ms. Rumble of Ontario noted that while traveling, she and her husband enjoy trying local foods. However, she added, "Other times we would get McDonald's or Tim Hortons because of the kids if we are on a long trip . . ." (2003).

for comfort in the known. Furthermore, Canadians and Americans traveling within North America expect conveniences and services which are common features of Western postindustrial society. For example, anthropologist Mark Nuttall, conducting research on tourism in remote areas of Alaska, describes a Wisconsin couple who were shocked because they were unable to buy a quart of milk while driving to Fairbanks via the Dalton Highway (228).¹⁶ The paradox presented by conflicting desires for wilderness and the amenities of civilization are discussed further in later chapters.

Anecdotal and statistical evidence also shows an increased desire for safety in a number of areas. Fears of terrorism, heightened following the events of September 11, 2001, steadily increased as the United States (and allies) launched the "War on Terror." The Canadian media reported that such circumstances made Canada, and Atlantic Canada in particular, an attractive alternative to travel abroad. Americans, and mainland Canadians, have felt safer traveling within North America in general. Tourism officials believe that Newfoundland is still reaping the benefits of its hospitality to the 13,000 accidental visitors of September 11 (Gushue 2004). The new appeal of Canada, however, was severely challenged in 2003 by the double whammy of confirmed cases of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE, also known as "mad cow

¹⁶ The Dalton Highway, only recently opened to the public, is a dirt road originally constructed exclusively for Trans-Alaska Pipeline and related oil-industry use (Nuttall 228).

disease") in Canadian beef herds and an outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). While not directly affected by BSE and SARS fears by virtue of its "impossibly remote" location (von Hahn 2002), Newfoundland and Labrador still felt the impact in reduced visits to Canada overall. In St. John's, the Pepper Mill restaurant sought to calm any fears by advertising its fresh seafood as "Mad Cow Disease Free!!"¹⁷ That summer was also the first tourism high season following the Canadian government's refusal to join the United States and the "coalition of the willing" in the war on Iraq. An Ipsos-Reid poll conducted for the Canadian Tourism Commission in March 2003, however, reported that a majority of Americans "who were aware of Canada's position on the war" were not excluding Canada from their travel plans as a consequence (Buhasz and Hardenne 2003).¹⁸ Nevertheless, widespread fears concerning terrorism and anti-Americanism abroad kept many Americans at home, as did the rising value of Canadian currency against the American dollar. Overall, Canadian tourism has

¹⁷ The pronouncement, at the bottom of a chalkboard listing fish available, faced onto the street from inside the restaurant and was easily read by passersby.

¹⁸ Journalists Buhasz and Hardenne reported that around "63 percent of Americans . . . stated that it would not affect the likelihood of their travel to Canada in the next six to twelve months. Thirty percent indicated they would be less likely to travel to Canada." Furthermore, the "highest level of impact responses" came from the Northeastern United States, an area with which Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as Atlantic Canada in general, has historically strong ties.

suffered significantly for the past three years ("Tourism Slump" 2003; Williamson 2003).

Newfoundland and Labrador both benefits and suffers from its peripheral position in the Canadian imaginary. It has yet to approach British Columbia, Ontario or Quebec in the development of culinary tourism, and possibly never will. Perhaps the province is yet too mired in economic and social woes (coming together in the one-two punch of outmigration, for example), both from an emic and etic perspective, to enjoy the luxury of consistently positioning food, and eating, as a means of entertainment. But in its maintenance and enlivening of centuries-old food practices as well as incorporation of commercial goods into localized identities, it offers travelers a unique experience. Sophisticated Quebecers and retired Floridian RV enthusiasts alike find themselves at the same dinner table in L'Anse Amour, Labrador, separated only by a couple of folklorists and a plastic table cover. All are presented with the same plate of caribou, cabbage, peas, potato and turnip, smothered in caribou gravy.¹⁹ They do

¹⁹ This is a description of a meal my partner and I had at the Lighthouse Cove B&B in L'Anse Amour, Labrador. Due to the sheer number of tourists and the relatively small number of restaurants on the Viking trail, a large proportion of B&Bs offer evening meals upon request. This is also true in the Labrador Straits. Many offer local specialties, and almost all emphasize "home cooking." While they may be served restaurant or "family" style, depending on the size of the establishment and the aesthetic of the proprietors, the most popular method is to serve individual portions of the same dishes at one large table. Thus, while everyone is eating the same things (although there may be exceptions made for vegetarians or young children, for example), they are not serving themselves from the same bowls or platters. Again, depending on space and aesthetic, the

not completely forget their differences, and indeed, these dissimilarities fuel the conversation. But for the evening, their talk is enabled by the social conductivity of a shared meal. I eagerly participated in many such meals in the course of conducting the fieldwork for this thesis.

1.4 Participant Observation

The original thesis project proposed a comparative study of all Atlantic Canadian provinces. Hence, from August 11 to August 29, 2001, I undertook fieldwork in the Maritimes (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island), observing and participating in tourist activities in both urban and rural settings.²⁰ The timing of the research trip was extremely beneficial in allowing me to conduct participant-observation during peak tourist season. Data gathering included taking ethnographic fieldnotes and photographs, collecting menus and local tourist information and food-related souvenirs such as postcards (Fig. 1.4) and

proprietors may sit down with the guests, but even then may or may not eat with them. In some cases, one person may remain in the kitchen, while the other may sit at the table and, if not eating, participate in conversation. However, even in situations where the guests are served "restaurant-style" throughout the meal, the proprietors may attempt to control the social aspects of the meal by assigning seating.

²⁰ Cities and communities visited included Halifax, Truro, New Glasgow, Little Harbour, Pictou, Antigonish, Peggy's Cove (Nova Scotia), Charlottetown, Orwell, Cavendish, New Glasgow, St. Ann (Prince Edward Island), Moncton, Shediac, Grande-Digue, Cassie Cape, Cocagne, Notre-Dame, St. Antione, Cormierville, St. Thomas, Bouctouche, St. Marie de Kent, Irishtown, Sussex, Fredericton and Saint John (New Brunswick).

“lobster egg” candy.²¹ I spoke with both travelers and local residents in each community: restaurateurs, servers, farmers, cashiers, cooks, musicians, museum employees, grocers, artists and university students.

In both Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, I had the benefit of local contacts who were able to suggest places or events to visit, and people with whom I might like to speak. In several instances, they accompanied me to events and provided an emic perspective.²² I also visited a wide range of eating establishments throughout the study area, from hotel eateries to roadside stands, sampling regional specialties first-hand. Events I attended, along with many other tourists, included the 15th Annual Halifax International Busker Festival, Prince Edward Island Old Home Week, the Wendell Boyle memorial ceilidh in Orwell, PEI, the W.W. Boyce Farmer’s Market in Fredericton, NB, and demonstrations by two loyalist regiment re-enactor encampments at King’s Landing Historical Settlement (New Brunswick).

Fieldwork undertaken that summer demonstrated that many visitors to Atlantic Canada come to experience “the great outdoors,” bypassing cities and

²¹ Food postcards often fall into one of two categories: recipe cards, such as the New Brunswick lobster postcard shown in Fig. 1.1., and tall-tale cards picturing giant potatoes (as shown), fish, lobsters, fiddleheads, and so on. See Roger Welsch’s study Tall-Tale Postcards: A Pictorial History (1976) for more on the latter. Frank de Caro also briefly notes the use of folklore and folklife activities on postcards in his article “Studying American Folklore in Printed Sources” (413).

²² I am especially indebted to Evelyne Benais and the Tye-Latta family for their hospitality and assistance at this time.

well-known tourist attractions, such as Green Gables National Park in Prince Edward Island, in favour of provincial and national parks and other wilderness areas. Moreover, while tourists frequently engage in a driving tour of the Maritimes, taking in all three provinces, Newfoundland and Labrador is commonly viewed as a destination in and of itself. People frequently told me that they had been to every Canadian province except Newfoundland and Labrador.

A second fieldwork trip was undertaken the following summer. From July 16 to July 29, 2002, I observed and participated in tourist activities in eastern, central and western Newfoundland and the Labrador Straits.²³ Once again the timing of this travel facilitated direct contact with numerous travelers, as well as observation of local response to high demand for tourist services. As in 2001, data collection included ethnographic documentation (fieldnotes and photographs) at major tourist sites (e.g., Gros Morne National Park, Port au Choix, L'Anse aux Meadows, Red Bay and Ryan Premises National Historic Sites), the collection of menus (Fig. 1.5), tourist information and food-related souvenirs, and discussions with travelers and local residents in each location. Travel across the province at this time also allowed me to participate in the first

²³ Communities surveyed include Grand Falls-Windsor, Deer Lake, Woody Point, Trout River, Norris Point, Rocky Harbour, Cow Head, Port Saunders, Port au Choix, Brig Bay, Bird Cove, Main Brook, St. Anthony, St. Lunaire, Griket, Gunner's Cove, L'Anse aux Meadows, Straitsview, Quirpon, Cape Onion, Raleigh, L'Anse au Clair, L'Anse Amour, Pinware, Red Bay, Mary's Harbour, Battle Harbour, Lewisporte, Gander, Bonavista, Trouty, New Bonaventure and Trinity.

wave of tourism following the unexpected influx of visitors on September 11, 2001, and the film and video releases of The Shipping News, Random Passage and Rare Birds, international dramatic productions centering on Newfoundland, all of which were expected to have a significant impact on provincial tourism (D. Sullivan 2002).

Participant-observation at bed and breakfasts in both Newfoundland and Labrador highlighted the importance of informal social interaction between travelers and residents, and the concurrent opportunities for cultural exchange. Moreover, I was made keenly aware of local business people's concerns and frustrations with regional, provincial and national tourism campaigns and policies.

Also of note was the continued popularity of the Viking Trail.²⁴ Favoured routes to the area include travel by ferry from Sydney, Nova Scotia to Port aux Basques, or flights into Deer Lake. Less frequently, visitors fly into St. John's and drive across the island in a rented car. Both the Bonne Bay and St. Anthony areas are used as bases from which day trips are taken to other sites. Smaller communities along the route provide accommodation for the overflow from the busier tourist areas, as well as for travelers stopping en route. Moreover, the Main River region, to the east of the Viking Trail, is popular with hunters and

²⁴ L'Anse aux Meadows was the focus of the province's tourism campaign in 2000, as the "1000th anniversary of Leif Ericson's attempt to make a home at L'Anse aux Meadows" (2000 Travel Guide 20). Anthropologist Wayne Fife has thoughtfully examined Viking Trail tourism, resulting in three articles at the time of this writing.

fishers, and thus home to a number of lodges. RV owners sometimes leave their large vehicles and travel ahead by car, spending the night in a hotel or bed and breakfast. Together these factors form a dynamic complex of food needs and desires in the area.

As a result of both the popularity of the route (provincial route 430) and the geographical constraints of travel, tourists see each other again and again, and sometimes develop friendly relations on the basis of shared experiences.

Meeting repeatedly over a period of days or weeks, travelers pass on accommodation, sightseeing and restaurant recommendations and warnings. In situations of unfamiliarity, travelers also exchange information about specific food and dishes, e.g., toutons, cod tongues, or fish and brewis. At the Gros Morne Seafoods Chalet in Rocky Harbour, a Newfoundland couple touring the island's west coast in a RV explained fish and brewis to two other groups of travelers sitting nearby.²⁵ Thus, food knowledge is traded like currency, encoded as a marker of lifestyle, experience and status. Such knowledge is also important in providing opportunities for socializing. The Newfoundland couple noted previously continued to chat at length with another couple from mainland Canada. These exchanges take place between tourists, and also between

²⁵ Even without having spoken, tourists who recognize each other at the same eating establishment, unexpectedly, may feel an instant confirmation of the validity of their choice. Visual and verbal contact can occur not only within the physical confines of the restaurant, but also in the parking lot, as licence plates and vehicles become points of recognition and affinity.

tourists and local residents. Such patterns of communication to which many travelers are habituated enabled me to strike up conversations with tourists as I traveled. In this way, I recruited interviewees, and in some cases, also made friends with whom I still correspond.

In reviewing the data gathered on this second field trip, as well as interviews with B&B owners the following winter, I decided to focus exclusively on Newfoundland and Labrador. Thus, in the summer of 2003 I concentrated on data gathering exclusively in the province. A third field trip focused on the Avalon and Eastern Regions, particularly Bonavista, Trinity and Trout River on the Bonavista peninsula and Placentia on the Cape Shore. To reach a greater number of visitors and local travelers than I could by simply introducing myself and explaining my study as I had at B&Bs and tourist attractions during the previous fieldtrips, I sought volunteers to complete a short survey by postal or electronic mail.

1. 5 Survey summary

I created a flyer, with tear-away tags, that I regularly posted in downtown St. John's over a three-month period (appendix one). I also posted variations of the flyer in other locations—Bloomington, Indiana; Austin, Texas; Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador; Montréal, Québec— as the opportunity arose. Although I received some responses via this solicitation, it was a small number in

comparison to the time and effort necessary to create and post the flyers, roughly one contact per every ten flyers. In addition, some respondents did not read the flyer closely. For example, a Canadian respondent had never visited Newfoundland and Labrador, nor any of the other Atlantic provinces. In two other cases, the respondents had never been anywhere in Canada. Those who did respond, and had traveled in the study area, were offered the choice of completing a survey by email, or being interviewed by phone at their convenience. The vast majority chose to use email (appendix two).

An unforeseen benefit (and curse) of the flyers was a brief spate of media attention. Radio and television reporters and producers contacted me after seeing the flyer in their respective communities, or while traveling in the province. I agreed to interviews on three Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) regional radio programs, as well as the national CBC television program Food Chain in hopes of attracting more respondents. Although no one who subsequently completed the survey mentioned hearing or seeing one of the interviews, it is possible that the media exposure influenced their decision to participate in the study.

Another method of survey distribution proved more successful. I constructed a mail-in survey which consisted of a self-addressed, stamped envelope containing the questionnaire (appendix three). Additionally, this method better facilitated the participation of travelers who do not have ready access to

the Internet. Employees of the tourism information office housed in a railcar on Harbour Drive in St. John's generously allowed me to keep a stack of surveys with the other tourist information until the office closed for the season. I also mailed twenty surveys to four B&B operators (for a total of eighty surveys) I had met during my 2002 fieldwork trip, each of whom distributed the surveys to interested guests.²⁶ Some of the respondents were asked further questions by email or phone. I placed another fifty surveys in Trinity during a short trip to the area: twenty-five at the Dock Gallery and Craft Shop, and twenty-five in the lobby of the Rising Tide (Theatre) Arts Centre.²⁷ In June 2004, I obtained permission to place twenty-five surveys in the lobby of the City of St. John's new downtown tourism office. Finally, in July 2004, I distributed a total of sixty surveys across the island in the course of a trip to Gros Morne National Park. Over this fifteen month period, I received ninety-four completed surveys.

There were two negative aspects of the mail-in survey. Firstly, the cost of stamps and envelopes is an important consideration, as there is no way of knowing how many surveys will be returned. For instance, two locations that were contacted by letter concerning display of the surveys after initial expressions of interest did not reply, and no surveys from the locations were ever

²⁶ For this invaluable assistance I am indebted to David and Barbara Adams, Jeannie Billard, Lerley and Rod Bryenton, and Rita and Cecil Davis.

²⁷ Special thanks to Louise Andrews at the Dock and employees of the Rising Tide Arts Centre for permission to leave surveys at these locations.

received. Secondly, perhaps because of greater familiarity with quantitative surveys such as those distributed in 2004 by Parks Canada (Fig. 1.6), some respondents endeavoured to transform the qualitative survey into a quantitative format, by numbering suggested responses and answering with some combination of those numbers. Furthermore, in some instances my questions were perceived as part of a quality control effort, and answers were geared toward the evaluation of service.

1.6 Other Methods

Throughout the research period, I contacted the authors of web sites which detail trips to the province. This method of eliciting data produced uneven yet invaluable results. In some cases, the email addresses given on the web sites were inactive, and my messages bounced back. Other queries received no response at all, which may be credited to a simple lack of interest in participating in the study, or to the fact that my message was caught by the recipient's spam filter. However, in four cases, I received enthusiastic replies from web site authors, whose recollections of their travels in the province have been important to the study. I interviewed the authors by email and telephone.

In addition, I have been a registered member of the Frommer's, Lonely Planet (whose web site is called "The Thorn Tree"), and Rough Guide online travel forums, which allowed me to read and post messages to each site's

discussion boards. Included in each membership is a free subscription to the forums' electronic newsletters, useful for monitoring articles about and discussions of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as the Atlantic region and other parts of Canada.

As with many folklore studies, respondents also came to me through friends and colleagues who hosted visitors to the province. A number of relatives and friends who stayed with me in St. John's graciously agreed to interviews or completed a survey by email upon returning home. Moreover, I am indebted to Memorial University students who have discussed traditional and contemporary foodways in the province with me both in and outside of the classroom.

Foodways discussions in both my Introduction to Folklore (FOLK 1000) and Folklore Research Methods (FOLK 2100) classes were always lively. Informal talks with friends living in the province have also been invaluable.

While certain methods were more time and labour efficient than others, the combined approach of participant-observation, through which I made personal contacts with fellow travelers and people working in the tourism industry, and postal and e-mail surveys allowed me a comprehensive picture of the current state of tourism in the province. However, I would not recommend the tag-flyer method to those conducting similar research, as the considerable time and effort necessary to create and post them far outweighed the data gained in response.

The majority of participants, both those interviewed and those queried by survey only, were from outside the province, namely other Canadian provinces (primarily Ontario) and the United States.²⁸ As discussed above, about half of contacts from within the province were media-related. Participants also tended to be well-traveled, traveling a few to several times a year either for business or pleasure. In addition, their travel includes destinations both within North America and abroad. Thus, the majority of participants have experienced the foodways of other regions and cultures to some degree. Moreover, participants tended to be in their fifties and sixties, in accordance with general worldwide travel statistics. Persons in this age bracket have more leisure time, many being retired or semi-retired, and more discretionary income. Mail-in survey respondents tended to be female (approximately sixty-two percent).²⁹ It must be noted that many respondents answered on behalf of both themselves and others, most frequently

²⁸ In the main, the survey sample corresponds with the information supplied by the St. John's Department of Tourism and Economic Development. While residents of the province continue to constitute the largest group of tourists, the number of tourists from other provinces and countries is steadily increasing. Provincial statistics published in 2004 estimate the number of non-resident visitors during the 2003 season to have been around 441,400 persons, accounting for \$316 million, or slightly over one quarter, of total tourism spending.

²⁹ The high number of female respondents may be interpreted as further confirmation of women's continuing responsibilities for the provisioning of food in family contexts, and the extension of that role into leisure activities such as travel. See Charles and Kerr 1998; DeVault 1991.

a partner. Therefore, a number of the surveys represent the experience of the writers as well as their interpretation of the experience of their companion(s).

1.7 Chapter Outline

This thesis is not meant to be an exhaustive study of traditional foodways, but broad-based and exploratory in its consideration of food and tourism in the province. My supervisor and I discussed a number of possible areas of research in the early planning stages of the thesis, such as festivals (e.g., the Brigus Blueberry Festival and the Labrador Straits Bakeapple Festival), dinner theatre and cookbooks. In reviewing the collected data, however, certain patterns emerged which have resulted in the thesis as it now stands. I had never imagined writing a chapter on fried foods, for instance, until after the first fieldtrip of 2002, during which the topic came up repeatedly in casual conversation. Similarly, seal flipper pie emerged as an important etic contact zone (Pratt 1992) following the release of the film The Shipping News (2001), based on Annie Proulx's novel. I hope that future researchers will be able to use the present study as a resource from which to branch out into more specialized sub-areas in both foodways and tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The place of culinary tourism in the tourist marketplace forms the basis of chapter two, particularly as it pertains to Canada, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Beginning with a brief overview of the enduring influence of French

haute cuisine as the epitome of fine dining, I discuss the recent efforts of the Canadian Tourism Commission, and Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, to position local products in the widening market for diverse culinary experiences. In the context of Canada's confederation, this market is significantly marked by Québec, as a New World outpost of French cooking with its own well-regarded artisanal traditions.

Chapter three is an overview of the threads of scholarship which have come together in the growing body of work on culinary tourism.³⁰ Tourism studies, food studies and folkloristics (especially the early work of Don Yoder) are at the core of this emerging sub-discipline. This chapter also considers both the longstanding academic neglect of food, as a subject area suffering from both the so-called triviality barrier and gender ghettoization, as well as its more recent identification as a "hot new field" in academia (Ruark 1999). Lucy Long's theoretical framework is discussed at length here, as I provide Canadian examples for each conceptual category. The chapter ends with an examination of ideas about authenticity and food-centered tourism products.

Chapter four centers on the dish which made a splash in The Shipping News, seal flipper pie. Traditionally a food eaten in celebration of both spring and

³⁰ Folklorist Lucy Long coined the phrase "culinary tourism" in a special issue of Southern Folklore in 1998 (181). She credits Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett as an influence in the use of the phrase "gastronomic tourism" (Long, Introduction 202).

the return of local men from the seal hunt, it has now come to represent the unique and, as socially constructed from the outside, peculiar cultural aspects of Newfoundland and Labrador. The development of the dish as part of customary folklore is examined in the historical record, in folklore materials such as folk songs and in the words of local interviewees. Etic reaction to the dish is analyzed as efforts at social and economic control, as recently discussed by folklorist Mario Montaña in relation to fajitas in south Texas. Finally, I consider the disjuncture between culturally-imbedded artifacts and customary behaviour that often follows the commodification of tradition.

Chapter five expands to consider a variety of foodstuffs that fall into the currently reviled category of fried food. As noted above, the issue of fried food in the province was brought into sharp focus during my trip across the island and into Labrador in 2002, and bolstered by subsequent survey data. While fried food may not immediately strike one as traditional, we can recognize traditional and vernacular cooking techniques as integral to regional and ethnic food systems, as well as a signifier of gender divisions (see, e.g., Lévi-Strauss 1977). Although the discussion centers on fish and chips, cod tongues also give voice to tradition here. Both foods are examined as cultural signifiers in the context of the evolving "obesity epidemic" and identity construction.

Newfoundland and Labrador's wild and cultivated berries, the subject of chapter six, provide a counterpoint to the perceived over-abundance of fried

foods. Dovetailing seamlessly with the provincial government's emphasis on "outdoor nature product" (Dooley 2002), regional berry varieties are unique and healthful. Sold informally at roadside stands and commercially in a range of products, berries represent locals' connection to their natural environment, their industry and patience in gathering the fruit and their resourcefulness in utilizing it in a variety of ways. Berries provide visitors with a significant, low-risk entrée to local foodways. Moreover, berries are one of the most convenient food souvenirs (in the form of jams and jellies, for example, as well as iconic representations in the form of jewelry and magnets), a market niche which provides local individuals and companies significant revenue.

Chapter seven concludes the study, outlining the contributions of the analysis presented here and reviewing themes discussed in the case studies. These include the othering of Newfoundland and Labrador through denigration of foodways, the (inter)national concern with widespread obesity and its implications for public policy, and the continuing influence of the Romantic philosophy of nature on tourism, or in Rachid Amirou's phrase, the quest for "original communitas." The discussion is extended to possibilities for future research in the area of culinary tourism, specifically in this province.

1.8 Conclusion

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) is counting on the current appeal of all things culinary, and the sociability it engenders, as the industry struggles to find a way out of the tourism slump summarized above. In September 2003, newspaper articles announced that “culinary tourism is hot,” and the CTC was eager to develop Canada’s unique culinary product(s) accordingly (see, e.g., Kennedy 2003). Culinary Canadiana will face stiff competition. As sociologist Deborah Lupton observes,

. . . in the context of western societies . . . diversity in food choice is considered more important, and is available to more people, than ever before. Differentiation and innovation are highly culturally valued. In the context of an abundance of food, the search for new taste sensations and eating experiences is considered a means of improving oneself, adding ‘value’ and a sense of excitement to life. (126)

Hence, along with product development, the industry must consider the “symbolic production” of foods (Cook 232), the ways in which certain foods are culturally constructed to hold meaning and thus the ability to enhance, or spoil, identity (Goffman 1964).

As Bourdieu (1984) has discussed, self identity is intimately connected to socioeconomic status. Regardless of the variety with which they may be presented, tourists consistently make choices in keeping with class location. Moreover, the continual reassertion of class identity reproduces socioeconomic hierarchies of power and control. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters,

the assertion of power through the demonstration of taste is a significant aspect of both informal and consciously constructed forms of culinary tourism.

The beginnings of culinary tourism lie in the social construction of taste in eighteenth century France. The next chapter, as noted above, places culinary tourism in historical context and examines the contemporary arena in which Canada, and Newfoundland and Labrador, seek to be contenders.



Fig. 1.1 The author samples fish and brewis with fried onions and ketchup at "Newfie Night," the last night of the Exploits Valley Salmon Festival.



Fig. 1.2 “Newfie Night” attendees at Joe Byrne Memorial Stadium in downtown Grand Falls.




Fig. 1.3 "Newfie Night" menu featuring traditional foods. Doors opened at four o'clock and by half past six, Fisherman's Brews, fish and chips and toutons with baked beans were sold out.



Fig. 1.4 Postcards featuring aspects of the food iconography of Prince Edward Island (potatoes) and New Brunswick (lobster).




Fig. 1.5 Seafood iconography adorns this menu from Smith's restaurant, frequented by visitors touring the Viking Trail.

 Parks Canada / Parcs Canada

Welcome to the Gros Morne National Park Area (which includes the communities of Cow Head, St. Paul's, Sally's Cove, Rocky Harbour, Norris Point, Glenburnie/Birchy Head/Shoal Brook, Woody Point and Trout River). Our goal is to provide you with the highest quality visitor experience. Please complete this form and return to Parks Canada in the postage paid envelope provided.

In accordance with the Access to Information and Privacy Acts, all information collected will be kept confidential. Participation is voluntary.

 Please shade your answer as a full dot as shown on the left; this will assist us in processing your information.

1. If you live in Canada, please shade the first three characters of your postal code:

First Character: ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9

Second Character: ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9

Third Character: ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9

2. If you live in the United States, please shade the first three digits of your zipcode:

First Digit: ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9

Second Digit: ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9

Third Digit: ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9

3. If you live in another country, please specify: _____

4. Please indicate your point of entry to the province:

☐ Not applicable - I am a resident of NL

☐ Channel-Port aux Basques ☐ Deer Lake

☐ Argentea ☐ Stephenville

☐ St. John's ☐ St. Barbe

☐ Gander ☐ St. Anthony

☐ Other (please specify): _____

5. How many people in your party, including yourself, are in each of the following age categories? (Your party includes all those people travelling in your vehicle and sharing expenses.)

	1 person	2	3	4	5+
under 10 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10 to 34 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35 to 64 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
65 and older	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Is this your first trip to the Gros Morne National Park Area?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If NO, how many times have you visited in the past five years (since and including 2000)?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 or more (specify): _____

☐ I visited prior to 2000

7. What is the MAIN reason for this trip to Newfoundland and Labrador? (The main reason is the reason without which this trip would not have taken place.)

☐ Not applicable - I am a resident of NL

☐ Convention or conference

☐ Business (such as meetings, buying/selling)

☐ Visiting friends/relatives

☐ Vacation/pleasure

☐ Other (please specify): _____

8. On a scale of 0 (zero) to 10, where 0 indicates no influence and 10 indicates the primary reason, how much influence would you say that the Gros Morne National Park Area had in your decision:

a) to vacation in Newfoundland and Labrador? (For NL residents, this refers to your decision to vacation within the province versus opting for a trip outside of the province.)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

b) to travel north of Deer Lake in Newfoundland and Labrador?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. What is the one-way distance from your home to your most preferred alternative vacation site if you did not visit the Gros Morne National Park Area?

_____ Km (one-way)

10. What sources of information did you use to help plan your visit to the Gros Morne National Park Area? (shade all that apply)

☐ Newspaper / magazine ☐ Previous visit

☐ Friends / relatives ☐ Road signs

☐ Internet ☐ Park literature

☐ Tourist information centre ☐ Park staff

☐ NL 2004 Travel Guide ☐ Radio/TV

☐ National Parks/Historic Sites guide for NL

☐ Other travellers

11. At what point in planning your trip did you decide visit the Gros Morne National Park Area?

☐ before leaving home

☐ enroute to NL (including ferry or airplane trip)

☐ while in NL

12. Please rate the following from 1 to 10 in their importance to your decision to visit the Gros Morne National Park Area. (Where 1 is least important and 10 is most important.)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Because it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because it is a National Park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiking/backpacking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Camping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western Brook Pond/ Fjord	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tablelands geology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scenery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wildlife	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommended by friends/family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. If you are not a resident of Newfoundland and Labrador, please indicate if you visited any other National Park(s) in the Atlantic Provinces on this trip and if so, how much time you spent at each of these parks:

	Visited Park	Time Spent Park (days)
Terre Nova	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Cape Breton Highlands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Kelowna	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Fundy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Koudibouque	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Prince Edward Island	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>


 Canada

Fig. 1.6 Page one of quantitative survey distributed in Gros Morne National Park by Parks Canada in the summer of 2004.

Chapter Two

Culinary Tourism in the Canadian Context

Culinary tourism, while always an integral part of travel, has only recently been developed both commercially and theoretically (see chapter three). Related tourist products include culinary tours of countries with longstanding reputations for culinary excellence, such as France, Italy, Spain and Japan. Cooking classes focusing on regional cuisines *in situ* would also fall into the culinary tourism category. Culinary tourism is a new focus of both federal and provincial tourism offices in Canada. This chapter explores the global milieu in which Canadian tourism and food service professionals are hoping to make their mark, particularly in the establishment and development of what sociologist Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson has termed "the gastronomic field." Referencing Pierre Bourdieu's "cultural field" (1993), Ferguson employs the example of gastronomy in nineteenth-century France to elucidate her theory. I will contrast the gastronomic field that has grown around the food of France, as a culinary standard, with that of Canada, which can be understood as still in development.

"Cuisine" has a multitude of contemporary meanings. The word originally indicated the kitchen or culinary department of a hotel or grand home. Later, the term was used to indicate a cohesive food system built on a precise set of ingredients, thus linking the system with a specific geographical area, and the refined techniques resulting from working with these foodstuffs repeatedly over time. Among purists, this understanding of "cuisine" is the most widely used, with the terms "diet" or "culinary culture" employed to delimit habits of eating. For example, while scholars such as Sidney Mintz maintain that the United States has no national cuisine (2002), the national "diet" is generally acknowledged to consist of a "prevalence of fast food eaten out and prepackaged foods eaten at home, high levels of animal protein, salt, fat, and processed sugars and correspondingly low levels of fresh fruit and vegetables, preference for soda over water" (P. P. Ferguson 49; see also Mintz 1996). More popularly, however, "cuisine" is often used to denote a wide variety of regionally or culturally-specific specialties. "Haute cuisine" connects a particular culinary system with class structure, specifically the upper class, and originally, the French nobility (Mintz 1989; Trubek 3-4). It is thus an exclusive cuisine. The phrase "fine dining" is

frequently used to express the same idea. In current popular discourse, however, the term “cuisine” has been elided with “haute cuisine,” rendering the single word indicative of institutional, elite food preparation and presentation.

Much of the analysis presented here is based on popular tourist literature—guide books, governmental publications, newspaper and magazine articles, memoirs and electronic media, all of which contribute to the formation of various gastronomic fields and provide keys to regional and national selfhood writ large (Dubinsky 2001; Kinnaird, Kothari and Hall 1994). Although the academic study of, as well as government attention to and financial support for, culinary tourism is relatively young, the interest of travelers in local cuisine is an established trope, as noted in the previous chapter.¹ Moreover, the travel account itself has more recently become the source of scholarly inquiry.

As noted by Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, early travel writing, such as Goethe’s journal detailing his visit to Italy in 1788-9, provides rich “proto-ethnographic accounts” (37). Ó Giolláin asserts further that late eighteenth-century German

¹ “Agri-tourism” and “agrotourism” are also in current usage along with the phrase “culinary tourism,” and emphasize food production sites, such as farms, dairies, orchards and vineyards.

travel literature “brought together the dominant objectives and topographies which would prevail in the future field of folklore research” (38). Identifying the unique foodways of a particular culture has always been an important part of travelers’ accounts, as further evidence of “human diversity” (37). As food writer John Allemang advises the traveler, “Food is the great dissolver of modern tourism’s impersonality, the best way to deepen your understanding of foreignness while making that object lesson a self-serving pleasure” (2003).

Maurice-Edmond Sailland, writing under the pseudonym Curnonsky, is credited with the early linking of food and tourism, thus stimulating interest in regional French foodways. In *Souvenirs* (Curnonsky 1958), Sailland reminisces

After the 1914-18 war, Louis Forest, Austin de Croze, Marcel Rouff, Maurice des Ombiaux and myself created the gastronomic press and, particularly in *Comoedia*, consecrated the holy alliance between tourism and gastronomy. This pioneering work benefited from two novelties: the ‘democratised’ motor-car and the taste for good fare which, after some years of anguish and privation, developed in France from 1919 onwards The motor-car allowed the French to discover the cuisine of each province, and created the breed of what I have called ‘gastro-nomads’. (53; qtd. in Mennell 276)

The development of the automobile, coupled with the rise of interest in gastronomy did not go unnoticed by tire companies. It was at this time that both Michelin and Kléber-Colombes began publishing their own restaurant and hotel guides.² As well, Sailland and his associates began production of a multi-volume series, *La France gastronomique* in the 1920s. Such publications, together with the writing of other celebrated gastronomes, marked the beginning of what Mennell calls the “democratizing of fine food” (Mennell 276), which continued with the more accessible and expansive guides starting to appear in England and France after World War II (Mennell 266-290). Read not only by upper class gastronomes, these writings by respected taste makers defined and popularized ideals about ‘good food, good drink and courtesy’ (qtd. in Mennell 282).

2. 1 Developing a Gastronomic Field

Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson writes, “If French and foreigner alike have long considered cuisine quintessentially French, the explanation lies importantly in an expansionist culinary discourse that relentlessly associates (good) food and

² Today, esteemed restaurants in both Europe and North America are still distinguished by their Michelin stars.

France, and has done so for some three or four centuries" (25; see also Goody, Food 2). Thus, essayist, novelist, and poet Jim Harrison can declare: "Life is brutishly short and we wish to eat well, and for this we must generally travel to large cities, or, better yet, France" (78). An examination of cuisine and tourism necessarily begins with a discussion of "the birthplace of cuisine as we know it" (Fallon and Rothschild back cover), France, and specifically "the world center of gastronomy" (Lach xix), Paris.³ France has long reigned as the culinary capital of the world (see, for example, Terrio 1996; Trubek 2000; Zukin 1991), its power in the realm of food and drink only recently beginning to fade. As the birthplace of what the world would come to know as the "restaurant," as well as the concept of *cuisine du terroir*, much in the culinary imagination is routinely traced back to Gallic origins.

³ France has also been, since the nineteenth century, held up as the center not just of cuisine, but of civilization itself (Trubek 52-63). American anthropologist and chef Amy Trubek writes, ". . . to have a fine meal was to have a French meal: 'civilization' and 'culture' coalesced around this cuisine" (60). However, this discourse of civilization also included serious concerns about the immorality and decadence of the French. Trubek characterizes this as part of the "love-hate" relationship between the British and the French, intertwined with the morality of the Victorian era.

French cuisine, and the restaurants in which it was served, are often imagined to have sprung fully formed from the ashes of the aristocracy and the abolition of the rigid, Byzantine merchant guilds following the revolution (Spang 2-5, 91-118). Historian Rebecca Spang and others, however, have more recently traced the evolution of the restaurant as we know it today to 1789, and the influence of the “creator of the restaurant,” Mathurin Roze de Chantoiseau.⁴ Chantoiseau heralded his own *salle de restaurateur* in the business directory he first published in 1769 (13-24). The restaurant, as an eating establishment, followed on the heels of the proliferation of small establishments in which individuals could take a *restaurant*,⁵ meaning specifically a curative bouillon. The concoction generally consisted of various meats cooked down into a broth. *Restaurants* [broths] were considered to be ideal for convalescing individuals, differentiating them from contemporaneous institutions such as taverns, inns and the *table d’hôte* [host’s table].

⁴ Travelers availed themselves of prepared foods long before this period, however, at town markets and roadside stands beginning in the 1300s (Trubek 3; Tinker 1987).

⁵ The word *restaurant*, referring to a healing, liquid foodstuff, appeared in print as early as 1420, in a French text by Master Chiquart Amiczo (Spang 1, 247).

Trubek highlights the commercial tradition of the *traiteur*, or caterer. As indicated by the translation of the French term, the *traiteur* made and sold food at his shop, prepared food in large quantities for special occasions and in smaller quantities for individual custom orders. As eighteenth century Paris developed into a commercial and artistic center, the artisans, merchants and tradesmen pouring into the city—with no access to a kitchen or other food production space in their rented rooms—came to depend on the *traiteur* (Trubek 36).

Foreign travelers to France, some of the earliest documentarians of culinary tourism, reacted with alarm to the dining situations they faced. In these relatively early days of international travel, visitors to France were commonly unsatisfied with the food on offer. Of his travels through France in the early eighteenth century, for example, Joachim Nemeitz declared that (in inns and *tables d'hôte*) “the meat is not properly cooked, . . . they serve the same thing every day and rarely offer any variety” (qtd. in Spang 7). Others worried about the effects of French food on their well-being (Smollett 71; H. M. Williams 100). Moreover, unable to access the equivalent of the private home dining they were habituated to in their own country (Thicknesse 175), they were confronted with

the potentially uncomfortable (and, in the case of gender, exclusionary) communal dining situations of the aforementioned establishments. As Adam Gopnik writes of taverns and the *table d'hôte*,

As you ate, you were expected to talk and joke and kid around with the other people at the table, including the host. . . . This could be fun, but if the guy next to you at the *table d'hôte* was drunk and beery you were stuck, and if you were in the mood for chicken and only veal roast was being served you were stuck, too. If you were a woman, you couldn't go at all. ("What's Cooking?" 84)⁶

By contrast, the purveyor of restorative broths began attending to the needs of the individual diner. This was the beginning, Spang emphasizes, of what would evolve in the nineteenth century into the central paradox of the restaurant, the opportunity to have a private experience in a public setting.⁷

⁶ Further, as noted by P. P. Ferguson, the public arena, in terms of public food production and consumption, remained a male domain into the twentieth century. She writes, ". . . as with other urban spaces (shops, parks, public transport, and above all, the street), its inherent promiscuity gave the restaurant an uncertain moral status that effectively excluded upper- and middle-class women" (43-44).

⁷ Theories vary on the degree of the privacy achievable in a restaurant. The distinction important here is the simple availability of having individual gastronomic needs and desires met in a public setting.

Just as significantly, however, was the simultaneous development of what Spang terms "modern gastronomic culture." Developing from a highly politicized discourse on aesthetics and physiology that included the textual and performative work of chefs, journalists, intellectuals and novelists, gastronomic culture achieved the critical mass necessary to constitute a new cultural field (P. P. Ferguson 5-50), and one of France's most enduring exports. French haute cuisine was not just popular in France. It was produced outside of the country, domestically and commercially, by the 1830s. In just sixty years, there would be five thousand French chefs working in Britain, many of them employed by members of the royal family and the nobility (Trubek 47-8).

"[S]ince the beginning," remarks Trubek, "this cuisine has been territorially marked but practically borderless," discussing in particular the spread of its popularity in nineteenth century Britain, but noting its presence in North America and the rest of Europe as well (42).⁸ For example, historian Jeffery Pilcher has noted "the infatuation with French cooking" of the Mexican upper class at the turn

⁸ While discussion often centers around "French" cuisine, it is in fact a food system that draws on the distinctive specialties of the country's many regions.

of the twentieth century (79). Based on a circumscribed, and textually stabilized, set of practices, French haute cuisine could in theory be reproduced in any location. It was accepted by the elite in a number of western countries as a distinct marker of both pleasure and status (Mennell 206-7; Trubek 42-51).

Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson notes, "as European aristocracy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries spoke and wrote French, so too it 'ate French' and relegated native culinary traditions to the status of poor relations" (26). In 1864, for example, A. V. Kirwan declared,

The metropolis of London exceeds Paris in extent and population; it commands a greater supply of all articles of consumption, and contains a greater number and variety of markets, which are better supplied. We greatly surpass the French in mutton, we produce better beef, lamb and pork and are immeasurably superior both in the quantity and quality of our fish, our venison, and our game, yet we cannot compare, as a nation, with the higher, the middle, or the lower classes in France, in the science of preparing our daily food. (qtd. in Trubek 52)⁹

⁹ See P. P. Ferguson 56-9 for further documentation of the nineteenth century disparagement of English cookery in comparison to French.

Moreover, French haute cuisine absorbed the culinary influences of its colonies, to complete the process of imperial “Frenchification” (P. P. Ferguson 28-30).¹⁰

By the nineteenth century, French cuisine became an integral aspect of the nation’s identity. P. P. Ferguson writes

The gastronomic field turned a culinary product into a cultural one. This cuisine became “French” as it had not been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the culinary arts were associated with the court and the aristocracy, not the nation. Nineteenth-century culinary institutions and texts effectively transformed the patently class-based culinary product and practices of the ancien régime into a prime touchstone of national identity. (9)

Regardless of whether or not French haute cuisine was an “invented tradition” (P. P. Ferguson 30, cf. Hobsbawm 1983), and one inextricably tied to a specific socioeconomic class at that, it was an integral part of nation and empire building in this period.

Still, as Spang notes, “Until well after the middle of the nineteenth century, restaurants were to remain an almost exclusively Parisian phenomenon, one rarely encountered outside the French capital” (2). Yet many of these restaurants

¹⁰ It is important to note here that French haute cuisine’s absorption of outside influences did not, and has not (yet) resulted in what is currently known as fusion cuisine—at least not in France.

were housed in the grand hotels established to accommodate increasing tourism to the city, simultaneously providing budding chefs with an introduction to the philosophy and practice of French cuisine. As P. P. Ferguson reminds us, “at the end of a long career that began in the 1870s, the highly influential August Escoffier boasted that he had sent some two thousand French chefs from his kitchens all over the world” (36). The concept of French haute cuisine was further distributed and stabilized by culinary expositions, formalized instruction (e.g., the founding of *Le Cordon Bleu* in 1895), journals and professional organizations (Trubek 64-127). Moreover, as Trubek notes, the consumption of French cuisine became “both literal and symbolic” (128).

2.2 Epiphanic Eating

The researcher interested in the development of contemporary culinary tourism soon finds that the influence of French cooking is a recurrent theme in both food and travel writing. Authors describe their first visit to France, or simply a French restaurant in another country, as turning points in their lives. The experiences precede important career choices or simply a new awareness of

food that they may then extend to the foods of other cultures. Such accounts are evidence of both the continuing symbolic power of the world's culinary capital, and the lasting impressions left by sensually grounded events.

Alice Waters is the revolutionary restaurateur who brought the concept of seasonal, organic cookery to North America in the form of Berkeley's critically well-regarded Chez Panisse in the early 1970s. Food was an elemental part of her first trip to France.

There's nothing so beautiful as French watercress. . . . I can recall walking down the rue Mouffetard in 1965, my first year in Paris. I was a girl from New Jersey who'd grown up on frozen food, and to see the baskets and baskets of greens, so many shades of green and red! . . . I walked up and down the street, my eyes unbelieving. . . . I had never tasted an oyster. I went through Normandy, eating eighteen at a time, and drinking apple cider, and it was so wonderful that I was just carried away. . . . (qtd. in Gopnik, Paris 244)

Waters' memory starkly contrasts with what she identifies as the cold monotony of stereotypical North American fare (frozen food) with the just-picked bounty of the French soil and climate. Furthermore, the difference is deepened by the juxtaposition of New Jersey, long an object of ridicule in the United States (see

Narváez, "Death" 1-2), with the City of Light. She is overwhelmed by the sights and tastes she encounters. It is like nothing she has known before.

Print and broadcast journalist Adam Gopnik recalls his culinary epiphany similarly, acknowledging his narrative's place among so many of its kind. He writes,

Most people who love Paris love it because the first time they came they ate something better than they had ever eaten before, and kept coming back to eat it again. My first night in Paris, twenty-five years ago, I ate dinner with my enormous family in a little corner brasserie somewhere down on the unfashionable fringes of the Sixteenth Arrondissement. We were on the cut-rate American academic version of the grand tour, and we had been in London for the previous two days, where we had eaten *steamed* hamburgers and fish-and-chips in which the batter seemed to be snubbing the fish inside it as if they had never been properly introduced. On that first night in Paris we arrived late on the train, checked into a cheap hotel and went to eat . . . without much hope, at the restaurant at the corner, called something like Le Bar-B-Que. The prix-fixe menu was fifteen francs, about three dollars then. I ordered a salad Niçoise, trout baked in foil, and a cassis sorbet. It was so much better than anything I had ever eaten that I nearly wept. (Paris 147-48).

Gopnik skillfully frames his story in the details of previous disappointments ("*steamed* hamburgers") and lowered expectations. The denouement is thus all the more powerful. Even in an unfashionable area, at a dubiously dubbed establishment late in the evening, tired and worn, the visitor to France can enjoy a meal so fine it will test one's emotional composure.

Like Gopnik, bad boy celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain discovered the affective sway of the edible in France, tracing his "pre-epiphanies" on the way to

“chefdom” to his first journey to his father’s ancestral home. The first came in a bowl of Vichyssoise, surprising and delightful (cold soup!), eaten on the ocean liner transporting the family to Europe (9-10). The second presented itself in the form of a raw oyster, plucked fresh from the floor of the Atlantic Ocean by a local oyster fisher in a small village in southwest France. Bourdain found pleasure not only in the taste of the oyster itself, but in the horrified reaction of his parents and brother.

I took it in my hand, tilted the shell back into my mouth as instructed by the now beaming Monsieur Saint-Jour, and with one bite and a slurp, wolfed it down. It tasted of seawater . . . of brine and flesh . . . and somehow . . . of the future [ellipses in original]. Everything was different now. Everything. I’d not only survived—I’d *enjoyed*. (16)

Bourdain’s pleasure in the moment derives not only from the sensory experience of witnessing the procurement of the creature and consuming it, but also from the positive and negative responses of those around him. He explains further,

I had learned something. Viscerally, instinctively, spiritually—even in some small, precursive way, sexually—and then there was no turning back. The genie was out of the bottle. . . . Food had *power*.

It could inspire, astonish, shock, excite, delight and *impress*. It had the power to please me. . . and others. This was valuable information [ellipses in original]. (17)

Bourdain’s epiphanic experiences are individuated and social, emphasizing encounters with the unknown. Moreover, he presents these encounters as cognitive and behavioural gateways to a fuller appreciation of other cultures’ culinary traditions.

Food writer John Allemang's recollections of France focus on olfactory pleasures. He declares,

I can still recreate the tangy aromas of raw-milk Brie that rushed out the door of Philippe Olivier's cheese shop in Boulogne as I rushed in, and I can still recall the forgiving tones of the hotel housekeeper when she learned the rank smell in the room was souvenir cheese and not a dead mouse. This stink of decomposition is the true fragrance of France, a visceral smell that the luxury-suite potpourri bowls at the Ritz can never hope to rival. (2003)

Like Bourdain, Allemang's culinary reminiscence of France include a social component (the cheeseshop owner, the suddenly sympathetic housekeeper) and a relationship with nature (decomposition) which renders the moment authentic. They are connections, Allemang asserts, not available in socially exclusive surroundings.

By contrast, in the introduction to her book on the development of French cuisine, anthropologist and chef Amy Trubek recounts her first extraordinary restaurant meal, which occurred after she had been cooking professionally for several years. While the occasion did not take place in France, it was, significantly, at a French restaurant run by a native French chef in a Chicago suburb. She writes

The evening was unforgettable. Years later I can still remember entering the restaurant, eyes ever widening as I absorbed the beautiful copper pots hanging from the walls, the plush banquettes, and the seemingly endless array of waiters. . . . With time, some details of the meal have faded, but in my mind's eye I still see the magnificent dessert, a mille-feuille with fresh raspberries and blackberries, surrounded by a pool of crème anglaise and drizzled with a caramel sauce. With the attentive service, the elegant

setting, and the glorious food, I felt ennobled and enriched. As we left the building, I knew this was a world I must explore. (ix)

While not physically in France, the restaurant still communicated a powerful “Frenchness,” which Trubek locates not only in the food and the person of the chef, but in the décor and style of service. Together, these elements represented a “world” which so intrigued Trubek that it became the focus of her career aspirations.

While contrasting sharply with Allemang’s impression of the connection between earthy French foodways and nature, both authors locate in their experience an authenticity intimately connected to France. The web of associations between France and food is extraordinarily complex, and its historic domination so complete, that Trubek later declares that it began to “haunt” her (x).

Although rumours of its demise continue to circulate (see, e.g., Gopnik, Paris 144-165; Trubek 128-34), the ideals and influence of French cuisine still haunt the traveler. As Trubek found in interviews with North American chefs, French cuisine haunts the occupational sphere as well. For example, celebrity chef Mark Miller, founder of Santa Fe’s renowned Coyote Café, among others, said

. . . we have a reinforcement . . . that whatever is French is important, and whatever is not French is not important.

[There is] an unconscious reaffirmation of the Eurocentric model. Not only in its techniques, tastes, and culture, not only [do

you produce] the re-affirmation of these, but you also [produce], in effect, a hierarchy that puts ethnic food below. The acceptance of ethnic people and ethnic culture is below the European one as well. A culinary caste system is being set up, and it is being reaffirmed all the way along: symbolically, linguistically, technically, and taste wise. (qtd. in Trubek 130-31)

Thus, Steve Fallon and Michael Rothschild can confidently write for World Food France,

No other cuisine in the world—apart from the Chinese on the other side of the world perhaps—comes close to that of the French for freshness of ingredients, natural flavours, regional variety and refined, often complex, cooking methods. French cuisine is indisputably the western world's most important and seminal style of cooking and has been for centuries. Indeed, the very word 'cuisine' was borrowed from the French because the English phrase 'cooking style' just couldn't handle all the nuances. (8)

While Italy, Spain and England, as well as Asian countries such as Japan and Thailand now actively compete with France in the culinary tourism arena, the *idea* of French food remains a high standard, particularly in North America, against which all others compete for the tourist's (and local's) attention. As Trubek explains, "All . . . arguments for French haute cuisine's hegemony come down to the view that French dominance is the result of a set of attitudes and practices that are unique to the French people and the French soil" (108). While the standard of contemporary French cooking may currently be in question (Mariani 2003), the distinctive qualities of French foodways, traditional and elite, are firmly ensconced in the popular imagination.

2.3 The Canadian Cuisine Conundrum

Unlike countries long-celebrated for their cuisine, such as France and Italy, Canadian fare has not until very recently enjoyed a similarly positive image. Historian Karen Dubinsky notes that during the first wave of postwar travel “[c]omplaints about Canadian, and especially Ontarian, food were vociferous” (337). And these were complaints from *Canadians*. Canadian cooking was thought to exhibit ‘lack of imagination,’ and Canadian journalist Gordon Sinclair declared flatly, ‘Ontario has the worst cooking on earth’ (qtd. in Dubinsky 337).¹¹

Just prior to my first trip to Canada in the late 1980s, I read in a Let’s Go guide that the country had no real national dishes or cuisine, although there were a few good restaurants. In her recent book *I’m Wild Again: Snippets from My Life and a Few Brazen Thoughts*, Helen Gurley Brown writes, “Canada can sometimes be annoying. . . . Canadian food is terrible. Did you ever hear anybody say, ‘Honey, let’s send out for some Canadian food?’” (“Overbites” 2000). Indeed, current travel books are not much more positive. Even budget guides such as Lonely Planet (based in Australia) state, “Gastronomy in English-speaking Canada was, in general and with exceptions, long based on the British

¹¹ Blason populaire targeting the foodways of another country or culture (or even a neighbouring city or section of a city) is a well-established feature of ethnic humour around the world (see, e.g., Davies 1990; Laba 1978). As a particularly relevant example, we may note the derision of English cooking by the French. It is telling to note here, however, that these negative comments about Canadian food are from Canadians themselves.

'bland is beautiful' tradition. While there are still no distinctive national dishes or unique culinary delights, good food is certainly plentiful" (85).¹²

The Canada: Rough Guide (based in London and New York) is slightly more complimentary, albeit in a backhanded way, noting that while

at first sight there's little to distinguish Canada's mainstream urban cuisine from that of any American metropolis . . . the general standard of Canadian cooking has improved dramatically in the last few years. In the big cities there's a plethora of ethnic and speciality restaurants . . . and even out in the country—once the domain of unappetizing diners—there's a liberal supply of first-rate, family-run cafes and restaurants, especially in the more touristy areas. (41)

Most guides, after making similar blanket statements regarding the lack of a national culinary tradition (see, for example, Dorling Kindersley 362), emphasize both ethnic restaurants, as a natural outgrowth of Canada's multi-culturalism, and regional specialties: the seafood of both coasts, for example, *la soupe aux pois* and *la tourtiere* in Quebec.

Due to the connection with France, Québec in general, and Montréal and Québec City in particular have long held dominion in Canada in all matters culinary, and have often fared the best in both emic and etic evaluations of food in Canada. "CanCuisine seems to be on the verge of something big these days,"

¹² Guidebooks fall into three general groups: budget, moderate and luxury. Guidebooks discussed in this thesis falling into the budget category include Lonely Planet, Moon Handbooks and Rough Guides, Frommer's straddles the moderate and luxury categories, with Fodor's generally leaning toward the higher end. Budget guides are also considered by many to be "alternative" guides, in that they strive to highlight attractions and services that are not mainstream and already well-trodden by the masses.

food writer Jeremy Ferguson pronounced in May 2001, "and Québec is home to its oldest, deepest and most impassioned food culture." Indeed, visitors to the country are routinely directed to that province for the best in cuisine. In the early 1980s, for example, the Michelin guides stated flatly, "Food in Canada varies little from that in the United States but there are some regional specialities of interest. . . . Québec, thanks to its French heritage, has a fine culinary tradition and is the province for eating out" (20). Little has changed over the past two decades.

Lonely Planet (1999 edition) declares, "Most of the country's semi-original repasts come from the French of Québec" (86),¹³ and later "[t]he French have long been responsible for Montreal's excellent restaurant reputation" (316).

Similarly, Canada: The Rough Guide notes, ". . . of course, Québec is renowned for its outstanding French-style food" (42). Readers are also advised that, "It is when you start eating in Québec City that the French ancestry of the Québécois hits all the senses: the eateries of the city present an array of culinary delights adopted from the mother country, from beautifully presented gourmet dishes to

¹³ While the majority of the quotations in this thesis are taken from guidebooks published at the end of the twentieth century and turn of the twenty-first century, I must point out that the text of such books changes very little from year to year. I have noted this, primarily, in my examinations of Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, Frommer's and Fodor's over the past few years. For example, the text from page 86 of the Lonely Planet guide section "French Food" (not "French-Canadian food, notably), of which I have presented only a part, has changed only slightly in ten years, primarily with the addition of a few sentences on the Acadian rapie pie [paté à la rapure] (Lightbody 32-33).

humble baguettes" (259). Laura Purdom and Donald Carroll, in Traveler's Canada Companion, assert that

Québec, once the heart of New France, would be called New Normandy if it were named after its stomach; for its cuisine remains based on the French peasant cooking of its early Norman (and to a lesser extent, Breton) settlers. Not that you can't find classic or nouvelle French cuisine in Québec—you can, famously, in both Montréal and Québec City. (54)

While Purdom and Carroll are careful to stress the historic and regional base of Québec's cuisine, unlike the majority of guides,¹⁴ the link with France remains. As a final example, Dorling Kindersley reports "[t]he center of French-style gourmet cuisine in Canada is Québec. Dishes here are reminiscent of the best European food, and Montréal usually boasts at least two well-known French chefs working in its top restaurants at any time" (363). Here, the cultural connection is highlighted not only in terms of cooking style, but also in the corporeal form of the French chef—the real thing. As noted in a 2003 report entitled U.S. Wine & Culinary Enthusiasts prepared for the Canadian Tourism Commission by Research Resolutions and Consulting, Limited:

The single exception to the 'typical' destination pattern for Americans who come to Canada on leisure trips is Quebec. Possibly because of the reputation of French foods and wine, and the European 'flavour' of parts of Quebec City and Old Montréal,

¹⁴ Generally speaking, guidebooks are more likely to discuss (French) regional connections when discussing Acadian cooking. It is important to note here that only French regions are highlighted in terms of European culinary traditions. In other words, similar connections are not made between, say, west country English and Newfoundland cooking.

one-third of the Wine & Culinary Enthusiasts [sic] from the U.S.A. are drawn to Quebec . . . (8)

In addition to maintaining what is clearly perceived to be an important outpost of Old World traditions and innovations (classic, nouvelle, post-nouvelle) in the New World, Montréal is home to fusion cuisines influenced by the city's many and varied immigrant populations, as well as the restaurants serving these communities and the metropolis at large. Even as the new millennium settles into itself, the culinary community continues to look to Europe as the home of a number of the most-respected world cuisines.¹⁵

The multicultural realities of Toronto and Vancouver bring the two cities into close running with Montréal for the title of Canada's culinary capital. In a 2003 Globe & Mail article entitled, "Emerging frontiers in culinary tourism," Vancouver writer Jamie Maw identifies Toronto and Vancouver as "emerging . . . gastro-tourism destinations" along with Barcelona, Chicago, Dublin and Melbourne. Maw declares, "Vancouver has broken through San Francisco's dominant position in the West Coast culinary firmament, with its extraordinarily diverse culinary lexicon and tsunamis of fresh migration from Asia, Europe and California. Welcome to the new frontier." Briefly describing eight restaurants, Maw's list includes Japanese, Venezuelan, and Canadian west coast cooking. Likewise, Toronto's restaurant scene is "similarly informed by the more than 150

¹⁵ Notably, culinary tourism products in Canada are aimed at the domestic and United States markets (Deneault 10).

countries that underwrite it.” Indeed, during a short visit to Toronto in 2000 for an academic conference, I had the opportunity to eat at Ethiopian, Japanese, Thai, and Lebanese establishments.

2.4 “Recipes for Success”

In June 2001, the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) held a National Tourism and Cuisine Forum, themed “Recipes for Success.” Tourism and food service professionals from across the country gathered in Halifax for the three-day event. The national meeting followed a series of regional roundtables which convened between October 1999 and May 2001. Based in particular on 2001 studies conducted by Plog Research for Condé Nast (publisher of Bon Appétit, Condé Nast Traveler, Gourmet, The New Yorker, and Vogue, among others) and Lang Research on behalf of the various Canadian governmental departments and industry partners, the commission sought to formulate a Canadian response to the growing demand for culture-based tourism, and specifically culinary experiences, among baby boomer and older adults.

Striving to identify what culinary tourism might entail in terms of a national product, the question of “Canadian cuisine” was also addressed. Perhaps predictably, participants thus found themselves arguing over the meaning of the word “cuisine.” High profile Canadian chef Michael Smith argued, “Where does this whole idea come from that we don’t have a national culinary identity in this

country? We're in Canada, we're cooking with Canadian ingredients, we're serving Canadians—is that not a cuisine?" (qtd. in Deneault and MacDonald 16). His question was countered by the Executive Director of Product Development for the CTC, Murray Jackson, who adhered to the more strict definition of the term noted earlier in this chapter. He said,

I think we are talking about cuisine in Canada in its many forms. I do think that there are some distinctive regional cuisines that we can identify and market effectively, but I think when we get to the national level, trying to define 'Canadian Cuisine' is a trap, and that our focus is on cuisine in Canada—the breadth, the diversity, the quality, the value, the freshness, the presentation." (qtd. in Deneault and MacDonald 16)

Such comments encapsulate the struggle between "the need to address the misconception that we don't have a national culinary identity in Canada" and "the need to articulate a definition that acknowledges and celebrates all of those who contribute to the culinary experience in Canada" (Deneault and MacDonald 16) in the development of a Canadian gastronomic field. No solution to the marketing dilemma was put forward in the conference report, although the phrase "cuisine in Canada" appears in Canadian Tourism Commission documents more frequently later.

By 2002, the Canadian Tourism Commission would offer this explanation:

While we do have a number of distinctive regional cuisines, many of the foods and cooking styles found in this country have been adopted from other cultures. This makes it difficult to talk about 'Canadian cuisine.' 'Cuisine in Canada' refers not only to foods that may be considered uniquely Canadian, but also to the tremendous

variety of food that results from our multicultural traditions.
(Deneault 2)

In practice, as evidenced in Travel Canada electronic and print literature, both usages are employed. "Canadian cuisine" indicates a range of cuisines within the country, alongside mentions of "Newfoundland and Labrador cuisine" and Saskatchewan's ethnically influenced cuisine.¹⁶

Not surprisingly, France was held out as the gold standard during the forum. Chef Stefan Szapalay stated,

There are other countries that have been very successful at doing this. . . . Take France. . . in France you do have some excellent restaurants, but really not a lot more per capita than other parts of the world. But you have an incredible amount of very good restaurants. So maybe it is more about the consistency of a product, then [sic] it is about a few incredible destinations, or a few events. (Deneault and MacDonald 15)

A crucial difference between the European experience and that of a nation like Canada is the historic interplay of various aboriginal and immigrant groups, rendering the expression of national identity through a unified cuisine problematic. Moreover, this raises the question of Canadian identity itself, indirectly addressed by the Culinary Institute of Canada's Program Manager, David Harding:

¹⁶ See, e.g., the Travel Canada web site. "Cuisine and Wine" is discussed in the "Cultural Activities" section along with "Historic Sites," "Language and Learning," "Museums," "Performing Arts" and "Visual Arts." (See http://www.travelcanada.ca/tc_redesign/app/en/ca/experiences.do?catId=39&provinceld=6).

We have just developed a program on cuisine in Canada. It was easy to develop and include the regions, the culture, the climate, et cetera, but one thing was missing, that we have been trying to incorporate into the curriculum, and that is Canadian pride—Canadian pride is lacking. We don't promote our chefs enough, we don't acknowledge ourselves and our products. . . we need to promote Canadian pride. . . . (Deneault and MacDonald 21)

Moreover, attendees stressed that such national pride must be bolstered by cultural knowledge. Phil Mondor, Vice President and Director of the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council, called for

. . . a new type of worker . . . one with a broader range of skills and knowledge to serve these markets and types of services. For example, offering authentic cuisine experiences means that the worker must be very knowledgeable on the historical and cultural dimensions of the food and may even need to interpret their work or perform it according to authentic practices. (Deneault and MacDonald 22)

In other words, this new type of food service worker must have a command of folklore in the form of knowledge of regional foodways, and all that entails.

Established tourism products held out as examples for others to follow were "The Gourmet Trail" offered by First Island Tours Ltd. (British Columbia), "*La Route des Saveurs: Cuisine in Québec's Charlevoix Region*" by Routes to Learning Canada, Inc.¹⁷ Recommendations for those wishing to organize similar culinary tourism products further underscore the importance of folkloric knowledge and communication. With a heavy emphasis on authenticity and experience, operators are encouraged to, "Learn the stories of the people and

¹⁷ Routes to Learning, Inc., was formerly Elderhostel Canada.

the land, and know when to tell them, or ideally, when to have them recounted by a local contributor. Your package will have the most impact if it is built on the history, the culture, the stories of the people and their land." Equally important is the element of difference, key to the travel experience in general (previously discussed and examined further in chapter three). Therefore, operators should, "[a]lways incorporate experiences that are off the tourist-beaten track. . . . the most memorable experiences will be those that occurred off the beaten track, where participants were able to experience a true connection with the people and the landscape" (Deneault and MacDonald 31).

2.5 Newfoundland and Labrador

As previously discussed, Newfoundland and Labrador foodways have been shaped by the province's historical connections to Europe, particularly England and Ireland, as well as the natural environment. Thus, many staples of the regional diet are perceived to reflect the influence of what is commonly termed "British cuisine," and frequently entail the boiling of both meat and vegetables. Travel guides, in general, seeking to present the unique and unusual, have little enthusiasm for something considered basic or commonplace. Similarly, due to the newer trend of "'health'-based authoritarianism" (Wernick

26),¹⁸ foods now perceived as unhealthy are usually only recommended when they can be readily identified as a local specialty. For example, Lonely Planet Canada advises, “On the east coast of Canada, through all the Atlantic Provinces, deep-fried food is common; all too common for many,” but also that the “abundant” seafood is “delicious and affordable” (86). The authors later recommend “a local dish called ‘brewis’” (also called fish and brewis, as noted previously), and cod tongues, with a proviso that they’re best when pan-fried (414). Canada: The Rough Guide’s advice is more expansive, and suggestive:

Newfoundland’s staple food is the cod, usually in the form of fish and chips, supplemented by salmon, halibut and hake and more bizarre dishes like cod tongues, and cheeks, scrunchions (fried cubes of pork fat), smoked or pickled caplin and seal flipper pie. The island’s restaurants are not usually permitted to sell moose or seal meat, but many islanders join in the annual licensed shoot and, if you befriend a hunter, you may end up across the table from a hunk of either animal. (42)

Packed with loaded words and phrases such as “more bizarre” (effectively labeling the previously enumerated foodstuffs “bizarre” as well) and “hunk of either animal,” the above statement concisely locates local foodways at the edge of edibility, palatability and exoticism (Long, Culinary 32-34). While neglecting similarities to other regional cuisines—e.g., pig skin deep-fried in lard is a popular snack food in the southern United States, recently trendy with low-carbohydrate dieters (see e.g., Hodgman 2003; Knight 2004)—the authors simultaneously

¹⁸ The intersection of health concerns and tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador is discussed in detail in chapters five and six.

“other” both Newfoundlanders and their foodways. Noting that serving moose or seal meat is not generally allowed in restaurants, they suggest getting around the legal restriction by making friends with a local hunter. A binary opposition between commercial and domestic edibility is implied.¹⁹ Why would moose and seal be eaten at home, but not approved for commercial eateries? As Long notes, “The eater of the ‘not edible’ is perceived as strange, perhaps dangerous, definitely not one of us, . . .” (*Culinary* 33).

Visitors are not the only ones commenting critically on dining possibilities in the province. In Newfoundland author Edward Riche’s *Rare Birds*, restaurateur Dave Purcell bemoans the state of the produce from which he must construct his daily menus:

. . . getting fresh vegetables in St. John’s was an ordeal, a torture for anybody who cared about food. They were shipped to Newfoundland in dubious condition and always arrived near the end of their usefulness. Only in August and September was high-quality local produce available. The rest of the year Dave was forced to go to the wholesaler’s warehouse in Fort Pepperell, an old American military base in the city’s east end, to dig through the boxes as they were slung out the back of the refrigerated trucks. It was a treasure hunt, examining crate after crate of yellowing compost in search of the occasional green leaf or a wax bean with a crunch. (120)

¹⁹ In reality, the distinctions between domestic and commercial food preparation practices in the province are often blurred. In many cases, this is a fact of the developing nature of tourism in the province, as local entrepreneurs struggle to meet the unique requirements of a highly seasonally restricted business. This is discussed in greater detail in chapters five and six.

The poor quality of produce in the province's capital city also receives comment in John Doyle's 1998 film Extraordinary Visitor. The character Marietta, when presented with a beautifully ripe tomato in a local grocery store, exclaims that it must have fallen off a truck bound for Toronto.

Local entrepreneur Wade McLoughlan, filing a report on St. John's for Canadian fashion magazine Flare, explains that when he arrived in Newfoundland in the early 1990s, "There were no cafés, few decent restaurants, and the only clothing shops downtown were stalwarts from the 60s and 70s, whose clientele were dying out, literally." Fortunately, he notes, there are now "fine restaurants galore" (72). However, the food served in such eateries is not traditional Newfoundland fare, but the "fusion cuisine with Thai and Japanese influences" available at his own restaurant (73).

In Newfoundland writer Michael Winter's Globe and Mail column, "Urban Adventure," he relates his experience at a restaurant on Wards Island (part of Toronto Islands Park, Lake Ontario). He and his girlfriend discuss their unsatisfactory supper:

'Perhaps,' my girlfriend says, 'the cook is not even here.'
 'Maybe he took the ferry into town, to eat.'
 'Yes, he left a few things in the fridge with cellophane.'
 'The inside of your baby potato is old.'
 'They're last year's potatoes.'
 'And the gravy is just ordinary. There's not a trace of juniper.'
 'Even the 18th of one berry you should be able to taste.'
 'The edible flower was nice.'
 'That's the one thing.'

'Maybe the truth of the matter is when you go to an island the food is crap.'

'It's not like we took the [MV Joseph and Clara] Smallwood [ferry] over to Newfoundland.' (2004)

Winter's portrayal of Newfoundland food underscores the general disparagement of local foodways examined at length in chapters four and five (on seal meat and fried food). Tourism and food industry professionals in the province are currently working to dispel this negative image.

As noted above, an important aspect of culinary tourism is the contextualization of regional foodways, a conscious locating of individual items within the web of quotidian and holiday activities. For example, the domestic symbolism of Jiggs' dinner may not cohere in the more institutional setting of a public restaurant. From a strictly practical viewpoint, cod tongues, when overcooked or allowed to cool before serving, become an unappealing, gelatinous mass. Fish and brewis provides another example of a dish which can be quite delicious, or rather horrible. I had both experiences during my trip across the island in the summer of 2004. Visitors who encounter a poorly prepared (for whatever reason) sample of any dish are unlikely to want to make another such culinary foray, especially given time and budget limitations.²⁰

²⁰ Exceptions do occur, though. One such example involving cod tongues is discussed at length in chapter five.

2.6 How Taste Works

On June 22, 2004, I attended "A Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador Luncheon" at the Fairmont Newfoundland. Co-sponsored by Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador (HNL) and the provincial government, the main purpose of the event was to launch the Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador program. Although the Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador program has been operating in a somewhat limited capacity in the province since 1980,²¹ the "launch" of the program at the luncheon represented new interest in the idea of culinary tourism and the addition of a website listing program members.²²

As an example of the ebb and flow of enthusiasm for such a program, I offer a comparison between the 2002, 2003 and 2004 provincial travel guides. The 2002 guide contains a two-page section devoted to local food in which travelers are advised, in the charged language of advertising,

²¹ Although HNL literature indicates that the program first started in 1997 ("Taste" 1997, ACOA "Taste" 2003), program director Chris Woodley told me that in his own background research he found references to such a program as early as 1980. At any rate, prior to the re-launching of the program and the establishment of Woodley's position as well as a steering committee composed of industry professionals, the program was administered by volunteers.

²² In early August 2004, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador released an extensive report prepared by the Economic Planning Group of Canada in association with D.W. Knight & Associates. Entitled A Special Place, A Special People: The Future of Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism, the report is dated March 2004. Under the heading "Other Provincial Initiatives in Cultural Heritage Tourism," the authors recommend that the Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador program be resurrected. They posit the program as a way to foster a "much-needed raising of standards across the province" (123).

Along the roads of your Newfoundland and Labrador vacation, look for Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador restaurants. It's your guarantee of a truly unique and authentic Newfoundland meal. Made with the freshest local ingredients. The best of new and traditional fare served up with Newfoundland warmth and charm.
(29)

However, the 2003 guide, in which local cuisine is combined in one page of text with general information on provincial festivals, there is no mention of the Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador program. Nor is the program mentioned in the 2004 guide, in which details of local dishes are restricted to half a paragraph (18).

With the federal government's current emphasis on culinary tourism, provincial enthusiasm for related programs has been strengthened, and, it would appear in the case of Newfoundland and Labrador, revived. The menu for the HNL luncheon included "Jigs Dinner Squares,"²³ salmon on birch planks provided by Kent's (building supply), and local berries for dessert (raspberries, partridgeberries, blueberries and a blackberry coulis) (see Fig. 2.1 for complete menu). While attendees ate, Minister Paul Shelley, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, briefly discussed the tourism slogan for 2004 ("Tourism: Open Our Doors") and presented promotional spots currently running on radio,

²³ The "Jigs Dinner Square," a creation claimed by Spirit of Newfoundland Productions, combines all the traditional ingredients of the boiled dinner in an appetizer-sized filo pastry. Their website enthuses, "Visitors and residents alike are encouraged to try a tasty little piece of Newfoundland History and culture!" (Spirit of Newfoundland 2004).

television and at tourism trade shows. While the ostensible focus of the luncheon was on Newfoundland and Labrador cuisine, references to the same were noticeably missing from all of the promotional media, which continue to focus on the province's "outdoor nature product" (e.g., whales, icebergs and puffins, as further discussed in chapter six). In addition, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador members presiding over the event, particularly President Stan Cook, Jr., appeared to have little knowledge of the food products being promoted.²⁴ The constituency of the province's culinary iconography is still under negotiation.

Given the current image, both etic and emic,²⁵ of Newfoundland and Labrador foodways, as well as the still-developing tourism infrastructure, the scope of the revived Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador (TNL) program is ambitious. Distinguishing TNL from Nova Scotia's similar "Taste of Nova Scotia" program, which Program Director Woodley says "lets everybody in," are rigorous membership requirements. Woodley explained the lengthy TNL application procedure to me during an interview conducted in a downtown St. John's coffee

²⁴ For example, after the Jigs [sic, as notated on the luncheon menu] Dinner Squares squares were served, Cook announced to the crowd, "Well, if this is an example of Newfoundland cuisine, then I'm looking forward to having a lot more of it!"

²⁵ This discussion, begun earlier in this chapter, continues in chapters four, five and six.

shop.²⁶ Member establishments, which may include a wide variety of businesses from takeout to fine dining, must maintain a roughly 1 to 3 ratio of "Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador" items. For example, if there are four entrees on the menu, one of these must fit the TNL criteria. If there are between five and seven entrees, at least two of these must be TNL worthy items. The somewhat vague criteria for such items includes the use of "fresh locally produced ingredients whenever possible," the use of "recipes [which are] either traditional or local," and "superior. . . taste and appearance" ("Taste" 6). Applicants must describe each item for consideration in terms of ingredient and recipe sources, and answer the open question, "Why do you feel this item meets Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador criteria?"

Following a review of their application, potential members are then visited by a program assessor. The application materials state, "The assessor will consider various aspects of your operation, and will determine a score based on the criteria. Assessments will focus on three areas: Menu and Cuisine, Staff and Service, and Physical Structure" (6).²⁷ Requirements regarding staff and service

²⁶ I am grateful to Chris Woodley for allowing me close examination of the Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador membership application package, as well as other related materials.

²⁷ Woodley declined to provide further information regarding the assessors, as the anonymous restaurant visits of these individuals, extending from the application process into each establishment's membership tenure, are a key part of the program. He did state that all assessors employed as of the current writing had recently received training specific to TNL program evaluation.

include staff's ability to knowledgeably discuss menu items, particularly those indicated as TNL feature items. The physical structure of the business, among other conditions, must exhibit the TNL logo. If the assessor rejects the application, the decision may be appealed. However, each additional assessment may cost the applicant fifty dollars. Yet, Woodley maintains that the current criteria represent a loosening of previous requirements, such that a takeout with no indoor seating is as eligible, in theory, as a fine dining establishment such as Corner Brook's 13 West.²⁸

Membership responsibilities encompass sourcing and staff training as well: "[a]pplicants must agree to seek out and purchase locally produced products," "avail of training programs available to them," and "promote the program in as many ways as possible" (3, 5). Following acceptance into the program, members are anonymously evaluated by TNL assessors at least once during each membership year. Participants must update their applications annually. Moreover, any changes in an establishment's menu must be reported to the program office.

All program members must also hold memberships in both Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador and the Newfoundland and Labrador Restaurant and Foodservices Association (NLRFA)/Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices

²⁸ TNL's food service categories are as follows: family, snack bar, cafeteria, fine dining, bistro, ethnic, takeout, café and specialty (7).

Association, a financial commitment at which, Woodley admitted, some restaurateurs balk. For the smallest establishment, such as a seasonal ["open six consecutive months per year or less" (4)] take-out operation with no seating, participation in the program would currently cost \$726.49: \$210 for TNL membership, \$200.84 for HNL membership and \$315.65 for Restaurant and Foodservices Association membership fees. Woodley believes that each establishment's fee outlay will be more than compensated by the direct and indirect benefits of program membership. As stated in the application materials, such benefits include a listing in a forthcoming dining guide (planned for spring/summer 2005), as well as a program website.²⁹ Furthermore, Woodley notes, membership fees assist in paying for the marketing of the program itself. While it is currently underwritten by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), along with a number of provincial government departments, one of Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador's long-term goals for the program is financial self-sufficiency.³⁰ Another goal, Woodley emphasizes, is the creation of a self-sustaining marketing machine, of which the logo itself "is the biggest part." Ideally, visitors and residents alike, habituated to

²⁹ The need for a local dining guide is underscored by the fact that there are no restaurant listings in the provincial travel guide, although descriptions of accommodations may include information on in-house food service.

³⁰ The ACOA grant, for example, is for \$157,000 (ACOA, "Taste" 2003).

the guarantee of excellent, local food and service, would routinely look for the logo, with food service professionals actively recommending other members' establishments as a matter of course. Thus, the program seeks to cultivate a network of culinary "ambassadors" (Woodley 2004).

In late 2003, 256 invitations to join the program were issued across the province. Near the end of June 2004, Woodley stated that there were fifteen interested establishments. They hoped to have forty participating restaurants by year's end.

2.7 Conclusion

While writing about food and eating may be similar to the widely quoted "Writing about music is like dancing about architecture—it's a really stupid thing to want to do," (Elvis Costello qtd. in White 52), it is also, as Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson points out, one of the only ways to make the ephemeral experience last (16-17). Just as France's nineteenth century gastronomic field was predicated on an evolving society's interest in cuisine as a cultural product, today's tourism industry has recognized the cultural currency of local foodways. Moreover, they seek to turn this cultural cachet into hard currency, an important component of which is print and electronic marketing. The central challenge for local businesses and governmental agencies is to highlight the unique products of a particular area while meeting the standards and expectations of a public

that demands a wide variety of choices that may or may not be a part of local foodways. In Canada and the United States, this includes a food repertoire indelibly marked by the influence of French *haute cuisine*, *cuisine du terroir*, and *cuisine nouvelle*, as well as the more recent reaction against the North American fast food industry and attendant opposition to McDonaldization (see, e.g., Ritzer 2004; Schlosser 2002; Smart 1999).

The Canadian cuisine conundrum is linked to its relative youth as a nation, its size, its historical and current association with Britain and its ongoing identity issues, particularly in relation to its neighbour to the south. Moreover, as demonstrated in CTC documents, the tourism industry struggles with the basic makeup of the country, a diverse confederation of provinces. At present, both national and provincial organizations are working to highlight regional specialties while creating a broadly based, positive image of "cuisine in Canada" through a variety of media (travel and restaurant guides, web sites, television advertising and so on).³¹ Again, such an approach harkens back to the French model, pulling disparate regional elements and traditions into a formalized, replicable system that is perceived to represent the country as a whole. The fact that

³¹ They could begin with dessert. As Joan Skogan declares in the pages of *Saturday Night*, "Eat a butter tart today. It's the Canadian thing to do" (21). Similarly, folklorist Pauline Greenhill writes that attending graduate school in Texas "allowed me to discover the true distinctiveness of Canadian culture—we have butter tarts and Americans don't" (7). With current concerns about obesity and its contribution to heart disease and diabetes (discussed in detail in chapter five), however, today's tourist may be more inclined to skip dessert.

Canadians themselves do not typically view the country as a unified whole, with one or more provinces supporting serious separatist movements at any given time, clearly adds to the complexity, and perhaps challenges the validity, of such a project. The attempt to delineate a “national cuisine,” based on “Old World” models, in the “New World” context of the Americas may be interpreted as a component of more general, politically-motivated nationalizing agendas (see also Wilk 2002; Gabaccia 2002).³²

It is also critical to draw attention to the largely unexamined requirement, in the reports prepared for and by the CTC, of aesthetic distinction and hence status that delineates the culinary tourism sector. Taking the Research Resolutions and Consulting, Ltd. report on Canadian tourists as an example, we read that such enthusiasts are “appreciably more affluent than are typical domestic visitors in Canada and have more formal education” (4). The desired “Wine and Culinary Enthusiasts” express interest in gourmet dining and wine-related activities such as tastings and vineyard tours. The most popular self-reported activity among this group, at seventy-three percent, is daytrips to wineries, followed by touring regional wineries at sixty percent. Food finally comes in third with fifty-eight percent, described as dining at “internationally acclaimed restaurants” (15). The interests of this market segment strongly tend

³² In this sense, creating a national cuisine from distinctive regional foodways harkens back to the romantic nationalism that inspired much folklore collecting, beginning at the turn of the nineteenth century (Wilson 1973).

toward the products of elite culture. Thus, the process of identifying and creating broadly marketable products based on regional foodways is also a process of developing items of elite culture *based on* traditional or popular culture, and positioning them within a supportive gastronomic field which must also be created and maintained.

The "Wine and Culinary Enthusiast," however, is not the only tourist drawing aesthetic and moral conclusions about regional food cultures, nor are gourmet foods and esteemed wines the only comestibles on offer. An interdisciplinary consideration of culinary tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador, anchored in a folkloristic understanding of quotidian food events, offers a vivid picture of the continued association of food and class, consumption and power. The next chapter traces the development of folklore and other social science scholarship that informs my analysis of seal flipper pie, fried food and berry encounters as formative cross-cultural and interclass experiences.



*A Taste of
Newfoundland
& Labrador*

Luncheon Menu

Appetizer

*Figs Dinner Square
All of the great items in a
Newfoundland and Labrador Traditional
Figs Diner wrapped up in a filo-pastry*

Entree

*Birch Planked Atlantic Salmon Fillet
Musby Pea Mashed Potato
Lemon Butter
Fresh Garden Medley of Local Vegetables*

Dessert

*Newfoundland and Labrador Scone Short Cake
with Chantilly Cream and Blackberry Coulis*

Tea and Coffee

Fig. 2.1 Menu served at "A Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador Luncheon"
sponsored by Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador.

Chapter Three

On the Table

As Lucy Long notes, culinary tourism brings the “anthropology of tourism, folklore and food studies” together, as well as both academic and popular discourse in a variety of media (2).¹ What follows here is an overview of folkloristic and other social science research developments as relevant to culinary tourism in Canada, and particularly in Newfoundland and Labrador. I will identify the major contributors and themes that have led to acceptance of the idea of “culinary tourism” as a legitimate research topic.

While folklorists have been collecting information about regional food practices since at least the late nineteenth century,² anthropologist John Joseph Honigsmann is credited with the first use of the term “foodways,” namely in his 1961 study Foodways in a Muskeg Community: An Anthropological Report on

¹ While Long’s statement restricts culinary tourism’s intellectual playing field to three areas, there are a number of inter/disciplines which have contributed significantly to the academic literature on both food and tourism, including sociology, gender studies, history and cultural studies. Long is correct in pointing out that the wide range of writing, both academic and popular (as well as work that falls somewhere in between), makes a thorough review a daunting task.

² See, for example, the work of Alice Bertha Gomme (e.g., “The History of England in a Cooking Pot: Folk Recipes and Kitchen Magic” published in London’s Morning Post on March 4, 1931) and Florence White (e.g., Good Things in England, published in 1932), both founding members of the English Folk Cookery Association.

the Attawapiskat Indians, published in Canada. Don Yoder adopted the expression for use by folklorists as indicating "the whole range of cookery and food habits in a society" or "the total cookery complex," while continuing to use the phrase "folk cookery" in his own work (1972). Yoder specified the meaning of "folk cookery" to foodstuffs, their preparation, the origin of food names and finally the influence or interdependence of such expressive behaviour on other traditional forms, including functional and symbolic processes. At the time of publication, Yoder's own research on folk cookery was considerable (e.g., Yoder 1961; 1962-63; 1971), and he envisaged the development of food studies in the American context such as that already well underway in Europe.

3.1 Food and the Social Sciences

European food scholarship, firmly based in the concept of folklife, facilitated the documentation of numerous regional traditions through both ethnographic and historical methods, often in interdisciplinary approaches. In a 1972 publication, Yoder singled out the work of J. C. Drummond and Anne Wilbraham on the English diet (1939), L. Burema's historical study of health in the Netherlands (1953), Albert Hauser's survey of food and drink in Zurich from the Middle Ages to the modern era (1973), Maria Dembinska's examination of food consumption in medieval Poland (1963) and Nils-Arvid Bringéus's anthology on Swedish food in various historical and social contexts (1970) as examples. In

bringing European food research to North American folklorists' attention, Yoder also pointed out that such work "has been strangely neglected in the United States" ("Folk Cookery" 326). He added that although cultural anthropologists in the United States had done work in the area, it was generally concerning non-Western groups, as would be expected in anthropological studies at the time. In 1978, Michael Owen Jones, echoing the earlier sentiments of Don Yoder, stated that "the subject of foodways is indeed important, though still generally neglected in folkloristics" (260).

Yet, despite repeated acknowledgements of the comparative lack of foodways scholarship in North America and accompanying calls to action, folkloristic food study remains a relatively small sub-field in which the opportunities for documentation and analysis are considerable. Like children's folklore, foodways appears to have suffered from a "triviality barrier" (Sutton-Smith 1-8) combined with the challenge of ephemerality. As Günter Wiegelmann writes

Food occupies a very special position among those cultural events that are observed daily because it's extremely ephemeral . . . the preservation of tradition lies totally with the carrier and depends therefore on the strengths and weaknesses of human memory . . . forgetting, misunderstanding, reinterpretation, improvisation during performance are vital with food. (qtd. in Welsch 192)³

³ Welsch's review of Wiegelmann's book, which includes the translation of lengthy excerpts, is part of *Keystone Folklore Quarterly's* special issue on food (1971). Editor Jay Anderson asserts Wiegelmann's work to be "far and away the most significant anthropology of food to be published to date" (153).

Anyone who has struggled to remember the way her/his mother or father prepared a certain dish (standing over the stove gazing down, for example, at a pan full of uncooperative potatoes)⁴ can certainly relate to the crucial interplay of experience and memory in the transmission and (re)creation of traditional foodways (see, e.g., Goldman 1981; Sutton 2001; Wachs 1988). Conversely, memory may be the precursor to creative experimentation and innovation. Perhaps it is this pattern, endemic to all human activity, that enabled food studies to be hailed as a “hot new field” in 1999, after more than a century of diligent documentation, albeit “along the margins of anthropology and folklore” in North America (Ruark 1999).⁵ However, a number of scholars point to food’s association with women and the domestic realm as a continuing source of academic stigma in what remains a male-dominated occupational arena.

Tied to the “central ritual of housekeeping” (Strasser 1982), food provisioning has been a female-gendered activity for thousands of years, reinforced by traditional, institutional and popular culture (DeVault 1991).

⁴ This is a reference to my own (unsuccessful) attempt to cook mashed potatoes “just like Mom’s” for the first time. Similarly, after newly arriving in Newfoundland, I was challenged by a professor to cook one of my mother’s Thanksgiving recipes from memory, an endeavour which also ended in disappointment.

⁵ This estimate uses John Gregory Bourke’s “The Folk-foods of the Rio Grande Valley and of Northern Mexico,” published in the Journal of American Folklore in 1895, as a starting point. Clark Wissler’s 1916 article, “Aboriginal Maize Culture as a Typical Culture-Complex,” in the American Journal of Sociology is another early example.

American studies scholar Warren Belasco observes that this gendered division of labour eventually manifests itself in academia, as it

effectively segregated women professionals in less-valued disciplines closer to home, particularly dietetics, home economics, and nutrition education. . . . it took several decades before scholars could begin to consider the traditional female ghetto of domesticity without Victorian era blinders and prejudices, and even today, feminists who do treasure their cooking heritage and skills may risk the skepticism and scorn of colleagues. ("Food Matters" 7-8)

The work of female food scholars has thus been criticized as unworthy of academic attention and even counter-productive to the feminist movement (Avakian 1997). I have encountered such chauvinism, for instance, in the less confrontational but equally damning pronouncement of food research as "cute."

Anthropologist Pierre van den Berghe attributes the "relative neglect of food and cuisine in social sciences" to "the more general avoidance of any subject which threatened to expose the natural roots of culture" (387). Camp, for example, identifies folklorists' particular orientation to foodways as an outgrowth of such an avoidance. He writes

. . . folklore's relatively late coming to the study of food and culture has meant that folklorists are more likely to focus upon particular foods as significant *choices*, implicitly rejecting physical determinism in favor of a cultural model—one in which foods that people eat are believed to say more about who they are than about the edible stuff they have at hand.

In this sense foodways is a tacitly modern way of looking at some very old traditions, a view informed more by the consumerist decision making of Western market economies than anthropological or archaeological precepts. (367)

Certainly, the perception of an unslakable desire for variety and novelty in tandem with status informs popular conceptions of consumer choice, even with regard to quotidian food provisioning (see, e.g., Bell and Valentine 192-95; Lupton 94-130). My survey respondents' and interviewees' recognition of the environmental limitations on tradition, in direct contrast, will be discussed in the following case studies.

The folkloristic study of food, as with many other folklore genres, continues to influence and be influenced by scholarship in other disciplines, adding to its diffuse nature and the challenge faced by folklorists when seeking to develop competency in the area. Anthropologists have also contributed much to the study of food. As early as 1948, Audrey Richards argued for the primacy of food in the development and communication of culture, prompting her mentor Bronislaw Malinowski to state "the most important motive in the life of the community and in the interests of the individual is food. . ." (xiv-xv).⁶ As well as exploring the social dimensions of food provisioning and consumption among the southern Bantu, a chapter on the symbolic use of food was "a pioneer study in gastronomy" (Anderson, "Study" 157). Richards later described her work as an effort to "prove that hunger was the chief determinant of human relationships, initially within the family, but later in wider social groups" (Land ix). Indeed, her

⁶ Malinowski's statement is in contrast to a number of Richards' disciplinary predecessors, including himself, assigning that crucial role to sex (M.O. Jones 260; Neustadt, Clambake 137).

research on foodways helped establish the basis of social scientific food study in North America. As Jay Anderson writes, "The impact of this scholarship on the study of folk foodways cannot be underestimated" ("Study" 157).

The foundational work of Mary Douglas elaborated on Richards' ideas about food and social meaning. Claude Lévi-Strauss established theoretical frameworks for the analysis of individual foods and meal systems, as well as the cultural boundaries that define what is and is not edible (Douglas 1966, 1984; Lévi-Strauss [1964] 1970). Most important to the present study is Lévi-Strauss's insight that "food, and what we do with it, is at the very core of sociality" (van den Berghe 387), while his effort to demonstrate "universal cognitive structures" remains open to debate (Long, *Culinary* 32-33; see also Douglas, *Implicit* 250; Neustadt, *Clambake* 141-42). As part of the continuing corrective to Lévi-Strauss's emphasis on the linguistic analysis of foodways and its attendant sensory data, Paul Stoller refocused attention on the sensory in anthropological research with *The Taste of Ethnographic Things* in 1989.

Charles Camp refined the definition of foodways in 1997 as "the culture-based definition of the edible and the body of customary, verbal, and material traditions that pertain to the utility of food as an instrument of cultural continuity, a sign of group identity, and a significant aspect of folk culture" (366). Indeed, recent foodways scholarship has often focused on ethnic or regional food practices as emblematic of individual and group identity (e.g., Gutierrez 1992;

Humphrey and Humphrey 1991; Neustadt 1992; Lloyd 1981). Scholars have analyzed procurement, preparation, display and consumption of foodstuffs, particularly a specific dish or event, in the context of localized small group interaction, and in relation to other aspects of folklife such as traditional gender roles (Theophano 1991; Turner and Seriff 1987; B. Williams 1984), belief (Vennum 1988) and festival (Neustadt 1992). As such, these works have served as case studies for the analytical framing of food as symbolic system (Cussler and Givé 1952; Douglas 1975; Mintz 1985; Levi-Strauss 1970, 1977). Moreover, such micro and macro-studies have served as counterpoint to earlier food-related research emphasizing geographic and historical determinism (e.g., Cummings 1941).

In addition, a general inattention to the body and somatic experience finds the beginnings of a corporeal corrective in food studies. In a 1994 special issue of the Journal of American Folklore, folklorists addressed "bodylore"⁷ in contexts such as religious experience, bachelor parties and, perhaps most (in)famously, the literal and figurative act of licking at cultural forms. Kathy Neustadt, tracing the historic, Cartesian mind/body split in the social sciences as well as Western thought in general, and positing the tongue as the ideal mediator, points out that folklorists must "contemplate ourselves in an image of the

⁷ The term "bodylore" was coined by folklorist Katherine Young in 1989 (Young 1994).

ethnographer/tourist—with or without Bermuda shorts—engaged in professionally sanctioned cultural “eating”: our *ingestion* an aggressive act of imperialism, our *digestion* a false epistemology” (“Folkloristics” 188).

Nutrition and the improvement of traditional diets has been a constant thread in the work of food studies scholars of a variety of disciplinary orientations as well. In the early 1940s, the Southern Illinois Foodways study, involving the work of anthropologists and sociologists, had two main goals: “1) they hoped to examine the relationship of foodways to other cultural configurations and 2) they sought to develop methods and techniques for those interested in modifying foodways in rural societies” (Anderson, “Study” 158). The study was part of what Anderson termed, in 1971, the ‘golden age’ of American regional foodways research, along with the work of the war time Committee on Food Habits, spearheaded by Margaret Mead (160-61).⁸

In retrospect, foodways scholarship has developed along three main themes. Jones, Giuliano and Krell identified two of those approaches, while proposing a third in a special foodways issue of Western Folklore in 1981. One, the authors note, has been the emphasis on historic developments, including the

⁸ Mead’s committee, it is important to point out, undertook foodways research for the specific purpose of improving dietary practices, in accordance with war-time rationing policies, by understanding the underpinnings of culturally-specific foodways. See Manual for the Study of Food Habits: Report of the Committee on Food Habits, National Research Council Committee on Food Habits, 1945, or Mead’s own Food Habits Research: Problems of the 1960s (1964).

effects of changing technologies (e.g., refrigeration, transportation) in tandem with geographic determinants such as terrain and location, on broadly conceived regional or nationally bounded food systems (see, e.g., Cummings 1941; Hilliard 1969). The second has entailed a focus on specific cultural groups, often bound by region or ethnicity, "treating each as having its own distinctive system of food technology, dietary attitudes, and ways of preparing and consuming food" (Jones, Giuliano and Krell ix). Here also is attention to the effects of industrialized food production and distribution on traditional foodways, especially in terms of "enculturation, acculturation, and urbanization" (xi; see, Masuoka 1945; Gizelis 1971; Sackett 1972). The authors noted a third trend in foodways scholarship, emerging at the time of their writing, which recognized that the two established approaches were designed to document and analyze conditions that by the 1980s were on the wane. The "eclecticism of the diets of many Americans and the lack of homogeneity of attitudes and behaviour in contemporary America" had to be addressed (Jones, Giuliano and Krell x). Thus, as in folklore studies in general, the attention of many foodways scholars turned to studying food events in context, as situationally unique communicative opportunities occurring in dynamic community networks.

3.2 Food and Tourism

Recently, folklorists have begun to explore food outside of traditional group contexts. In 1998, Lucy Long introduced the term “culinary tourism” to express the idea of experiencing the Other through food, as well as a conceptual framework by which folklorists may approach the study of this cultural behaviour. Long states that culinary experience of the Other may involve one or more of five categories: culture, region, time, ethos/religion and socioeconomic class, which often overlap in a single food event. She also acknowledges that gender and age may constitute (an)other category of identity-based culinary knowledge, but perhaps not as often or as readily as the other groupings (*Culinary* 24).

As Canadian examples, we may note the national or ethnic identification inherent in French-Canadian or Ukrainian food, or the regional cuisine of the Maritimes. The country’s many heritage-based attractions offer tourists the foodways of the past, such as the soldier’s bread available for purchase at the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park in Nova Scotia, or the Victorian Mother’s Day Luncheon served at the King’s Head Inn at Kings Landing Historical Settlement in New Brunswick.⁹ Long explains that the category of ethos and religion “refer[s] to worldview and systems of evaluating human actions and products” (*Culinary* 29), and thus includes vegetarianism, veganism and organic

⁹ The luncheon includes “traditional games of the past” as well as period food and drink (see the “Events and Programs” section of the Kings Landing web site at <http://www.kingslanding.nb.ca/englishevents.htm>).

eating regimens as well as the formal, institutionally supported requirements and taboos of various religions. In the Canadian context, Jewish, Muslim and Catholic dietary requirements and observances fall into this category, as do a number of eating systems based on worldview. Finally, socioeconomic class as culinary Other involves moving up or down the class status scale for a meal event. For many, such culinary tourism may be accomplished by having a gourmet meal at an expensive restaurant. Some might view the consumption of fish and chips or similar so-called "lower class cuisine" as eating the food of the socioeconomic Other. This is discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

Culinary tourism is possible in any number of contexts, including eating in restaurants or at festivals, reading or cooking from cookbooks, shopping in grocery stores, taking a cooking class, or perusing travel marketing materials (e.g., advertisements for tours or specific destinations), which Long singles out as "interfaces between individuals and cultures." The choice of the term "interface" is significant, she notes further, in emphasizing the "self-reflexive potential of such sites and the possibility for dynamic, negotiated interactions within them" (*Culinary* 32). Acknowledging the highly individual nature of the act of eating highlighted by Jones, Long further notes that while our perception of the culinary Other is shaped by cultural influences, in the end, the conclusions we draw remain idiosyncratic (see also M.O. Jones 1978).

Long also delineates a framework for culinary experience that may be represented by the following diagram (Fig. 3.1), explaining that each category must be understood as dynamic, with food items moving along the continuum, for example, from exotic to familiar with individual experience and changes in taste. Foodstuffs may also fit into more than one category at the same time. The most important distinction, perhaps, is that between edibility and palatability, which Long identifies as a contrast between cultural norms and individual (but nonetheless culturally shaped), aesthetic judgments: "[t]he first is what we can eat; the second is what we want to eat" (*Culinary* 33). It is important to note here that movement may occur not only in regard to the exotic becoming more familiar, or something at first perceived as inedible moving into the realm of edibility with prolonged exposure. Particularly relevant to this study is Long's recognition that

[s]ome foodways that were once mainstream, even normative, have been moved to the inedible by some segments of the population because of nutritional or health concerns. . . . Butters and creams are suspect, as are traditional sauces and gravies that call for these ingredients. Rich desserts full of fats and sugar are deemed taboo for those who are health-conscious, and women's magazines frequently give alternative recipes and cooking methods for popular but cholesterol-laden foods like fried chicken, grilled cheese sandwiches, and ice cream. (*Culinary* 34-5)

The applicability of this kind of movement, from edibility to inedibility because of health issues, with regard to tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador, is discussed in full in chapter five. Long's observation, however, reminds us that

culturally defined notions of healthful eating may define a particular culinary ethos, akin to religious strictures.



Fig. 3.1. Lucy Long's realms of culinary experience (Culinary 33).

Along with the realms of culinary experience Long isolates five main strategies for negotiating the production of cultural perspective: framing, naming or translation, explication, menu selection and recipe adaptation (Culinary 37). Her examples of each are primarily from the perspective of those involved in some way in the food industry, from producers to restaurateurs, as the business of culinary tourism involves anticipating culturally-influenced expectations as well as individual needs and desires. Building on the work of Richard Bauman and Erving Goffman, Long indicates the importance of situational context and the performance of ethnic identity in the strategy of framing. Encompassing “the languages used on menus and signs, the décor, the spatial arrangement of tables, and the location of public and private areas” (Culinary 38), framing is the way in which a particular food system is elaborated in (non-edible) material forms

and spatial organization. In Newfoundland and Labrador, this is frequently accomplished by decorating restaurant exteriors and interiors with artifacts related to the fishery, such as lobster or crab pots, nets and life preservers (Fig. 3.1-3.4). Negotiation, naming or translation refers to the identification of particular items, which Long applies particularly to dishes originating in cultures whose primary language is not English. She writes,

For example, the Korean dish *bulgogi* is translated literally as “fire meat” but is frequently identified as “grilled beef strips.” Such names frequently draw from the familiar end of the continuum in order to demonstrate their similarities to the larger foodways system. In doing so, the naming places the food analogously within a framework accessible to Americans. (*Culinary* 38)

As residents of an English-speaking province, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians do not face the same challenge of translating the title of a dish from another language into a form comprehensible to the English speaking tourists forming the greater part of the province’s visitors, although certain local dialect terms do sometimes require explanation. However, Long also applies the strategy to the use of English qualifiers such as ‘old-tyme’ or ‘old-fashioned,’ as well as emphasizing or creating geographic links to foods with place names. The Norseman Restaurant in L’Anse aux Meadows, for instance, offers Newfoundland Split Pea Soup and Labrador Caribou Tenderloin. The Carriage Room restaurant, housed inside the Glynmill Inn in Corner Brook, identifies one

of their full hot breakfasts as a West Coast Breakfast. Here, the term "west coast" refers to the west coast of the island of Newfoundland.¹⁰

The third strategy Long singles out entails descriptions or explanations of particular foods, or explication, stressing the goal of providing a native viewpoint of food items. As with the previous strategies, explication may be employed on menus, in cookbooks or in person at a restaurant or food stand. For example, a number of my informants recounted how the dish cod tongues was explained to them by servers at various restaurants in the province (see chapter five). Another example of explication may be found in the popular local cookbook Fat-Back and Molasses, which is often available for purchase at tourist-oriented gift shops. As Long writes, "Many cookbook authors attempt . . . negotiation of the exotic by including introductions to the food system being presented or by including narratives and anecdotes about the recipes" (Culinary 41). Accordingly, Fat-Back and Molasses is filled with the anecdotes of contributors, such as that offered by Mrs. Stella Boyd of Summerford for a cod sound pie recipe.¹¹ Boyd explains

¹⁰ I am very grateful to employees of the Norseman and the Carriage Room who kindly donated restaurant menus to this study.

¹¹ The cod "sound" is the air bladder. Journalist Mark Kurlansky explains that the bladder is "a long tube against the backbone that can fill or release gas to adjust swimming depth" (34). As well as being fried and used in stews, chowders and pies, as above, the bladder may be rendered to make isinglass. A clear or translucent gelatin, isinglass is used in the manufacture of clarifying agents, jellies and glues.

This recipe came from Western Head, Notre Dame Bay, and may originally have come from our great-great grandparents who came from England. It was always served for Christmas Eve Supper. The Sounds were brought from Labrador where our fathers fished in the summer months. The Sounds were salted down in wooden tubs. Butter was bought then in 22 and 10 pound wooden tubs. Today, where Sounds are available, the fifth generation of our family still has 'Cod Sound Pie' on Christmas Eve and it really is a delicacy. (qtd. in Jespersen 18)

While Boyd's statement does not explain what a sound is, it places the sound in a widely understandable context. First it locates it as a foodstuff used in a savoury pie. Second, it points to its provenance ("may originally have come . . . from England"), while at the same time establishing it as a traditional food within the Boyd family. The sounds are also linked with the hard work of both men and women: catching, "making" and preparing fish for consumption. Finally, Boyd notes the importance of the dish in terms of ethos, as an integral part of Christmas Eve celebrations.

Menu selection, the fourth strategy, is a process of selection. Long identifies this as "perhaps the most common strategy," involving "the producer's cognitive model of the tastes of the potential eater as well as the producer's notions of which dishes best represent the cuisine" (*Culinary* 42). In practice this strategy may involve, for example, highlighting dishes believed to be most acceptable to the target audience, or presenting them alongside dishes identified with other regional or national cuisines known to be familiar and popular to a

general exoteric clientele.¹² The 2002 Newfoundland and Labrador Travel Guide provides a local example of selection. Familiar foods that grow locally, such as strawberries, are shown alongside less familiar, and perhaps unknown dishes such as figgy duff, a sweet bread pudding with raisins (Fig. 3.5). The strawberries also flank a colourful ceramic platter featuring two burgers (familiar). Upon further inspection, one might discern that the “meat” of these burgers is actually fried squid (unfamiliar). Above the squid burgers, a glass platter in the form of a fish, complete with head and fins offers the etically unfamiliar, traditional Newfoundland and Labrador dish fish and brewis. The fish platter supporting the cod, as well as the bottle of “white” wine beside it, serves to indicate that it is indeed a fish dish. Although it would be difficult for someone unfamiliar with local berries, or bakeapples in general to recognize it as such, the wine is indeed Rodrigues’s Bakeapple Wine, another example of putting an unfamiliar foodstuff in a familiar form.¹³ In the top left corner, the most unfamiliar, and to some certainly inedible, of the province’s traditional foodstuffs is cleverly cast in that

¹² Long’s example here is the practice of Korean restaurateurs of offering “Korean food alongside other Asian cuisines, such as Japanese or Chinese, already established in the United States” (*Culinary* 42).

¹³ The Rodrigues Winery is discussed in detail in chapter six.

most popular of North American fast food forms, the pizza. This pizza features seal sausage.¹⁴

Finally, recipe adaptation entails “the manipulation of the ingredients and preparation methods of particular dishes in order to adapt to the foodways system of the anticipated consumers” (Culinary 43). In Long’s discussion of the strategy, with Korean cooking in the United States as a primary example, the main issue is often degrees of spiciness, or perceived heat. Korean restaurateurs must balance their traditional ways of spicing certain dishes with their understanding of the palate of the “average” North American. As traditional Newfoundland and Labrador cooking has not typically been hot and spicy, changing spice amounts for visitors is not an issue. Recipe adaptation is most employed in poaching or baking fish, namely cod, rather than frying it. The reasons for such a change are discussed in detail in chapter five. Another example comes from the menu of The Cabot Club, the fine dining establishment housed within the Fairmont Newfoundland Hotel in St. John’s. In contrast to traditional ways of preparing caribou, which is generally as a steak with a brown gravy, chef Roary MacPherson offers “Pepperberry Crusted Loin of Labrador Caribou with Red Currant Jus.”

¹⁴ The relative acceptability of seal meat is examined at length in chapter four.

3.3 Folklore and Tourism

With Long's comparison of conventional tourism—the exploration of new spaces—to the exploration of unfamiliar domains through eating, foodways research coheres with analyses of tourism. While traveling, tourists have the opportunity to assume, and consume, temporary, regional, and different socio-economic identities or, conversely, to hold firm to established, everyday tastes and personalities. Thus, food may be accepted or rejected as a “medium of cultural transmission” (Jochowitz 225).

The academic study of tourism emerged in the 1970s, primarily in the fields of anthropology and sociology. Sociologist Dean MacCannell's The Tourist (1976) is often cited as a starting point, but we can look to the earlier work of French political geographer and social critic André Siegfried in the 1950s and historian Daniel Boorstin in the 1960s (and later, for example, literary theorist Paul Fussell and artist and intellectual Guy DeBord) as setting the stage for conceptions of both “the tourist” and tourism, as opposed to travel and “the traveler,” for decades to come.¹⁵ In summary, the conceptual framework contrasted upper class “travelers” in the Grand Tour tradition with the emergent

¹⁵ See MacCannell's critique of Boorstin, for example, 103-107 (1989), as well as James Clifford (65-6, 220-37). Dettmer points to the work of Hans Magnus Enzensberger (1958) as an early commentator on the difference between tourism, or travel for its own sake, and travel undertaken as a necessity for financial or health reasons. Enzensberger notes that prior to the eighteenth century (and the rise of the Grand Tour), travel was generally considered “a necessary evil, a dangerous and uncomfortable undertaking” (Dettmer 162).

middle and working class "tourists," on the assumption that while moneyed, and presumably culturally sophisticated travelers "possessed an originality and self-sufficiency in judgement" that led to "authentic" experiences and knowledge, tourists unmindfully pursued amusement, relying "unquestioningly on the conventions that guided their tours" (Buzard 27-29). As historians Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough point out, in hindsight such class-based stereotypes betray these criticisms of middle and working class travel as evidence of "historically specific, social and cultural anxieties in the modern industrializing and democratizing nations of Europe and North America" (2). Literary theorist James Buzard locates it particularly as concern about the new mobility of "the lower orders of society" which first emerged after the French Revolution. Indeed, in the mid-twentieth century, Siegfried declared tourism a debased cultural form, designed for those who could not discern "between filth and beauty" (148).

While the study of tourism has broadened to include virtually all forms of travel, as well as those who travel, Baranowski and Furlough emphasize the intellectual influence of earlier cultural theorists such as Siegfried. Thus later studies would seek to categorize both types of tourists and their behaviours, such as Valene Smith's seven-part typology of tourists (explorer, elite, offbeat, unusual, incipient mass, mass, charter) (11-14) and five-part typology of tourism

forms (ethnic, cultural, historical, environmental, recreational) (4-6).¹⁶ Sociologist John Urry's work on tourism introduced the concept of the "tourist gaze" (1990). Building on Michel Foucault's original conception of the gaze, Urry linked it to broader trends toward democratization, while still deeming it highly structured and thus, Urry reasons, inauthentic. The process whereby the tourist gaze was constructed was predetermined by the tourist industry, working within a modern visual economy of signs. In other words, the tourist could only see what she was meant to see, and thus remained *reactive* rather than active.

While Long's overview of tourism scholarship highlights the work of Urry and others, she neglects to note the longstanding assumption of the passivity of the tourist as a main precept of theoretical developments, as well as the general disdain of the "tourist" as opposed to the "traveler" (as discussed above, and still an important trope in popular discourse). This, in turn, glosses over the significant departure represented by her own concept of culinary tourism, which depends upon the idea of the tourist as an active participant in intercultural exchange (as further demonstrated by a number of the essays in her book).

Nonetheless, as Long notes, "This work on typologies and classification helped to establish the anthropology of tourism as a legitimate field of study" (Culinary 3), which may have been previously begrudged because of the

¹⁶ Smith's work built on Erik Cohen's typology of tourist roles, notably his conception of the "organized mass tourist," "the explorer," and "the drifter" (1979).

scholarly perception of tourism's inherent degraded nature (Baranowski and Furlough 1-3).¹⁷ Currently, however, the only premise upon which students of tourism may agree is that it is "a complex and multifaceted activity" (Long, Culinary 4). It must be recognized that a single trip may include elements of different tourism forms, as delineated by Valene Smith, which is reflective of the fact that any single tourist, as an individual, may fit into more than one of Smith's categories. Therefore, as in the folkloristic approach to culture, attention to context is crucial, and a hallmark of more recent tourism studies.

Along with an emphasis on context, more scholars have acknowledged the agency of the tourist, as an active participant in the experience of travel, rather than the passive observer of both early and more recent formulations. Perhaps most notable in the former regard was MacCannell's The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class, first published in 1976. While still turning on problematic constructions of authenticity, MacCannell's work recognized the tourist's active pursuit of knowledge and experience early on in the development of tourism studies. As Baranowski and Furlough write, "while tourism and vacations were increasingly enmeshed within cultures of consumption, mechanically produced images, and various political and economic agendas, tourism and vacations have enabled a persistent quest for experiences of the self

¹⁷ Folklorist Elke Dettmer identifies the historic tendency as a scholarly disinclination to the study of "play and leisure" (161). Thus, culinary tourism, as a subject for academic inquiry, has suffered from an intellectual double whammy.

and its pleasure, and for education and knowledge" (10). Significantly, a crucial element in the touristic search for meaning is the perception of difference—differentiation between hosts and guests, and between the experience of travel and everyday life. Thus, as MacCannell succinctly states, "The differentiations *are* the attractions" (13).¹⁸

3.4 Authenticity in Tourism

MacCannell asserts that tourists are often stymied in their search for authentic experience because of the "staged" nature of tourist productions. Building on Goffman's idea of the "front" and "back" regions of social establishments, MacCannell contends that in the constructed realm of "touristic space," the so-called "back" regions are not *real* back regions: "What they see in the back is only another show" (105). Tourists, in many cases, are simply not able to access the authenticity they seek. Delineating the spaces which *are* available to tourists, MacCannell's six stages of touristic settings bear quoting here in their relation to Long's strategies of negotiation in culinary tourism.

Stage one: Goffman's front region; the kind of social space tourists attempt to overcome or to get behind.

Stage two: a touristic front region that has been decorated to appear, in some of its particulars, like a back region: a seafood restaurant with a fishnet hanging on the wall; a meat counter in a

¹⁸ Direct textual references to MacCannell are taken from the 1989 edition of The Tourist.

supermarket with three-dimensional plastic replicas of cheese and bolognas hanging against the wall. . . .

Stage three: a front region that is totally organized to look like a back region; simulations of moonwalks for television audiences; the live shows above sex shops in Berlin. . . .

Stage four: a back region that is open to outsiders; magazine exposés of the private doings of famous personages; official revelations of the details of secret diplomatic negotiations. . . . It is the open characteristic that distinguishes these especially touristic settings (stages three and four) from other back regions; access to most nontouristic back regions is somewhat restricted.

Stage five: a back region that may be cleaned up or altered a bit because tourists are permitted an occasional glimpse in: Erving Goffman's kitchen; factory, ship. . . .

Stage six: Goffman's back region; the kind of social space that motivates touristic consciousness. (MacCannell 101-02)

An important component of Long's contribution to the development of tourism theory comes in the identification of host and guest inter/actions taking place in tourist space, providing a framework for the study of interculturally-motivated practice, undergirded (in the case of both Long and MacCannell) by Goffman's outline of the parameters of social performance. A McDonald's restaurant, albeit offering regionally-restricted products such as the McLobster sandwich, serves as an example of stage one tourist space. Many tourists, while perhaps taking advantage of McDonald's reliable sameness from time to time, are interested in having dining experiences which they cannot readily duplicate in their hometown. Stage two, thus, appears in Long's "strategies of negotiation" as "framing," discussed above. "Recipe adaptation" may occur in Long's "explication," cohering with stages three, four and five, as the tourist is in various ways allowed what she or he perceives to be a 'native' perspective, although there may be greater and

lesser degrees of distance from source cultural forms. The Dark Tickle Economuseum®, discussed in detail in chapter six, may be considered an example of stage three, four or five tourist space, and at the same time, an application of Long's strategy of explication.¹⁹ Small bed and breakfasts around the province offer an example of stage six, while at the same time providing space in which Long's strategies of framing, recipe adaptation, menu selection, negotiation and explication are utilized, in an effort to present a portrait of Newfoundland and Labrador culture that is pleasing to the visitor.²⁰

In bringing MacCannell and Long's theoretical frames together, the reader comes to the inevitable puzzle of the constituency of "authentic" experience, which Long's approach admirably begins to address. MacCannell's notion of authenticity, as indicated, is awkward in both its generality and adherence to a distinction between authenticity and "staged authenticity" (91-107). Arjun Appadurai would later reject the whole notion of authenticity. In its implication of an objective reality, it places itself outside of the possibility of reality (i.e., the

¹⁹ I have left the Economuseum® to move along the continuum of stages three to five, as interpretation may vary as to its similarity to what MacCannell terms "authentic" experience. As MacCannell notes, distinctions between the stages are problematic and largely depend on degrees of simulation and access (101-02). While the Economuseum® showcases traditional utilization of the province's wild berries, it has been explicitly designed as a performance space for touristic viewing. Simultaneously, it functions as an educational space.

²⁰ The role of local bed and breakfasts in the construction and presentation of Newfoundland and Labrador culture is discussed further in subsequent chapters.

more accepted notion of continuously re/constructed subjective realities) (1986). Accordingly, Maxine Feifer and others (e.g., Cohen 1988²¹; Ritzer and Liska 1997; Urry 1990) moved toward a more contextually-based understanding of authenticity construction in the conception of the "post-tourist." The post-tourist recognizes the element of construction in sociocultural experience and may thus take pleasure in tourist productions that range widely on what can be termed the "authenticity continuum." Indeed, the post-tourist "knows that they are a tourist and that tourism is a game, or rather a whole series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience" (Urry 100). In post-tourism, then, it is novelty, rather than authenticity, that is the primary objective; but Urry's formulation has been criticized "because the 'tourist gaze' becomes an uncritical and undifferentiated extension of consumer behaviour" (Koshar 325). Although contemporary understandings of the postmodern condition may appear to have eliminated concerns of authenticity in tourist productions, both industry professionals and local civic groups as well as academics continue to grapple with the thorny issue.

Directly addressing the "particularly vexed" (Baranowski and Furlough 22-23) issue of authenticity, the major contribution by folklorists to the field of tourism studies has been in the area of heritage and cultural tourism, examining

²¹ Cohen's term for the post-tourist is "recreational tourist" ("Authenticity" 377).

issues of authenticity and representational authority in the matrix of host/guest interaction. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's work in this area is perhaps the best known, as in her 1998 book Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage. In her discussion of Plimouth Plantation she notes that authenticity may be signified by process rather than product. She writes, "Authenticity is located not in the artifacts per se or in the models on which they are based but in the *methods* by which they were made—in a way of doing, which is a way of knowing, in a performance. The village as whole is based on this principle, which is taken to an extreme in the technique of first-person interpretation" (196). The resultant artifact, however, is undeniably a product of the present rather than the past, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett emphasizes that "the heritage industry is a new mode of cultural production" separated from the ethnographic past by virtue of its present re/valuation (150). The value of heritage, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett concludes, depends upon the fact of its obsolescence (148-51).

Folklorists and other cultural workers are deeply involved in the ongoing processes of heritage and other tourist productions, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett noted in 1988, a fact demonstrated by the highly reflexive nature of much folkloristic scholarship on the subject. Regina Bendix writes that in the development of folklore scholarship, "authenticity finally reached the surface" in the mid-1980s (216). It was at this time, she notes, that folklorists began to understand ethnography as a process of authentication in its own right, an

intellectual insight that dovetailed with the “crisis of representation” in the social sciences in general. Bendix identifies the recognition of the uses of authenticity, rather than the struggle to define it, as a possible point of strength in folkloristics. Public sector folklorists’ documentation and analysis of their own front-line experience in this area have been invaluable.

For example, while not specifically concerned with tourism *per se*, Robert Cantwell’s “Conjuring Culture: Ideology and Magic in the Festival of American Folklife” addresses the authenticity problem in outlining the experience of the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife staff circa 1985. While striving for authenticity, he writes, festival planners were compelled by issues of access, attention,²² conservation, objectification, social interaction and representation to engage in “several forms of deception, including what is called ‘induced natural context’” (159). The end result, however, far from spurious spectacle, Cantwell believes, was a kind of magic, cooperatively conjured by planners, participants, presenters and visitors alike. Patricia Atkinson Wells has termed this compromise between realms of traditionally private or highly localized expression and public performance and commodification “‘public culture’—a mediated, interpreted, and ‘packaged’ version of custom or tradition that both the esoteric and exoteric participant can be comfortable with” (vii), an understanding gleaned from her

²² This refers, specifically, to the festival visitor’s attention span. Cantwell’s example is of Makah (a Northwest coast native American tribe) woodcarving, which he describes as “long and painstaking,” requiring observers to spend about twenty minutes to see something take shape (153).

experience in cultural and heritage tourism in Tennessee. Both Cantwell's and Wells's terms emphasize the participatory pastiche that is culture, and acknowledge the dynamic negotiation of boundaries that constitutes cultural (re)production.

Barry Jean Ancelet has outlined the negotiation of both authenticity and esoteric/exoteric boundaries in Cajun country tourism, where locals attempt to "serve the visitors' needs without ruining the cultural landscape for natives" (260). Mardi Gras, long a popular tourist draw for Louisiana cultural centers such as Baton Rouge, Lafayette and New Orleans, also attracts visitors to more rural areas and smaller-scale celebrations. Ancelet asserts that the Mardi Gras festivities in the aforementioned cities run on a kind of "internal momentum," and the chaos that often ensues acts as a festive fuel, whereas prairie celebrants have had to build community cultural defences in order to avoid being overrun by outsiders at festival time. He explains,

Communities interested in hosting tourists have developed ingenious ways of keeping them out of the way of what is going on. Mardi Gras runs leave town early in the morning and weave their way through the countryside until mid-afternoon. To keep tourists off the roads and in town, associations have been programming little festivals with music, food and Mardi Gras-related activities such as masking contests and chicken chases. Later in the afternoon, when the Mardi Gras rides back into town, visitors get a parade made up of the real thing, with riders dismounting and engage them in dancing and general Mardi Gras play. The communal gumbo at the end of the day, once reserved for riders and contributing homeowners, is now made available to visitors. For a nominal price, visitors can sit with riders and enjoy the fruits

of their labors, and help supplement the costs of the celebration at the same time. (260)

While not all strictly traditional, the activities the community has developed serve both local and tourist expectations. It is important to note here that the activity in which both groups come together is a shared meal.

3.5 Conclusion

In the final analysis, however, whether or not academics and public folklore professionals grant the stamp of authenticity to a process, product, person or place, tourists do assess quality and form opinions. As Cantwell iterates, "Conscious beings know where they are; culture, indeed, *is* where they are" (159). Tourists talk about their experiences with fellow travelers, and with friends and family upon their return home. For example, the bulk of my knowledge of Korean and Taiwanese culture comes from a Canadian friend and colleague who lived in both countries while employed as an English teacher.

As has been illustrated by the work of many of the scholars cited above, while people have to eat, even in instances of limited availability and variety because of geographic or economic constraints, foodways may simultaneously exhibit tradition and innovation, circumscription and choice. Further, as Jones states

Despite a shared identity, one person does not always eat what another eats, or in the same way; though in the company of each other, people who share food do not always feel a sense of

community; and while engaged in the same kind of activity at the same time and in the same place, participants do not always interpret the event in the same way. (263)

With experiences differentiated by social, economic and indeed physical distance, tourists may not know the local codes (Douglas 1966 and Lévi-Strauss 1966). If they do have some familiarity with the codes, it is certainly not the same as those who have grown up learning this form of communication. The language western travelers may be said to share, however, is the language, or social code(s), of eating out.

Sociologist Joanne Finkelstein argues for the (negative) transformational opportunities afforded by dining out, in a process that converts emotions into commodities as the appearance of pleasure is substituted for actual experience (1989; 1998). Finkelstein maintains that the post-modern experience of eating in a restaurant is far removed from the embodied, sensually rich activity described by food studies scholars. Eating out, she declares, cannot be meaningful because it has become fashionable. My informants' comments, however, run contrary to Finkelstein's claim, as it is precisely the interaction between themselves, as tourists, and local employees, as hosts, that they cite as making a meal enjoyable and memorable—even in instances where they did not particularly enjoy the food (see also Warde and Martens 175-90, 227). Such contradictions between overarching theory and actual, reported experience is precisely the space in which ethnographers such as folklorists, trained in small

group communication, may contribute much to a deeper understanding of the intercultural exchange.

Jones, Giuliano and Krell assert of eating that,

. . . in no other experience, perhaps, are we compelled to express so many aspects of our total humanity. Virtually nothing else we do in our daily lives speaks so loudly of our sense of art, aesthetics, creativity, symbolism, communication, social propriety, and celebration as do our food habits and eating behaviour. (xii)

Part of the task of culinary tourism, then, is to measure the reception, or lack of same, of such expressive behaviour across cultural, socioeconomic borders and basic experiential borders. Just as Jones stresses that culinary expressivity is not homogenous in origin, neither can one expect tourist perception to be unanimous. When one expresses oneself through foodways, what does the individual tourist understand? From what sensory data, if any, does the cultural outsider make her or his meal meaningful? Finally, are there patterns in such perceptions? These are some of the questions that subsequent chapters of this study will address. Further, as Jones notes, there has been a tendency in food studies to "exclude from consideration the researcher's own behaviour and to avoid studying eating *per se*" ("Perspectives" 261). Thus, the study will also draw upon my own experiences—I have prepared meals for visitors to the province, shared meals with them in local restaurants and B&Bs, and on more than one occasion bypassed the unfamiliar, local eatery for the momentary comfort of Tim Hortons mass-produced familiarity.

As MacCannell writes

Actually, self-discovery through a complex and sometimes arduous search for an Absolute Other is a basic theme of our civilization, a theme supporting an enormous literature; Odysseus, Aeneas, the Diaspora, Chaucer, Christopher Columbus, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Gulliver, Jules Verne, Western ethnography, Mao's Long March. This theme does not just thread its way through our literature and our history. It grows and develops, arriving at a kind of final flowering in modernity. What begins as the proper activity of a *hero* (Alexander the Great) develops into the goal of a socially organized *group* (the Crusaders), into the mark of status of an entire social *class* (the Grand Tour of the British "gentleman"), eventually becoming *universal experience*. (5)

Engaging in some way with local foodways, including attempting to avoid them, constitutes an integral part of the tourist's experience of the Other. As far back as 1971, Don Yoder pointed to the importance of "travel accounts" and personal letters in the folkloristic study of cookery (Yoder 117). Camp later underscored the point, noting that "[t]he most basic and stereotypical of cultural characterizations—the stuff of elementary school geographies and popular travelogues—make primary reference to the specific foods various peoples eat and often describe the physical and cultural attributes of whole societies in terms of these foods" (367). In examining the negotiation of culinary tourism, the roots of otherness may be revealed.

With some notable exceptions (e.g., Bourdieu 1984; Goody 1982; Lewis 1997; Marriott 1968; Montaña 1992, 1997; Warde and Martens 2000; Weismantel 1988), however, alterity as linked to food and class remains largely unexamined in the social sciences. As Montaña notes with regard to the

folkloristic study of food, "the majority of the scholarly contributions neglect the role played by class, political, and historical factors that influence the rejection, acceptance, consumption, and definitions of edible foods. . . . To what extent is the acceptance and rejection of food categories conditioned by . . . class relations?" (221). Etic and emic perceptions of seal flipper pie provide a significant example of the construction of the socioeconomic Other through foodways, and form the basis of the next chapter.



Fig. 3.2 The Anchor Café in Port au Choix beckons tourists with textual and pictorial references to local history and culture. The “Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador” recommendation adds an assurance of quality.



Fig. 3.3 The Anchor Café frames its culinary offerings with fishing paraphernalia, as well as architectural echoes of occupational folklife.



Fig. 3.4 Front view of the Anchor Café's prow. Lobster traps and a mannequin in a sou'wester round out the exterior décor.

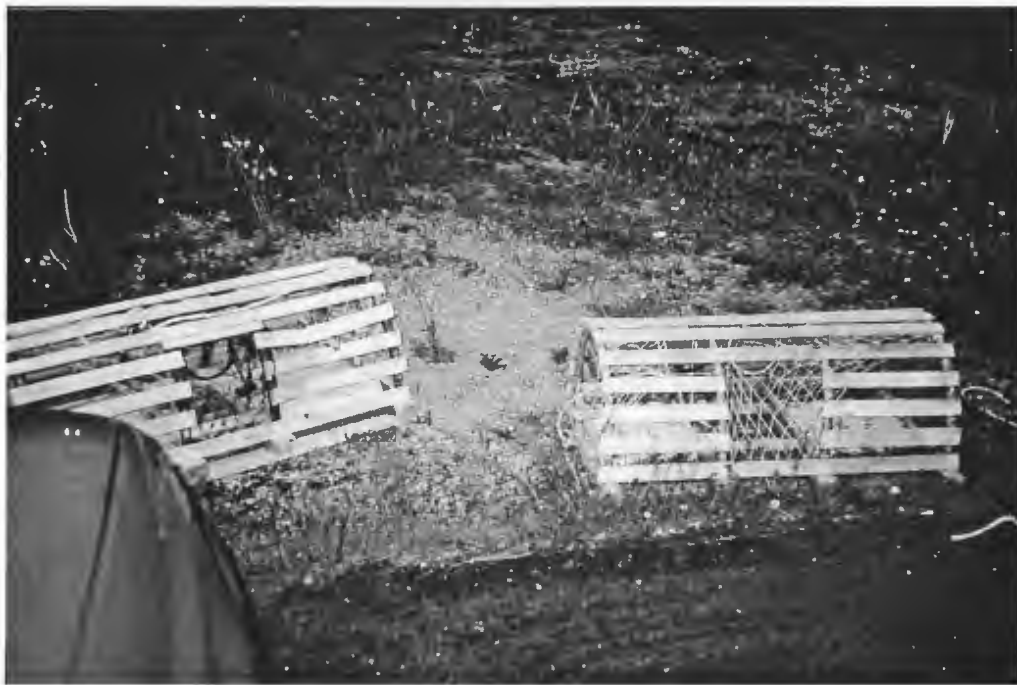


Fig. 3.5 Lobster traps border the parking lot of the Anchor Café.



Fig. 3.6 Newfoundland and Labrador food as depicted in the 2002 Newfoundland and Labrador Travel Guide (28).

Chapter Four

Flipper Pie Discourse and Cultural Control

When I was in grade school, I developed an interest in cooking, inspired by years of watching the important women in my life, my mother, aunts and grandmothers. I wanted to cook the way they did—easily, if not always joyfully—and create the way they did, for any and every occasion, regular, everyday kinds of meals as well as pies and cakes for birthdays and other holidays. Looking through my mother's recipe books was one of my methods of researching the craft, but being a compulsive library patron, I scoured the shelves for interesting titles there as well. It was thus that I discovered the Nancy Drew cookbook.¹

I had never been a Nancy Drew fan, having inherited from my mother a set of books concerning the similar, yet somehow much more fascinating adventures of tomboy Trixie Belden. However, there was no Trixie Belden cookbook, and so I turned to that other young woman detective, and The Nancy Drew Cookbook: Clues to Good Cooking. For my debut family meal, I selected the exotic sounding Peanut Butter Soup.

Those of you recoiling in terror at this moment recreate the reaction which met my culinary labour that lonely day in the late 1970s. The soup was unanimously rejected, although my mother made a valiant effort to summon up a positive comment. "It's very interesting," she said, "and not something I've ever had before." Or would ever have again.

¹ Nancy Drew is a fictional character created in 1930 as a female counterpart to the Hardy Boys. The teenaged sleuth was the protagonist of more than 350 books written by a number of different authors.

While peanut butter soup is a part of regional Louisiana, Ghanaian, Thai and Jewish cooking, to cite a few examples, as well a staple of both vegan and vegetarian cuisine, it was simply unheard of in my family's social circles in small-town West Texas. My enthusiasm for the dish, at least prior to its disappointing reception at the supper table, was thereafter interpreted as an early sign of my unusual and, in view of my parents, sometimes questionable interests. In family folklore, the phrase "peanut butter soup" became a shorthand used in a number of ways, most usually as a means of teasing me. A broader use of the term, however, also developed over the years. "Peanut butter soup" was used to implicitly signal to other family members the presence of the weird, unusual or offbeat.

When I first began my thesis research, I was frequently asked by friends and colleagues outside the department what topic I was pursuing. Following my brief explanation of the idea of "culinary tourism," both Canadians and non-Canadians alike would reply, "Oh, you mean like seal flipper pie!" Like the more esoteric "peanut butter soup" of Everett family folklore, "seal flipper pie" has become a shorthand for the bizarre in Newfoundland culture.

Consisting of front shoulder meat (like shoulder of lamb or pork) fried with pork fat, onions and bacon, then put into a pastry, the pie made an appearance in Annie Proulx's The Shipping News (1993), as well as in the film (2001) it inspired. Looking at both the historic record and more recent popular debate (e.g., Chafe 1972; England 1975; Lamson 1979; Welsh 2002) allows a folklorist to document the esoteric and exoteric iconography of seal flipper pie (Jansen 1959). Flipper pie remains iconic,² not least as part of popular exoteric constructions of rural savagery, the innocent animal's limb representing a forlorn last stand. The continuation, and

² I use the word "iconic" here in the sense of a popular icon, rather than in the semiotic sense.

recent intensification, of the seal hunt controversy (see, e.g., Bennett 2004; Murphy 2004; B. Jones 2003; "Seal Hunt" 2004; Stacey 2003; Welsh 2002; Wente 2002) indicates the persistence of fundamental ideological conflicts in constructions of responsible ecological stewardship, a divide which folklorist Cynthia Lamson suggests is, at heart, a powerful demonstration of class conflict.

4.1 It's a Newfoundland Thing

In April of 2003, the CBC radio show On the Go asked listeners to call or send in their favourite flipper pie recipes. Such recipes have been circulating in the province for decades in a number of forms, both orally and through various media. Historian Shannon Ryan explains the relative dearth of seal meat recipes in Newfoundland and Labrador cookbooks, as compared to recipes for cod or salmon for example, as resulting from the difficulty of cooking it properly, in addition to its restricted, seasonal availability. He also writes, "Because of its scarcity, the care needed in preparing it, and the superb quality of the final result, the seal flipper had an important place in traditional culture" (Ryan and Small 8). Such cultural connections are manifest in song as well as foodways, such as this one included in Ryan and Small's collections of Newfoundland sealing songs and poetry, Haulin' Rope & Gaff:

When The Flippers Strike The Town

You may talk about the pan-cakes
That your mother used to fry
The ones that you remember
When you were a little boy
But this I got to tell you
And upon me do not frown
The pan-cakes won't be "in it"
When the flippers "strike the town."

In the morning you'll rise early
And you'll need no Daylight Bill
When a "swiler" first is sighted
From the tower upon the "Hill"

And the latest married woman
 As she sports her wedding-gown
 She'll be smiling on the "swilers"
 When the flippers "strike the town."

Now there's nothing like "a flipper"
 No there's not—"upon my eye"
 Fried or stewed or "parboiled"
 Or well baked up in a pie.
 Sure you wouldn't view a comet
 If its tail lay on the 'grown'
 Upon my word and honor
 When the flippers "strike the town."

When the father of the family
 To his wife will bring a "gad"³
 How her eyes will gaze upon them
 Oh, how pleased she'll be and glad
 And she'll talk about the frosty spring
 When he made forty poun'
 Pork and cabbage won't be in it
 When the flippers "strike the town." (Ryan and Small 1978)

Reprinted in Ryan and Small from a 1959 issue of Newfoundland Stories and Ballads, this song well depicts the widespread air of excitement created by the arrival of the sealers. In addition, the anticipation of the flipper dinner is foregrounded, as the listener is advised that she or he will forget all other favourite dishes (e.g., "mother's pancakes") and not even a comet will distract attention from the flipper feed. In fact, flipper can be so delectable as to be dangerous, a situation comically expressed in "Mrs. Mullowney Was Three Weeks in Bed Since She Ate the Fipper Stew,"⁴ attributed to Johnny Burke. The narrative song describes a generous flipper dinner hosted by Olive Mullowney, wife of "Old Skipper Jim," to which "all

³ The word "gad" can refer to a flexible, often forked branch used to carry a seal flipper, and to the number of flippers carried thusly. Such a branch may also be used to carry a trout, by hooking the fork under the gills, as one would hook the toes of the seal flipper (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 206).

⁴ "Fipper" is another word for "flipper."

the aristocracy" was invited. Picking up the story in the third verse, the listener learns that

All hands sat in their places,
To do justice to this spread,
And Mrs. Muldowney's place was fill'd,
You just could see her head;
And to say that fippers vanished
Would be proper to relate,
'Till nothing but a mass of bones
Remained upon her plate.

No doubt she did them justice,
For her appetite was sharp,
She didn't leave a toe-nail
Of a white-coat or a harp.
In fact she gourmandized so much
She couldn't eat no more,
Till billious from devouring prog,⁵
She swooned off on the floor. (J. White 49)

Mrs. Muldowney does recover, but, like many who have over-indulged, is left with an intolerance for even the name of the dish that temporarily undid her: "And now just mention flipper stews/Whenever you go in. / And a lighted lamp of kerosene/Will take you on the chin." Together, "When The Flippers Strike The Town," and "Mrs. Muldowney Was Three Weeks in Bed Since She Ate the Flipper Stew" emphasize the communal, seasonal expectation and enjoyment represented by the flipper dinner.

In general, seal flipper pie recipes are similar in providing instructions for the cleaning and preparation of the meat, but not always for the creation of the pastry. Knowledge of how to make an appropriate pastry is therefore assumed, as it is in many cookbooks. The major point of difference between various recipes is the direction for, lack thereof, or even admonition against, parboiling the flipper. Some recipes actively discourage parboiling as it "makes a disagreeable odour and

⁵ "Prog" is used here to mean "food."

permeates the meat," as noted by a Mrs. Tom Best in Fat-Back and Molasses (Jespersion 28). Cream of the West Flour's A Treasury of Newfoundland Dishes (Maple Leaf Mills 1958) provides the following recipe, "passed on from one generation to another." It is somewhat unusual in its inclusion of a number of specifically named vegetables, as indicated by its title.

Baked Flippers with Vegetables

2 flippers
3 slices salt fat pork
2 onions
1 turnip
2 carrots
1 parsnip
5 or 6 potatoes
salt and pepper to taste

Remove all fat from the flippers. Wash and cut in serving pieces. Do not parboil.

Fry out the salt pork; remove "Scrunchions". Brown flippers in this fat. Then add a little water and simmer on the back of the stove until partly tender.

Add chopped onions and cut up vegetables, except potatoes. Season and add about 1 cup of water. Cook about 30 minutes and then add the potatoes. Cook another 15 minutes, adding a little more water, if needed.

Meanwhile make this topping:

2 cups sifted CREAM OF THE WEST Flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup shortening
Water to make a stiff dough

Roll this pastry out to fit your bake pot. When the flippers and vegetables are sufficiently cooked, top with this pastry and bake at 425° F. for 20 minutes, or until nicely browned. (65)

The recipe brings together several basic elements of Newfoundland and Labrador cooking, in addition to the featured flipper: salt fat pork, turnip, carrot and potato.

Fat-Back and Molasses features four recipes, collected from both individual women and older, locally-printed recipe books. As an introduction to the recipes, Mrs. Harvey Lambert of Twillingate explains:

In the Spring when the first sealing ship comes down from the ice of Labrador or the Gulf with its hold packed with seal-skins, it will also carry some barrels of flippers for sale in St. John's. So eager are the customers that the first flippers sell for \$12 to \$18 a dozen. Each cleaned flipper would weigh from one-half to one pound. Nearly all the Men's Clubs in St. John's serve a flipper supper sometime in April and tickets are sold out long ahead of time. The meat is tender and tasty, but you have to be born in Newfoundland to really appreciate it. Few mainlanders acquire a great liking for it, but it isn't April in St. John's without at least one flipper pie. (Jespersion 27)

Lambert's statement attests to the esoteric nature of a dish that is often described as a Newfoundland delicacy, foregrounding the concept of a singular native sensibility. Expressing the sentiment in popular slang, if you're not from Newfoundland, you won't "get it." It's a Newfoundland thing. Indeed, in her 1994 Rabbit Ravioli, cookbook author Kitty Drake suggests a seal, chili, cornmeal and chick pea combination to aid the "uninitiated" in "acquiring a taste for the strong dark flavour of seal meat" (50).⁶ April is still flipper pie month for many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, both native and naturalized, whether they are living in the physical boundaries of the province or "away." The Memorial University of Newfoundland alumnae chapter in Calgary organized a flipper dinner for April, 2003 that received a record response (Alumni Affairs 2003).⁷

⁶ Similarly, Lynne Fitzhugh, a member of an archeological field crew in Labrador in the 1970s, writes in Caribou Cakes: Reflections and Recipes of Labrador Food, "In time I developed an array of dishes that combined Labrador food with the ingredients we had brought from home, with some interesting results, like this seal curry recipe for people who haven't yet learned to like the taste of seal" (Them Days 31). Her account emphasizes the unfamiliarity many people have with seal as a foodstuff, as well as the strong flavour of the meat.

⁷ Seventy-eight people had registered for the dinner as of the April deadline. Because of a snowstorm, the event had to be rescheduled for May. The organizer hoped to register even more guests during the delay.

Yet, seal flipper pie occupies a liminal space in Newfoundland culture. Historian Shannon Ryan has discussed the singular influence of the local seal fishery on regional folklore and culture (1987), and its place alongside the cod as a founding cornerstone of the Newfoundland economy (1994). It occupied a place in popular culture as well, prior to Annie Proulx's creation of R.G. Quoye and his ancestral Newfoundland home. An example is the chorus of Dick Nolan's "Happy Newfoundlanders" (1973):

Well, we're happy Newfoundlanders and proud of our great land
We love moose steak and flipper pie and everything is grand
Our air is pure and our kids get fed so I hope you understand
We're happy Newfoundlanders and we're proud of our great land

As in Mrs. Harvey Lambert's statement in Fat-Back & Molasses, here seal flipper pie is a proud marker of cultural identity. Eddie Coffey includes flipper pie in his ode to Newfoundland cuisine, "Newfoundland High." In the third verse he sings:

I love to do battle with a dish of bakeapple,
Topped off with sugar and cream;
And a codfish stew with potatoes, too,
And a pot full of home-baked beans;
A hunk of salt beef and some turnip greens,
Served up with a flipper pie. (Newfoundland Saturday Night 2000)

It is important to note that the lyrics of such songs, while certainly exemplifying emic communication on a number of levels, also speak to cultural outsiders and are often taken at face value as culturally authentic statements.

Interestingly, I have heard as many stories from Newfoundlanders about avoiding flipper pie as eating it. A Port aux Choix innkeeper in her forties told me about having to prepare it every week for her father. She herself never ate seal, however, except when her parents insisted. Similarly, another innkeeper in Cape

Onion said that although he grew up eating seal meat, he never did—and still doesn't—care for it. Conversely, a professional actor who grew up in St. John's stressed that eating seal flipper pie was an important seasonal activity in her family, a rite of spring. Flippers are still sold in season at the St. John's harbour (Fig. 4.1-2).

Vernacular documentation of the importance of the April seal hunt and the resulting flippers is exemplified in, for example, passages from White Tie and Decorations, an edited collection of letters written by Sir John and Lady Hope Simpson between 1934 and 1936.⁸ In April 1934, in a letter to his son, Edgar, and daughter-in-law, Eleanor, Simpson explained,

With each skin, the ship brings in a 'flipper'—the webbed foot of the seal. It is not a foot, nor is it a fin, but it is between the two. It is a culinary delicacy, exceedingly popular, and flipper suppers are now the order of the day. I had flipper at lunch one day. It is quite good, a little resembling jugged hare, and you eat it with jelly. But it is not an edible about which to rave. (Neary 69)

His wife's evaluation is more positive, although she admits to an initial apprehension. She wrote to son Ian and daughter-in-law-Sheila, on April 19 that, "Last night, there was a flipper supper here. I was afraid to touch flippers; they look and rather taste like ham The seal meat is excellent eating" (Neary 74). Both Hope Simpsons also comment on the waste they perceive in the seal hunt, namely that the main objective, the procurement of white coats, was prosecuted in such a manner that left the bulk of the meat on the ice where the animals were dispatched. Lady Hope Simpson, in the same letter mentioned above, expressed consternation in writing, "all the good seal meat is left on the ice! The ships bring only the pelts with the fat &

⁸ The Simpsons came to Newfoundland from England during the Commission of Government, or direct governance of the former colony by a governor and six commissioners from 1934 to 1949. Half of the six were from the United Kingdom, half from Newfoundland. All, including the governor, were appointed by the British Parliament. Sir John Simpson was named Commissioner for Natural Resources (Neary 5-8).

one flipper" (74). Her husband hoped to arrange for ships to transport greater quantities of meat (69, 74). The couple's wonderment at the lack of interest in using the meat, beyond the annual flipper supper, betrays a lack of knowledge of the fishery on the part of the general public that persists to the present day. In turn, such unawareness contributes to popular stereotypes of greedy, blood-crazed hunters with clubs setting upon defenceless creatures.

It could be argued that throughout the history of the seal fishery, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have simply been responding to the vagaries of various markets. The commercial demand for seal oil and leather in Great Britain peaked in the 1800s (the market for oil far greater than that for the skins), followed by the development of a market for pelts, particularly whitecoats, which lasted until the early 1980s (Ryan 1987). With the closure of European whitecoat markets in the eighties, and the growing opposition to the seal hunt that began in the late 1950s and reached an emotional peak in the late 1970s (Lamson 1979), new regulations restrict seal hunting to juvenile and adult harp and hood seals.

Whatever the particular market target, the safe return of the hunters has always been an occasion of great relief and happiness for the men as well as their family and friends. The flipper was an important part of homecoming ritual. Moreover, it was another way for the sealers, some of whom would sell flippers at the waterfront upon their arrival at port, to add to their net income for the trip. Overall, it was a celebratory time. Ryan explains, "This annual sale of flippers took on the air of a festival: the sealers selling their goods and drinking rum to make up for a long abstinence. The docks would be lined with buyers, and with men, women, children and dogs just looking on" (Ryan and Small 7).

4.2 It Was in The Shipping News, So It Must Be True

Seal flipper pie, along with cod tongues, has become iconic through repeated inclusions in travel accounts of Newfoundland and Labrador.⁹ With the release of the feature film, The Shipping News, and the re-starting of the seal hunt debate (particularly in relation to the closure of the cod fishery), seal flipper pie has also earned an especially widespread notoriety in related media coverage. An extensive Internet search pairing the phrase “seal flipper pie” with “Newfoundland,” produced numerous reviews of The Shipping News, but also revealed recipes (posted by Newfoundlanders living in the province and away), vernacular travelogues, and speeches by the Canadian ambassador to the United States for a just over 1,100 references.¹⁰

Together with the regionally non-existent squidburger, seal flipper pie figures in almost every review of The Shipping News collected, including commercial (i.e., appearing in newspapers or other periodicals) and vernacular notices. For example, reviewer Gina Carbone, writing for the Portsmouth Herald (New Hampshire), exclaims, “New England winter got you down? Let ‘The Shipping News’ remind you it could be worse. Adultery, incest, murder, drowning, dark nights, freezing rains and seal flipper pie—seal flipper pie, for heaven’s sake—all vie to maximize viewer depression in this Newfoundland film.” The review ends with the tag line, “Gina Carbone wonders what Greenpeace thinks of the seal flipper pie industry” (2002).

⁹ Similar regional food icons include potatoes in Prince Edward Island, lobsters throughout the Canadian maritime provinces (see J. M. Watson, 1995, with regard to Prince Edward Island), lobsters in Maine (Lewis 1997) and crawfish in Louisiana (Gutierrez 1992). However, it is important to note that seal flipper pie and cod tongues have yet to grace mugs, T-shirts, salt and pepper shakers and postcards in the same manner. Cod tongues are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

¹⁰ Searches were also conducted using the phrases “flipper pie,” “flipper dinner” and “flipper supper.”

Newfoundlanders, of course, were among the first to comment on the film, and not often positively. The coupling of seal flipper pie with squidburgers adds to a fantastical image of Newfoundland which provoked the ire of many. Kathleen Winter, a regular columnist for The Telegram, devoted her January 12 plot of newsprint to her reaction. Entitled "Outhouses and Squidburgers," she wrote:

Our family trooped in to see The Shipping News on the heels of much pundit speculation about how everything from tourism to national self-esteem would be topped to giddy heights by this world unleashing of "Newfoundland, the Movie."

As if somehow when word gets out that we eat hamburger buns with squid tentacles dangling out of them the bottom will fly back into the airline travel market as squidburger hordes make their way here.

As if adventure tourists can't wait to come to a land of incestuous, 12-year-old fathers and take-outs where the special of the week is pie made out of seal flipper cartilage.

. . . . Nobody is going to watch this film and get interested in Newfoundland. They will watch it and think we are a backward, poverty-stricken and superstitious little corner of Ireland, which is what they thought before anyway, right? (2002)

Winter continues to draw distinctions between the textures of art and reality, and the general public's ability to distinguish between the two, as well as recognizing the futility of expecting a Hollywood dramatic film to portray accurately anyone's quotidian existence. She concludes, however, with a telling statement:

I mull this over and over, one eye scanning the yard through the window—my bleak Newfoundland-in-January yard—for the messenger bound to come running with the news that people really do eat squidburgers in Newfoundland, and if I was a real Newfoundlander I'd know that.

Winter's invocation of authenticity in fantasy points to the historical problem of fictionalized peoples, a perpetual issue for marginalized groups such as the Roma (Hancock 1997). When mass-mediated images of a cultural group dominate popular

discourse, the line between realities is constantly blurred, and may contribute to feelings of alienation, as expressed by Winter (see also Butt 2002).

The summer following the release of *The Shipping News*, two postings to glyphs.com,¹¹ provided an example of the process. A poster identified as Rebecca posed a number of questions based on her viewing of the film.

I found myself wondering how true to the culture and climate of Newfoundland the movie was: Is it really never summer there? Do they sincerely have to tie their houses down with cables? Do the people actually have drunken brawls to see a friend off on an adventure, and end up destroying all the friend owns in the process? Does anyone really eat seal flipper pie—and like it? And do the fishermen ever come back alive after going out in a sea that unpredictable in a tiny open dingy [sic] with only an outboard motor?

Rebecca's electronic musings reveal a lack of knowledge about Newfoundland coupled with a sense of doubt about its portrayal in the film. The setting and events are fantastic enough, in her view, that they might not represent reality. However, her wonderment does indeed encompass two elements of Newfoundland culture—some people really do like seal flipper pie, and fishermen do come back alive after going out to sea in small boats. The sole poster to respond to her queries addressed only the flipper pie question, writing,

Rebecca, from what I have heard, the filmmakers did a good job of depicting life in Newfoundland. I know that GBS [Great Big Sea] and their fans were high on promoting this one. I imagine that seal flipper pie is a real dish as it sounds similar to other popular local snacks like cod tongues. (RD 2003)

In RD's response, the internationally successful Newfoundland band Great Big Sea provides a stamp of authenticity for the film's portrayal of Newfoundland, coupled

¹¹ Glyphs is a web site providing forums for discussions of the creative arts. The postings discussed were part of the "Circle Theatre" forum, "The classic setting—with sticky floors and smelling of popcorn—for the discussion of the cinema." <http://www.glyphs.com/forums/>.

with RD's knowledge of traditional foods such as cod tongues. However, one suspects that what RD had "heard" may not have included any comments on the film by native Newfoundlanders, as discussed above.

As illustrated by Rebecca's series of questions about the "real" Newfoundland, the film, perhaps because of the small number of major releases set in the province, inspired much speculation about Newfoundland, as well as commentaries on the province's culture. As noted above, the majority of reviews of the film mentioned the appearance of seal flipper pie. The least of these was in references to local foodways dramatized in the film (and often coupled with a nod to director Lasse Hallström's previous film, *Chocolat*). For Metroactive Movies (Silicon Valley, CA), Richard von Busack includes the dish in a list of "macabre details" from Proulx's novel along with "severed heads" (2002). Similarly, "kids-in-mind," a movie review web site for parents, lists both a fish cleaning scene, the *verbal description* of seal flipper pie and Quoye spitting out a bite of it under the heading of "violence/gore." Felicia Feaster, reviewing the film for the Atlanta alternative weekly *Creative Loafing*, describes Newfoundland cuisine as "Seussian," providing as examples squid burgers, seal flipper pie and partridgeberry duff (2001). While Busack's characterization casts flipper pie as gruesome, Feaster's reference to the bizarre, whimsical world of Dr. Seuss removes Newfoundland cuisine to the realm of fiction and fantasy.

Interviews with the film's stars also contributed to etic perceptions of the province as the information passed into vernacular tradition. Posting to AllExperts.com, Michelle responded to a query as to whether or not Kevin Spacey *really* ate seal flipper pie.¹²

¹² Although Michelle does not specify which particular interview with Spacey she saw, the most widely quoted has been his appearance on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno on June 20, 2001.

Yes Kevin DID eat the seal flipper pie according to him. I happen to know that because I heard him say so on a tv interview. . . . He also said, about Shipping News, how he had to eat all that kind of food in the town they filmed in because there was really nothing else to eat. He tried all kinds of weird fish he said.

It is important to note here that the Newfoundland filming locations were Corner Brook, New Bonaventure, Trinity and St. John's (filming was also done in Nova Scotia), where a wide selection of foods, in addition to fish, are readily available. Moreover, Spacey spent much of his time in Newfoundland in the Trinity area, home to at least three restaurants lacking "weird fish" as menu items.¹³ Regardless of what Spacey actually said in the interview, the assessment of Newfoundland cuisine as limited and weird reifies the film's presentation.

Vernacular reviews of the film took on the seal flipper as well. A reviewer for Epinions.com, a web site to which anyone may post a review or comment on products ranging from films to cars to electronics,¹⁴ notes the "seal-knuckle pies [and] squid sandwiches." Although, the writer recommends "this underrated chick flick," she or he cautions, "There are also continuous references to the use of seafood and fish parts. What could turn your stomach more quickly than Seal Flipper Pie or a nice Squid Burger [sic]?" (deaser26 2002). A counter review begins, "I'm from Newfoundland, so my epinion [sic] is a little biased" A Newfoundlander now living in Kentucky, "heidi9" also recommends the film. In addition, however, she details the criticisms of friends, such as those regarding the representation of local foods:

¹³ While filming in the Trinity area, both Spacey and Judi Dench stayed at The Fisher's Loft in Port Rexton, a 4 1/2 star inn which won Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador's Orchid Award (recognizing "those that set new standards for aesthetics at an international level") for 2003.

¹⁴ I am grateful to Bruce Mason for bringing this web site to my attention.

Here are a couple of things my Newfie friends did not like. In the local take-out, the meal of choice was the "squid burger." No, I have never heard of such a creation, but I believe the squid burger represented other 'odd' things Newfoundlanders eat, like cod tongues, moose and ptarmigan (wild game bird).

Interestingly, heidi9 does not mention seal flipper pie, although she does include other "odd" local foods. The omission raises another interesting aspect of The Shipping News' cultural fallout, which may be summed up as, "Yes, it exists, but I/we don't ever eat it."

Placing the pie in the category of old-fashioned foods that are no longer widely consumed distances the writer from negative opinion based on The Shipping News. For example, Quinn Macdonald, a blogger from Nova Scotia,¹⁵ wrote on August 11, 2003

Heh..Just watching The Shipping News . . . I saw this almost two years ago..loved it in the theatres..no, it's not a sample of life in the maritimes or anything..and there is no seal flipper pie in NewFoundLand [sic] either. . . well. . none that they'll admit too, anyway. . .

A reader responded, "Seal flipper pie's pretty popular there! My dad actually had some. . . but never will again" (ReRoommate 2003). Such postings, while acknowledging the existence of seal flipper pie in "maritime" tradition, also dismiss it as something to be ashamed of and avoided. Similarly, a Newfoundland blogger posting a review of the film to her site wrote, "For me, my first thought was 'Great, now people will think we all rape our sisters, eat seal flippers, have no electricity and beat the crap out of people's dreams when we're drunk'" (Heavenly Ginger 2002). Like Kathleen Winter's column (discussed above), this blogger's commentary

¹⁵ A blog is an Internet journal, like an on-line diary available to the general public. Individuals who maintain blogs are known as bloggers. Some blogs are constructed such that readers can post responses to each blog entry.

attempts to reconcile the conflict between artistic interpretation and realistic portrayals in fictional films. Her conclusion, that the importance of the film lies in its presentation of universal themes, rather than in a slice of Newfoundland life, is somewhat undercut by her final statement, "And for those wondering, I've never eaten Seal-Flipper pie!" The pronouncement simultaneously acknowledges and refutes the well-worn maxim that art imitates life.

Spank! is an ezine for young adults offering a number of topic-oriented forums. The Shipping News appeared in the "Question Your Peers!" forum in the summer of 2003, following a post asking for "fun places" to see in the Maritimes on a family vacation. Summarizing the lengthy discussion which was posted in real time, "RotaryKid" from Halifax stated how relieved s/he was that The Shipping News wasn't set in Nova Scotia, as it "made NewFoundland [sic] sound SO bad" Scooby, from St. John's, agreed, complaining about the references to incest. S/he "did however laugh at the seal flipper pie. . . my dad likes seal flippers. . . i personally don't" (see <http://www.spankmag.com/forums/disp_post.cfm/cc.52658/clt.30/page.html>). The perception of flipper pie as a dish that older, rather than younger, people eat and even enjoy has also been demonstrated in class discussions in my undergraduate folklore classes. Similarly, a recent poster to eGullet.com stated, "Flipper pie is definitely an old-timer's thing" (chromedome 2004a).¹⁶

¹⁶ An Internet message board devoted to fans of the musician Prince also recently featured a thread involving discussion of seal flipper pie that began with an aside about unusual meats that "taste like chicken." For example, Connie wrote, "I never heard of [seal flipper pie] either, till a friend mentioned he's going up north in Canada, Newfoundland (?) where the locals eat seal flipper pie. I thought it was just a cute name for a pie, but it's literally seal flippers baked in a pie shell." Fiestyilminx replied, "eeewwwww!!!! barbarians!!!!." Connie's explanation and Fiestyilminx's response underscore the popular (mis)understandings of and attitudes toward the dish.

Not only did the filmed version of Proulx's creation spawn endless discussions about the existence of seal flipper pie and squid burgers, it gave birth to a new reference point for discussions of Newfoundland culture. In reviewing Andy Jones' one man show "To The Wall" in early 2002, Martin Morrow wrote,

International audiences for the film of *The Shipping News* are likely to come away with the notion that Newfoundlanders are just a wee bit off-kilter.

They have no idea.

When it comes to Newfie eccentrics, forget Judi Dench or Pete Postlethwaite [actors portraying Newfoundlanders in *The Shipping News*]. Andy Jones is the genuine article. More outrageous than Julianne Moore's accent.¹⁷ Stranger than seal-flipper pie.

To be fair, Jones' show turns on what he calls "'the N factor'—that peculiar way Newfoundlanders have of looking at things."¹⁸ What I want to stress here, however, is the assumption that all Newfoundlanders are "off-kilter," and a few are even odder than "usual." Andy Jones, for example, is not an average, eccentric Newfoundland native, but is even "[s]tranger than seal flipper pie."

Newly developing media standards of strangeness did not prevent the provincial government from attempting to work the internationally-released film to local benefit. The Telegram reported in January that the province planned to spend up to \$100,000 on related marketing, and had arranged to work with Maxxim Vacations, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Alliance Atlantis, a national film production company (not associated directly with *The Shipping News*). Maxxim planned a tour package around the film that included visits to the outdoor movie sets, actor Gordon Pinsent's birthplace in Grand Falls, and a copy of Proulx's novel.

¹⁷ Moore's accent was widely criticized, by those able to distinguish a difference, as employing an Irish accent for her role in the film rather than a Newfoundland one.

¹⁸ I attended a performance of Jones's show in September of 2002 at the LSPU Hall in St. John's.

Maxxim employees reported exceptionally high levels of interest in the tour package (D. Sullivan 2002). Provincial tourism literature for the following summer encouraged visits to filming locations for The Shipping News, as well as two other internationally distributed visual productions made in Newfoundland—Random Passage and Rare Birds (2002 Travel Guide 117).

4.3 The Real News about Mainlanders and Seal Flipper Pie

Comments from informants about seal flipper pie reveal both an aversion to the mere idea of the dish, as well as a general unfamiliarity with its actual form, not to mention the historical, socio-cultural context in which it was created and valued. Nevertheless, while reviews and articles about The Shipping News rarely made a connection to the province's annual seal hunt, some recent visitors are making the connection more readily. Even in such cases, however, their comments highlight general misunderstandings about both the seal hunt and the traditional dish. An anatomy professor from California wrote, "I thought about [seal flipper pie] but didn't try it because of the image of some poor seal without a flipper being sacrificed for my dinner choice," revealing an assumption that the animal would be killed just for its flippers.¹⁹ George Sanders, an IT professional in his mid-fifties from Pennsylvania told me that he and his wife "specifically did not try seal flipper pie because of our own feelings about hunting seals. Besides our niece (age 15) would be very upset

¹⁹ Likewise, a poster to the aforementioned Spank "Dating and Relationships" forum wrote, "[S]eal flipper pie? I am suddenly stricken with mental images of baby seals having their flippers being hacked off with a large sharp object. . . Thank you for the nightmares I will surely soon have. . ." ("Princess Kristin" 2003). The discussion thread concerned "Home Run Pie," a commercial fruit pie manufactured and distributed in the United States by Horizon Snack Foods, which prompted others to describe regional or otherwise obscure pies they had heard of or actually eaten. Princess Kristin was responding to the mention of seal flipper pie by "RotaryKid."

if she even knew there was such a food as seal flipper pie." Sanders and his wife have visited the province three summers in a row, but in 2003 George noted that he could not remember any coverage of the Newfoundland hunt or the surrounding controversy in the local (Philadelphia area) media.

A retired couple from the United States wrote

We also noticed in our travels that your attitude toward animals is quite different from ours. We would never ever think about eating moose, or caribou or seal flippers (or is that a joke?). These are beautiful animals that we have come to look at and enjoy, but we understand that to Newfoundlanders these animals are a food source and a resource. In the States we do not eat venison or elk or duck or pheasant or turtle soup or other animals that are considered game animals. (2003)

A dramatic statement of socioeconomic difference, this comment distances the couple from those who by circumstance must consider wild animals, no matter how "beautiful," as sources of food and/or income. They further demonstrate their privileged position by listing similar foodstuffs they do not eat, even back home in the States. Moreover, the etically bizarre quality of seal flipper pie is emphasized in their question ". . . is that a joke?"

Margaret Procter, a professor at the University of Toronto, has also been to Newfoundland a few times in the past couple of years, as her daughter recently moved here. During our first email exchange, she told me that she had had a bite of seal meat, and that "It tasted fishy and felt somewhat rubbery ... that's all I remember, though my daughter (determined to become a good Newfoundland-Labradorian[sic]) kept exclaiming at its tastiness." After further discussion, she recalled:

I think I first heard of seal flipper pie just as one of the funny-sounding things that people ate around the world, like fried grasshoppers and frogs' legs. . . . I think I didn't pay much attention to the seal controversy; it seemed pretty irrelevant to my life in downtown Toronto, and I wasn't in the market for any kind of fur coat anyway. (2003)

The comments by these three visitors to the province disclose objections to eating seal meat for a variety of reasons: concern for the welfare of the animals themselves, objections to hunting them on principle coupled with concern for the feelings of close relatives and simply, a dislike for the taste.

4.4 Conclusion

Generally, seal flipper pie is exoterically viewed as bizarre, unpalatable and sometimes simply "barbaric," a judgment evidenced by popular and vernacular commentary about or inspired by The Shipping News, as well as electronic conversation and rumour. Globe & Mail columnist Margaret Wentz, in a 2002 year-end wrap-up of her work and various reactions to it, apologizes for her pronouncements regarding the seal hunt, "[e]xcept the part about the seal meat. You'll never convince me it's edible." Unable to maintain an argument that Newfoundlanders interpreted as a direct cultural attack, Wentz resorted to schoolyard tactics, and simply labeled seal meat "yucky." Declaring another cultural group's cuisine to be inedible is a longstanding, and effective, means of exerting both social and economic control (see, e.g., Montañó 1992, 1997; Sammells 1998).

Indeed, as discussed above, Newfoundlanders of previous generations viewed flipper pie as something only they could appreciate; a sentiment with which many younger Newfoundlanders would appear to agree, in that it is a relic of past tradition. As the thirty-something character Wavey Prowse admits to Quoy in The Shipping News, "Never eat it myself" (Jacobs 117). In an example of life imitating art, author Will Ferguson sampled the dish during a 2003 visit to St. John's. He writes,

Lorraine McGrath and Leslie Thomas of the Avalon Convention and Visitors Bureau had decided to treat me to flipper pie at Chucky's Restaurant, though I noticed, with mild consternation, that when we got

there *they* stuck with the fish and chips. 'Go ahead,' they urged. 'Seal flipper pie. It's a Newfoundland tradition.'

Seal flipper pie is the sort of food that is eaten almost exclusively on a dare, kind of like prairie oysters or 7-Eleven hot dogs. The meat is oily, dark and fishy. It is not the sort of thing you want to face when you have a hangover. (2003)

Likewise, a survey respondent from Australia, Susanne Greville, wrote that she had asked her waiter at Chucky's restaurant in St. John's if seal flipper pie *really* contained seal. She was assured that it did and encouraged to try it. After Susanne had eaten some, the waiter revealed that she herself had never eaten it. Whether or not one actually consumes it, knowledge of the dish, and its significance in the province's history, is still a marker of identity. It may be viewed by younger generations as unpalatable, but not inedible (Long, Culinary 33). Foodways, stories, songs and other expressive forms maintain regional cultural traditions recognizing a boy's first seal hunt as a rite of passage (Ryan and Small 3, 7; see also Coles 1990), honoring men who risked their lives, and sympathizing with those who lost brothers, husbands and fathers.

Divorced from socio-cultural context and denied simultaneously by both insiders and outsiders as delectable food and significant historical artifact, seal flipper pie has become an icon of the bizarre—like the peanut butter soup of Everett family folklore. Thus St. John's Telegram columnist Tony Collins called for a championing of the pie in 2003, declaring,

. . . it's about time that we . . . took umbrage at this scurrilous denigration of what should, after all, be widely promoted as our national dish.

The Russians have their caviar, the English their roast beef, the Saudis their sheep's eyeballs, the Scots their haggis and the Americans their hot dogs. But what do we have? What do we see featured in our provincial travel guides? Lobsters, fer Gawd sake! . . .

Make no mistake about it. Until we proudly proclaim our heritage and come out of the gastronomic closet, the rest of the world will continue to equate seal flipper pie with murder, incest and adultery.

As with many cultural products, the transition from domestic settings to international tourist markets has stripped the flipper of many of its social significations, leaving it vulnerable—like a seal pup on the ice—to hunters in search of cultural vulnerabilities.

Mario Montañó, in his study of Mexican folk foods in south Texas, observes, “. . . when the cultural hegemony cannot appropriate, it ignores or excludes those cultural forms and activities that exist within social groups living in the fringes of the hegemony” (“History” 233). Examining the ways in which the dominant Euro-North American culture incorporated and transformed certain Mexican folk foods into Tex-Mex favourites (e.g., *fajitas* and *menudo*) and rejected others (*morcilla*, *machitos* and *cabezitas*), Montañó emphasizes that the latter’s “oppositional qualities are not associated with a pre-capitalist past, with a subordinate culture, or with the fact that they have been ignored. The counter-hegemonic quality of these foods reside in the production process” (“History” 234). Seal flipper pie, and seal meat products in general, are oppositional in the process by which the meat is procured. As a longshoreman said to journalist Dorothy Howarth on the eve of Newfoundland’s confederation with Canada in 1949, “Tastes just like beef, with a bit of a fishy tinge. . . Real Newfoundland dish. Can’t make it Canadian whatever you do” (3). Those opposed to the seal hunt repeatedly cite the manner in which it is executed as inhumane, which bolsters their rejection of the resultant products and renders seal meat not only unpalatable, but inedible. As print and broadcast journalist (and native Newfoundlander) Rex Murphy observes,

There was never any appreciation, and more loathsomely, never any attempt to achieve an appreciation, either of the history of the great hunt, the desperation of the people who for generations prosecuted it, the heart-rending exigencies of the out-harbour crews who were driven to it and the great train of loss, wreckage and death that inscribed its melancholy story. (2004)

Hence marketing campaigns promoting seal products, especially comestibles, fall largely on deaf ears regardless of the meat and oil's potential health benefits (see, e.g., Shahidi and Liu 1999). The United States, among other countries, still maintains a ban on seal products ("Canada resumes" 2004).

Folklorist John Ashton observes that "[h]ard work and wilderness skills were the foundations upon which a value system emerged in support of Newfoundland's tradition of self-sufficiency" (7; see also Ashton 2001). Environmental competence, especially regarding food procurement, continues to be an integral aspect of male identity and conviviality in the province, as well as of local character in general. Ashton notes further that the persistence of such values "helps to explain why . . . many rural Newfoundlanders persist in the hazardous and economically marginal harvesting of seals in the face of widespread public condemnation" ("Hunters" 7). Lamson posits that "the two sides," pro-hunt Newfoundlanders and hunt protesters, "will never be in agreement while social and economic discrepancies remain between them" (6). Detailing the origins of the environmental movement, Lamson identifies fundamental differences in the socioeconomic base of each group: "the activities are drawn from an educated elite, with access to wealth and the coercive means to affect protest, and ultimately, change" (6). The protesters' agency was not lost on Newfoundlanders, and became a theme in local counter-protest, such as in the following letter to the editor printed in the Evening Telegram in 1978: "People who do not know the reality of a Newfoundland rural way of life, such as movie stars, city slickers, Greenpeacers should stay out of our affairs. A person whose hands have never been dirty or salted by the sea should keep their dainty hands out of it" (qtd. in Lamson 22). The long-entrenched positions of the two sides led Express associate editor Craig Welsh to make a similar statement in 2002: "It's gauling [sic] to have a couple of mainlanders pop into the province and announce that what we think

of the seal hunt is irrelevant. And to say it's only people in central Canada, the ones with political power, who matter is rubbing a lot of salt in the wound" (2002).

While seal meat is made objectionable by the manner in which it is obtained, and the images of rural ignorance and violence with which it is consistently associated (see also Overton 62-80), other staples of traditional Newfoundland and Labrador foodways are rejected because of the process by which they are prepared for immediate consumption. Fried foods, the subject of the next chapter, were on the minds of many with whom I spoke and corresponded. An examination of their comments, and the sociocultural context of their experience, provides insight into the development of certain regional foodways, as well as some of the most weighty health concerns of the present day.



Fig. 4.1 Seal flippers for sale on Harbour Drive in downtown St. John's.



Fig. 4.2 Flippers and other items are weighed and sold from the back of the Taylor's truck.

Chapter Five

The Good, the Fat and the Fried

On the morning of August 12, 2003, I dropped off twenty-six questionnaires at the tourism information railcar on Harbour Drive. As I placed them on a display shelf alongside brochures for whale and bird watching tours and local bed and breakfasts, I caught the eye of Neal, an employee, as he spoke to a group of four tourists. "Maybe you'd like to take this survey," he said as he pointed in my direction. The two men and two women, whom I soon learned were visiting from Ontario, joked that there wouldn't be enough room to write down everything they'd eaten. Then one of the men asked if the study was about "how people get fat." I said no, and proceeded with my handy, one-sentence explanation of my research: "I'm looking at the links between food and culture, how people's impressions of a particular culture are affected by the food they eat while visiting." The taller of the two men nodded thoughtfully, and then said, "Well, they like everything fried in Newfoundland, right?"

Patrick O'Flaherty's Come Near at Your Peril: A Visitor's Guide to the Island of Newfoundland, mentioned to me by a number of tourists, may play some part in such expectations. In the chapter entitled "Eating," he explains

Newfoundland restaurants stay afloat by appealing to the local trade. With few exceptions, they don't cater to tourists. So you will eat what Newfoundlanders eat.¹ I don't know why this is, but Newfoundlanders in restaurants . . . mostly eat fried food, sometimes in batter so thick that you must dig a quarter- to half-inch to see what's inside. Fried usually means deep-fried in batter; pan-fried is what the menu might say if simple frying is meant. It is well to be alert to such distinctions. If,

¹ Kevin Gushue of the St. John's Economic Development, Tourism and Culture department, confirmed that this is correct, Newfoundland and Labrador's main tourist season being too short for eating establishments to depend solely on income made during that time.

say, you want a grilled lamb chop or a pasta dish, you may have to look long and hard for it. . . . (32)

Indeed, the aspect of Newfoundland and Labrador food most consistently commented upon by tourists was the prevalence of fried foods. In my initial conversations with people traveling on the Great Northern Peninsula, it was frequently a topic of great concern, particularly for those on restricted diets because of cardiac or circulatory conditions, and for vegetarians. There is a general perception among tourists that the diet of non-aboriginal Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is unhealthy. This may be due to a number of factors, including summaries of local foodways in popular travel guides and media reportage on regional and national health surveys (discussed later in this chapter), as well as fiction and non-fiction written by local authors. As Sussman and Unel have noted, even while tourism professional may strive to counter popular stereotypes and negative impressions of a certain people or region, visitors to any area are more likely to fit their experience into culturally-conditioned categories than to recognize that which would defy their expectations (210).

In May 2003, Campbell Morrison reported in the St. John's Telegram that children in Atlantic Canada have the highest rates of obesity in the country. Two years earlier, a Statistics Canada report revealed that about thirty per cent of Canadians were overweight, with Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick competing for the dubious distinction of "fattest province" (Canada 2001). While the report inspired a flurry of reaction from various governmental bodies, it is perhaps most significant to note the impression apparently left in the national psyche. A professor who moved from Quebec to Newfoundland in 2002 told me that Montreal newspapers had run a number of stories commenting on the obesity of

Newfoundlanders (Devlin Trew 2002).² Writing for *Saltscapes*, which promotes itself as “Canada’s east coast magazine,” Harry Bruce opined that Atlantic Canadians “get too much fried food, and too little exercise. . . . [Atlantic Canada has] far more of these slobbs than is good for their medicare systems” (96).

The perception of the province as a last bastion of fried food has even inspired local restaurateurs. Jacqui Hunter, who opened Java Jack’s in Rocky Harbour, explained on the regional CBC radio program “The Morning Show” that she knew that visitors wanted “an alternative to the deep-fried” (2002). Her restaurant specializes in nouvelle cuisine treatments of local foods, as well as espresso-based hot and cold beverages.³ It is popular with tourists, judging from the crowds my partner and I encountered there on each of our three visits in July 2002, and two visits in July 2004.

A couple from Ontario noted their impression of Newfoundland food on a web site detailing their 2002 visit, in a section titled “And in Summary”:

There’s something about fried food—it’s everywhere. Everything is available fried, and it all comes with french fries. There were times when we felt like we’d kill for a salad, but it seems that not a lot of salad components grow in Newfoundland. (Coady 2002)

² My searches of Montreal newspaper archives did not reveal any articles singling out Newfoundland and Labrador, but rather articles generally concerned with the obesity epidemic which were extremely similar to those that ran in local and national newspapers. However, with regard to the construction and maintenance of stereotypes, the account of such articles is of as much or more consequence to the folklorist as the actual stories themselves. Moreover, the professor’s knowledge of the articles came not from reading them, but from *hearing about them from others*. Nevertheless, this did not prevent discussion of these articles and subsequent social construction of Newfoundlanders as group. On the interplay of rumour and popular media in intergroup folklore, see, e.g., Paredes 1958; Rosnow and Fine 1976; P. Turner 1993.

³ Conversely, Gina Hodge, co-owner of The Norseman restaurant in L’Anse aux Meadows has experienced “some trouble getting the locals in because they can’t get deep fried food” there (Robertson 2004).

Further in the same section, they wrote about their newfound attachment to Tim Hortons: "It became a talisman of familiarity in a foreign land, a hedge against a sea of fried food."⁴ Coady's comments imply an absence of vegetables, excluding the fried potato. While salad components do indeed grow on the island (e.g., lettuce, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes), this may not be apparent to a visitor simply from perusing restaurant menus. However, while a lack of knowledge about local agriculture may not be uncommon among tourists in any locale, Coady's comment highlights an important disjuncture in the general public's understanding of modern food distribution systems, as well as the Canadian tendency to exoticize Newfoundland and Labrador. Because the province is repeatedly portrayed in the popular news and entertainment media as markedly different from the rest of the country (see chapters one, two and four), a tourist might assume that commercial systems with which they are familiar do not exist here. Indeed, while allowing for the conventional use of poetic license in travel writing (Duncan and Gregory 1999; Gilbert and Johnston 2002; Holland and Huggan 1998), it is interesting to note that Coady refers to the province as "a foreign land."

Continuing the salad theme, an anatomy professor from California responded to my initial query about his Newfoundland travel photographs on the Internet, explaining, "The food people eat in Newfoundland blew me away as far as quantity and type. Being a salad eating Californian it was an interesting experience indeed" (Sourisseau 2003a). When I asked him to elaborate, he wrote:

My biggest surprise about Newfoundland food was the large portion size, the use of gravy on lots of entrees, the lack of choices of salad and dressing, the frequent frying of fish and other entrees, and the

⁴ This comment is also interesting given the foods that Tim Hortons serves. While they do offer non-fried foods such as sandwiches and soups, the majority of their business comes from the sale of coffee and baked goods (Penfold 2002).

very rich desserts covered with creme or ice creme. I am sorry but I found "Newfoundland food" to be a bit too rich for my taste. As a professor of anatomy I was interested to know the incidence of cardiovascular disease in the general population. After two days of eating typical provincial food I found myself eating a typical lunch and then having only a small salad for dinner. In this manner I didn't gain an extra pound in weight, unlike some of my co-travelers. (Sourisseau 2003b)

The emphasis on "salads," in contrast to what he perceives as the typical Newfoundland diet was characteristic of the informal discussions I had with visitors to the province. The prevalence of fried foods was often contrasted with a perceived lack of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Sourisseau's comments reveal an implicit link between what is served in restaurants and what is typically consumed in domestic settings. Based on his brief time in the province, he assumes that both the foodstuffs and portion sizes he encountered in commercial establishments are identical to what is served in local homes. In addition, he links the rich foods and large portions to disease rates in the population at large. Finally, his statement as a whole re-asserts his own status as a healthy person, who has both knowledge of proper nutrition and the discipline to put it into practice, in contrast to Newfoundlanders and even his own traveling companions.

5.1 Fit or Fat?

As Counihan notes, "Eating sparingly is a measure of proper human behavior in the United States and many other cultures" (121). Moreover, in North America, food consumption, or lack thereof, is increasingly tied to identity (Barthes 1975; Bourdieu 1984; Brumberg 1988). A couple touring the province by RV wrote:

We quickly became aware of the limitations in food choices because so many fruits and vegetables had to come to you by boat. . . . [We were] surprised at the limited choices of salad and other healthier fruit and vegetable based dishes in restaurants. Appalled by the huge section of frozen fried nugget-type dishes in the market. I guess that is real convenient for families, but that stuff'll kill you.⁵ Ditto the huge portions of French fried potatoes that everyone seemed to be eating, often covered with gravy or cheese. (Anonymous 2003)

Shopping and cooking for themselves the majority of the time, this couple became familiar with both grocery store and restaurant offerings. Like Sourisseau, assumptions are made about the local diet based on foods available for purchase commercially. The statement implies that they would prefer to have eaten more fruits and vegetables while in the province, while at the same time avoiding fried foods. Further judgment of local eating habits encompasses both the foodstuffs (french fries, gravy and cheese) and the portion sizes. Again, as does Sourisseau, the couple asserts their own healthful habits, including their ability to discipline bodily appetites, as integral to their identity. The ideal body type is slender and fit, a sign of "discipline, success and conformity" to sociocultural ideals, whereas "fat people are stereotyped as undisciplined, self-indulgent, unhealthy, lazy, untrustworthy, unwilling and non-conforming" (Bell and Valentine 35-6; see also Dejong 1980; Dejong and Kleck 1986; Fries and Croyle 1993).

Bound up in thinking about, and expressions of, identity are notions of class. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu asserts that "the body is the most indisputable

⁵ It is important to note here, as previously, that respondents frequently described with surprise circumstances which are common to their own places of residence, such as the prevalence of fast food restaurants (discussed further later in this chapter) or the large portion sizes served at restaurants across North America. In this statement, for example, the "huge" selection of frozen fried entrees is singled out. Placing a wide selection of ready-to-eat items at the entrance to a grocery store is an industry-wide practice in both North America and Europe. Moreover, such foods are the "third most popular items" at supermarkets across Canada (Hennessy 142).

materialization of class taste" (*Distinction* 190). Bourdieu's central argument has been paraphrased thus:

Classes reproduce themselves by their members' internalization and display of certain tastes, which then mark only some for distinction. At the foundation of these tastes is the body. Taste is *embodied* being inscribed onto the body and made apparent in body size, volume, demeanour, ways of eating and drinking, walking, sitting, speaking, making gestures, etc. (Featherstone 123)

Bourdieu's assertions are based on a 1960s survey of over 1,000 French citizens. Similar research conducted in the United Kingdom in the eighties and nineties revealed analogous patterns in food preparation and consumption (Calnan 1990; Mennell, Murcott and van Otterloo 1992). As cultural studies scholar David Bell and geographer Gill Valentine pithily state, "the educated classes are more likely to bake or grill their food, whereas lower classes fry it" (43). Moreover, further distinctions around class lines may be based on such cooking methods.

Nova Scotian Lynn Palmer's priorities when considering an eatery, for instance, include cleanliness and whether or not "they serve non-greasy things" (2003). Similarly, Claire Clark, visiting from Alberta looked for "cleanly cooked (i.e. not fried) seafood" (2004). The association of cleanliness with certain food preparation methods thus renders a moral judgment upon both the producer and consumer of such foods. In this moral equation, greasy foods are not only unhealthy, but unclean or dirty. Overton has traced the emic and etic social construction of dirt and litter in the province, including "Newfie" jokes portraying Newfoundlanders as, among other things, dirty and poor (see also Thomas 1976). He writes, "For many, dirt clearly represents moral, political and physical disorder. . . . Dirt is a metaphor for all that disrupts the moral universe" (98). Thus, a lack of cleanliness is equated with immorality, as well as with violence (Overton 89-92), as in the case of seal flipper pie. The socially constructed moral implications of fried food are far-reaching.

Meredith Quaile, originally from Ottawa, has been living in St. John's for a couple of years. During this time, she worked in a downtown restaurant popular with tourists. She told me that, "most Americans comment on how difficult it is to get anything other than fish and chips outside St. John's." As a vegetarian she has experienced such difficulties firsthand. As a host—for example, her sister, aunt and uncle came to visit her in the summer of 2003—she said,

Usually when anyone has come to visit me, no one knows what the local food is, or is considered to be—they are most often pleasantly surprised at how tasty everything is but also shocked at how fattening and unhealthy all "traditional" Newfoundland food is.

Alan and Eve Law, a couple who live just outside Montréal, also remarked on the prevalence of fried foods. Travelling in the province for the first time in the summer of 2001—the eastern coast exclusively—they found that "everything was deep-fried." Halifax resident Kimberly Howard, describing her and her husband's August 2003 Newfoundland vacation wrote that, "We noticed an absence of salads and emphasis on meals 'with fries.'" A professional translator from Ottawa stated, "I was surprised that everything was deep fried." George Sanders, a Pennsylvania resident visiting the province for a second time with his wife, stated that, "The biggest issue with food was the difficulty in finding restaurants in some of the small villages and finding food (outside of St. Johns) that wasn't fried." A survey respondent from New Brunswick, making a return visit to the province, declared that it's just "difficult to find healthy choices in Newfoundland." At a bed and breakfast in Rocky Harbour, I encountered couples from Maryland and Ontario who were surprised that "everything is fried," especially in light of the fact that "the staples seem so healthy." Shirley Wilson, from Vancouver, and Marilyn Corbold, from Ontario, noted that one of their main priorities, when deciding where to eat while traveling, was to "avoid deep fried [foods]—yuk!" They further exclaimed, "*Don't*

deep fry gorgeous seafood in batter!" (2003). Writer and photographer Maureen Costantino, in her Internet travelogue of a July 2001 visit, writes, "Expect a lot of fried food with very little seasoning, and heavy on the fat. It was a bit tough for us as we're used to a different type of diet, but we survived, if a few pounds heavier."

A retired World Bank economist living in Key West, Florida also commented at length on the amount of fried foods she and her husband encountered on local restaurant menus. Marie Robinson wrote,

We had not anticipated that so much of the cuisine would be based on frying, although chefs were generally obliging about grilling or poaching fish. (Unfortunately poaching fish leaves it pretty tasteless, but at least it won't mess with your cardio system.) The limited supply and variety of fresh vegetables and fruit was noticeable in the [Great Northern] Peninsula, too, although very understandable.

In response to other questions, Robinson emphasized that health is her main priority with regard to food and travel, noting that neither she nor her husband eat meat or fried foods. Robinson went on to draw links between the widespread frying habit and a lack of knowledge about proper nutrition.

However, while Sourisseau made explicit connections between unhealthy cooking practices and poor health in the province, Robinson pragmatically emphasizes the commercial drawbacks. She makes comparisons between Key West and Newfoundland, as island cultures and economies. When asked about her impression of Newfoundland and Labrador culture, in relation to local foods, she opined:

Our food experiences mirrored the fact that the Northern Peninsula and Labrador are struggling, rooted in traditional ways of doing things, suffering economic hardship and trying to maximize every available resource. We felt that they try to offer you the best that they have and appreciated that. However, I think that with some changes in food preparation, dining experiences would be more enjoyable. We live on an island here and know well how juicy and sweet fresh fish tastes when it is grilled over an open fire with minimal seasonings. People come here as tourists and pay lots of money to eat like that because

you just don't get that in large cities. Newfoundland and Labrador have wonderful fish, but in most of the province it is fried or poached to death and then smothered in sauce.

While her comments as a whole demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of food production, distribution and preparation issues, not unexpected from a high-level economist, her elaborations also highlight a common paradox in local tourism.

Fast food restaurants, McDonald's in particular, are thought of as symbols of progress and Western sophistication by residents of countries such as China, Saudi Arabia, and Brazil (Schlosser 230; J. L. Watson 348). When I visited the Caribbean island of St. Lucia in 1992, the teenagers with whose family I boarded were keen to show me the new Kentucky Fried Chicken that had recently opened downtown. In Newfoundland and Labrador, conversely, fried food and especially chain restaurants are looked down on by travelers. Tourists to the province seek the old-fashioned and quaint, and don't want their sight lines, or waistlines, ruined by McDonald's (McKay 1994). As well, traveling as they are within the familiar mono-culture of North America, tourists expect easy access to fresh vegetables whenever they desire them. Thus, visitors to Newfoundland and Labrador are making class-based, negative assumptions about the province based simply on the *availability* of fried food. Simultaneous desire for a romanticized past as well as the comforts of twenty-first century Western society also point to a contradiction Counihan identifies as "central to consumer capitalism: the tension between the pleasures of consumption and the moral superiority deriving from abstention" (115).

Certainly, though, Newfoundlanders themselves recognize certain regional food traditions to have potentially deleterious effects on one's health. This straightforward assessment of traditional foodways is expressed in various ways. In Rare Birds, Riche's struggling restaurateur, Dave Purcell, thinks glumly on his eatery's

lack of appeal to the “fish and chip philistines of St. John’s” (2). Reporting for Saskatoon’s Star Phoenix, freelance writer Bill Robertson writes that his B&B host in Twillingate “bemoaned the fact that Newfoundlanders are still married to the deep fryer” (2004). O’Flaherty’s list of locals’ favourite foods includes:

. . . deep-fried fish . . . with French fries . . . and mayonnaise-soaked coleslaw (occasionally a little package of tartar sauce is on the plate, in case you think not enough guck is on the food already; hot-turkey (or hot-beef) sandwiches, covered in gravy, with french fries and (in the case of turkey) dressing (stuffing), plus overcooked peas and/or carrot; turkey dinners with dressing and overcooked vegetables and scoops of mashed potatoes—all smothered in gravy. . . . (32)

Indeed, Neal, the aforementioned tourism railcar employee, in the middle of my listing of local foods (I had gotten as far as cod, scrunchions, moose and caribou) to the four visitors from Ontario, interjected “She’s gonna have your cholesterol shooting through the roof!” He then explained that he had recently lost a hundred pounds by cutting out all the foods I had just named.

A web site created by Memorial University of Newfoundland students for Education 4142 (“The Teaching of English Language and Literature in the Intermediate and Secondary School I, taught by Roberta Hammett) states, regarding the “Newfoundland Traditional Diet,” “This diet is not recommended by the Heart Smart Foundation.⁶ After one week of unlimited portions, you are guaranteed to gain five pounds. . . .” (Food 2001). The week’s menus, covering breakfast, lunch and supper for each day, include five fried dishes. Similarly, in his opening monologue for the East Coast Music Association’s 2003 awards show, broadcast

⁶ The theme of the web site is “Newfoundlanders read The Shipping News.” The extensive site includes a number of student responses to themes in Proulx’s novel, and issues raised by their own reading of the work (see <<http://www.educ.mun.ca/educ4142/>>).

nationally on CBC television, Newfoundland comedian Mark Critch sent up Atlantic Canadian cuisine as a whole:

We're known for our healthy cuisine. East coast food: kill it, boil it until the colour drains out, add gravy and serve, bon appetite. We eat sensible things like cod tongues. Tongues, a food that can taste you back. There's only three ways to die on the east coast, heart attack, stroke, chip fat fire. It didn't get that way eating a lot of salads. Nobody ever died in a salad fat fire. (2003)

The audience response was favorable enough that Critch used the bit again in his Express (St. John's) column, "Crackie," in the March 26-April 1 issue that same year, adding. "What do you expect? If you didn't have your first heart attack by the time you were 16, you weren't a man. That was our Bar Mitzvah."

In Port au Choix, I met Kelly Hayes, a special education teacher who was traveling around the province after attending a teachers' conference in St. John's. Although she now resides in Ontario, her father's family is from St. John's. Previous visits to Newfoundland had included visiting relatives. Following an exchange of pleasantries at the breakfast table of the B&B where we were staying, I told her a bit about my research project. She remarked that in her previous visits, it seemed that everything was deep-fried. After a while, she said, she felt like screaming, "Oh my God, somebody give me a vegetable!" She then added that there were more non-fried options now. Hayes, a vegetarian, later responded to some questions I sent her by e-mail. Although, as she had mentioned earlier, she had found vegetarian-friendly foods more available during her July 2002 visit, she still believed Newfoundland foods, in general, to be "fried in lots of grease" (Hayes 2002b).

However, as a colleague pointedly asked me one night, "What's wrong with fried?"⁷ Certainly, North American doctors and other health professionals have

⁷ Thanks to Jim Overton for this timely query.

advised the general public for decades now on the negative consequences of eating fried foods. We have also been advised, though, that consuming french fries every now and then will not seriously harm us. Moreover, Newfoundland and Labrador is not the only geo-politically-bounded area to count fried foods among its traditional or popular cuisine. Scotland, for example, is well-known among travelers for its deep-fried haggis, Mars bars, and pizza (Dow 1995; Bearn 2003; Morrison and Petticrew 2004). In terms of fatty foods, the southern United States has long had a reputation for unhealthy traditional cuisines of which Texas's chicken-fried steak is but one example (Cummings 1970; Roark 1998).⁸ But "[m]odern North Americans," cultural commentator Margaret Visser observes, "have recently learned to be terrified by fat, any fat at all" (125). As psychologist Paul Rozin explains,

. . . information about the health effects of different patterns of food intake, and different foods, has become widely available, through the media. . . . This availability of information has not been accompanied by education of the public on risks and benefits, basic concepts of probability, and on the gradual and rocky road, in science, from ignorance to knowledge. Hence, the public often takes findings to be facts.

This has led, at least among Americans, to frequent new concerns about particular dietary items, and has promoted tendencies to ignore it all, or to overact to it all, or to develop simplifying heuristics that take the uncertainty out of every bite. One unfortunate heuristic is that foods are either good or bad for health. The level of intake drops out of the question. Thus, a substantial percent of Americans think of fat and salt as toxins: even a trace of each in food is considered unhealthy. (17)

Furthermore, fried food is not yet generally included in what anthropologist William Roseberry describes as the "spectrum of foods—including wines, beers, waters,

⁸ The preparation of chicken-fried steak involves battering and deep or pan-frying a cut of beef, traditionally the tougher ones (as the frying was a way of making the meat more palatable) such as top round. The steak is served with white, or flour-based gravy, mashed potatoes and various other vegetables in both in domestic and commercial contexts. My Newfoundland students have consistently reacted with bemused horror to my explanation of the dish.

breads, cheese, sauces, and the like—through which one can cultivate and display ‘taste’ and ‘discrimination’” (150).⁹

Paradoxically, fried and fatty food valuation is currently in vogue in certain contexts. While, as noted, battered delectables have not attained the widespread status of wine or gourmet cheese, certain items have been “fashionable,” or trendy, in North America since the fall of 2001. Linked to a widespread desire for physical and emotional solace following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, so-called “comfort foods” made highly publicized appearances at high-end restaurants and dinner parties throughout North America (Mehegan 2001; Ross 2002).¹⁰ The trend has long legs—comfort food was the main culinary attraction at several 2003 Toronto International Film Festival premiere and after parties, including breaded sole and fries wrapped in cones made from newspaper at the Hugo Boss bash for the film *Shattered Glass* (Pearce 2003), harkening back to the traditional British style of serving fish and chips (Coen 45, 53). In March 2004, *In Style* magazine’s Oscar awards party guide detailed an “All-American” themed bash at which hosts could serve “mini burgers on dinner rolls and baskets of shoestring fries and onion rings (from your local burger joint) with ramekins of ketchup” (“Last Minute Oscar Party” 491).

Even with renewed interest in foods that five years ago would generally have been dismissed as fattening and unhealthy, fast food giant McDonald’s is currently

⁹ It is important to note, though, that there are those who value knowledge of fast foods, including all things fried, and make distinctions between good and bad junk food in much the same way an oenophile might distinguish between wines. See, for example, Dickey 2003. Additionally, Roseberry’s statement does not draw the implicit distinction made between, for example, Stilton cheese as opposed to Kraft Cracker Barrel® cheeses, or Budweiser in a can as compared with a local microbrew.

¹⁰ Also referred to as “the retro food trend” (Ross 2002).

suffering. Battling competition from other fast food chains as well as its own image, "being all about fatty, bad foods," the McDonald's empire lost money for the first time in its history in early 2003 (Heinzl 2003). In France, under pressure from anti-fat activists, the chain actually erected signs warning customers that it is inadvisable to eat McDonald's products more than once a week (Mitchell 2003). Morgan Spurlock's 2004 documentary, Supersize Me, continued to focus negative attention on the chain.

Marie Robinson's comments, however, as previously noted, offer an important insight into the frequent diatribes against fried food encountered during the fieldwork period. As many scholars have noted with regard to colonial expansion, a common rationale was and continues to be that the indigenous, or current, inhabitants of a given territory lack the ability to make the best, most efficient use of their own resources (see, e.g., Pratt 1992). As a guiding principle, it allows the political and economic aggressor to assert control over a less powerful society "for its own good," whether or not the judgment is based on the reality of the situation in question. Although the province of Newfoundland and Labrador as it exists today is a direct result of industrial production and commodity capitalism exemplified in the development of the fishery and other resource extraction industries, tourists often perceive the area, romantically, as set apart from the rest of North America in space, time, and development. Such paternalism, a key component of the imperialist project, finds its contemporary political expression in, for example, exoteric criticism of local foodways including the harvesting and preparations of fish and, as previously noted, seal flippers.

5.2 A Deep-Fried Paradox

Any discussion of Newfoundland and Labrador's regional foodways would be incomplete without specific mention of fish and chips.¹¹ In contrast to the study participants quoted above, others made special note of the province's popular twosome. Lynda and Gary Everett, visiting from Texas, counted a "meal of traditional chips and gravy" in a small outport as one of the culinary highlights of their trip (Everett 2002). A well-traveled couple from Ontario declared the fish and chips they had in Trinity to be the best they had ever eaten (McCullough 2003).¹² Guests staying at my home during the research period from Australia, mainland Canada and the United States—including a vegetarian and a woman in her sixties who follows a strict low-fat, low-salt diet—all requested fish and/or chips as one of their first meals on Newfoundland soil. For one couple, fish and chips from Ches's, a popular fish and chips shop first established downtown and now with locations throughout the city, became a daily food ritual.

Folklorist Susan Coen explains that Newfoundlanders have "emotional, psychological, cultural, and physical ties . . . to fish and chips" (49). Fish and chips is a favourite vacation food of Newfoundlanders who are living outside the province. Jim Ryall, a member of the Canadian Armed Forces living in New Brunswick, wrote that he always looks forward to a visit to Ches's (as well as to Mary Brown's, a fast food chain, originating in the province, that specializes in fried chicken). Lori Thorne, a graduate student at Dalhousie University in Halifax, simply responded, "mmmm . . . chips dressing and gravy . . . mmmm." In like manner, a grade school teacher living

¹¹ *Trainspotting* author Irvine Welsh is currently writing a book about the importance of fish and chips shops, and fried foods in general, in Scottish culture (Bearn 2003; Gibbons 2003).

¹² A comment written in the guestbook of the Dock Marina Restaurant in Trinity in August 2003 similarly exclaimed, "Best fish and chips on the planet!!!"

on the Avalon Peninsula noted that the only regional dish he and his wife routinely seek out while traveling within the province is fish and chips. Students have told me about driving visiting relatives and friends straight from the St. John's airport to their favourite fish and chips shop.¹³ A couple visiting family friends in the province in 2003, originally from Jamaica but now living in Florida, included fish and chips at Ches's on their list of "musts" (H. King 2003). They had previously learned about Ches's from relatives living in Newfoundland. Conversely, locals also take fish and chips to those living away, traveling by airplane with take-out containers from a favourite chip shop on their laps (chromedome 2004; Tye 2004).

In contrast to non-residents' concerns about fried foods in general, Coen has documented a local distinction between fish and chips and other fast foods. She quotes Don Murray, the operator of a snack bar:

But it's only junk food they [fast food chains] give out anyhow; it's not really good food. It doesn't really fill you up. I'd rather sit down to a fish 'n chips than a hamburger. It's a part of the basic diet. You always got to eat some sort of fish and meat instead of the ground-up scrap they serve in fast food chains. (52-53)

Murray distinguishes between the "staple," fish, and what would now be labeled the "empty calories" of a typical fast food chain meal (see, e.g., T. G. Smith 2002).

Henry Larkin, proprietor of Henry's Lunch Room, maintained that his fish and chips were not fattening, as his batter recipe was designed to "seal off the fat from the fish" (Coen 51-52). Thus, local purveyors of fried fish (and other foodstuffs) believed their products to be distinct from, and more healthful than, other commercial fast foods.¹⁴

¹³ Folklorist Jillian Gould collected similar stories from a number of St. John's residents in the fall of 2002 for her study of the social importance of fish and chips shops in the city.

¹⁴ Kate Read, a former resident of St. John's who grew up in London, notes that a similar perception of fish and chips is commonly held in England. Specifically,

In addition to local beliefs about the healthfulness of fried fish, fish and chip shops have long been important spaces of social interaction, as described by folklorist Jillian Gould (2002). Moreover, as the shops have generally been family businesses, they represent occupational tradition. Fish and chips have played an important part in the religious life of the city as well. The Catholic practice of eating fish on Friday meant that many local shops were patronized at least once a week. Even for non-practicing Catholics, the Good Friday “feed of fish ‘n’ chips” remains an annual custom, so much so that businesses promote it in their on-site and print advertising (Fig. 5.1-3).

As psychologist and nutritionist David Booth notes,

What a person eats is a matter of what he or she thinks and feels—about the particular food materials available, the body they go into, and the personal and social meaning of each eating and drinking occasion. Yet the only data relating food choices to risk of disease are based on estimates of the total weights of nutritive chemicals that groups of the population usually swallow each day. (99)

Similarly, the majority of the tourists quoted in this chapter analyzed provincial foodways on the basis of what was available to them as travelers. Understandably, they did not ordinarily consider each food item in terms of the various sociocultural contexts, such as on Good Friday, in which they might be consumed.

5.3 The Cod Tongue Contact Zone

Fried Cod Tongues

Carefully wash fresh cod tongues and dry in a paper towel. Allow 7 or 8 per person. Put 1 1/2 cups flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper together in a plastic bag. Put tongues in and shake

she said that health-conscious individuals regard fish and chips, while not something one should eat every day, to be considerably more wholesome than fast food from a chain restaurant such as McDonald's.

them until evenly floured. Cut up 1/2 pound salt pork and fry until golden brown. Remove pork cubes and fry tongues until golden brown on both sides.

Serve with mashed potatoes and green peas. (Freaky qtd. in Jespersen 18)

Mary Louise Pratt defines “contact zones” as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today” (4). As eaten in public or domestic contexts, fried cod tongues, for many visitors, constitute a culinary contact zone.¹⁵ Fried foods in general are deemed unacceptable, as illustrated above, but the exotic appeal of cod tongues appears to allow the transgression of everyday food rules. Moreover, the traditional food appealingly combines the known, cod, with a thrilling unknown, fish tongue. What the tongue reveals, however, varies with its audience.

While the gustation of cod tongues is not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador,¹⁶ a majority of study participants who encountered the dish while here noted that they had never heard of it before. Thus, cod tongues were a clear indicator of difference during their visit to the province.

Karl Juelch, a retired educator from New Jersey, interpreted cod tongues as evidence of local resourcefulness. He explained,

Cod tongue is an edible portion of the fish. Every American, in response to our telling them that we ate this morsel, reacted negatively. I applaud the Newfoundlanders for using this part of the fish rather than throwing it out. My grandmother used to make fish stew using the heads of fish which would have been discarded after the filets were cut out. When I go bluefishing I carve the cheeks out of

¹⁵ While both baked and fried cod tongues are a part of traditional cooking in the province, fried cod tongues are more widely available commercially.

¹⁶ Cod tongues have also been part of traditional foodways in other Atlantic Canadian provinces, as well as in New England, Scandinavian countries such as Norway, and the Basque region of Spain (Kurlansky 41, 246-7).

the heads of the large fish, about the size of a scallop. Makes a dainty delectable morsel. (2001)

Don Munro, visiting from Nova Scotia, met up with friends he made in university while vacationing in the province. Trying cod tongues in the company of native Newfoundlanders, he made similar connections between the dish and vernacular history:

Cod tongues were great because I got the impression that it was a delicacy, or something that was a way of making the most of a prized fish. As I ate, my Newfoundland friends recalled being with their grandfathers cutting [and] gutting fish to make Cod tongues and how they remembered different recipes or their relatives making them (2003)

Both Munro and Juelch link cod tongues to an inventive approach to food sourcing. Furthermore, both men are able to relate the dish to personal experience and family tradition: Juelch remembering his grandmother's cooking and his own bluefishing, Munro connecting to Newfoundland tradition through the reminiscences of his friends.

Deane Crawford is a retired electrical engineer living in New Mexico. An avid motorcyclist, he spends a few months of every year on the road, usually with at least one other cyclist. Crawford has detailed his travels on the Internet, on a collection of pages entitled "Welcome to Deane and Norm's Motorcycle Touring Website" which include text and photographs. In July 2003, he and Norman Hoelting met up in Knoxville, Tennessee. Following a "Honda Hoot" motorcycle rally, they rode together to Labrador via Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Crawford describes many of the meals they had throughout the trip, including his first encounter with cod tongues in St. Barbe:

And, tonight we tried something we'd never heard about, but had been seeing on menus since we got to New Foundland [sic]. This dish is "Cod Tongues". That's right, Tongues of the Cod fish, lightly breaded and deep fried. It's a regular menu item around here, and we

found it delicious! Not something one would want a lot of, but a few small tongues—Mmm, Mmm.

When I asked about their experience Crawford recalled that,

The one standout item that I have never had, and didn't know existed as a specialty, was cod tongues. In my travels in all other Canadian provinces or territories, I have never run into cod tongues (as well as never run into them anywhere else). This seemed to say something for the delicate taste of Newfoundlanders. . . . The trial of Cod Tongues was memorable partly because we were eating in a small restaurant/motel, where the manager suggested them and the waitress brought some for us to try, even though we weren't sure. This kind of epitomized the friendliness of Newfoundland people in the small villages or towns Newfoundlanders were quite friendly everywhere we went. (2003)

Crawford's companion, Norman Hoelting, remembered that evening slightly differently, noting that

The waitress overheard our discussion about the cod tongues and without asking for them she prepared some for us. Another couple heard this also and she fixed them some. It was a very friendly and interesting meal in addition to being served something very different.

While the details of the two later accounts vary, the men's overall impression of the cod tongue tasting was the same. They were persuaded by their server's enthusiasm to try a dish with which neither were the least bit familiar. While, as Crawford indicates on his web site, they enjoyed the tongues, it was not a dish they were interested in eating "a lot of." Over time, though, the experience has come to represent the friendliness of Newfoundlanders in general, and their enthusiasm for local tradition, including foodways.

A retired couple based in Florida had a similar cod tongue encounter. I met Jack and Gail McGinn at a bed and breakfast in L'Anse Amour, Labrador. Traveling from western to eastern Newfoundland in their recreational vehicle, the couple had first sampled the fried tongues somewhere on the west coast of the island. Sitting

down to a meal at Velma's in downtown St. John's a few weeks later, they soon found themselves explaining to their server that they had already tried cod tongues, and didn't care for them. "Well, then they weren't cooked right!," the server replied.¹⁷ She suggested they return in a couple of days, when cod tongues would be on offer again at Velma's (McGinn 2003). When I spoke to them again at the Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Festival (in St. John's), the McGinns were somewhat nervously anticipating their second sampling, but happy to return to the restaurant at which they had been the recipients of such friendly care. Like Crawforth and Hoelting in St. Barbe, the personal attention they received at Velma's heightened the McGinns' interest in the local dish, even after a negative initial experience.

While hosting the Jamaican couple described above, Newfoundland native Heather King and her relatives prepared a number of Newfoundland dishes, including cod cheeks and tongues. Heather said,

They really liked them. They asked from what part of the cod did the cheeks come from or were they actually cheeks. My sister in Placentia cooked cod tongues for them. Tony liked the cheeks better than the tongue, he did not enjoy the gelatinous part of the tongue. Pauline liked both the tongue and cheek, she liked the gelatinous part of the tongue. (2003)

Certain aspects of the dishes' flavours, which, for example, Pauline enjoyed were met with distaste by others in addition to Tony. Further, not all tourists have the benefit of a pro-tongue contact zone chaperone.

A number of negative reactions to cod tongues highlight an aspect of what is referred to as "mouthfeel" in food science, a quality not typically discussed in folkloristic literature: "the unique combination of textures and chemical interactions that

¹⁷ As previously noted, improperly prepared cod tongues are widely considered unpalatable in both taste and texture.

affects how the flavor is perceived" (Schlosser 127-28). Further probing also elicited unfavourable comments about the "greasiness." Richard McKenna, a computer science instructor at New York's Stony Brook University, admitted, "Cod tongues were not for me. Not to sound too gross, but they had the consistency of snot." Mary Dudfield, a teacher from England, noted that her husband tried the tongues, but "found them slimey." Two men visiting from Toronto reported finding out about the dish from a local who explained that they were "very good, though he described the texture as 'gross' while enumerating their salient features. This did not exactly sell us on them" (derek 2003). Jenee and Joe, a young couple making their way around the world, traveled through Atlantic Canada in May and June of 2003. In the June 10 entry of their travelogue, Jenee wrote, "Joe has been sampling the local cuisine- lobster, cod tongues, fish and brewis (a fish stuffing), bakeapple berries and figgy duff. He has enjoyed it all - well, everything but the cod tongues. He didn't like the texture (I can only imagine)" (joeandgill.com 2003). A couple from Ontario wrote, "No more cod tongues, thanks." It was the only regional dish they commented upon negatively. A St. John's resident told me that both her father and a friend, each visiting the province for the first time from London and Toronto respectively, were made sick by cod tongues, which she attributed to the aforementioned "greasiness." Grease, as noted above, is often linked with dirtiness and thus danger. Thus, some visitors were satiated simply by reading or hearing about local foods. Irene McCullough wrote, "I've learned about scrunchions, cod tongues and been interested to learn about them. But have not been inclined to try them" (2004).

5.4 Conclusion

Historian Donna Gabaccia declares, "Although regional eating habits persist in the United States, they are no longer straightforward reflections of a seaside location

or a prairie continental climate" (39). While she is certainly correct in pointing out the decrease in direct connections between what is produced and what is eaten in any given region, she surely underestimates the persistence and symbolic importance of regional gastrospheres.¹⁸ Newfoundland and Labrador, by virtue of several "signature" dishes, maintains a distinct gastrosphere that is indeed a "straightforward reflection" of island culture. Fish and chips, cod tongues and seal flipper pie, for example, are important components of the enduring image. Together with museum displays, dinner theatre presentations and informal conversation with local residents, visitors to the province are repeatedly instructed in the crucial role that the fishery has played in the socioeconomic development of the province. Part of the picture often includes the perception of long-term deprivation and hardship. How tourists interpret the interplay of historical circumstance influences their assessments of regional foodways, as do the contexts in which they consume local culture, whether they find it tasty or not.

The perceived prominence of fried foods on menus across the province fulfills the expectations of a predominantly mainland Canadian tourist base, steeped in media coverage of the "obesity epidemic" beginning in the spring of 2001.¹⁹ As noted above, such reportage included statistically damning data about Newfoundland and Labrador. The Globe and Mail's health reporter André Picard's special series in July 2001, for example, identified the province as having the second highest percentage of overweight or obese individuals in the country (behind Prince Edward Island), as well as the lowest proportion of active individuals

¹⁸ Historian Rebecca Spang credits Wölf Schaeffer for this term (2000).

¹⁹ In addition, such assessments reinforce the slippage between commercial and domestic food preparation and consumption evidenced in many informant comments.

("Fat City," "Fittest Cities"). The mass media reporting was preceded by a number of institutional reports which provided the statistics, including the previously noted Statistics Canada Health Indicators newsletter and GPI Atlantic's "The Cost of Obesity in Nova Scotia," which included data covering all of Atlantic Canada, presented at the Healthy Weights Conference in that province in March 2000 (Colman 2000). In addition, the correlation between low-income and poor nutrition is well documented (see, e.g., Charles and Kerr 1988, Leather 1996, Ralph 1998). Thus, Canadian visitors to Newfoundland, in particular, found their preconceived notions of Newfoundlanders' and Labradorians' unhealthy lifestyles directly linked to a failing economy, easily confirmed (Sussmann and Unel 210).

It is crucial to remember, however, that even as travelers construct the locations they visit through their culinary experience, they are continuously constructing themselves, both in relation to unfamiliar, temporary surroundings and to their home environment and accompanying sense of self in all its dimensions. Counihan writes that eating is in fact currently perceived as moral behavior, and "class, race, ethnic, and gender boundaries are maintained by eating differences. . . . Voluntary restraint and freedom of choice toward food differentiate well-fed, well-off people from poor people with hunger and limited ways to satisfy it" (126). With regard to travel, tourists are necessarily differentiating themselves as individuals who can afford, in terms of both money and time, to vacation. The data presented here suggests that visitors to the province distinguish themselves not only as knowledgeable about nutrition and fitness, but also as physically and financially able to pursue the goals of what they understand to be a healthful lifestyle.

Concern over the obesity epidemic prompted proposals to tax unhealthy lifestyles in the form of a "fat tax." In theory, taxing foods (and beverages) proven to contribute to obesity, such as soft drinks, chips, snack cakes and the full range of fast

foods would motivate consumers to make healthier food choices. A poll conducted for The Globe and Mail and the CTV television network in 2001 found that almost fifty percent of Canadians support such a tax, with the highest proportion of approval coming from Québec. Furthermore, a slightly smaller percentage of those polled (four out of ten) also indicated that they would be in favour of tax breaks for individuals endeavouring to achieve or maintain healthful lifestyles by, for example, participating in a commercial weight-loss program such as Weight Watchers (Picard, "Fat Tax").

Critics of the proposal emphasize the problems of trying to legislate something as personal as food choice, as well as the fact that such a proposal would penalize many individuals and families already struggling financially, or, as David Butler-Jones, president of the Canadian Public Health Association puts it, "amount to punishing the sick" (qtd. in Picard, "Fat Tax").²⁰ As nutritionist Ann Ralph points out,

Contrary to popular myth, the poor spend more efficiently in certain respects. A carrot may be cheaper and healthier than a chocolate bar, but it has fewer calories [and thus less "food energy"]. . . . Mainstream healthy food options are likely to cost an extra 10 per cent, so poor people are buying calories which are cheap (91)

One must thus question the motivation for taxing "junk" foods rather than subsidizing, for example, the purchase price of organic produce or lean meats. Significantly, support for a fat tax was higher among low and middle income households (Picard,

²⁰ Given the tax revenue estimated for such a tax (\$250 million), based on current alcohol and cigarette taxes, as well as soft drink taxes in a number of states south of the Canadian border, the impetus for the proposal appears rather more financial than social. However, proponents would argue that such revenue would simply help balance the costs to the health system caused by an overweight populace. In either scenario, the bottom line appears to be the opportunity to raise funds rather than to effect long term changes in behaviour. After all, would anyone argue that the tax on alcohol actually prevents people from drinking?

"Fat Tax").²¹ As the demographic least able to pay such a tax and most in need of greater access to healthy foods, this fact demonstrates an awareness of the need for, if not the ability to effect, dietary change.

Interviewed about the tax proposals, physicians Dr. Larissa Roux and Dr. David Lau agreed that simply taxing such foods would not end obesity in Canada, noting the complexity of circumstances that have led to the country's overweight rate (Picard, "Fat Tax"). While, as the doctors explained, nutrition and physical education would certainly be important components of any organized approach to the problem, social and cultural circumstances which shape food intake are largely ignored or discussed as afterthoughts, as are individuals' emic assessments of *their own health*. Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial Strategic Social Plan Office, in a report entitled From the Ground Up declared that in 2001, sixty-six percent of their survey group "rated their health as very good to excellent," with all regions reporting rates above the national average of approximately sixty-one percent (see also Buehler 1987 for similar findings). Running directly counter to overweight and obesity rates, these statistics emphasize the gap highlighted by Booth between quantitative approaches to food studies and the complicated nature of even the most minor food event (see also J. Smith 147-72). Similarly, visitors' descriptions of the first time they tried cod tongues or were taken to Ches's for fish and chips reveal that eating is more than ingesting "good" or "bad" foodstuffs. It is in the documentation and analysis of such experiences that folklorists can contribute to a

²¹ While still being debated informally at various levels of government, the proposal does not appear to have come under formal consideration by the federal government as of this writing. The matter has been considered by the Ontario Liberal government, which proposed such a tax on meals under four dollars. In April 2004, however, the government backed down in the face of rising opposition from both individuals and corporations including Tim Hortons and McDonalds ("Ontario Premier" 2004).

more holistic, culturally-grounded understanding of what it means, to both hosts and guests, to be "healthy."

While the first concentrated flurry of newspaper and television reporting on the Canadian obesity epidemic appeared in the spring and summer of 2001, related items continue to appear in both local and national media regularly, with a current emphasis on childhood obesity (see, e.g., Picard "New Generation;" B. Jones 2004). Travelers' commentaries on the amount of fried foods on Newfoundland and Labrador menus reflect important aspects of localized traditional and vernacular culture—the primacy of cod as a staple, evident in the consumption of, for example, fish and chips and cod tongues. In addition, however, they are a direct reflection of a rapidly developing national and international concern with extra weight and its consequences, not just individually, but for socialized and private health care systems alike. In countries with socialized medicine, like Canada, obesity may be interpreted as poor citizenry, an individual state of being that nevertheless has real consequences for the larger community. As food policy analyst Rod McRae states, "... in Canada . . . we are all paying for each others' diseases" ("Food" 2004). Thus, "[i]n the peculiar social situation of the world of food abundance in . . . developed cultures, the nutritive value of food has become a moral issue . . . and we now see . . . the moralization of food indulgence" (Rozin 23).

Issues of identity, class, morality and civic responsibility shape visitors' perceptions of local foodways, as demonstrated in this discussion of fried foods in Newfoundland and Labrador. For many visitors to the province, the perceived popularity of fried foods (both domestically and commercially), along with current health and disease statistics, is a powerful demonstration of the consequences of poor eating habits. Yet, such foods retain more cultural cachet than the much-maligned seal flipper pie. The raw foodstuffs, cod fish and tongues, are at one end

of the spectrum healthful, at the other end, exotic. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians just aren't cooking them properly, in the view of visitors quoted here. In the next chapter, we'll jump out of the deep fat fryer into the berry bucket for an examination of a traditional food beyond reproach in both natural constitution and cultural construction.





Fig. 5.1 Jungle Jim's promotes its fish and chips in the days leading up to Good Friday with a sign adorned with neon-hued Easter Eggs, lilies and a palm tree.



Fig. 5.2 Fish and chips are among the Good Friday offerings at the Lazy Lizard restaurant in Mount Pearl.



Fig. 5.3 Advertisements for a Good Friday meal of fish and chips also appear in local newspapers, this one from the St. John's Telegram.

Chapter Six

To Berry or Not to Berry: There is No Question!

If the availability and prevalence of fried foods in Newfoundland and Labrador represent all that is wrong with contemporary North American food culture, then the province's wild berries must go far in tipping the scale to the good.¹ Berries in general are known to be high in vitamins such as C and A, and disease-preventing antioxidants like phenol and anthocyanin. They are low in calories and high in fiber. Their versatile nature facilitates their use in both savoury and sweet concoctions, as well as sensually appealing non-edibles such as candles, soaps and other skin care products. Moreover, visitors to the province are much more likely to see a framed photograph of a pitcher of blueberries for sale in a gift shop than one of a plate of fish and chips (Fig. 6.1). Communities around the province have developed summer festivals around indigenous berries: the Humber Valley Strawberry Festival (held in Deer Lake) in July, blueberry festivals in Brigus and St. Georges and bakeapple festivals in Garnish (Newfoundland) and Forteau (Labrador) in August,² and West St. Modeste's Partridgeberry Festival in September.³ All things considered, berries are elemental in the province's material tourism.

¹ My intention in this chapter is to focus on the traditional and commercial uses of berries that have historically grown wild in the region, although some varieties are now cultivated. It is important to note, however, that the success of berry crops drawn from both managed and unmanaged stands has prompted trials of European cultivars such as Sea Buckthorn. Sandra Phinney declares Sea Buckthorn to be "the latest wonder berry, loaded with Vitamin C, Omega oils, fatty acids and beta carotene" (35). See also Davidson 708.

² Anne Fawcett identifies the Labrador Straits bakeapple festival as the province's oldest (45).

³ Festivals of this nature, as well as other food-centred celebrations could be the topic(s) of a number of extended studies. To my knowledge, Zainab Haruna's

The berry is a low-risk culinary departure for many travellers, particularly for those for whom the uncertainties of transportation, lodging and sight-seeing activities are challenge enough. Not only are edible berries fundamentally healthful, but even the hitherto unknown (to visitors) varieties, such as partridgeberries and bakeapples, come in familiar shapes, sizes and colours.⁴ When cast in a familiar, agreeable form, previously forbidden varieties are eagerly consumed. Fellow guests at a bed and breakfast in Grand Falls were delighted to find dogberry jam on the table, exclaiming, "Oh, I always thought dogberries were poisonous. I can't wait to try it!"⁵ Similarly, in her web journal of a 2001 visit to Newfoundland, Christine Ulicki describes how she and her husband,

. . . stopped at local winery and sampled some fruit wines, and bought a couple of bottles. Found out that dogberries are bright orange things on mountain ash trees. We have one of those in our front yard, always thought they were poisonous. Guess not, cause they make wine out of them.

Tourists to the province who revealed that they had not tried any other regionally-specific foods (for various reasons) noted that they had, at least, had a partridgeberry dessert of some kind.

research (2001) on the Brigus blueberry festival is the most detailed folkloristic study of any of the province's such festivals to date.

⁴ Bakeapples (also known as bog-apple, yellowberry and cloudberry, particularly in Scandinavia, and baked apple berry), for example, composed of large drupelets or pericarps, have a form similar to raspberries and blackberries. Partridgeberries (also called foxberry, redberry and cranberry in Canada, cowberry in England, and lingonberry in northern Europe) are a variety of cranberry.

⁵ Notably, the same lateral acceptability does not appear to apply to savoury pies, such as seal flipper pie.

6.1 Berry Bounty

The perceived acceptability may also be due to guidebook recommendations. The official web site of the Canadian Tourism Commission exalts the province's berries in its section entitled "Cuisine in Newfoundland and Labrador":

Sweet flavours come naturally in Newfoundland and Labrador. Visit the annual Blueberry Festival in the town of Brigus and you'll be treated to a blueberry themed bake-off, a pie-eating contest, and plenty of mouthwatering blueberry desserts. Make sure to stick around for the crowning of the winner of the Miss Blueberry Pageant,⁶ and get your slice of the centrepiece of the festival, a massive blueberry pie. In nearby Forteau, the Bakeapple Festival in August celebrates the golden-coloured berries, also called cloudberrries, which grow in abundance along the coast. Enjoy berry picking, baking contests and traditional song and dance. And a jar of bakeapple jam makes a souvenir that you'll savour for a long time. (2004)

In one paragraph, a number of the province's traditions, both time-honoured and emergent, are presented to potential visitors: berry picking, musical expression, foodways, and food-related festivals. The berry is thus presented as a locus of touristic activity offering visitors a connection with local culture. Furthermore, they can take a symbol of such experiences home with them, in the form of jam, an aspect of berry commodification and (re)domestication that will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

Frommer's, a previously mentioned travel guide publisher that also maintains an extensive web site, has long offered an annual edition covering Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and, as stated on the guide's cover, "the Best of Newfoundland and Labrador."⁷ The first major section details "the best" leisure

⁶ This is an error. In actuality, the pageant is called the "Missed Blueberry Pageant," and involves men in drag, who are then judged on their "beauty" (Haruna 2001). Additionally, Forteau is not "nearby" Brigus, but off the island on the Labrador Straits, a distance of over 900 kilometers by car.

⁷ The 2004 tourist season marked the first year that Frommer's offered a guide exclusively for Newfoundland and Labrador. However, it is unclear how

activities and attractions, including “spots for observing nature,” “scenic drives,” “picturesque villages,” and “local dining” (Karr 3-9). In Nova Scotia, the traveler is directed to Digby scallops, rappie pie and fresh lobster, also recommended for sampling in New Brunswick.⁸ Prince Edward Island gets a nod for their mussels. For the best local dining in Newfoundland (Labrador is not specifically mentioned here), the tourist is pointed to berries:

The unforgivingly rocky and boggy soil of this blustery island resists most crops, but produces some of the most delicious berries you can imagine. Look for roadside stands in midsummer, or pick your own blueberries, strawberries, partridgeberries or bakeapples. (Karr 9)

Karr’s description bolsters vernacular travelogues emphasizing the lack of vegetables available in the province, as discussed in the previous chapter, or perhaps even plants the seed prior to tourists’ visits. The fact that “delicious berries” can thrive in “unforgivingly rocky and boggy soil” renders them more precious, especially as, according to this guide, they are among the few edible plants that can grow locally.

Fodor’s, a more upscale and conservative guide book series, also waxes poetic regarding the province’s berries. Hostelcanada.com, an online travel information and reservation service based in Ireland describes Newfoundland berries in its “Eating Out” section.

Another favourite among visitors to Canada are the wonderful array [of] Newfoundland berries on offer if you happen to come during the

widely this guide was available, as visitors told me they had difficulty finding such guidebooks prior to arriving in the province.

⁸ Although fresh lobster is available for purchase, either dockside or in restaurants throughout Atlantic Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are singled out by Frommer’s as “the most productive lobster fisheries” (7), apparently foregrounding quantity and contradicting the endorsement of Prince Edward Island lobster dinners later in the guidebook.

right season. Blueberries, strawberries and partridgeberries are just three of those to be found at roadside stands in midsummer but if you don't get to buy them from these makeshift vendors, try them on cakes and desserts in restaurants in the area. (2004)

The site also recommends dim sum in Vancouver, Danish specialties in Saskatchewan, lobster in the Maritimes and smoked meat in Montreal, clearly a highly selective list in light of the many foods and traditions influencing their production and presentation in Canada. Therefore, the highlighting of Newfoundland berries is all the more notable.

The emphasis on berries is longstanding in travel literature about the province. Hoping to inform English society about Newfoundland, John Mason penned A Briefe Discourse of the New-found-land in 1620. He noted, "The Countrie fruites wild, are cherries small, whole groaues of them Filberds good, a small pleasant fruite, called a Peare, Damaske Roses single very sweet, excellent Straberries, and Hartleberries with abundance of Rasberries, and Gooseberries somewhat better than ours in *England*" (1620). Also in that year, Richard Whitbourne declared

Then haue you there faire Strawberries red and white, and as faire Raspasse berries, and Goose berries, as there be in *England*; as also multitudes of Bilberries, which are called by some, Whortes, and many other delicate Berries (which I cannot name) in great abundance.

There are also many other fruits, as small Peares, sowre Cherries, Filberds, &c. And of these Berries and fruits the store is there so great, that the Marineres of my Ship and Barkes company, haue often gathered at once, more then halfe an hogshead would hold; of which diuers times eating their fill . . . (6)

Making arguments for continued economic activity on the island, both authors emphasize the bounty of wild berries with strikingly similar statements. Moreover, they point out that the fruit is just as good as, or even better than that native to England.

In 1794, Aaron Thomas was an able seaman aboard the H.M.S. *Boston*, a fifth rate, thirty-two gun frigate that sailed to Newfoundland as part of a trade convoy (Murray vii-ix). Thomas's diary entries, addressed to a former shipmate, is a late eighteenth century example of the travelogues that proliferate on the Internet today. In an entry dated August 14, the thirty-two year old wrote:

I have had occasion before, in more then [sic] one place, to mention how plentiful this Country is stored with Berrys. Nature has been abundantly gracious to this Country in that particular. All Countrys has something to recommend them, China has its Teas, Lapland has its Reindeer, Ireland has its Linnens and Italy has its delicious Fruits. Newfoundland has its Fish, and to that I may add it has its Berrys, which are gratefull to the taste and so abounding that Horses and Cows and Goats live upon them when they are ripe. The Berry which is to be found in the greatest quantity is Hurts, they are called Whimberrys in England. They grow in surprizing plenty under the Spruce Trees and Brambles. Partridge Berrys are form'd like a large Pea and coloured like the finest Vermillion when ripe. They make good Tarts. These are in great abundance. Here also are Stone Berrys, Gooseberrys, Raspberrys, Currants and Cranberrys, with a great number of other Berrys which produce excellent food. The whole Country abounds with them in the month of August and quantitys of Cranberrys are sent to England (Murray 140).⁹

Already adhering to the established style of travel writing, Thomas compares Newfoundland's berries, and fish, to the unique products of other foreign (vis-à-vis England) countries before enumerating the many kinds he encountered. He himself may have gone berry picking, as he also reports that many of the ships' crew "were always ashore picking Berrys" (119). Indeed, the able seaman later declares that berries on the island are so numerous that domestic as well as wild animals may

⁹ Editor Jean Murray notes that a "stone berry" as such is not known on the island, thus it is unclear to which berry Thomas refers here. The answer might lie in the fact that the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* reports "stone hurts" as one of several local names for the three types of blueberries growing wild in the area (262). However, the reader will note that Thomas differentiates between "Hurts" (common vernacular for "blueberries") and "Stone Berrys."

survive during the late summer months on a “continual feast of the most luxurious Berrys” (155).

Two centuries later, readers of Annie Proulx’s The Shipping News are introduced to berry picking in chapter twenty-four, straightforwardly titled “Berry Picking.” Proulx writes:

On the headlands and in the bogs berries ripened in billions, wild currants, gooseberries, ground hurts, cranberries, marshberries, partridgeberries, squashberries, late wild strawberries, crowberries, cloudy bakeapples stiff above maroon leaves.

“Let’s go berrying this weekend,” said the aunt. “Just over a ways was well-known berrying ground when I was young. We’ll make jam, after. Berrying is pleasure to all.” (191)

Quoyle’s aunt encourages him to invite a female neighbour, Wavey Prowse, in whom he is romantically interested. As both Narváez (“Newfoundland” 355) and Omohundro (162) note, berry picking has traditionally provided an opportunity for young adults to interact with a modicum of privacy. Proulx thus sets the scene for a romantic encounter between Quoyle and Wavey.

The setting also provides Wavey and the aunt an opportunity to discuss the great value placed on bakeapples, as well as another Newfoundland tradition, “berry ocky.”

“People used to come here for miles with their berry boxes and buckets,” said the aunt [Agnis] over her shoulder. “They’d sell the berries, you see, in those days.”

“Still do,” Wavey said. “Agnis girl, last fall they paid ninety dollars a gallon for bakeapples. My father made a thousand dollars on his berries last year. City people want them. And there’s some still makes berry ocky if they can get the partridge berries.”

“Berry ocky! There was an awful drink,” said the aunt. (192)

Proulx's prose emphasizes the traditionality of berry picking as a pleasurable *and* profitable activity.¹⁰ The reference to "berry ocky," while to my knowledge not reported since the early seventies,¹¹ is a notable allusion to the many berry beverages Newfoundlanders and Labradorians enjoy (see, e.g., *Them Days* 94-5; *Jesperson* 149-50; *Maple Leaf Mills* 105 for berry beverage recipes).

Berries have long been integral to Newfoundlanders' and Labradorians' food stores, as a generally dependable supplement to other subsistence activities. Berry picking is still an important late summer and early fall activity, combining local geographical knowledge with material culture, foodways and custom. Although both men and women go berry-picking, it has been understood in some areas to be primarily a female activity, or at least directed by females, with women in a community taking their children along while the men were out fishing (Narváez, "Newfoundland" 341-42; O'Brien 81; Omohundro 162; see also Faris 32-33).

The berries ripen one after the other across the province as the summer winds down and autumn begins: first the wild strawberries, blackberries and currants,

¹⁰ Moreover, the author creates a status differential in the use of the berries, in that "city people" buy them from those in rural areas who pick them. However, my experience living in the province's largest city does not support such a scenario. While "city people" may certainly purchase berries from the roadside stands described above, they also pick them (sometimes in large quantities), and look forward to doing so. As Will Ferguson writes in *Beauty Tips from Moose Jaw*, "... it isn't fish that Newfoundlanders are obsessed with; it's berries. Right here—in the city, in a B&B right in the heart of town—the conversation, if left untethered, will drift towards the subject of berries: preferred seasons, the picking of, secret spots in which to find, areas overpicked and best avoided" (303). Hilda Chaulk Murray interviewed a number of people in the St. John's and Mount Pearl area who recalled going berry picking as children in the first half of the twentieth century (93-94). The berries were used exclusively at home.

¹¹ The *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, undoubtedly Proulx's source for the term, defines "berry ocky" as "a homemade drink of wild berries, esp partridge berries, or jam and water," listing two sources from 1969 and 1971 (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 40).

followed by the highly prized bakeapples,¹² then raspberries, succeeded by squashberries and blueberries, and lastly come the partridgeberries and marshberries (Gray 9,13; Omohundro 163-167; Pocius, Place 127-130). These have primarily been used for jams and jellies, which might in turn have been used as flavouring in other dishes, or simply as pie filling. Other berries, eaten raw and not usually picked in large quantities, include teaberries, gooseberries and dogberries.

While all the aforementioned berries have been primarily utilized for domestic consumption, there is also a history of commercial sale to supplement primary income sources (Horan, "Blueberries" 209-211; Narváez, "Newfoundland" 342; Omohundro 165). Bidgood's Supermarket in the Goulds advertised "Blueberries and Partridgeberries Wanted!! (large quantities)" in the August 28, 2004 edition of the St. John's Telegram. In 1994 Omohundro wrote that bakeapple pickers in Labrador could earn several thousand dollars in a season. Another example are the jars of berries sold from roadside stands in late summer, an enterprise in which both adults and children take part. Such stands may be temporary assemblages of card tables and folding chairs, or permanent structures the size of small storage sheds. During 2002 fieldwork, I met two pre-teen girls running competing jam stands on either end of a bridge near L'Anse aux Meadows, between Gunner's Cove and Hay Cove (Fig. 6.2-4). Both stands featured homemade products, including knitted socks and baked goods, but the most popular sellers, both girls reported, were the

¹² Levi Johansson reports a very different traditional attitude toward bakeapples/cloudberries, and berries in general, in the northern Sweden mountain district of Frostviken. He writes,

Those years when the cloudberries were plentiful, one would pick masses of them and cook *mylgröt*, enough for a whole barrel, and more, for the winter. It was eaten with milk, but without sugar, just like any other porridge, and was mostly regarded as a surrogate for the real porridge. The other berries were used very sparingly and eaten freshly-picked with . . . fresh milk. . . Berries were disdained, really. They were just food for the birds. (qtd. in Genrup 159)

partridgeberry and bakeapple jams. Rita Davis, proprietor with her husband, Cecil, of the Lighthouse Cove B&B in L'Anse Amour, Labrador, would agree. She said,

They [tourists] love them all, but partridgeberry is the most favourite jam of all. . . . Yes, because I tell you, I make partridgeberry muffins, I make partridgeberry pudding, I make a partridgeberry sauce to go over the pudding. And, of course, we have the partridgeberry jam. . . and I make a partridgeberry sauce to go over ice cream. Delicious! Something about the partridgeberry, they have this really nice flavour. (2003)

Another example of the widespread popularity of partridgeberries is Tim Hortons partridgeberry muffin.¹³ Tom Leslie, of Toronto, visiting the province in August 2003, wrote, "Yesterday (Monday) we met up with Craig and Susan, after coffee and a partridgeberry muffin at Tim Hortons (yay!)." Similarly, "Mrs. T.," a visitor from Philadelphia exclaimed, "Ate lunch in Clarendville and had a partridgeberry muffin. Now THIS I could get used to real fast! I had another" (2000).

In terms of commercial production, however, it is the blueberry which leads the native berry cohort. Of the three types of blueberries documented in the area—the low sweet blueberry, the northern dwarf blueberry and the velvet-leaf blueberry¹⁴—the former is the most widely harvested. Most significantly, the low sweet blueberry is free from the blueberry maggot which frequently plagues crops in the Maritimes and Maine (Horan, "Blueberries" 210).¹⁵ Pamela Gray's informants

¹³ The partridgeberry muffin, recently discontinued, was available only in Atlantic Canada. I obtained this information from Jennifer Vankooten, Consumer Nutrition Coordinator, Research and Development for Tim Hortons.

¹⁴ Horan notes that while velvet-leaf blueberry "has been reported by. . . by a number of botanists," recent investigations "have questioned its existence in the Province" (209).

¹⁵ Blueberries are also called ground hurts, hurts and low bush hurts locally (Horan, "Blueberries" 209). The *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* also reports the variant names "hart," "hert," "hirt" and "whort," as well as "black hurt," "Indian hurt" and "stone hurt" (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 262).

identified blueberries as the “most popular and readily available” of the island’s indigenous, potential foodstuffs, including flora and fauna, in response to the question, “What foods do you eat that you do not buy in the store?” (123-24). Homemade blueberry wine has been a traditional Christmas drink (Gray 140).

The bakeapple and the partridgeberry are more often employed in a symbolic fashion, however. Although bakeapples and partridgeberries are not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador even in the Canadian context,¹⁶ as noted above they are an important and frequently touted element of traditional regional cuisine. Bakeapples, particularly, are considered a treat to be savoured, and generally cost substantially more than other wild berries (Gray 156; Omohundro 164-65; Pocius, *Place* 127).¹⁷ For example, 250 ml jars of Legends bakeapple jam sell for \$11.75 CAD, while the same size jar of blueberry jam is \$5.25 CAD. Similarly, Labrador Preserves 250 ml bakeapple jam is priced at \$9.99 CAD, and the blueberry jam at \$6.99 CAD. Frommer’s author Curtis advises visitors “If you come in mid-August, plan to attend the annual Bakeapple Festival, celebrating the berry that *stars* [emphasis added] in the desserts of Newfoundland and Labrador” (280).

Currently, the province’s wild berries continue as important aspects of regional tradition, as well as commercial enterprise.¹⁸ The berry industry has evolved

¹⁶ For example, *A Treasury of Nova Scotia Heirloom Recipes* claims bakeapple jam to be “distinctly Nova Scotian” (Hilchey 8).

¹⁷ Known as “cloudberry” in Northern Scandinavia, the fruit is equally, if not more prized in those countries. Alan Davidson writes:
 . . . the inhabitants of these peace-loving countries have been known to engage in ‘cloudberry wars’; and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs maintains, or used to have, a special section for cloudberry diplomacy. (194)

¹⁸ A visitor from England described the importance of the fruit as “the local obsession with berries” (Harris 2003).

in a number of ways from the days when local pickers sold the fruits of their labour to fish plant factors (Horan, "Bakeapples" 116-17, "Blueberries" 210; Omuhundro 165). In addition to locally picked and individually sold berries, there are larger scale operations which harvest the fruit from unmanaged natural stands. The province is North America's largest producer of wild partridgeberries, with a mean annual harvest of 965,000 kilograms. No doubt because of the region's berry-picking traditions, the commercial market for partridgeberries is greater outside the province, which has inspired local producers to experiment with European cultivars. The bulk of exported berries are frozen. Notably, one of the berry's niche markets are locations "across Canada where large numbers of Newfoundlanders have settled" (Hendrickson "Wild Lingonberry"). Although the berry is widely distributed across Canada, as noted above, Newfoundland and Labrador is one of only three Canadian provinces which have developed an industry around it (Hendrickson "Wild Lingonberry"). The partridgeberry is also harvested in Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan.

The fact that visitors are primed for an abundance of wild berries is demonstrated in their travelogues and comments about their experiences while in the province. Survey respondent Don Raymond wrote, "The bakeapple products were a revelation!" (2003). J. Bertilson, posting to Britishexpats.com advises, "You've got to try the local bake-apple and partridge berry jams" (2002). Howard Coady, whose description links the province's fauna with that of Scandinavia, writes,

The berries are great. If you visit Newfoundland, there are three berries you'll get to know: Partridgeberries (same thing as Lingonberries), Bake-apples (same thing as Cloudberries) and Blueberries. It was enough to get Susan thinking of Danish desserts. We had a culinary treat in Fortune—the chef at the motel we stayed in produced a wonderful partridgeberry pie made from fresh picked berries. (2002)

Coady's statement makes the link between nature and culture clearly—the quality of the pie is tied to the freshness of the berries.

My interview with Rita Davis confirmed the prevalence of berry-centred discussions with tourists. She told me that

When people come here in the summer time, they says, 'Rita, where you live to, we're surprised to see all the different kinds of berries that you people can get here.' Because I mean we can get partridgeberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, squashberries, bakeapples . . . that's quite a variety of berries. And they're all good berries. . . . And everybody's surprised at Newfoundland and Labrador, the berries that grow.

Vernacular travelogue writers describe the berries, seeking to provide the reader with both visual and sapid information. Haligonian Tvor explains, "Partridgeberries are blue-reddish and taste like a combination of blueberries and cranberries and are a little tart. Bakeapples are amber and more expensive as they are harder to find and are a sweeter flavour. Both delicious though, on homemade scones" (2000). Lynda M.R., visiting relatives in Newfoundland in July 2000, wrote, "For those of you who have never been to Newfoundland and have no idea what a 'bakeapple' is, it's a very rare berry also known as the cloudberry that grows one berry to each plant -- in bogs! Hard to get but worth it. Newfoundlanders love their bakeapples" (2003). Lynda's statement emphasizes the effort required of berry pickers in pursuit of bakeapples, as well as her inside knowledge of their local importance.

Among visitors to the province, discussion about how bakeapples got their name [which Casselman asserts is "a one-hundred percent Canadian word" (12)] is frequent, and often occurs around the supper or breakfast table at inns or B&Bs. My fieldnotes from the morning of July 24, 2002 document one such conversation at the Lighthouse Cove B&B in L'Anse Amour, Labrador:

There are a variety of jams available, as well as jelly (bakeapple), which everyone seems eager to try. Barbara [from British Columbia] says that she found out that the name "bakeapple" comes from the French *appel* as in *sinappel*, without name, because they didn't know what it was. Jack [from Florida] says when he heard the name, he thought it was an actual baked apple—he couldn't imagine it. I mention that when I first heard the name [upon moving to Newfoundland in 1996], I thought it meant a special kind of apple, too. Someone asks Rita how many kinds of wild berries there are. She names off a long list, including a number I am not familiar with. Jack says he hasn't heard of half of those and we all nod in agreement.

Thus, the oft-told etiological legend makes the rounds each season, circulating orally, electronically and in print media. An unidentified webmaster, recounting her or his flying tour of Eastern Canada in 2003, wrote that in L'Anse aux Meadows,

Berries are big business here, and they have local names too. Bakeapples are said to be named by another linguistic misunderstanding. Supposedly, an Englishman asked a Frenchman what the berry was called, and the Frenchman answered with a question: "Baie qu'appelle?" - which means, "what is the berry called?" ("Eastern" 2003)

Even writers who doubt its veracity dutifully recount the story, thus contributing to its longevity (Dégh 2001). As Casselman reports,

One folk etymology of our Maritimes says that early French settlers first saw this berry new to them, and they inquired, in the improbable French of the folk story, "Baie, qu'appelle?" Berry, what's it called? English settlers who came afterward heard this as bakeapple, claims the tale. *Mais je pense que non* (13).

Whether or not the teller or writer believes the legend to be true, relating it, either orally or in print, keeps the narrative in circulation.

Along with descriptions of the province's berries, and speculation about the origin of local names, visitors demonstrate a keen interest in the nutritional aspects of the fruit. For example, those who complained about fried foods or the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables often contrasted this criticism with praise for the local use of berries. Shirley Wilson and Marilyn Corbold, from British Columbia and Ontario

respectively (whose emphatic comments about fried foods are noted in the previous chapter), applauded both the “wonderful berries” and the resourceful use of “what’s at hand, deliciously.” Similarly, Maureen Costantino of Virginia wrote,

... the farther north we went, and the sparser the population, the more bland the food became. However, although meals in general were uninspiring, the homemade rolls served at breakfast and dinner throughout the province were something to write home about. They were delicious, especially when spread with a bit of the homemade jams and jellies made from locally picked berries and fruits.

Michael Marchmo, responding to queries posted on Britishexpats.com about Newfoundland, lists among “things to try,” “Bakeapple anything.” The exhortation follows his admonition that there is “fish, fish everywhere, but nobody knows how to do anything except deep fry or pan-fry them” (2002). Thus, according to such opinion, while the local use of seafood is “uninspiring,” berries are acceptably prepared.

6.2 Berry Picking Time

Those visiting the province during berry picking season witness the regional custom firsthand. Debbie Gill, from British Columbia, wrote, “I can appreciate how hard people work to pick these berries, we saw them alongside the road everywhere.” Hikers happen across berry patches, making the connection between the wild fruits and regional specialties. Hence John Webb from Toronto wrote, “As we hiked many of the meadows and cliff tops in Newfoundland, we became aware of the many berries available, and we enjoyed them later in pies and tarts.” Cathy Deyo told me that she had been delighted to see blueberries growing wild on Signal Hill. Assuming that picking berries would be prohibited at this National Historic Site, but at the same time unable to resist them, she hunkered down and furtively stuffed a handful into her mouth. “When I raised up, though” she continued, laughing,

"I saw five other people, plain as day, picking berries like mad!"¹⁹ Still others, after sampling a berry pie or jam, are eager to find the fruit in the wild.

Ilona Biro, on assignment for the Globe and Mail, visited the province in 2002. B&B owner Bella Hodge (Valhalla Lodge, Gunner's Cove) encouraged Biro and her friends to pick berries. Biro writes,

Meanwhile, after a few days at Hodge's, my companion and I had fallen deeply in love with partridgeberries. Beyond the usual jam, we had tasted all manner of sweets, sauces and even wine made from the tart berries. When we asked where we might find some to take home with us, Hodge sent us off on a mad berry hunt around Gunner's Cove: 'You never know, you might get lucky and find a patch of your own,' she teased.

Visitors to Newfoundland soon discover that islanders are passionate about their berries. There probably isn't a Newfoundlander who doesn't know of a decent berry patch, but just try to find out where they are. Berry pickers are a secretive bunch, especially when it comes to the bakeapple, whose single salmon-coloured berry sits like a jewel amid a bouquet of greenery.

Always up for a challenge, we went for a hike along the cliffs, hoping to find a few elusive berries. The lichen-and moss-covered cliffs were as soft as pillows underfoot, and to our surprise, we found blue flag irises, ivory mushrooms, bakeapple blossoms and Labrador tea plants growing like weeds. (2002)

Biro's impassioned description of the berries, which renders the fruit as rare and mysterious "jewels," truly known only to locals but which visitors may pursue "madly," heightens the romanticism of her account in general. As she notes later in the narrative, "I left with the feeling I had been somewhere exotic and beguiling." More practically, Biro also notes the fruits' utility—jams, sweets, sauces and wine—as well as its local importance.

¹⁹ Although they are technically residents of the state of Washington, Cathy and her husband, Allen, live full-time in a medium-sized RV. They took to life on the road upon retiring. I spoke with the Deyos while they were visiting St. John's. They had set up temporarily in the parking lot of the Elks' Lodge, just a few blocks from my house.

Some guided tours include berry picking. "Going Places Together," which organizes group travel exclusively for women, featured berry picking on a September 2003 Newfoundland tour ("Understand" 2004). Group members were to pick berries in the Trinity area and then return to their lodgings at Campbell House (located in Trinity on High Street), "to make something wonderful from our berries." Such activity connects visitors to local tradition, and leads them to reflect on the significance of local practices in both present-day and historical contexts. For example, Marian Kloetstra, of Niagara Falls, Ontario, wrote, "People use what is available and what is free. The hunting, fishing and berry gathering must have been very important to survival." Cole and Nancy Underhill, also from Ontario, thought that regional foods, such as partridgeberry pie, jam and sauce, "reflect the history of the island, and its very practical, self-sufficient people." A Torontonion, noting that he and his traveling companion had "tried many of the jams and marmalades at bed and breakfasts," said that he had learned about the province's traditional foodways from the experience. He explained, "From bakeapples we learned how hard people work to collect them from the bogs."

6.3 Berried Treasure

As Brio and a number of other writers indicate, berries and berry products are in demand as souvenirs of Newfoundland and Labrador. Helene Cox from Manitoba wrote, ". . . fell in love with bakeapples—brought back several jams, including some home made." Jams and jellies are the most often purchased for this purpose, a category which includes a number of locally produced products. Labrador Preserves in Forteau, for example, was established in 1975 and specializes in "all Natural Fruit spreads and syrups made with the freshest, juiciest wild berries, hand-picked in the pristine Labrador barrens" ("Labrador Preserves"

2004). Overseen by Stelman Flynn,²⁰ the berries are processed in a facility adjacent to Flynn's Seaview Restaurant and Motel.

The Seaview Restaurant and Motel are located on the Labrador Straits' main thoroughfare, Highway 510, that begins at the ferry terminal in Blanc Sablon, Québec. The road winds its way through a number of small coastal communities including L'Anse au Clair, Forteau, and L'Anse au Loup, and now ends at Red Bay (from which it continues, as a gravel roadway, to Cartwright). Because of its location, and the relatively small number of restaurants in the area, the Seaview is well-patronized by locals and tourists alike. I ate two meals there in four days. On my second visit, lasting approximately one hour, three other travelers with whom I had come in contact over the previous few days also came in for a meal. Labrador Preserves products are prominently displayed near the cash register. In addition, they are in many cases the only berry goods sold in area gift shops (e.g., the shops at the ferry terminal, and the National Historic Site²¹ and Whaler's Restaurant in Red Bay).

Visitors to the west coast of Newfoundland, however, frequently make only a daytrip to the Labrador Straits, arriving and leaving on the ferry on the same day, at most spending one night in the area in order to make the trip to the Red Bay National Historic Site. On the much more frequently toured Northern Peninsula, the predominant berry product is manufactured by the Dark Tickle Company located in St. Lunaire-Griquet.²³ Developed in the early 1990s as the family fishing business

²⁰ Flynn is also president of Forteau Food Processors, Limited.

²¹ The Red Bay National Historic Site consists of a reception and interpretation centre, as well as Saddle Island, the site of a Basque whaling station in the sixteenth century. Following a scant five-minute boat ride, visitors are allowed to wander the island on their own for approximately an hour.

²³ The story of the founding of The Dark Tickle Company has inspired filmmaker Mary Sexton to begin developing a feature film called Making the Dark

wound to an end, Steve and Gwen Knudsen turned to the peninsula's wild berries as a result of local and tourist interest. The fishing business had included a general store, part of which was a small gift section geared to the growing number of tourists drawn by the remains of the Viking settlement in L'Anse-aux-Meadows. Ms. Knudsen said, "People were looking to buy partridgeberry and bakeapple jam—we looked for a suitable product but couldn't find one" (Newfoundland 2002). In 2002, the company became the province's first "economuseum."²⁴ Their current product line includes chocolates, spiced syrups, jams, pickles, relishes, teas and vinegars. The Knudsens' physical operation comprises a manufacturing plant, workshop, showroom, tea room, interpretive room and an interpretive trail "that leads you into a typical Newfoundland bog where wild berries grow" (Dark Tickle Company 2002). Thus, the company has become a tourist attraction in itself.

Elizabeth Funk, visiting from the United States with her husband, described their visit to the Dark Tickle Company in a travelogue posted to Globaltrekkers.com.

... we headed over to the Dark Tickle Jam Company to sample some products and buy gifts for friends. The shop has a small area for eating and an interpretation area which explains how berries are gathered and made into the company's products. Bill decided to try some bakeapple "drinkable berries." I had heard about the "drinkable berries" but had assumed that it was just juice—not so. Dark Tickle actually makes a berry syrup with sugar and spices. At the tasting area, they put two spoonfuls of syrup into a tea cup and then pour hot water over it to create one of the best tasting hot drinks I've ever had. I realized that the shelves of tan-colored plastic bottles, which I had

Tickle, details of which may be found on the Centre Aisle Productions, Inc. (BC) website at <http://www.centreaisle.com/CA_Productions/film/FilmDarkTickle.htm>.

²⁴ The economuseum® concept seeks to preserve and promote the knowledge and output of craftspeople engaged in traditional, artisanal activities such as jamming, whiskey distilling, soap-making and quilting, while offering "a culturally innovative tourism product." The *Société internationale des entreprises ÉCONOMUSÉE®* was founded in Québec in 1992 by Cyril Simard. At present there are two economuseums in Newfoundland and Labrador, including The Dark Tickle Company and GNP Craft Producers Sealskin in Shoal Cove East (also on the Northern Peninsula), and nine altogether in Atlantic Canada.

been avoiding, were not maple syrup at all, but different flavors of the company's drinkable berries. Along with some jugs of drinkable berries, Bill and I bought wild blueberry jam, partridgeberry jam, bakeapple jam and some berry flavored teas. (2002)

Introduced to the province's wild berries by way of partridgeberry sorbet served at the Cabot Club (Fairmont Hotel), as well as Stonehouse Renaissance's caribou and blueberry stew, the Funks were primed for The Dark Tickle Company's products and educational presentation. They visited the economuseum with the express intent of purchasing souvenirs.²⁵

A jar of jam, although breakable, can be easily wrapped and packed into a suitcase for the trip home, while a package of tea presents virtually no transportation risks. However, ease of transport is not always a deciding factor. As Lynda M.R. wrote²⁶

On the way we passed through Markland where we went in search of the Rodrigues Winery. Our friends Trevor and Nicole are big fans of the fruit wines made here so we had to check it out. It took a bit of looking since it's called the Markland Cottage Winery and we were looking for something called Rodrigues Winery. We got ourselves sorted out and found it in the back of the town hall! It was worth the hunt though, the wines are delicious. We especially liked the Bakeapple and Barrens Blend. . . . We ended up buying 6 bottles of wine (the dessert wines come in 375 ml bottles) including one bakeapple. (2003)

²⁵ Jams, jellies and related products such as teas are successful tourist industries in a number of locations. In New Glasgow, Prince Edward Island, for example, the Prince Edward Island Preserve Company, which encompasses a demonstration kitchen, retail store with sample counter and restaurant, does a brisk business during the tourist season. My visit on August 20, 2001, which coincided with the arrival of three tour buses, provided me the opportunity to explain what bakeapples are to a tourist from Québec. The employee managing the sample counter at the time was unable to describe the berries or identify where they grow, since they did not "make that jam on-site." The Prince Edward Island Preserve Company is online at <http://www.preservecompany.com/>.

²⁶ The underlined words and phrases in the following excerpt indicate where Lynda has created hyperlinks to other web pages. I have left these, as well as that in the previous quote from Funk, in order to highlight an important aspect of vernacular travelogues on the Internet, intertextuality (see Titon 1995).

Now Rodrigues Winery, Markland Cottage Winery began production in 1993, under the ownership of Marie-France and Hilary Rodrigues. Manufacturing berry and other fruit wines, the operation earned Canadian certification as Kosher and Pareve for Passover in 2001. Rodrigues' wild berry wines include blueberry, partridgeberry (labeled as "lingonberry"), bakeapple (labeled as "wild cloudberry"), and black currant, while their strawberry and cranberry wines come from cultivated patches. The winery also sells black currant, cloudberry and cranberry liqueurs. Moreover, the winery utilizes iceberg water in the processing of its beverages, and the image of an iceberg on a number of wine labels, directly linking the province's wild berries and the icebergs of many provincial tourism campaigns.²⁷ As the winery's brochure plainly states, "The wine labels represent the best expression of the natural fruit grown in a true pollution free environment of clean soil, clean air and clean water, Nurtured by Mother Nature. Naturally" (2004). Thus, the berries are linked to ideas of purity, as well.

Like The Dark Tickle Company, Rodrigues Winery offers visitors a chance to observe everyday operations. Tours are available year round, and include the primary and secondary fermentation and processing areas, the racking and holding tank area, iceberg water tanks, Slivovitz style triple copper pot still (for the distillation of the company's pear and plum brandies, as well as the future production of vodka and schnapps), and wine tasting.²⁸ In addition, tour participants visit the fully

²⁷ For example, the cover of the 2002 provincial tourist guide feature two icebergs and a whale tail (Fig. 6.5). The caption revealed on page one reads "Majestic humpback whales share coastal waters with 10,000 year-old icebergs." An email I received from Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism on March 11, 2004, featured the same illustration, as well as a smaller inset, also of icebergs.

²⁸ Slivovitz style distillation is eastern European in origin. Slivovitz is a dry plum brandy.

automated bottling line. Capable of bottling approximately one hundred cases in an hour, the mechanized workhorse neatly embodies the commercialization of traditional beverage-making practices in Newfoundland and Labrador.

6.4 Domestic Traditions, Commercial Transitions

Through observation, participation and discussion, tourists are readily able to connect berries and berry products to the tourism board's emphasis on nature and Newfoundlanders' historically deep connection to it. The province "has long been promoted for tourists as . . . a place to be in touch with an older, more natural existence," as sociologist James Overton writes (144). As much a construct as any other current government production, Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism's main emphasis is on the province's "outdoor nature product" (Dooley). As previously noted, many visitors to the Atlantic region primarily come to enjoy "the great outdoors." Rather than spend much time touring cities and well-known tourist attractions, they prefer to concentrate on provincial and national parks as well as other rural and wilderness areas. Newfoundland and Labrador, in comparison to the bucolically super-charged vacations of Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, is carving a market niche as one of North America's last "unspoiled" destinations. Features or activities unique to the province, such as the caribou herds and iceberg spotting, contribute to the widespread perception of the region, on the part of both residents and visitors, as culturally and geographically distinct from other Atlantic Canadian provinces. Such sights and experiences can also be linked culinarily, as in this meal description by New Mexico resident Deane Crawforth (informant introduced in previous chapter):

We just had to try Labrador specialties for dinner tonight. We had Caribou Hamburgers, 'Bake Apple' pie, and had our drinks cooled with chunks of 'genuine Iceberg ice'! (Bake Apples are a local name for

'Cloud Berries,' a peach-colored berry that tastes something like apples. And, yes, our waitress assured us that the ice really did come from an iceberg. In the spring, some local man goes out to icebergs with a boat, and takes chunks of ice to sell to the restaurants and bars, so they can sell it to tourists like us. Our restaurant keeps it separate in a special container until they sell it). (2001)

Crawforth's statement pulls flora, fauna and geology together, perfectly echoing the province's main marketing themes.

The connection between the province's scenery and its wild berries is made explicit in other vernacular travelogues as well. Of his stay in the Labrador Straits, a web site author who identifies himself simply as "Dave," writes:

Rita, our hostess, gives us bakeapples over vanilla ice cream and they are absolutely delicious. When the woman who Sean didn't hit with his motorcycle told us about the bakeapple festival, we tried to picture apple trees in Labrador. But a bakeapple is a little orange berry with a shape like a raspberry that grows singly on the ground. They have little white flowers which, we're told, collapse inward and then change color before the bakeapple emerges from within; first the berry is reddish, then it turns bright orange when it's ready to be picked. They're tart and sweet and yeah, a little apple-y, but they're not just a quirky local food, they're *delicious*. They strike an unexpected chord of food-joy in me; how could we have never heard of something *this good*? In their own way the bakeapples are as amazing and surprising as the whales and the icebergs; they must be one of the fruits we forgot about when the Gate was locked behind us. (1999)

Dave's exuberant response to bakeapples combines surprise at not being familiar with such a wonderful foodstuff, and pleasure in having finally "discovered" it. He is also careful to point out that it's not just locals who enjoy the berries, emphasizing the importance of his etic and thus presumably more objective perspective.

As exaggerated as Dave's declarations may strike the reader, once they have eaten local berries, some visitors do indeed find them hard to forget. As Rita told me, "I have a lady, now I'm doing up a bottle now to send out to Toronto. Last year after she left here she emailed back and wondered could she exchange a bottle of partridgeberry jam for some maple syrup. And, of course, we emailed

back and told her yes. . . . 'Rita,' she said, 'I haven't had a good piece of toast since I got home.' Rita has also traded her jams for elderberry jam from the States.

Rita identifies what she believes to be a fundamental difference between jam and jelly in the province and elsewhere, which may help clarify its appeal. She explained,

. . . I think what it is, we sweeten our jam to a taste that's suitable. And a lot of people say, 'Oh, I like that tarty taste in your jam.' And that's what I think makes it more enjoyable. [HE: Yeah, not so sweet.] No, because I mean some people go by this recipe, I know, like jellies, because if you don't put in the right amount of sugar your jelly won't set, and you have to do that. But now with jams, you can substitute. Not put so much [sugar] and just have more berries than what it calls for and less sugar²⁹. . . . And some people are diabetics, too, and can't enjoy sweet things, where when they come [here] they say, 'Oh my, your jam's delicious, I just love it!'³⁰ Everybody goes crazy over it! (2003)

Rita's bed and breakfast, by virtue of its location and well-deserved reputation, gives Rita and her husband, Cecil, non-stop access to tourists for the full season. Like many B&B proprietors in the province, they are fully booked months in advance. Rita sets her breakfast table with an impressive array of homemade jams, and enjoys talking about them with visitors.

Both Rita and Cecil spend a considerable amount of time with their guests discussing the details of everyday life in Labrador. Rita has the added perspective

²⁹ Interestingly, this contrasts with etic perceptions of locals as a people given to excess, as in the previous chapter on fried food. Another example are the frequent references to the excessive drinking of Newfoundlanders in particular (see Tucker 1838 for an early example).

³⁰ Along with obesity (discussed in the previous chapter), diabetes is a condition on the rise causing health officials great concern. In October, 2003, André Picard reported that half the population of Canada are now considered at risk of developing diabetes as a result of aging and factors related to excess weight. Figures in the United States are similar (Brody 2003). Among the respondents that discussed health concerns with me, diabetes was cited as an important factor in food choice, second only to heart health.

of having grown up across the strait in Newfoundland. Bakeapples, for example, in Labrador are believed by many to be superior to those in Newfoundland. Omohundro reports that Flowers Cove residents often traveled to the Labrador coast by skiff to pick bakeapples prior to Confederation. Women from Main Brook accompanied their husbands to Labrador, to pick berries while the men fished (Omohundro 164-65). Rita, who is originally from Flowers Cove, often demonstrates the difference in the bakeapple crops to guests through the foods she serves. She explained,

You know, the Labrador bakeapple is far better than Newfoundland bakeapple. I've had people come here, and of course I've often, like I've made bakeapple pies and I serve bakeapples on a cheesecake and things like that. And when I have the dessert, I say to them, 'Well, I'm going to serve you bakeapple pie or bakeapple cheesecake.' And they say, 'Well, I'm sorry, but we *don't like* the bakeapples.' And I say, 'Well, where did you eat them to?' And they say, 'Well, we had some in Newfoundland, but we didn't care for them.' So I said, 'If you don't mind, I'm just going to give you a little on top, and you taste it and you tell me if you like them or not.' And when they taste, they says, 'Oh! This is so different! These are delicious!'

Her confidence is borne not only of her long experience with bakeapples, but of almost ten years negotiating tourists' needs, expectations and attitudes. When I stayed at Rita's B&B in July 2002, she and Cecil also explained the differences in the way Newfoundland moose and caribou taste, compared with those in Labrador, even down to the way the various meats smell while cooking. One evening, other guests and I were surprised to find out that the caribou we had eaten for supper had been killed and butchered by Cecil, who is in his seventies. The next morning, we were informed that Cecil had picked all the berries from which Rita made the jams and jellies presented for our breakfast.

Rita explains the difference between Newfoundland and Labrador bakeapples in terms of climate. She told me

But what it is, I think, now what makes a difference in Newfoundland, you get hotter weather. And bakeapple is a berry that loses its colour very quickly. The sun fades it out and once the colour goes the flavour goes. Now, our bakeapples. . . . here we get colder weather, and our berries stay really orange, orange, for a much longer time. We don't get that hot sun like you get in Newfoundland. And when I serve bakeapples mine is a *deep* orange. . . . When they lose their colour, they lose their flavour. . . . When the berries are nice and orange, that's when the flavour's good.

Rita's experience, growing up in Flower's Cove, then moving across the Straits, underpins her complex understanding of the flora and fauna of each area, which she now utilizes in her role as a host. During my short stay in her home, she took the time to explain environmental factors influencing domestic food production, discussing the subtleties of moose and caribou feeding patterns with me late in the evening after a long day of cooking, cleaning, and answering other guests' questions.

6.5 Conclusion

Tourists to Newfoundland and Labrador who venture out of the major centres must out of necessity camp or stay at B&Bs in outport communities, a circumstance which brings them into contact with small, locally-run grocery stores, home cooking, and the food traditions Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have developed over centuries of trial and error in a harsh climate. For many visitors, such contact is exemplified by "a good piece of toast," spread with jam made from berries picked by their host(s). Meals incorporating locally provisioned and prepared foods create a space in which Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can illuminate the connections between land, sea, climate and consumption that constitute traditional foodways.

As Anna Meigs succinctly states,

Most persons in the industrialized world do not grow food or see or know those who do. We encounter food in tins, in boxes, under plastic. We know food as inert matter dissociated from its human producers and natural context. In fact, children in societies such as ours

must be taught that the impersonal lifeless packages we call 'food' were originally living animals or plants. (104)

Whereas ethical and moral uncertainty or conviction precludes many tourists from trying seal meat or purchasing seal products, and health concerns prevent the enjoyment of regional favourites such as fish and chips, berries offer visitors a window into local culture beyond reproach—and for which they need not reproach the locals.

In *Rare Birds*, Edward Riche's restaurateur protagonist, Dave, reluctantly attempts to assist a birdwatcher whose car has been stolen. The visitor is shocked to find himself a crime victim in Newfoundland.

'How dreadful,' he [the birdwatcher] squeaked again. 'You don't expect it here.'

It was the hollow myth of Newfoundland again. The people were all supposed to be so sweet and colorful but never dangerous, the good poor. This was Canada's Happy Province. I'll introduce you to some of the car cannibals, thought Dave. They'd club you like a seal pup and sell your organs for the price of a dozen beer. (223)

If the seal hunt symbolizes the dangerous poor in the tourist gaze (Urry 2002), and the fried food surfeit the ignorant and lazy poor, then the traditional and emergent uses of the province's wild berries must surely represent the "good poor." Tourists frequently remarked on the hard work in which locals engage to procure the berries, the fruits' healthful attributes and the ingenuity involved in making the berries "big business." Moreover, they linked the use of berries to an admirable relationship with the natural environment, and, as Overton states, "an older, more natural existence." Dovetailing with the provincial government's emphasis on flora, fauna and other natural features, Newfoundland and Labrador's wild berries provide tourists with a

guilt-free icon of authentic , traditional culture in which they may participate on a number of levels.

Largely organically grown and adaptable to a wide range of consumer goods, the province's berries present the local tourist industry with an ideal culinary tourism product. They may be utilized in democratic comestibles like jam and juice (although bakeapple jam, for example, is relatively expensive), and—perhaps most significantly for the Canadian Tourism Commission's culinary tourism project, admittedly targeting “. . . Wine and Culinary Enthusiasts . . . with the relative affluence required to pursue interests in fine wine and gourmet food” (Research Resolutions, Canadian Wine 3)—also processed into high status consumables, such as wine and artisanal chocolates (Terio 2000). Businesses like The Dark Tickle Company expertly connect the past with the present in product presentation and promotional literature while appealing to ideals of “quality and taste” (Dark Tickle 2004). As Dark Tickle's brochure explains,

For hundreds of generations, nutritional, tasty and plentiful wild berries were a staple of life for native people and European settlers. Canada's aboriginal people found many useful purposes for berries—food, medicines, dyes, and fibres. These same berries helped sustain life for Vikings, Basque whalers, French explorers and European settlers. Today, these heritage berries are still harvested by the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In this efficient statement, the historical pedigree of the “heritage” fruit is established and connected with the province's master narrative. Neatly packaging working-class life experience for middle and upper class consumption, the brochure invites visitors to “watch as workers clean and cook fruit, and package and label products for the market.” Although the company does not produce wine, it connects to wine's culinary status. Dark Tickle's brochure asks “. . . how about a glass of blueberry wine with

hors d'oeuvres before dinner?" The statement creates a frame for consumers to consider other popular berry products, such as wine and liqueurs.

The growing appeal of organic alcoholic beverages is no mystery. Seen by an increasing number of vintners as the future of the industry, California vintner Rob Sinskey declares it "the right way to grow grapes, period" (Walker 87). Sinskey elaborates, 'It amazes me that wine, this elite product, is typically produced by cheap, chemically dependent commercial methods. . . . There's a disconnect there. There's no reason why we should be wearing protective suits and respirators to produce a luxury item that goes in your mouth' (qtd. in Walker 87). Thus, the Rodrigues Winery, with both United States and Canadian certification as Kosher and Pareve for Passover as previously noted,³² is well-positioned in both the organic food and wine markets.

The winery utilizes the established oenological model to promote its products, in conjunction with an emphasis on the unique, natural qualities of each berry. All Rodrigues wines, for example, bear the descriptive "exotique" on their labels. The company's brochure and web site emphasize the "pollution-free" nature of their products, describe the bouquet and finish of the wines, and recommend food and wine matches that bring local berries into the lexicon of established flavour pairings. For instance, "Exotique Lingonberry (Partridgeberry) Wine" is suggested as "an ideal partner with fish or fowl, especially turkey" (c2004). Rodrigues' blend of partridgeberries and blueberries, the "Exotique Wild Barrens Blend Wine," is an "[I]deal complement with red or white meat dining, " while the equally versatile "Exotique Cranberry Wine" may be served "slightly chilled with turkey, baked ham,

³² The market for kosher products extends far beyond the Jewish community. In Ottawa, for example, less than half the consumers of kosher foods are Jewish, including Muslims, lactose-intolerant individuals and others "who appreciate the strict supervision of kosher food preparation" (Harvey 2003). In this respect, kosher foods and those with organic certification share a significant portion of their clientele.

grilled salmon, veal or pork tenderloin" (c2004). There are, notably, no wines, brandies or liqueurs suggested for pairing with seal flipper pie or fish and chips, an omission which underscores both the dichotomy between domestic and commercial realms of consumption, and the ongoing construction of the culinary tourism product canon.





Fig. 6.1 Partridgeberry postcard purchased in Port au Choix.



Fig. 6.2 Jam and craft stand run by Youth Ventures program participant in Gunner's Cove.



Fig. 6.3 Pointing the way to wild berry jams on Route 436.



Fig. 6.4 Gillian's jam stand near Gunner's Cove.

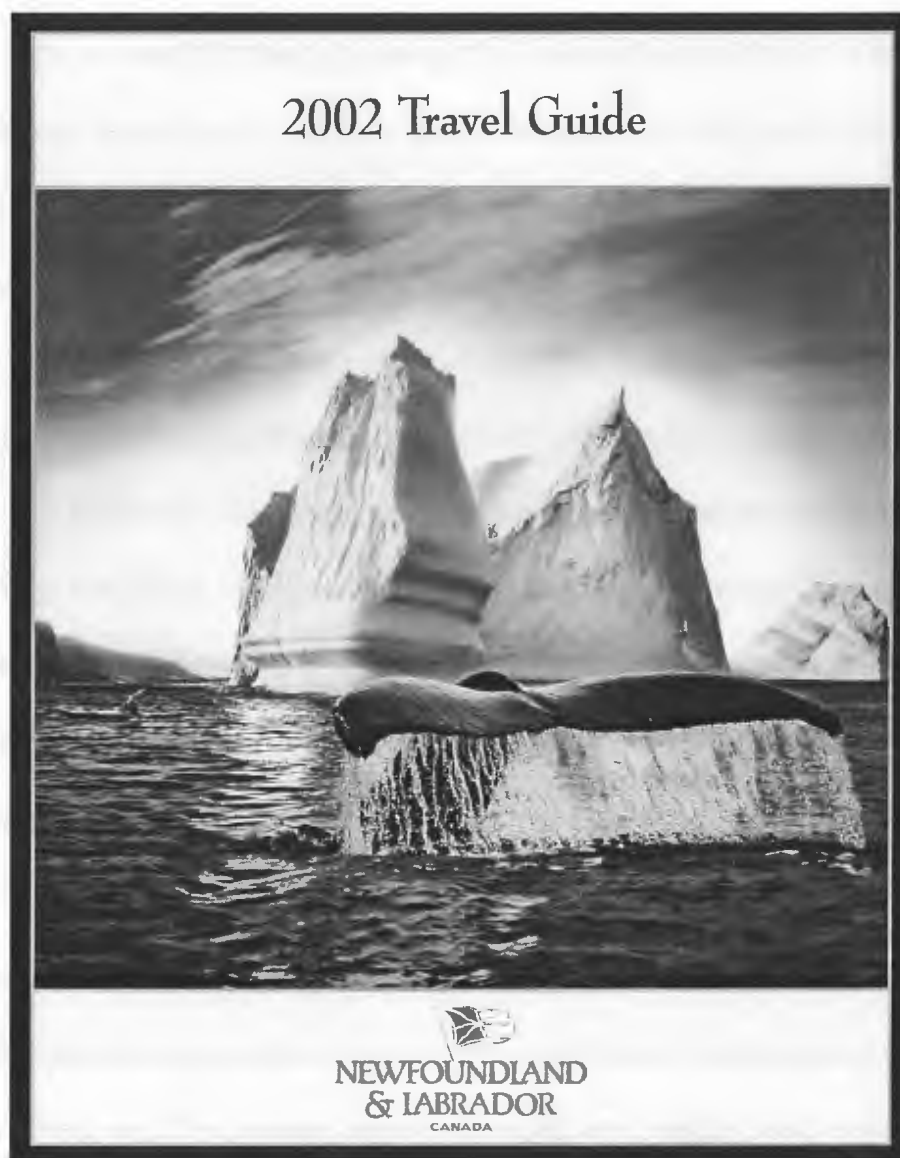


Fig. 6.5 The provincial travel guide emphasizes the natural wonders of the region. This same image is used in email, newspaper and television advertising.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

On a recent grocery shopping trip, I caused something of a kerfuffle. The two orange tomatoes on the vine I had excitedly put in my cart, without checking the price, rang in at \$2.93. Neither the cashier nor those she consulted could believe that the figure was correct. How could two small tomatoes cost almost three dollars? As a growing number of employees consulted produce price lists and examined the fruit, the customers behind me in line became noticeably irritated. I began to feel conspicuous and considered asking the cashier to forget about the tomatoes. However, I really wanted those beautiful tomatoes, even at \$2.93. With an average annual personal income of just under \$24,000 and a provincial unemployment rate of 14.3 percent,¹ however, for many in the province it would be an extravagant, if not impossible, purchase.

Prior to beginning work on this study, I did not believe it possible for me to think about food more than I already did. I was wrong. Conducting research such as this heightens one's awareness of the privileges of being raised in a middle class milieu, and the greater access to varied and healthy food options it affords.

¹ These statistics from the government of Newfoundland Labrador web site, specifically the pages of the provincial statistics agency, are available at <<http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/>>. The numbers date from 2003 and August 2004, respectively.

As documented in The Cost of Eating in Newfoundland and Labrador, a report prepared by Marg Ewtushik on behalf of Dietitians of Newfoundland and Labrador, Newfoundland & Labrador Public Health Association and Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers, almost a quarter of Newfoundlanders lack the necessary disposable income to cover the minimum costs of food, shelter, clothing and transportation. Moreover, "[f]ood insecure low-income families tend to buy cheaper high-calorie foods out of necessity (rather than choice) over more expensive healthy food choices including fruits and vegetables." For such families, purchasing enough nutritious foods to ensure physical well-being would consume from twenty-eight to *one hundred nineteen* percent of available income. Consequently, Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest per capita use of food banks in the country.

At the same time, the province is working to position itself as a competitor in the emerging culinary tourism market, negotiating the contact zone between working-class regional foodways and middle and upper class contemporary, mainstream Western cuisine. This may be considered a counterhegemonic response to the elite taste makers that deign some cuisines "fine," others "exotic" and so on. Eating in Newfoundland and Labrador, overall, remains a highly contextualized experience, bearing close ties to the history and domestic socialization patterns of the province. This is expressed in both straightforwardly traditional and more constructed, invented ways.

7.1 Contributions of this Study

At the outset of this project, I hypothesized that tourists' perceptions of regional foodways would be characterized primarily by broad judgments of quality or lack thereof. I soon realized that I had been quite mistaken. Through their commentaries on travel both in and outside of the province, my informants consistently demonstrated the symbolic role food continues to play, and its particular communicative potential in intercultural interactions. As folklorist Janet Theophano reminds us, "Food. . . . has the capacity to communicate, in any one event, many layers of meaning. The particular interpretations given to such cultural texts are dependent upon the 'readers'" (52). The readers of Newfoundland and Labrador foodways whose comments are documented here presented me with irrefutable evidence that the "texts" which comprise regional foodways resonate in the social imagination long after the last slurp or swallow, and sometimes without a single bite taken. Thus, the data and analysis contained in these pages illustrates how we continually communicate, both explicitly and implicitly, through food.

Another important aspect of the case studies presented here is the contextualization of both commercial and academic understandings of the concept of "culinary tourism." This is the first long-term, academic study of culinary tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in Canada as a whole, to my knowledge. As described in chapters one and two, culinary tourism is

perceived within the industry as a newer, and potentially highly profitable, arena of tourist interest and activity. Canada, as a confederation of provinces and a nation of immigrants (Iacovetta 1998), faces a number of challenges in its quest to present a uniquely Canadian culinary tourism product. Indeed, an on-going debate in the industry centers around the question of whether it is even possible, or desirable, to speak of a singular "Canadian cuisine."

One of the most significant aspects of Long's original framework, and one I have developed further here, is the extension of folkloristic analysis to the collision of tradition and commercialization in food marketing. The bakeapple pie prepared for family members in an outport kitchen is sometimes the same pie that will be served to tourists from British Columbia, Florida and Ontario. Five minutes drive down the road, those same visitors can sample bakeapple pie prepared in a commercial kitchen. While the ingredients and basic recipe may be the same, the methods of production, presentation and marketing are considerably different.

Folkloristic studies of both traditional foodways and commercial food production in Canada are still few in number, as stated at the beginning of this work (e.g., Coen 1980; Gray 1977; Hoe 1990; O'Brien 1999; Zhu 1991). Those centering on food and class are even more scarce, as discussed in chapter three. An significant aspect of this thesis is its documentation of the disparity

between regionally-based, tradition-directed food provisioning practice and the marketing construct of culinary tourism.

Finally, this thesis is evidence of a significant cultural shift in widespread attitudes toward food, as the health food movement, or at least its ideals, moves from counter-culture (Dubisch 1981; Belasco 1993) to the mainstream. While I anticipated comments pertaining to health concerns, I was struck by the way in which related issues ran through so many conversations and surveys.

Moreover, while we cast critical eyes toward Progressive Era moral crusaders (c1890-1930) attempting to reform traditional diets (Levenstein 1988; Shapiro 1986), contemporary North American society connects food and morality with increasing rigidity in an atmosphere of what food writer Raymond Sokolov calls "nouveau Puritanism" (32).

7.2 Directions for Further Research

Clearly, English speakers are not the sole visitors to the province. I was chastised by a Belgian respondent who was plainly offended that the survey was available only in English (Mortelmans 2004). As Canada is officially a bilingual country and the province is hoping to attract more visitors from Quebec, a similar study conducted in French is essential.² Additionally, studies of culinary tourism

² My facility with French has not yet reached the level necessary for a project such as this.

among German tourists, a strong sector of provincial tourism, thanks to the efforts of individuals such as folklorists Elke Dettmer and Delf Hohmann, would add much to our understanding of intercultural foodways reception.

Another effective strategy might be to work with a specific tour group or company exclusively over one or more seasons. As noted in the previous pages, a number of respondents were participating in group tours of various kinds. In addition, others had worked with particular travel agencies (e.g., Maxim Vacations in St. John's), sometimes over a period of two or more years, to design itineraries tailored to their specific needs and interests. Furthermore, although many efforts were made to elicit respondents between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, there are few representing this demographic in the study. As generations who have grown up with McDonald's, and are perhaps less familiar with traditional, region or ethnicity-based meal patterns, their response to developing culinary tourism infrastructures such as that of Newfoundland and Labrador may provide an important perspective on changing attitudes toward food and identity.

Historically, Newfoundland and Labrador's tourism operators have served, in the main, the resident tourist. Today, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians traveling within the province still constitute the largest percentage of tourists, as noted in chapter one. While a number of study respondents were either currently or formerly Newfoundland and Labrador residents, they comprised just over

twelve percent of the total study sample. Working solely with local respondents and interviewees would offer valuable insights into, as Clifford Geertz writes (of the Balinese cockfight), the "story they tell themselves about themselves" (26) when serving and consuming foods commonly held as markers of Newfoundland and Labrador identity.

The field of food studies also offers, as Alan Warde and Lydia Martens note in their study of dining out in Britain, an opportunity to interrogate one of the "primary talisman[s] in the legitimization and celebration of consumer societies," the effect of variety, as manifest in the global marketplace, on established cultural systems (14). The restaurant scene in Newfoundland and Labrador, and especially in St. John's, has changed dramatically in just the last half decade, presenting both residents and visitors with dining options previously available only on trips to the mainland. Although I have included data concerning restaurant décor, menu selection and marketing, further research in this area would deepen our understanding of this manifestation of globalization on traditional culture in the province and further delineate class perspectives.

Finally, Newfoundland and Labrador is repeatedly portrayed in the national media, and the media of other provinces, as the poor little char girl of the Canadian family. It is imperative that the mechanisms of hegemony that enable such persistently negative portrayals be revealed and examined. Studies of quotidian processes such as food provisioning and consumption document "the

contradiction between chronic inequality and universalistic and egalitarian hegemonic ideologies" simultaneously inscribed and elided every day (Gimenez 262). While folklorists and other scholars, as discussed here, have produced important work on this topic, much remains to be done in the exposure of Newfoundland and Labrador's systematic, and systemic, cultural and socioeconomic subjugation.

7.3 Food for Thought

Newfoundlanders' and Labradorians' canny recognition of the appeal of goods vaunted as authentic, either through production or use, is coupled with a growing acknowledgment that " [t]he aesthetic presentation of locally and regionally produced foodstuffs in new taste combinations appeals to sophisticated urbanites who want food that has both cultural authenticity and cachet" (Terrio, "Crafting *Grand*" 71). Well aware of the etic construction of Newfoundland and Labrador culture, as evidenced in mass-mediated productions such as The Shipping News and Rare Birds, and reaction to them, the individuated nature of tourism in the province currently provides a number of opportunities for local inhabitants to perform their culture *as they wish it to be perceived*. Moreover, they are constructing and performing public identities as members of a unique regional culture, for as geographer Phillip Crang notes, "Identity politics are at the heart of tourism labour processes" (152). Culinary

tourism is often a process of negotiation, and Long highlights the importance of the social dimensions of culinary tourism in the identification of "explication" as a key strategy.

In this study, I have discussed regional foodstuffs as demonstrating the tension between denuded cultural artifacts and those presented within the matrix of tradition-directed behaviour as dynamic representations of Newfoundland and Labrador culture. As ephemeral objects imbued with cultural meaning, primarily crafted in domestic settings, these foodstuffs also fall into the category of craft.

As anthropologist Susan Terrio explains,

Craft commodities . . . are imbued with and are the bearers of the social identities of their makers and for this reason retain certain inalienable properties. Produced in limited quantities, using traditional methods and/or materials, they evoke uninterrupted continuity with the past. The historicities of these goods, even if invented or altered, give them special value for both use and gift exchange. ("Crafting *Grand*" 71)

Jams and jellies produced by local companies or bed and breakfast proprietors bear such marks of distinction. Even when a specific food item is judged by a visitor to be unpalatable, such as cod tongues, it may still be understood as an important expression of local identity and regional authenticity, particularly when accompanied by "explication."

Local culinary productions must also contend with significant class-based expectations, however, and it is at this nexus of socio-cultural and economic factors that the collected data most strongly coheres. In this study I have examined three foodstuffs which range across Long's "realms of culinary

experience" (as detailed in chapter three). The case studies on seal, fried foods and berries exemplify etic, class-coded views of each category. Seal meat is a highly unfamiliar foodstuff associated with brutality (as with Riche's "car cannibals" who will "club you like a seal pup and sell your organs for the price of a dozen beer" [223]). Moreover, it is not widely available in provincial restaurants, although there are exceptions. Visitors have relatively few opportunities (in comparison to, say, cod tongues) to sample seal meat in restaurants. Thus, previously held images, shaped by The Shipping News or media coverage of the seal hunt, remain. Locals are simultaneously judged as idiosyncratic and potentially dangerous when examined through the lens of seal flipper pie. As discussed in chapter four, this appears to be one of the factors leading younger generations to distance themselves from this aspect of local tradition.

Fried foods, by contrast, are deemed unpalatable and even inedible because of health concerns. As presented in chapter five, frying, as a method of food preparation, is consistently connected with lower socioeconomic status. An exception to this rule is cod tongues, which transcend the strictures generally applied to frying because of their exoticism. In addition, however, respondents and interviewees frequently connected a perceived abundance of, and local overindulgence in, fried foods with a lack of fresh produce, both in grocery stores and restaurants, a concurrence which led to speculations about a general

lack of knowledge about the importance of proper nutrition. Such judgments speak to the linkage of food, morality and good citizenry in the popular imagination and everyday practice.

The province's wild berries, however, and their utilization in diverse locally made products are highly regarded. They are both edible and palatable.

Reifying the text and images of national and provincial tourist literature, the berries serve as an iconic image of resourceful people close to a bountiful, welcoming wilderness more clearly representing middle and upper class expectations of "the folk" (Bessière 1998, 2001; Lofgren 2001; McKay 1994).

Berries may be Newfoundland and Labrador's most successful culinary tourism product, combining attributes of health, wilderness and versatility. Furthermore, the often tacit class criteria of culinary tourism is met with a wide range of berry products including wines, liqueurs, and chocolates.

I do not wish to end this study with the impression that, with the exception of berries, all foods locally available are judged to be of inferior quality and status, nor do I wish to minimize travelers' health concerns. Even when sharply criticizing portion size or the habit of serving gravy and dressing with fries, the majority of my interviewees and respondents were also eager to emphasize their enjoyment of time spent in the province. They spoke of awe-inspiring scenery and warm, generous hosts. In a few instances I believe they were trying to salve the wounds they feared they might have caused me with their

disparagement of seal flipper pie or other food items. In the main, though, their final assessments described a province struggling to make the best of difficult economic conditions persisting over a considerable period of time, and to simultaneously meet and defy visitors' expectations of Canada's youngest province. Thus, the collected data, encompassing a wide range of components of contemporary culinary discourse, demonstrates the continuing links between social class and food consumption, revealing a polysemic dialogue around the pleasures and responsibilities of abundance. The assertion of power through the disciplined expression of taste, together with evolving vernacular health moralities, is intrinsic to the construction of culinary tourism in Canada.

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Appendices

What did you eat on your vacation?

Participants should be asked to provide
a description of the food item(s) consumed during
the vacation trip. The description should include the
name of the food item(s), the location where it was
consumed, and the date of consumption. For
more information, contact the author at
1991-1992, 1993-1994, 1995-1996.

1. Name of the food item(s)
2. Location where it was consumed
3. Date of consumption
4. Description of the food item(s)
5. Amount consumed
6. Frequency of consumption
7. Reason for consumption
8. Any other information

What did you eat on your vacation?

Participants sought for research project
(Department of Folklore, Memorial University of
Newfoundland) on food and travel in Atlantic Canada.
Short questionnaire may be completed by email. For
more information, contact H. Everett,
food@rowdyblues.com.

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Food and Travel Survey
Holly Everett
Department of Folklore
Memorial University of Newfoundland

As this is an open-ended survey, please feel free to answer in as much (or as little) detail as you wish. Questions? Contact me at h64he@mun.ca or drpepper@warp.nfld.net. I will get back to you ASAP. Thank you for your help with the project!

1) How often do you travel, and for what general purpose (e.g., business, leisure, adventure, visiting family)? Where have you been to recently, in addition to Newfoundland?

2) How do you get information about your destination(s) (e.g., books, internet, friends, travel club, travel agent, television)?

3) What would you say is your major priority when deciding where to eat while traveling (e.g., taste, health considerations, cost, convenience, trying something new)? Does this vary by location or type of trip?

4) During your visit to Newfoundland, did you have any foods or beverages that seemed particularly regional (e.g., cod tongues, fish and brewis, caribou, moose, bakeapples, seal flipper pie, toutons, Jiggs dinner, Screech, fish 'n' chips, etc.)? Were the foods available different from what you expected based on any previous knowledge of the province?

5) What impressions did you have, if any, about Newfoundland and Labrador culture from that item or meal?

6) Meals are often made memorable by social circumstances (the company, the atmosphere of the restaurant, musical or theatrical entertainment, etc.). Do any meals you had during your recent visit to the province stand out in your mind

specially, whether or not they included regional foods/beverages?

7) Did you take any berry jams or jellies, or any similar food souvenirs, home with you?

If you are willing to be contacted in the future, should further questions arise from your responses here, please indicate that below, as well as whether or not I may use your name in the presentation of this research (thesis, articles and/or book chapters, class lectures, etc). Anonymity will be maintained otherwise.

Thanks again for your time and assistance.

Food and Travel Survey
Holly Everett
Department of Folklore
Memorial University of Newfoundland

The survey questions are open-ended, so please feel free to answer in as much or as little detail as you wish. Questions about the study? Contact Holly at food@rowdyblues.com or leave a message at (709)737-8409. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Please provide any background information you wish, such as age, occupation(s), special interests and/or current place of residence.

1) How often do you travel, and for what general purpose (e.g., business, leisure, adventure, visiting family)? Where have you travelled to recently, besides Newfoundland and Labrador?

2) How do you get information about your destination(s) prior to arrival (e.g., books internet, friends, travel club, travel agent, television)?

3) What would you say is your major priority when deciding where to eat while travelling (e.g., health considerations, cost, convenience, trying something new)? Does this vary by location or type of trip?

4) Have you tried any foods or beverages that seemed particularly regional during your visit to Newfoundland and Labrador (e.g., cod tongues, fish and brewis, bakeapples, partridgeberries, seal flipper pie, toutons, Jiggs dinner, Screech, etc.)? Are the foods available different from what you expected?

5) Do you feel you've learned something about the province and its culture, or about Atlantic Canada in general, from any regional foods or beverages you've sampled? If so, what?

6) Meals are often made memorable by social circumstances (the company, the atmosphere of the restaurant, musical or theatrical entertainment, etc.). Do any meals you've had stand out in your mind specially, whether or not they included regional foods and/or beverages?

If you are willing to be contacted in the future, should further questions arise from your responses here, please provide your name and phone number, email or postal address below. Also, please indicate if I may use your name in the presentation of this research (thesis, articles and/or book chapters, class lectures, etc.), or if you prefer anonymity.

Thank you for your help with the project!

