

**Local Irishness: Storytelling, Heritage, and Place Attachment  
in Douglstown, Québec**

by © Angelina Leggo

A Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
**Master of Arts**

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May 2020  
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

Abstract:

The community of Douglastown, on the Gaspé Peninsula in eastern Québec, has experienced profound change in recent years. An increase in migration to the area has relegated the once majority Anglophone population to a minority in the region. In response, community members use a history of Irish immigration to the area to differentiate themselves from other places in the Gaspésie and across the province. They likewise use this legacy to strengthen and express place attachment, celebrate their heritage and history, emphasize their language, and continue the traditions of the Catholic Church, both within and outside of their community. Through interviews, participant observation, mapping, and local research, I show how stories in Douglastown revolve around these multiple expressions of Irishness and how this has created a framework for defining belonging in the past that still resonates within the community today.

## Acknowledgements:

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Denver Leggo, who taught me our family's stories, a deep love for the places in l'Anse à Brillant, and why I should be proud of where I came from. Your love for our home was the inspiration for this research and I hope that you would be proud of what I've accomplished here.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the entire community of Douglastown and to all who took the time to participate in my research. I'm very proud that you trusted me with your stories and I hope that I've done them justice. It has meant so much for me to be able to participate in your community, your pride in and love for your home has been a driving force behind this thesis and in my personal life as a Gaspesian who happens to live somewhere else (for now).

To my amazing supervisor, Dr. Sharon Roseman, thank you so much for your constant support and belief in my ability to finish this thesis. You have taught me so much about perseverance and patience, as well as excellent editing and writing skills, and I'm grateful for it all: for every comment, suggestion, and question that has sculpted the way my writing has developed. You are truly an inspiration and a role model. Thank you for keeping me going!

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Memorial University and the Department of Anthropology and its staff. I have been blessed with supportive and caring individuals who continued to look out for my best interests long after I moved away from Newfoundland. Thank you to the mapping department of the Queen Elizabeth II Library, who came through with the maps I use here on very short notice. And, finally, thank you to my fellow graduate students, who put up with my stress and commiserated with me, sometimes even years after we all moved away, especially Mitch Fournie, Joy Brander, and Nehraz Mahmud. Those long hours at the office and our monthly suppers have stuck with me and are some of my favourite memories.

I'm grateful for the financial support that I've received throughout my studies, particularly to the Social Sciences and Human Research Council of Canada for the funding to complete my research and to Memorial University for the scholarship that enabled my education.

Finally, thank you to my amazing family. To my mother Sandra and to my brothers Jeffrey and Jonathan, who each helped and supported me in different ways throughout this process. To my children, who had to deal with multiple evenings and weekends of an absent mother locked in her office. And to my amazing husband, whose love, support, faith, and friendship got me through many, many moments where I just wanted to give up. I love you all so much: in many ways this is for you.

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## **Chapter 1**

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Introducing Douglastown

On the top of a hill, overlooking a spit of sand that divides an ocean from a river's estuary (see Figure 1), sits an imposing Catholic church dedicated to St. Patrick, flying the tri-colour Irish flag.<sup>1</sup> Sitting to the left of its front door is an all-white statue of St. Patrick, holding a single green four-leaf clover. The yellow brick church has green and orange trim and it is hugged by three buildings, a school, a hall, and a presbytery, constructed of the same yellow brick and decorated with the same green and orange. Together, these buildings dominate the landscape through their proximity, their uniformity, and their positioning. They likewise embody stories about the past and present of the people who live in this place.

These four buildings are an example of an ongoing process of boundary creation and maintenance peculiar to Douglastown – one among a series of small towns along the Gaspé coast in eastern Québec that was settled by predominately English-speakers in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 1970s, Douglastown was amalgamated with various other small townships to create the town of Gaspé, a process which stripped the community of its formal boundaries. The boundary process is now tied up with place-making and storytelling practices that, together, delineate which inhabitants may lay claim to the local Irish heritage of the town.

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<sup>1</sup> This geographic formation is called a barachois and its placement within the area is central to the structure of the place, both historically and currently (Mimeault 2005).

The people of Douglastown are in a state of transition, as the traditionally dominant Anglophone population dwindles, falling from 14.1% of the population in the town of Gaspé in 1996 to 11.6% in 2016, primarily due to an aging population and out-migration (Element 2003; Statistics Canada 1996, 2017; Vision Gaspé-Percé Now 2016). Those who remain are increasingly minoritized as Francophones migrate to the area, buying and building homes.

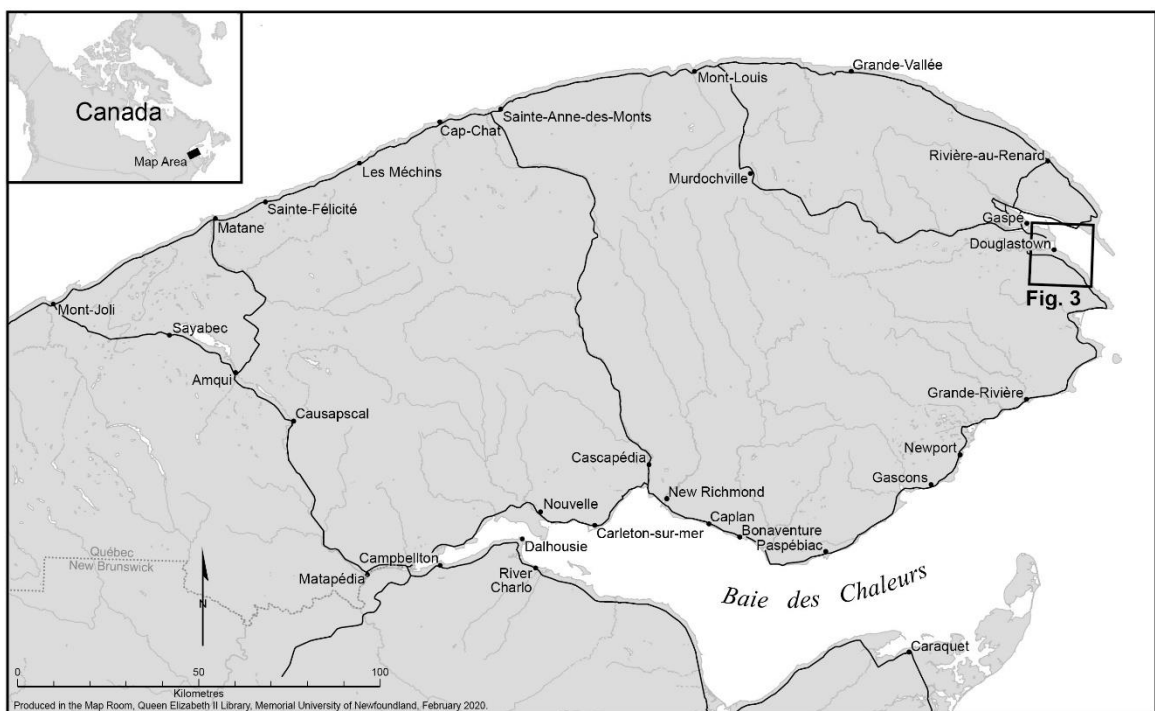


Figure 1: View of the Barachois at Douglastown. Photo provided and reproduced with permission of the Douglastown Community Centre in 2013.

The parameters of belonging within this community are fluid, shifting under specific circumstances and in contexts where the boundaries of the community are



challenged. Currently, the guidelines for inclusion are stretched by those within the boundaries to include more Anglophones and English-speakers as the socio-political and economic situation in the town evolves. The memories of Douglastown articulated today by the descendants of settlers from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century suggest that community belonging is and has been framed by three criteria, which reverberate throughout the community in numerous ways. They are comprised of Irish ancestry and links to the unique regional history; being Catholic or the descendant of a practicing Catholic family; and being a native English speaker. Those able to trace their ancestry back to the original Irish Catholic settlers form the basis of the ‘real Douglastowners’ who have dominated socially, economically, and politically since the time of European settlement in the 1800s



**Figure 2:** Towns along the Gaspé Coast, including the enlarged area featured in Figure 3 and reproduced in Figure 18. February 2020, Memorial University of Newfoundland Map Room, Queen Elizabeth II Library, St. John’s NL.

until the early-2000s. I argue that shared local and ancestral history, religion, and language have long constituted markers of belonging in Douglastown and that these parameters are key components to the processes of storytelling and place-making that characterize the communication of the town's history.<sup>2</sup>

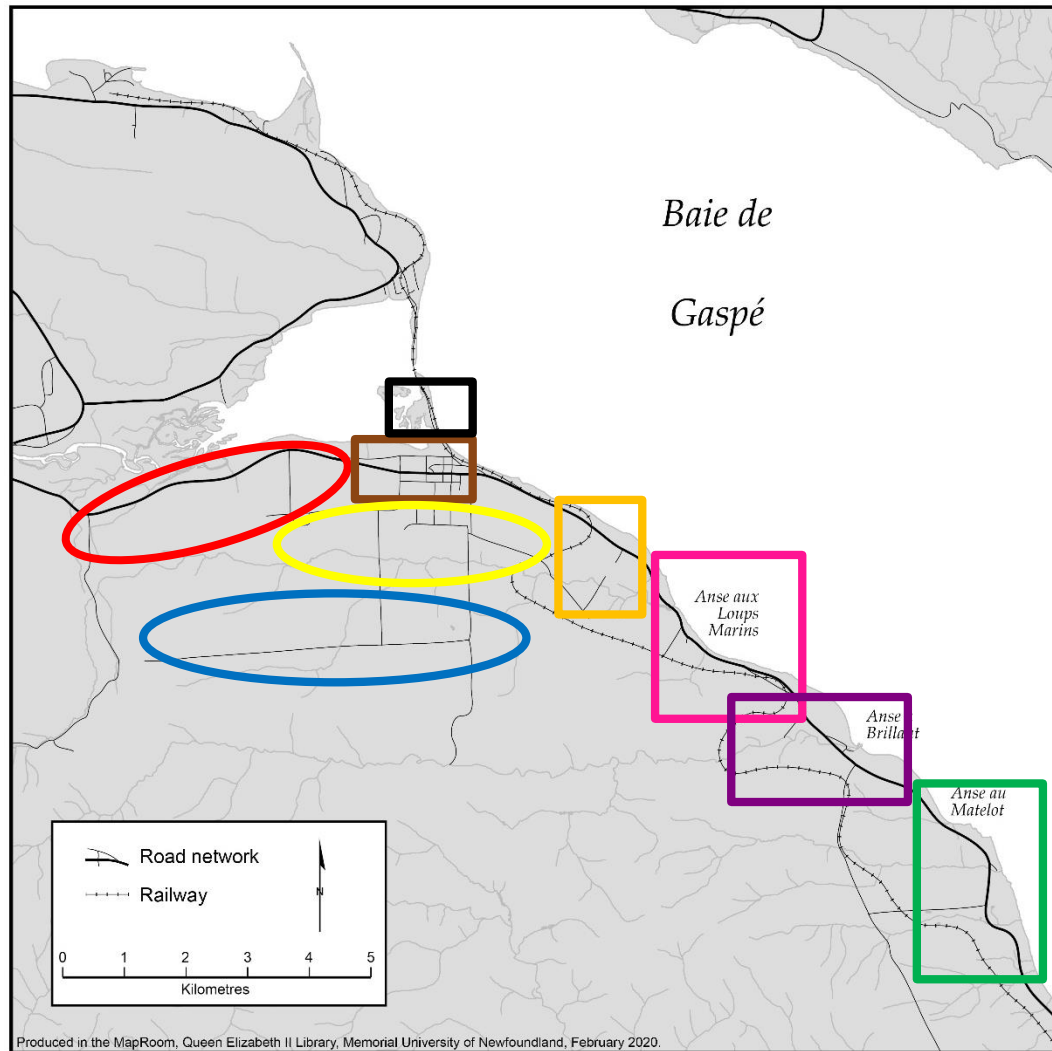
## 1.2 The Community of Douglastown

The three criteria that have historically framed belonging are integrally tied to the places of and within the community and to its landscape (Basso 1996; Bohlin 2001; Cruikshank 1998, 2005; Offen 2003). The geographical boundaries of the community, including the historical dimensions, can be seen in Figure 2. From its founding in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 1970s, Douglas Township stemmed from the Sap Peel Road, which leads to a popular scenic mountaintop, to the river at Bois Brûlé (White 1999). This township no longer exists and Douglastown is now said to spread from the Sap Peel Road to a train overpass bordering Seal Cove (Figure 3, see also Figure 18 on page 173).

The township as it once stood can be divided into nine areas, sub-divisions that grew out of conversations with residents of these places and which formed the geographical confines of the research for this thesis. Referring to Figure 3, these are: Up the Bay in red, Douglastown Core and the First Range in brown, On the Point in grey, the Second Range in yellow, the Third Range in blue, Big Head in orange, Seal Cove in pink, l'Anse à Brillant in purple, and Bois Brûlé and Prevel in green. For the purposes of mapping, I have grouped together the Core and the First Range. The Core is not a term

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<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, these same three criteria have been identified by Fournier (2001) as unique in Francophone Québec: "In one of his earliest writings, Falardeau identified what he called the 'something different' of French Canada – traits he found in the strength of Catholicism, the French language, and the uniqueness of historical events" (338).



**Figure 3:** A Breakdown of the Historic Douglas Township. February 2020, Memorial University of Newfoundland Map Room, Queen Elizabeth II Library, St. John's NL. Modified to include the shapes.

used locally; I have coined it to differentiate between it and the rest of the First Range, which extends to the beach, and the space along the current highway where the bulk of social activity takes place. As described at the beginning of this Introduction, this space includes the church, the rectory, the Community Centre, the Holy Name Hall, and the post office. These buildings are also sites for the numerous committees and organizations that work for the preservation of the Catholic Church, the promotion of an Irish heritage,

the cultural preservation and revitalization of the community, and the retention of the Anglophone community. Throughout this thesis, the term Douglastown is used to refer to the community as it is understood today, including some residents in the collective areas of the Core, the Ranges, and Up the Bay, whereas Douglas Township refers to the larger, historical space of all combined areas.

The nine areas designated above are the result of the geography of the region and how it has influenced the history of European settlement. This area of the Gaspé coast is the north-eastern edge of the peninsula in Eastern Québec (see Figure 2). It is characterized by the meeting of the Appalachian mountain chain, here named the Chic-Choc Mountains, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence (SEPAQ 2016). Many rivers flow from the mountains into the sea, creating sandy coves that allowed easy access for fishing, historically the primary occupation along the Gaspé Coast and the reason European settlement began in the region (Ommer 1989; Mimeault 2004; Samson 1986; Sinnett and Mimeault 2009). One of the largest rivers in this area, the St. John River, produces the barachois that distinguishes Douglastown from its surrounding communities. On the beach at Douglastown, the historical combination of a large wharf and a train station, built in the early 1910s, made the town an economic hub for the region during Douglastown's 'Golden Era,' which is roughly the time period following the Great Depression to Québec's political upheaval in the 1970s, when the secularization of the provincial government and the growth of Québec's sovereignty movement began (White 2001a).

Several nearby rivers also created natural harbours that became sites for European settlements centred on fishing; the Seal Cove River, the l'Anse à Brillant River, and Bois

Brûlé were all once defined by wharves or fishing harbours of their own, a testament to the strength of the cod fishery.<sup>3</sup> However, Douglastown held economic dominance and these surrounding communities became amalgamated into Douglas Township, which functioned as an independent municipality until the 1970s.

Being a resident of Douglas Township and participating in the economic life of the region did not necessarily translate into being a ‘Douglastowner,’ and the people from each of these coves cultivated senses of self, community, and place attachment that were not necessarily dependent on or related to the greater township. In essence, each became a tightly-knit community unto themselves with different connections to the greater idea of Douglastown.

### 1.3 Theoretical Orientation

#### *1.3.1 Emplacement, Place Attachment, and Landscape*

Many stories about Douglastown are part of a repository of communal memory and are closely linked with particular places in the community, exploring which of those hold significant meaning to the community’s past, and why. The longer that one’s family history is associated with places within Douglastown and the historical Township, the more important the communal stories and places become to a sense of self and community. In the case of some residents, their personal investment in Douglastown, where they invest meaning and importance into places and related narratives, has fed into

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<sup>3</sup> A train station and a harbour and wharf were also located in l’Anse à Brillant, which serviced the inland population as well as those on the coast. While both train stations closed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the wharf at l’Anse à Brillant is the only one still in use in the Township out of the four that once existed.

their conceptions of home. Further, their unique attachments to specific places have transcended their individual memories to create landmarks that are significant to the entire community.

The stories of Douglastown provide a window into how places are formed, articulated, and transmitted to others. Defined by and bound up in the social history of the area, which is characterized by a legacy of and attachment to Irish ancestry and the Catholic Church, the places of Douglastown hold incredible significance for many community members, particularly those who participate in an Irish, Catholic ancestry. This holds true for stories set in the distant past, where places are more accessible to the audience than the people in the narrative. Stories of the past provide a means of layering ancestral place attachment with personal meaning and thereby anchoring community members in terms of both their position within the parameters of belonging and the places of significance in the community. This process is achieved through a combination of emplacement and expressions of place attachment.

Emplacement in narrative is a means of embedding the audience in an immersive experience by recreating the settings of the story.<sup>4</sup> Familiarity with these settings allow elements of the narrative to be emphasized by the storyteller and encourages the audience to imagine the story being told. It likewise encourages both storyteller and audience to relate to the narrative and its settings on a physical and sensorial level, by invoking their own sense memories of that place (Feld 1996). The storytelling experience provides a unique opportunity to relate to place on multiple levels, the event of the narrative and its settings, as well as reinforcing notions of belonging within the community through a

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<sup>4</sup> This is touched on by Pink 2011.

personal and historical investment in the places referred to during the event. Supposing, as Pink (2011) does, “...a place-event...an intensity or nexus of things, in process and in relation to each other” that stems from “places as intensities of activity and presence, as experienced by embodied human subjects, from specific subjectivities” (349), the immersive experience of storytelling offers two facets in the place-event experience. The places within the community are connected to one another not merely through the settings of the story, but also through the place-events of story-telling, where the audience is called upon to relive their own stories of places within the context of the narrative event. The process of emplacement, then, entails experiencing the place-event of the narrative while simultaneously experiencing the settings of the story through personal, relatable encounters with place.

Emplacement has meaning through re-experiencing place attachment that is developed by investing meaning in place and incorporating it into the identity of the self and of community. As Sharon Roseman and Diane Royal (2018) explain, “place attachment...occurs as part of active, ongoing processes... [that] often include unpaid social reproductive labour” (Roseman and Royal 2018: 52), including lawn care and the beautification of individual homes (see Chapter 6). The consistent investment of time, labour, care, creativity, thought, and sense experience “[develops] emotional bonds to locations associated with specific sets of meanings, memories, social relationships, and activities across various spatial and temporal scales” (Low and Altman 1992 paraphrased in Roseman and Royal 2018: 52). Each place is a nexus of activity and meaning, “composed of entanglements of all components of an environment” (Pink 2011: 349) and part of a cultural narrative (350) that gives it definition within the broader community as

well as to an individual. Forming and invoking place attachment is an entire physical and sensorial experience, whereby “experiencing and knowing place – the idea of place as sensed, place as sensation – can proceed through a complex interplay of the auditory and the visual, as well as through other intersensory processes” (Feld 1996: 98). Place-making as a continual experience and investment over time creates a sense of place that can be further invoked through narrative, intentionally and unintentionally.<sup>5</sup>

Place attachment in Douglastown stems from personal investment in place-making, but the perspective of place within a broader cultural narrative lends it value beyond the individual, providing opportunities for multiple layers of meaning and attachment for community members. This is true for both public spaces like the beach, that are easily accessible to a large number of people (resident and non-resident), and for private property that becomes historically or culturally significant through associated narratives. Places of attachment, such as homes and tracts of land that have been in the same family for several generations (for some, this goes back to the time of European settlement), hold great meaning for those currently living there as a source of history, heritage, and pride. In these cases, place attachment for family members is accessible through the stories that are told of those places and through the time and work invested in property management, clearing trees, building infrastructure, and so on. The common lament that the landscapes of Douglastown have changed significantly in the last 50-60 years, reclaimed by brush, grass, and forest, is a comment on the amount of time, labour, industry, and vision of earlier generations that has been erased in recent years. When telling stories of places where families have invested for generations and that hold value

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<sup>5</sup> See Patterson 2015 for an example of how sense of place may manifest in the performance of music, dance, and social participation in Douglastown.



for the community as a nexus of historical significance, the attachment to place, its sense experience, and its communal relevance within the community is both confirmed and reinforced.

Place attachment frames the parameters of belonging through associations with heritage, history, and family. Coupled with developing and expressing a sense of place and processes of emplacement, place attachment as a measure of belonging necessitates a certain amount of personal investment. To belong to the community, one must actively participate in the making of places and of community, a task that necessitates being within the community space. Members of the community who have since moved away and no longer participate in community life have the potential to participate in these processes because they have a personal and familial history within the community. Yet, their absence from the places of significance means that they cannot continue to participate in the creation of the town in absentia. These potential members remain passive participants by keeping informed on people and activities within the town and through visiting.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, place conceptualizes the community and, by extension, is integral to how it conceptualizes itself.

As a cultural group, Gaspésians frequently express their attachment to place through a variety of means, including those who are no longer able to actively participate in place-making (see, for example, Boyle 2004, 2007; Boyle and the Barburners 2004; DeVouge 2010; Leggo 2011; LePage 2014. See Patterson 2014 and 2015 for how this affects the diasporic music community).<sup>7</sup> Many community members across Gaspé who

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<sup>6</sup> Other means include letter writing and phone calls to friends and family, subscribing to the local newspaper, and the increasingly dominant methods of social media and e-mail.

<sup>7</sup> Regarding the spelling of Gaspésians, I have chosen to follow the spelling convention most common within the community, supported by certain publications (such as Patterson 2014, 2017, and 2019).

have since moved away articulate a desire or a need to return to the area periodically. This is demonstrated in the lyrics to a song written by Paul Lepage for his wife, who grew up in Haldimand (a town across the barachois from Douglastown), entitled “The Sands of Haldimand” that emphasizes her need to return to Haldimand Beach in order to find herself and feel that she is at home. Specific places, like Haldimand Beach, are often cited as fundamental to this need according to individual life experience, clearly articulating how a strong attachment to place is fundamental to individual identity construction, but also on a scale that encompasses the entire cultural group of Gaspésians (Leggo 2011, see also Basso 1996; Bohlin 2001; Cole 2009; Daniels, Baldacchino, and Vodden 2015; Degnen 2015; Martin 2003; Offen 2003; Roseman and Royal 2018; Tuan 1991). This attachment is articulated in a variety of artistic works produced on the Gaspé coast and in the narratives associated with Douglastown.

As an active agent, place manifests through its influence on community residents, holding collective investments of memory, emotion, and narrative. While community members may understand and know the history of various places in Douglastown, they are also expected to invest in the town, creating their own individual stories and experiences of place and sharing them with others. This leads to the consistent creation of place where it, like community, is perpetually being created (Lustiger-Thaler 1994, see also Bohlin 2001; Brehm 2007; Daniels, Baldacchino, and Vodden 2015; Martin 2003; Nash 1999; Ó hAllmhuráin 2016; Tilley and Cameron-Daum 2017; Tuan 1991). Within this process, these places are constantly in flux in relation to one another as well, since they cannot be considered as separate, isolated units, but exist in concord with the

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However, spelling this term as Gaspésians is also acceptable and found within literature (see, for example, The Burlington Post 2009).

fluctuating meaning ascribed to them by each individual and by the community as a whole. Each place of significance within each individual story exists in a tapestry – an interconnected text that is both a compilation of many places and an active agent in its own right. Hence, individuals relate to specific places and to the tapestry of interconnected places in two ways: as members of the community with its communal memory and as individuals cultivating personal relationships to place.

This tapestry likewise contributes to the landscapes of Douglastown, which exist both within and without social relationships (see for example Basso 1996; Daniels, Baldacchino, and Vodden 2015; Guo 2003; Tilley and Cameron-Daum 2017). More than just background, landscape “is a part of ourselves, a thing in which we move and think” (Tilley and Cameron-Daum 2017: 5). It is not static, fixed, or unchanging, but is constructed consistently and often in contestation, depending on the individuals or groups involved. A conglomeration of places and the connections between them, landscape also encompasses the views that constitute and frame the places, actions, and lives of community members and residents. It remains fundamental to identity, history, culture, and place: “landscape as cultural process is dependent on the cultural and historical context...[it] is not only the background of human actions but the outcome of the engagement between people and world in particular historical and local conditions” (Guo 2003: 201). As the backdrop for community life and as an agent of personal and communal investment, landscape has a significant position within the narratives about places and community that form the parameters of belonging.

Place, then, is a multi-faceted concept that encompasses emplacement, place attachment, and landscape and is expressed, within this thesis, in concordance with

narrative. Julie Cruikshank (2005) describes the relationship between stories and place: “Humans persist in transforming seemingly neutral spaces into places of significance. A growing body of research about social memory argues that landscapes are places of remembrance and that culturally similar landforms may provide a kind of archive where memories can be mentally stored” (Cruikshank 2005: 11), where memories are accessible through written stories, oral history, and other forms of narrative (see also Basso 1996; Chase Smith et al. 2003; Lambert 2010; Offen 2003; Orlove 1990; Sletto 2009; Smith 2003). Place here is more than a context for daily life (Lefebvre 1991[1974]; Unwin 2000) – it transcends the everyday to become a repository of memory for individuals and communities, allowing a narrative to be built that, in turn, informs communal identities associated with place (Basso 1996; Bohlin 2001; Cruikshank 1998, 2005; Feld 1996). This echoes what Keith Basso (1996) has termed place-making, “a universal tool of the historical imagination” (5), that seeks to satisfy human curiosity about events in certain areas. Place-making requires imagination and memory to create “a particular universe of objects and events – in short, a *place-world* – wherein portions of the past are brought into being” (Basso 1996: 6, emphasis in original). Further, “if place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of *doing* human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities” (Basso 1996: 7, emphasis in original). This is accomplished through the telling and re-telling of stories, a vehicle for place-making and exploring emplacement. A place, then, is not only the venue for everyday life: it becomes the outward expression of an identity associated with the self and with relationships between that self and others in the past, present, and future.

### *1.3.2 Local Knowledge and the Reproduction of Stories*

As stories bring places into being, they create and transmit knowledge. Knowledge production through storytelling and place is neither static nor universally applicable (Cruikshank 2005). Instead, it is inherently emplaced and locally produced: “embodied in life experiences and reproduced in everyday behaviour and speech” (Cruikshank 2005: 9). Knowledge of the past is similarly re-enacted through personal encounters with places that hold historical meaning, reproduced in the present through the telling and re-telling of stories, and emplaced through the event of its telling and its settings (Cruikshank 1998; Fine and Haskell Spear 1992; Pink 2011). The reproductions or performances of narratives that explore historical themes, people, or events are neither separate from the social context of their enactment, nor divorced from personal investment, that is, the meaning individuals put into stories and places (Bauman 1984[1977]; Flueckiger 2003; Sawin 2002; Somers 1994; Wickwire 2005). As the telling of stories is a social activity, “created in the everyday situations in which they are told” (Cruikshank 1998: xv), they have meaning through their enactment and seek to project meaning from the storyteller to the listeners.

Narratives about the past, then, cannot be divorced from the present due to their performance and the reactions they engender from the audience. The storyteller is able “to speak the past into being, to summon it with words and give it dramatic form, to *produce* experience by forging ancestral worlds in which others can participate and readily lose themselves” (Basso 1996: 32, emphasis original). Together, both storyteller and audience bring the past into being through narrative in a complex process that involves the place-event of the narrative itself, the settings of the story and the senses of place associated with them, and the story being recounted (Feld 1996; Pink 2011).

Historical stories are not fixed deliveries of fact, but are dependent on individual interpretation, circumstance, and the frequency of their repetition.

And so, the historical narratives presented throughout this thesis are based on local knowledge and influenced by the cultural backgrounds and personal histories of storytellers and audiences. At the same time, these narratives simultaneously reflect the differences among the varied, sometimes competing, individuals and groups involved in highlighting and preserving the places and events of significance in Douglastown (Basso 1996; Bohlin 2001; Cruikshank 1998, 2005; Degnen 2015; Edwards 1998; Guo 2003; Jianxiong 2009; Nash 1999; Offen 2003; Silverman and Gulliver 1992; Stewart and Strathern 2003). As Bohlin (2001) describes, “the process of remembering is a profoundly social activity in which the past is invoked to construe, reproduce, or alter one’s relationship with the world” (274); while individuals tell similar stories differently and highlight some shared stories over others, its enactment is inherently social. Since any member of a community is or can become a storyteller, multiple narratives or interpretations of the past are available for those stories that hold communal importance and are repeated often (Cruikshank 2005; Langellier and Peterson 1992; Wickwire 2005).

From this collection of stories, a group emerges that support and validate one theme. Through repetition, this theme becomes dominant; not necessarily a single story, the dominant narrative theme is a means by which a collection of stories is in accord with itself and is the most commonly accepted collection within a particular group. While alternatives to the dominant narrative theme are not necessarily unknown, they may disappear through relative disuse over time. In Douglastown, a dominant theme both establishes and echoes the parameters of belonging: as an English-speaking, Catholic, and

Irish heritage defines the identity of the community, its inhabitants, and its places. The narratives that do not support the reproduction of these three criteria tend to be absorbed, forgotten, or altered until they conform to the tenets presented by the dominant theme.

While a dominant theme, like the one encountered in Douglastown, is reinforced by official organizations – in this context, the Catholic Church and (in the past) the Catholic English-language school – it is not separated from local knowledge production by inhabitants. Its reproduction is affected by “[t]acit knowledge embodied in life experiences and reproduced in everyday behavior and speech” (Cruikshank 2005: 9), as well as the circumstances involved in the telling of stories, including the particulars of each place-event. In sum, the theme itself may change over time and space, through repetition and challenges to the boundaries it sets (Silverman and Gulliver 1992; Somers 1994). Thus, “if the past can be invented once in response to changes in the present, then it can be (and has been) reinvented later on in further response” (Silverman and Gulliver 1992: 21, see also Hobsbawm 1983a, 1983b). The anthropology of history is one approach of accessing these inventions and reinventions, as well as the contextual effects that encourage a reformulation of a particular past (Silverman and Gulliver 1992).<sup>8</sup> This formulation allows an exploration of “how constructions of the past are used to explain the present...how the past is created in the present...[and] how the past created and recreated the past” (Silverman and Gulliver 1992: 16). In other words, the dominant narrative theme, while established over time, inherently remains subject to the concerns

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<sup>8</sup> Silverman and Gulliver (1992) are here using the terms “invention and reinvention” to refer to the process whereby “people explain the past to themselves, just as they explain, rationalize, and justify their present. From this perspective, history is ideology, and like any ideology, it is open to manipulation and reformulation while it is believed by many to be ‘true’ and correct” (20).

of the present through its narrative reproduction and through the place-events that create or encourage its re-telling.

In the small, rural, and long-established community of Douglastown, the dominant narrative theme relies on oral historical narratives, tied to place and landscape, that function to create the parameters of belonging to place and to community (see also Basso 1996; Casella 2012; Cruikshank 2005). In Douglastown, written versions of history tend to be closely tied to oral narratives and vice versa, whether as a source or as a point of contention (Casella 2012). The choice of narrative being told by the storyteller is influenced by an individual's sense of self as much as by circumstance, audience, setting, and so on. Flueckiger (2003) illustrates this when discussing how a Muslim woman in Hyderabad uses her self-identity as a healer to bring meaning to the narratives and performances of her stories, where they "frame and articulate a worldview in which spiritual healing is effective" (267). The maintenance of the dominant narrative theme is as susceptible to these variables as individual stories. Furthermore, the choice of which stories to tell and re-tell is, in turn, susceptible to the pressures of the dominant narrative theme, contributing to its evolution and establishment as a primary vessel to describe the people, places, and events within the community, while simultaneously affecting narratives that do not fit its basic tenets.

The reproduction of a dominant narrative is, at its core, a personal choice. The choice of which stories to tell, where to tell them, and how often they are repeated form the process of constructing communal narratives; that is, stories that are well known and accessible to all members of the community (Sawin 2002). The narrative is continuously being reproduced subject to individual interpretation, where storytellers are then able to



adapt the narrative to fit personal or political purposes. This is evident in the competition for financial resources to preserve community cultural activities and buildings (Historia 2012, as well as Irish Week and the Country Festival described in Chapter 3). And so, the narrative is shaped as it is told and retold by a variety of community members, thereby allowing the dominant narrative theme to come into being and be reinforced over time.

Next, a dominant narrative theme can become concretized through processes like commemoration. Commemoration takes particular stories and enshrines them in community memory by dedicating specific places or objects to groups, people, events, and more. For example, the street name “Loyalist Road” commemorates the first settler group in the area and a wooden cross stands as a monument to the presence of Francophones On the Point (as in Figure 16). As Azaryahu (1995) describes, “[c]ommemorative street names, together with commemorative monuments and heritage museums, not only evince a particular version of history, but are also participants in the ongoing cultural production of a shared past” (312). Further, “spatial commemorations in particular, which merge history and physical environment, are instrumental in the naturalization of the commemorated past” (Azaryahu 1995: 319), tying particular stories to particular locales, and bringing place into definitions of belonging (Azaryahu 1996; Basso 1996; Cruikshank 1998, 2005; Edwards 1998; Guo 2003; Nash 1999; Strathern 1981; Tuan 1991). Commemorative places within a community not only enshrine particular versions of history, they also provide focal points for narratives that lend legitimacy to the storyteller and reinforce the particular story being told. They validate particular communal narratives, as the St. Patrick statue on the church validates the Irish heritage of the community, and provide

convenient landmarks for storytelling purposes, serving as focal points for settings during storytelling events.

The relationship between place and narrative is a manifestation of the creation and maintenance of community for Anglophones in Douglastown, which, in turn, has fed into processes of belonging. Since the claim to an ancestral heritage has been one tool for framing belonging and an integral piece of storytelling practices, ascription to that heritage as a means of self-identity enhances the significance associated with processes of place-making, and the subsequent place-worlds of the sort Basso (1996) describes, by imbuing them with the ability to determine belonging to place. Coupled with Cruikshank's (2005) discussion of local knowledge, which comes from familiarity with and investment in one's surroundings, community members are able to communicate about people and places in forms that may not be recognizable or understood by outsiders without the framework experienced by community members.

### *1.3.3 Defining Community as a Reflection of the Dominant Narrative Theme*

And so, the dominant theme in Douglastown relies heavily on the narrative of Irishness and the related themes of local heritage, English language use, and Catholicism. Together, they have served to frame belonging to the community, defining places of significance which are, in turn, transmitted and re-affirmed through the process of storytelling. While the places that serve as focal points for storytelling are bounded within a particular geographic area, the community itself is not equal to "all people living within (or born within, or registered to vote within) a given territory" (O'Rourke 2006: 2). Rather, ascription to and reproduction of the dominant narrative theme is the measure

of belonging to the community, coupled with attachment to place and local heritage in a complex web that transcends the individual and echoes over generations of family members. There is a growing proportion of people living within the territory of Douglastown, and within the historic Douglas Township, that do not fit these criteria (for a similar situation, see Strathern 1981). Community, then, is framed by the parameters of belonging and investment in and knowledge of place and place-related narrative, rather than residence. Likewise, length of residence does not necessarily denote acceptance into the community. While place and place attachment are fundamental parts of community identity and heritage, living somewhere is insufficient to determine belonging in a community even where that attachment exists.

Gupta and Ferguson (1997) explain how places are imagined by those who live there as much as by those who live away (see also, Bohlin 2001). A variety in population therefore means a variety in imagining, relating to, and investing in place, belying the homogeneity that is assumed through ascription to or belief in the dominant narrative theme (for a similar situation within ethnic groups, see Talai 1986). Indeed, both old and new residents have expressed a strong attachment to the places and landscapes of Douglastown (see Chapter 6). However, being privy to and complicit in creating narrative in and through place does not equate inclusion within the community, even when the stories being told are part of the dominant narrative theme. Community is better defined flexibly, as Diane O'Rourke (2006) details:

Without the assumption that residence in a place and membership in a group are naturally attached, local community must be imagined in at least four senses: 1) its existence as a group of mutually-obligated people linked with that locale; 2) as belonging to a place bounded from other places; 3) its identity, what type of community it is; 4) the basis for membership in or exclusion from the group (O'Rourke 2006: 3).

Claiming an Irish heritage is a fundamental tool when implementing O'Rourke's definition in Douglastown. Thus: 1) many of the families descended from the original European settlers are inter-linked through marriage, thereby creating mutual-obligation and a desire to help one another. Even if this is not the case, the culture of the community is such that neighbours have been expected to help one another when needed. One of the complaints community members have about recent in-migrants is that the latter do not seek to help, socialize with, or otherwise interact with their neighbours, thereby changing the nature of their understanding of an assumed relationship between being part of a community within the place of residence;<sup>9</sup> 2) Irishness sets a physical and cultural limit to what may be defined as Douglastown based on the historical limits of Douglas Township coupled with participation in or a relationship to Catholicism and English language use; 3) an Irish heritage gives some community members a means of defining themselves as separate and distinct from other community members and from those in nearby communities; and 4) Irishness provides the basis for establishing, enforcing, and detailing the other boundary criteria through its historical association with those Europeans who first settled the town.

That being said, community is always "in the making" (Lustiger-Thaler 1994: 21); the Irishness of Douglastown cannot be assumed as static and unchanging over time and space. In fact, as the theme relies on storytellers for its reproduction, the preoccupations

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<sup>9</sup> Here and elsewhere in the thesis, I am following the designations of residents laid out by Brehm (2007) of native residents (defined as those born and raised within the community and who are currently living there – typically, I prefer the use of community member when referring to 'real Douglastowners'), long-term residents, and recent in-migrant, as well as adding the designation of out-migrant, with the understanding that out-migrants may also be frequent visitors. For clarification, I define long-term residents roughly as those living in the community for over 10 years, recent in-migrants as less than 10 years, and out-migrants as those who have had permanent residence outside of the community for a significant period of time. These are defined as length of residence at the time of research, in 2012.

of the present may inform individual interpretation of the past (Edwards 1998). The current emphasis on being Anglophone in general and Irish in specific is related to the arrival of new migrants over the past two decades, coupled with out-migration and a general aging of the original population (Vision Gaspé-Percé Now 2016). As community members see themselves ‘dying out,’ they have held onto the pieces that differentiate them from others (Peace 1989). This, coupled with evidence of a strong interest in ancestry and community heritage, feeds a re-evaluation of who the community is, how membership is defined, where the boundaries of belonging ought to be established, and the flexibility of those boundaries.

#### *1.3.4 Defining the Boundaries of Community Belonging*

The dominant narrative theme provides the framework for understanding the historical boundaries of belonging and thereby determining who could have traditionally laid claim to community membership. Such boundaries are established by and through the identity that individuals ascribe to a community (Badone 1987; Cohen 2000; Nyamjoh 2011; Strathern 1981; Talai 1986; de Vidas 2008). The identity of Douglastowners was historically linked to the dominant historical theme of an emplaced Irish heritage accessible through narrative (Basso 1996; Cruikshank 2005; Somers 1994).<sup>10</sup> This applies to the construction of the town’s history, to the way that the

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<sup>10</sup> In recent years, these narratives have most commonly been reproduced during Irish Week, a festival celebrating an Irish heritage, which usually contains several presentations on the history of the community. Having their history discussed during this festival reinforces the dominant narrative even if the subject matter is only subjectively related to Douglastown. The best example of this is the *Carricks* shipwreck, which will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2, as well as in Ó hAllmhuráin 2016 and 2020.

English-speaking residents have and do describe themselves, and to how the community presents itself to outsiders (including those residing within the community).

The use of history and ancestry as a basis for identity is a choice that is consistently made by community members in the present and is therefore affected by the concerns, preoccupations, and goals of each person. While members of different cultural groups interpret and ascribe different meanings to the same event, revolving around the fluidity of historical events and how their interpretation influences perceptions of the past (Cruikshank 2005), “participation in [a]...group does not necessarily connote or require that the members so drawn share corporate interests or one set of values” (Talai 1986: 252).<sup>11</sup> Thus, the homogeneity assumed through a majority of community members investing in one dominant narrative theme obscures the nature of choice and lends it the appearance of inevitability. However, individuals hold variable goals when reaffirming the dominant narrative theme, as do their audiences. In Douglastown, the town is remembered in narrative as a vibrant, thriving place of economic, religious, and social significance, that has now been relegated to the position of ‘bedroom community’ for the town of Gaspé. This has significantly affected the identity of the community as a whole and of its individual members. Using the dominant narrative theme to define how the community is remembered allows the boundaries of belonging to appear normalized and inevitable, thereby naturalizing their definition of community and of identity.

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<sup>11</sup> Talai is referring to an ethnic group in this 1986 article. The community in Douglastown shares many of the same characteristics as ethnic groups within Talai’s definition, but not all: “Ethnic consciousness is achieved and maintained through inter-group competition [for resources]” (1986: 265). From consciousness to the development of an ethnic identity, “ethnic ascription provides a sense of possible community between people recognizing each other as belonging to the same ethnic category” (Talai 1986: 266). For community members in Douglastown, a shared Irish history is not enough of a factor to develop an ethnic consciousness, particularly in comparison with identity as a minority-language Anglophone in Québec. Rather, the shared mindset expresses itself through local heritage.

The establishment of a community identity, then, is more complex than a group of individuals who continuously ascribe to one set of norms and traditions (Talai 1986). According to individuals who have been both included and excluded throughout their lifetimes, the parameters of belonging are perceived to have been applied differently in the past than they are in the present. Now, the framework appears to be broadened to include greater numbers of English-speakers living in and around the historical Township, even as the boundaries are articulated most concisely by those who feel they are or have been excluded from belonging in the past. This opens up the narratives and their associated places to a wider audience, who may not have experienced the same level of emotional and cultural investment, and reconstructs narratives into teaching tools that transmit the local, cultural significance of certain traditions to others.

The creation and maintenance of boundaries provides a framework for establishing community through processes of inclusion and exclusion; through time, they provide a basis for members deciding what or who does and does not belong (Cohen 1982). This in turn affects the evolution of dominant narrative themes and forms place attachment by choosing who contributes to building the places of meaning within the community and the communal narrative. While the boundaries themselves may be flexible, the framework that guides their application has been created and developed over time. This framework does not change in substance, even as it is blurred, hidden, combined, and influenced, as dictated by changing social, political, economic, and other circumstances (Gidal 2014: 104-105). In this sense, the community itself “emerges as an affective patterning of social practices closely tied to people’s ongoing desires for collective exchanges and need-satisfaction” (Lustiger-Thaler 1994: 21). Strathern (1981) notes of

Elmdon: “We have seen that ‘real Elmdon’ is best thought of as an idea rather than a set of people as such...the core families who are most regularly cited as real Elmdon are not a segment of the population sociologically bounded off from the rest...it is the boundary-*effect* of the image we have to explain” (82, emphasis original). The effects of the boundaries in Douglastown on those who have been excluded tie directly to issues of power and accessibility to the dominant narrative theme and the places of significance within the town.

#### 1.4 The Context

In Douglastown, community and identity are tied to place and to the relationships between the small, colloquial subdivisions that divide the historical Township and the greater town of Gaspé. These locally-defined boundaries are apparent within the Anglophone minority, where communities define themselves in part through comparison with their neighbours. Hence, the encounters between different factions or groups within what appears to be a homogenous whole “may involve a perpetual debate in which participants strive to impress their views on one another and in the process influence the organization and boundary of their...group” (Talai 1986: 252).<sup>12</sup>

The community of Douglastown has always existed within the context of the greater Gaspesian population, and this is especially true for the current English-speaking population. The community under study is one of many along the coast that once had a population of majority English-speakers. Other nearby communities to the north and south (such as Haldimand, Wakeham, York, parts of Gaspé, Lobster Cove, Barachois,

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<sup>12</sup> See previous footnote.



Malbay, and so on) were similarly largely Anglophone.<sup>13</sup> Douglastown differentiates itself from other historically Anglophone areas in Gaspé by promoting an Irish heritage. This process of differentiation comes at least in part because of increasing touristic and academic interest in the area over the past two decades, which encourages the retelling and exploration of the community's past. It is reinforced by cultural activities, projects, and events influenced by increasing numbers of French-speaking residents, who affect the composition of the town, as well as increased promotion of the Anglophone community (Vision Gaspé-Percé Now 2016).

The historical European populations on the Gaspé coast consisted of pockets of English-speaking and French-speaking populations living in different areas that bordered one another (Almond 2010; Mimeault 2004; Sinnett and Mimeault 2009). These European settlers arrived to land that was held by the Mi'gmaq, who currently form the nations of Gespeg, Gesgapegiag, and Listuguj. Interactions between these three groups, French settlers, English settlers, and Mi'gmaq inhabitants, appear to have been primarily for economic purposes, as described in Paul Almond's (2010) fictional rendition of early settler life on the Gaspé Coast. Here, for example, Almond describes the differences and relationships between New Carlisle, a Loyalist settlement, and neighbouring Paspébiac, a French-populated working-class town, in the first book of his fictive, historically-based *The Alford Saga*, set in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (around 1800).<sup>14</sup> These two communities are described in the novel as fundamentally different – from the ship-building culture of French-speakers who participate in the truck system to the farming settlement of New

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<sup>13</sup> The communities listed here currently comprise parts of present-day Gaspé and Percé.

<sup>14</sup> Loyalists was a term applied to British sympathizers who moved north into the British colonies of what would become Canada, following the American War of Independence in 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Carlisle.<sup>15</sup> The view of the Loyalist agriculturists toward the French labourers can be summarized in the following quote, where the protagonist (a deserter from the British army who is currently hiding as a French ship-builder in Paspébiac) is questioning a New Carlisle settler:

“Sir, forgive my ignorance, but why are you United Empire Loyalists all in New Carlisle? Why not in Paspébiac?”

“No choice. They brought us here and told us any land to the east and west was taken up by them damned French Acadians. Lieutenant-Governor Cox’s doing” (Almond 2010: 118).

While the relations between these two communities are portrayed in the novel as strained, at least from a social perspective, the many communities along the coast did participate in mutually-beneficial economic relationships. That being said, they frequently operated through an impartial third party, most commonly Robin, Jones and Whitman Ltd., a fishing company that virtually monopolized the cod industry along the coast and throughout Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (Beaton Institute Archives – Memory NS n.d.; Mimeault 2004; Samson 1986; Sinnett and Mimeault 2009).

When the provincial government amalgamated the smaller townships in the 1970s to create the towns and municipalities as they stand now (for Douglastown, this meant amalgamation into the town of Gaspé), coupled with the passing of legislation designed to protect the French population of Québec in the same time period, the primacy of these English-speaking pockets began to recede economically and politically (Caldwell 1994; Fortier 1994; Fournier 2001; Hamers and Humel 1994; Schmid, Zepa, and Smite 2004).

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<sup>15</sup> The truck system is an economic model whereby the employee is paid for labour in goods as opposed to money. Within this system, the employee would usually receive the goods necessary for a season of work on credit, gambling that the work would be adequate to pay off the balance at the end of the season (Higgins 2007; Ommer 1989; Samson 1986).

Over time, residents were faced with their categorization as a linguistic minority, one that subsequently became more pronounced as out-migration increased due to declining opportunities for employment and other reasons, leaving behind a largely monolingual, aging, Anglophone population (Patterson 2014; Vision Gaspé-Percé Now 2016). Before this point, Anglophones were able to conduct their business and their social lives by contacting the Francophone community as much or as little as they desired. The passing of Bill 101 in 1977 made French the official language of the province and ultimately required the Anglophone population to change the language of business from English to French. Simultaneously, the legislature sparked a social change that prioritized Francophones by requiring that all individuals, groups, employers, government employees, and others providing services speak in French. This social change and the movements that led to this and other legislative changes is referred to as the Quiet Revolution in Québec, a social and political movement in the province from the 1960s to the 1980s.<sup>16</sup>

The change in legislation concerning language usage, as well as the separatist movement in Québec that called for independence from Canada and the subsequent referendums in 1980 and 1995, has had a two-fold effect on the Anglophone population: (1) it created solidarity among English-speakers in opposition to French-speakers, who were then characterized as ‘other’ and essentially different in terms of social relationships;<sup>17</sup> and (2) it created a perception among Anglophones that their community

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<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 5 for a more in-depth discussion of this movement.

<sup>17</sup> For example, some of the rhetoric from the Anglophone population about Douglastown’s relationship to the town of Gaspé as a whole and about the new migrants is paraphrased as follows: Douglastown is a bedroom community for Gaspé; Francophones don’t appreciate the view (a colloquial term meaning a view of the water) of Douglastown, they would rather be back in the woods where it is more private; French-speaking neighbours are less interested in getting to know/helping out their Anglophone neighbours than vice versa; and so on.

was being subsumed by the Francophone population and subsequently had a limited future. As a result of a perceived threat to the continuity of the Anglophone population, communities like Douglastown emphasized their roots and asserted their histories of settlement in the area as though the memory of their contributions to its development were also in danger of disappearing, a sentiment that is not entirely unfounded given their relative obscurity in past works about Québec's history (such as that described by Ronald Rudin's 1985 exploration of Anglophone populations in Québec). Simultaneously, perpetuating and consistently advocating a 'dying culture' rhetoric (for another example of this, see Peace 1989), leads to what Richard Element (2003) describes as the socialization of young people to leave the area in order to achieve personal success. At the same time, by holding so tightly to the importance of their history and culture and by consistently citing an attachment to place (for example, LePage 2014), the older generation instills a strong sense of Gaspesian heritage in their children (Leggo 2011).

Thus, within the perspective that the traditionally Anglophone areas are dying, lies a counter-current of pride and a need to assert their unique culture and heritage. Gaspesians tend to characterize themselves as 'just different' from people in other places, regardless of the languages they speak. For example, a recent article in the *Montreal Gazette* explored the difference in speech patterns found in a study by Charles Boberg and Jenna Hotton (2015) among English-speakers on the Gaspé coast: "roughly 9,000 native English-speakers still inhabit the region, and the way they use the language helps define them as a community" (Abley 2015: n.p.). Further, an article published in the English-language newspaper, *The Gaspé Spec*, describes a phenomenon occurring in the Baie des Chaleurs area of "halves," where people of all language groups are cutting bills

in half and using the two pieces as a form of barter (Gagné 2015). The trend is portrayed as a way to reinforce community ties and this, in turn, is portrayed as “different” from what typically happens in other places. One of the pioneers of this movement is quoted as saying: “The ideal scenario would be to create our own Gaspesian currency,” illustrating a desire to reiterate just how different the Gaspesian communities are from others across the country (Gagné 2015).

And so, it is within this tension between perceived cultural death yet proud and proclaimed difference that the community of Douglastown articulates its individuality within the larger Gaspesian culture. By promoting itself as a place of Irish heritage, it carves a piece of the cultural pie for its own. This effort is echoed significantly in only one other place along the coast, Cascapédia-Saint-Jules (near New Richmond and the reserve of Gesgapegiag, see Figure 2), despite the presence of Irish migrants in other places in the Gaspé Peninsula. Indeed, these two Irish communities are unusual in the province of Québec, where many Irish migrants were assimilated into Francophone language and culture as a result of a shared Catholicism, particularly those outside of metropolitan areas like Montréal (Akenson 1996; Redmond 1985; Rudin 1985). As such, Douglastown’s Irish heritage activities have an edge in the fight for resources, primarily federal and provincial government provided financial resources for cultural projects, like the Douglastown Irish Week and the restoration of the Holy Name Hall (Historia 2012). Since Douglastown can lay claim to this unique heritage, it is in a better position to preserve its institutions and historical places than the smaller members of its once-municipality, such as Seal Cove, l’Anse à Brillant, and Bois Brûlé. This has subsequently affected how the parameters of belonging have been stretched today, as opposed to how

they are perceived to have existed in the past: where these communities cultivated identities separate from Douglastown in past generations, they are now encouraged to adopt the larger fold of Douglastowner identity.

### 1.5 The Research Process

The research that informs this thesis was collected in 2012 over six months of ethnographic fieldwork that relied on three methods: interviews with 17 participants, participatory mapping with 11 participants, participant observation, and the collection of a number of text: those archived in the Gaspé Museum and the Douglastown Community Centre as well as publications that were locally produced, based on local subjects, and/or sold in Gaspé. The interviews were thematic and unstructured; essentially, all participants were asked what they would like to share about Douglastown and, for participatory mapping, if they would draw a map of Douglastown. This provided a window into what the term ‘Douglastown’ conveys in terms of community, place, routes, and connections between each of these. Interviewees were chosen from a variety of locations, demographic characteristics, and backgrounds. For example, long-term residents identifying as Anglophone with long histories of familial residence in the area were interviewed along with other residents with varying lengths of time in Douglastown or the town of Gaspé generally. The latter group included French-speakers (Francophones and those from bilingual households), people who grew up elsewhere but now live in Douglastown, people who live in Gaspé or Douglastown in the summer and elsewhere the rest of the year, and people living in Gaspé but outside of Douglastown. I combined these criteria with as many different age groups, religious backgrounds, employment, marital status, and gender as possible to obtain the most diverse group of participants

accessible in the time frame of the research. Pseudonyms are used in some cases to protect the identity of individuals who indicated that they would prefer a pseudonym be used for their contributions overall and for the case of sensitive materials. The use of pseudonyms is indicated when applied. In other cases, individuals indicated that they wished to use their own names.

It should be mentioned that the group of people I interacted with the most, and who had the most to offer in terms of stories, were members of a specific type of group referred to as “committee culture” by Frances Oxford (1981), who cautions “one can place too much emphasis on the organisers; they stand out and are noticeable” (Oxford 1981: 227). Given the confines of my time within the community, it was easiest to establish strong connections with people inside this group because I could spend larger amounts of time with them by volunteering on various committees and at community events. Due to the small size of the community, the same people often occupied the role of organizer or volunteer on multiple committees, such as the Irish Week Organizational Committee, the Committee for the Holy Name Hall, the Fabrique (non-clerical leaders in the church), and the Douglastown Community Centre Board of Directors. Each of these committees is dedicated, in some way or another, to the promotion of either an Irish past in the spirit of cultural preservation, tourist promotion, or the preservation of the church. The other portion of participants not directly involved in the committee life of Douglastown, such as those without the same vested interest in promoting Douglastown (i.e., people outside of the community, members of the community in outlying areas, new residents, and so on), tended to have a particular interest in history and the historical constructions of either their own communities or the Gaspé coast as a whole.

A final word must be said of my participation as a researcher in this community. My interest initially stemmed from curiosity about why this place in particular promotes a strong Irish identity after over 200 years of settlement, and why residents felt they needed to distinguish themselves from surrounding Anglophone communities. I knew about Douglastown because I was raised in an Anglophone family and grew up in the nearby community of l'Anse à Brillant. I was raised to have a very strong sense of attachment to the particular place where I grew up and a strong sense of pride in the English-speakers along the coast as a whole. However, this identity was always differentiated from Douglastown, no matter that I frequently participated in the life of that community throughout childhood and adolescence. Hence, my interest in the subject stemmed from a long-term interest in the constructed difference between Douglastown and its neighbours.

That being said, this connection meant that I held a particular position as a researcher. I was simultaneously part of the community as a member of the larger historical Township, and not part of it as I no longer lived in and contributed to the community. Further, I do not self-identify as a 'Douglastowner.' However, when I volunteered on committees in Douglastown, I was accepted as though I were as much a part of the community as anyone else. Thus, as a member/non-member, my research was perceived as the efforts of a native-born individual attempting to reconstruct their *own* history, which is quite common as a number of people with ties to the area have recently done the same (such as Al White's Douglastown Historical Review 1999-2006 and Elaine Réhel's genealogical compilation 2008). However, the research was also perceived as that being conducted by an outsider academic, which is also becoming more common as researchers have recently been in the community from the Université de



Laval, Concordia University, and, as of 2015, another student from Memorial University. I found it difficult to negotiate the achievement of a balance between being a researcher and a participant, similar to how Strathern (1981) explains her experiences as a “resident observer” and how this differed from traditional anthropological methods:

The anthropologist in an exotic community is in a sense play-acting, trying to learn the ways of the people and to follow them as far as possible, asking to be taught how to cultivate, to cook, to entertain, to pray. The role of a learner was accepted by the African communities I worked in... But for an English woman working in an English village, and a permanent resident at that, the situation was very different. There was no need to explain my presence... Nor was there any necessity to explain Elmdon ways of living to me...It would have been absurd to try to act like a villager or to imitate an Essex dialect... [And so] a student newcomer could identify with one group as an anthropologist in an unfamiliar society tries to do, but a resident of some years’ standing has already been placed in a sub-culture (xviii-xix).

For me, this problem was exacerbated because I grew up in l’Anse à Brillant, meaning my place as a community member within the Township has been firmly entrenched since childhood. However, I discovered that the community in Douglastown had changed enough that there were expectations of me that I did not anticipate, and levels of knowledge that I was expected to have but did not due to my absence for most of my adult life. On the other hand, as Rieti (1991) notes, “even ‘insiders’ can become ‘outsiders’ when they have a microphone or pen in hand” (214); indeed, my position as a community member did not negate the trepidation that came with the interview process and I experienced people reluctant to be interviewed despite my familiarity and personal history within the community.

And so, my precarious place as insider-outsider led to my decision to become involved in “committee culture,” despite having other means of accessing the community. Further, given the rural nature of the town, it also provided the best opportunities for

participant observation. Being a member of various committees and a volunteer at community events allowed me to quickly re-integrate into the community and ultimately led to a more varied group of participants.

### 1.6 The Structure of this Thesis

The parameters of belonging within an emplaced Anglophone identity as a Douglastowner are derived from the three main criteria listed above: history, religion, and language. The chapters of this thesis are structured to capture these criteria with the topic of history divided into two chapters: Chapter 2 focuses on stories about the history of Douglastown and Chapter 3 concentrates on others forms of expressing heritage. Although each criterion is dealt with in a separate chapter, with Chapters 4 and 5 dealing with Catholicism and language, respectively, this should not imply that the topics are mutually exclusive. In fact, they support and reinforce one another, all under the influence of the dominant narrative theme. Finally, Chapter 6 is dedicated to landscape, maps, and places to show how Douglastowners engage with places and place-making to not only define belonging to the community, but also to provide the link between past and present, community and self, and to set a framework for narrative.

## Chapter 2

### Stories of the Past

Stories told of the past have their own history, one that may change and evolve over time, influenced by the needs and circumstances of their telling and how that telling is interpreted (Cruikshank 2005). Constructing historical stories as they are reflected in the present day depends on a number of factors, like economics, power relations, and social status, and their transmission fulfills a specific purpose. In Douglastown, the stories most frequently referred to in publications, conversation, and interviews revolve around a single narrative theme, which is indisputably built on a foundation of Irish immigration. The theme functions to overshadow alternative stories and thereby present an homogenized face of the community to outsiders. Its application to historical stories indicates that the majority of migrants into the area were Irish (with the notable exceptions of Loyalists and one group of Francophones who remain in communally-shared stories), and that these migrants were responsible for building the town and its institutions.<sup>18</sup> Further, the life of the ancestral Irish settler established a personal and communal identity that is still accessible today.<sup>19</sup> This chapter explores some of the ways that stories of Irish settlement in the town are presented and how these presentations create and reinforce a sense of local identity, knowledge, and attachment to place that is dependent on Irishness. The historical stories and their significance are accessible

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<sup>18</sup> To qualify, the Irish that appear in the stories of historical immigration to Douglastown are also spoken of, or assumed to be, primarily Catholic and pre-Famine migrants. This is interesting when placed in conjunction with Angèle Smith's (2004) discussion of Irish migration to Canada, where "[during the] early stage of immigration to Canada [between 1825 and 1845], most Irish were Protestant and settled, not in the cities, but in rural areas," which roughly concurs with the time of settlement in Douglastown.

<sup>19</sup> Notably absent from these stories are the Indigenous peoples of the Gaspé, specifically the Mi'gmaq and Métis, whose histories are overlooked in favour of a focus on European settlement.

through the ways they have changed over time and through the role of constructing and re-constructing a dominant historical theme in the intersection of personal and community identity.

## 2.1 Written Sources on Douglastown's History

A sense of how the narrative theme has been built and reinforced is accessible through multiple avenues. One of these entails exploring different written sources and comparing similar stories that occur in multiple places. While no comprehensive history of the community exists as a published work, locally produced summaries of Douglastown's history and that of its surrounding areas have been circulated (DeVouge 2010; White 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; Phillips 1990; Réhel 2008; Leggo 2013). The most popular of these sources is a collection of leaflets published independently by Al White (who does not and has never resided in the town) named "The Douglastown Historical Review" (henceforth the DHR). The DHR has 13 issues (White 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006) and was sold locally at a gas station in Douglastown, as well as through privately contacting the author, until production stopped in 2006. The purpose of this collection was to assemble a collective history, spearheaded and researched by White, but revolving around requests from readers. As one issue begins: "I received a letter some time ago from [a woman in Ontario] who told me she was interested in finding her... 'roots.' Her only problem was she didn't know how to get started" (White 2001a).

The collective and interactive nature of these publications also allows for the input of its audience. Each issue ends with the request to correct any mistakes that readers observe: “I try not to make mistakes but mistakes will happen. If you find any errors then please let me know,” and subsequent issues contain these corrections: “In issue #8, page 16, I made the mistake of interchanging the names...and came up with [a] fictional character... My apologies for the mistake. I have reprinted the corrected column for the...family below” (White 2003: 28). While it relies heavily on White’s text, the DHR also contains captioned pictures, photocopies of primary documents, lists of names, personal recollections of community members, reproductions from other cultural studies and articles, and maps. It specifically targets one section of Douglastown’s populace, as it was published only in English and sold locally, but its reach extends into other places with Anglophone residents in the town of Gaspé. The DHR is an excellent example of maintaining and transmitting the dominant narrative theme because it recounts common stories, reinforces the places attached to these narratives, and amends its text according to the concerns and interests of its audience.

The first issue of the DHR explores the creation of the town, surveyed for and formed by Loyalist settlers coming to Canada following the American Revolution in 1785. It lists the original settlers, most of whom left by the early 1800s, paving the way for later Irish immigrants through the creation of lots and a system for land grants. Subsequent issues typically follow the genealogy and movements of various families; thus, there is an edition that follows the Briand family, another that records the history of the McDonalds, and so on. The majority of the issues are specific to family names that still exist in the community and are often inspired by individuals with familial ties to the

town. Other issues that do not specifically feature a family name or names may do so by default through the association between family and place. For example, an historical exploration of a specific settlements, such as Bois Brûlé, will focus on the families who resided there; in this case, according to the DHR, the White family was predominant in that community for much of its history.

Consistent repetition of family names in accordance with certain areas effectively defines membership for each small settlement, with the implication that those who have an ancestral history associated with specific surname belong to particular places. Conversely, the implication for those without that connection to these same places is that they may not belong to the same degree and in the same manner. The presence of a long, shared history invested in place holds an implication that is tantamount to community belonging. This has two consequences and implications in Douglastown: first, as any Francophone residents of Douglastown in the past and present are not the targeted audience of the publication, they are excluded in both the history of the places as discussed within the DHR and in the idea of community belonging. This is echoed in other historical publications about the area, and across the Gaspé region as a whole, which tend to omit specific groups. For example, Indigenous histories and participation in the development of the region, specifically the Mi'gmaq, are excluded in history texts after initial European settlement is discussed and Métis histories or development are not referred to at all (Mimeault 2004; Sinnett and Mimeault 2009). Second, the Anglophone families focused on in the DHR are located within specific territories, thereby linking belonging to place. Thus, for example, the Briands and the McDonalds belong in Douglastown, not in Seal Cove, and the Leggos belong in l'Anse à Brillant, not in Big

Head. This works to compartmentalize belonging and place attachment according to familial associations and local heritage.

The majority of the issues of the DHR, then, are specific to family names and communities within Douglas Township and do not analyze the area as a unified whole. This occurs implicitly, although newer documents published about the region tend to group all English-speakers together.<sup>20</sup> Notable exceptions to this geographic grouping of Anglophone families are issues of the DHR that explore active participation in war. White catalogues the men from various communities who enlisted in a separate issue for World War 1 and the Battle of Hong Kong, a story that is remembered in other local written sources (Fortier 2005). In these two issues, White presents the enlistment of young men as an effort from the historical Township as a whole, rather than a separate sacrifice from each town. He goes to great effort to ensure that all soldiers are remembered and named:

That's when it happened. I started to run across the names of veterans who were not on my original list. Some of these names were from Haldimand and Sandy Beach... The Review is intended to preserve the history of Douglas Township which includes those communities. I needed to tell the story of these men as well. I also came across the names of veteran's who's [*sic*] families had left Gaspé [*sic*] either before or after the war. Their contribution had simply been forgotten by those who had remained behind (White 2002b: 1).

The suspension of the place-based community and familial attachment for events on a global scale, as well as White's determination to include all veterans from the area, suggests solidarity within the Anglophone community in the sending off of young men,

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<sup>20</sup> For example, the ways that the English-speaking communities are presented in documents like Vision's (2016) *Community Profile* and the collaborative *Regional Profile: English-Speaking Communities of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine* by CASA, CAMI, and Vision (2016).

in rejoicing for those who returned, and in grieving for and ultimately commemorating those who died overseas.<sup>21</sup>

The DHR was published from 1999 to 2006, and while it comprises the most comprehensive history published about Douglastown, it is not the only account. It is therefore in a position to either support or challenge earlier published accounts about the history of the area. A prime example of the DHR's role in constructing and reinforcing Irish-themed narratives concerns the naming of Douglastown (another example of this type of process is presented in Casella 2012). This story has two versions in circulation: the oldest tells how the town was named for a Scottish surveyor named Douglas. The first issue of the English-language newspaper, *The Gaspé Spec*, has a photo-based article on Douglastown entitled "The early years... Douglastown 1775-1975" that begins with the following sentence: "The area overlooking Gaspe [*sic*] Bay near the mouth of the St. John River was named after the Scottish surveyor, Douglas, who in 1775, divided the region into 4 acre lots with streets and sections reserved for churches and schools" (Unknown Author 1975: 12).

The earliest printing of the second story, as far as I can tell, appeared two years later in the third issue of the *The Gaspé Spec* in a three-page article by Doris and David McDougall (1977) entitled "Douglastown before 1800," which summarized the earliest history of Douglastown. Their story, supported by White and recorded in the first and tenth issues of the DHR (1999, 2003), speaks of an Irish surveyor named O'Hara who

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<sup>21</sup> Incidentally, White's definition of the Township is broader than my own. He includes several communities across the Bay from Douglastown that I do not, including Haldimand and Sandy Beach as mentioned in the above quote. His definition more closely resembles that of the Parish of Douglastown, while my definition is based on the Township limits described by participants during interviews and participatory mapping.



named the town for his superior, Sir Charles Douglas. In the McDougalls' article, "there is an apocryphal story of a surveyor named Douglas who laid out the town for Loyalists and named it after himself... although repeated publication may seem to have given it the appearance of truth, it is a myth of dubious origin and little or no basis in fact"

(McDougall and McDougall 1977: 20). In the first issue of the DHR, which explores the founding of the town, White likewise challenges the story of Douglas as the surveyor.

After detailing the actions and motivations of Felix O'Hara, he concludes by saying: "If my theory of how the maps were used is correct, then that would suggest that the towns were named before the arrival of Loyalists and named by O'Hara and/or Cox. For now it's just a theory. Hopefully one that can be proved sometime in the future" (White 1999: 6).<sup>22</sup> Later on in the same issue, White picks up the story again, under the heading "The town gets a name." Here, he writes that the original story was first told by Abbé Ferland, and that "the good Abbe's [*sic*] story has been quoted by every author since [1877]. All but one that is [alluding to the McDougalls' article]" (White 1999: 13). The story that White tells of naming the town is more comprehensive and detailed than the McDougalls' account, lending it the credibility associated with a citation of primary historical sources.

Both of the publications by White and the McDougalls outline a perspective of how, and in the case of White why, the first story is incorrect, and both propose the same general story as a new understanding of this event. It is notable that the relatively short article written by the McDougalls would reserve the space to correct this story and, while the DHR is a significantly larger production, to have this correction repeated again thirty

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<sup>22</sup> Cox was the Lieutenant Governor of Gaspé between 1775 and 1794; he was responsible for the distribution of land to the Loyalist settlers (White 1999: 5).

years later implies that the first story is still part of narratives that have been widely shared and repeated.

The discrepancy between these two stories and the contemporary focus on O'Hara over Douglas is an example of how politics affects which stories get repeated, why, and how the differences play within the maintenance of a dominant narrative theme (Azaryahu 1996; Basso 1996; Cruikshank 1998, 2005; Degnen 2015; Guo 2003; Jianxiong 2009; Lambert-Pennington 2012; Nash 1999; Offen 2003; Roseman 2003; Strathern 1981; Tuan 1991; Wickwire 2005). In Douglastown, the second story is generally considered to be the correct one and the first is explained in relation to the second, as Linda Drody explained to me:

Felix O'Hara was an educated military man and trained surveyor and he surveyed Douglastown and New Carlisle. Many people say that Sir Charles Douglas, who was a lieutenant and British Admiral, laid out Douglastown and that it was named after him. It was named after him but he did not survey it. I don't know how that story got passed down after so many years. I had heard that from my father and his father told him. That is the case for most everyone in our town.

The second story upholds the theme of Irishness better than the original story of the Scottish surveyor, particularly through the names of the characters, since Douglas is associated with Scotland and O'Hara with Ireland. The newer story likewise changes the nature of the naming: as opposed to a Scottish man naming the place for himself, the story focuses on an Irish man who names the prospective town in honour of his superior. The focus of the story thus switches from Scotland to Ireland, thereby upholding the theme of Irish heritage and subsuming the Scottish element and its role in Douglastown's history. It also makes a more interesting story, particularly because it is often told with the two in conjunction, as in the three examples provided above.

Other printed historical accounts about Douglastown and the historic Douglas Township can be found in snippets throughout books that explore history in the Gaspé, such as Dorothy Phillips' *A History of the Schools around Gaspé Bay* (1990), various historical books centered on the history of the town of Gaspé (Gaspé Birthplace of Canada Corporation 2010; Mimeault 2004; Sinnett and Mimeault 2009), folkloric collections of stories (CASA 2005), and in the text and timelines of local vacation guides. These sources touch very lightly on the impact that Douglastown and its surrounding communities have had on the development of the Gaspé Coast and do not reflect significant markers of attachment to place, personal and communal forms of belonging, or stories reflecting the dominant narrative theme.

The histories that have been written about Douglastown specifically appear to uphold the dominant narrative theme by emphasizing the Irishness of the town and subsuming alternative stories, like First Nations and Métis histories and the presence of individuals with Scottish, Loyalist, French, and other heritages migrating to the area, including Protestant Irish migrants. The presence of these other heritages and identities remain in the legacy of family names, stories like one that tells of Scandinavian settlements in the woods of l'Anse à Brillant, the history of Francophones On the Point, and so on. This gives the impression of ethnic, religious, and linguistic homogeneity in the past, which effectively allows the boundaries of belonging to be easily defined and enforced, particularly with regards to ancestry. It likewise lends credence to the compartmentalization of place and heritage, that is, Douglastown as defined within the historic Township as a space occupied by Irish, English-speakers, of Catholic descent.

## 2.2 Irishness in a Published Book of Parish Records

The written history presented in the DHR is composed of a combination of interpretations and reproductions of primary historical documents, including maps, correspondence, and official government documents. There are also locally-produced materials that consolidate historical records into books now found in people's homes and in community buildings. These materials are comprised of parish lists that detail the births, deaths, and marriages in the community; they are becoming more widely used by individuals as personal genealogical research becomes more popular.<sup>23</sup>

The compilation of church records is used as an authoritative source for fact-checking written histories like the DHR and complementing personal genealogical research. Sources like the following allude to dominant historical themes through the surnames associated with various migratory backgrounds, such as Irish, Scottish, English, and French. The best known and mostly widely used of the parish lists in Douglastown is Éleine Réhel's (2008) genealogical research on St. Patrick's Parish, the only Catholic parish within Douglas Township, spanning 1845-2008. This book is referred to as a first step in conducting research, evidenced through participant observation in conversations around genealogical research and as recommended during Irish Week presentations, like Paul Maloney's "Introduction to Genealogical Research." It is considered 'a good book to have' around the house and has a counterpart in Ouellet and Richard's (2002) *Obituary of*

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<sup>23</sup> A trend towards genealogical research and interest in genealogy is evidenced in Douglastown by presentations during Irish Week, such as the 2010 presentation "Introduction to Genealogical Research" by Paul Maloney and Aldo Brochet, and by references in the DHR: "I received a lot of mail concerning the article on the...family that appeared in the fifth issue of the DHR... Readers were interested in 'how I found what I found'" (White 2001c: 1).

*Non-Catholic Deaths of the Gaspé County (ca. 1820-2000)* for non-Catholic current and former members in the historic areas comprising Douglas Township.<sup>24</sup>

Réhel's book frames the church records in a manner that openly upholds the narrative theme of Irish ancestry, heavily emphasizing the ties between religion, Irishness, and Douglastown in the introductory sections. The book opens with pages dedicated to St. Patrick, in order to tell the story of his journey to becoming a priest, a bishop, and finally a saint, and other sections devoted to exploring Irish symbols, including the shamrock (linked to the story of St. Patrick), the harp (a story that is told as a legend of pagan gods), and the Irish flag (whose conception was intended to symbolize harmony between a Catholic majority and a Protestant minority). She also includes a history of Douglastown, an excerpt from the first issue of the DHR (White 1999), and a recounting of Irish immigration along the Gaspé Coast, with a focus on Douglastown. The entire introduction ties the people of Douglastown to Ireland and glosses over alternate sources of ancestry, including Francophones and other ancestries with ties to the Catholic Church.

This book is more accessible to a wider variety of people than the DHR because it is bilingual and therefore broadcasts accounts of history and identity that link Irishness and Douglastown to a broader audience. Framing the book with the addition of Irish-specific material clearly indicates the importance of Irishness to its presumed audience and serves as a means of transmitting that heritage to others. In this way, it implies that the majority of users are invested in the links between Douglastown and Ireland, thereby

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<sup>24</sup> Of note in this book is the title itself, with the phrase "Non-Catholic" framing its context as other, as opposed to including the name of each denomination cited within, primarily Anglican.

upholding the dominant narrative and disseminating specific assumptions about the nature of the community and its past.

### 2.3 The Harp Book

While the publications explored thus far serve to broadcast the history of Douglastown constructed around the dominant narrative theme and make it accessible, they effectively repeat and solidify a history that most Douglastowners readily accept and, to all appearances, have accepted for years. The theme of Irish dominance has a history of its own that has served to re-iterate and indoctrinate notions of belonging to the community, its heritage, and its places.

The most iconic of locally-produced documents, and one of the most obvious expressions of the transmission of the dominant narrative, was produced within the elementary program at the St. Patrick School.<sup>25</sup> As a regular exercise within their school curriculum for many years, students were asked to construct a ‘harp book,’ which would detail the history of their town. I came across one such book from 1936 in the remains of the Douglastown Library, which used to be located in the basement of the Community Centre. According to the library card found within the front cover, the book had been checked out ten times between 1984 and 1997. The harp book was shaped like a Celtic Harp, bound in green cardboard, and tied together with a shoelace. Inside, the pages were photocopies of handwritten work on lined paper and were complete with iconographic pictures (a boat, a woodland scene in a shamrock shape, etc.), drawings, sayings (“First

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<sup>25</sup> The former St. Patrick School closed in the mid-1990s and the building was converted into the Douglas Community Center and Hostel in the early 2000s.

Flower of the Earth, And first Gem of the Sea”), and photos of people, the town, and buildings.

While this example of a harp book is ostensibly a history of Douglastown, in actuality it relies almost exclusively on the history of the Church in the community. Incidentally, this version (the only one I was able to access) told the story of surveyor Douglas when speaking of how Douglastown got its name. The first buildings described in the harp book were church buildings, the events of note recounted in the early history of Douglastown revolved around religion, almost all images and drawings in the text are of churches or related buildings, there are lists of missionary priests, and so on. In fact, apart from a brief description of the families who made up the first settlers, the entire harp book produced by this particular student is dedicated to the enumeration of the challenges, events, and accomplishments of the Catholic Church in Douglastown, including three chapters dedicated solely to the tenure of specific priests.<sup>26</sup>

As a physical object, this example of a harp book embodies the three signifiers that define membership within the community: its shape and colouring evoke Irishness, something that is reflected in other sources like Réhel’s book, it is conceptualized as and stated to contain a history of the community, and its actual text recounts the history of the Catholic Church in Douglastown. Its continuing presence in the town, both as a physical object and as a learning tool remembered by former students, speaks to its efficacy: everybody, apparently, constructed a harp book. In fact, the act of creating one itself signifies belonging, as the following conversation excerpt exemplifies:

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<sup>26</sup> That being said, the Douglastown School was a Catholic School run by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary and so the emphasis on the church in school material may be expected, to some extent.

*Angelina Leggo:* I really wanted to bring up the Irishness of Douglastown, with you especially because you've lived here for so long and yet you didn't grow up in the Douglastown Irish...

*Lorraine Blais:* No, I didn't make a harp book. Did you hear about the harp book? ... The children that went to school here...they would all have made, one time in their primary school, a harp book that gives the whole history of Douglastown. But if you, when you read it, it's the history of the *church* of Douglastown, so...it's just...the Catholic history of Douglastown ... They were really harp-shaped.

The fact that the harp book was used as an educational tool shows how continuously the Irishness of Douglastown was reiterated within the Catholic school. Notably absent from the book are the non-Catholic populace and the areas outside of Douglastown associated with Catholicism. It also drew a line between Douglastown Parish and Douglas Township by clearly outlining the physical boundaries of the Parish, but only detailing events that happened within the Core. Thus, this particular harp book defined who it was that belonged to Douglastown along the lines of language, as an exercise in an English-language school; religion, as these books were created in a Catholic school and explored the church's history; and Irish ancestry, as the material within focused on a very specific segment of the community, those with an Irish Catholic background.

The places noted and described within the harp book serve to reinforce the dominant narrative theme and the role it plays in the parameters of belonging within the community. The descriptions of places are buried in text chronicling the tenure and influence of the various priests and other religious officials that were formative to the establishment of the church in Douglastown. The majority of the buildings and sites of old or future buildings described throughout the book are attached to the church and even



infrastructure with no direct association to Catholicism is framed by the development of the religious institute: “It was during these years of Father Gauthier’s stay among us that was really begun and completed the railroad... The station was built on the sand bar; a large iron bridge over the tickle...” The descriptions of the places that are included reveal the level of knowledge expected of the book’s audience; an intimate knowledge of Douglastown’s places in the past and present is necessary to fully understand the history recounted within this book. Buildings are described in detail, but are either not placed within the geography of the area or are only vaguely located. For example, a description of the first formal convent in Douglastown reads: “The convent was completed in the summer of 1900 and blessed on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August. It is a building 50 ft wide X 30 ft wide with a kitchen annexed 24 ft X 20 ft both two stories high on stone foundations.” The text continues with a description of the benediction ceremony and the establishment of a school within this building, but the actual location of the building within the community landscape is not provided. Similarly, any descriptions of places throughout the time frame covered by the book (1775-1936) are open to interpretation, including the sand bar mentioned in the quote above, as well as phrasing like “the foot of the hill,” “on the hill,” and allusions to previous buildings: a new church being built on the foundations of an older building. These references suggest that the buildings themselves stand as landmarks and therefore their locations should be known to readers. The harp book is thus not intended as an educational tool for use by those outside the community, despite its presence in the Douglastown library for several years and its framing as part of the school curriculum.

The harp books, therefore, are examples of how history was transmitted and re-written in an educational context (Cruikshank 2005; Bohlin 2001; Edwards 1998; Guo 2003; Jianxiong 2009; Offen 2003). The practice of having school-aged children write local histories illustrates one way the dominant narrative theme was reinforced along specific boundaries of belonging, that is, history, religion, and language, and was further attached to specific places within Douglastown.

#### 2.4 Locating Stories and Commemorating History

For all the advantages of published accounts, the transmission of historical stories still primarily occurs by word of mouth. Knowledge of these stories and their settings and landmarks remains the most significant marker of belonging and permits community members to layer meaning into places of significance and augment place attachment (Basso 1996; Degnen 2015; Offen 2003; Rowles 1983; Wickwire 2005). Unlike the sharing of historical stories through the dissemination of written sources, as discussed earlier in this chapter, a story must be located before it can be told.

The action of locating stories is found repeatedly within the academic literature on storytelling and place, particularly in reference to Indigenous populations (for example: Basso 1996; Chase-Smith et al. 2003; Cruikshank 1998, 2005; Feld 1996; Lambert 2010; Pain 2004; Pearce and Louis 2008; Sletto 2009; Smith 2003). For Douglastown, the history of a place is layered with meaning, from individual experiences, attachment, and sense of place, to communal narratives of historical people, events, and situations. The storyteller's knowledge of place precipitates the measure of their belonging and their rootedness is perceptible through an intimate knowledge of the area. Those who have

lived there the longest, who have the strongest ancestral ties, and who have the longest memories to draw upon are the most likely individuals to become storytellers.

Furthermore, the detailed recounting of a story serves as a connection between the place-event of its telling, the nature of the story and the circumstances that engender its telling, what the telling is intended to convey, the storyteller, and the audience. Storytellers typically attempt to find a connection between the settings of the story and the audience, even when the audience is comprised of outsiders to the community. The place attachment of the audience, by contrast, is measured through their level of knowledge of the names and landmarks being used to locate the story; that is, the names that accord with vernacular usage as opposed to official names when the two diverge (Azaryahu 1996; Gabbert 2007; Guo 2003; Nash 1999).

The setting for most of the stories recounted to me in interviews were carefully described, particularly when they were recounted by well-known local storytellers or others with strong ties to Douglastown. If I did not know or was unsure of its location, an association between that place and something familiar to me would be made before the story could proceed. In the following example, Alma Briand and I are discussing the setting of the old church in Douglastown (Figure 4) and comparing it to the one that is there now, which was built in the 1950s:

*Angelina:* And that would be in the same place that the Douglastown Church is now?

*Alma:* Yeah, it's right below – you know where the cemetery is now?

*A:* Yeah...

*Alma:* With the road going up? It would have been there, right in front of [so-and-so's] house.

A: Oh yeah, so when they built the road it would have been moved then?

*Alma:* It got torn down.



Figure 4: The Old Church in Douglastown. Photo by author of a photograph owned by Alma Briand, used with permission.

Here, landmarks and events are used to place the exact location of the church that is the focus of our conversation, illustrated by the photo in Figure 4, which was also used as a prompt during the interview. My attempts to visualize its location are directed and focused by Alma's interventions, until finally I realize that the place is now occupied by the major highway that divides the Core and the rest of the First Range. Simultaneously, Alma's cues are directed by my uncertainty and reactions to her descriptions, until she notes that I have understood the place she means.

As the communities within Douglas Township are compartmentalized, so too are the storytellers, with individuals having areas of expertise in relation to select localities

that contribute to their sharing of stories and place attachment. The social location of place in relation to the parameters of belonging also reveals the potential longevity of these memories. For example, territories like Bois Brûlé have fewer individuals left to be storytellers than in places like Up the Bay. This is a result of reduced population in general, but it is also related to the degree to which the community relates to the wider Douglas Township. The Core of Douglastown remains the driving force behind the historic Township, even though it no longer exists as a municipality, hosting organizations that promote social integration for residents, celebrate the community, and service the Anglophone communities in Gaspé and Percé. The areas that have significant connections to the community of Douglastown, with several residents who attend the Catholic Church and who hold familial ties to the community, have a higher likelihood of having their places and stories remembered. In other words, the more people with ties to a particular place results in a higher likelihood of the stories associated with that place being remembered and recounted regularly. Hence, places like Up the Bay and the Ranges, as communities of Irish Catholic descendants, are more easily incorporated into the dominant narrative within the historic Township than places like l'Anse à Brillant, with a history of British Protestant settlement. Although the places remain, the history associated with them will likely not continue beyond the recollections of a few individuals, and then peter out altogether with those individuals. This is a process that is already happening.

Similarly, the Core contributes to processes of commemoration, led by organizations that focus on maintaining and developing the places that are host to significant portions of community memory (Azaryahu 1995; Basso 1996; Guo 2003;

Nash 1999). The conversion of the St. Patrick School into the Douglas Community Centre is an excellent example of this process: “They wanted to transform the old school that had been closed down into a community centre, they wanted the town to help them with that.” Other places of commemoration are more obvious: some streets, for example, are named for a European settler family, like Rue McAuley or Kennedy Avenue. A memorial in front of the graveyard remembers the young men who went to war, as White recognizes in the DHR issue on World War 1 (see section 2.1). Other memorials are subtle and require specific knowledge of the area and of the stories associated with Douglastown. The cross in Figure 5, for example, does not have a plaque explaining its presence, but community members know that it is the cross from the old church shown in Figure 4.



Figure 5: The Cross from the Old Catholic Church in Douglastown. Photo by author.

Groups, including families, as well as individuals and buildings are also commemorated in places and remembered in stories. The most obvious of these are the Loyalists who comprised the first European settlers of Douglastown. The history of the Core, as it is typically recollected, begins with the arrival of Loyalists. Specific houses and portions of the community allude to the Loyalist presence. One example of an old forgotten Loyalist graveyard, whose precise location is good-naturedly contested, illustrates the limitations in commemorative spaces. The dispute over the graveyard's location is limited to different bids for authority. Those who locate it at one place claim that a descendant of one of the very few Loyalist families who remained in the area, a person who is now deceased, named it as such. Since that individual's ancestors were buried in the graveyard, she has the authority of familial association. The other placement is based on childhood memories of playing in or near the graveyard and so the authority here comes from personal recollection, but no particular ancestral ties. The conversation between the two parties will not be resolved as the graveyard has, for all intents and purposes, disappeared. However, these two places are fairly close to one another, and the nature of this disagreement does not appear to have created any animosity between those involved. Each party is left free to believe in their own authority, with an 'agree to disagree' mentality; although, each is also certain that they are correct.

The physical commemoration of Loyalists only lightly touches the community. There is one street named "Loyalist Boulevard" that is seldom used and is in disrepair, and there is one restored home, proudly remembered and spoken of as the oldest house in Douglastown. The hearth in this house is the original one built by Loyalists in the 1700s and has been lovingly restored by the current owners, who were quite proud to show me

what they had accomplished when I visited their home on a guided tour of Douglastown (Figure 6).



Figure 6: The Original Hearth in the Oldest House in Douglastown. Photo by author.

While the memory of Loyalists is of primary importance, in that it signals the beginning of Douglastown, its legacy and heritage are fleeting as few physical or familial remnants are left. In fact, one of the stories told most frequently in conjunction with their time rests on the presence of one family of “secret Roman Catholics,” emphasizing the tie between heritage and religion:

*Gary Briand:* These were all settled by Loyalists, all of it. But Kennedy arrived in 1792 and that changed things... the only [Loyalist] I know [who was Roman Catholic] was Kennedy. But he was probably a closet Catholic; he arrived here with his wife and children from Boston after spending two years in Sherbrooke.

*Angelina:* But all the Loyalists left and then it was settled by Irish-

*G:* Yeah, they didn’t all leave, four families remained...





Figure 7: The Lot where Kennedy's House Burned. Photo by author.

Unlike the Loyalists, the Kennedys have left a lasting impression on the town, primarily through their family name, which remains prominent in the community to this day. While the entire company of Loyalists have a lost graveyard, one street sign, and a single house to commemorate their presence, the first Kennedys alone have a now wooded lot that speaks to their memory, as well as generations of descendants, a close association with the Catholic Church, and an immutable place within oral history. The wooded lot, for example, marks the location of the Kennedy house (Figure 7), the demise of which is a common story: "I'm taking you now to show you where Kennedy built his house. I remember the house; it was destroyed by fire in 1959. The fire came out from the third range and went right down to the sea...it burned everything in its path."

Presumably, the retention of the family in the community has given the Kennedys a longer history in communal memory. The Kennedy house was also the location of the first Catholic Mass said within the confines of Douglastown.

[In 1800,] Father Desjardins came by skiff...from Carleton and he said the first Roman Catholic Mass here...and at the end of the day, he said to Mr. Kennedy, 'what you need to build is a chapel where people can get by water when the priest comes.' So, Mr. Kennedy built a chapel on the beach (laughs).

Thus, Mr. Kennedy's legacy is likewise tied into the establishment of the Catholic practice in the community, neatly tying together the heritage and religious aspects of stories about the past.

Douglastown's Irish history, as recounted through oral stories, proceeds with accounts of the development of Douglastown. Schools, churches, stores, halls, and resource development are all associated with the early years of settlement, from 1800 to about 1860 when the Parish of Douglastown was officially established (White 2000a, 2000b; Phillips 1990). Even though the Gaspé Coast has a long history of association with European fisheries, this was not necessarily the sole or even primary economic resource for all residents. They also farmed and raised sheep for wool and cows for a burgeoning dairy industry. The memory of the farms of Douglastown leads to one of the most common signs in individual reflections of change to the area: the regrowth of all of the land once cleared by settlers, leading to fields full of alder bushes, small trees, and various other types of undergrowth. The rise and decline of agriculture and animal husbandry is also lamented, sometimes through tragic tales, like that of the passing of sheep farming:

Douglastown had a prominent population of sheep until 1909 when the tragedy occurred. It had been an early spring and the people had removed all

the wool from the sheep and, at that time, the little bay below here was quite exposed, there were a lot of small islands with very rich vegetation. And so, the farmers would put their sheep out there; they would tag them or mark them with paint or a dye so they could be separated in the fall. But on the second of June that year... 90% of the sheep died in a great blizzard. Three or four master ships came ashore in Douglastown, this was before the railroad of course, and all the sheep perished except for about twenty... and so, they lost all of their money for the winter. People tried to restore sheep farming here, in the 20s... but it didn't work out because I think the coyotes had arrived by then.

Since most families relied on farming and animal husbandry for subsistence and as a modest source of income, winter months were spent in a variety of ways that helped to supplement the household. For example, some families would participate in the fish trade by constructing barrels to transport salt cod to markets in Europe and the Caribbean, using alders or small birches to make barrel staves; “that was another job in the spring for the old people, they’d make them and sell them. Drums they called them, for the fish.” The trees “were cut in the spring and dried, but not to a complete dry state, they were still very flexible. And then they passed them in the fall through hot, boiling water and looped them together and these were put over the barrel once the barrel was made.” Knowledge of local construction has not survived as the construction of staves has: “It’s okay to keep [the barrel] from coming out but they must have had something to keep it from going in...before they put the fish in it, they had to have something to keep it in...there was nothing to keep the boards from going in.” But while the process is not entirely understood or remembered, the artifacts are – at least two people have leftover staves still hanging in their barns as a physical reminder of their familial past (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Barrel Staves in a Barn. Photo by author.

These barrel staves also represent how natural resources were used to supplement what amounts to subsistence practices. In the early to mid-1900s, Douglastowners are described as living off the land: fishing and drying cod “for their winter fish,” hunting and trapping, and farming. These types of stories foster an impression of place attachment and of durability in the people, who are able to withstand the climate and the environment in order to eke out a living, as the following excerpts, all from different interviews, show:

*Gary* – In the winter they trapped extensively, the Briands, they were always trapping, fox and beaver. In fact, one of the old Briands left here in 1894, he went by flat to Campbellton...and from there he ended up in Montana. He never married, he died quite well off without a will and without any heirs...the only thing my aunt received was an old gun.

*Norma MacDonald* – Yes, how they did things years ago...they were so talented a lot of them, they were clever people a lot of them years ago eh? Well, that old man that built that house... he never went to school and his wife used to read for him and he was a real good carpenter and he measured

with a string...couldn't count, couldn't do anything and he was one of the best carpenters. Everything was carved with a knife or chiseled; it was unbelievable what he did.

*Gary* – Originally when Up the Bay school opened the Sisters who lived in Douglastown were traveled, horse and sled, morning and night, and the man who drove them was Mr. Power [pronounced Poor] ... He was a trapper and he made his own clothes. He would dry furs, cure them, and sew coats with an awl and he always wore a cap made of the fur of groundhog... He was a tough old hombre [pronounced om-bray], I don't think he ever married.

These stories can be placed in direct contrast with those about the earliest Loyalist settlers and, even though the two stories are not told together like the versions of naming the town, the implication remains that those who left did so because “life for a pioneer family wasn't easy” (White 1999: 13). The telling of these stories generates pride in familial ancestry and in places attached to that legacy. They imply that the early settlers created a legacy that gave rise to a particular type of person, for whom adversity and hard work are welcome. Their history thus sets them apart.

Understandings of Douglastown's history by those outside of the community, however, may vary significantly from other sources of historical narrative, both written and oral. According to the DHR, the Loyalist settlers left Douglastown between 1785 and 1800 (White 1999: 13), with the exception of the few families who stayed. Community memory supports this and the Loyalists are remembered as leaving due to harsh living conditions. The town's story continues with settling Irish immigrants, who gradually formed the basis for the majority of the current English-speaking residents. However, there is a difference in perception as to when and how these Irish settlers arrived. Individuals who live in Douglastown have a different perception of Irish settlement than those who live outside the community. Most residents of Douglastown I spoke to

recognized that a majority of these settlers were pre-Famine migrants and could trace their family names back to specific dates of arrival, with the help of the material published in the DHR and other resources. For those living outside of Douglastown and its surrounding areas, however, a story in circulation throughout the greater Gaspésie associates Douglastowners with a belief that their ancestors arrived via shipwreck. As one individual mentioned, when asked to speak about Douglastown, “I wanted to clear up this silly idea of Irish people coming from shipwrecks, especially the Douglastowners: they’re so proud of their shipwrecks.”

This perception appears to be directly related to the *Carricks* shipwreck of 1847. The *Carricks* was a ship from Ireland that grounded off the coast of Cap-des-Rosiers, a place almost directly across the Bay of Gaspé from Douglastown, while it was en route to Grosse-Île, an island in the St. Lawrence River that was a well known quarantine site for Irish immigrants fleeing the Great Famine in Ireland.<sup>27</sup> The legacy of the *Carricks* has a sure place in the oral history of Douglastown, as people tell stories about how Douglastowners took survivors into their homes. One story in particular has a prominent place: shipwreck survivor Patrick MacDonald froze to death crossing the ice to Douglastown one winter on St. Patrick’s Day because he “was lonesome for his fellow Irishmen.”<sup>28</sup> Another story tells of brave and selfless Father Downing, the pastor of the parish of St. Patrick and of the mission at Cap-des-Rosiers where the *Carricks* wrecked, who was one of the first on the scene. He is remembered as giving his shoes to a man with lacerated feet. However, these stories are placed by community members within a

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<sup>27</sup> For more information on the *Carricks* and its effect on the Irish population of Gaspé, see Ó hAllmhuráin 2016 and 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Another version of this story appears in Ó hAllmhuráin 2016.

timeline that does not indicate that either Patrick MacDonald or Father Downing were among the original Irish settlers. In the 1936 Harp Book, for example, Father Downing is recorded as the nineteenth priest to work in the Parish, from 1844-1847.

Despite these discrepancies in Douglastown's narrative, most oral stories and places associated with Douglastown's past tend to agree with the histories laid out in the written sources above, with an emphasis on the industry and character of the settlers that is echoed in the harp book and the DHR. The details provided through the stories that community members tell and the process of locating story settings lend these histories a more nuanced and personal character, from the pictures that prompt stories in people's homes (see Figure 4), to the barrel staves made by older generations still hanging in people's barns (see Figure 8). The importance of locating stories and the process of commemoration showcases how these historical stories hold meaning for community members who have invested in place and who have been exposed to the stories of Douglastown for much of their lives.

## 2.5 Stories Beyond the Dominant Narrative Theme

The dominant narrative theme in Douglastown heavily emphasizes and supports the Irishness of the community's past through various means. That being said, there are some written and oral stories that provide a window into how the histories of areas outside of Douglastown differ from the tenets of the dominant narrative theme. In the DHR, White dedicates one issue to exploring some of the families outside of Douglastown (2002a) by looking at Seal Cove, l'Anse à Brillant, and Bois Brûlé. Here,

he explains the role that religion may have played for settlers choosing their lots to settle through the story of William Leggo:

He books passage on a schooner engaged in coastal trade...after three or four days of favourable winds, they find themselves at anchor near Douglastown... William takes this opportunity to ask Johnston [the local Custom's Officer] about the availability of good farm land in the district. He is disappointed to hear that all of the lots in the front range...have already been claimed. Although there are some lots between Douglastown and Seal Cove that are still available, the best ones have already been taken up. Besides the area has been settled by Catholics and William is Episcopalian (White 2002a: 4).

Eventually, William settles in l'Anse à Brillant and begins a line of descendants that has lasted until the present day, though only two families of that name live in the area now. His Episcopalian faith influences his choice to move away from the Core and settle his family in a less established area.

The most interesting portion of this particular issue, with the potential to challenge aspects of the dominant Irish theme, is the list of family names that concludes the booklet (White 2002a). This list provides details about the founding members of the Township and notes where they come from, supplying a direct look at the diversity of backgrounds that exists in the area. The majority of family names came from England, Ireland, and Scotland, some from the Jersey and Guernsey Islands, and one family from Denmark. These families settled across the Township and, while certain family names became associated with particular places, a long history of inter-marriage and community cooperation ensures that cultural elements became shared from each background listed to produce the particular traditions and beliefs that Douglastowners celebrate today.

Oral stories also reference the dominant narrative theme and its focus on Irishness through presenting examples where individuals are excluded from community life, in moments where the boundaries of the community become real under specific



circumstances. In the following story, paraphrased from an interview excerpt by a participant recalling his teenage years (sometime in the mid to late 1960s), an entire hockey team faces the effects of the boundaries as delineated by the dominant narrative theme, although they take no direct action to cause this exclusionary moment.

At a hockey game against the team from Douglstown, a young man from the Township and a young girl from Douglstown exchanged a look across the rink. Within earshot of the storyteller, who was also present at the game, the girl remarked to her friend that she thought the young man was ‘cute.’ In the story, her friend responds by exclaiming that she couldn’t possibly be interested in *that* boy, he was Anglican! The participant who heard this reaction to a harmless comment felt slighted by the reaction, as though the mere expression of romantic interest was not permitted due to a difference in church affiliation.

In this story, to even express an interest was against community norms. One casual comment thus created a barrier that did not previously exist in a tangible manner, effectively excluding the young man, as well as his teammates by association, as objects of affection. Through no action or desire to challenge the tenets of belonging, the members of the opposing team were positioned outside of the boundaries of the community at a time when this would have remained an obscure and uneventful detail within the activities of the day. The narrative upholds the basis of Irish Catholic Douglstowners, but it likewise provides an opportunity to see how a focus on Irishness and its related characteristics constructs moments whereby those who are not within the parameters of belonging may be excluded.

This story came about naturally in an interview setting when discussing the differences between the two communities and the feelings of marginalization experienced by the participant in his past. While moments like this one demonstrate how a barrier is formed when a boundary is challenged, the story is also molded by the storyteller and by the audience. In this case, the participant was demonstrating the separateness of the two communities in his past by showing how extreme their isolation could be, even in moments of coming together for mutual pleasure. In some storytelling events, then, the act of being placed outside of the parameters of belonging correlates with a deviation from the basic tenets of the dominant narrative theme, which subsequently placed the individuals in the story on one side or another of the community boundaries. However, other storytellers may appear to be testing the boundaries by those who ascribe to the parameters of belonging but, in fact, they are expressing and emphasizing other differences of import within the wider area of the historic Douglas Township.

Similar to the criteria used by Douglastowners to define their boundaries, other nearby communities use certain factors to identify and differentiate themselves from the rest of the Township. Denver Leggo from l'Anse à Brillant uses Catholicism as a jumping off point to describe how his community was separate from others in the historic Township: "[Growing up], Douglastown was a mystery, we didn't know...all the Catholics, [they] were a different society. We didn't mix...we were an isolated community, very isolated by religion and by geography." The notion of geography as part of the divide between Anglicanism and Catholicism in Denver's stories is of particular interest, as Catholics living nearby who attended the Church did not report the same

feelings of isolation. When asked to elaborate on his feelings of separation from others in Douglastown, Denver continued:

Although we're considered a part of Douglastown, I mean physically considered a part of Douglastown, we were never – how can I say – we were never integrated with Douglastown, except for a couple of families... The thing is, we were our own enclosed community. We weren't owned by the people who bought fish or bought wood, we did everything independently.

The stories he recounted in this and subsequent interviews exemplified these feelings of independence, pride, and place attachment, detailing the infrastructures and places of note in his community in stories and during a guided tour, including the place of the old train station, the current wharf, the fishplants both 'old' and 'new,' a geographic phenomenon known as e's Point (the origin of this name remains a mystery), and other spots of familial and personal significance. L'Anse à Brillant is the only community that still has a functioning wharf and fishing harbour and, although both fishplants have closed, the buildings remain standing and see occasional use (see Figure 9).

With a long familial history of Anglophone ancestry in l'Anse à Brillant, Denver fulfills some of the criteria for belonging detailed by the dominant narrative theme. He later explained that he feels included now in a way that he did not in his earlier years and, in fact, he encouraged his children to participate in activities held within Douglastown when they were young, including the St. Patrick's Day concert and the Catholic church choir.<sup>29</sup> His position within the larger community of the Township over his lifetime exemplifies how "the cultural differences which discriminate people on either side of a boundary are not just matters of degree or

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<sup>29</sup> Incidentally, Angelina Leggo is the child referred to here, who participated in musical events in Douglastown. See pages 34-35 for an explanation.



Figure 9: The Old Fishplant in L’Anse à Brillant (foreground) and Smoker’s Point (the trees and the cliff in the background). Photo by Denver Leggo, reproduced with permission from Sandra Miller.

relativity...but of kind: each party sees different issues as being at stake, or the terms in which they perceive them may be incongruent and incommensurate” (Cohen 2000: 2). In this case, as in many others, the distinguishing feature is framed as Catholicism;<sup>30</sup> since both ancestry and language are shared, religious denomination remains the primary cited reason for difference. For Denver, however, this parameter is also complicated by economics, whereby his community was not “owned by the people who bought fish or bought wood [in Douglastown],” but remained economically independent. While religious denomination is still an important theme in his stories of Douglastown and its relationship with l’Anse à Brillant in the past, the isolation of the latter community is also described as a source of pride.

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<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 4 on issues between the two language communities, where the French-English divide tends to mask other, less tangible issues, such as socioeconomic status.

Finally, the presence and influence of First Nations and Métis individuals in histories of the area were noted in only one interview, with a participant who lived outside of Douglastown, though within a nearby area. Here, he speaks of how language influences the names for Métis groups, who now form the Nation Métisse Autochtone de la Gaspésie, du Bas-Saint-Laurent et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine.<sup>31</sup> In the quote below, this participant is speaking about the origin of the place name Bois Brûlé, which appears in several different places on local and formal maps.

The name as we know it is French linguistically and it dates back...a good ways because it's actually kind of faded over the last few generations. So, yeah, for the longest time I just thought it meant there was a forest fire here and then when research became a lot easier [online] it became clear that there was another meaning to the term.

The term Bois Brûlé is an offensive means of referring to Métis groups because it references skin colour and is a derivation of the term 'half-breed,' as explained by the Indigenous Voices Program in concord with the University of Saskatchewan, where Métis "make up 5.4% of the population" (Indigenous Voices 2017. For an example of a Métis individual reclaiming this term through art, see Leroux 2018: 35-37).<sup>32</sup> The participant quoted above speculated that the use of this term as a place name found in multiple areas on different maps referred to the movements of a group of Métis, as

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<sup>31</sup> While the Nation MicMac de Gespeg forms a recognized Band, the Nation Métisse Autochtone de la Gaspésie, du Bas-Saint-Laurent et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine (NMAG) is not a federally recognized nation. However, they are seeking this formal recognition (see, for example, Radio-Canada 2019). For a more in-depth look at the establishment of the NMAG, see Gaudry and Leroux (2017).

<sup>32</sup> Other approaches and interpretations to the term "Bois Brûlé" and alternative representations of Métis people can be found on the Métis Nation of Canada website (<https://mnoc.ca>, specifically the section entitled Métis Identity), in examples where the term Bois Brûlé is used in association with nationhood (such as the biography of Canadian Geographic author Darren O'Toole, see <https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/author/darren-otoole>. See also the term used to name an historical subgroup of Sioux living in southern Saskatchewan, see the entry for "Brulé" in the second edition of *A Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles*, found at <https://www.dchp.ca/dchp2/pages/welcome>), and in Giroux 2015.

opposed to an error, a misunderstanding, or multiple places with the same name as speculated by other community members. The confusion and lack of clarity surrounding the use of this term is due, at least in part, to the relative obscurity of Indigenous communities in the histories of the area articulated by European settler populations and across the town of Gaspé as a whole (for an introduction to the connections between the establishment of a Métis Nation in Québec and French-Canadians, see Rivard 2016).

The variety inherent in these multiple accounts of the areas included in the historic Douglas Township provides a look into what may have been masked, altered, or developed in opposition to the dominant narrative theme. Certainly, the histories of Francophones before the arrival of new residents in the early 2000s, the Nation of Gespeg, and the Nation Métisse Autochtone de la Gaspésie, du Bas-Saint-Laurent et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine are frequently overlooked in popular stories. As some participants pointed out, there is a history of French settlement in Douglas Township that has been largely glossed over in written history and in local historical narratives. Unless specifically asked about, with few exceptions, the stories recounted in interviews and participant observation rarely mentioned the history of Francophones within the town, despite the presence of place names and family names that have clearly had a French influence. Similarly, the history of other communities within the wider historic Township are typically not discussed by community members of Douglastown; it is only by stepping out into these other areas that their contributions, differences, and particular features may be explored.

## 2.6 Conclusion

The history of Douglastown showcases how the parameters of belonging and the places of commemoration, landmarks, and social interaction have been shaped by the dominant narrative theme. The histories explored herein, written and oral, show the different ways that Irishness has become prevalent in the community's definition of self, creating memories of resilient Irish people who are capable and proud of their heritage.

The focus of the dominant narrative on Irish ancestry and making this narrative accessible to outsiders through publication and public events coincides with the arrival of new migrants in the last two decades. The theme of change was heavily emphasized in interviews, as individuals with long familial histories described how different the community is now from the time of their youth, regardless of their age. The act of locating historical stories further solidifies claims to the places of the community, both past and present, in the face of this change and the fear of losing these places to the new residents as historical homes and land are sold out of family groups. Further, stories that highlight the variety inherent within the community stand as a testament to the power of the dominant narrative theme, which has so effectively masked the contributions of other nationalities and ethnicities to the development of the area.

The minority status of community members is thus established not only in terms of language, but also in terms of religion and Irish heritage as attached to the places of significance to individuals and to the community as a whole. This status creates a need to strengthen connections to place, through sharing narratives and locating places to others, like myself, who are likely to preserve the stories associated with them. As the social status of the 'real Douglastowners' who remain changes, particularly in relation to an

aging community, the memories associated with landmarks are threatened, particularly for those that depend on social memory for their significance, like the cross in Figure 5. This results in a situation wherein people do not know their neighbours and their neighbours do not know the community; where, as one person summarized, the place “that I grew up in doesn’t exist anymore.”



## **Chapter 3**

### Composing Irishness: Claiming and Displaying Heritage

The historical narratives explored in Chapter 2 are the foundation for claiming Irishness through the lens of the dominant narrative theme. Means of celebrating heritage in public and private settings also occur outside of written historical accounts, but are likewise structured by the dominant theme. This chapter thus explores ‘composing Irishness,’ that is, how the heritage of Douglastown is created, celebrated, and embedded within the community through the use of generic illustrations and images and through the ways that Irishness is expressed as a local phenomenon. For Douglastown, Irishness is at the core of defining belonging and place, where the process of composing heritage and projecting it outward is central to the community’s sense of self. The celebration and projection of Irishness in Douglastown has been strengthening over recent decades with the development of Irish Week, the revitalization of buildings associated with heritage activities, and a selection of projects, documents, and other events that center on the heritage and history of the community. That being said, Irishness cannot be divorced from local heritage and traditions, otherwise it has no meaning as an expression of heritage within the community.

#### 3.1 Irish Iconography on Display

Composing Irishness relies upon the stories that people tell, but it also encompasses how the community, as a whole, presents itself to others. Outward displays of Irishness



**Figure 10:** An image of St. Patrick holding a shamrock, located outside of the Church. Photo by author.

through physical objects project a particular image of the community to others. Symbols that are used in decorations inside and outside of individual homes and public buildings lay claim to their cultural heritage and emphasize the connection between the past and present (Badone 1987). The shamrock, in particular, appears consistently throughout the community, from a statue of St. Patrick outside the church (see Figure 10), to decorations, bookmarks, and the house numbers outside of people's homes (see Figure 11). The Irish blessing can be found embroidered or otherwise depicted hanging on the walls in people's homes along with other common signs that reflect an Irish heritage and pride, such as "The day God created the Irish, he didn't do anything, except sit and smile" and "Erin go Bragh."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The Irish blessing is as follows: "May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind always be at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, and rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, May God hold you in the palm of His hand." The phrase "Erin go Bragh" connotes allegiance to Ireland and roughly translates as "Ireland forever."

Public examples of composing and displaying Irishness include decorations outside of the home, like the house number in Figure 11. This vehicle for displaying Irishness, which is found outside of multiple homes, is generic in the shamrock shape and green



Figure 11: Irish Iconography on Display. Photo by author, with permission of the Rooney family.

colour, but personalized through a name and address. That this is the home of “The Rooneys” conjures images and feelings associated with the place and the family for those familiar with them and their property. Other outward displays that are blatantly Irish without any particularly ‘Douglastown’ markers are, of course, a link to the town and its past by dint of their emplacement. The church is the best example of this, with the statue of St. Patrick holding a shamrock facing the highway and overlooking the older parts of Douglastown (see Figure 10).

Irish symbols are also found within the public buildings of the Core, and they likewise tend to be symbols that are stereotypically associated with Ireland: shamrocks, leprechauns, pots of gold, and any combination thereof. During Irish Week in 2012, the Community Centre featured many of these types of symbols, as well as prominently displaying orange and green in banners hanging from the ceiling, tablecloths, and on posters. A guestbook at the entrance of the building, for example, was found on a stand decorated with shamrocks under a poster on orange paper that reads “Livre des invités de la Semaine irlandaise / Irish Week Friend’s [*sic*] book.” Other buildings likewise reflect these decorations; the following excerpt from my fieldnotes describes the Holy Name Hall during the first event it hosted. Unlike the Community Centre, the Hall is only open for special occasions:

The stage itself is painted a beige/brown type of colour and is made of wood. There are yellow curtains hanging from the back of the stage and there is an Irish flag hung in the middle of these curtains with shiny green shamrocks on a string and hung in an arc to either side of the flag... The wall along the left has no doors or windows but is an unbroken line of green wall...that holds lights with conical shades pointing toward the ceiling and decorations of paper leprechauns, pots of gold, and shamrocks... The floors are made of wooden planks painted red, a little smaller than those on the stage, and everywhere there is a deep amber colored wood paneling, around the doors and windows, trimming the stage, on the backs of the chairs, and so on.

While the decorations in the Community Centre are there to celebrate the festival, with the exception of laminated posters from previous Irish Week celebrations, those in the Holy Name Hall appeared to have been there for a longer time frame. Since the Hall is the primary venue for the St. Patrick’s Day concert, it is possible that they are permanently present and, indeed, some posters read “St. Patrick’s Day” (see, for example, the poster in the background of Figure 14 on page 117). This combination of public displays of generic images, inside and outside of prominent community buildings,

showcase a local commitment to an Irish heritage for community members, even as they use generic images to display that commitment to outsiders.

Alongside these generalized images that lay claim to both place and heritage through their shape, content, and position within the community, people display intensely local images, art, and pictures in their homes. For example, during one of our interviews, Norma showed me a picture hanging on her wall with a caption below it. The picture, she explains, was her husband's "old house," his childhood home, which was strongly associated with his familial history. She tells me that this house is still standing, used now for storing snowmobiles, chainsaws, and other seasonal tools. The inscription below the photo reads: "Brian's father had a farm on the hilltop / How many souvenirs sleep in those walls / May our parents all rest in peace / We keep their memory in our hearts." The picture and verse speak to how place attachment is developed and transmitted in a process that is common throughout the area. The picture of the house is a story of continuity over generations; Norma does not refer to the building as 'Brian's parents' house,' as it appears in the verse, but as *his* "old house." This is supported by the verse "how many souvenirs sleep in those walls," implying numerous memories and artifacts are available within the building for those who have access. The overall impression associated with this picture is local continuity, of generations of family members laying claim to one place and investing the house and property, the "farm on the hilltop," with memories, emotions, and meaning. Displaying such intensely local and personal art in the home alongside the more generalized expressions of Irishness legitimates both as expressions of heritage, bringing Irishness into the local.

Examples like these and other forms of art and commemoration depicting local scenes in Douglastown express attachment to community as saturated in an Irish past. Douglastown artist Linda Drody excels at this, with her paintings an homage to the history, landscapes, and places of significance in Douglastown and other communities within the town of Gaspé (see Figure 12). The Irishness inherent in these and other

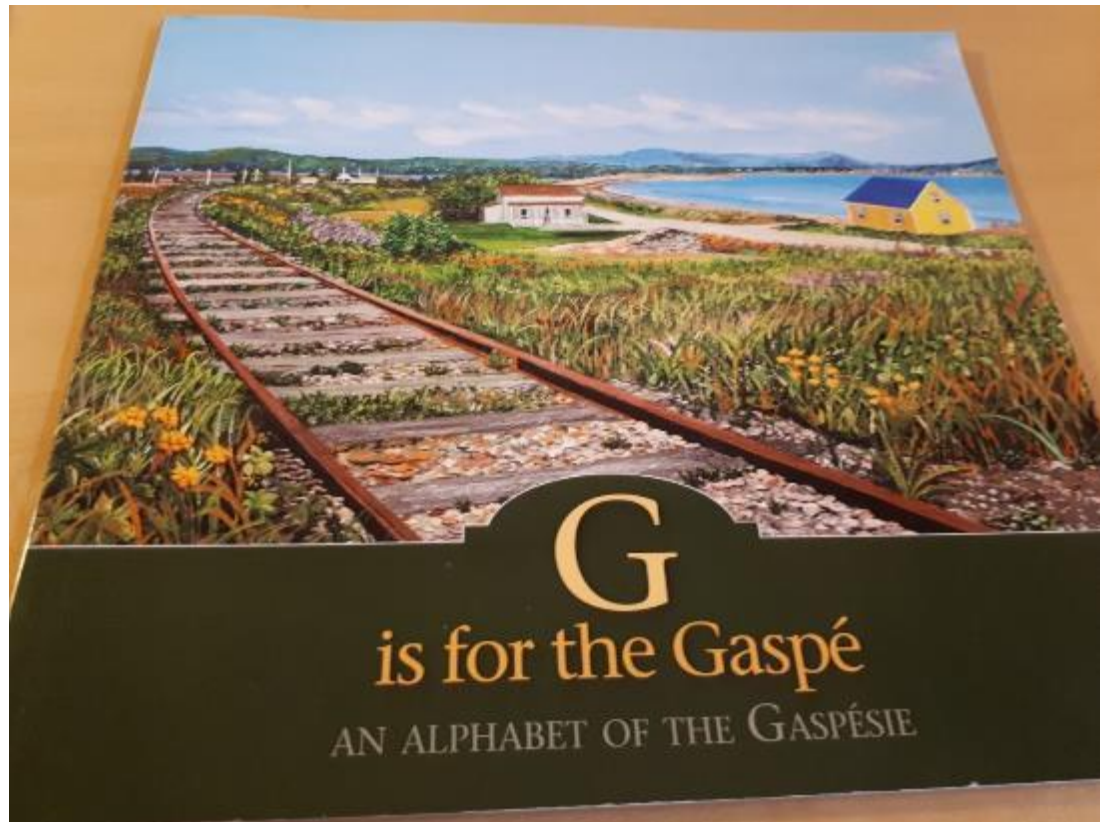


Figure 12: The cover art of *G is for the Gaspé* (CASA 2011), featuring a painting by Linda Drody of the railroad and beach in Douglastown. Photo by author, used with the permission of Linda Drody.

examples relies on the dominant narrative theme to enforce the links between history, locality, and the heritage of long-established families. The adoption and display of the theme in the images and phrases community members choose to display within and outside of their homes bring together multiple aspects of their personal histories and of

community identity. Thus, expressions, pictures, art, and crafts express Irishness *in* the local, reflecting back into the community the idea that the two are inextricably intertwined.

### 3.2 Mummering and Wakes

The use of Irish symbols on display, both publically and privately, is one method used by community members to claim the heritage as laid out by the dominant narrative theme using physical objects. The examples of personal expressions of local attachment to places and heritage, as well as generic images like the shamrock, become associated with and communicate about Douglstown due to their placement within the community. The communication of long-held traditions through stories, memories, and places, by contrast, is an example of locally developed heritage that is tailored to specific events or places. Like the picture of Brian's old house, these traditions are a tribute to an Irish/local past. The practices discussed below are no longer part of community life and reside in memory or in artifacts; like the barrel staves discussed in Chapter 2, they remain in the stories that are told of the past and have shaped the dominant theme as it is expressed today. They therefore signify an important part of the community's sense of identity and history. This section will focus primarily on two traditions that remain in memory, stories, and places within Douglstown: mummering and Irish wakes.

The term 'mummering' or 'jannying' refers to a practice commonly associated with populations of Irish or English heritage, particularly when these populations have a Catholic background.<sup>34</sup> In Newfoundland, for example, mummering is a Christmas

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<sup>34</sup> Other traditions with similar practices of dressing up, visiting, and expecting hospitality are common in North America as the result of customs brought over from various European countries. See, for example:

tradition with a complicated history; officially banned in 1861 for its associations with violent behaviour, the practice became symbolic of a unique Newfoundland tradition in the 1960s and 1970s through increased attention by academics and theatre groups (Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Website 1999; Pocius 1988). Descriptions of aspects of Newfoundland mummering, described below, are reminiscent of the details surrounding similar practices in Douglstown:

Mummering involved a group of people, disguised in ridiculous attire, who called on local homes during the Christmas season. These Mummies or Jennies, as they called themselves, dressed in bright coloured clothing and wore masks when available or painted their faces black. They also distorted their voices to avoid being easily recognized. After being invited inside a house, festivities ensued where food and drink were offered to the visitors who acted the fool and sang and danced while the hosts attempted to identify them. Once a person's identity was correctly determined, it was customary for the mummer to remove his or her mask. The traditional custom of mummering still occurs in many regions of the province today (Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Website 1999; see also Jarvis 2014).

In Douglstown, the practices that reflect the mummering tradition of Newfoundland were recounted during interviews by two participants, who are among the older community members interviewed and the only two who participated to have heard the term mummering used locally in their lifetimes.

In all, these participants described three different practices, each reflecting different times of the Christian calendar with specific details that both link and separate the three customs, sharing elements with multiple traditions across North America (see, for example: Fehr and Greenhill 2011; Lindahl 1996; Masters 2009; Ware 2003; Welch

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Fehr and Greenhill (2011) for an exploration of *Brommtopp*, a Prussian tradition practiced in Southern Manitoba; Welch (1966) for an introduction to the Mummer's Parade in Philadelphia, reportedly a mix of Swedish, English, Scottish, Irish, and German influences (see also Masters 2009); and Ware (2003) for an analysis of how Creole *courirs de Mardi Gras* practices in southern Louisiana, a legacy of French traditions that provide a contrast to parades in New Orleans and other city centres, contribute to rural tourism (see also Lindahl 1996).



1966). The events they described do not have a primary place in the stories of Douglastown, but remain a significant indicator of Irishness and local customs for those community members who remember them. Despite the infrequency of their repetition, stories about mummering and related practices remain an integral part of community identity because they form the ways in which heritage is remembered, celebrated, and projected today. Mummering, for example, was described to me as a practice “indigenous to Irish Catholics,” as Gary mentions,

But I suspect it was the influence of Newfoundland came over [*sic*] to the Gaspé. I don't know how wide it was but my father knew the word and knew what it meant and his grandfather told him that it had occurred around here; I don't think widely.

Gary describes other activities that take place on the eve of Mardi Gras, which are reminiscent of activities like mummering as well as other customs associated with holidays like the Creole *courirs de Mardi Gras*. In the latter tradition, “[g]roups of costumed riders on horseback or in trucks roam country neighborhoods and small towns, stopping at homes and businesses along their routes... to sing, dance, clown and play pranks,” culminating in a request for food or money to contribute towards a group meal at the end of the day (Ware 2003: 158-159). Here, there are commonalities in the practice of dressing up and playing tricks:

Mardi Gras was the big event here, everyone dressed up... I went out as a child Mardi Grasing... Halloween too, but Mardi Gras was much bigger, in my opinion... We played tricks: we tied door handles, covered up chimneys so the smoke would not rise up the chimneys but go in the house and people would have to run out, we were nasty, we stole gates. Let animals out of the barn. At that time there were no fridges and people kept their milk in bottles or in a container in the brook nearby and we would go and lift it out of the brook and leave it on the side, that type of thing.

In comparison, Sean O'Brien's memories are more consistent with descriptions of Newfoundland mummering, where participants dressed up to be unrecognizable and visited "to get a laugh on your neighbours that they didn't know you."<sup>35</sup> Like mummering, the longer you could continue to fool people, the more successful the trick. Sean speculated that the tradition died out around the time of the Second World War, in the 1930s and 1940s, when so many young men didn't return home from the war: "it was not a time for merriment." The enjoyment that came from the practice was, he speculated, lost in the grief of war. This tradition, though, is described as occurring in the middle of Lent, during a festival known as Mi-Carême (pronounced Mee-careem), instead of Mardi Gras, Halloween, or Christmas.<sup>36</sup> The Mi-Carême festival likewise reflects aspects of mummering, although it is associated with France instead of Ireland, and it is still celebrated, or has been revived, in parts of New Brunswick, which is a close cultural neighbour of several Gaspé communities (Boberg and Hotton 2015; Société Mi-Carême 2016).

Similar to the activities surrounding Halloween today and Gary's descriptions of Mardi Grasing, Sean described another tradition whereby children and young adults would walk around with jack-o-lanterns placing them in the windows of their neighbours "just to let them know they were there."<sup>37</sup> He didn't mention any of the tricks that Gary recounted or any convention of "getting up to badness." In general, the haziness surrounding the practices of mummering or related activities, when they occurred, and

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<sup>35</sup> Sean O'Brien is a pseudonym

<sup>36</sup> Both Mardi Grasing and the festival of Mi-Carême are mentioned in a participant quote in Patterson 2015: 35-36.

<sup>37</sup> Sean also described how jack-o-lanterns then were made from turnips instead of the contemporary use of pumpkins, which were used instead for preserves and baking.

what the practices consisted of, suggests that mummering was never widely practiced or that it died out a very long time ago. Each of the practices described are linked to the Christian calendar, through the connections with Lent, Christmas, and, to a lesser extent, Halloween through its association with All Souls Night. The significance of these traditions lies in the associations that the practices established, where even indistinct memories of events are tied to a legacy of Irish heritage and Catholicism.

The Irish wake builds on this foundation of Irish Catholic traditions. It is a concrete example of Irish ancestry practiced in local settings and entrenched in community memory and tradition, remaining an integral part of Irish heritage specifically in the ways that it is remembered and recounted in Douglstown. The Irish wake is a tradition with a lengthy and well remembered history.<sup>38</sup>

The Irish wake, then, occurred after a community member died and they were laid out in the family home, typically the parlour, for three days. During this time, community members came to the house to visit the family, pray over the dead, and make sure that the deceased was not left alone until they were interred. The practice also ensured that the family had the help and support they needed following the death of a loved one. This practice likely ended with the establishment of funeral parlours, as Remi says:

That was so much easier. Can you imagine, for three solid days, people in and out, in and out, in and out? You had to get meals, the ones that were there at noon, you had to get meals for them... But it's when you came back from the funeral, the house was so friggin' empty... Just imagine your place, people going in there for three steady days then you come back from the funeral and then just you, your mom, and your family. Cause with the funeral parlour, it closes at a certain hour, you can go and rest.

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<sup>38</sup> For discussions of Irish Catholic traditions, see Taylor 1995 and Inglis 2007. For examples of Irish traditions within Québec, see Redmond 1985 and Donahue 1997.

Despite the inconveniences of hosting a wake in the home, the physical space where the wake took place is also a means of ensuring that the tradition remains in community memory by enshrining the practice within people's homes. The repeated use of the room, even after the tradition died out, further entrenched reminders of Irish wakes into everyday activities. Stories of Irish wakes came out without prompting during interviews, as in the following story Gary tells, which began with a story about his house:

I remember coming up here to this old house with my father to attend a wake of his uncle. And it was in the summer of the year, a very hot day, we came up in horse and wagon and at that time there was a narrow road coming up the back hills to the west of where the road is now and I recall it vividly because it was an extremely hot day. At that time bodies were not embalmed and, um, the old gentleman was waked in the parlour; all these Irish houses had a parlour of course and the parlour was used for waking the dead and for entertaining guests. Normally, when a young man was courting a girl, they were allowed to sit in the parlour. It had the best furniture in the house. So that day I came up with my father, I had to be about 6 or 7, I remember vividly the house was crowded with people, it was extremely hot, and there were an enormous amount of houseflies. That's something that I still recall.

One story in particular associated with the Irish wake was recounted to me by several different people, again without prompting. Kathleen Murphy's version of the story is as follows:<sup>39</sup>

We don't have the characters in Douglstown we used to have, we used to have some wonderful characters, we missed Scott...so much when he passed away... he had so many wonderful stories to tell and so much badness that they got in years ago! And everything was *so* much fun because they didn't have TV, they only had the radio and they didn't have electricity okay and certainly they traveled with a bottle and they had *all* kinds of fun and badness! Tippin' over the outhouses and I always remember his story of going to the wake and everybody cleaned up their own body and put it on display in the house in those days... And him, tying (laughs) and you stayed up all night, the Catholics stayed three days, okay, I have no idea what the Protestants did... He tied a string to the toe of the dead person and as they're prayin' and they're prayin' and they're doing the rosary and you'd have to do the rosary every hour and everything and it's three, four o'clock in the morning and you start yankin' on that toe, can you imagine? Can you imagine

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<sup>39</sup> Kathleen Murphy is a pseudonym.

the hootin' and the hollerin' that was going on? 'Oh my God, he's still alive he's still alive!' What a laugh!

Other versions of the story are more detailed, but were still communicated in interviews with a sense of amusement and light-heartedness, although it is notable that no one who described the incident was present at the time it occurred. For example:

There were tricks played as well during those times. One that stands out in my memory (chuckles) occurred in Douglastown... There was an old house there, and there was a man who lived there... He had married, he had no children, his wife died. Now, (chuckles again) at that time the wakes were ritualistic things; the women always arrived at the house at 7:00 at night to say the rosary. You got down on your hands and knees to say the rosary, they were led by the women... there would be 50 or 60 women and they would be packed into the dead room, as we called it, and out in the corridor and out in the kitchen so they could hear the leader of the rosary and this particular night [this man] was much older than his wife, he was quite feeble. So, [a group of men] ...they were all young men, they were in their 20's, and they *loved* to drink. (Laughs) they loved to drink! ... Anyway (laughs) the wake room was in the parlour, it was called the parlour it was used only for waking the dead or courting... This particular night [the missus] died, she was about 40-some... I think the year probably was 1940, around when I was born. So [one young man] (laughs) got a ball of yarn and [another young man] volunteered to keep on the fires, [it] was a big old house with three stoves, ... and they arrived in the afternoon because the women, when a woman died, would lay out the women, dress the body, wash it and dress it and lay it out on boards. On boards, there were no caskets then. They built a casket when the person had died and they put her in the casket the morning she was buried, okay. That was both women and the men's job, but that's another story, how that was done... Anyway, they all arrived at the house at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The women were just finishing the washing of the dead body and they were going out to the barn to put crêpe in the casket, some other men were out in the barn building the coffin. (Laughs) So... behind one of the stoves there was a partition, a hollow in the wall, going into the dead room so the heat would circulate. [One young man] got the ball of yarn and he stretched it out behind the stove, let's say there, but he stretched it in and tied it on the corpse's foot, the little toe. She'd been washed and there was simply a sheet over her, that's what they did, they covered them with a sheet. Well, I mean, they had their underwear on I'm sure, and a dress but, anyway (laughs). So, they had it all planned. The women arrived in great dignity to say the rosary that night and to say the prayers and the prayers were very long, I have sat at them on my knees for an hour. Anyway, [the other young man] was out with his bottle of home-brew or whatever, behind the stove, sitting there – nobody could see him. And he had a hold of the yarn. So

whenever a lady would say “for we have sinned” [he] would pull the yarn and the sheet would move, you see, he wriggled the toe. Some of the women (laughs) panicked and thought the goddam thing was alive with a ghost and ran out and some of the other women discovered it, discovered (laughs) and caught [him], half loaded and doing it! But, that was a typical Irish wake.

This is the most comprehensive version of this story that was recounted to me. There are some discrepancies between versions and within them, particularly concerning the characters involved and what they were doing. However, all versions portray the event as humorous and disregard the circumstance of the event itself to emphasize the jokes of these high-spirited young men.

Like the stories told about mummering, this one has been passed down over time; those who tell the story now were not present at the event. No sense of an offense against the family, to the women praying, or to the body of the deceased woman is part of the narrative, although there were clearly upset people in the story itself, like the women who fled screaming from the ‘ghost.’ It is significant that this humorous story is the one most commonly associated with the tradition of Irish wakes in the community. The participants who tell the story belong to an overall aging population and a changing community; as they pass, so too does the knowledge they hold of their community. Using humour to remember an Irish tradition, like the wake, is a way for the community to downplay the grief associated with change and potential loss of cherished traditions (for another example of sharing memories and stories of death and the deceased as a means of coping with grief, see Roseman 2002). John Donahue (1997) describes a similar sentiment of grief from the perspective of a rural, Irish community elsewhere in Québec: “The Irish survive in the area as ghosts of the past, forgotten ghosts at that. Growing up Irish is rural

Québec, then, meant awareness that as a group, the Irish were disappearing and their passing was heartily welcomed by those who could replace them” (Donahue 1997: 69).

That being said, the humour of the story keeps it being told and this may be why the more macabre aspects of it are left unstated and implied. The genre of the ‘funny story,’ like the ‘frightening story,’ is one that encourages re-telling and, the above story in particular, also reinforces the Irishness of the community (Beals and Snow 2002). Each re-telling thus encourages a review of how an Irish wake was conducted, why it was important, and what function it served in the community. This permits the tradition to be established as both Irish, through its ritual, and locally connected to Douglstown, through its characters and places. Its telling becomes an opportunity to teach others about Catholicism, Irishness, and local customs. This is apparent in the above quotations, where comments like “you stayed up all night, the Catholics stayed three days, okay, I have no idea what the Protestants did” and “She’d been washed and there was simply a sheet over her, that’s what they did, they covered them with a sheet” clearly show how the narrative becomes a teaching moment for an audience unaware of the details in the tradition, like myself. Such stories thus become an avenue to project the dominant theme to the others in areas outside of Douglstown.

The Irish wake, then, is deeply entrenched in community memory for a number of reasons. First, it was universally practiced among Irish Catholics in Douglstown. Second, the custom was continued until relatively recently, when the establishment of funeral homes in the region offered an alternative method for laying out deceased loved ones. Third, the Irish wake has a physical presence in many of the older houses in Douglstown through the parlour, where the deceased were housed during the wake.

Building on the foundation of Irish Catholic practices as demonstrated in mummering practices, both become local expressions of Irishness that serve to display the dominant narrative theme of the community through different mediums.

### 3.3 The Festivals of Douglastown

Expressions of Irishness through traditions like mummering and the Irish wake are no longer practiced within the community, but more contemporary forms of Irishness are coming to the fore. These newer expressions are part of a trend toward celebrating culture and heritage throughout the area, with the rise in community organizations and cultural projects since the 2000s, as well as permitting new means of participating in the tourism industry.<sup>40</sup> The most blatant expression of Irishness in this form is the annual Irish Week festival, which as of 2016 was in its tenth year. Irish Week is a prime example of how the dominant historical theme of Irishness is expressed within the community. Further, it is the chief means through which Douglastown currently brands itself as Irish to tourists, visitors, and people across the Gaspé Peninsula. By drawing in musicians, academics, and craftsmen from all over Québec, Canada, and Ireland itself, the community advertises its heritage to the outside world. Indeed, Irish Week is a significant tourist event, drawing in people who have family still living in Douglastown and who organize their vacation time to attend, as well as musicians and performers from outside of the Gaspé Peninsula. In essence, Irish Week functions to broadcast outward to the world what was once directed inward.

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<sup>40</sup> Such organizations include the Holy Name Hall Committee, Patrimoine Gaspésie, and Vision Gaspé-Percé Now. Important projects that have been implemented within the community have included personal genealogical and historical projects, The Douglastown Detour (an audio tour of the community), and academic projects like Gaspesian Community Sound and the Vernacular Architectural Forum.



Irishness as a local expression of heritage can be found within the places and presentations during Irish Week. During a “A Short Intimate Concert with Sister Henrietta Essiambre, fiddle, and Norma MacDonald, guitar” at the Holy Name Hall, one of the first presentations in 2012, several examples of the marriage between Irishness and local expressions of pride and commitment to the community were evident:

Norma finishes the song with lyrics that are different; each verse, or second verse, ends with something like “that dear land across the Irish Sea” but the final time she sings this she says “in that dear land across the Gaspé Bay,” which I assume is a reference to Douglastown, which is roughly located near the mouth of Gaspé Bay as it pours into the St. Lawrence River... The third song is introduced as “The Gaspé Reel” and we are told that this is not the real name of the song; so I surmise that this is what it’s referred to locally. Norma tells us what it is actually called but I do not catch it (Fieldnotes, July 30, 2012).

These two performers are well placed to project the link between Ireland and Douglastown: Norma is a ‘real Douglastowner’ with a personal history of music and performance in the community and Sister Essiambre “was a former teacher and principal at the Douglastown School in 1969-1970, which is where they met forty years ago” (Fieldnotes, July 30, 2012). The concert ends with a song called “The Douglastown Song,” which Norma tells the audience was composed by a nun from Barachois. She introduces the song as “an appropriate way for us to start Irish Week.” The modification of song lyrics and the final song choice in these examples neatly ties the major tenets of the dominant narrative theme to Douglastown (local Irish heritage, Anglophones, and the practice of Catholicism) through their composition, imagery, and performance. However, they also convey a sense of dedication and pride in displaying the Irishness of the community. The act of

emphasizing these links at the festival is to not only celebrate them, but to make pride in their local heritage available to the outside world.

The festival, as a whole, was conceptualized and initiated by a Francophone with no ancestral or familial ties to the Gaspé Peninsula. While it is perceived as being a vital part of the community now, several of the volunteers and organizers I interacted with expressed a desire for more attendance and participation from the local, Irish community. The Irish festival, then, has been something of a paradox within the community. It stands as a symbol of belonging through some of its content, like the concert described above, and through its concept as a celebration and an outward projection of Irishness. As its founder states:

I have been learning that there was a strong Irish community in Douglastown and they were proud of their roots and they were celebrating the St. Patrick's since many many many years and they never miss it... There was an important aspect of our community there and when I start the Irish Week it was based on this perception and c'est ça, I know there's much less Irish people, roots of Irish people around here than before but there's still some... And it's not far from the Québec traditional arts in many aspect and, you know, it's not irréaliste to make a week on the Irish culture because, you know, it's so close to Québécois... It's not like I was making an African week in Douglastown (laughs)... I tried through the years to make people conscious of the, uh, a little bit of the history and of the, uh, where Douglastown come from and what it means Douglastown and things like that.

And yet, conceptualized by a Francophone with no previous ties to the community and supported by a variety of outsiders, it is not an expression of Irishness that unilaterally resonates with community members. Indeed, some events hold more meaning for community members and visiting family members than others. The presentation entitled "180 Years Ago: The Settlement of the Maloneys in Douglastown," for example, drew in a large crowd, some of whom came to Douglastown specifically for this event.

Here, a genealogical description of one family tree and their associations with other families was presented. As an audience member, during the event I realized “that the majority of [the audience is] related to one another; they are almost all Maloneys” (Fieldnotes, July 31, 2012). The fact that the majority of the audience was made up of people familiar with the family tree, at least to some extent, coloured the delivery of the presentation, evident from the following excerpt:

Now, Paul tells us that he has come to ‘the real topic’ and that is the connections between the two families, what he has termed the Morris Maloney Connection. This section became a little sticky for me, as it is difficult to follow a family tree without holding one in front of you, particularly if you aren’t familiar with the family. I may have been the only member of the audience with this problem (Fieldnotes, July 31, 2012).

The level of interest and investment in the presentation was evident through audience reaction; several times, the topics brought up by the presenters sparked multiple conversations throughout the room. It stands in contrast to other presentations and workshops that occurred during Irish Week that had much smaller and less involved audiences, but dealt with subject matter that had little to no connection to Douglstown.

The concept of an ‘Irish Week’ has a history of its own. Another festival with a similar name was held in Douglstown in the 1980s, organized around the St. Patrick’s Day concert, which was a very significant celebration at its peak. This older version of the Week, which ran for about five or six years, consisted of dances and suppers at the church and culminated in the concert at the Holy Name Hall:

We used to have Irish Days quite a few years ago... it was a whole different set up.<sup>41</sup> We had a Friday night dance; I think that was the Queen’s Ball, yeah on Friday night. Then Saturday night we usually had a roast beef supper and dance and we had bar service, Saturday night yes... Saturday afternoon we

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<sup>41</sup> This participant is referring to the types of activities typical of the two festivals. The current Irish Week consists of presentations, workshops, multiple concerts, and so on as opposed to the food and community-driven festival he goes on to describe.

used to have a ski-doo run, we had fish cakes in the evening... I think we had the St. Patrick's concert on Sunday but I'm not sure. It was a two or three-day affair.

The crowning moment of this small festival was the St. Patrick's Day concert, which began with an "Irish stew" served in the church basement. According to the classifieds section of the local newspaper, *The Gaspé Spec*, the tradition of Irish stew in the church basement on St. Patrick's Day has continued for decades.<sup>42</sup> This stew is representative of the focus that the previous festival had upon food, evident in the summary above, where what was served for supper and when is explained in great detail. Similarly, the stew before the concert was mentioned by a number of participants throughout the interview process. This meal consisted of beef, pork, and lamb, or some combination thereof, potatoes, carrots, and turnips. For some participants, it is not significantly different from any other type of stew made in the community: "it's just a stew; you call it Irish because it's St. Patrick's," although it is considered a traditional Irish dish and is common there and in other places with populations of Irish descendants.

The St. Patrick's Day concert is remembered as a 'grand affair' that showcased what truly made the community special, prominent, and perceivably Irish in years past: a love of music and showmanship.<sup>43</sup> Although it continues into the present, the concert is spoken of as suffering a decline in participation, attendance, and quality:

Years ago even the St. Patrick's concert was a very very very big thing. The school was involved, every one of the students in this school were there. At least one person in each household in Douglastown was involved into this

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<sup>42</sup> An advertisement for an Irish stew in the church basement has appeared yearly in this newspaper from 2005 to 2017, the selection of years I had access to (with the exception of the first six years of its production). Based on my personal memories of growing up in l'Anse à Brillant in the 1980s and 1990s and enjoying this tradition, I surmise that this has been an ongoing event.

<sup>43</sup> The types of songs and what made them 'Irish' is an avenue for further exploration. The subject of Gaspesian music and its uniqueness, specifically as it manifests in Douglastown, is explored by Glenn Patterson 2014, 2015, and 2019 and in Patterson and Morris 2020.

concert in one way or another. The pride in that building [the Holy Name Hall] was beyond, we had pride in our concert and we had pride in that building... There now, it's just like it's thrown together last minute. When I was younger my girl we could have practiced, two months that went on, for the plays, for the singing... And the people that do it [organize the concert] it's not their fault they can't get anybody to do anything and it's just, like, nobody cares anymore, you know? I find that hard...

The St. Patrick's Day concert was once the crowning celebration of Irishness in the town. Now, Irish Week has arguably replaced the concert as the most visible expression of the community's history and culture. The differences between the two celebrations appears to lie in their leadership and spirit, rather than in the details, although both are necessary for the expression of Irishness to the broader community. For example, many of the Irish Week activities tend to be led by individuals who live outside of Gaspé, with an interest or expertise in Irish heritage. These activities, whether they are for entertainment purposes or formatted within a teaching forum, are differentiated from the community-led celebrations of the 1980s Irish Days and the St. Patrick Day concert that targeted Catholic, English-speakers in the Township and surrounding communities. Similarly, St. Patrick's Day celebrations have changed through the evolving nature of institutions within the community. As one person mentioned, "One time...the school would be closed on St. Patrick's, there'd be Mass on St. Patrick's Day and the church full like Sunday... It was a big thing one time but now, well, there's nothing left to it, eh?" For these individuals, the decline of such events directly correlates with a decline in both community pride and communal heritage despite the revived efforts to celebrate Irishness through mediums like Irish Week. Further, they perceive these newer celebrations as a good thing, but one that cannot equal the previous level of importance that celebrations of Irishness used to have within the community, touching all aspects of social life.

The current Irish Week is concerned with projecting Irishness outward instead of directing it inward in the manner of the St. Patrick's Day concert. The festival's activities are as much for outsiders as for community members, despite its conception as an event for the community, and this may partially account for why the leaders of the festival desire higher attendance rates from local Anglophones within the Township. This outward projection is evident in the past schedules of Irish Week. The activities and presentations are an intriguing mix of local history, musical and dance styles, and food, with more commodified and stereotypical aspects of what people expect from an 'Irish' event. Statements like those printed at the beginning of the schedule in 2009 neatly sum up the attitude and the intention of the Irish Week festivities:

Irish Week captures the echoes of the past. Its workshops endeavour to perfect the styles and trends in Irish music and dance. Its presentors [*sic*] are internationally known. Its varied program appeals to the young and old. The events scheduled focus on the past and the future and go to revitalize our Douglastown community.

Most particularly, the mixing of "internationally known" presenters who will "revitalize our Douglastown community" shows how the Week legitimizes itself with well-known individuals who are, in turn, expected to present Irishness to Douglastowners. Events hosted by people from the community tend to be sing-a-longs, open mikes, and entertainment during meals while the historical presentations, workshops, and staged performances are conducted by outside experts. The latter includes such presentations as: "Erskine Morris and Douglastown's traditional music" in 2011, "The input of Irish families in the history of Gaspé" in 2010, and "The Douglastown Parish Register" in 2009, which are all centered on Douglastown's genealogy and history but conducted by

individuals from outside the community, both literally as residents and figuratively as those who do not qualify as ‘real Douglastowners.’

Other types of presentations are intended for educational purposes, to tutor the community on specific Irish personages and popular aspects of the culture. Examples of these types of seminars include “Lilting: An Old Fascinating Art” in 2012, “Animations on Irish Folklore History” in 2009, and “The poet William Butler Yeats” in 2008. Taken as a whole, these presentations represent an attempt to educate Douglastown residents and other attendees on what it means to be ‘Irish.’ That being said, the majority of historical presentations, and in 2012 the most widely attended, concentrate on Irish aspects of the Gaspé coast, like the example of the Maloney presentation discussed above. The act of bringing the local into the Irish is more attractive for community members. Even when the popular presentations are conducted by those living outside of the community, the presenters typically either have genealogical links to the community, such as “Dr. Paul Maloney of the Maloney Family Association,” 2010, or have direct ties to the community, like Kathy Kennedy “a Douglastown born sound artist with a background in classical singing,” 2009. The most conspicuous absence of local or locally-connected talent comes on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evening shows “under the tent” when bands, primarily from Atlantic Canada and other parts of Québec, perform. These shows tend to vary in entertainment; some shows are specialized, “Fiddler’s Evening: A Women’s Stand” in 2011, others provide a variety of entertainment, “The Duguay Family, stepdancing” in 2012, or allude to audience participation, “Kitchen Party (Montréal): An energetic [*sic*] band that transforms a regular night into a devilish party,” in 2011. Although some individuals from the town of Gaspé,

though not Douglstown specifically, have the opportunity to open for these larger bands, they are not the headliners and this is lamented by some community members: “I don’t have anything against outside bands but I feel for any young singers or musicians coming up; they don’t have a stage.”

Standing in contrast to Irish Week is the Country Festival, which ran for the first time in the summer of 2012 (just a couple of weeks after Irish Week ended), and has continued to the present. Organized by local community members, the Country Festival is an homage to arguably the most popular genre of music in the area (see Figure 13). The Country Festival was a very different sort of occasion in 2012 than Irish Week. Rather than presentations and workshops during the day coupled with entertainment in the evenings, it emphasized participation in musical activities, much like the St. Patrick’s Day concert and related festivities. While Irish Week had events all day, every day, for a week, the Country Festival was three days long and had a generalized ‘open mike’ event during the afternoons, with the exception of a children’s afternoon on one day, and two bands performing each night. These bands frequently played the same songs; for example, Johnny Cash’s “Folsom Prison Blues” was played three times in one evening. Further, the bands that played, with the exception of “Pamela Rooney and the Exceptions,” were a different kind of musical group than those who performed during Irish Week. Relying on technology, most of the performances at the Country Festival consisted of one or two people with a computer providing accompaniment to singing and guitar playing. Irish Week, by contrast, hosted full bands with multiple instruments and significant stage presence. This speaks to the recruitment of the musicians who played: while the Irish Festival brought in bands from elsewhere in Canada, such as New



Brunswick or Montréal, the musicians who played the Country Festival were primarily from Gaspé or nearby towns around the coast.



Figure 13: Advertising the Douglastown Country Festival in 2012. Photo by author.

This created a very different type of show, particularly for a community used to local talent that performed with the tools at their disposal. In a place where the most common type of musical performance in the past was a kitchen party, consisting of common instruments like fiddle, guitar, and voice, the full band style promoted by Irish Week prompted less of a participatory atmosphere (Patterson 2017). The Country Festival made up for the lack of a large and commanding stage presence with multiple musicians and instruments by audience response and participation. While I observed hand clapping and occasional dancing at the shows under the tent during Irish Week, the Country Festival had a much more vocal and participatory audience. People were up dancing almost constantly on a small dance platform and attendees frequently cat-called the musicians, asking for specific songs or cheering them on. Similarly, the musicians interacted with the audience, encouraging them to choose songs and apologizing when

their songs were not ‘country’ enough: “Just one more and then we’ll get back to country,” “I want to sing a song that isn’t country; I don’t think they’ll kick me off the stage for doing it.”

As these comments suggest, the two festivals are similar in terms of delivering as advertised. Since both publicize a particular type of culture and music, performers in each festival cannot present something that is not ‘authentic’ to that image without justification or apology. Hence, playing music that does not conform to the genre must be excused at the Country Festival and any presentation, workshop, or musical event at the Irish Week must be connected to Ireland in some way. In fact, attendance itself is occasionally perceived as needing justification; for example, as I was volunteering at the souvenir table one evening under the tent during Irish Week, a woman came up to me and explained that she was “allowed” to be at the festival because her mother had Irish roots.

Comparing an evening under the tent with an evening at the Country Festival, the discrepancy between their levels of audience participation, particularly in dancing, is also attributable to the physical set-up of the audience space and how it affects the overall atmosphere. While the Country Festival was spatially informal, with picnic tables scattered around an open tent and a dancing platform away from the stage, the Irish Week cultivated a ‘sit and listen’ ambiance, with chairs in regimented rows in a much larger tent and a dancing platform set up directly between the front of the stage and the chairs. Dancers at the Irish festival were subject to scrutiny from both the band and the audience, whereas it was possible to be slightly more discreet at the Country Festival. On some evenings after the scheduled bands had performed, informal dancing occasionally took place during Irish Week, accompanied by whatever musicians could be enticed to stay.

The one square dance I witnessed in 2012 was formalized by the presence of a caller and required a lengthy recruitment process to make sure enough dancers were available before it could begin. The entire process of the square dance necessitated a significant amount of organization and the dancers were expected to have some level of skill. At the Country Festival, the most common type of dancing that took place was line dancing and, while this style also necessitates some level of skill, its enactment during musical performances became a teaching forum, where more experienced dancers taught novices (like myself) the correct steps. The teaching that happened there, unlike the workshops and presentations during Irish Week, was spur of the moment, informal, and an occasion for laughter, teasing, and general ‘fooling around.’

One opening night of the Country Festival, the lead singer of the headlining band, a ‘real Douglstown’ who grew up in the community, called out “I’m proud enough that I’m the first one here. It’s been a long time that Douglstown has been needing this kind of festival!” This comment and the juxtaposition of the two festivals illustrates an important aspect of how Irishness is enacted within the community. While pieces of Ireland are utilized by the community in its décor, in musical choices, and in the enactment of an Irish heritage, their usage only has meaning when connected with the community. It is not necessary to partake in all activities associated with Ireland to be Irish in Douglstown. The Country Festival illustrates this through music, performance, and dance.

### 3.4 Conclusion

The act of composing and projecting local heritage is a highly complex procedure in Douglastown. Even when the process appears to be unambiguous, it is complicated through its attachment to local places and people, or lack thereof. As one participant noted in an interview, “I was English, I was Irish, but I was not from here. The first thing [someone] told me when I moved to Douglastown is that I would die an outsider and [that person was] perfectly right about that.” Irishness and expressions of an Irish heritage in and of themselves do not necessarily equal community acceptance, belonging, and inclusion. Processes of composing Irishness are more significant when they include ties to the heritage and history of the area. Irish Week for example, which is intended to showcase the heritage of Douglastown, relies heavily on outside contributors for both its enactment and its audience and therefore seems to have less appeal to community members than other efforts to celebrate the heritage of the community.

It is the very complexity in composing Irishness that actively creates, re-evaluates, and re-assesses the numerous ways heritage is articulated in Douglastown, from local expressions and displays that use the idea of homogenous Irish ancestry to connect the community and Ireland, to strategies that link Douglastown to Ireland in order to fulfill a particular purpose. The process of this composition is crucial to establishing a connection between the parameters of belonging, place attachments, the dominant narrative theme, and the past of the community as remembered in frequently repeated stories. The ‘Irish factor’ is the thread that ties together the parameters of belonging through the development and reinforcement of the dominant narrative theme. Yet, aspects of Irishness that are not tied to local traditions, ideas, and places have less hold for community

members even as they incorporate symbols of Ireland into their homes and public places. It is not enough to be Irish without a local connection.

The necessity of distinguishing and defining themselves as different, or set apart from other residents, is the means by which Douglastowners display, express, and compose their Irish ancestry. On the one hand, this need provides a means for self and communal identification, increasingly important within the community due to the arrival of new migrants and the natural decrease of the Anglophone population in the region because of out-migration and an aging population (Vision Gaspé-Percé Now 2016). On the other hand, expressions of Irishness cannot be *only* Irish; they must be articulated within the local in a way that makes sense to residents and their history.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Religious and Spiritual Stories**

The Irishness of Douglastown finds expression in various traditions, practices, and ancestral links, voiced through the stories that are told of the town and its history, and embedded in its places and landscapes. The Catholic Church has acted as a repository for this heritage since its establishment in the early 1800s. The naming of the Parish of St. Patrick alone enshrines the heritage of the community in the religious institutions of the town, contributing to the sustainability of the dominant narrative theme, which underlies narrative and place.

The Irishness of the community and its history in Douglastown are expressed through the practice of Catholicism and the use of the English language in social interactions, unusual as many other Catholic churches in surrounding communities and across Québec as a whole are Francophone (Huntley-Maynard 1993; Kaplan 1994; Mace, St-Onge, and Wright-Clapson n.d.; Pinto 2014). The community contributed to the bilingualism of incoming church leaders like missionaries, priests, and nuns. These religious leaders were required to communicate in English even during times of upheaval in Québec, such as the Quiet Revolution explained on pages 133-135, when speaking English was a politically significant gesture. In this way, the Catholic Church became a repository for the heritage, identity, and language of Douglastowners.

The practice of Catholicism is not remembered in narrative as existing in isolation. Instead, Catholicism was a lived experience and permeated all aspects of social life. The church building itself served important social functions in the past; it was a place of

worship and a public gathering spot where, both before and after Mass, residents would gather on the steps to swap stories, gossip, socialize, and advise one another. As one interviewee noted, “One time, years ago, they used to all meet at church and they would talk about their gardens and what they were cooking for Christmas and what they were preserving for winter and so on and so forth.” References to gathering on the steps constructs the Church as a focal point and powerful force within the community, representing a social as well as religious place in the memories of community members. However, since Catholicism permeated the lives of community members, narratives with church-related themes tend to be associated not only with places where religious traditions were enacted, like the church and the cemetery, but also with buildings related to education, Irishness, and other events, personages, and groups.

Stories related to the church were thus common throughout interviews. This chapter explores how the Catholic Church is remembered and represents a repository for Irish heritage and culture in the community, enriched through knowledge of and investment in places and local traditions. Stories that recount childhood memories of the school, the church, the graveyard, and other places and characters associated with Catholicism uphold Irishness through their context. As such, they indirectly contribute to the dominant narrative theme through the underlying associations between religion and heritage in the community (Eisenlohr 2013). Like processes of composing Irishness, stories with religious and spiritual themes find meaning through expression in the local, but their enactment serves as a means of teaching others in a more concrete manner and with more detail.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Note that the stories in the previous chapter that likewise served to teach listeners about the heritage of the community also frequently included religious themes.

#### 4.1 Irishness and Church History

The story of the Catholic Church is embedded within the story of Irish ancestry in Douglastown. In written sources that describe the growth of the church, the relationship between religion and heritage is illustrated through the characters that appear in narratives and in the language used in certain sources to embed this relationship in place. The three written histories examined below are easily accessible to community members: Issue 2 of the DHR (White 2000a), the 1936 Harp Book in the remains of the Douglastown Library, and a compilation of sources presented in various webpages through the popular GoGaspé website entitled “A Cultural Visit to Douglastown” (Mace, St-Onge, and Wright-Clapson n.d.).<sup>45</sup>

The story of the Church in Douglastown as laid out in the DHR begins as Ireland and Catholicism are brought together through the personage of William Kennedy, an Irish Roman Catholic who migrated to the area with the first group of Loyalist settlers in the late 1700s. William Kennedy is remembered as the first Catholic in Douglastown (albeit described as a secret practitioner for many years, see pages 58 and 106-107) and he hosted the first Mass in his home in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, as the community grew from the eight families that remained of the original Loyalist settlers (White 2000a, 2000b). The community built a chapel after the arrival of missionary Father Desjardins to the town of Gaspé around 1800, who then dedicated the new building to the twelve apostles and “gave the tiny fishing community a picture of St. Peter, the patron saint of fishermen” (White 2000a: 15-16). The establishment of a Parish, with buildings and official leadership, began by hiring a priest in the 1840s:

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<sup>45</sup> The section of the DHR (White 2000a) is also reproduced in Elaine Réhel’s 2008 compilation of information on St. Patrick’s Parish.



As the Catholic population of the town and it's [sic] surroundings increased with the arrival of Irish immigrants in the 1820's and 30's, the people became increasingly interested in having their own priest. They petitioned their Bishop and were told that until a presbytery was built the town could forget about getting their own priest. Not to be dismayed, the small community built a presbytery in 1841 and after it's [sic] completion petitioned the Bishop again (White 2000a: 15).

In the DHR, the figures of William Kennedy and the growth of the Irish population are identified as the impetus for the creation and permanent establishment of the Catholic Church. The inception of the St. Patrick's Parish and one of the buildings that currently contributes to the visibility of Douglastown's landscape, the presbytery, are directly attributable to the presence of Irish migrants (see Chapter 6).

The history of the church from then on is marked by several fires and the subsequent building and re-building of the religious infrastructure within the town. The descriptions provided by written accounts of this process, continually rebuilding the places associated with the church, use a rhetoric that suggests place attachment through consistent investment in place, where the "[b]onds between people and places are reinforced through a variety of activities" (Roseman and Royal 2018: 52). Particularly in the harp book example introduced in Chapter 3, the history of the church is peppered with language that alludes to the industry of community members, their hardiness, and their eagerness to comply with the needs of the church. Excerpts that illustrate the portrayal of residents as industrious, hard-working, and committed include: "The good people with a courage and zeal that never failed them since went to work immediately, and in the early spring [1822], they rose up the second chapel;" "The people of Douglastown, with the zeal that

characterizes them, went to work immediately and the first days of May the same year 1846 a new chapel replaced the last one.” Through this rhetoric, the harp book creates and projects an image of the dedicated Irish Catholic settler, creating meaning in the places they built for practicing Catholicism, places where the majority of social interaction also took place. This image of the early settlers is echoed in the excerpt from White’s (2000a) description quoted above; “Not to be dismayed” by the demands of the Bishop, the community banded together to build a church.

The webpages “A Cultural Visit to Douglastown,” an online archive created by Daniel Mace, Karine St-Onge, and Nancy Wright-Clapson, by contrast to the other written sources discussed, introduces a more varied exploration of what the St. Patrick’s Parish has meant to individuals through a compilation of personal memories and other local stories. Specifically, the website contains a list of the priests of Douglastown and their contributions, personal recollections from the nuns who educated the children of the town, an uncredited history of the parish from 1938, the life story of a man born in 1870, and other personal testimonies and community publications, like a cookbook. Rather than stressing the relationship between Catholicism, community members, and place, portions of this source highlight references to Irishness through naming numerous and diverse connections to Ireland, particularly those that relate to the priests who were in charge of the parish through the years. For example, statements like: “Father Gauthier was parish priest in Gaspe’ [*sic*] village for many years. Although of Acadian descent, Father Gauthier has a strong veneration for the Irish as the feast of his ordination is on

March 17th. His 25th anniversary was celebrated on St. Patrick's Day and a large banquet was held in his honor” and “In 1921 Revd [*sic*] Myles, a Gaspesien [*sic*] by birth and of Irish descent came to Douglastown as parish priest” illustrate the diversity of Irish connections captured within the history text (Parish History 1938). Noting these personal connections suggests that the author is stressing a common ground between parishioners of Irish descent and the priests who had, at that time, a strong influence over their congregations.

The online archive also contains references to the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, a convent based out of Rimouski, a city approximately 390 kilometers from Douglastown with a 0.9% English-speaking minority community in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2017b). Responsible for running the schools, the nuns were in a position to interact with the generations of students taught during their one-hundred-year tenure in the community (1900s-2000s, Bond 2000). The recollections of the Sisters, as reproduced on the webpage “The Way It Was” from an original print version published in 2000, references the Irish heritage of the community in several ways. As opposed to the Irish connection that characterized descriptions of the priests, the sisters use phrasing that describe themselves as witnesses to the Irish heritage of the community. Here, we see numerous references to “the Irishmen,” “Irish spirit,” “the Irish young people,” and so on (Bond 2000). Published in 2000 to mark the centennial of the establishment of the Sisters in Douglastown, these written memories as reproduced on the webpage mark the sustained presence of Irishness as a heritage and focal point for the community in the memories of the Sisters.

Stories with religious and spiritual themes from community members do not discuss the practice of Catholicism or the history of the church in the community, but rely on the relationship between religion and other themes, such as education, significant individuals, and the supernatural. They become Irish through their emplacement, where the connections between religion and heritage remain in their relationship to the dominant narrative theme, which is reflected in these written accounts. As in the previous chapter, the following narratives detail how Irishness is embedded within local practices, traditions, and knowledge and holds meaning through place and in processes of place attachment.

#### 4.2 Religious Themes in Education and Place

Rather than the primary focus on religion as part of an Irish heritage, demonstrated in the written accounts described above, other narratives demonstrate the social associations between the church and significant aspects of community life, particularly the education system. These stories serve as a means of educating others about life in Douglstown, both through recollections of how things used to be and through deliberate references to change. Places also feature strongly in memory, particularly for those recounting their personal pasts.

Change is also featured through place. The St. Patrick's School, which was named for the parish and closed around 1995 to become the Douglstown Community Centre several years later, is one example of change manifested in place, both in its construction and in its purpose. As an educational institution, it was run by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary under the direction of a Catholic school board that primarily served French

Catholic populations in Québec. The designation of the school boards into Catholic and Protestant was a political decision that affected Anglophones as a minority population, which is demonstrated in the excerpt below of a Report from an Advisory Board to the Minister of Education of Québec in 1994:

Community control over education is an illusion. English-speaking Catholics and all those who are in a school board by entente are disenfranchised in the boards where their children attend school. Furthermore, as minority stakeholders in predominantly French Catholic boards, they have difficulty electing someone from their community to those boards due to lack of numbers in any given ward. The same pattern is true for French-speaking Protestants in Protestant boards which are predominantly English, which makes non-representation linguistically even-handed in its unacceptability (Advisory Board on English Education 1994: 4)

In order to respect and serve the needs of the English-speaking minority, the school boards in the province were re-organized along linguistic lines in 1998, but by that time the school in Douglastown had already closed (Hoverd, LeBrun, and Van Arragon n.d.). The St. Patrick School building also reflects change in its construction. The first time I was given a complete tour of the Community Centre, I was specifically taken to see a converted confessional; now turned into a closet, it holds a legacy of the relationship between the Church and the school through a lattice-work grill that was deliberately preserved during the renovations that transformed classrooms into bedrooms for rent. This grill was the piece that partitioned the priest from the confessor. Keeping this element within the closet, and pointing it out, allows the Community Centre to project its heritage as a part of both the Church and the school and teaches outsiders about the community. This is especially poignant as the closet is located upstairs, in the part of the Centre that is used as a hostel.

A further example of how religious-themed stories occur in tandem with perceptions of change can be seen in narratives that describe evolving landscapes. Stories in interviews that communicate social aspects of life in the town and showcase religious themes, exemplify how the church was an interactive hub of social life in the past. Descriptions of how the steps of the church were used as a gathering place, for example, were commonly associated with descriptions of the decline of the Church's influence in the town and were mentioned in interviews with several different participants. The following interview excerpt came about naturally in a conversation about how the landscape has changed from agricultural and pastoral landscapes to reclaimed fields of trees and brush:

The last horse in Douglastown, work horse in Douglastown, I believe died last year. That stands in sharp contrast to a day in March 1953; I'm going to tell you about that, it'll illustrate the amount of *horses* there were in Douglastown. My first cousin and I were serving a funeral, acolytes, at a funeral in Douglastown. In the old church in Douglastown there were high benches in the sacristy where the priest dressed and where the altar boys got ready for the funeral. It was heated entirely with wood and it was a very bad day, high winds, cold. So, we got there early from the school; the sisters allowed us to go early because we wanted to make sure that the fire was on in the sacristy. There was all this kindling there and wood so we lit the fire and we jumped up on the high benches looking out the big windows. Above the cemetery in Douglastown, we counted *one hundred and four* horses and sleds coming to the church for the funeral. The man who had died was well liked and appreciated; it was a massive funeral, but a hundred and four horses!

The descriptions provided of the building and the roles of the church acolytes communicates the integral social place of religious practices in community life, from excusing children early from school, to the jobs an acolyte was expected to complete, to how the physical arrangement of the room affected a child's use of furniture (i.e., "we jumped up on the high benches looking out the big windows"). The idea of major change is expressed through the number of horses, from the one hundred and four that was

striking for the storyteller to zero throughout his lifetime. The association here between change and the church is reflective of the change experienced in the parish of declining congregational numbers and participation, which is also illustrated through participation in the choir: “The Sisters always did the music in the church, okay, for years and years and years it was always a nun who did the music [when] I joined the choir... The choir was *huge*, it was huge [lists the names of individuals who were in the choir] ... between 20 and 30, in that choir.” As an attendee and participant in the church choir during fieldwork, the choir at that time was reduced to five people or less on any Sunday that I attended Mass.

The presence of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary and their role as teachers figure prominently in the childhood memories of former students. For example, a story written by a community member for a production of local history by the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) recounts a tale associated with the school and showcases the links between education, religion, and place.<sup>46</sup> The following is an excerpt from this story:

I remember one little incident which happened one year...I was about ten or eleven then. It was just before Christmas. Some of the girls said to the Sister that it would be nice to have a Christmas tree for the class for the last day of school. She agreed. We could all help to make decorations with coloured paper, cotton wool, buttons, and whatever else we could think up. But, she said, “We don’t have a tree.” The lights started to flash. I gave my brother a little nudge. “We’ll get a tree for you on our way back to school after dinner,” he said. She took the bait.

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<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, I was not able to access this particular publication in full, including publication information. The story that is excerpted here was provided to me by the participant who wrote it. CASA is a regional not-profit community organization that works on behalf of the Anglophone community. While this organization once focused on the entire Gaspé Peninsula, it now centers most of its programming on the Chaleur Bay area (the southern end of the Peninsula) while Vision Gaspé-Percé Now primarily serves the towns of Gaspé and Percé.

We hurried home, had our dinner, found our axe and picked up some rabbit wire. We had seen some nice fresh rabbit trails on our way to school that morning. No big rush with the Christmas tree. We must have set eight or ten snares. By then, we had no watch, but it must have been close to two o'clock. We started to look for that tree, and it started to snow about the same time. Anyone who has ever looked for a Christmas tree knows how hard it is to find the right one, too many branches on one side, too few branches on the other side.

Another one over there looks nice till you find out that it's really two trees close together. To add to our misery, we were getting all wet. The trees were all covered with snow. Finally, up high, way up high, we saw what we thought was a beauty. It was the top of a big tree that was about eight inches on the stump. We chopped and pushed and sweated. Finally, after what seemed like hours, down it came. Like the saying says, "Pretty from far, but far from pretty." The top had little short needles and was covered with pieces of old dry cones. Some of the branches broke when the tree came down. Now it was starting to get dark. We had no choice.

We had to go with what we had. The tree was horrible when we started to drag it from the woods. We had cut off about six or eight feet from the top of a big tree. After we dragged it through the snow for half a mile, and then pulled it up three flights of stairs – our class was on the third floor – the tree was not something you would want to put decorations on. [Our poor teacher] took one look at us and then at the tree.

Now there was a big window in our class. It opened outwards, hung by hinges at the top. She asked someone to hold the window open. She picked up the tree, and out it went. We weren't insulted. We knew the tree was a disaster.

Now Mother Superior had a class on the ground floor, directly under ours. You know what I'm going to say. She saw this dark object pass her window and in the dusky light, decided that someone had fallen out an upstairs window. Now I don't know why she didn't go outside to see what had happened. Instead, she bounded up three flights of stairs, burst into our class, all out of breath, trying to ask [our poor teacher] who had fallen out the window. (Reproduction of the story contributed to a project by CASA provided to Angelina Leggo by a participant, who preferred to remain anonymous. Written in 2008.)

The relationships between students and school, students and teachers, and between teachers themselves is portrayed here. The places of the woods and the classroom are present in their relationship to one another through the lens of a child, who would rather



be in the woods setting snares. As a story that informs others about life in Douglastown, it exemplifies the preoccupations and interests of children in the past, as well as how religion and religious holidays manifested in the classroom. It communicates about life in Douglastown to an outside audience and is relatable to those with similar cultural backgrounds, as demonstrated through the phrasing used throughout: “Anyone who has ever looked for a Christmas tree knows how hard it is to find the right one, too many branches on one side, too few branches on the other side;” and “Like the saying says, ‘Pretty from far, but far from pretty.’” Details of rural life are also apparent through descriptions of the trials involved in finding the proper Christmas tree, the multi-purposes behind an afternoon in the woods, and the discomfort that can arise when working outside in the snow. This story is an example of one that is deepened by knowledge and experience of local places, practices, and traditions. While its entertainment value remains likely the same for most readers, it holds more nuance for audiences who can relate this story to personal experience.

The ties between the education and religious systems in the town can also be exemplified through individuals, like figure of Father Nellis (who will be discussed in more detail in the next section), as the following interview excerpt illustrates:

It was a much more intact, holistic community; life revolved around the church and the school, as I recall it. And Father Nellis went to the school every week to visit the children. At that time, the schools were separated according to denomination and faith. So Douglastown was a Roman Catholic elementary and, at some years, a high school... Clearly, he took a great interest in the children and he would come in and give them quizzes, not always on the faith but also on geography, history, and world events. And we were pre-advised the day before by the teachers that he was coming and we had to be in our best form... You see, the school was located near the church and every first Friday of the month there was a special Mass said in which all the school had to go. Confessions were heard, you know about confession, confessions were heard before Mass and the teachers took children who

wanted to go to confession or who hadn't gone, to the Church. They went to confession then stayed for the Mass as we all did. And that was a ritual the first Friday of every month.

School-centered Masses, a priest involved in the education system and hearing the confessions of children, and the proximity of the buildings all work together to portray the close relationship between these two institutions in narrative. This story also functions to inform its audience about life at that time, through extensive detail in the practice of Friday Mass, as well as the role of the priest in the education system. The narrative exemplifies the change in societal focus between then and now, reminding the audience that "life revolved around the church and the school" and how this created "a much more intact, holistic community."

Like the themes of religion and education appearing through relics in the Community Centre, the relationship between Irishness and Catholicism is present in the buildings. Within the Holy Name Hall, a replica of a church stands as a monument next to the stage (see Figure 14). The Holy Name Hall is a building that is directly associated with Irishness; its use is relegated to events during Irish Week and the annual St. Patrick's Day concert. The presence of the model church echoes the Irish elements on the outside of the church building next door. Underneath a St. Patrick's Day poster and sitting on an Irish flag, it brings religious themes into the Irish heritage and celebrations of the ancestry of the community.

The manifestation of local ideologies and practices and how those have seen significant change is revealed through the analysis of stories that hold religious and educational themes. Interviewees use childhood memories as a basis for comparison



Figure 14: The Church Replica in the Holy Name Hall. Photo by author.

with current societal trends in the town to illustrate the change in the make-up and ethos of the town, from a holistic entity to a bedroom community for the town of Gaspé. However, elements of the past are enshrined in memory, narrative, and place and serve as an homage to the history of the community, bringing together Catholicism, education, and Irishness.

#### 4.3 Stories about Father Nellis

Written and oral narratives often attribute great influence to specific personages and events, even if interpretations differ widely (Cruikshank 2005). The figure of Father Nellis, who was the priest in Douglastown from 1933 until 1958, is one example of a person whose impact has been profound, leading to stories of his actions attached to the most visible buildings and landscapes in the town. In all the stories of Douglastown that I heard through interviews and participant observation, no other person held the same level of influence, power, and strength in the memories of Douglastowners than Father Nellis.

Father Nellis stands out due, in part, to his powerful personality and the effect his personality has had on the town, its landscape, and in his interactions with community members. He is remembered as having kept close tabs on his congregation, visiting anyone who did not attend Mass to find out why, and working closely with the schools to discipline and teach students, such as the description of his involvement in the school found in the previous section. Described alternatively as “driven,” “obstinate and inflexible,” “powerful,” and “a good man,” his actions have become part of Douglastown’s dominant narrative theme through the intersection of religion, local heritage, and landscape. ‘Real Douglastowners,’ as well as outsiders, recount stories of his exploits without necessarily knowing that the story being told once featured, or was caused through the actions of, Father Nellis. The story of the white brick is one such narrative; it is the single most common story associated with both Father Nellis and the landscape of Douglastown (see Figure 15). As the following excerpt shows, asking about Father Nellis immediately prompted the story of the white brick:

Father Nellis? The best example is, you just look around the important buildings in Douglastown, the colour of the brick. The rectory, the Hall, the school, church, and post office...that’s Father Nellis. I’ll tell you, well, it’s not a legend, it’s true it happened. There was a truck arrived with a bunch of red brick and the worker was unloading the truck. Father Nellis told him, he said: ‘Don’t unload it, you’re going to have to put it back up.’ So, the foreman came along and the guy told him, ‘the priest told me not to unload this.’ ‘No, no,’ he said, ‘unload it.’ He said: ‘That’s what’s going on the post office.’ Father Nellis made a few phone calls, foreman came back in the afternoon and told the guy: ‘You gotta load all that red brick back on. It’s white brick going here.’ Father Nellis made a few phone calls to Ottawa and, it was federal! You can go all around the coast, you won’t see another post office in white brick or any other colour brick...what he said, went.

The effect of this act on the community has molded the landscape of the town and is a source of pride for community members, as evidenced above through the reference to



Figure 15: The White Brick on the Church, the Post Office, and the Holy Name Hall. Photos by author.

how unique the white brick is on the post office. It also serves to highlight the town's most significant places in terms of its social and religious life, both in the past and the present. The conformity of these buildings, where the bulk of social interaction and cultural celebration take place, are due to the vision Father Nellis held for the community.

The church, the presbytery, the Hall, the post office – how many towns do you see like that? There's none. Cause Father Nellis said it was all going the same colour and it's going the same colour and that's it cause it *wasn't* that colour, daddy tells me, when it was built, that [Holy Name] Hall in fifty-whatever it was built. It was that red shingle siding, you know what I mean? That old, old stuff they used to put on, that's what it was. And Father Nellis made them put [on the white brick] cause he wanted everything the same colour.<sup>47</sup>

In this recollection, the building affected is again transformed from the more conventional red siding to the distinctive white brick. The ultimate effect of this

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<sup>47</sup> It is unclear as to whether or not this is a different version of the first story of the white brick where the post office was affected or a story that represents the continuation of Father Nellis' effect on the landscape of the town.

transformation creates a unique landscape: “how many towns do you see like that? There’s none.” With the conversion of the Holy Name Hall to conform to the other buildings and reflect the dominant narrative theme, the vision of Father Nellis also becomes associated with the Irishness of the community, marrying religion to heritage and enshrining both of those in landscape.

The stories of Father Nellis and the white brick frame the dominating personality of the man: “he wanted to improve the place and he had profound visions of what he wanted.” Hence, his memory embodies the manifestation of the dominant narrative theme within its landscape, simultaneously reflecting the power that priests had upon Catholics in the parish. This physical expression of the ties between the education system, the church, the social connections of the community, and its heritage may be articulated as follows: belonging to the Catholic Church, attending the English, Catholic school, celebrating community heritage at the Holy Name Hall, using the post office as a community member and resident, and supporting and being influenced by the clergy residing in the presbytery. Belonging and heritage are thus manifested in place through each of the buildings covered in the white brick. Ultimately, the result of Father Nellis’s vision is a noteworthy vista that remains a source of pride and identity for community members.

Father Nellis’s personality and influence was a force within the community, especially for the faithful, such that his death in 1964 marks the beginning of the decline of priestly influence over the lives of community members. This decline is epitomized through the transfer of decision-making power and command over activities from the resident priest to the Fabrique Council, a democratic governing body for the parish.

While present prior to 1965, the Fabrique was primarily tasked with keeping track of finances, though not control over spending, and bearing responsibility for heating the building – all other decisions and governance were solely in the hands of the priest.

The story of Nellis's death is reflective of his personality, but it is also another marker of the relationship between heritage and the Church in Douglastown, as demonstrated in the following excerpt from an interview with Gary:

He died during St. Patrick's and he died because of his obsession with perfection. I'll explain. A great snowstorm came on; he had invited the Bishop from Gaspé to come down. St. Patrick's Day was looming and on March the 16<sup>th</sup> at night, his churchyard had not been opened [plowed]. [One man] was in charge of the road at the time and he had been trying to reach [him] all day to get the men to open the churchyard wide. Because at that time in the regular year they opened a certain section of it and not the whole thing but he wanted *everything* open including the Holy Name Hall. And in his frenzy to reach [the snow plow operator], he became so frustrated that he went out when he saw the first machine arrive, 'cause somebody told [the plow operator] that he needed to be in Douglastown. Father Nellis rushed out, he did not put on a heavy top coat and it was a windy day and he walked over into the existing churchyard, the existing church, and he took a heart attack while beginning to talk to the man on the blower. But...he may have had a heart attack before...probably the stress on his heart was too much from his anxiety and he collapsed. Now, since that time the church democratized.

Father Nellis's need for things to be done according to his vision is thus remembered as the cause of his death, running from the presbytery to the church in a snowstorm. He is also remembered for his profound effect on the aesthetic look of the town. And with his death came the gradual relaxation of the hold the priest held over the practice of Catholicism in the community, though his memory remains physically engraved on the landscape of Douglastown.

#### 4.4 Stories of the Supernatural

The Catholic Church, then, has played a fundamental role in perpetuating the dominant narrative theme of Irish heritage within the community, particularly within its effect on the landscape through the memory of Father Nellis. These stories, the conformity of the buildings, and the relationship between the Church and the school form a large part of Douglstown's communal memory and contribute heavily to the town's religious-themed narratives. Running parallel to these are stories about supernatural beliefs and experiences.<sup>48</sup>

Stories that reflect religion and spirituality through supernatural themes offer another means for inclusivity and communication about the heritage of the town and of its significant places. Hearing these stories enforces a sense of emplacement for audiences, who are familiar with and have invested in its settings, while simultaneously serving to educate and inform others about their community. More than the stories that hold religious and educational themes, these narratives are used to communicate religious practices and ideologies within local circles and to outside audiences. Knowledge of local places add nuance and meaning to stories, though unnecessary to appreciate the plot, characters, and aspects of the narrative that contribute to knowledge-sharing.

The primary and most widely told stories associated with the supernatural in Douglstown are ghost stories, which typically tell of restless spirits who 'come back' or 'remain here' because of unfinished business. For example, Sean tells of an old man

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<sup>48</sup> All of the following narratives of supernatural events were recounted to me as second-hand experiences, that is, the events recounted happened to someone else. Rieti (1991) notes that, for some, a significant amount of trust must be established before participants are comfortable sharing their first-hand experiences of fairy stories and other supernatural phenomena. Given the length of time that I was in the community, and despite my previous history there, I did not have time enough to build the level of trust necessary for the communication of sensitive material like first-hand experiences of the supernatural.



whose brother had died.<sup>49</sup> Before he passed, the brother told the old man that he must promise to ‘say a Mass for him,’ dedicating the spiritual benefits of a Mass to the repose of the deceased, especially those souls in purgatory (Saunders 2005). After his brother died, and for whatever reason, the old man kept putting off having a Mass said for his departed brother. And then, one night, the old man was sleeping in his bed when the rungs of his headboard began to squeak, loud enough to wake him up, as if someone was turning them slowly. He thought to himself, as he lay there listening, that he never did get around to having a Mass said for his brother. Eventually, he went back to sleep and when he woke up in the morning, he checked the rungs. They were tightly screwed in, much too tightly for him to move them. He quickly made arrangements to have the Mass said for his brother because he figured his brother had come back in the night to remind him of his duty.

This story is an example of a genre of ghost stories typically associated with oral narratives, where “the supernatural presence often does little beyond making itself known in some manner” (Banks Thomas 2007: 29), here by squeaking the rungs of the headboard. The unexpected squeaking reminds the character of his neglected duty to his brother and prompts action. As explored in the previous chapter when discussing the Irish wake, the telling of this story functions as a means of communicating some of the ideologies, practices, and traditions associated with Catholicism and of the cultural obligations of siblings to those unfamiliar with these religious practices.

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<sup>49</sup> Sean was a participant who preferred that I take notes during our interviews, rather than be recorded. The following narrative, and others he contributed, are excerpts from my fieldnotes, paraphrased from our interviews and with added explanations for clarity when necessary.

Other stories about ghosts holding religious and spiritual themes reflect a sense of place as well as the traditions and heritage of Douglastown manifested locally. Explicit knowledge of the places in this story are not necessary to follow the plot or to garner the desired effect of general ‘spookiness.’ However, being familiar with its settings adds richness and depth because it allows for full visualization, cultivating processes of emplacement through the settings of the narrative and encouraging a sense of place through the physicality of the descriptions in the story.

You were talking about ghost stories. The most vivid one that I recall, I have been told about it and three people, three people who were there...all attested to me...they’re all dead now, maybe 25 or 30 years, maybe more. You know, in the Roman Catholic religion, it is strictly demanded that you make your Easter duty. Easter duty meant going to confession just prior to Easter, the new Christ is coming at Easter, you cleaned your chest and you paid your dues to your church. You paid your tithe or your deem and you normally paid for a pew. These were not exorbitant fees at that time, they were very reasonable, but it was obligatory. And if you missed paying your dues, even though you had been at confession, the record in the Church showed you had not paid your dues it was extrapolated you had not made your confession, okay? So that’s the context, I’m telling you.

Now, in this particular Easter season, two men...they were both from [within the Township], although Roman Catholics. One of them lived [in Prevel] the [other] man lived...below the Seal Cove River...and they were fishermen but they were also heavy drinkers. And they went out fishing after herring, *very* early in the season. And a storm came on; the boat overturned and they both drowned. So, it came time to get the priest to bury them but the priest asserted that they had not paid their deem and had not made their confession therefore. So, their bodies were brought to Douglastown, to Kennedy’s shed on the beach, they were sewn into tarps, canvas tarps of which you made sails for fishing boats, sewn in there and the priest allowed that they be buried in unconsecrated ground...in every Roman Catholic graveyard, until 1960, there was a corner of the graveyard, very small...which was called pauper’s field, traditionally. But it was called the sinner’s plot [colloquially]. Anyone who had not made their confession at Easter had to be buried in there... In my day, there was a little fence around that section of the graveyard and it wasn’t even kept – nobody put flowers there and weeds grew up in it. Nobody went *near* it...

So, the law was: these people could not be buried in unconsecrated ground unless it were at night, in the dark. And in Douglastown the favourite time for doing that, and this was spring of the year, was about four o'clock in the morning. So, there was no bell rang at the church, nothing, the priest didn't get out of bed, the men saw that the graves were dug, and they loaded the bodies from the shed onto the sled or wagon, probably wagon that time, wagon in the spring, came up the hill and here's where the story begins.

Three of them...*swore*, talking to me individually, the following happened. They were coming up the hill below the Douglastown post office where it exists today, when suddenly on the side of the ditch, on the high land of the ditch, they heard a bleating. They looked over: it was a young, young sheep, a lamb. And the horses drawing the two bodies up the hill, on separate wagons, stopped. They wouldn't move, the horses. One man beat the horse but it *wouldn't move*! Boom! The lamb went down, arrived at flat land, crossed the ditch, and got behind the two body bearers, the wagons, and walked behind it right up to the cemetery. When it got to the cemetery, the men parked the horses outside the cemetery wall, of course, the gate, and they carried the bodies – lifted them over the fence. They couldn't go in the cemetery with them [the bodies] because that was consecrated ground. They lifted them over the fence and put them down in the ground, and covered them up no doubt. *But* the moment the bodies went into the ground, the lamb disappeared.

So...they searched all over Douglastown to see who was missing a lamb; no one could account for it. There was still snow on the ground, it was springtime, lambs had been born at that time, some weren't expected yet but *nobody* could account for a missing lamb, no one. So, [one man] spoke to the priest and he said: "It is possible that these men may have made their confession but didn't pay their deem and, if that happened, I had no way of knowing," because in the confession the priest is not supposed to say who went to confession, nothing about it. So, these three men, who attested this to me clearly, were convinced that it was the Lamb of God, the Spirit of God, who followed those men up to the unconsecrated ground. Now, isn't that scary?

The relationship between confession and tithes, the priest and his parishioners, and the parishioners and their economic means are the driving force behind this ghost story.

Elements of life in Douglastown are evident through references to the fisheries, the habits of "heavy drinkers," allusions to the lower socio-economic status of fishermen who begin the season early and are unable to pay their tithe, and details of life as a Catholic practitioner in these circumstances. The settings of the story – the beach, the road, the

graveyard, and the time of day – evoke images that inspire a sense of place and recall instances of place attachment. Phrasing such as “they were coming up the hill below the Douglastown post office where it exists today” encourage listeners to recall the physicality necessary in climbing this hill. Those familiar with it know that the hill is steep and long, running from the beach to the Second Range. It likewise specifically places listeners through the reference to the “high land of the ditch.” The drama of the story comes from its setting in the hours before dawn, in the unconsecrated part of the graveyard where the ‘sinners’ were buried, which the storyteller frames as a space of fear. The teaching elements come through the elements of Catholicism tailored to the population of Douglas Township through the details it provides, as well as its introduction: “So that’s the context, I’m telling you.”

Religious and spiritual themes also feature in stories that portray the devil or those under its influence. These stories tend to communicate about Catholic ideology through amusing anecdotes; much like the story of searching for a Christmas tree earlier in this chapter and that of the young men at the Irish wake in Chapter 3, they present details of Catholic practices through a local lens, relatable to community members as well as others with similar cultural backgrounds. The following story is one such narrative, excerpted from an interview and paraphrased from my fieldnotes:

A man was looking for someone to fish with him, but he wasn’t having any luck finding a partner. Finally, the man said aloud that he just had to have someone and he didn’t care if it was the devil himself. A few days after he said this, he happened to meet a strange fellow who was willing to fish with him for the season and so they did. In the fall, when the season closed, this fellow went to pay his new partner. He counted out his

partner's share onto a rock on the beach and when this strange man went to take his share of the season's work off of the rock, he left behind a burnt imprint of his fingers on the rock. The man had, quite literally, made a deal with the devil.

The settings of this story and its plot reflect the culture and heritage of a fishing community. The fisherman's need for a partner highlights one of the problems experienced in the fishing industry, particularly when placed in the context of a truck system whereby the degree of debt is dependent on the success of the fishing season. Counting "his partner's share onto a rock on the beach" suggests the social and economic importance of that place to residents and the vagueness of what beach is being referenced in the narrative allows listeners to visualize and personalize the story in accordance with their own places of attachment. As part of the supernatural narratives of the town, this story works with the story of the Lamb reproduced above, where Catholic fishermen are put or assumed to be in a morally questionable position with regards to their relationship with religious practices.

The acts of fishing and the details of religious practices appear in the next narrative as well, but with the role of 'Devil's advocate' and in the context of what is colloquially referred to as 'putting one over' on somebody else. A fisherman and his partner used to fish out of Gaspé North and the French people out there were terribly superstitious. One day, these French fishermen noticed that Pup and Mr. Ben were catching fish and they, for some reason, were not.<sup>50</sup> Now, Pup could speak French and these other fishermen knew it so they asked him how come he was catching all these fish but they weren't. Pup told them that it was a secret, but Mr. Ben had a strange black book and he was all the

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<sup>50</sup> The names have been changed in this story to protect the anonymity of the storyteller.

time praying out of it to the devil. Four days after the uneasy French fishermen heard this, one of them said he had to stay home because all of his potatoes were covered in potato bugs. ‘No problem,’ said Pup, ‘I’ll just send over Ben with his book,’ using his relationship with the devil to clear the field of potato bugs. When eventually Pup and Mr. Ben showed these men their black book, the joke was revealed: it had been a piece of black tar paper all along and the two fishermen were getting one over on their French counterparts.

Here, the figure of the devil is used as the object of the joke, through Mr. Ben’s black book. The story illustrates the relationships between the people who fish for a living, where success prompts being sought for advice. The camaraderie between different groups of fishermen lends itself to relationships whereby these forms of jokes are appropriate and entertaining, going beyond those involved to become a shared narrative.

The figure of the devil is present in the above stories as a way to amuse and communicate about life in the region. The juxtaposition of this figure and the fishing industry works within religious themes in narrative to explore a different facet of the town’s history. Fishing, while a significant economic staple for the entire region of the Gaspé throughout its history and into the present, does not appear significantly in any other story themes, outside of these narratives of supernatural events (Mimeault 2004; Sinnett and Mimeault 2009).

Stories of the supernatural have the power to transcend the community and are ripe for retelling. They serve as an excellent means for communicating the more interesting elements about the town. Since they are also entertaining, they serve the social function

of passing along local information of how the town functioned in the memories of older generations, as well as educating outsiders and newcomers about the town and its places and the roles Catholicism played in everyday life in Douglastown.

#### 4.5 Religion Featured in Moments of Exclusion

Finally, religious themes and stories revolving around the practice of Catholicism are also found in stories that feature community members being excluded due to transgressions against the rules and traditions of the Catholic Church. The story of the Lamb reproduced above is one example of this, where the narrative details how the two men lost at sea in the early spring were included within the community in life and excluded in death, due to the ambiguity of whether or not they had made their Easter confession. The uncertainty in this story permitted their exclusion from the church, personified through the clandestine ceremony and placement of their burial in the “sinner’s plot.” Being buried in the “dead of night” in the unconsecrated section of the graveyard is symbolic of an expulsion from the community, particularly when placed in comparison with the rituals of the Irish wake described in Chapter 3.

Similar moments of rejection based on transgressions to the rules and values of the community have had analogous repercussions, as demonstrated in the following stories. Religion features strongly in these stories of exclusionary moments, often where it held the power to significantly disrupt lives, as in the following two examples:

The eldest in the family...arrived home one night, I was very young, about eight, seven maybe, and I was sent upstairs. But children being curious, I listened through the grate. And [she announced] that she wished to marry her boyfriend...Now, he was Anglican and he was not prepared to change his religion and she was not prepared to get married anywhere else but Douglastown [in the Catholic Church]. And, adding fuel to the flames, she

was three months pregnant. So, her parents took it very hard. Her mother went to see the priest and told him that her daughter wanted to be married and he said no, 'I'm not marrying her in the church. I'll marry her, but it will be in the rectory and it will be at 8:00 at night.' So I remember, my aunt came down from Montreal and she brought me a suit, fit for a young boy to wear. They were married in February and we went out on a horse and sled because the roads weren't open at that time...and went into the office door, the same as if you were going in to pay your tithe. And the priest married them in the living room of the rectory.

The secrecy of the marriage, the staging of the wedding outside the church, and the reactions of the parents and the priest to the marriage request all indicate disapproval of the union and allude to its potential to disrupt communal norms. The circumstances of the marriage clearly strained the relationship between the mother, the bride, the priest, and their community, as shown in the phrases "her parents took it very hard" and when the priest said, "I'm not marrying her in the church." The inter-marriage between Catholic and Anglican represents a deviation from the tenets of the dominant narrative theme, resulting in a challenge to the parameters of belonging.<sup>51</sup>

Several aspects of this story are reminiscent of the story of the Lamb summarized above, where the two fishermen experienced a moment of exclusion upon their death due to the ambiguity of whether or not they had made their Easter confession. In both cases, the ceremony was conducted at night, outside of the traditional places, and without the local traditions that honoured the occasion. For both, the significant life event is overshadowed by the transgression, which leads to the clandestine and uncharacteristic performance of a traditional ceremony.

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<sup>51</sup> See the quotation reproduced on page 158, where one participant noted: "In Québec, we talk about two solitudes, English and French. But actually, in our area, there have been three solitudes: French, Protestant, and Catholic."



Another example of a story with a similar exclusionary moment, here paraphrased from an interview with a participant recounting an experience by one of his ancestors, is one of a woman asked to leave her family home when she told them that she was pregnant, though unmarried. In recompense for her expulsion from the family, she was gifted a section of land from her family's property and, essentially, lived next door to her parents for the rest of their lives. The story is told in a manner that suggests her parents never spoke to their daughter again and, by proxy, she was ostracized from the community. In each of these examples, once fully within the boundaries of belonging, the individuals were rejected from the community due to violating church regulations and community norms, placing the transgressors outside of its boundaries.

These stories of exclusion based on transgressions towards the rules and norms of the Catholic Church symbolize moments whereby the religiosity of the community is made vulnerable. Given the close ties between Irishness and Catholicism as practiced in Douglstown, they represent challenges to the very functioning of the community and the specifics that make the community unique. It is significant that these moments are also communicated as second-hand experiences; like stories featuring the supernatural, they are not the direct experiences of the storyteller.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

The decline of the Catholic Church has led to the establishment of expressions of heritage in other contexts, such as the Irish festival, local publications, iconography, and the other connections elaborated on in Chapter 3. This has effectively transferred the celebration of Irishness from an everyday activity to one relegated to special occasions or

times of year. The Irishness of Douglastown, then, is not lived as it once was; the decline of the church means the celebration of an Irish heritage has become an event practiced once or twice a year.

The influence of the Church, however, lives on through the narratives that hold religious and spiritual themes. These stories become effective vehicles for presenting culture, heritage, and locally-specific traditions through a number of means, using childhood memories, people, landscapes, stories of the supernatural, and moments of exclusion to communicate these details. The stories are useful tools for a number of reasons: first, they tend to be very entertaining and this encourages their telling. Second, they hold religious themes that are relatable to both Protestant and Catholic audiences, who make up the majority of residents along the Gaspé coast. Third, they are understandable outside of their specifics and cater to rural audiences with similar cultural elements and, finally, they preserve Catholic traditions, rituals, and relationships and communicate their local nuances to those outside of the community.

## Chapter 5

### The Relationships Between Anglophones and Francophones

The political climate in Québec has roots in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when France gave up rights to its colonies in Canada following the Seven Years' War. The French settlers who remained were governed by Britain from 1763 to Confederation, although they comprised the vast majority of residents within what would become Québec (Conrad and Finkel 2009). Current issues surrounding language came to the fore during the political movement that took force in the 1970s, mentioned in the Introduction (see pages 28-29). The political and social reform in Québec began with the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s, which sparked political and social change in the province, including government secularization and the development of a governmentally-funded welfare state, as well as the beginning of the separatist movement. Part of this process became legislated with Bill 22, the Official Language Act, in 1974 through the government of Robert Bourassa, and culminated in the 1980 referendum. The Bill deemed French the official language of the province, specifying that it applied to the language of business, administration, public utilities, labour, and education (Tetley 1983). The passing of this legislation sparked considerable outrage within the Anglophone community, particularly from groups in Montréal, who "opposed Bill 22 because they feared that this was only the beginning of change and that resistance to any such change was preferable to the risk involved in attempting to reach a final solution of Québec's dilemma" (Tetley 1983: 194). The political ramifications of the movement to protect the French language and culture of Québec continues to preoccupy residents of the province and has given rise to multiple

other legislations over the years (see Authier 21017 for an example of a recent language issue being debated in the province). The most notable of these pieces of legislation is the Language Charter (Bill 101) that “specifies [among other things] that the only students permitted to enrol [*sic*] in English-language schools are those with at least one parent who was educated in English in Québec or elsewhere in Canada” (Laframboise 2017: n.p.).

This political movement has gained momentum since the 1970s and currently requires recognition and use of the French language and integration into its culture for most residents in the province, enforced through government policy. English-speakers throughout rural Québec have struggled to maintain their own distinct heritage and identity in the face of a Francophone majority in this political climate, which has divided the population by language since Britain took control of the territory (Donahue 1997; Huntley-Maynard 1993). The reduced population numbers of Anglophones outside of the metropolitan area of Montréal projects an image of rural Québec as relatively homogenous and unilingually Francophone, with 80.5% of the official language minority residing in the Montréal Census Metropolitan Area (Corbeil, Chavez, and Pereira 2010). Due to the difficulty in attracting professionals to the region of the Gaspésie, particularly bilingual professionals, the minority status of Anglophones exacerbates their inability to receive much-needed services in their preferred language of English (Vision Gaspé-Percé Now 2016). This has led to the development of community groups like Vision Gaspé-Percé Now (Vision), Committee for Anglophone Social Action

(CASA), and others throughout the province to advocate on their behalf (CHSSN 2017).<sup>52</sup>

In Douglastown, further changes accompanied the political reforms that were implemented during the Quiet Revolution to protect the French language and transform its status in business and society. The 1970s also saw the amalgamation of each small municipality along the Gaspé coast into larger towns, framed by these major changes occurring at the provincial level. Cumulatively, it is possible that the political circumstances during that decade further strained the relationships between language groups in Douglastown. Now, the concept of the ‘real Douglastowner’ is grounded in the English language and, as a minority Anglophone population, is in a situation that is a mirror image of Québécois political identity, which is rooted in the French language. The juxtaposition of these two language identities creates tension between the two language communities and masks other socio-political and economic changes that have likewise transformed the town (Kaplan 1994). Due to its history in the community and in the province, language is in a position to cover over deeper societal issues because of its long history as a divisive topic.

Due to this history, it is within the theme of language that community parameters of belonging are drawn, tested, and stretched. This chapter will explore the relationship between Douglastown residents who are mainly French or English-speaking within the frame of minority and majority populations in the province of Québec. This relationship

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<sup>52</sup> Both CASA and Vision represent communities along the Gaspé Coast, including Douglastown. Vision is a local organization, while CASA is regional, but the former have their offices within the Douglastown Community Centre. See footnote 46 on page 113 for other details on the relationship between these two organizations.

between language groups is expressed through memory and in conjunction with other factors of change experienced in the community.

### 5.1 Anglophones Directing Language Relationships

The relationships between language groups are an echo of and a reaction to Québec language politics as a whole, where concerns about maintaining cultural and linguistic autonomy are paramount for both Anglophones and Francophones (Tetley 1983). Cultural productions from Anglophones along the Gaspé coast are framed within a desire or need to celebrate and retain their culture and the English language. For example, the first issues of *The Gaspé Spec*, the local English-language newspaper, provided content in both official languages. However, letters to the editor in subsequent issues challenged this practice and, after less than a year, the content of the newspaper was provided solely in English. In response to this, and after a visit from Québec premier Robert Bourassa in 1975 shortly after the inception of Bill 22, a Francophone Douglastown resident wrote the following letter to this newspaper:

Dear Sir: ...first of all I want to say I enjoy reading SPEC but there is one thing I want to talk about – Bill 22. Well, I am not for Bill 22 but what is so wrong with french language in our society... how come we frenchmans can learn to speak english without being ashamed and english people seems to be ashamed to speak french especially people from Douglastown... I speak, read, and write english and I am not ashamed of it. Someday some english people may be glad they can speak French... We people are just, like any english people only our language is different. (The Gaspé Spec 1975)<sup>53</sup>

This individual's views on the relationships between Anglophones and Francophones are characterized by one-sided efforts on the part of French-speakers to increase

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<sup>53</sup> This quote, as well as its reproductions below, has been reproduced exactly as it appears in *The Gaspé Spec*, including spelling and grammatical errors.

bilingualism. The writer does not understand the feelings of shame and a refusal to work towards increasing second-language fluency that describe the Anglophones encountered in her daily life, since “I speak, read, and write english and I am not ashamed of it” and “Someday, some english people may be glad they can speak French.” Further, this passage suggests the writer may have experienced discrimination because French is her first language, as she states “We people are just, like any english people only our language is different.” The elimination of French from *The Gaspé Spec* occurs at the same time as the provincial political reform and the amalgamation of Douglastown into the town of Gaspé.

Other evidence of the power that the English language held in the town is evident from accounts of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, introduced in the previous chapter. Upon moving to the town, the sisters were required to learn English; many of them were unilingual Francophones before coming to Douglastown. The necessity of learning English is mentioned in almost every single recollection provided at the end of the document “The Way It Was,” compiled to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sisters’ presence in Douglastown (Bond 2000). Phrases such as: “I really loved that parish even though I could not understand English;” “I found Douglastown no different from where I was born and brought up, except that English was the only language at that time;” “I had a problem with the language at first, especially the mass and sermons, but I quickly caught on and learned enough to get by” exemplify the primacy of language in the memory of the Sisters (Bond 2000). The dominance of English directed the flow of the relationship between language groups, including those in positions of authority, like the Sisters. The framing of the Sisters in narratives of the past is very different from that of

other Francophone groups in Douglastown, such as those described below, in part because their position of authority was ingrained through their roles as teachers and leaders in the parish.

The inversion of the dominant language group in the community from English to French is the largest change that was identified by residents in Douglastown in interviews, along with the change in landscape. The inversion is recent, as the new migrants to the area over the last one to two decades have changed the linguistic dynamic of the town. The articulation of this change with regard to language relationships is manifested by community members in comments and conversations that characterize members of the new Francophone community as different, perpetuating a notion that the two groups are divided, even when efforts to increase bilingualism are present.

The relationships between language groups in Douglastown is verbalized by Anglophones in more than one way, dependent on the group of Francophones being referenced. The French-speaking groups present in narrative can be grouped into two categories: ‘old’ and ‘new’ Francophone residents. ‘Old’ Francophones stem from a group locally referred to as the ‘crattys’ (a derogatory term described in the next section), while ‘new’ Francophone residents generally characterize those who have moved into the community relatively recently. The new Francophone residents have had a much more significant impact on the town, transforming it into what one participant named a “bedroom community for the town of Gaspé,” with community members also associating their presence with the physical transformations of its landscape. Within the shift of focus from old to new Francophone residents comes a shift in the balance of power within the



community due to the effects of these new migrants, changing the relationship between French and English language groups in the community.

## 5.2 The Case of the Crotty Family

Memories of language communities in the past construe the two groups as distinct, the “two solitudes” of French and English, with few opportunities for bridging the divide.<sup>54</sup> While the community was never culturally homogenized, English was dominant in business and society for most of Douglastown’s history, despite amalgamation into the town of Gaspé and the implementation of Bill 22, until incoming migrants changed the language make-up of the area. The treatment of the families On the Point, a community of Francophones who built their homes on Crown land, provides a window into how the historical relationships between the two linguistic groups are remembered now.

The social status of those On the Point excluded them from fully participating in the Irish heritage and dedication to Catholicism that characterized belonging and places of social interaction in Douglastown, like the steps of the church. The association between this group and the French language is described in interviews as the basis for their exclusion. In the past, the term used to put down this group of families On the Point was ‘cratty,’ a catch-all derogatory label. During Irish Week in 2012, a presentation was given on the Crotty family by Cherie Bowers, an American with roots in Douglastown through the Crotty family and other prominent family names from the area. Leading up to the presentation, community members were observed expressing surprise at learning that

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<sup>54</sup> The “two solitudes” is an expression often utilized in Québec to describe the lack of communication and collaboration between Anglophones and Francophones. The expression comes from Hugh MacLennan’s 1945 novel *The Two Solitudes*, but it has been adopted into the rhetoric of society as an apt description of the relationships between the language communities in the province.

the term ‘cratty’ actually derived from a family name, as their assumption had been that the term was only a nasty form of name-calling. Similarly, during and after the presentation itself, people expressed interest at learning that the Crotty family had Irish roots. As one person noted: “What they used to call the crattys that, that’s Crotty there, come find out this time they’re Irish them people. Where here we only knew them as French,” then reciting the names of all the people, including those descended from the Crotty family and living in the community, who were surprised to learn of this heritage. Language, in this case, obscured the heritage of the Crotty family, excluding them from participating in the heritage of Douglastown and extending to the rest of the group On the Point.

The story of the Crotty family as told at the 2012 Irish Week presentation reveals how they came to be On the Point, and how circumstance and bad luck shaped their position in the community. When originally emigrating from Ireland to the Gaspé Peninsula in the early 1800s, the O’Crottaigh family landed at Point St. Peter, a small French fishing village in Malbay, approximately 23 kilometers from Douglastown.<sup>55</sup> In an effort to assimilate, the O’Crottaigh family, whose name in Irish means ‘hunchback,’ changed their name to Crotty, which was more easily recorded and understood in French. Unfortunately, as noted during the 2012 presentation, the term ‘crotty’ in French translates as something dirty and unpleasant.<sup>56</sup> Two branches of the family subsequently changed their name in later generations to Center and Grady respectively to avoid the

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<sup>55</sup> The official name for this area is Point St. Pierre, but it is known locally within the Anglophone population as Point St. Peter

<sup>56</sup> This association may derive from one of two translations of Crotty: crotte, which translates as droppings or excrement, specifically in reference to animals, or crotté, which translates as muddy or mucky. Both of these translations are provided by the online Collins Dictionary, French-English, s.v. “Crotte,” [https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/french-english/crotte\\_1](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/french-english/crotte_1) and s.v. “Crotté,” <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/french-english/crott%C3%A9>.

stigmatization that came with both Crotty and O'Crotaigh. After fishing cod out of Point St. Peter for a number of years, the Crotty family moved to Douglastown around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This migration was due to unmanageable levels of debt to the fishing company, who demanded more from the fishermen each year. Their unsustainable levels of debt drove them to seek employment elsewhere (see also Ommer 1989 and Samson 1986 for an exploration of the truck system in Gaspé and the relationship between fishermen and merchants).

And so the Crotty family, in a dismal financial situation with no assets, few resources, and little money, moved to Douglastown where they were subsequently unable to purchase land and settle. They built on Crown land instead, on the point that forms half of the barachois of Douglastown, with other Francophone families.<sup>57</sup> Their choice of a settlement location coincided with a fish and seafood cannery where they were able to find temporary or seasonal work.<sup>58</sup> There, however, they became looked down on by the rest of Douglastown residents; in actuality, due to the geography of the region, the beach is much lower with the development of the town on a hill rising toward the Second Range, and figuratively, as their lower socioeconomic status translated into isolation and ostracization. This perception of the group on the Point reverberated into the lifetimes of community members today, over 100 years since the Crotty family settled there:

When I went to school, French was kind of looked down on. The people On the Point were French and they were like second-class citizens...they were more, I wouldn't say ostracized, but sometimes looked down on... Most of them down on the Point didn't work much, they were poorer...and as soon as welfare came out, that was all welfare. So, very few people worked, they

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<sup>57</sup> It is unclear how many families were On the Point when the Crotty family settled there.

<sup>58</sup> What exactly was canned at this plant is also unclear – one participant told me it was salmon and a conversation recorded in my fieldnotes mentions that it was lobster. It is possible that the plant canned whatever was at hand, dependent on the season.

mainly lived from poaching. But, now it's better I think since they moved to the mainland.

The stigma associated with the families On the Point is evident in this memory, with the assumption of a reliance on social assistance once it became available, the perception that “very few people worked,” and that their major source of livelihood came from poaching. Examples like this sculpt the relationship between language groups in memories of Douglastown's history when English was still paramount, leading to a negative relationship that excluded French-speakers from participating in Douglastown's heritage and, therefore, from becoming full and equal members of the community:

When I was a kid, there was a really unhealthy racism toward the French, but it was founded in...the fact that there were maybe 20 houses on the beach... So, they were really treated like second-class citizens in Douglastown. And, as I understand it, they were called crattys...and it comes from the Crotty family... And so, all these houses got, well I don't know how they disappeared but...there's none left... And so, in the time of my youth, and I still hear this today, you know, talking about ‘those people’ but they were really treated as if they were so different from us but if you just scratch back two generations or something, you'll see interbreeding....and Crottys are Irish anyway and, you know like, a lot of Douglastowners would be horrified to think of Crottys as not French...that's the climate I grew up in.<sup>59</sup>

Here, the families On the Point are remembered as being “treated as if they were so different from us,” echoing feelings expressed in the opinion piece quoted earlier in the chapter.<sup>60</sup> This expressed difference remained despite commonalities in ancestry, livelihood (such as participating in the fishing industry), and significant places, like the beach and surrounding areas where the wharf, train station, and other businesses were located. The perception of how language affected the relationships between this group

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<sup>59</sup> It is noteworthy that this interview took place after the 2012 Irish Week presentation on the Crotty family, which may have influenced the perception of the Crottys as Irish.

<sup>60</sup> As a Francophone Douglastowner, it is likely that the author of the opinion on page 136 was from the group who lived On the Point.

and other community members is evident in the comment: “a lot of Douglastowners would be horrified to think of the Crottys as not French.”

However, the family was re-framed during the Irish Week presentation that declared their roots as Irish. This act effectively pushed the boundaries of inclusion and began the process of allowing the descendants of those who had lived On the Point to claim their place within the community’s memory and to act as repositories of knowledge, history, and place attachment in their own right. One house remains from the original group, whose inhabitants, an older couple, attended the presentation on the Crotty family as special guests. They were actively sought out and consulted by audience members after the presentation for clarification or elaboration of different points. The re-framing of the Crotty family from French to Irish serves to bring the family and the entire group associated with them into the dominant narrative theme, bringing them within the parameters of belonging. This revelation is reinforced in an earlier quote, where a participant expresses how interesting it is to see them in this new manner: “Come find out this time they’re Irish...here we only knew them as French.”

The boundaries that defined the Francophone families On the Point as different and outside of the parameters for belonging are now blurring and changing. Their legacy in Douglastown means that an ongoing process of place attachment focuses their history within one of the more popular spots within the Township, Douglastown beach, on an area steeped in historical meaning with a legacy of Douglastown’s economic infrastructure. Their inclusion within the dominant narrative theme through the Crotty family allows the boundaries of community belonging today to be stretched in ways that were not possible several years ago. Newer Francophone migrants, by contrast, do not



Figure 16: Cross on the Beach Commemorating the Community On the Point. Photo by author.

have the same legacy of access to community participation, place attachment, or historical association, of necessity due to their length of residence in the community. Their presence provides a contrast to the longer-standing Francophone residents that encourages the inclusion of the latter group. Hence, the boundaries stretch to include those residents once ostracized, who are invested in the community, creating and developing a shared participation in the town's past. Further, they begin to carve out a place within the dominant narrative theme through the inclusion of the Crotty family and their Irish heritage. As the term 'cratty' once excluded the group from participation in the community's heritage, Crotty now becomes a means of claiming that heritage and the role it plays in the stories of the town (see Figure 16).

### 5.3 Language Masking Other Social Issues

Not all of the people residing in Douglastown can be neatly divided into Anglophones and Francophones, particularly when the criteria are dependent solely on what language is spoken the most frequently. In younger families, especially Gaspesians who remain in or have returned to the area, inter-marriage between the two language groups is common. Even earlier in Douglastown's history, bilingualism was not unusual, as the excerpt from the 1975 opinion letter to the local newspaper discussed on page 136 illustrates. In other interactions with participants, evidence of bilingualism was noted in stories, particularly those about the fishing industry. Francophone or bilingual families also existed within the community outside of those On the Point. Rémi Dion, for example, reminisces about growing up in a bilingual household:

We were bilingual from day one, that's why I have an accent in English and I have an accent in French... When I went to school, French was kind of looked down on in this way, the people On the Point were French and they were like second class citizens... We lived right here [in the Core] but we went to French class and the people On the Point were in the French class they were more, I wouldn't say ostracized, but sometimes looked down on.

The families On the Point frequently inter-married, creating an impression that "everyone on the Point was kind of related." Despite being included within the Francophone population in terms of education and a common language, Rémi's example suggests that language acts in memory as a divisor that is actually based on socioeconomic status.

Although the poverty of families On the Point was noted repeatedly throughout interviews within the topic of historic Francophone groups in Douglastown, they were not described as bilingual and Francophones outside of this group were rarely mentioned in interviews or narratives about the past. Thus, because families like Rémi's or other examples of bilingualism rarely appear in narratives about language, this gives rise to the

impression that to be Francophone in Douglastown's past was to be poor and underprivileged.

Like Remi, who helped to organize the first iteration of Irish Week (see Chapter 3) and served as mayor of the town from 1968 to 1970, in part because of his bilingualism, Lorraine Blais is a bilingual resident who has supported and worked for the growth of the community. Her contributions include founding a library at the Community Centre, an Audubon society, and a travel series, volunteering in many different capacities for Irish Week and other community activities, and being on the Board of Directors for the Community Center. Lorraine and Louis Morin, her husband, are a Francophone couple who moved to Douglastown together in 1975 and raised several children there; as self-described hippies, they had a desire to live in the country, a perception that Anglophones also hold of the new migrants. Their experience has, by and large, been quite different from the other Francophone families in the area described so far:

*Louis:* We were one of the first French families around, new ones arriving. Close to the beach there was a very, very small community, French community there...they were families which had been there for many, many years. I think we were maybe the first family here

*Lorraine:* Well we bought [our house] from a French-Canadian family... [the nephew of a parish priest] ...

*Louis:* Once we had our own children, when they were young, and some of the children from the small community close to the beach, began to come – they wouldn't stay very long but they were coming. And once I was surprised because they were staying here in the house when we were beginning to eat... And I was too shy to tell them 'Now you have to go back home,' so, they were staying in the staircase looking at us...they don't realize that the house can be a private place, like a home, so they are always at home everywhere. So I realized that those children were feeling right at home...

They were very nice children and we liked them but once we decided, we were in like that hippie culture, and as I was gardening we were having our first vegetable and I said to Lorraine, 'We'll go to the beach and we'll have a



little fire and we'll burn some of our vegetables just as it was written in the Bible... So, we went there with carrots and turnips and onions and (begins to laugh) we're putting all those things in the fire and all the children are, 'Oh, you're crazy! What are you doing?!' (We all laugh). I said, 'We're offering vegetables to God!' Oh, those poor guys

*Lorraine:* What really scandalized them was the strawberries. The potatoes they didn't mind it was just when they saw us throw strawberries 'cause strawberries are like precious and we put three or four in the fire.

This anecdote again suggests that the larger issue surrounding the families On the Point was low economic status rather than language. It also alludes to the presence of other Francophone families outside of those On the Point, as Lorraine mentions that their house was purchased from a "French-Canadian family."

Furthermore, even though all of the characters in the above anecdotes had French as their mother tongue, their cultural understandings differed. Particularly for the families On the Point, who inter-married and existed within a small, but close-knit community, the children were "always at home everywhere," causing initial discomfort for Lorraine and Louis. Similarly, the cultural differences between the, at the time, new migrants and the children were emphasized when Lorraine and Louis burned their vegetables and "scandalized" the children. Similar situations occurred between adults:

I went to a Tupperware party once down there [On the Point] and I felt out of place 'cause I was the only [one not from there]. I bought a few things and then the lady that was giving the demonstration was saying, 'Well, now if you buy so much the hostess will get this prize,' you know, there's the pressure, 'and if any pledge that you're going to have another Tupperware party, she'll get another prize or another gift.' And so they'd say, 'Oh well we've had a lot of Tupperware parties, it'll have to be from someone outside,' you know, it'll have to be you! And that's the last thing I'd do is organize a Tupperware party so I felt so bad...but I said no I can't do that.

Here, it is the notion of obligation that is different, rather than privacy or symbolic gestures using food. From the storyteller's perspective, the social obligations found

within the community On the Point did not extend to her, although the others assumed that her presence at their party created that obligation. Her unwillingness to host a party, despite her disappointment in letting down the group, affected her relationships with these women, at least for the duration of the event described.

Another example of how language is spoken of as a divider, when other factors also contribute to the grouping of Douglastown's residents, occurred during my fieldwork. Many community activities are hosted in the Douglastown Community Centre, including frequent 5 à 7 evenings (or Happy Hours), monthly breakfasts, knitting circles, exercise groups, cooking parties, and so on. These activities are intended to both foster a sense of community and provide entertainment and hobbies to members of both language groups within the community. The following excerpt about my experience attending a 5 à 7 depicts what appears to be a separation based on language. My own reactions and assumptions in this excerpt are interesting in that they are so typical of the community – the discomfort associated with encountering a group of people you don't know, who were not the group you were expecting to meet, and speaking your second language:

I walked into the Center alone but I could hear a lot of voices and some music before I saw anyone. I turned left down the hall towards the kitchen where a number of people were gathered; there were a couple of people cooking in the kitchen and more gathered around some tables in the dining room. I noted several small children but I didn't see anyone that I knew, only faces I recognized from the breakfasts that I had worked previously. This was my first 5 à 7 and I had been invited specifically earlier that day, so I was quite surprised that I didn't see the person who had invited me. I was also feeling quite nervous because I didn't know the people gathered there, they were all speaking French, and they looked at me curiously. They all apparently knew each other, since even the groups sitting at different tables were conversing, and were here for a pot-luck, evident from the lines of open and steaming containers on the counter. I poked my head into the kitchen and the dining room, smiled at those who noticed me and said hello, and then made my way to the bathroom (a default reaction when I'm uncomfortable). The door to the bathroom is across the narrow hall from the entrance to the living room so as

I approached it I realized that there was a second group sitting in the living room. Here were the people that I knew! They were sitting around a table near the back of the room. The living room entrance is furthest from the kitchen and there are a series of windows that look out into the Hall and the dining room across it. The group was seated near the entrance of the living room, far from the windows that look into the dining room, around a long table that is placed against the further wall. They were drinking beer and soft drink and eating chips while three people played the fiddle and the guitar, occasionally passing the instruments from one to the other. They were all English speakers and I joined them gratefully, ashamed of myself for not attempting to participate in the Francophone party in the kitchen... Later, I asked one of the people who were there what had happened and why the two groups had separated themselves so completely. She replied that when she arrived, they were already in the kitchen preparing their meal and she didn't want to disturb them so she went to the living room and set up there to play music. The impression I got was that one group had no desire to disturb the other and so they separated themselves. It seemed a little sad that this is what happened (Fieldnotes, October 19, 2012).

This excerpt shows how easy it is to interpret the division as based on the dominant language being spoken. However, taking other factors into consideration, such as age and life course, a different picture emerges. The group in the kitchen was composed of couples with young children enjoying a meal together, while the group in the living room was made up of men and women at the age of retirement or older, getting together to play music and socialize. To all appearances, the groups were separate because they comprise different language groups and, in fact, this was my initial impression. However, they likewise consist of groups with similar ages, interests, lengths of residence, and place in the life course. This different perspective can be applied to many other community functions that involve both language groups, as pointed out by a community member with a bilingual family, because the majority of Anglophones in Douglastown consist of an aging population and the new migrants are characterized as young families (Vision Gaspé-Percé Now 2016).

While the historic Francophone population becomes drawn into the dominant narrative theme, the new residents serve as an impetus to emphasize the heritage of the community. Their presence inspires unease and uncertainty, as the political reform that has characterized Québec since the implementation of Bill 22 continues to affect Douglastowners and the English language loses the primacy it has held for so long. The new migrants are often portrayed by Anglophone community members as unknown neighbours, unavailable to others, who alter the physical, social, and economic make-up of the town. The vocalization of a fear of these changes constructs the new migrants as a group that is fundamentally different, reiterating the two solitudes of Québec. The verbalization of this feeling of difference comes in many forms, for example, one person remarked during participant observation that the English prefer to build their houses so that they can have a view, on a cleared hill so that they can see the water.<sup>61</sup> The French, she went on, prefer to build their houses surrounded by trees, a sentiment related to the impression that all incoming Francophone migrants come from urban areas and therefore value their privacy. This is one articulation of a recurring theme within the community, whereby the new migrants are constructed as responsible for the changes in the town. Within this example, Francophone newcomers are associated with the other major change attributed to the town, the change in landscape. Many of the older houses of the community (that is, before the new construction that has marked its growth) are built on hills that overlook the water, presumably because this afforded a view of both what was going on in the harbour and of fields and livestock. Although many of the new houses recently built in the community *are* often surrounded by trees, this can be attributed to

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<sup>61</sup> The view is a concept that will be revisited in Chapter 6 when discussing landscape. See pages 166-168.

other reasons that revolve around the overgrowth of Douglastown's once clear fields: for example, most of the available land for development is on the Second and Third Ranges and, due to the mountainous geography of the region, unable to have the same 'view' as those on the First Range. Second, the landscape of Douglastown has changed dramatically over the past 50 or 60 years, such that the forests have reclaimed large amounts of what was once farmland. Thus, the new houses being built by incoming migrants are often, by necessity, surrounded by trees. Indeed, one of these new migrants has, arguably, the best view in all of Douglastown *because* he built his house in a place where no one can see it:

Now I cannot show you the house that I would love to show you, but it has the best view in Douglastown I'm told. I'm told it's fantastic, it's even better than my view... Almost to the fifth range, fourth range pardon me, he built a big place back there. He makes his living from finding wild mushrooms.

Incidentally, the houses being built by some of the younger community members, who are either moving back to the community or who are establishing themselves in households independent from their childhood homes, are also in these areas of Douglastown simply because this is where land is available to build. Several of the incoming migrants have also established businesses within the town and require specific property needs, such as a greenhouse garden and Gaspésie Sauvage, which sells wild edible products and is referenced in the quote above. The presence of the 'new' Francophones, then, are surrounded by ideas that function to separate members of the two language groups, despite other factors that contribute more saliently to the changes described. Hence, the placement of the houses are actually manifestations of the change in landscape that has occurred due to the decrease in agricultural and pastoral needs, as the social and economic make-up of the town evolves. The unease being expressed may

have more to do with the number of new houses being built and less about where they are being situated.

The polarization of the two groups along the lines of language is a means of coping with deeper social issues, such as poverty, class, social status, and place in the life course, by seeing language as the source of difference and separation. Without minimizing the effect of language in dividing groups of residents, which certainly plays a significant role in how residents communicate and socialize, these other factors nuance the divisions that are typically attributed solely to the separation of French and English groups. Community members remember and frame issues as attributable to language that are, in fact, likely manifestations of and reactions to other social factors.

#### 5.4 Working Together

Language functions as a divisor of the community because of a lack of interaction between language groups and because of the perceptions of Francophones held by community members, which are fed by local and provincial history, circumstances around their increasing minoritization, and a difficulty in conversing in their second language. Mutual projects that overcome the divisions that language present work to preserve the places of importance in Douglastown. The transformation of the St. Patrick School into the Community Centre is a good example of how the two language groups came together to preserve an important piece of the community.

Since its establishment, the Douglastown Community Centre has essentially replaced the church as the center of social life in the community. Those who work towards continuing the Centre as a significant place in the life of the community, both

French, English, and bilingual, have turned it into a place of social interaction, demonstrating an ability and a desire to invest in the community from a diversity of individuals. Members from both language groups volunteer for and participate in community events held at the Centre, such as the monthly breakfasts and garage sales, working together to make such events a success. Approximately half of the members of the Board of Directors in 2012 were composed of new migrants. Bringing together the two language groups to support this institution and ensure its vitality is exemplary of a desire for Anglophones and Francophones to work together to the betterment of their collective community. The following excerpt suggests that the inspiration surrounding the impetus to preserve, re-purpose, and revitalize Douglastown's institutions may stem from the unease and discomfort born from the presence of the new migrants:

When the French started to move in and the French decided...they were going to do something with the school and turn it into the community center. I had people phone me and say... 'we got to get on that committee, because we don't want the French to come in and tell us what to do. It's a French committee, they have no right to come in and tell us what to do.' [I express my surprise at the attitude that the Community Centre is for Francophones, which I have heard in numerous places. I talk about how I spend a significant amount of time at the Centre and how all of my interactions are in English] ... I think what's happening now is that it could be changing slightly, but certainly when the committees were set up it was French. Even with the Library? They said the same thing about the library: 'We better get on the committees because we don't want this to become a French library.'

The attitude expressed in this interview excerpt is reminiscent of the changes to *The Gaspé Spec* referenced at the beginning of the chapter where, forty years ago, the Anglophone community saw a need to reserve their newspaper for communication in one language. However, what may have begun from a place of fear regarding losing historical institutions has had the benefit of bringing together the two language groups. From the perspective of some English-speakers, such as the participant referenced in this interview

excerpt, the motivation to retain a significant presence and avoid having community committees and institutions governed by the needs of the majority, Francophone community have, in actuality, encouraged and brought about a mingling of the two groups. The Board of Directors for the Community Centre, for example, consisted of a mix of individuals, Francophone, Anglophone, and bilingual, at their Annual General Meeting in 2012, with portions of the meeting delivered in both languages.

Mutual work between the language groups, such as the re-creation and maintenance of the Community Centre, remains a primary motivation for some members of the community. While Anglophone residents with strong ancestral ties to Douglastown lament the loss of a community where neighbours are as close as family, the following quote from a new migrant suggests that the incoming Francophones hold a different perspective:

It's just a quiet, peaceful, close-knit community and you can be English and French and it doesn't matter. People here seem to want to work together, and I noticed that from the beginning...they seem to want to work together. It's kind of a rare thing, because from what we hear about English and French they kind of like to separate and here you have people who want to, who work on it, who really try their best to get the two communities to be together.

From this perspective, language is not a concern or a divisor of the community. In fact, the opposite is true, where residents “really try their best to get the two communities to be together.” This is in contrast to how the two language groups are often spoken of within the Anglophone community, whose members tend to emphasize differences over similarities. Similarly, Rémi describes his perspective on the attitude new migrants hold towards established families, using the example of an entrepreneur who had recently moved to the community:



He speaks with an accent but he speaks a bit of English, he's picking up on his English. Like he says, you know, 'I live in Douglastown, I'm going to have to learn to speak English to speak to the people from Douglastown'. And a lot of the new French families make a real effort to speak English.

The prevalence of this type of effort on the part of the Francophone community was difficult to determine within the time frame of my research, but my own experiences supported it. For example, going back to the night of the 5 à 7, near the end of the evening a young mother entered the living room to ask for a pillow from the couch for her young child, who was less than two years old. She approached me, possibly because I was sitting the closest to the door and noticed her entrance, and asked if that would be okay. She addressed me in English and persisted throughout the conversation, even when I responded in French. Again, these examples recall the opinion expressed in 1975 excerpt from *The Gaspé Spec* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, where the Francophone author expresses her efforts to communicate in English. Indeed, all of my interviews were conducted in English, even when it was the second language of the participant, despite my offers to converse in the language of their choice.

While these examples of the behaviours and perspectives of those Francophone residents who participate in community events and organizations, as held by some community members, suggests an effort to bridge the gap between the two language groups, the concept of two communities still persists:

It's funny how a vast majority of the Douglastown community thrives on the fact that they're Irish, that their people are from here and their roots are here but yet...when the school was to be closed, it wasn't somebody that had their roots here that brought it back to life, when the Holy Name Hall was pushed away because it was too hard to handle, if I remember correctly, the person that put time and energy and effort [into keeping it] wasn't originally from here and the person that's working endless hours to keep it now is not from here. The people that are from here and that thrive on being Irish are not working hard to keep what belonged to their people here.

The interview continued with the participant noting that the above comment did not include everyone, and that many people with strong ancestral and personal ties, ‘real Douglastowners,’ were likewise working hard to maintain the community’s institutions. However, the perception of this participant is that the community members who have the strongest historical ties to the community are not necessarily those who are currently, in 2012, able to invest their time and talents in the community and its historical institutions. Instead, the newer, incoming migrants are also putting in the effort to support and retain a sense of Douglastown’s heritage. Furthermore, these new residents persevere in conserving and re-purposing Douglastown’s institutions to retain the uniqueness of the town, without the motivation that comes with the personal connections to Irishness or Douglastown that characterize other community members. For example, when I asked Luc Chaput, the founder and head of the Irish Week festival, if he had Irish roots, he laughed and said he thought he was “the only one on the Irish Committee” that didn’t have that link. Similarly, the Francophone attendance at, and other support of, community activities and institutions appears to have less to do with the Irish nature of the event or venue than with supporting the community as a whole: “[People attend events] because there’s something going on and because it’s in our town and the music is kind of neat, you know, it’s not because it’s Irish – well, I don’t think anyway.” This is reminiscent of the power of the dominant narrative theme when it is expressed as a manifestation of the local. The heritage of the community thus becomes ingrained in social activities and subsequently becomes apparent to, incorporated into, and supported by incoming migrants.

The divide between the two language groups contains more nuance than which language is spoken. And while the English population laments the way things used to be, they likewise understand that cooperating with the majority language group helps to preserve and retain the places and events associated with dominant narrative theme. Indeed, some participants view the change in population as something to be celebrated because, even though “[s]ome of the old Irish people are not in love with so many new French families moving in but when something is going on, not too many *English* families are there,” using a recent community event as an example, where “at least 85%” of those who attended were Francophone. The English families, he continues, were always hard to move, “it was hard to get them to participate in anything.” And, since “I see Douglastown turning just about completely French,” it must be a positive development that so many French families are, indeed, participating in community life and working to preserve the dominant narrative theme and its related places of importance. Rather than losing the parts of Douglastown that make it unique, those associated with the Irish heritage that underline the community’s sense of self, collaboration is actually preserving their heritage.

### 5.5 Conclusion

The presence of significant numbers of incoming Francophones into an historically Anglophone area has led to longstanding Douglastowners stretching their definitions of belonging and bringing previously excluded members into the dominant narrative theme. While belonging remains defined by religion, language, and local heritage, the current

situation has marked these factors along a sliding scale or a gradient, which allows for more inclusiveness now than in the past:

In Québec, we talk about two solitudes, English and French. But actually, in our area, there have been three solitudes: French, Protestant, and Catholic... Over the years, it's been...there's been differences between that they haven't, or they weren't as tight as they should have been, working together, the [Catholics] and the Protestants. Now it's changing for the better because...religion per se is not as powerful as it was.

Thus, as language manifests as a source of pressure on the continuation of Douglastown's heritage and traditions, community belonging opens to include a broader group of Anglophones within the historic Township, regardless of religious background, and thereby creates a larger audience for the telling and re-telling of stories.

Language, then, serves as a means of creating and reinforcing ideas of difference that divide Douglastown, allowing community members to cultivate and maintain an 'us-and-them' mentality. This division is perpetuated and emphasized throughout the province of Québec, in politics and in language relations at multiple levels. Deeper than that, however, is the feeling that the 'real Douglastowners' left in the community are, by and large, being driven into a less privileged and lower economic status due to the arrival of young working couples, families, and entrepreneurs that characterize most of new residents. And so, while the dominant language group flips from English to French, the Anglophone community also experiences a reversal in class and privilege as the social and economic landscape of the community changes. This reversal echoes a situation that reverberated throughout Québec after the Quiet Revolution, when Anglophone communities in the province lost their priority in business and social situations, replaced by Francophones with the support of the government (Fortier 1994; Fournier 2001; Tetley 1983). Rural communities like Douglastown have experienced the change brought

about by Bill 22 in different ways than those who live in metropolitan areas. With the recent growth of the community, Anglophones are now exposed to the effects of language minoritization in their home community. Thus, reconciling the present with the past in terms of language results in the multiple ways Douglastowners express their Irish heritage, lament the way things used to be, and participate (or not) in community activities.

This situation, with the decline of the Anglophone population and their mechanisms for asserting their heritage and the parameters of belonging, exemplifies Anthony Cohen's (1982) call for an ethnography of locality, for "it is at the boundaries of ethnic groups that ethnicity becomes meaningful... The same is true of localities...people become aware of their culture when they stand at its boundaries" (Cohen 1982: 3). The local conception of Douglastown as composed of English-speaking, Irish, and Catholic community members has become threatened, in the perception of the 'real Douglastowners,' by the inclusion of significant numbers of people who cannot be included within the traditional parameters of belonging to the community. Regardless of how significantly these newcomers work to support, preserve, and transmit the dominant narrative theme, their presence alone transforms the social, economic, and physical make-up of the town. In response, Douglastowners welcome those residents who have contributed to the perpetuation of the dominant narrative theme and who have, over time, invested in the development of the town and of its places of significance, including the families from On the Point, all English-speakers from within the historical Township regardless of church affiliation, and others in outlying communities and across the Peninsula as a whole who are neither Catholic nor Irish.

## Chapter 6

### Mapping Place Attachment

Throughout the processes of expressing local history, composing Irishness, and celebrating Catholicism, the physical settings of Douglastown influence the construction and expression of the dominant narrative theme. When community members actively engage with their history, their heritage, and the changing circumstances of their town, they likewise interact with the places and landscapes that form the community. Place becomes more than a passive setting through its influence on community residents, changing in form and perception and holding collective investments of memory, emotion, and events. Community members not only know and understand the history of various places in Douglastown, they likewise create their own place attachments within the town through their experiences and through the work, vision, and time they put into specific places (Roseman and Royal 2018).

Place attachment is illustrated through individual stories and experiences of place and how these narratives are communicated to others, thereby laying the foundation for building shared narratives that are more than just personal stories. This leads to the consistent creation of place where it, like community, is always “in the making” (Lustiger-Thaler 1994: 21, see also Bohlin 2001; Brehm 2007; Daniels, Baldacchino, and Vodden 2015; Martin 2003; Nash 1999; Tilley and Cameron-Daum 2017; Tuan 1991). The settings and place-events of stories exist in an interconnected matrix, which is both a compilation of many places and a source of place attachment and emotional investment in its own right. Hence, individuals relate to specific places and to the connections between them in two ways: as members of the community with the influence of the dominant

narrative theme and the heritage and history of the town and as individuals with personal relationships and attachments to place.

This chapter explores how place works within understandings and negotiations of the dominant narrative theme, its parameters of belonging, and how place attachments are expressed in memory and in the present. Telling and listening to the stories of Douglastown and creating new memories, stories, and attachments is enhanced through extended knowledge of local places and how they relate to one another. Understanding the nuances of the dominant narrative theme as it manifests in place, in other words, brings a deeper relationship and understanding to expressions of place attachment through narrative and through investing time, emotion, and work in place. The process of making that place attachment apparent to others, through storytelling and through sharing places, brings the private into the public sphere. This process creates the potential for personal stories and place attachments to become part of the communal repository of narrative.

### 6.1 The Participatory Mapping Technique

The ways in which community members within Douglas Township relate to places and landscapes is exemplary of ascriptions to the dominant narrative theme and a crucial part of understanding how the parameters of belonging are applied and enacted. To access the places, connections, and ideas that create the concept of Douglastown for participants, I used a version of the participatory mapping technique, whereby participants define their community for themselves (Offen 2003; Pearce and Louis 2008). By asking interviewees to simply draw Douglastown, the places and landscapes of

significance in the community were apparent through the similarities between maps, while the differences underlined how individual experience enriched perceptions of the town.

As part of the unstructured interview process, willing interviewees were asked to simply “draw a map of Douglastown” sometime during the first interview, usually at its conclusion. In retrospect, this method would have been best employed at the beginning of the interview as the direction of our conversation often influenced the maps that were drawn and the features included within them. Nevertheless, this method permitted a glimpse into how individuals conceptualize the limits of Douglastown and its key places, roads, buildings, and landscapes, as well as the places of significance valued by individuals. Participatory mapping allowed analysis of the aspects of the town that participants identified as Douglastown, through the features they included on the maps and how often these features recurred on maps drawn by different participants.

Of the seventeen participants who were interviewed throughout the research process, eleven participated specifically in mapping Douglastown. Of these, three people were native residents within the historic Douglas Township but outside of Douglastown, three community members in Douglastown, three long-term residents in Douglastown, one out-migrant currently living in Montréal, and one a recent in-migrant from elsewhere in Québec.<sup>62</sup> Not all participants were comfortable participating in this exercise and some were not asked, dependent on the circumstances of the interview. For example, one

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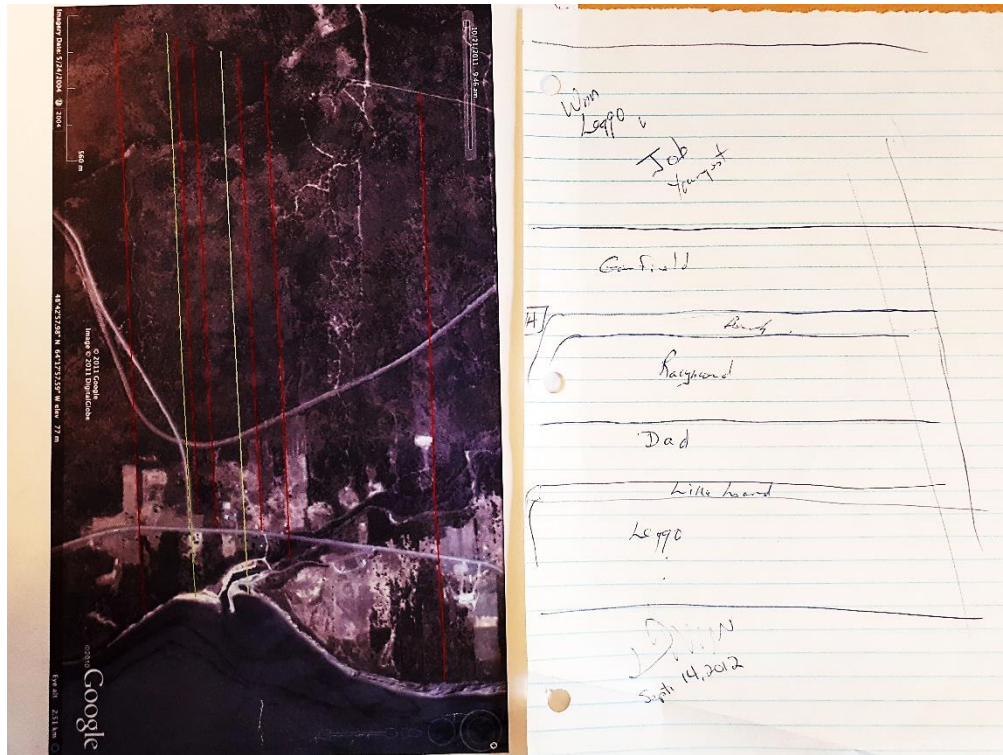
<sup>62</sup> These are the designations of residents laid out by Brehm (2007) described on page 22 in footnote 9, where native residents are those born and raised within the community and who are currently living there (I use the term community members for Douglastowners), long-term residents are those who have been living in the community for over 10 years, and recent in-migrants are those who have lived in the community for less than 10 years. I have also added the designation of out-migrant, who were native residents and now have permanent residence outside of the community for a significant period of time.



person was interviewed as we worked together to prepare for an upcoming event; thus, they were not asked to draw a map because that would have interrupted their work day in a way that the conversational interview did not. Others were not comfortable with the idea of drawing or with mapping. Still others drew diagrams that illustrated their discussion points, but were not necessarily related to the process of mapping. In general, participants who lived within the Township, but outside of Douglastown, chose to interpret the exercise differently, mapping other areas of importance instead of, or as well as, the historical town. An excellent example of this came in the first interview with Denver, who drew a map delineating the historical division of land owned by the Leggo family in the l'Anse à Brillant valley. This map was a hand drawn version of a printed map of Google Earth that was given to me at a later date (see Figure 17).

Denver's illustration was not a product of the participatory mapping technique, but it served a similar purpose by depicting properties around his home in l'Anse à Brillant in an historically meaningful way. The illustration indicates how Denver framed the l'Anse à Brillant valley within a particular span of time, a bracketed period of history from the lifetime of one of his ancestors to his early childhood. By dividing the historical territory of the Leggo family into partitions associated with specific ancestors over multiple generations (see Figure 17), he exemplifies the period of time that defines his experience of place, when the entire valley was owned and settled by the Leggo family.

Other interviewees drew maps of their personal property and of specific routes that were important to them and that helped them to illustrate significant places in their lives and how they related to one another. Lorraine, for example, drew a map of her garden and



**Figure 17:** Denver's Illustration and Modified Map of the Divisions of Leggo Land.  
Photos of documents by author.

the grounds of her house, including the plots for berries, vegetables, and flowers, as well as a Celtic meditation walk, a child's playhouse, an outdoor activity area, various trees, and their outer buildings, a barn and a shed. Lorraine's interest in mapping the grounds of her home illustrates her pride in the work, time, and emotion she has invested in her property, intentionally developing these features. She and her husband, Louis, have made their work accessible to the public with guided tours of their property, so that others may experience and explore the interesting elements they have crafted around their home. The first time they did this was in 2012, shortly before Irish Week began, and they have done so periodically until the present. This event illustrates how the private becomes public through efforts to inspire and share with others a pride in their work and in their place attachment, making it visible to the entire community.

The examples of Denver and Lorraine's mapping show that personal illustrations are nuanced through the times and places that are significant on an individual and familial level. More generally, the participatory mapping technique was used as a means of accessing attachments and conceptions of Douglastown on a comparative level, which is why all participants were asked simply to draw Douglastown in whatever manner that made the most sense to them. In this way, the process of mapping and illustrating helped participants to demonstrate their conceptions of Douglastown or any other significant areas.

## 6.2 Places, Connections, and Landscapes on Maps

Collectively, the maps drawn through the participatory mapping exercise provide a window into shared understandings of Douglastown. The majority of them focused on describing the beach, the barachois, and the railroad that connects Douglastown with Haldimand, including the train trestle. Three of the maps also included Haldimand beach on the other side of the river – a testament to the historic division of the Parish of St. Patrick, whose limits encompassed a much larger area than the historic Douglas Township.<sup>63</sup> A significant portion of the maps contained more detail in the area around the beach than anywhere else. Even those maps drawn by participants residing outside of Douglastown, but within the Township, focused primarily on the water and included the railroads, suggesting the primacy of the ocean to residents within the entire area.

In terms of defining the limits of what is conceptualized as 'Douglastown,' the vast majority of map-makers focused solely on the Core. Even within those maps that

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<sup>63</sup> See footnote 21 on page 42, where the town limits used by White in the DHR are described.

encompassed a larger physical area in defining the community, the majority of detail, buildings, labels, and streets were contained within the Core, that is, from the beach to the Community Centre. Key features noted within this area typically included the Community Centre, Trachy Hall, the Catholic Church, and the post office. The most frequently noted streets included Trachy, the Highway 132, and Kennedy Road.<sup>64</sup> The prevalence of these features signifies that the defining landscape of Douglastown, and the routes that connect it, are located in the Core. When people think of the town, this is inarguably the image that comes to mind for the majority of participants. Indeed, my own perception of the town is coloured by the imposing combination of buildings that define the Core and the view they command, as evidenced by the first paragraph of this thesis. These buildings are also significant as they are the objects of the story of the white brick (pages 118-120), further evidence of the pride that Douglastowners hold for these institutions.

For most native and long-term residents, the ocean and the railroad are fixtures because of *the view*; this is the landscape that holds a significant place in the minds of community members, reflected through its recurrent primacy not only in maps and conversation, but in art, books, photos, and other productions like the Harp Book discussed in Chapter 2 and in the art pieces of painter Linda Drody. First and foremost, the view is a stunning landscape, highly valued for its aesthetic qualities. However, its worth is also found in the historical construction of the community. Historically, and specifically before the construction of the current highway in the 1950s, the ocean, the harbour, and the train provided residents with a livelihood and with a link to the outside

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<sup>64</sup> Trachy (pronounced locally as trashy) Road runs from the beach to the Second Range and is one of the settings for the story of the Lamb on pages 124-125.

world – news, goods, and visitors from outside of the community were all much more likely to arrive by boat or train and most businesses were located next to these amenities. Having a view, then, meant having a visual link to the goings-on of the town. Being too close or too far away from these hubs did not afford the same view and, therefore, the residents who lived in such locations were often considered underprivileged and/or of lower social status. Thus, the community On the Bar, though close to the water and industries of the town, did not have a view and, in fact, were subject to the view of other residents living higher up on the hill. Those living in the back ranges had no view at all; as one participant explained, “my mother grew up in deep poverty on the Third Range, and so her life was about getting out of the woods,” a status symbol that meant a rise in the social standing of the community.

With the installation of the railroad in the 1910s, the link between the view and the proceedings of the town was strengthened. The railroad station was located on the beach, close to the site of the harbour. The businesses of Douglastown, the general stores, the butter factory, were located near the harbour and the train station for the convenience of loading and unloading goods, and because these were high traffic areas. These industries remained located near the water, even after the harbour and the station fell into disuse and were torn down. After the construction of the highway linking the towns along the Gaspé coast rendered other methods of transportation obsolete, the importance of the view remained ingrained in community memory, to the extent that those without memories of this historic tie invest in its importance.<sup>65</sup> Thus, the association within the community between having a view and being ‘in the know,’ and the exposure to and investment in

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<sup>65</sup> Although, as stated previously, the view is also valued highly and sought for its aesthetic value.

the community's history, brings the dominant narrative theme into the significance of this landscape for community members. The commonalities between the maps that focused on the buildings and fixtures within the Core highlight the importance of the view through the inclusion of the railroad tracks and the beach, which are the objects of scrutiny, and those buildings and routes that offered the best vantage point from which to observe these places, such as the church, the Community Centre, and the post office.

There was remarkable homogeneity among all of the depictions of Douglastown, with one exception. The presence of this exception indicates both the key features that characterize how native and long-term residents perceive landscapes, routes, connections, and places and how these perceptions are sculpted and influenced by the dominant narrative theme. The map that stands out in terms of what is described and why was drawn by a recent in-migrant of French and English parentage with strong ties to the French communities of Douglastown and Gaspé. This map is drawn over four pages, taped together, with an eye to scale and detail. Unlike most of the others, the majority of this map is focused on the back ranges of Douglastown. Details include very careful rendering and labeling of the streets of the Second and Third Ranges, as well as labeling which areas are forest and including the Seal Cove River, which was not noted on any other map even though it intersects the back ranges of Douglastown. While this map, like the others, includes the church, the post office, Highway 132, and Kennedy Road, the beach appears only as a couple of quick lines with the word "beach" crammed in at the bottom. It also does not include any detailing of the train tracks or the train bridge, which was a key feature of every other map. Instead, the majority of this map is given over to the description of the land near the home of the participant. Of the five buildings noted,

three are private residences, as well as the greenhouse on the Third Range run by another recent in-migrant.

The differences highlighted on this map suggest that the places included through the exercise are filtered through the degree of importance they hold to each individual and tempered by length of residence, as well as ascription to the dominant narrative theme. As a new resident, this participant was not exposed to the tenets of the dominant narrative theme, especially in comparison with community members, who have been internalizing its rhetoric their entire lives. By not focusing exclusively on the primary landscape of the Core and including other, more personal, features, this participant shows how specific interests inform a connection with place to create new, individual, and unique attachments outside of their personal property. Without the dominant narrative theme defining a sense and understanding of the community, she draws only those aspects of Douglastown that constitute her personal connection with place.

This map likely does not reflect the same preoccupations with the historical landscape of Douglastown as the others produced in this exercise because of a lack of framework wherein an investment in the dominant narrative theme dictates the significance of landscapes like the view and other places. As a new resident, place attachment manifests differently than it does for native or long-term residents, whose relationships to places and the connections between them are coloured by the dominant narrative theme and by their familial and ancestral histories. Instead, the map of the new resident illustrates the landscapes and places that she is most familiar with and which are important to her on a personal basis. Here, the features included on the map are driven by her personal experiences and relationships, as opposed to history and heritage. A private

residence belonging to a relative is by far the most significant feature of this map, the largest and the most detailed, showing that it is a place of particular importance. Second, as someone who enjoys outdoors sports such as cross country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, and walking, she highlights the areas where she does these activities, describing them as she draws: “When you’re riding around Douglastown, you discover things! Cause there’s lots of people who ride the 132, they don’t know that there’s all that in the back... We go riding in the back, with our snowshoes.”

This is an example of what Joan Brehm (2007) describes as “the natural environment as a provider of related lifestyle choices” (Brehm 2007: 484), a factor the author feels is overlooked within the concept of rootedness that places a primacy on “community attachment” and local social relations, as in the other maps research participants drew of Douglastown.<sup>66</sup> The features of the map drawn by the new resident, then, reveal how “the natural environment is a deeply embedded part of respondent’s lives; it supports a particular way of life” (Brehm 2007: 484). The map is more of a reflection of an individual connection to the town and less of a reflection of the dominant narrative theme.

Other maps completed through participatory mapping, of course, likewise hold notes of personal attachment, although not to the extent of the one described above. This is one way that personal place attachment manifested within participatory mapping, as the nuances of each individual map and the explanations that accompanied their creation are

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<sup>66</sup> Brehm is using the term “rootedness” based on the definition by Hummon (1992), where “community attachment appears to be most strongly rooted in involvement in local social relations” and the built environment when the emotional ties are positive (Brehm 2007: 483). Brehm expands on this to reflect “that ‘rootedness’ may also be embedded within one’s sentimental and emotional connection to the natural environment within the context of community” (483).



framed within the parameters of the dominant narrative theme. The ways in which personal concerns and interests are reflected on the maps provides variety within what is otherwise a significantly homogenous group of drawings. For example, the map drawn by an out-migrant concentrates very closely on the water and, in fact, has more detail concentrated there than any other map. It depicts the beach as a bowl, a u-shape, decorated with a single sailboat out in the water. During our interview, this map-maker was careful to speak about how her childhood memories are informed by the landscapes and places of Douglstown that are significant manifestations of the dominant narrative theme, including the view:

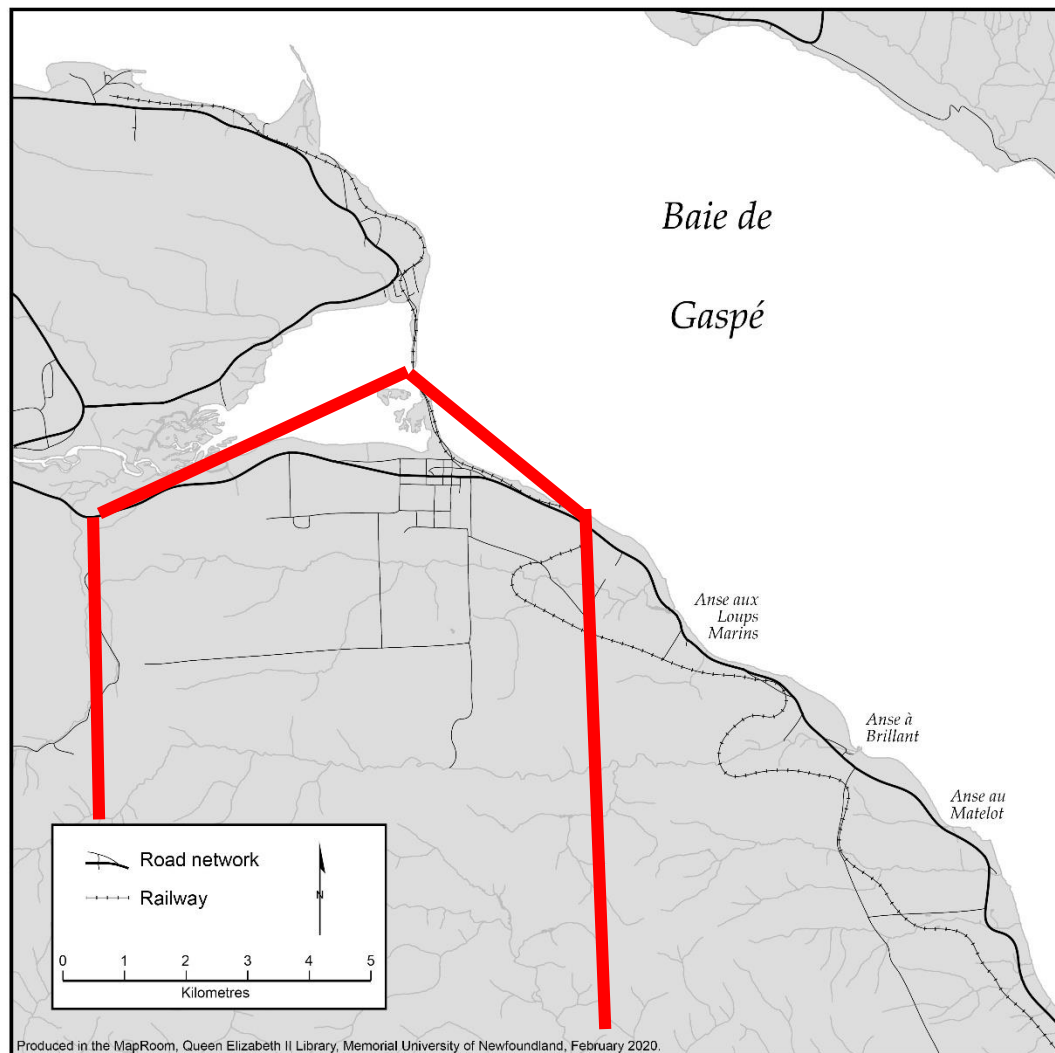
My memory of my childhood is, I think, unusually wrapped up in geography... I was the last child of a big Irish Catholic family and my siblings were much older than me and I was left alone a lot...and in this very rural place, I experienced an enormous amount of freedom to be outdoors. And I was outdoors an awful lot. Part of that has to do with where I grew up... our house was across the road from [our] store...so both my parents worked in the store and I was always close by... My childhood was basically passed in playing around the land which my father owned...the way that this land is built – the town, the church, and the school were above and, you know it's a deeply Catholic based town, and so there is a psychological sense of having the church at the top of the hill...and those kind of governing bodies being able to see down the hill... There's this water, and water conducts sound faster than air does, so I had this tremendous sense of security as I played on the beach here knowing that I could be seen by kinda the elders of the town...but from my perspective I was [also] able to hear things from far away...when I was on the beach [one time] I heard this low rumbling sound and I looked around for where the sound was and it took me looking around the entire horizon as far as the eye could see to see the boat on the water that was making that sound. And I know that had a real impact on me, the fact that I could hear things as far as the eye could see.<sup>67</sup>

The basin of the beach is a reflection of those childhood experiences; it is the shape of the bowl that is meant to suggest a gathering in, a basin as she described it, of sound and of

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<sup>67</sup> This interview was actually the one exception to the time of mapping during the interview – the mapping took place at the beginning of the interview and this excerpt was taken from her explanations as she drew.

activity. It also supports the significance of the view and of the privilege associated with having access to this landscape, as she described the feeling of safety under the eyes of “the elders.”



**Figure 18:** The Approximate Limits of Douglastown. February 2020, Memorial University of Newfoundland Map Room, Queen Elizabeth II Library, St. John’s NL. Modified to include the red lines.

Another example of how mapping becomes a reflection of personal attachment to place and landscape comes from Gary, a native resident particularly interested in the history of the area. This map was an introduction to the places featured on a guided tour we took by car in later interviews, exploring places of note to the history of the area. This map is distinguished from the others by virtue of the area defined as Douglastown and the variety of landmarks noted and featured within. What is defined as Douglastown here, then, runs from the limits of Up the Bay, that is, the Sap Peel Road, to the train overpass that marks the divisor between Douglastown and Seal Cove, to the Malbay Line back in the woods, to the train bridge that divides Douglastown from Haldimand across the barachois (see Figure 18 for an approximate reproduction of the limits discussed by this participant). These were the limits of the town of Douglastown before amalgamation into the town of Gaspé, which shows the importance of both the need for accuracy and of the effect that an interest and occupation with history has had on the process of mapping for this participant. His map and descriptions have set the limits for the definition of Douglastown used in this thesis.

Gary's map also demonstrates places that are the settings of important stories within the community, from the perspective of this well-known storyteller. Included in these are Conoley's Place, where the first school teacher in Douglastown made his home, and the site of Kennedy's old house, which was the victim of the terrible fire described on page 59. The focus on these specific places is both a testament to the importance of historical stories for Gary and a foreshadowing of the tour of Douglastown he was already planning. The only streets he marked, however, are the Third Range Road, which is only lightly indicated, and St. Patrick Street, which is drawn in its entirety. Most other

maps included Highway 132 and Kennedy Road as features that are vital to the community's present and past, respectively. Like Denver's illustration in Figure 17, this map shows the preoccupations of the map-maker in terms of time and space, citing specific historical moments through including places of significance to the development of the town, like Conoley's Place, and omitting others, like the construction of Highway 132.

In sum, the participatory mapping exercise reveals how history, heritage, and personal investment all come together to create conceptions of home and of community, including the places of attachment and importance that colour individual experiences of Douglastown and other, nearby areas. Length of residence in a town affects the degree to which the dominant narrative theme influences how individuals relate to place. Further, the composition of the maps themselves, as well as other illustrations, are evidence of how both space and time manifest for individuals. While personal likes, needs, interests, relationships, and so on, are significant factors when defining the community, its places and landscapes rely heavily on the history of the community and the extent to which it is incorporated into an individual's attachment to place.

### 6.3 Communicating Places in Douglastown

As the dominant narrative theme sculpts the ways in which Douglastowners understand and conceptualize their community, it also informs the ways in which people navigate the area. This is evident when community members locate places verbally or give directions, otherwise known as wayfinding, a tool for exploring how people conceptualize and organize places and landscapes (Gabbert 2007). In McCall, where Lisa

Gabbert explores the implementation of the Rural Addressing System, wayfinding becomes a form of resistance to change. In Douglastown, wayfinding methods are used instead as an indication of how knowledgeable the audience is of the community's history and of the internalization of the dominant narrative theme. Community members and residents are thus given an opportunity for "people [to] mix embedded and disembedded orders of information depending on the situation" (Gabbert 2007: 198). Through wayfinding, individuals are presented with an opportunity to mix forms of wayfinding, be it through embedded forms like using familiar landmarks or disembedded forms, like house numbers and official street names or designations. In rural areas like Douglastown, residents do not appear to rely heavily on the disembedded and distant forms more common in Gabbert's findings. Instead, wayfinding methods in Douglastown rely on creating a frame of reference that connects the person describing place, the person receiving the description, the place itself, and other significant landscapes and landmarks, both social and physical, that help to locate the place being described (Istomin and Dwyer 2009). Wayfinding methods here are another means of accessing how places and landscapes interconnect, where places are specific locations, buildings, or pieces of property and landscapes comprise of groups of places and routes or vistas like the view and the Core, in conjunction with the routes and landmarks drawn and described on the maps.

Wayfinding as I experienced in the research process focused more on situating settings for stories than on giving directions and therefore concentrated on places and

landscapes as vistas and less upon significant routes.<sup>68</sup> The process was much the same, however, with the absolute necessity of locating stories before they could progress, thereby allowing the audience to visualize the events and evoke personal memories associated with places and a sense of place when appropriate. In turn, the visualization of events creates a frame of reference that is meaningful to the storyteller and to the person hearing the tale in both the context of the story and the place-event of its telling, connecting place and time through the act of sharing a story or anecdote (Flueckiger 2003; Pink 2011; Sawin 2002).

Examples of how wayfinding is used in storytelling rely heavily on the history of the town and on familiarity with the social relationships, people, and landmarks that connect places. For example:

Our other house was directly across from the school. You know where [so-and-so's house] is? Well just go up one more house. There was a big barn there and there was a house and I think it's just light shingles and on one side would have been [so-and-so] and the other side would have been [another couple] and that big, big house. We rented it from [the priest], it was his house. And we lived there eleven years.

Here, we see the use of multiple homes to create a frame of reference for locating a specific building and the inter-connectedness of the landmarks used to provide the description, as well as a description of the house in question. This example differentiates community members from outsiders through knowledge of the community, as those unfamiliar with the community would have no reason to know where 'so-and-so' or 'another couple' lived and would therefore be unable to visualize the landmarks that create the frame of reference. This is also an example of how time is used to imagine

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<sup>68</sup> In part, this is due to the familiarity I had with the community and with the various participants I interviewed. My tours of the town also frequently included private residences, so that likewise contributed to less need for directions.

place, as descriptions of the house are dependent on who is living in them now, but not necessarily who was living in them at the time that the participant was residing next door. Similarly, it illustrates a need for audience familiarity with the history of places within Douglastown. Note that the first direction is “directly across from the school.” In fact, this individual is referring to the Community Centre, the former St. Patrick School, indicating that the audience must be familiar with the places of Douglastown as they are now, as well as their history. This is further evidenced through the comment of renting the house from the priest, as no priest has been resident in Douglastown (or, to the best of my knowledge, owned land there) for many years. The multiple uses of descriptors that rely on knowledge of the dominant narrative theme, featuring connections between places, social relationships, and time, are employed within a few short sentences to locate one building, the setting for the ghost story that proceeded after I was able to visualize its placement in the community.

Another example shows the amount of effort that can go into providing a frame of reference for a story and the usefulness of combining embedded and disembedded forms:

*Douglas Hunt:* [This guy] was always into fishing this, that, and the other thing and him and [his friend], they were diving off of White Head. Do you know where White Head is?

*Angelina:* No

*D:* Know where Côte Surprise is?

*A:* No

*D:* You know when you go out of Percé and there's, uh, going out toward Chandler?

*A:* Yes?

*D:* That point runs out with the lighthouse on it. That's White Head

A: Oh yes, okay

D: They were setting up there, they were going to sell mussels or something, or scallops, and they were mapping off the bottom of the sea

The story only continues once there is an acknowledgement by the audience of the place's location. In this case, even though the story took place under the water, it was important that I visualize the exact place on land that corresponded with the point of departure for the divers. Here, we are discussing a place that is roughly 40 kilometres away from the place of the interview, where I was staying during fieldwork. The name White Head appears on official maps in French as Cap Blanc, but the specifics of its locality mean that it was so far from my frame of reference that further landmarks, here the lighthouse, were necessary to place the location and, therefore, to be able to continue with the story.

The use of landmarks in the example of White Head is a tool often used by community members to describe places for audiences unfamiliar with other means of wayfinding, like social relationships and other embedded forms.<sup>69</sup> Landmarks are crucial for creating a frame of reference for all listeners, including those less familiar with other descriptors, allowing them to imagine the events unfolding within the story and adding detail and poignancy to the telling. Multiple landmarks help to create a more varied and detailed web, a testament to the interconnectedness of places. The methods used in producing a frame of reference are similar to the wayfinding methods described by Gabbert (2007) and are “used as [rhetorical tools] not only to signal residential/insider status but also to frame participant relationships in particular ways” (Gabbert 2007: 189).

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<sup>69</sup> A common question at the outset of framing a place was: “do you know where [so-and-so] lives?”



The use of landmarks is also a means of determining the level of belonging experienced by the others in the conversation, where the more landmarks needed to locate a setting indicates an audience less familiar with the area being described. This was the case in the first example in this section, where the participant is describing a house she used to occupy. Thus, when the school was readily accepted as an identifiable landmark, subsequent descriptions became increasingly specific, down to describing the building itself. Further, in that same example, both public and private landmarks are used. The landmarks by themselves are not sufficient to create a frame of reference, as they are in the example of White Head. Instead, the house must also be described, with a big barn and light shingles, and further landmarks used before the frame of reference is firmly established to the satisfaction of both parties and the house being described is visualized by the listener to the satisfaction of the storyteller. This first example is a “means of establishing oneself as an insider and one way of distinguishing ‘who’s who’” (Gabbert 2007: 191). In the second example with White Head, the status of the audience is immediately apparent as outside of that community’s understandings of place (unrelated to Douglastown), necessitating the need for landmarks in order to locate the story.

While participatory mapping served to define the landscapes and places of importance in Douglastown, methods that create a frame of reference are a means of understanding belonging and knowledge of the community through the use of specific types of embedded and disembedded forms. The choice of specific landmarks to create the frame of reference for listeners helps to both situate the storyteller and the audience in terms of space, time, and social position within the community, thereby ascertaining their level of knowledge and, by proxy, their belonging.

#### 6.4 Beyond Narrative Settings and Maps

Once a frame of reference has been created, the story can progress. The places that are most commonly found in the stories told to me by Douglastowners, particularly stories repeated by multiple community members, correspond with those most frequently included on the maps; that is, public and private property with social and historical importance. These are the nodes of the community, the locations that draw the most attention and visitors, and hold the most emotion for the greatest number of residents – including those inside and outside of the parameters of belonging.

The majority of places of communal importance are found within the Core, as these are the places that define the landscape of Douglastown and create and uphold the most identifiable aspects of the community. The settings for narratives and the places of their telling are typically a combination of these nodes and places of personal attachment for the storyteller; they are significant in people's lives as repositories of narrative, emotion, and memory. Places that demonstrate personal significance for community members become meaningful through the work that is invested in their development and through the social importance they hold for residents, both inside and outside of the parameters of belonging. These places likewise have the ability to transcend the personal and become significant to the community as a whole.

A private residence, for example, is not typically a focal point for storytelling purposes unless it holds significant value to the community. The oldest house in Douglastown, for example, is a site for stories associated with Loyalists because it holds artifacts from the time of European settlement, which makes it unique and a source of pride for the community (see pages 57-58). The means by which a private residence like

this one becomes a significant place for the community indicates the primary place of history and heritage to the dominant narrative theme and the effect of emotion and work being poured into place. This is a creative process, whereby a location becomes something more significant to the community than a residence (this is also true of other types of places, as in Basso 1996; Cruikshank 2005; Feld 1996). The act of creating place attachment develops through investments of time, money, and emotion, creating something that transcends a personal connection to become a significant landmark for the community. Lorraine and Louis's garden is one example of this, as they are well known gardeners and open their garden to the public periodically to show what they have accomplished. Through this act, they are establishing their property as a place of potential significance for others in the community, who now have the opportunity to create new memories and experiences of that place.

Yet, the house of Nancy Wright-Clapson is, perhaps, the best example of how work and emotion invested into place can bring it from a place of personal attachment to one that holds meaning for the whole community. Her house is her place of business, a testament to her late husband, a local attraction, a landmark, and a reflection of the community and the landscape in which it stands. She describes how she came to create her distinctive house:

My husband was a carpenter and I used to work with him up north in the Yukon and I was his gopher: I'd go for this and go for that (we laugh). So I was his helper for a long time and I learned a lot from him and I inherited his wood working shop [after he died] so when I get a chance I play with wood.

The results of this play are a highly unusual, and very artistic, shingling on the outside of her house that has led to identifying it as "the gingerbread house" or the one with "the wooden quilt." The patterns Nancy uses to create her shingle art, and the stained glass art

that is her livelihood, are inspired by her surroundings and by the landscapes that she inhabits. While she chose not to participate in the mapping exercise, the influence of landscape is nevertheless evident in her craft – from the stained glass lamps she creates of beach glass (which is broken glass smoothed and cured by the ocean), to the patterns of flowers, fleur de lys, lighthouses, bats (a testament to the creatures that roost in her roof), and abstract waves that pattern the outside walls of her home (see Figure 19).



Figure 19: A Portion of the Shingling on Nancy's House. Photo by author.

Her house is not only a visible illustration of place attachment; it is becoming a community attraction in its own right:

I remember, when I moved back here in 2006 somebody said to me, “Oh you should go visit Nancy.” And I said “Who’s Nancy? (laughter) Where does she live?” You know? And they told me: “Oh it’s easy you just, you go to Douglastown and you look for the gingerbread house.”

Her work is thus transforming the building from a place of personal and private significance to one of interest and importance to the wider community. Having a stained glass business in the basement of her house only augments her exposure to an audience beyond her immediate social circles. Its location directly across the street from the Community Centre and its visibility from the road make it accessible to the tourists and other visitors who stay at the Centre.

Nancy’s house is not only the repository of her personal memories and emotions, or what is rapidly becoming a place of artistic interest. It is also distinguishable as one of the oldest houses in Douglastown, which makes its décor all the more special, and it holds a measure of history as well. Gary explains:

It’s not the second, it’s the third oldest house...I think it’s the third oldest house, some would say the second.... Now Mr. Clifford Morris was Charlie Morris’s brother. Both of them had been born in Mr. Morris’s house, the old house where Nancy lives. Mr. Clifford built this house about 1890, 1895 possibly. But to my knowledge, I would say this is the third oldest house in Douglastown. Nancy’s done a lot of work on that house.

Gary believes the second oldest house to have been built in 1804, a Loyalist house like the one assumed to be the oldest house in Douglastown (see pages 57-58) and nearer to the water than Nancy’s, where the Loyalist settlement was believed to have been positioned. Nancy identifies her house as having been built in 1873 (see Figure 20), twenty years earlier than Gary’s estimation. As with the Loyalist graveyard discussed in Chapter 2 (see page 57), the lack of clarity causes no strife between community members, but entrenches the places in the memory of those



Figure 20: Original Photo of Nancy's House, printed on tin. Photo courtesy of Nancy Wright-Clapson and reproduced with permission.

residents familiar with the stories, rendering Nancy's house as significant not only for its current status as a business and an artistic attraction, but also a place of historic interest. Due to its many roles and its aesthetic appearance, Nancy's house is a private residence that holds communal significance.

Public places likewise create opportunities to become significant on multiple levels, outside of narrative settings. While places like the Community Centre garner a lot of attention as hubs of activity and fixtures in the landscape, redolent with history, other places hold a subtler and less stated position within the community as landmarks and places of social interaction. For example, the Gaz-O-Bar of Douglastown, a gas station and convenience store affectionately known as Jean-Guy's after its proprietor, does not

appear in the historical stories of Douglastown. It is not imbued with historical significance or with the dominant narrative theme. It does not feature in personal stories either and was referenced on only one map of Douglastown, drawn by a resident of the historic Township. However, its role as a place of social interaction and of community support remains significant.

The importance of Jean-Guy's is illustrated through its role in the community and through its use as a place of social gathering. It is a more informal place for residents to gather and hear news than the Community Centre or the church and it sees a lot of traffic as people drop in for gas or small grocery items. Since it is a business, people are more inclined to loiter, drop by for unspecified periods of time, and make unplanned visits (often dependent on who else is there), rather than attending a specific function for a predetermined amount of time. Jean-Guy's is located on Highway 132, just to the side of Douglastown Core. It is within walking distance of the church, Community Centre, post office, beach, Holy Name Hall, and the cemetery. It is surrounded by homes and it is the only general store remaining in Douglastown. As such, it holds the legacy of the various businesses, infrastructures (the train station, the wharf), and the community that surrounded them, a legacy associated with the Golden Era of Douglastown when there were many such stores and amenities. This Golden Era is also remembered as a time of strong community values, participation in the St. Patrick's Day Concert and church activities, and financial prosperity. As one participant lamented, of all the stores, "there's only Jean-Guy's left now."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> While this is a prevalent sentiment, stemming from the rhetoric of the dying community (O'Rourke 2006; Peace 1989), there are several other private businesses that have been established in Douglastown in recent years, such as a kite store, Gaspésie Gourmande, the greenhouse, and Nancy's stained glass business, Classy Glass Studios.

While the store is not an obvious meeting place, most visitors, tourists, residents (native, new, and long-term), and people in communities from the greater towns of Gaspé and Percé invariably pass through at some time or another. It is the only gas station between Gaspé and Barachois, a distance of approximately 30 kilometres. Locals sell their handmade goods there, like crocheted hats, and the well-sought after Douglastown Historical Review was only found at this store for many years, as advertised in the Gaspé Spec:

Soon Available – The Spring/2005 issue of the Douglastown Historical Review featuring the “Pioneering Families of Sandy Beach & Lobster Cove” will be available for purchase at the Gaz-O-Bar J.G. Thibault in Douglastown as of June 25th. (Classified section of *The Gaspé Spec*, 31(25) from June 26, 2005).

The use of Jean-Guy’s as a place of social gathering may cause residents some inconvenience, as one participant complained about the parking lot: “People parking badly and going in and talking and not moving,” but this only strengthens its place within the community as a hub of social gathering and interaction. On interviews with different participants that consisted of guided tours of Douglastown Core, Up the Bay, the Ranges, and the beach, we always stopped at Jean Guy’s. This small and seemingly inconspicuous location shows that places of importance, landmarks, and hubs of activity are not necessarily blatantly stated as such within narratives or the dominant narrative theme.

## 6.5 Conclusion

The places within Douglastown that are the settings for the bulk of narratives, memories, and historical significance tend to be the buildings associated with the Core and its landscape, such as, the church, the Community Centre, and the Holy Name Hall,



as has been apparent in the majority of the stories in this thesis. However, these places and their significance are evolving as their roles within the community change. The number of Anglophones in the area dedicated to the Catholic Church in Douglastown is waning and so are the places and activities associated with its buildings. Simultaneously, efforts to repurpose and revitalize its buildings grow. Thus, the church, while a significant part of the landscape, is associated with narratives set in the past and has declined as a place of social interaction. The Holy Name Hall is becoming an historic novelty, whose significance lies in efforts to preserve the building and to find a way to use it on a regular basis, as opposed to the position it used to hold within the community as an active, engaging place (Historia 2012). The presbytery, once a center of industry and learning associated first with the resident priest and then with the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, can now be considered obsolete; as of summer 2012, the building was emptied of residents, was later sold to a private owner, and has been undergoing major construction.

As the places of significance in the community change, so too does its landscape. As mentioned previously, one of the most lamented changes in Douglastown expressed by participants and noted during participant observation were those that affected the ways in which the land was used and cared for. This sentiment, a by-product of the dying community rhetoric, was expressed by individuals all across the historic Douglas Township in each small community (O'Rourke 2006; Peace 1989). When people speak of a change in landscape, however, they are not referring to 'the view' or other defining landscapes, like the Core, that people associate with Douglastown. Instead, they speak of the fields that are now overgrown with grasses, shrubs, and small trees, the areas that were once cleared farmland, but have become choked with undergrowth once again.

Community members lament the amount of work that their ancestors spent clearing the land, with an unarticulated undertone of disapproval that can be interpreted as a criticism of the current owners, who disrespect this work by not maintaining the land. However, they are also lamenting the change in their town from a place of consequence as participants in industry and economy to a bedroom community. What is being experienced is a sense that Douglastown is no longer relevant as a cohesive and independent entity. It seems that a process of focusing on an Irish past accompanies these experiences and allows community members to cling more tightly to the heritage that defines them as different and, conversely, to be more accepting of others once marginalized within the historic Township (see Chapters 5 and 7). Such a process can

Figure 21: An Abandoned Sawmill on the Second Range. Photo by author.



also create a situation whereby the parameters of belonging may be both opened up and simultaneously more stringently applied, depending on the person in question. As

explored in Chapter 5, language and residence play a large role in this process. Stories concerning place, locating those stories, and creating new memories and landmarks are also integral, such that they are a means of passing along the connections, places, and landscapes that make Douglastown so significant. New place attachments and stories can then be added to the community's repository of stories that create and uphold the dominant narrative theme, thereby maintaining the area as a significant repository for history, heritage, and language.

As the population of the community of 'real Douglastowners' changes – growing older, moving away, selling their family homes – so too do the meanings associated with place. Processes of place attachment change and become imbued with nostalgia as the landscape evolves from spaces of industry and agriculture, now defunct or abandoned in Douglastown, to overgrown fields and abandoned buildings (such as Figure 21, with a sawmill standing as a testament to the once prominent logging industry). The one exception to this process of change is the Community Centre, which has experienced new life as a place of social interaction associated with making new memories as, for example, the site for Irish Week. As the new center of social gathering within the community, it holds history, communal stories, and personal narratives – as well as being a vibrant place of business. Its multiple roles indicate that it has the potential to create and hold meaning for native, long-term, and new residents alike.

## **Chapter 7**

### Conclusion

The community of Douglastown is created and sustained through the dominant narrative theme, which also offers structure for the storytelling practices of its members. Narrative further offers a foundation for those who identify as members of an ancestral Irish, Catholic settler community to establish and sustain their identity as a group, forming and upholding the boundaries of their community. This process is achieved through composing an Irish heritage, sharing it with others, and maintaining the parameters of belonging along the lines of English-speaking, Catholic traditions emplaced within local historical and familial connections. At the core of this process lies a shared, communal understanding of Irishness as a means of identifying and differentiating Douglastown, both to members of and those outside of the community, whether they are resident in the area or not.

Stories lay the foundation for the multiple ways that Douglastowners express themselves, understand themselves as part of a group, and communicate their culture and heritage to those outside of the community, as well as to each other. Written and oral histories of the area show how Irishness is and has been embedded within a shared sense of self, developing an ethos of a resilient Irish population that has overcome the difficulties inherent in early settler life (see, for example, pages 107-108). Stories that communicate this ethos serve as a means of reiterating the ability of community members to overcome challenges and confront change, an important rhetoric now as the area faces a significant reorganization of its demographic composition. Published histories and oral

stories serve to make this sense of community and resilience available to others, while simultaneously laying claim to the places of significance within Douglastown. The minority status of ‘real Douglastowners’ strengthens their need to reiterate their attachment to place and the uniqueness of their history in the area, as well as their Irish heritage.

### 7.1 Understanding Change

Narrative provides a foundation for common understandings of community and a means of sharing values and traditions. However, strong feelings of how change has manifested in recent years have been expressed by participants, as well as by others in the community, which likewise provides an impetus for sharing particular kinds of stories to fulfill specific purposes. In particular, the topics of landscape and language were commonly articulated in discussions of Douglastown, frequently as an immediate response to the open interview prompt: “What would you like to tell me about Douglastown?” (see page 32). Upon further conversation with interviewees, it became apparent that the decline of the Catholic Church has likewise prompted feelings of nostalgia and significant difference between the present and the past; as the influence of the Church has waned in the area, the practice of Catholic traditions and their relevance to community life have become associated with memory. Indeed, the majority of the stories told through interviews that featured religious or spiritual traditions, practices, or places were most commonly associated with childhood memories. The role of religious and spiritual stories in the community, then, act as vehicles for communicating the

specific cultural and historical nuances of Douglastown, thereby preserving Catholic traditions and their effect on the historical development of the community.

Currently, we can say that language defines what is commonly viewed as the community of Douglastown, including other Anglophones within the historic Township, as religion has defined it in the past (recall the quote reproduced on page 158, where an interviewee notes that the three solitudes of the area once were “French, Protestant, and Catholic”). Language as a driver of change manifests within the dominant narrative theme as a means of reconciling the past with the present, providing the impetus for moments like those described in Chapter 5, where the story of the Crotty family becomes associated with an Irish heritage and thereby opens the boundaries of belonging for the historic Francophone residents from On the Point.<sup>71</sup> In the minds of participants, the perceived divisions between language groups now, inspired by the arrival of new migrants in recent years, are reflective of Québec politics as a whole, although in practice they actually serve as a mask for other social differences, such as age, social status, and economic situation. In particular, the increasing minoritization of community members, not only in terms of language majority within the area but also socio-economic status, represents an inverse from the structure of the community decades earlier, when the ‘real Douglastowners’ did not typically form the lower classes within the area.

With the decline in the population of community members, the practice of Catholicism, and an increasing and two-fold minoritization process, a renewed focus on those aspects of the community that are unique, noteworthy, and serve to differentiate Douglastown from other places and towns on the Gaspé Peninsula comes to the fore. This

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<sup>71</sup> See also Denver’s example in Chapter 2 on page 69, where he describes having a deeper level of connection to Douglastown now than in his childhood.

is the drive to proclaim and celebrate Irishness. In particular, the decline of the Church, once the haven of Irish identity and practices related to expressions of that heritage, means that Irishness is now expressed through other channels, like Irish Week. However, unlike previous celebrations and expressions of heritage (for example, the St. Patrick's Day concert, see pages 94-95), Irish Week as an expression of community heritage does not necessarily resonate with community members as strongly as desired by its organizers. In part, this is because the festival does not express Irishness as it manifests within Douglastown in the majority of its activities. Rather, it is structured in a manner that frequently invites outside experts to teach or display different ways of being Irish in the world today, through workshops, music, presentations, and so on. For Douglastowners, expressions of Irishness in this format tend to be less meaningful than those that are attached to how their heritage has developed within the community.

In other words, processes of composing Irishness are inherently tied to the local for community members. The complexity inherent in these processes produces a large variety in local expressions of Irish heritage, from generic images like shamrocks and leprechauns to locally specific art, pictures, and poetry that become Irish due to their emplacement. In this context, as a local manifestation of heritage and identity, Irishness is a means of establishing a connection between belonging, place attachment, the dominant narrative theme, and how the history of the community is expressed.

## 7.2 A Place-Based Community

While community members cope with change, ongoing processes of maintaining the dominant narrative theme and its Irish core cultivate their sense of pride. The

emphasis that Douglastowners place on the heritage of their community, using it as a source of difference within the wider area of the historic Douglas Township and the Gaspésie as a whole, provides a contrast to the sense of ‘dying community’ that is associated with the changes occurring in the area. Storytelling about life in Douglastown and its history effectively differentiates the community from surrounding areas and brings many of the residents together as a group. The uniqueness of Douglastown as created and emphasized through the dominant narrative theme establishes boundaries for the community, where the stories that are told affect the parameters of belonging for existing as well as potential or aspiring community members.

Like Gaspésians, as in many other places, Douglastowners are proud and protective of their community, creating and upholding boundaries that protect the dominant narrative theme and how it manifests. An ongoing joke within the towns of Gaspé and Percé states that one must have at least three generations of family members born in the area before one may be considered to truly belong. The more serious implications of this joke imply that until then, no matter the contributions, investment, or attachment to place, you will always be considered “from away,” that is, outside of the Gaspésie. This sentiment is echoed by the quote reproduced on page 102, where an informant notes that despite a shared Irish heritage and being raised as an Anglophone, acceptance was denied because she “was not from here.”

Part of the protectiveness that derives from the pride of community members for their stories, history, and place attachments is associated with the need to establish belonging over the places of importance in the community. For example, community reactions to the conversion of the St. Patrick School to the Community Centre (see page



153), as well as the Douglastown Library, showcase this need to preserve the institutions of the community for the celebration of local heritage. These institutions, among other places associated with the Core, are of clear importance to community members, as evidenced through the participatory mapping project and the multiple use of these places as setting for stories associated with the community's past. As the role of these places evolve, their position within the community changes as, for example, the decline of the Church affects the use of its buildings and the development of the Community Centre encourages the participation of the Anglophone community.

The places of Douglastown hearken back to articulated understandings of change, where they are spoken of in concordance with the effects of increasing migration to the area and associated with the decline of Catholicism. In fact, while landscape is one of the most frequently articulated examples of change in interviews and in participant observation, it may be spoken of as a symbol that represents these other, more distressing, forms of change, prompting feelings of alienation from the area (see the quote reproduced on page 74, where a participant noted: the community “that I grew up in doesn't exist anymore”). Focusing on the dominant narrative theme as it manifests through place in narrative settings and place attachments is an outlet for the vulnerability inspired by these changes, which in turn affects the ways in which the boundaries of the community are drawn and expressed.

### 7.3 The Boundaries

And so, the boundaries of the community in Douglastown are not static; “boundaries change in nature over time. As they become tractable, so the parties which

they separate may need to find other means by which to distance themselves from the other” (Cohen 2000: 11). The ways in which the community’s boundaries have changed or not changed in the memories and stories of individuals show the extent of their fluidity, their changeability, and the circumstances surrounding their applicability in the stories of specific residents.

As has been shown throughout this thesis, the dominant narrative theme in Douglastown is driven by Irishness and reflected and nuanced through the use of the English language, religion characterized by Catholicism and its traditions, and a local heritage associated with family history in the area, which defines the community and its past. The boundaries surrounding the parameters of belonging and the ways in which they are drawn in relation to the dominant narrative theme are expressed and maintained through the stories that individuals tell of their community and its past, present, and future, as well as the various ways residents express attachment to place. Narrative provides a means of creating moments that allow the boundaries to be stretched and well-known stories to be re-framed, as was the case with the stories associated with the naming of Douglastown and the Crotty family.

For those who belong to the community, the features that form the parameters of belonging are normalized; they reflect and establish the dominant narrative theme and broadcast it both internally and externally through the various methods explored in previous chapters. By choosing to uphold the dominant narrative theme, individual community members simultaneously reinforce the group, reiterate its boundaries, and define themselves as belonging to the community. They accomplish this through stories of place attachments and events and the multiple ways they reflect the dominant narrative

theme in their stories, homes, traditions, and speech. This is particularly true in Douglastown for those with a long familial history in the community, such that the dominant narrative theme becomes a signifier of self-identity within the community for generations of family members. Internalizing the narratives of the community, then, gives each community member the responsibility to uphold and reinforce the parameters of belonging.

#### 7.4 Conclusion

Moments of exclusion and inclusion that reveal the boundaries of Douglastown exemplify the complexity involved in defining community and who does and does not belong within the tenets of the dominant narrative theme. Stories are a fundamental part of how the identity of the community is expressed and how that expression draws together those particular individuals within the area who constitute the community of Douglastown. Communal identity is reinforced and cultivated through storytelling practices, drawing upon the dominant narrative theme for structure and meaning. Defining how the dominant narrative theme outlines the ways that members of the group understand community is a complex process that involves much more than agreeing on certain core values, traditions, and norms and excluding those who do not hold true to those same ideas. As Diane O'Rourke (2006) has argued, community must be more than a group of individuals "[imagining] themselves as having shared customs, values, and an identity distinct from others...and having moral obligations to each other" (O'Rourke 2006: 1). In the case of Douglastown, it is equally important to examine the means by which these shared ideas and experiences are expressed and the underlying convictions

that feed those expressions. The description of the community of Douglastown, its history, and the parameters used to delineate belonging are coloured by the individual in the place-event when narratives are shared. For “in telling their own stories/histories, individuals actively construct their identities, their community identity and their conception of the world around them” (Trew 2005: 109), including, in the case of this study, the continuation and development of the dominant narrative theme within these moments of sharing.

Furthermore, the processes whereby stories and the dominant narrative theme are used to outline moments of exclusion and inclusion are dependent on space, situation, storyteller, audience, and time. Due to the ever-changing nature of moments of boundary challenge, “the distinction between ‘real’ villagers and ‘outsiders’ produces a provocative image of boundary that is in fact less absolute than it appears. In practice who is included and who is excluded changes with context” (Yarrow 2011: 89). This also contributes to flexibility over time in the maintenance of boundaries defined by the dominant narrative theme and helps to create moments of inclusion, like the experiences of Denver (see pages 68-70) and the examples of the Crotty family and the naming of Douglastown (described on pages 139-144 and 42-44, respectively), leading to a complex web that is continually shifting, changing, and adapting.

Creating and upholding community in Douglastown is messy. It is inextricably attached to places and landscapes and it is voiced and described through communal and personal stories that fulfill particular purposes for storytellers. It is an example where:

Not every residential cluster can be called a community and not every community is simply or uniquely attached to a place, nor is every resident in a place included in the community of mutual obligation or shared identity. None of this is natural association to place; all of it depends on the ways

people frame their loyalties to place and other people, and what they imagine unites them. (O'Rourke 2006: 9).

Even then, individuals may not be included within the community by dint of a group choice to uphold belonging along specific criteria, here laid out by the dominant narrative theme.

What holds people together in Douglstown is based on the tenets that form the dominant narrative theme and driven by their mutual understandings of Irishness, how these understandings can and should be expressed, and why their heritage is important. Douglstown, having experienced large and recent demographic change as Anglophones become the minority where they were once the majority, seeks to re-define itself and, in the process, re-evaluate what it is that holds the group together and what distinguishes it from neighbouring communities. As such, the criteria used to define Douglstown and Douglstowners shifts and grows in accordance with the stories being told, both old and new, allowing new opportunities for place attachment and creating new connections between people.

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