

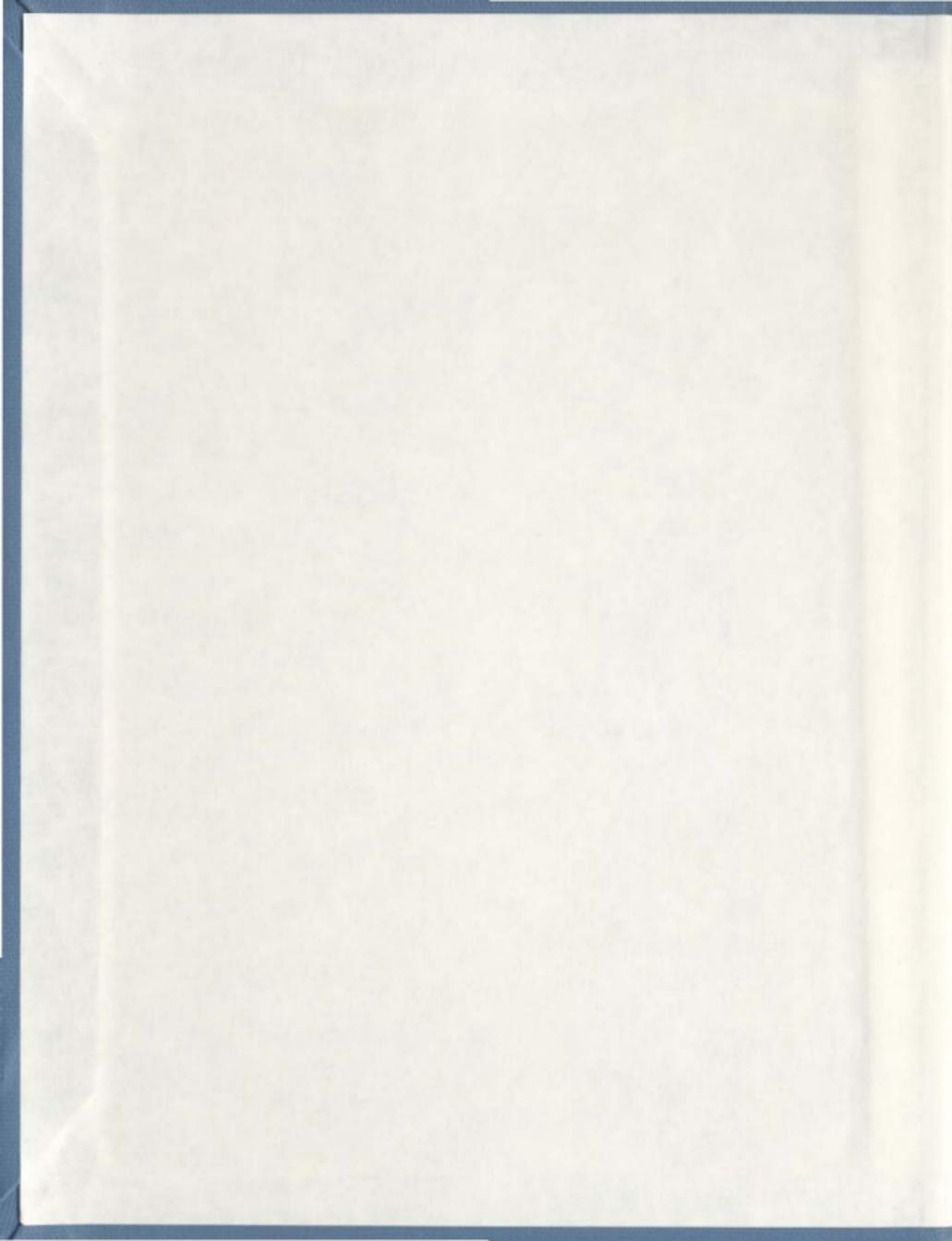
THE LANDSCAPE OF HOME:
THE ROLE OF SIGNAL HILL IN THE EMERGENCE
OF A SENSE OF IDENTITY AND PLACE IN
ST. JOHN'S NEWFOUNDLAND

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**THE LANDSCAPE OF HOME: THE ROLE OF SIGNAL HILL IN THE
EMERGENCE OF A SENSE OF IDENTITY AND PLACE IN ST. JOHN'S,
NEWFOUNDLAND**

by

© Pamela E. Coristine

A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Folklore Department
Memorial University of Newfoundland
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ABSTRACT

Common to every community across the world are features in the landscape which contribute to a community's identity and the local sense of place. Some of these features become metonymical for the cities and countries in which they lie. Images of these visible place features are often mass produced, becoming symbols or icons of a city and its residents. But along with their recognition factor is the more important fact that as symbols of place identity these icons help to create and reflect the local sense of place. A National Historic Site and prominent landmark in St. John's, Newfoundland, Signal Hill has provided individuals and groups a focal point for the negotiation of a collective identity and concept of home over the past four centuries. An integral feature in the city's landscape, for many local residents today Signal Hill simply means home.

Dedication

To the future and the memory of my late brother Philip Hunter Coristine.

Acknowledgments and Thanks

In a process that has taken far longer than I ever imagined there are many people who contributed in various ways to this final manuscript. I would like to briefly acknowledge and thank them for their help, patience and understanding. These include, friends (Gian, Mikel, John, Cat, and Sheilagh) and family (my mother, Eileen; the Flookes, Seymours, Taylors, and Pritchetts) and the following individuals:

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Chapter One - Introduction

Signal Hill: A Significant Place Feature

Introduction

When I arrived in St. John's, Newfoundland my initial reactions were mixed. I was immediately struck by the stark beauty of the place and its isolation. Having come armed with certain expectations it took some time before I developed a sense of the place. As defined by Hemming, Mansfield, and Kaplan in the Coastal Folklife Survey special edition of The North Carolina Folklore Journal in 1998, a sense of place "implies that understanding a particular landscape may require looking beyond its geographic characteristics, that human imagination and experience have played with the surfaces and created structures of meanings" (Hemming, Mansfield, and Kaplan, 1998: 6).

This sense of place, or those unquantifiable things that make a community distinct from anywhere else, is increasingly recognized as critical in the understanding of how people articulate their identities as individuals, families, groups and nations. A sense of place provides the reference point around which individuals and groups can negotiate their collective interests. Yet while globalization is a force that brings people the world over closer together, confrontations between various cultural and ethnic groups appear to be on the rise. This is due, in part, to the significance places have for the people who live in them:

For all the uprooting, the homelessness, the migrations, forced and voluntary, the dislocations of traditional relationships, the struggles over homelands, borders, and rights of recognition, for all the destructions of familiar landscapes and the manufacturing of new ones, and for all the loss of local stabilities and local originalities, the sense of place, and of the specificities of place, seems, however tense and darkened, barely diminished in the modern world (Geertz, 1996: 261). Understanding why places have the power to evoke passionate loyalty from those who inhabit them seems crucial during this period of confrontation between cultures over increasingly permeable boundaries.

While it may take some time for an outsider to appreciate what a particular place means to its inhabitants, it does not take long to discover those features which hold symbolic meaning. Common to every community across the world are features in the landscape which contribute to a community's identity and the local sense of place. Some of these features become metonymical for the cities and countries in which they lie. Canada is often represented as a country of vast, natural beauty through images of its coastlines, forests, rolling prairies, high mountains and frozen tundra. These landscapes are representative of the country as well as the identity of the people who live in it. On a more local level there are natural and built features within cities and communities which act in the same way. These features may be focused on the natural environment, such as Stanley Park in Vancouver, Central Park in New York, or Epping Forest in London.

Features may also be man-made like Notre Dame Church in Montreal, the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, or the leaning Tower of Pisa.

Images of these visible place features are often mass produced, becoming symbols or icons of a city and its residents. But alongside their recognition factor lies the more important fact that as symbols of *place identity*—“the contribution of place attributes to one’s self identity” (Hull, Lam and Vigo, 1994: 109)—these icons help to create and reflect the local sense of place:

...place features serve as icons for meanings that contribute significantly to one’s place identity, which is part of one’s self identity. Place icons serve as symbols of people’s memories and values and thereby make the experience of place more personal, more intimate. When these icons are encountered they may evoke the valued memories and/or other associations and thereby evoke a sense of place (Hull et al, 1994: 118).

In St. John’s, Newfoundland, the sense of place evoked by Signal Hill is undeniable whether encountering it for the first or hundredth time. Closely associated with the city of St. John’s, images of the National Historic Site repeatedly appear on postcards and in local publications, like the City of St. John’s Visitor Guide. (Figure 1 - 1, Appendix 5). Marked as it is by Cabot Tower, the historic monument located at its summit, Signal Hill has become a “unified symbol expressive both of nature (the lookout, fortress and

landfall promontory) and culture (seafaring, fishing, coastal trade, communication and military history)” (Sanger, 1997: 1).

Yet while Signal Hill may express “Newfoundland to Canadians, and Newfoundlanders to themselves” (ibid), it is at the local level, in the city of St. John’s, that the sense of place evoked by Signal Hill and Cabot Tower is most keenly felt. This local sense of place is a complex mixture of associations and meanings expressed on both the community and personal level. And it is this combination that makes Signal Hill such a significant place feature that as one of my informants put it: “...no matter where you are in the world, if you’re from Newfoundland you know what Signal Hill and Cabot Tower is...and if you were anywhere, you’d go, ‘That’s home’” (Interview 14). It is this meaning as home that makes Signal Hill the focus of this thesis. I soon discovered that deciphering what makes a place in the landscape representative of home is complex, involving emotions and associations that are often taken for granted. (Figure 1 - 2, Appendix 5). I concluded that as one of the two most visible landmarks in the city, the other being St. John’s Basilica, Signal Hill is one of those place features that contributes to and reflects a sense of identity and a sense of place. (Figure 1 - 3, Appendix 5). Each time a local resident looks up and sees Signal Hill they are reminded not only of where they are, but of who they are. Through a combination of ethnography, historical analysis, and textual study this thesis will attempt to elucidate this understanding through the sense of place and identity represented by Signal Hill in St. John’s, Newfoundland.

Theoretical Approach

The Home Concept

The subjective experiences that feelings for home grow from make it difficult to define. Images of place—“cultural texts involving the organization and interpretation of experience and collective memory, and often, of the meaning of ‘home’” (McCabe 1998: 233)—can stand in for what we can not easily articulate. Yet, because home is an important component of sense of place, and this thesis, it is worth a brief examination. Our perceptions are often influenced by where we are from and/or where we live, whether it is a house, a neighborhood, a region, city, province, territory, state, or country. In 1995, an attempt to define the concept of home was made by scholars from a variety of disciplines in The Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings, and Environments (Benjamin, 1995). As seen from the perspectives of architecture, geography, psychiatry, anthropology, history, etc., the term is difficult to pin down. Is home a house? Can it be found only within a particular context? Where are its boundaries? How do people fit into the equation?

Initial comparison of the home concept between Western and non-Western societies demonstrated some similarities. While for many Western peoples home has come to be closely associated with one’s house or physical dwelling, older notions once emphasized social relations and community similar to the Kurdish, Ghanaian, and Dogon concepts of home. For example, in order to demonstrate what home was to a visiting

researcher one Dogon man was compelled to point out not only his dwelling, but also a number of important places, physical structures, situations and people (Benjamin, 1995: 300). The concept of home then, as concluded by Benjamin, is perhaps best not limited to any one definition, but rather left as "a kind of *provocateur* in research, goading scholars and other interested parties to think again concerning how people interpret their living environment, and how these interpretations should be manifested" (Benjamin, 1995: 305). The simple answer of "home" that many St. John's locals gave to my question "What does Signal Hill mean to you" provoked and inspired me to write this thesis.

Sense of Place Scholarship

During the 1970s a blending of geographical and anthropological perspectives resulted in a wave of research into the positive feelings people have towards their home place and the reasons behind the attachment. In his book Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values, geographer Yi Fu Tuan identified the neologism *topophilia* as "useful in that it can be defined broadly to include all of the human being's affective ties with the material environment" (Tuan, 1974: 93). Tuan's attempts to label the positive feelings or sentiments people have towards place were diverse and included topics such as: ethnocentrism; patriotism; urbanization; and aesthetic appreciation. Tuan followed this study with Space and Place: The Perspective

of Experience (1977) in which he differentiated between space and place, defining the latter as about security, stability, and experience:

An object or place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind. Long residence enables us to know a place intimately, yet its image may lack sharpness unless we can also see it from the outside and reflect upon our experience (Tuan, 1977: 18).

Experience, long residence, and the journey away from home are seen as aspects in the development of a sense of place, but also vital are feelings of belonging and attachment (Relph, 1976; Aiken, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Sopher, 1979; Cohen, 1982, Benjamin, 1995; Ryden, 1993; Macdonald, 1997). The idea of belonging is integral to Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures (1982), the social/economic study of feeling “at home” edited by sociologist Anthony P. Cohen. In this work Cohen argued that belonging is a deep connection to place brought about by more than birth, rather “it suggests that one is an integral piece of the...community; that one is a recipient of its proudly distinctive and consciously preserved culture” (Cohen, 1982: 21). The depth of this belonging is measured through an individual’s ties to a social network made up of family and friends as well as through their community involvement.

Peter Mewlett's contribution to Cohen's work (1982) examined the production of local consciousness based on social identities. In his study of a Lewis crofting community, Mewlett found that the community's local consciousness or "the association that people—both individually and collectively—can retain with a specific place" (Mewlett, 1982: 223) was informed by relationships based on social identities. These relationships between people and their connections to place become more solid as they develop over time (Macdonald 1997; Terkenli, 1995; Aiken 1976); "Affection for place—a sense of place—develops only slowly. We care for places because of the people who live in them, because of the deposit they have left in our memories, and because of the way they arouse our different senses" (Aiken, 1976: 27).

The relationships between people and the associations to place that contribute to the sense of belonging are very much connected to issues of identity (Macdonald 1997: 22). Taken together the ideas about the physical world (memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behavior and experience) and the environmental past (memories of places and associated behavior) result in the formation of a *place identity* (Proshansky et al, 1983: 59), a combination of perception and cognition that produces "the 'glue' of familiarity that binds people to place" (Hull et al, 1994: 110). The attributes ascribed to features in the landscape, our experiences, our memories and associations all combine to create "the nonmaterial properties of the physical milieu—the sociocultural 'residue'" that becomes attached to place (ibid).

These place-based meanings tell us "who we are and who we are not, how we have changed and into what we are changing" (ibid).

Sense of Place within Folklore

The idea that a sense of place, or identity, is reflected in cultural forms has long been a part of folklore. After all it was those cultural forms and expressions that differentiated the folk from the elite. But folklore's beginnings had less to do with issues of identity than the 19th century preoccupation with the past. Chronicling the past, including the ways of the folk, provided the material against which the rapid advancements of the era could be measured (Bronner, 1986: 2). Identity, group identity in particular, became a much larger part of folklore studies when Alan Dundes defined the folk as "any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor" (Bronner, 1986: 110). Contributing to the shared sense of identity among groups would be a common core of tradition. With the suggestion that context, a particular place, time, activity or culture, affected a group's interactions, Barre Toelken refined the definition (Bronner, 1986: 111).

The influence of structuralism manifested itself within folklore by encouraging the examination not just of particular items but also of the relationships among and between them. The structural analysis of narrative by scholars such as Levi-Strauss revealed that there was an underlying cognitive foundation upon which we built our worlds. Material culture studies, like Henry Glassie's Folk Housing in Middle Virginia

(1975) exemplified how these cognitive structures were reflected in material objects, or cultural forms. For example, through a close analysis of collected data, Glassie proposed that the change in house style towards “symmetry and enclosure” during the period of the American Revolution was indicative of a psychic need for order, or structure (Glassie, 1975: 118). Material culture studies such as Glassie's also indicated that cultural forms reflect regional boundaries—people's perceptions and reactions to a particular place. This led to the understanding that identification with region influenced cultural practices, shaped folklore, and informed personal as well as group identity (Schoemaker, 1990: 238).

In 1986, Mary Hufford published One Space, Many Places, her report to the New Jersey Pinelands Commission for Cultural Conservation of folklife and land use in the Pineland's National Reserve. Hufford's report attempted to add something different to the scientific observations, historic and archaeological material already well established in the study of place. Through ethnography, Hufford believed she could reveal the “human experiences and culturally-based meanings that lend character to places” (Hufford, 1986: 11). This added dimension revealed a relationship between people's perceptions and actions, or *reciprocal causality*:

1) Landscape + user's perception = collective image

2) Collective image + action = landscape (Hufford, 1986: 11).

For example, Hufford's ethnographic survey considered how those who used the Pinelands area communicated their understanding of it through folklife expressions like the tools they used for managing it. Issuing from the area's resources such expressions were "tied to the collaborative image of the place, as well as to the collective memory" (Hufford, 1986: 13). The image of place then "emerges constantly as it is formalized and conveyed through folklife expressions" (Hufford, 1986: 12).

Similar to Hufford's concept of reciprocal causality is *reflexivity*: the process through which a world view is expressed and reinforced (Lightfoot, 1997). Through the study of folkloric forms, such as stories or songs, a folklorist is able to discern the particular concerns, or world view, of a group. Through the performance of those stories and songs the world view (situated in place) is fed back to them. This interaction between place and folk groups was the purpose behind the collection of studies published in Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures (1990). Edited by Barbara Allen and Thomas J. Schlereth, this collection of essays included the examination of region or place-specific cultural forms and folklife expressions, e.g., verbal traditions, foodways, religious rituals, and traditional skills.

In his study of the Newfoundland community of Calvert in A Place to Belong (1991), Gerald Pocius recognized that folklife expressions stem from "a complex and pervasive knowledge" available only to the community's long-time residents. Understanding that type of pervasive knowledge, Pocius argued, cannot be accomplished

through a study of material objects alone. Venturing deeply into the intricate ways people negotiate space, Pocius demonstrated that material culture study must include the spaces within which the material objects exist. Through his close examination of Calvert spaces—homes, gardens, yards, woods, and water—Pocius revealed aspects of the community’s social order—an order that ensured the shared use of available resources. Significantly, the availability and location of these same resources was passed on to the community’s younger members not through formalized instruction, but through experience “by accompanying an older person to a particular place” (Pocius, 1991: 65).

The concept of an intimate spatial knowledge available only to the local or *insider*, was explored further by the American studies scholar, Kent C. Ryden in Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place (1993). According to Ryden, in his chapter devoted to “Folklore and the Sense of Place” (1993), it was only 20 or 30 years ago that folklorists attempted to use their story collections to illuminate a sense of regional consciousness. Wading deeper into an area that became known as regional studies, folklorists also turned to collections of material culture and music. Even beyond these genres were the poems, paintings, recipes, rituals, tools, technologies, and names that researchers Mary Hufford and Suzi Jones suggested would bring about a deeper understanding of how a sense of place is both reflected and created.

Inspired by Allen and Schlereth’s collection, Kent published his study of place Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place in 1993.

According to Ryden in the chapter he devoted to an overview of “Folklore and the Sense of Place” (1993), it was only decades ago that folklorists attempted to use their story collections to illuminate a sense of regional consciousness. Wading deeper into an area that became known as regional studies, folklorists turned to other cultural expressions, like material culture and music. Expanding beyond the usual genres, researchers Mary Hufford and Suzi Jones suggested including poems, paintings, recipes, rituals, tools, technologies and names in order to gain a deeper understanding of how a sense of place is both reflected and created.

Recognizing that sense of place is woven into a community’s practices, Ryden stretched the boundaries even further with his suggestion that sense of place itself is a genre of folklore “or at least as a traditional attitude or stance vis-à-vis the physical world which underlies much folklore and for which Hufford’s and Jones’s genres of place provide the overt expression” (Ryden, 1993: 68). If, as Ryden suggests, regional folklore functions to: reveal local knowledge, transmit intimate and unrecorded history, provide a sense of personal and group identity, and indicate people’s emotional attachment to place and its components, then sense of place is not something that comes from folklore but precedes it as “the traditional structure of geographical experience and understanding that those genres individually and collectively reveal” (Ryden, 1993: 68).

Attempting to understand the sense of a place through the eyes of those who live in it, Ryden followed in the footsteps of other researchers. By examining folk narratives

in the mining district in northern Idaho's Coeur d'Alene, Ryden uncovered the process whereby locals or *regional insiders* situated themselves in the landscape through the stories inscribed onto its surface. These stories, which relate an area's *invisible landscape*—the subjective component of experience, memory, and narrative—appear also in the *essay of place*, the personal essay that describes and explores both a particular place and the writer's relationship to that place. Both imbue a surrounding landscape with emotions available only to those within whose minds it has formed over time.

Concentrating on this type of insider knowledge are the published results of the School for American Research seminar entitled, "Place, Expression, and Experience." The essays in Senses of Place (1996) contain ethnographic descriptions of localized forms of expression and forms of local knowledge that go beyond simple topography. An attempt to reconcile ethnographic representation with intersubjectivity, Basso and Feld's concept of *sensing of place* is concerned primarily with the ways in which a group of people animate the landscape and imagine how that landscape animates them. These explorations into meaning include: Western Apache and Kaluli expressions in which life is lived "like a trail" or "like a path;" Appalachian spaces of marginality, or "hollers;" the scenarios that surround leaving and return; struggles by overlapping communities to stake out a "home place;" and the process whereby the "quaint countryside" of rural East Anglia became an emotionally laden landscape of English heritage.

This “knowledge of place by means of the body” is a complex mixture of the memories and history that a place gathers and which in turn become meaningful only through the “interanimation” of person and place (as cited in Basso and Feld, 1996: 34). Thus place is more than simply physical, place is the actualization of subjectivity and knowledge. These explorations into the connection between people’s subjective understanding of place and the cultural forms which express it illustrate the kind of deeper analysis that structuralism first opened our eyes to. And proves again that it is not the thing itself that provides a group with identity, but rather the meanings attached to them (Suojanen, 1998: 117).

Methodolgy

This thesis is intended to illustrate the local sense of place within St. John’s, Newfoundland through an ethnographic, textual, and historical examination of an integral landscape feature within that place, Signal Hill. The site itself is located at the north-east end of the city on the Avalon Peninsula, one of the foggiest areas in the world. Projecting out into the sea the often steep and rocky landscape of this headland is subject to the natural forces of wind, rain, ice, snow, fog and sea spray. Temperatures can drop quickly when onshore winds combine with the offshore Labrador Current:

One undeniable fact of Signal Hill is the harshness of the weather there....The hill almost possesses a climate of its own, for at the same time that calm prevails in St. John’s, a strong wind may be blowing on the summit, which is, after all, 500 ft.

above sea level. By the same token, Signal Hill may be enveloped in fog while the sun shines on St. John's (Candow, 1979: 163). (Figure 1 - 4, Appendix 5).

The National Historic Site which takes up approximately 98.25 hectares of the Signal Hill Peninsula was established in 1958 (Department of the Environment, 1986: 1). Its commemorative integrity revolves around the 18th century English military presence as well as a history of communications from 18th century flag signalling to Marconi's experiments and Cabot Tower's wireless station. The area under examination in this thesis includes the National Historic Site as well as an additional area (approximately 30 hectares) of crown land and city property just outside the federal boundary.

If significant place features, such as Signal Hill, contribute to a community's identity and sense of place, what do people's use and expressions of Signal Hill convey about St. John's, Newfoundland. Rather than attempting to survey all those genres of regional folklore that demonstrate the unique sense of place in St. John's, Newfoundland—music, material culture, legends, foodways, rituals—I am attempting to ascertain what one particular and significant feature contributes to a local sense of place. This will be accomplished through the examination of Signal Hill's use (past and present), appearance in local legend, song, poetry and prose, as well as its role in the history of the community. The research material used for this exploration includes a series of interviews I conducted primarily in 1996/97 as well as a collection—spanning

approximately 300 years—of poetry, song, prose, and images related to Signal Hill or, in some instances, St. John’s.

In order to provide historical context contemporary authors consulted include: historians Melvin Baker, James Candow, Gene Long, and Peter Neary; geographer, Gordon Handcock; literary scholars, Patrick O’Flaherty and Paul O’Neill. Contemporary photographs are from my personal collection or have been contributed by local informants. Historical images were found in various archival collections and published works including those listed below as well as works like deVolpi’s, Newfoundland: A Pictorial Record (1972) and “Old Prints of Newfoundland” (1975) by F.A. O’Dea. Contemporary and historical examples of prose, song, and poetry regarding Signal Hill were collected from local newspapers (Newfoundland Gazette, The Evening Telegram and The Express), periodicals (Atlantic Guardian, Newfoundland Quarterly; Newfoundland Stories and Ballads, The Premier, and Tickle Ace), and other sources (B. Lacy’s Miscellaneous Poems, The Captain of the Dolphin, The People’s Songster, and James Murphy’s, Songs of Our Land) and are included in Appendix 3.

A variety of miscellaneous magazines, provincial and city tourist guides or brochures, and Parks Canada publications were also consulted as were early Newfoundland histories by: Lewis Anspach; J.B. Jukes, Sir Richard Bonnycastle, and D.W. Prowse. Early journals include those of surgeon, James Younge (1647-1721) and seaman, Aaron Thomas (1794). Library and archival research was conducted at the

Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL); and Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth Library (QEII), Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), Maritime History Archive, and Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA).

Images of Signal Hill

The original paper from which this thesis grew was a material culture study based on a database of Signal Hill images I collected in 1995/96. The images spanned the period from the late 18th century to the present. Collected from a variety of sources, archival collections and published materials, my initial hope to collect images from the personal photograph collections of individuals was not very rewarding. Although I did collect a few my database of over 160 images came primarily from published works and archival collections. Through an analysis of the predominant characteristic of these images I discovered associations with the area's military history as well with the fishery and local tourism. The most interesting discovery was the visual shift from images that included the harbour, Narrows, and Hill to those that focused on Cabot Tower. For the purposes of this thesis I am using a selection of these and other images, included in Appendix 5, to augment points made within the text.

The Interviews

The interviews for this thesis were conducted primarily in 1996/97. Those interviewed included visitors to and inhabitants of Newfoundland, however the bulk of those interviewed were residents of St. John's. The questionnaire, see Appendix 1, was

developed early on in the thesis process and some of the questions have proved to be irrelevant. In the summer of 1996 I was given permission by Parks Canada to conduct interviews inside their boundaries. I dropped this approach as unpromising after being dissatisfied with the responses I received.¹ Although almost everyone agreed to the questionnaire, the answers lacked depth and several people ended the interviews before I had asked all my questions. People seemed uncomfortable or suspicious of my purpose even after I explained. I concluded my presence and purpose were incongruous and intrusive considering the casual recreational purposes people were making of the Hill. I changed my strategy and began to interview the people around me.

Although I was a relative newcomer to St. John's I had come into contact with many people through the University and my interest in amateur theatre. And while temporary residents (University students) as well as the occasional visitor/tourist were among those I interviewed, most were local residents—people born in St. John's or other areas of Newfoundland as well as those born elsewhere but resident in St. John's for ten years or more. From shop clerks to government employees the socio-economic background of my informants varied. Most, however, were educated and well-spoken individuals. My informants' identities are not revealed in this work for several reasons. The first is based on an assumption I picked up during my undergraduate years in anthropology, that the researcher should protect the informant through anonymity.

¹ The three locations I stationed myself at within the National Historic Site were Chain Rock, Georges Pond, and the summit lookout.

Second, during the interviews I initially conducted with walkers on the North Head trail, I did not collect the names of those I spoke with. And finally, I assured several of my informants who were not comfortable with the idea of being identified, or who explicitly requested anonymity, that their identities would not be revealed. In order to differentiate between individuals I have assigned a number to each interview. This number appears with any quote I have used from the interview. A brief description of my informants as well as the date and location of each interview can be found in Appendix 2.

As I stated earlier, among my informants were several students and people then involved in amateur theatre.² Although one or two of my artistic informants may have had a professional interest in issues of home and identity—for example the artist who has dealt with these issues in her work and the playwright/actor whose work has gone on to deal with issues of sexual identity—I believe that most did not. In fact, for them and other informants the ubiquitous nature of Signal Hill often made it difficult for individuals to express exactly what the Hill meant to them. And for those that replied “home,” it was often simply that—home. Although my informants represent only a small portion of the city’s population, their openness and insightful answers were an enormous contribution to a topic and process that I was often unclear about, particularly in the early stages. I am also grateful to those individuals who were able to refer me to individuals like Parks Canada historian James Candow who shared with me transcripts of four

² While some of these individuals have gone on to become professionals in the industry the lives of others have taken different paths.

interviews he conducted in 1980. Others I was referred to include individuals having some special interest or connection to Signal Hill, e.g. those who had written a poem, painted a picture, lived nearby, or worked at the National Historic Site. In order to help establish a foundation for further research related to Signal Hill I have deposited many of the materials I collected during my research, including copies of my interview tapes, into the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archives, Accession Number 2002-227.

Questionnaire Response

The following is a brief summary of the responses I received during my interviews. These are the questions which made up my original questionnaire.

1. What do you know about Signal Hill?

The most frequent response to this question concerned Marconi and the first transatlantic wireless signal. Many people were under the false impression that Marconi had transmitted his signal from the Hill, rather than receiving it there. Several of those I spoke to thought the Hill's name commemorated Marconi's experiments and achievements. In fact, first known as the Lookout, the Hill was renamed Signal Hill by Colonel Amherst following the Battle of Signal Hill in 1762. And although locals and non-locals alike knew of a past military presence on the Hill, few knew of this battle or that it was the original reason for the Hill's commemoration as a national historic site.

2. *How old do you think the tower is?*

The second question was asked in an effort to discover whether there was a tendency to think of the tower as older than it is. I had initially been fooled by the tower's late 19th century gothic revival architectural style into thinking it older. I discovered that while some thought the tower older, most knew its approximate age, particularly the locals. I eventually stopped asking this question.

3. *Do you know any stories about Signal Hill?*

While I was interested in any story people had to offer, I was quite interested in local legends. When relating a legend, most told me the story of Deadman's Pond and Gibbet Hill: "the story is that a guy jumped in to save this girl who was drowning, and they both ended up drowning and dying there, so it became known as Deadman's Pond. And it's supposedly bottomless...and rumour has it that they used to dump bodies from the gibbet in there as well" (Interview 9). Other stories included more drownings, the mysterious disappearance of a university student, and a few ghost stories. Those stories not related to accidents, disappearances or local legends were accounts of personal experiences, e.g. a particular walk or outing at Signal Hill.

4. *Do you visit Signal Hill? When? Why?*

The frequency of visits to Signal Hill varied. Some individuals go daily or weekly, while others report going only occasionally, annually or infrequently. The reason for going was most often recreational, to walk and take in the view. Several

people mentioned going to the Hill as part of a family outing, or as a way of orienting visitors to St. John's. Many expressed the feeling that the Hill was a place to go in order to get away from the stresses of city life: "a neat thing about Signal Hill...is that in the middle of all this urban-ness is something that's completely untouched even if it's been reconstructed and Signal Hill is especially natural" (Interview 21). Individuals from at least three different generations confessed to going for reasons of romance, e.g., to make-out or "cuddle in the shelter of the tower" (Interview 22).

5. What does Signal Hill mean to you?

This question sometimes caused confusion. Its ubiquitous presence in locals' lives makes it difficult to express its importance, as exemplified by this comment:

Well, it's important in kind of the way that any place that you've known all your life is important. I can't really put down and say, you know, it's important because... it has any specific meaning, it's just there. And I've been familiar with it all my life. It's just part of living in St. John's (Interview 24).

Because I was looking for symbolic meaning and metaphor from people for whom Signal Hill is simply Signal Hill, I sometimes asked people what they thought of its visual image—whether the Hill and its Tower reminded them of anything. A few associated it with the concept of being on an edge—either the edge of the Atlantic, of Canada, North America, or of the known world, "a mystical doorway to another dimension...it's on the edge of all possibilities of existence" (Interview 20). One individual thought the image

very "gothic," imagining helmeted Vikings, while another was reminded of war. Many found the Hill "beautiful," putting some in mind of the "old world" or Ireland. With a bit of prompting from myself one individual came up with "Byron and...thin blooded dark brooding hysterical guys living in poetic isolation in these big towers overlooking the ocean..." (Interview 11). When the question was not confusing most locals simply told me the Hill meant home:

What it means to me more than anything is, I think, home. I mean I've been living here for 17 years. For most of it I've been in the east end and downtown for the better part of that. It's the way home always (Interview 10).

6. *What do you think of Cabot Tower?*

Although most agreed the tower's presence was what made the Hill such a visible landmark, many locals told me that the tower did not mean much to them. A few individuals, visitors and locals, expressed a sense of disappointment with the Tower, as if when seen up close it did not live up to their expectations. Several others regarded the tower as a sentinel guarding the entrance to St. John's.

7. *What do you think of National Historic Sites (in general)?*

Most people agreed that National Historic Sites were important for preserving history for future generations and for preserving land from commercial development. The Hill's status as a National Historic Site, however, had less to do with most visits to

Signal Hill than did the view from its summit. Several informants expressed dissatisfaction with the federal government's development, or lack thereof, of the Hill.

8. *Do you have any souvenirs of Signal Hill?*

This was another question I eventually stopped asking. I originally included it because I was interested in the material culture related to Signal Hill generated by the tourist industry. As locals made up the majority of those I interviewed, instances of tourism souvenirs were scarce. I did discover, however, that several people, locals and visitors, had collected natural objects from the Hill, e.g. small rocks or seagull bones as talismans and souvenirs.

When I began the interview process I thought my goal was clear. And the questionnaire I developed reflected what I thought those goals were—collecting material that would allow me to further a material culture approach to my topic. With hindsight, however, it is clear that I was searching for something more. And it was during the initial interviews, conducted in June of 1996 with approximately 20 people, that I discovered it—the equation of Signal Hill with home. Because I was unsure of how to delve deeper into this area of people's perception, in subsequent interviews I favoured a more general conversational approach, using the questionnaire only as a backup in case of conversational lag. More in-depth, this approach provided me with a deeper understanding of the meanings and associations Signal Hill held for particular individuals. And I became very interested in the recurring theme that several informants,

in the early and later interviews, touched on—their use of Signal Hill as a landmark was confined not only to the negotiation of their physical environment, but their life's path as well. I felt this discovery to be pivotal in the meaning of Signal Hill as home.

Song, Poetry, and Prose

In the collection of song, poetry and prose I gathered regarding Signal Hill, several of the themes which seemed to present themselves to me fit into the conceptions of home and community. I was encouraged to pursue this area of research following my discovery of the Signal Hill poem written in 1912 by Lydia Chancey. Used by historian James Candow to conclude his history of Signal Hill I recognized in its excerpts the theme of home. I was encouraged and searched through MUN's Newfoundland and Labrador Periodical index for further examples. This approach proved fruitful and I was able to come up a number of published poems and songs about Signal Hill. Not stopping there I also searched through literary anthologies, such as Digging Into the Hill and Tickle Ace, as well as local newspapers, zeroing in on specific dates as well as researching references found in works like Paul O'Neill's two volume set, The Story of St. John's, Newfoundland.³

Discernible in the very early works of my subsequent collection is an outsider's perspective, often with uncomplimentary references to the area's climate and unfair comparisons to a far away and idealized home. At the turn of the 20th century the theme

³ In a frustrating effort to confirm who, if anyone, had ever been hanged on Gibbet Hill I also spent a number of hours going through early colonial records at the provincial archives.

changes to a focus on the use of the Hill as a lookout, particularly to watch the arrival and departure of the sealing fleet, are numerous. Other themes are the Hill's military and communications history, various legends, recreational uses (sliding, skating, lovers meeting), and its presence in the memory of Newfoundland exiles as the "native's hill." Representative of the home landscape of a nation the focus changes again just after Confederation when the theme becomes the 1762 Battle of Signal Hill. The reason behind this theme seems to be this battle's commemoration of Signal Hill as a National Historic Site. Also hinted at in this period is a shifting away from the Hill's representation as a symbol of all of Newfoundland to that of a more local symbol of its capital, St. John's. And while I have not had the opportunity within the confines of this thesis to examine much of the material I gathered spanning the 1970s to the present, these works do seem less concerned with the Hill's symbolic representation of Newfoundland or St. John's and more about the intimate details of moments experienced by individuals in its natural setting. The chronological sequence of themes suggested to me by these works has provided the structural foundation of this thesis.

Conclusion

Much of the material I gathered during my field work is the focus of Chapters Two and Seven. These two chapters chronicle the ways in which Signal Hill is currently used and experienced by local residents and serve to bracket Chapters Three through Six, which explore the development and role of Signal Hill in St. John's from the 16th to 20th

centuries. In Chapter Two, *A St. John's Sense of Place*, I begin my attempt to establish the sense of place experienced by many local residents. This will be done through the associations and uses people make of the Hill as well as the stories told about it. From its present association with home I will then move backwards several centuries in Chapter Three, *Far From Home: Early Perceptions of Newfoundland*, to a time when Newfoundland was home to very few. This was a period during which settlement was not encouraged and living conditions were difficult. These realities combined with early visitors' and explorers' comparisons to home to make opinions of Newfoundland more often negative than positive: "such is the barrenness of that island and the inhabitants for the most part poore and debauched,...that their poverty and debauchery putts them upon committing all vices and mischief..." (as cited in O'Neill, 1976: 227).

Most of the early inhabitants of St. John's were from South-west England and later, South-east Ireland. Many brought with them a sense of an identity rooted elsewhere, which in turn was kept alive through the comings and goings of the fishing fleet. In Chapter Four, *Identity in an Emerging Capital*, I will examine the effects early 19th century permanent settlement had on the recorded attitudes people had towards St. John's and Newfoundland. I will also examine how, later in that century, competing identities resulted in divisions between groups—like those that existed between Protestants and Catholics. Yet despite the conflict and competition between these

opposing groups, St. John's emerged as the island's capital and Signal Hill as a common feature of city life.

At the turn of the 20th century, Signal Hill became a site for the establishment of a national identity. In Chapter Five, *Inscribing Signal Hill: Nation and Home*, I will examine this process and how it combined with a local understanding of Signal Hill as a landscape of home to make it the focal point for the interpretation of a national, yet very local, history. In Chapter Six, *The Development of History and Heritage*, it is the establishment of Signal Hill as a national historic site and the change in emphasis from its role as national symbol to a local one that is explored. But for local residents Signal Hill is home, a feature that contributes so strongly to identity and sense of place that when in 1996 access to the Hill was threatened, a province-wide protest was the result. This protest, examined in Chapter Seven, *The Battle for Signal Hill*, illustrates more than any poem, image or story could, the wide-spread and powerful feelings of ownership many St. John's residents and other Newfoundlanders have of this popular commons.

Chapter Two - A St. John's Sense of Place

Introduction

According to Lauri Honko identity is a part of a collective tradition that represents the cultural communication of a group (Honko, 1988: 22). History, art, architecture, food, rituals, music, dance, and language are all examples of this communication and tradition. Yet while many of these traditions can become symbols of a particular culture and its identity, it is the meanings and feelings attached to them that foster a sense of belonging and a sense of place:

At a different level of experience, or at a different scale, the landscape of home may be chiefly a litany of names, pictures, and tales of places that record the direct experience of home by one's people....At yet another scale, when experience of other places suggests that some familiar things at home may be distinctive, these may become generic symbols of home (Sopher, 1979: 136).

I was already aware of some of the Newfoundland cultural symbols before I arrived. I understood there was a particular musical tradition, a language or accent, and a lifestyle focused on the fishery. But as a new arrival in St. John's I was presented with a series of previously unknown symbols including food items (cod tongues, flipper pie, bologna or "Newfie steak," and Screech rum), phrases ("whata ya at?" "where ya going to?") and references ("maid" - referring to a young woman, and "buddy" referring to an anonymous

person or “some guy”⁴), and particular narratives (legends and ghost stories). Although these symbols, as they were presented to me, made me aware I was no longer in Montreal, QC, Victoria, BC, or any of the other Canadian cities I’ve lived in, it was the less obvious cultural nuances which brought that realisation home.

The first section of this chapter is a brief overview of some of these more subtle cultural traces in order to establish the sense of place in St. John’s. Intricately woven into the city’s history (see Chapters Three through Six) the latter section of this chapter will establish the Hill’s presence in the lives and memories of local residents and its connection to local sense of place.

Sense of Place in St. John’s

The Perspective from Inside and Out

As suggested by various scholars a sense of place involves feelings of attachment and belonging (Relph, 1976; Aiken, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Sopher, 1979; Cohen, 1982; Benjamin, 1995; Macdonald, 1997). Attachment and belonging begin to form early in life with the love, comfort, security, and order provided by familial and other social relationships. The surroundings associated with this nurturing and sheltering group becomes the “world of the familiar” (Dovey, 1978: 27). Soon after my arrival in St. John’s I recognized in the people that I met a connection to place that I had never experienced. Although my family were fourth and fifth generation Montrealers, I grew

⁴ I initially thought that Buddy was a very popular first name in St. John’s.

up there during the turbulent 1960s and 70s, and my feelings of attachment were ambivalent. As a non-bilingual Anglophone I often felt as if I did not belong.

The first time I left Montreal was at the age of sixteen. Intended to live with my brother and his family in Calgary, I was back home at the end of four weeks. Homesick and lonely for my friends, I had returned. St. John's film-maker, Rosemary House recalls her departure from home in similar terms "I could not wait to get off this miserable rock. And when I left at the age of 21 I was never coming back. And then, like most of us, I was suddenly stricken with a passionate desire to return..." (House, 1997).⁵ As many of us have experienced, our attachment to place—to home—often lies dormant until tested by our departure from it.

As the sense of place grows over time, the extent to which one feels attached often depends on kinship and social ties. Moving from province to province, city to city, I made friends, volunteered for various community organisations, and developed attachments to particular places in each. But when it came time to leave, to move on, I was always ready. It was not until I landed in St. John's that as a *mainlander*⁶ (someone from any other part of North America, but most other Canadians) or *see-ef-ay* (CFA = come from away) I began to understand how deep the sense of belonging to a particular

⁵ Of this phenomena one local woman commented in the guest book at the Signal Hill Visitor's Resource Centre, "I never realized how pretty my own home was, until I left and came home to live" (November 13, 1999).

⁶ After learning I had spent some time in Winnipeg, Manitoba one St. John's resident began to refer to me as a *flatlander*, a reference to Canada's prairie landscape.

place could be. The strength of this sense of belonging is exemplified by its definition in the Dictionary of Newfoundland English:

Belong. 1. To be related by blood;
2. to be a native of; to come from; 1965 Peacock (ed) i,xix... “one of the commonest phrases in the Newfoundland vernacular: ‘he *belongs* to Rocky Harbour’ – one is never from or even born in a place, one always belongs to it” (Story, Kirwin, and Widdowson, 1990: 39).

Local actor and writer, Brian Hennessey feels this way about his attachment to his St. John’s home: “This is where I belong...I just don’t feel right anywhere else except right here” (House, 1997).

I first encountered the complexity of this sense of belonging soon after my arrival in St. John’s. I was then spending much of my time around a large group of people involved with a local amateur theatre production.⁷ Some of those involved in the production had grown up together or had attended the same high school. Others were new acquaintances. It was while attending various social events focused around this group that I often observed people participating in a kind of *six degrees of separation* game—a game or discussion in which the participants establish themselves in the network of acquaintances and places with whom, or with which, they are all indirectly

⁷ The production was called “In Your Dreams, Freud” and involved a cast and crew of approximately 40 people.

connected.⁸ People who did not know one another at all or very well were always able to establish some sort of connection either through a family member, friend, or acquaintance. Most often the connection was made through a family name and place, e.g. the Blackmoors in Grand Falls.⁹ In establishing these connections between themselves, these individuals were also demonstrating where they belonged in the area's geographic and social fabric.

At many of these social events I also noticed the frequency with which St. John's residents (usually in their 20s) would state the name of the elementary and high schools they had attended. I recognized that there was a subtext in these exchanges that I did not understand. It became clearer when someone explained to me that the school system in St. John's was based on church denominations and therefore the name of the school was usually an indication of a person's class and religious background.¹⁰ This type of distinction also comes into play in understanding the terms *townie* and *bayman*. Encapsulating the dichotomy of city slicker and country hick the distinction between these two groups first came to my awareness when I overheard two young university students from *around the bay* (another term that makes reference to baymen) expressing

⁸ In the years between then and now I have observed this same behaviour among other groups of people.

⁹ After seven years in St. John's I have come to accept that in this regard I will never belong. The usual reaction to my family name, Coristine, is, "Oh, that's not a Newfoundland name." No, I explain, it is not. I either tell them that I am originally from Montreal or explain its Irish origins.

¹⁰ I did not understand the relevance of this particular piece of information until I became more aware of the influence the Churches had once held in St. John's society and the divisions that existed between Catholics and Protestant sects (Anglicans, Pentecostal, Salvation Army, Methodist, etc.) This particular aspect of St. John's social history was made clear during the 1996 debate regarding the referendum to abolish the denominational school system.

their hurt at being looked down upon by several students from St. John's. Local performer Anita Best experienced this same prejudice when she and her family first arrived in St. John's from Meerasheen during the 1950s. She was made to feel awkward by her southern shore accent and rural manners (House, 1997). I was two years in St. John's before I fully realized that for many rural Newfoundlanders, St. John's is the big, and sometimes bad, city. And for those students who leave their rural communities to attend Memorial University, this type of prejudice only makes adjustment to life in the city more stressful.¹¹

Originally from a large urban centre, I had my own adjustments to make to St. John's. I spent my second day in residence wandering back and forth along Water and Duckworth Streets in a vain attempt to find the large downtown shopping area. When I finally asked someone where it was I was a little shocked to discover I had seen all there was to see of the downtown shopping area. And as for shopping malls, I was directed to the Avalon Mall out past the University.¹² I also had to adjust to directional finding and the city's topography. In a city where the South Side Hills are more south-east and the expression *going downtown* literally means travelling down often steep and oddly angled streets, I quickly found myself purchasing a map and negotiating the downs and ups of downtown life. Yet as challenging as directional finding or the topography are, these are

¹¹ I recently met a young man from Carbonear who, during his first semester at Memorial, was afraid to go out at night for fear of getting lost or mugged.

¹² Often referred to as the *Babylon Mall* the term comes from the lyrics of a song by the local, Wonderful Grand Band.

surpassed by the climate. Until moving here in 1994 I had never really experienced what it meant to be continually aware of one's physical environment. Not only because I found the land and seascape so compelling, but also because for much of the year there is little escape from the physical realities of a climate dominated by wind, rain, and fog. And although I have lived in other provinces where the temperatures were colder, I have never experienced cold as consistently as I have here. Not only is this due to the thinly insulated, electrically heated, late 19th century row houses which dominate downtown St. John's (and my living experience) but also the persistent damp of the climate.¹³

Within three months of my arrival a sleet storm knocked out the power in and around the city for five days. Equipped with gas generators, wood and propane stoves, or camping equipment, many locals were well equipped to handle this type of emergency. Those who were not bunked with their better equipped family and friends while others took advantage of the hot coffee and soup offered up at the city's fire stations. Although the city's daily routine changed, I was impressed at how quickly most residents adapted to conditions.¹⁴ I was living on Military Road in a room in a large, rambling house badly in need of repair. On the second morning I found one of my housemates (originally from

¹³ Initially unprepared for St. John's climate, particularly the freeze and thaw cycle of winter, my wardrobe now consists of water resistant outerwear, sturdy boots, wool socks, sweaters, and lots of polar fleece. I've also noticed that the weather often provides the conversational ice breaker between locals and myself, whether complaining about its nastier aspects or being reluctant to mention its finer moments because of lingering superstitions that calling attention to it will ensure its quick disappearance.

¹⁴ Notorious among its students for never canceling classes due to weather (the record breaking snow fall of Winter 2000/2001 being a rare exception) Memorial University announced via local radio stations that the term's final exam period would go ahead as scheduled. When some students complained that their study time was being affected by the short daylight hours they were advised to use candles.

Fredericton, New Brunswick) in the kitchen boiling a pot of water and eggs over a can of Sterno; “Survival in Newfoundland depends upon adaptation to its hostility. All who come to Newfoundland are changed by it, else they perish” (Walsh and Jamieson, 1996: 2). I cannot remember exactly how I kept warm over the next several days, but by the fourth night (only vaguely aware of the city’s history of destruction by fire) I ignored the prohibition placed on me by my landlord’s house insurance and lit a fire in the coal grate in my room.

I was also impressed, that same December, by the incredibly social season that is Christmas in St. John’s. A distinct feature of this season is the house party, the numbers of which are almost as numerous as the people who annually return to their homes all across Newfoundland for this holiday. Although many of these individuals left home to pursue their education or look for work, several of those I spoke with during this social round expressed to me their yearning to return. I understood the sentiment, but I also now understand the economic necessity behind leaving. As writer Ed Riche put it:

It’s not glamorous to live here certainly. You still have a struggle getting a head of lettuce at certain times of the year. Certainly you don’t get arugula; that’s not available. Sometimes it seems very, very promising you know...and other times it just seems like you could put a bullet in your head...It seems ridiculous to say that’s the charm of the place (House,1997).

After seven years in St. John's struggling to pay the bills with short term work contracts, the weather becomes, as St. John's born writer Ed Riche points out, "a minor thing given the sort of persistent economic problems" (ibid). And it is this persistent economic problem that is often at the root of the boomerang phenomena I have observed in the lives of several local individuals. Continually travelling back and forth between their ambitions on the mainland and their hearts in St. John's (or other parts of Newfoundland),¹⁵ Riche sees this attachment as a mysterious affair of the heart:

Why people keep believing this place, keep loving this place so passionately is in the end, I think, a mystery to me...as are most passions...if you could explain a relationship, and you understood its mechanics, it wouldn't be an affair of the heart...Loving this place despite itself is the mystery (House, 1997).

While some individuals have come to rest in various provinces, several of those I have watched journey back and forth have now committed to settling back home. And they do so alongside the small number of their peers who early on resolved never to leave despite the economic or environmental challenges.

In her "offbeat" documentary film about St. John's, Rain, Drizzle and Fog (1997),¹⁶ local filmmaker Rosemary House explores this attachment to the "city that was

¹⁵ I did not realize the difficulties experienced by some of the individuals who have left St. John's then returned until I spoke to a woman who had left to study dance. I overheard her lamenting the attitude that many of her older friends now seemed to have towards her. When I asked her about this she explained that these friends saw her as a cultural snob, changed by her time on the mainland and in a larger city. Several also regarded her as a failure because instead of staying there she had returned home.

¹⁶ The film's title is a reference to the frequency with which local weather forecasts call for "rain, drizzle, and fog."

never meant to be” (House, 1997). Encapsulating much of my current understanding of the sense of place in St. John’s is the sequence near the beginning of the film in which House introduces herself:

From the very beginning in 1497, Newfoundland was a giant fishing station. It was a criminal offense to settle in St. John’s. The determined settlers were mostly destitute English and starving Irish and you couldn’t burn them out of the place. My name is Rosemary House and I grew up here at the edge of an island, on the fringe of a continent, where we are forever beset by hardship, struggle, disaster, cursed by a punishing climate—is it any wonder that we love it so? (House, 1997).

Serving as a backdrop to this narration are shots of the harbour, Narrows, and Signal Hill. Capturing in this sequence the broader Newfoundland sentiment “we will remain”¹⁷ House situates it with shots of a local place that has come to represent permanence; “in the beginning was Signal Hill and that it is now and ever shall be, world without end” (Beaumont Mifflin, 1989: 33). And it is this sense of permanence that makes the Hill such a dominant feature in the St. John’s sense of place. A powerful local symbol, Signal Hill represents the will to remain as well as the love of place that residents need to believe and maintain in order to do just that.

¹⁷ *We Will Remain: Patriotic Songs of Newfoundland* is the title of an album and recitation released in 1997 and distributed by Singsong Inc.

Signal Hill in the Lives of Local Residents

As part of the fieldwork for my thesis, I conducted a series of interviews with over 30 people. In summarizing the results of these interviews I noticed several trends. These involved what people did and did not know about the history at the Hill, when and why they went to the Hill, and finally, what it represented for them. I came to see the lack of knowledge or interest in the interpreted military history as telling. While this type of narrative may be of interest to newcomers, tourists, and researchers it is a story that locals know in a way that only they can. A mix of memory, story, legend, event and intimate personal moments, it is this sense of local history that makes Signal Hill significant to only those born and raised here. And part of that mix is the sense of permanence that many locals take from the Hill in the increasingly shifting landscape of St. John's, of home.

History and Stories

Although many locals did not know that Signal Hill had been commemorated as the site for a battle between the French and English in 1762, there was evidence of local history in the stories of those I interviewed. When I asked people what they knew about the Hill invariably people would mention Marconi. In fact, so well known is this particular man and his reception of the first transatlantic wireless signal in 1901 that

many individuals attribute the Hill's name to this event.¹⁸ As an event of international significance Marconi's signal is a source of local pride and therefore it is not surprising that no one knew that the name actually dates back to the period of the 1762 battle. Once known as the Lookout, Colonel Amherst's renaming of it as Signal Hill was inspired by the town's system of flag signaling. Yet, Marconi's imprint is so deep that most of those I spoke with associated Cabot Tower with him more often than with John Cabot, Newfoundland's putative discoverer and the individual to whom the summit monument was dedicated.

An awareness of the area's pre-colonial, colonial period and post-colonial past came through in the folk etymology connected to various place names: Ladies Lookout; Ross's Valley; Gibbet Hill; and Deadman's Pond. Connected to the tradition of place-based narratives these stories and legends are part of the invisible landscape available to locals. As part of this invisible landscape these stories connect to the area's history. For example, the report from one individual of a woman's moaning or keening heard in the vicinity of Ladies Lookout¹⁹ is related to the belief that women once watched for the return of their sailor husbands from this area of the summit (Figure 2 - 1, Appendix 5).

Our contemporary expectations of what history is may account for the shift in place names such as Signal Hill, but stories and local legends are also influences. For

¹⁸ When relating to me the story of Marconi's signal the majority of my informants stated their belief that the signal had been sent from Signal Hill. The signal was actually received, but as in legend formation the passive act of reception has become the active one of transmission (Lovelace, 2000).

¹⁹ This story was related to me by a former Parks Canada guide.

example, historical sources state that Ross's Valley, an isolated valley located between Signal Hill's summit and the North Head, was so named after a Captain E. R. Ross of the Royal Engineers. However, according to one local woman:

A long time ago...there was an old hermit who lived out there, and that's where it got its name. According to my father now. He grew up at the lighthouse on the other side...there was an old hermit who lived out there, his name was Ross. People were afraid to go out because of him. Then his ghost was supposed to have been out there long after he was gone... (Interview 20).

As history becomes story, narratives can change. As John Stanley Rich has stated, "aspects of the landscape have consistently brought forth imaginative attempts to explain how they came to have their names" (Rich, 1981: 162). It is quite possible that this woman's father was repeating a story he heard as a boy about a place which one local newspaper reporter remarked required "a man of great nerve to go to...after dark" (O'Neill, 1975: 301). It is also possible that her father had some recollection of the presence of Prowse's Folly, the 1892 quarantine hospital which was destroyed by fire in 1911 (Figure 2 - 2, Appendix 5).

But while definitions of legends are sometimes controversial, most scholars would agree that there is a class of legends which have a kernel of historical truth at their core and as such are often part of the folk history of an area (Joyner, 1982; Dégh, 1991). This would seem to be the case for the legend of Gibbet Hill and Deadman's Pond: "I know all

the stories about Deadman's Pond being bottomless and Gibbet's Hill. They used to hang dead bodies off of Gibbet's Hill to make people in town behave and all that sort of stuff" (Interview 15). (Figure 2 - 3, Appendix 5). The earliest reference to this legend dates to American John Mullaly's 1855 publication, A Trip to Newfoundland:

Strange wild stories are told of a human form having been seen there after the magic hour of midnight writhing in all agonies of death from a gallows, while the most unearthly sounds were heard. There were many who knew of this, but unfortunately the eye-witnesses were not to be found (Mullaly, 1855:40).

An eyewitness account of the gibbet's presence can be found as early as 1794, in the shipboard journal of Aaron Thomas (Murray, 1968).

The association of Deadman's Pond with Gibbet Hill appears to be related to another popular legend in which the pond is described as bottomless. Several of those I interviewed mentioned that they had first heard of the pond being bottomless when they were children and had been fascinated and/or frightened by the idea:

Deadman's Pond? Oh, that was my big one. As a kid I was afraid to go up there, even in the car... when my brothers told me the story about Deadman's Pond having no bottom and ah, and having all these dead soldiers' bodies and stuff buried under there... (Interview 21).

It is easy to understand why a bottomless pond, rumoured to contain human remains, became linked to the Hill above it that was once the location of a gibbet. Linking the two

further are the various drownings, rumoured and reported, which have occurred at this the pond.

In 1890, local resident Mr. Edgar Bowring informed several visitors of the local belief that a secret opening connected the pond with the ocean below it. The evidence was supplied by “a legend current in these parts that a soldier once fell in there and was drowned, and that his body was found next morning floating down yonder in the harbour” (Evening Telegram , March 4, 1890) . A more recent story was related to me about the disappearance of a scuba diver:

The Deadman’s Pond one I heard, from my brother as a matter of fact—once again all of this stuff when I was a kid—I’ve heard that it has no bottom. And when I was a child...I was told that...that a scuba diver, who himself heard about this legend, that it was bottomless, went to check it out for himself and he was lost in the interim...Now I’ve never bothered to check it out myself (laughs). But yeah, that was the story I heard (Interview 17).

While some of my informants were skeptical—“I mean, you know, you hear rumours about all those people who drowned up in those ponds. None of which as far as I’ve heard are true” (Interview 10)—the name Deadman’s Pond does appear to be connected to a documented drowning; “The story is that a guy jumped in to save this girl who was drowning and they both ended up drowning and dying there, so it became known as

Deadman's Pond" (Interview 9). This story appears to be based on the 1869 drowning of two young girls and the young man who tried to save them.

It was during a skating party, in 1869, that Frederick Carter drowned in an attempt to rescue two girls who had fallen through the ice. Previously known as Parsons or Wilmore's Pond, it appears this triple tragedy either triggered the name change to Deadman's Pond or helped popularize a vernacular one. This incident may have also inspired, or at least fueled, the belief of the bottomless pond, particularly if the bodies were not recovered—which the monument dedicated to Carter and located on the grounds of Government House would seem to indicate. As Kent Ryden states, "Place is dynamic, equal parts geography and imagination; it is a complex intermingling and, ultimately, fusion of mind and landscape, so that neither is finally separable or meaningful without the other" (Ryden, 1993: 254). Whether the stories about Deadman's Pond, Gibbet Hill, Ladies Lookout, and Ross's Valley are the result of imaginative attempts to explain a place name or oral traditions containing evidence of historical events, these stories and legends continue to enrich the landscape.²⁰

Landmark

Each of us use landmarks to negotiate the space in which we live. As one of the most prominent landmarks in St. John's, Signal Hill not only marks local residents' position in space but also time:

²⁰ I spoke to a commercial diver who told me the pond was approximately 50 feet deep, but that the last 25 feet are very cloudy due to silt.

...local history consists of personal and intimate events: landmarks are remembered and found significant because of something striking that once happened there to the person doing the remembering, because they provided the physical context for significant social connections and relationships, or simply because of their perpetual presence in the course of the daily routine (Ryden, 1993: 63).

For many of my informants Signal Hill has become associated with a series of life's moments. For example, the Hill marks a lifetime of memories for one woman I interviewed: watching fireworks as a child; Sunday drives with the family; being with her first boyfriend; going there with her father and newly born daughter; blueberry picking with her own children. And, after years spent living elsewhere, the Hill is also a place of pilgrimage because, as she put it, "I mean you're not home until you go up there. You know, if you haven't gone up there you haven't arrived..." (Interview 20).

Many of those I interviewed spoke about Signal Hill in reference to their childhood. One woman, for example, who grew up in the vicinity of the Hill, remembered the Hill as forbidden territory: a place "to play when we wanted to be exceedingly adventurous" (Interview 2). Another remembered being taken there to watch fireworks while for another it was the place her family often went "before you have Christmas dinner and after you've opened all the presents and there's nothing else to do" (Interview 3). A Bonavista woman told me that weekend visits to St. John's were never

complete without a drive to the Hill.²¹ As a park in the midst of the city, many parents bring their children to Signal Hill for an afternoon's recreation walking the trails:

One of the things we did regularly when the kids were small, we'd take them up there and go hunting for treasure. The kids were only like four and five. [My husband] would just walk ahead on the trail and he'd put a nickel here and dime there and stuff like that....And the kids would find a dime and go batty (Interview 20).

Its status as a National Historic Site also provides a visit to Signal Hill with an educational content:

My grandfather...., after he first got his video camera, he used to make us go up there, and each cousin would have to read one blurb about the history of Cabot Tower and Signal Hill...He wouldn't put us on tape, he'd put our voices on tape and he'd put the plaque on tape. And we hated this (Interview 3).

Much of the early summer season at Signal Hill is filled with school tours. (Figure 2 - 4, Appendix 5). Primarily made up of groups from the city there are also groups from other parts of the peninsula, province and occasionally from St. Pierre and Miquelon, France.²²

Some of the same informants who reminisced about family or school visits also confessed to being among the many who have made the Hill a place for romantic

²¹ Later in life this same woman continued the tradition because failure to do so left her feeling as if she had neglected to "*visit an aunt*" (Interview 21).

²² St. Pierre and Miquelon, two islands belonging to France, are located not far off the coast of Newfoundland.

encounters. The popularity of Signal Hill as a lovers' meeting place is not recent. Although one can make some assumptions based on various place names, such as Cuckold's Cove, the "Signal Hill" song by Johnny White expresses the experience well: "I said now, "My fair one, if you will excuse, / To partake of me arms," sure she didn't refuse; / But then I must say that I first met love's truth, / When I met her, I was sliding, on Sig-in-al Hill" (White, 1988). When I asked a long-time employee at Signal Hill National Historic Site to estimate the number of people who park there to look for *sex-in-the-lights*, he responded: "In a day? Or a night, weekend? Hundreds. I'd say half of St. John's was conceived on Signal Hill, without a doubt" (Interview 28). (Figure 2 - 5, Appendix 5).

I first encountered this phrase during my first few months in St. John's when a local man took me out for a drive. With coffee and donuts in hand, he asked me if I wanted to go look for *sex-in-the-lights*, quickly explaining that he was simply wondering if I wanted to go to Signal Hill. When I asked an informant to explain the phrase she said, "...apparently there used to be, I think they've actually urban planned their way out of it, but it used to be that you could spell sex in the street lights of St. John's looking from Signal Hill" (Interview 15). The phrase also appeared in an interview I was doing with two individuals simultaneously and sparked an interesting exchange. At some point the first individual, a woman, mentioned *sex-in-the-lights* while looking slyly at her male

companion. After failing to get a response from him she made a reference to it again when I asked the question, "Does Signal Hill mean something to you?"

Her - "It's a sex place, isn't it?"

Interviewer - "You're asking me?"

Her - "It seems to me that there were a lot people who lost their virginity on Signal Hill. Now, I don't know for sure..."

Him - "Well, that's just rumour. It wasn't me, it never happened to me."

Her - "It didn't happen to me."

Interviewer - "But was this something you heard a lot in high school?"

Her - "Yeh, like you'd go up to Signal Hill and then have sex or make-out, you know..."

Him - "Yeh..."

Interviewer - "Park..."

Him - "Park. That's a nice clean four-letter word, isn't it?" (Interview 10a).

Although it may not have happened to either one of my informants, it may be safe to assume that it has for others. Whether it is a first kiss, losing one's virginity, a marriage proposal, or the actual marriage itself, Signal Hill has become a site for the intimacy of one of the most basic of human encounters.²³

²³ Although I have no idea how many people propose marriage at Signal Hill, I have discovered at least one instance. The Newfoundland broadcasting pioneer Oscar Hierlihy, proposed to his wife at Signal Hill in 1939 (Hierlihy, 1995). In speaking to Parks Canada employees I also discovered that, like Cape Spear, Signal Hill annually hosts several weddings.

As a landmark of the passage of time, from childhood to maturity, Signal Hill has also served to mark life's end. For example, in 1996 there were two separate incidents of suicide.²⁴ Several days after one of these incidents members of the deceased's family came to see the place he had chosen to end his life. The Commissionaire on duty was able to assist them:

I was up in Cabot Tower one day—about two days later—this little girl walked up to me, she was about 7 years old, and she looked at my face and said, "Can you tell me where Grandad killed himself to?" I didn't know what to say. So I said, "Where's your mom to" and she said, "She's up stairs." So I says, "Tell your Mom to come down and I'll talk to your Mom." So, apparently, they were here from Vancouver, his daughter and her family and they wanted to know what happened, where it happened, whatnot...(Interview 28).

As well as these and other incidents involving accidental death, the Hill has been the chosen site for the scattering of an individual's ashes in at least three instances (Interview 28).

Like a Rock: A Sense of Permanence

Geographer, Yi Fu Tuan believed that "permanence is an important element in the idea of place" (1977:140). Signal Hill offers St. John's residents a sense of permanence through its consistent presence and association with the area's history. Although the surface of Signal Hill has seen changes over the years, it has essentially remained the

²⁴ There have also been at least two unsuccessful suicide attempts at the Hill (Interview 28).

same rocky wilderness it has always been. This sense of endurance sustains those who remain in St. John's, despite the hardships that come their way:

Signal Hill has absorbed the punishment of the elements, has been quarried and scarpred, and has lost most of its coniferous cover. Its man-made structures have fared poorly, with none of the original 18th and 19th century works remaining.... Some of these structures...were consciously demolished by man; some...were destroyed by fire; and others...were wrecked by the pervasive wind. But the entity known as Signal Hill still endures.... (Candow, 1979: 164).

Historian Jim Candow's perception is one that permeates the connection between Signal Hill and the sense of place in St. John's. As representative of the broader struggle and will to remain in Newfoundland, the Hill provides local residents with inspiration and reassurance. Although difficult to articulate, this sense of permanence comes through in people's knowledge, perceptions, and use of Signal Hill.

The 19th century plan to fortify Signal Hill as the town's "ultimate retreat" was abandoned, but today the Hill does provide many locals with a place to retreat from life's troubles and difficulties. Once at the Hill individuals can release pent-up emotions, regain their composure, and even find a sense of peace. After experiencing an extended period of stress relating to her personal and professional life one woman found her peace at Signal Hill:

It was totally foggy and I couldn't really see the ocean but I could hear it, through the fog, and it made me cry. Because I felt really at peace, and it was the first time in a long time that I felt really at peace with everything around me (Interview 14).

Signal Hill's elevation combines with its wilderness-like state to make people feel distanced from their day-to-day routine. The poem "Evening, Signal Hill," by Thomas Dawe, is an intimate expression of this particular experience:

Down on a southern point of rock
some solitary light-pulse throbs
in case of ships.
And on the flushed fog
in the west below
a city is disconnected
dots of light.
I turn from the city
and look to the salted east again
where there are fewer dots to connect
and fewer games
from the starting point of me (Dawe, 1973: 20).

The intricate connections we all have to place, to home, are often appreciated more fully when seen from a distance. (Figure 2 - 6, Appendix 5). The perspective offered by Signal Hill is that much more powerful because it enables the viewer to choose between two distances. By looking out over the city one is still somewhat connected to “those dots of light” representing as they do the relationships negotiated every day with friends, family, neighbours, co-workers, and bureaucrats. But by looking out over “the salted east” one can forget them for a time or ponder the infinite:

...we grew up, we grew up with that mystery of the ocean. The ocean seemed like this, that it represented the infinite. And the infinite represented God, you know? And so it had that mysticism, you know? And I think when you went there you went to really spiritually converse with whatever power you thought was out there.... And that's why I think, when I go up there, I go up to look out at the sea more than anything (Interview 20).

One woman, originally from a rural community, reported her trips to Signal Hill as a way of connecting with the rest of the island:

I guess to me, when at times, when I get really discouraged living in St. John's—because St. John's seems to cut itself off from the rest of the province psychologically and doesn't understand that its only reason for being is to serve the rest of the province—and when I get really discouraged then I always think, that, “Well there is Signal Hill.” That is a reminder, if they'd only see it, you

know? And that's when I like to go up there and remind myself that it's the only part of St. John's that really connects with me in a lot of ways (laughter). I mean, I've never felt I was from St. John's but if it meant claiming a piece of Signal Hill I could probably do that (Interview 22).

Its cliffs, wilderness setting, and proximity to the ocean all combine to remind this woman of her original home, where her heart still belongs.²⁵ It also helps to provide the Hill with its timeless quality.

Offering residents a chance to gain some perspective, many of my informants reported trips to the Hill to watch the sun rise or set. (Figure 2 - 7, Appendix 5). After being up all night, one young man reported on going to the Hill with friends to watch “the most amazing sun up I've ever seen in my life, there was a whole bank of clouds that was, it was like a ceiling and a floor you could see boats coming in it and out underneath it, you could see the sun shining in underneath it but the sun was actually up above it and it was just the most amazing thing” (Interview 11). Others make special pilgrimages to watch celestial events like the 1997 viewings of Comet Hale-Bopp, or the rising sun at the summer solstice:

We'd been up all night drinking with some friends and four of us went up there...to see the sun come up—and the place was, oh, we went over to what they call Ladies Lookout—and we were about a dozen to two dozen people... in groups of like two and three people...all just sort of converged haphazardly up

there to see the sun come up. And when the sun did come up—it was a clear night—everybody applauded. It was kind of strange and I've always wanted to go back and do that again... (Interview 18).

While gazing at the view offers perspective for some, others achieve it through the therapeutic benefits of a “brisk walk” around the hill. Various groups and organizations make Signal Hill a focus for organized walks such as the Protected Areas Association’s “Walk for Wilderness” in 1998 or the Children’s Wish Foundation’s “Wish Maker Parade” in 1996.²⁶

The physical setting of the Hill and its trails may provide people with a sense of permanence, but it may just as easily remind them of the precariousness of life:

...I have this fear that Newfoundland's going to sink. Every time I leave it I have this totally irrational fear that one of these days—but it's not irrational cause it's not literally sinking—but that the things that I love about this place aren't going to be here when I come back. And I've been on Signal Hill and stood there and thought, “This isn't going to disappear.” No matter what else on this island disappears, no matter how much the culture goes, no matter how many people leave it, this rock is still going to be here (Interview 3).

This sentiment is also expressed in the numbers of people who make it a point to visit Signal Hill, even if its only once a year.

²⁶ This particular individual has now moved back to her original home community.

For one of my informants, this quality of permanence became focused on a particular rocky figure she discovered during a walk around the North Head Trail. Comparing her discovery to the stages of a mythological journey, she confessed to becoming quite obsessed with the paleolithic Venus-like figure. (Figure 2 - 8, Appendix 5). I asked her if the figure had any identity for her:

Yes, I think so. There's a personality, but that's more like projection rather than any intrinsic reality. It's just projection of what I think about women, about this place and about women in this place and about the dynamics we've experienced over the centuries,....The strength, of course, the stolidity, the endurance, the fatigue—tremendous fatigue seems to be there—but the willingness to keep going anyway (Interview 2).

In an effort to relieve her of some of the intensity of her feelings, a well-known local artist used the figure as the inspiration for a large oil painting that hangs in my informant's living room.

He calls the painting...“I am the Eagle and the Rock”... and, well yes, there's this figure there, this mythological sort of bird, winged torso, and a bird head...but, it's probably the male consciousness...and the bush there... is called Lamb's Kill....You can see that the woman in the painting is part human but part rock at the same time. She's kind of emerging from the rock and she's creating a figure, she's holding a figure there and the figure is the figure that is the rock figure. And

²⁶ A neighbour I had a casual conversation with one day told me the Hill was once a popular place to rally together before organized protests or parades.

he deliberately left that shape somewhat vague....For example, as you can see in the background there, Cape Spear is there...but there's no lighthouse out there. So this is a landscape before time, before our own time anyways, a kind of time out of time landscape (Interview 2).

This timeless quality is a reflection of the quality many locals find in the landscape of the Hill.

This particular informant told me she does not often venture out to see her figure anymore. With the creation of the trails she feels that the Hill has become “much too under control.” She does, however, have photographs of the figure that she keeps around her. And every spring she walks out to check on it, “I go out and I’m never sure it’s going to be there... you know—always that little anxiety in the first time I go out after the winter—but it’s there, it’s been there. So it’s nice to have the picture in case one day I go and it isn’t there” (Interview 2).

While this sense of permanence helps ground individuals, it is somewhat of an illusion. Signal Hill has not always been the place it is now, as the rest of this thesis will demonstrate. While the physical structure of the peninsula has changed little its meaning has changed—just as the number and type of buildings on its surface has. One of my informants put it this way:

Well, people have experienced it differently all along, you know. I mean, you go back in time, before they had a road up there, the signal man had to live up there

with his family. And they had to grow their vegetables up there and everything. And if you would have been able to tell that person that in so many years people would come up to Signal Hill for recreation, he wouldn't believe such a thing was possible. And the people confined in the quarantines for diptheria, cholera and all that—they were put up there. How could one of those people ever believe that Signal Hill would become a site for recreation and Sunday afternoon drives or tourism, you know? It's inconceivable. It's inconceivable that a place of such hardship could become a place of tourist attraction. And so again that's why I say it's just another layer of meaning. It's bound to change again (Interview 25).

And so it has. Influenced by its strategic position the Hill has often provided martial forces (French, English and American), with a strategic location. Aside from military defences the Hill has also been the location of a signalling post, the noon-day gun, several hospitals, a farm, and a small community. But while the traces of this past have now largely vanished, the Hill does remain.

Conclusion

The first section of this chapter was an attempt to provide an awareness of the sense of place in St. John's and its role in the lives of city residents. I believe that the basic elements in this local sense of place is aptly described by American Studies scholar, Kent Ryden:

Sense of place endures all vicissitudes, then, sustaining identity, providing connections to a personal and collective past, offering an emotional center. It is a rooted and anchored locus of meaning and value. This may finally be why we develop a strong sense of place, why it is worth thinking and writing about place, why so much folklore adopts it as a theme either directly or obliquely: places, or our understanding of and attachment to vanished places, sometimes feel like all that is solid in a world of change, all that has undiminished value in a world of maddening flux (Ryden, 1996: 95).

As I, and others, have pointed out, one of the distinct motifs within the local sense of place is the battle to survive, to make a home, in a harsh and unyielding land on the edge of the infinite. Representative not only of that home landscape, but also of residents' tenacious grip on it, Signal Hill provides an apt symbol for the local sense of place:

In a city...where the environment has always exacted its toll from both the buildings and the people who dwell in them, the struggle for existence has constituted a central historical theme. Because of this, Signal Hill possesses a significance which transcends its contributions to the military, communications, medical, and social history of St. John's. On a deeper level, it may be viewed as a symbol of St. John's itself, and of its own will to survive (Candow, 1979: 164).

A place feature in the landscape of home, Signal Hill maintains this connection to the local sense of place through its role as topographical and generational landmark. For

those who live, or have lived, in St. John's, Signal Hill is a fixed point around which their lives, and the life of the community, revolve. Although the history commemorated at Signal Hill provides a national prominence, without the resonance it carries in the personal lives of local inhabitants it would simply be a relict landscape, indicative only of the past. It is the residents of St. John's who continue to live portions of their lives in relation to Signal Hill that make it live. But while the sense of permanence ascribed to it may help residents to remain rooted in their sense of place, change is inevitable.

Chapter Three - Far From Home: Early Perceptions of Newfoundland

Introduction

Whereas my thesis as a whole argues that a strong sense of place has emerged in St. John's, and that Signal Hill has come to emblemize home, this chapter considers a time before St. John's, or Newfoundland, was perceived as home, at least by any European. Under analysis in this chapter is the outsider's reaction to Newfoundland's environment as inhospitable, uninhabitable and uncivilized, a motif that appears in much of the early and primary source material gathered for this thesis. Much of this early material is, by its very nature, the product of a privileged and educated class. Therefore the reactions to Newfoundland contained within it are a more accurate reflection of a particular social class's reactions rather than the majority of individuals living in Newfoundland at the time, e.g. migrant fishermen and *planters*.²⁷ However, if places "like space and time, are social constructs and have to be read and understood as such" (Harvey, 1993:25) then I believe that, in combination with other research, this material does offer some insight into the early perceptions of Newfoundland. It also offers a tantalizing glimpse into a period in Newfoundland's history when home, "a meaningless

²⁷ According to the Dictionary of Newfoundland English a *planter* was "a settler in Newfoundland as opposed to a migratory English fisherman" (Story, et al, 1999:382).

word apart from 'journey' and 'foreign country'" (Tuan, 1974: 102), was often considered to be elsewhere.

Early Settlement of "This Worthless Isle..."

The European presence in Newfoundland reaches back to the 15th century, but it was not until the early decades of the 19th that it officially became a colony of Britain. Even though initial reactions to the area were positive these opinions were, in part, the result of attempts to encourage investment and settlement. Opinion changed when investors decided it was more advantageous to discourage settlement, especially in light of how expensive settlement efforts in such an isolated, harsh and inhospitable environment proved to be. One of the few to try settlement in Newfoundland was Sir George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore. In the early 1620s he established a colony in the present-day region of Ferryland.

Land was cleared, crops were planted, structures erected and money invested in the fledgling colony of Avalon. Progress was slower than Baltimore wished and so in order to keep a closer eye on its development he and his family arrived at the colony in 1627. Baltimore discovered that the unanticipated harshness of Newfoundland's climate and its lack of good and abundant topsoil produced few crops. And despite his request for its protection what few profits the colony produced often landed in the holds of the French warships which stalked the coast. The damp and chill climate was more than

Lady Baltimore would suffer. Within two years of her departure for the warmer lands of Virginia, the colony was virtually abandoned. Like Ferryland, all other early settlement efforts in Newfoundland essentially failed (Handcock, 1989: 33). The severe climate, limited food supply, and uncertain economy posed fundamental problems for survival (Handcock, 1989: 39)—as did the lack of law and order and the on-going hostility between France and England.

Early Settlement in St. John's

In 1585, somewhere in the vicinity of Harbour Side Park in present-day St. John's, Sir Humphrey Gilbert claimed Newfoundland on behalf of Queen Elizabeth I.²⁸ Despite the failure of the colonies at Cupids and Ferryland, a small St. John's community began to develop early in the 17th century. This community was first made up of those fishermen who, at the end of the fishing season, chose to stay behind. Some stayed in order to protect the fish stages from destruction by pirates and privateers while others remained to trap and hunt, to escape political, religious, or legal problems back home, or for reasons we will never know (Handcock, 1989: 46). The numbers of planters slowly increased, but so too did the complaints regarding their presence and unruly behavior. A commission was sent from England "to establish order among the boisterous fishermen, and to correct the great abuses which then subsisted among them" (Bonnycastle, 1842: 73 Vol. 1).

²⁸ A plaque located at this city park and erected by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, commemorates the moment.

A pamphlet claiming to prove that the cod-fishery had declined as a result of the planters' own fishing efforts was published by Sir Josiah Child and circulated in England. Child felt that only by forcibly discouraging settlement would the situation improve (Bonnycastle, 1842: 81 Vol. 1). Enthusiasm turned into discouragement and a bias against the inhabitants began to surface; "In new regulations for the Newfoundland fishery drawn up in 1634...no encouragement is given to settlers. They are, rather, pictured as trouble makers" (O'Flaherty, 1999: 30). In 1675 merchants in Exeter and Plymouth wrote to the government and Lords of Trade accusing the locals of "Debauching our men, Tempting them by wine and women not only to unfaithfulness but to common Drunkenness" (as cited in O'Neill, 1976: 227). In response, Sir John Berry arrived in St. John's with an order calling for the deportation of all planters from Newfoundland. In 1677 John Downing and Thomas Oxford returned from England after a successful two year legal fight against the 1675 deportation order. Even if motivated solely by profit this struggle is evidence for a growing attachment to St. John's and Newfoundland.

The reversal of England's position regarding the planters was likely influenced by the growing numbers of French at Plaisance (Handcock, 1989: 37). Tensions between France and England were high and in the summer of 1696 a French fleet made an unsuccessful sea attack on St. John's. Their overland attack, several months later, was more successful. Those who had taken refuge in a crude fort surrendered following the

arrival of a message from the French.²⁹ St. John's was then looted and burned to the ground. The following year a squadron of 1500 British soldiers was sent to recapture what had been lost to the French. The squadron landed at St. John's and restored the town's fortifications as survivors slowly drifted out of the woods and back to the settlement.

As harsh as conditions were, the fishery was too lucrative a venture and St. John's too sheltered a harbour to abandon. In 1698 an order to establish a permanent garrison at St. John's was issued by the Privy Council. The construction of a fort was underway by 1700, but by 1705 it was obvious the garrison had added a new and potentially volatile element to the budding society of St. John's. The garrison's commander, Lt. Thomas Lloyd, was accused of abusing his men, hosting orgies, and keeping people from attending church (O'Neill, 1976: 84). This matter was eclipsed by another French attack. This time negotiations to surrender failed. The French burned the houses and stores of St. John's and left with two hundred prisoners. The small community barely had time to rebuild before the French attacked again in 1707; this time leaving with 300 prisoners. Because so few men were posted at the St. John's garrison in 1711, Captain Jo. Crowe demanded the organization of a citizen's group to "guard in the night and patrol along the back side of the harbour" (as cited in O'Neill, 1976: 47).

The repeated destruction of the St. John's community during the late 17th and early 18th centuries contributed to the difficulties experienced by those wishing to

²⁹ The message arrived in the form of a captured prisoner's scalp (O'Neill, 1975:81).

establish a permanent community in the area. Also contributing to the problem were the numbers of migrants who passed through the community, never staying longer than a season or two before moving on. These *second stage movers* (Handcock, 1989: 67), made up primarily of planters and seasonal fishermen, made up a significant portion of the community's population (Handcock, 1989: 43). A place of business for "Britons abroad to make money" (Kerr, 1970: 25) even those who established local businesses in Newfoundland often retired back home to England.

Settlement in Newfoundland began to expand following the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) when 'liveryers' ('lives here'), "a permanent settler of coastal Newfoundland (as opposed to migratory fishermen from England)" began to appear (Story, 1990: 308). Some of these liveryers were the offspring of those planters who had retired back to England. This generation of Newfoundlanders remained behind to carry on the family businesses. The women in these families tended to marry seasonal migratory fishermen (Handcock, 1989: 52). As a result families with ties to communities in Newfoundland and communities back home were established:

The development and maintenance of vested interests in specific parts of Newfoundland by different homeland regions became an essential part of the migration system since it conditioned opportunity paths of movement and established the functional and spatial basis of transatlantic social, as well as economic, interactions" (Handcock, 1989: 69).

These transatlantic relationships were further strengthened with the arrival of increasing numbers of single women to the island. Often arriving as servants to the merchants many of these women married local men (Handcock, 1989: 93). These unions between first born Newfoundlanders and migrants helped begin the process of “setting down roots” a notion central to the concept of home (Terkenli, 1996: 329). But while social and economic relationships between Newfoundland families and communities grew, for many of these individuals ties to their homeland regions, whether in England or Ireland, remained strong, “their memories and sentiments...kept active by the annual visit of the fishing fleet” (Kerr, 1970: 27). (Figure 3 - 1, Appendix 5).

World View: Expectations and Cultural Expressions

The reasons why people leave home are often a factor in the individual’s response, experience and opinion of a new environment (Bolton, 1973: 33). Leaving home with the knowledge that one will eventually return is very different from leaving home forever. Another factor in the response is the knowledge, attitudes and awareness we all learn through our daily interactions within a society or, more simply put, our *world view*. According to Yi-Fu Tuan the natural environment and world view are closely related; “unless it is derived from an alien culture, [world view] is necessarily constructed out of the salient elements of a people’s social and physical setting....Like means of livelihood, world view reflects the rhythms and constraint of the natural environment”

(Tuan, 1974: 79). The world view of those individuals who came to Newfoundland between the 17th and 19th centuries was formed in an environment similar to yet also very different from Newfoundland's.

One of the most frequently expressed aspects of this world view, or cultural bias, focused on the raw state of Newfoundland's landscape and, occasionally, the society found there. In England, where well populated human settlements reached back thousands of years, the land and society were well developed. Growing economic and cultural centres, such as London, were seen to be in equilibrium with a well cultivated countryside. In comparison to this civilized balance, Newfoundland was raw, wild, and very uncivilized. Such an unknown and potentially threatening environment could not help but to throw into relief the better known home environment. This *home-nonhome dialectic* (Terkenli, 1996: 328) encouraged negative perceptions of the new environment just as it did positive ones of the old. (Figure 3 - 2, Appendix 5).

Aesthetic Evaluation: Comparisons to Home

Not only did the hostile nature of Newfoundland's environment serve to throw into relief European pastoral settings, it also represented the sublime, a concept closely associated with the European aesthetic movement known as the Picturesque. The Picturesque incorporated "a strong eighteenth-century British belief in man's control of his world" (Maclaren, 1984: 59). Picturesque qualities were often equated with pastoral themes in contemporary literature (Andrews, 1989: 60) in which hectic city life was often

put into balance by the well-ordered and traditional life of the countryside. But opposing this ordered view of the world were the qualities equated with the sublime, an “ineffable realm” where order “could not be discerned by the rational powers of the human mind” (Maclaren, 1984: 58). For a time Newfoundland’s landscape, climate and society were often equated with these sublime qualities.

“A Description of Newfoundland” - Chaplain B. Lacy

The earliest example of an aesthetically biased reaction towards Newfoundland’s raw state that I found during my research appears in Chaplain B. Lacy’s collection, Miscellaneous Poems Compos’d at Newfoundland on Board His Majesty’s Ship the *Kinsale*, published in 1729. The product of Lacy’s “few leisure hours” while aboard the *Kinsale*, the collection is made up primarily of scholarly and religious musings. But it is the book’s opening poem, “A Description of Newfoundland,” in which Lacy describes Newfoundland as “this worthless Isle” that I found evidence for a cultural and class based prejudice.

The circumstances of Lacy’s journey to Newfoundland are unknown. As a chaplain aboard the *Kinsale* it is not clear whether he was serving with the navy or accompanying someone on board. In either case Lacy’s low opinion of the “dismal Place” in which he found himself is not only made clear, but is often done so by contrasting it to home, to England. For Lacy the landscape of Newfoundland is jarring:

For whate'er offers to my present view,
Looks truly frightful with ghastly hue;
Number of crazy Rocks hang o'er the Sea,
Yielding an horrid Prospect from each Bay (Lacy, 1729).

His surroundings are made up of cliffs, mountains, densely wooded areas and there is no pleasure to be had from it. There is little in the way of cultivated land and the most reliable food item is fish. This must have been in vivid contrast to the comfortable and ordered life Lacy led back home where, it seems obvious, he wished he still was:

And therefore e'er I end I needs must say,
Happy are they that can in Britain stay,
And from their Native Shore ne'er strole away;
Receiving easy Food from Nature's hand,
And just returns of cultivated Land;
Whose home-bred Plenty does the Owner bless,
And rural Pleasure crown his Happiness (Lacy, 1729).

The expectations based on his experiences back home hindered Lacy from seeing Newfoundland, or the people he found there, on their own terms.

Not only was England's landscape more cultivated so too was its society. In comparison to England, "Where, thanks to Heav'n! / A Monarch's on the Throne," Newfoundland was a frontier where what little social control existed lay in the laps of

fishing Admirals. Why anyone would choose to stay in such a harsh and unlawful place was difficult for Lacy to understand. An example not only of cultural bias but class as well, Lacy seems unaware that the “wretched” lives led by the planters and fishermen may have been preferable to their lives back in England. The only reason he can see as to “Why they remain all the long Winter there” is “Unless to see their native home they fear” (Lacy, 1729). And for some this may have been very true. The number of capital offenses in England was at its height during the 18th century: “a man guilty of forgery, poaching, burning down a hayrick or even cutting down an ornamental shrub would be condemned to death” (Farrington, 1996: 151). Individuals who escaped such punishment by migrating to Newfoundland had compelling reasons not to return home. Just as Lacy, an educated man used to a life of comfort and privilege, had equally compelling reasons to do exactly that.

“Lines on Captain Court’nay’s Grotto” - Anonymous

Almost a century after Lacy published his Miscellaneous Poems, another parochial poet expressed a similar view of the “drear Isle.” “Lines on Captain Courtenay’s Grotto” was written in praise of a grotto at Signal Hill that had been “fitted up and ornamented with considerable ingenuity and taste” (Anspach, 1819: 304). The poem appeared in the January, 1812 edition of the Newfoundland Gazette. Its first stanza reads:

Near the metropolis of that drear Isle
Where sickly Nature strives in vain to sm[ile]
Whilst o'er its rugged rocks and barren [terrain]
Silent and sad fell desolation reigns;
Stupendous mass, see Signal Hill arise
And brave the shock of hyperborean sk[ies]
Its [fixed sides] no pleasing verdure yield
Unlike the soil of Albion's fertile field (Anon, 1812).

Although the author is unknown there are several assumptions that can be made. It is highly probable the poet was an educated English soldier, most likely an officer. It is also likely that, like Lacy, the experience of life in Newfoundland contrasted sharply with the poet's life back home. For instance, this soldier/poet would have very probably been living in overcrowded, unsanitary and smoke-filled barracks (Candow, 1983, 1988).³⁰ (Figure 3 - 3, Appendix 5).

Like Lacy, the unknown poet's perception of his surroundings was influenced by cultural and class bias as well as experience. "The soil of Albion's fertile field" is compared and contrasted to the "rugged rocks and barren terrain" of Signal Hill. And although the grotto there provides a retreat from the "Bacchanalian's" whose "midnight orgies tell with horrid shout" it is only temporary. A soldier's life was rough, even if

³⁰ Many soldiers brought wives and children with them. By 1832 the number of women and children at Signal Hill outnumbered the soldiers (Candow, 1988:13).

conditions in the military were an improvement on the life left behind. And while living conditions for English officers were better, it may be argued that life in St. John's offered its own unique challenges. Homesickness was a common affliction among an army's officers and soldiers; "Even the beleaguered French army in 1793 gave recruits smitten with 'homesickness' convalescent home leave" (Lowenthal, 1986: 9). Enjoyed as it was by military officers of "taste," Captain Courtenay's grotto offered a "happy spot" where "the "social joys that elevate the mind" could be shared. In an effort perhaps to put aside the experiences of his circumstances the Captain built his grotto to give himself and his fellow officers a place to speak not only of "friendship sacred," but of better days back home. (Figure 3 - 4, Appendix 5).

Only two years after the publication of this poem Lt. Edward Chappell of the *H.M.S. Rosamond* arrived in St. John's. Chappell's reactions to the place were similar to the two poets noted above. Chappell wrote of his arrival, "[a] white tower, raised on a precipitous eminence, seems rather intended as a mark to warn vessels of the danger of approaching the rocky shore, than as a beacon to conduct them to a place of safety" (as cited in de Volpi, 1972: 16). Chappell illustrated this view with Entrance to St. John's Harbour, Newfoundland in which the Narrows, bracketed by steep and rocky cliffs, appear dangerous to negotiate. A student of art and a graduate of the British Naval Academy, Lt. Chappell was shocked at the "State of Society" he found in St. John's, "a place where the majority of the principal inhabitants have risen from the lowest

fishermen” and “Literature and polished manners are here unknown” (O’Neill, 1975: 53). Affected by cultural bias Chappell’s opinions of the locals were as narrow as his illustration of the city’s harbour entrance. (Figure 3 - 5, Appendix 5).

Aesthetic Miscalculations: Learning from Experience

As the 18th century progressed into the 19th the sublime came to be appreciated rather than feared. This shift evolved through the Romantic movement and its view of Nature as evidence of God’s presence in the World; “the land beyond the landscape garden was increasingly treated as the garden always had been: as an object of beauty” (Crandell, 1993: 112). But in an era of exploration this aesthetic tendency could be dangerous, as it also affected the comprehension and representation of terrain; “The relation between man and sublime nature was neither co-operative nor harmonious” (Maclaren, 1984: 58). In his article, “Retaining Captaincy of the Soul: Response to Nature in the First Franklin Expedition” (1984), I. S. Maclaren suggests that the response to nature conditioned by aesthetic concepts led to several disastrous logistical decisions by British officers during Franklin’s first expedition. Similar experiences awaited newcomers to Newfoundland.

In 1839/40, J.B. Jukes conducted a geological survey of Newfoundland. Like other educated men of his time, Jukes kept notes. More than scientific observations on the island’s geology, Jukes commented on his experiences in the new environment in which he found himself. And like the explorers in Franklin’s expedition, Jukes

perceptions through the “tinted glass of past experience” (Tuan, 1974: 68) would occasionally lead him astray. His first view of the rocky coastline presaged some of the difficulties he and others were to experience:

The dark naked rocks that frown along the coast near St. John's, their stern outlines unbroken by any other vegetation than a few stunted firs that seem huddled together in the more sheltered nooks and hollows, give a stranger but an unfavourable idea of the country he has come to visit, and seem to realize all the accounts he may have heard or read of the coldness and barrenness of the land (Jukes, 1842: 4/5).

Like the Reverend Edward Wix, whose experiences during six months of mission work left him “so shattered...that at the sight of dizzy precipices in my way, I would sometimes burst into most involuntary tears” (Wix, 1835: 185), Jukes discovered that travel through Newfoundland's dense bush was surprisingly difficult.

Writing at the end of the 18th century, able-bodied seaman, Aaron Thomas, of the *HMS Boston*, wrote of a similar experience. Of his walks along the “Indian paths” through the dense bush surrounding St. John's Thomas wrote, “Was a man dropped from the Clouds he would find himself as closely wedg'd in as ever an individual was amongst the crowd on a birthday at St James', without any possibility of escaping or extricating himself, unless assisted by Hatchets and Pioneers” (Murray, 1968: 51).

Although warned about its cold and barren nature, individuals like Jukes could not escape aesthetic miscalculations of the Newfoundland landscape. Until he experienced it for himself, Jukes did not understand “what possible obstacle there could be to render a journey of only six or eight miles such a mighty matter....” (Jukes, 1842: 23). It did not take long for him to “understand the quiet smile of ridicule with which the people met my proposition to walk across from Pouch Cove or Cape St. Francis to Portugal Cove” (Jukes, 1842: 23).

During one excursion, Jukes and his companions came across “[a] beautiful valley...we could see blue hills sweeping round in the distance...wooded eminences with a park-like scenery on their slopes” (Jukes, 1842: 127). The actual experience of this park-line terrain prompted Jukes to wish “for a few miles of the fine turf of old England, or even a heathery Scotch mountain; anything but the rough, uneven, scrubby, yet soft and wet spongy mass of moss we had to stumble through, with a step between walking and jumping!” (Jukes, 1842: 127). In the account of his experiences, Jukes advises those wishing to lead the life of a traveller to begin in Newfoundland “in order to get well accustomed to rough living, rough fare, and rough travelling....” (Jukes, 1842: 173).

In the case of these and other European newcomers to Newfoundland the values incorporated into their world view contributed to judgments made of the new environment in which they found themselves. For individuals like Chaplain Lacy and Lt. Chappell, the aspects of the sublime they saw in Newfoundland’s landscape made it

unfamiliar and threatening. Likewise for the unknown poet in praise of Captain Courtenay's grotto, for whom home was definitely a better place to be than this "drear isle."

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to contrast the strong sense of place that currently exists in St. John's with a time when it did not. There were many factors that contributed to the negative response people, particularly among the elite, had of St. John's and Newfoundland. The difficult climate, lack of resources, on-going conflict between France and England and migratory nature of the fishery all contributed to this response and unfair comparisons to home. Accustomed as many Europeans were to a more pastoral setting, Newfoundland's raw state was disquieting. It was not home. As the population slowly increased and people from similar home areas settled together, St. John's and other parts of Newfoundland became extensions of original home regions. The development of a sense of place, of home, took time to develop. It was only after the end of the conflict between France and England and the arrival of a court of law that the situation began to stabilize. But in order to understand how Signal Hill has come to represent home to today's local residents it will be necessary to examine St. John's emergence as Newfoundland's capital city.

Introduction Chapter Four - Identity in an Emerging Capital

Introduction

A commonly understood indicator of a homogeneous culture is a strong sense of identity (Söderlind, 1984: 78). The assumption that Newfoundland encompasses a “distinctive, homogenous cultural entity”—descended from a few areas in England and Ireland—is simplistic (Peacock as in Story, 1997: 108). This view only serves to “gloss the complexity of belonging and, thereby, simplify people’s attachments and attitudes out of all recognition” (Cohen, 1982: 12). As stated in the introduction, the sense of belonging people have to place is very much associated with social/kin relationships and community associations developed over time (Aiken, 1976: 27). Identity, whether individual or group, is very much tied to this sense (Macdonald 1997: 22). In 19th century Newfoundland many inhabitants were still linked to ethnic English and Irish communities across the Atlantic. And while this chapter will further develop the point that most inhabitants did not see themselves as a cohesive cultural group the permeability of the boundaries around self or group identity (Hufford, 1986: 24) did allow for the slow development of an identity rooted in St. John’s and Newfoundland.

The lack of an overall Newfoundland identity during the 19th century very likely manifested itself in a myriad of ways, however, the conflict between groups remains the most evident. Carried on through social, cultural, and economic relations the conflicts between English Protestants and Irish Catholics predominated. This was particularly

evident in St. John's which, during this same period, emerged as Newfoundland's capital. Yet, while this division separated many individuals and groups the seeds for a group identity were being sown. In part the result of the mid-century threat of Confederation with Canada, this new identity can be attributed also to the growing attachment to place within the people of Newfoundland.³¹

Throughout the 19th century, St. John's residents had more and more life experiences to associate with their new home: experiences both profound and mundane. For example, residents experienced the famine stricken Winter of the Rals in 1817, the St. John's riot of 1861, and the near total destruction of the city by fire. At the same time, they also shared in the more everyday routines of living in St. John's such as watching for Signal Flags, listening for the Noon Day gun and watching for the arrival and return of ships at sea; activities all closely associated with Signal Hill. So while residents maintained their transatlantic ties, and the conflicts associated with them, their common experiences were cultivating new place associations unique to Newfoundland and St. John's.

³¹ According to Neary, it was during the later half of the 19th century that an "economic nationalism" arose in St. John's; the result of disputes "with the imperial government over the extent and meaning of the extraterritorial rights granted on the French Shore and about the jurisdictional rights of the Newfoundland government in the area" (Neary, 1996:5).

St. John's - Newfoundland's Capital Emerges

The Emporium of the Island

In the late 18th century the population of Newfoundland increased due to the growing numbers of native-born women and “a small but significant migration of single females, mainly from Ireland” (Handcock, 1989: 279). As well as the migration of increasing numbers of Irish, other events, like the American Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, assisted in the establishment of a more permanent and less migratory population. The Wars’ disruption of marine traffic travelling between the British Isles and Newfoundland meant it had to grow more independent, relying on local merchants rather than those in England to carry on the fishery’s business (ibid). Many of the migratory servants were hired for longer periods of time rather than the traditional one season. Further, to avoid the risk of being caught up in the hostilities, a variety of tradesmen and their families chose to stay in Newfoundland for the Wars’ duration. With the increase in population and local trade St. John’s emerged as the place where those with wealth tended to gravitate:

In the early 1800s St. John’s surpassed both Poole and Dartmouth in size of population and commercial dealings. Mercantile establishments and properties, shops and other capital assets of commerce, which were previously sold, purchased, or transferred among entrepreneurs in England, were now more commonly offered for auction or sale and purchased in St. John’s...[which]

developed as the main commercial, political, and cultural centre of
Newfoundland... (Handcock, 1989: 216).

According to the island's Governor in 1814, St. John's had become "the Emporium of the
Island" (Neary, 1983: 80).

Growing Confidence and Self-Rule

In 1818 a petition for the reform of merchant and fisherman relationships was
drafted by St. John's residents, Dr. William Carson and Patrick Morris, both leaders in
the push for Newfoundland self-rule. The petition was motivated, in part, by the harsh
treatment of James Landergan, a planter in Conception Bay. Unable to pay his debts,
Landergan was sentenced to 36 lashes on the bare back (O'Neill, 1976: 557).³²
Purchasing goods on credit from merchants who often sold supplies at highly inflated
prices (Kerr, 1970: 31) those fishermen who could not clear their debts were in danger of
losing their livelihood. Many of the newly arrived Irish were particularly vulnerable as,
having been recruited from agricultural labor, they were often lacking basic fishing skills.

As well as highlighting the fishermen's situation, the petition pointed out St.
John's growth in population and exports; "upwards of four hundred and sixty foreign
vessels having entered the port of St John's alone during the present year" (as cited in
Neary and O'Flaherty, 1974: 69). Many St. John's residents began to agree that England

³² After failing to appear in court Landergan was taken from his bed in the middle of the night and flogged
till unconscious (Neary and O'Flaherty, 1974:68).

was neglecting their increasingly vital city and profitable fishery. This led to further support for the self-rule movement.

The Rise of Sectarianism

The economic growth and impact of Newfoundland and its fishery meant England could no longer ignore demands for some sort of colonial government. (Figure 4 - 1, Appendix 5). In 1832 a representative government and its members of the House of Assembly was elected and established in St. John's. Almost immediately political alliances, such as those fostered by William Carson, were drawn along religious lines. As one of the original authors of the petition for the fair treatment of local fishermen, Carson had spent many years working to reform conditions in Newfoundland. But his political ambitions only contributed to religious division:

Sectarianism had played but a minor role at the general elections of 1832.

William Carson, however, became convinced that it had not been used effectively by the Reformers. In the following years Carson accentuated the sectarian factor to suit his political interests little suspecting that its inborn tendencies might rage out of control....by 1836 the sectarian issue threatened to override all others (Greene, 1999: 107).

Until 1784, Catholics in Newfoundland were not allowed to practice their religious beliefs.³³ During the 19th century the numbers of Irish migrating to Newfoundland

³³ "...even the private profession of it was made an excuse for restrictions on their activities and manner of life" (Kerr, 1970:29).

swelled. Many settled in St. John's and outlying areas. Given the strength of ties many in Newfoundland still held to their original home areas and the history of conflict between the English/Irish and Protestant/Catholic, it is not surprising that tempers flared—particularly when under the guidance of influential community members.

A past supporter of self-rule, newspaper editor Henry Winton used his paper, the Public Ledger, as a platform from which to attack what he saw as the Roman Catholic clergy's interference in local politics. In 1832 he accused Bishop Fleming of using his influence to promote the cause of Irish candidate John Kent, then running for government election (O'Neill, 1975: 186). The Bishop tried to rise above sectarian divisions, encouraging people to vote regardless of party lines. Winton continued to publish his editorials until Fleming reacted: "articles were directed against us as citizens and Christian Ministers; our sermons were burlesqued in the most ribald terms...and insults heaped on our characters" (as cited in O'Neill, 1976: 185).

Whether approved by Fleming or simply done on his behalf, death threats were posted on Winton's St. John's home. On the evening of December 25, 1833 a mob gathered outside. Stones were thrown, windows broken and threats to lynch Winton brought out a detachment of the Royal Veteran Companies (O'Neill, 1975: 175). But despite these acts of intimidation Winton continued to publish his paper and his controversial editorials.³⁴

³⁴ In May of 1835, Winton was mutilated in an attack by a gang of masked men (O'Neill, 1976:186).

St. John's Riot of 1861

Newfoundland was granted responsible government in 1855 which may have worked to “establish a lasting national base” if it were not for the “overriding sectarianism between Catholics and Protestants that served as a dangerous driving force behind political behavior” (Long, 1999: 22). How dangerous this force was became evident during the St. John's riot of 1861; “The day was one of dread and horrors which assuredly can never be forgotten and never atoned for...” (Newfoundlander, May 14, 1861). The riot began with the rejection of the representatives for Harbour Main, George Hoggatt and Charles Furey. Objections to their presence in the House of Assembly were based on rumours that the two men had won their seats through intimidation. When the two men were removed from the House of Assembly by police the crowd gathered outside began to force its way in.

Although dispersed from the scene by the entreaties of Father O'Donnell the mob simply moved off to Water Street where they continued to wreak havoc and destruction. The chaos intensified following the arrival of the military and the discharge of several shots. As the soldiers' presence seemed only to inflame the situation they were convinced to withdraw. Soon afterwards the crowd began to break up with many responding to the bells of St. John's Basilica. Once seated in their pews the mob was treated to the “pontifical wrath” of Bishop Mullock who denounced their behavior and sent them “scurrying home to wash their wounds and bury their dead” (O'Neil, 1976:

462). Three people had been killed and twenty others injured during the public disturbance.

Identity Building

In his work, Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures, Anthony P. Cohen argues that one does not have to be born in a place in order to belong to it (Cohen, 1982: 21). While the ties to family, friends, and community that contribute to feelings of belonging and identity are more readily available to the native-born, this is not always the case. Particularly in 19th century St. John's where group identities were still tied to people and places on the other side of the Atlantic:

Place identity is materially localized and lived through one's personal understanding and memory of the meaning of 'home'—an understanding that is necessarily embedded in wider sets of social relations—for 'identity marks the conjuncture of our past with the social, cultural, and economic relations we live within' (McCabe, 1998: 233).

Yet, while many town residents were still well connected to their past lives and homes, through the passage of time and occurrence of events both profound and mundane, there developed a history and core of traditions common only to St. John's residents.

A Society of Natives

The formation of the Newfoundland Native Society in 1840/41 can be viewed as an early attempt to join together native-born Newfoundlanders. Open to "all professions

and creeds,” Bonnycastle hoped the Society would help unite opposing groups (Bonnycastle, 1842: 116). The Society’s failure to do exactly that (Neary, 1983: 64) can be traced to the reasons for its establishment. A reaction against the wave of primarily Irish immigrants then arriving on the island, the Society only served to increase dissension. Its participation in the annual woodhauls serves as an illustration.

The St. John’s annual woodhauls originally began as a way to keep busy the thousands of fishermen who congregated in the city every spring. Groups of volunteers were put to work cutting firewood for local schools, churches, and a variety of charities. Those groups responsible for the construction of a woodpile used flags to identify which were theirs. The Native Society used pink flags while the green flags identified groups of Irish Catholics. (Figure 4 - 2, Appendix 5). Inevitably, fist fights broke out over whose pile was the largest. Ultimately, the Native Society became simply another arena in which opposing forces could wield influence. But whereas the Native Society failed, events and the passage of time were slowly weaving together people and place.³⁵

Disastrous Events

In the sometimes extreme climate of Newfoundland, the occasional disaster is to be expected. But during the 19th century the residents of St. John’s were faced with many, particularly as a result of wide-spread fires. The devastation left in the wake of

³⁵ The lyrics to the “Anti-Confederation Song of 1869” is evidence of the developing Newfoundland identity: “Hurrah for our own native isle, Newfoundland, / Not a stranger shall hold one inch of her strand, / Her face turns to Britain, her back to the Gulf, / Come near at your peril Canadian Wolf” (lyrics from the liner notes in We Will Remain: Patriotic Songs of Newfoundland, 1997).

these fires was often extreme. For example, following the fire of 1817 available resources were so scarce that thousands were left hungry and homeless. People died in the street and gangs of rowdies or “rals” roamed the town threatening lives and property (O’Neill, 1976: 140). The unusually severe weather during what became known as “The Winter of the Rals” only contributed to the misery.³⁶

Between the years 1816 and 1819 fires occurred so regularly that they were said to be looked for with the coming of winter. This fact was noted by Captain Sir William Elliot, who could not help but ponder local rumours that “some of the mercantile community have most opportunely escaped bankruptcy, by what might almost be termed a providential conflagration” (as cited in O’Neill, 1976: 623). This type of profiteering could only add to the bitterness already existing between merchants and fishermen and helps explain why “many of the population looked upon a fire as a godsend...especially if it reached or threatened a merchant’s store, when a regular system of plunder was carried out unblushingly, and, as it were, by prescriptive right” (Jukes, 1842: 8). Geologist, J.B. Jukes believed this “low state of moral feeling” amongst St. John’s “lower classes” was the result of their “former state of vassalage,” as well as the lack of education and the want of a “community of feeling” (ibid).

³⁶ Even Newfoundland’s governor did not escape the season’s severity. He died of a bronchial infection brought on in part as a result of the poor conditions of his living quarters. It took 300 men two weeks to cut a channel through the harbour ice to let sail the ship carrying the Governor’s body to England (O’Neill, 1976:140).

Although resentment amongst a large and exploited portion of the population is not surprising, there are many instances of behavior in direct contrast to that described above. In 1838, for example, the Royal Gazette reported that it was only with the aid of people in the street that a fire at the premises of Thomas Hayes was kept from spreading to the rest of the city (O'Neill, 1976: 627). And following the fires of 1846 and 1892 many community groups and members pulled together to help feed and house those left homeless and destitute. During the last of the Great Fires in 1892 in which more than two-thirds of the city was destroyed, people were reported to have volunteered to help fight the fire. Community response to the almost complete destruction of the city and its administrative and business centre included the housing and feeding of the displaced. Outside the city, at Harbour Grace, a thousand people came to greet a train full of St. John's refugees. Aid from the United States, Canada, and Europe poured in (O'Neill, 1976: 642). During the city's subsequent efforts to survive and rebuild it may be that there came together a number of those who, in earlier years, would have found themselves standing idly by.

Daily Routines

As well as disastrous events there were other and less dramatic features of life in St. John's. Among these were several practices originally established by the English garrison located at Signal Hill. These included flag signalling and the firing of signal guns, incorporated into the town's method of timekeeping. The habit of using the summit

as a lookout was as much the result of the military's practices as it was the Hill's physical setting high above the town and ocean. Overlooking the sea, the harbour, and the growing town of St. John's, Signal Hill was the perfect place from which to take in the view. Its prominence in the surrounding landscape also made the flags flying from its summit available for viewing by all residents. (Figure 4 - 3, Appendix 5).

Originally located in the vicinity of Ladies Lookout, the Hill's blockhouse and signal flags had long been a part of St. John's life. In the last years of the 18th century visiting seaman Aaron Thomas noted that when a signal flag was hoisted most city residents would refer to an illustrated chart of flags: "the Inhabitants looks [sic] at them from his door, then refers to a copy, which most housekeepers provides [sic] themselves with, and he knows what is coming in from the Northward or Southward" (Murray, 1968: 184). Like Thomas, Lewis Anspach also noted the town folk's habit of staying "informed of the approach of vessels" (Anspach, 1819: 303). Even with the waning presence of the English military the "fondness for flags" continued when the system was adopted by St. John's merchants:

I have seen the three masts and yards look like a linen-draper's shop, from the quantity of cloth hanging in the wind. This all appears very childish to a military man, but still it is of utility, as the merchant is at once told that his vessel is in sight a short time before it comes in; and as far as the packet is concerned, it

serves to inform the owner, the post-office, and the town in due time
(Bonnycastle, 1842: 141).

A common feature of city life, the tradition of signal flags was only slightly older than the noon-day gun. In a letter home to Ireland in 1833, Sister Magdalene O'Shaughnessy explained the "discharge of guns...fired at stated times during the day" was the only way of regulating the time in a town where the "extreme cold" negated the workings of a town clock (as cited in O'Neill, 1976: 675). This practice, which was eventually limited to one firing at noon, continued on well into the 20th century.³⁷ The Signal Hill Tattoo continue the tradition during their performance season in July and August of each year. (Figure 4 - 4, Appendix 5).

The "Grand Lookout"

Throughout the 19th century access to Signal Hill had improved.³⁸ During the century's latter half most of the Signal Hill garrison was relocated to Fort William, thus further opening the Hill to use by town residents. Alternative uses for some of the garrison buildings were found. For instance, from 1846 to 1859 an old barracks building was used as a prison after the fire of 1842 destroyed the city's courthouse and jail. But it was only after the total withdrawal of imperial garrisons from North America in 1869 that

³⁷ In 1906, when the practice was banned, a public outcry ensued. Several pieces regarding the issue, such as M.A. Devine's "Who Stopped the Sunday Gun?" were composed and published in local papers or as broadsides. The ban was soon lifted.

³⁸ In 1837 and 1838 a local paper announced the availability of money for the opening and repairing of roads including "a Road from Apple Tree Well to George's Pond" (Royal Gazette, November 28, 1837) and "a Road from the bridge at Maggoty Cove, toward the Ordnance Boundary line at Signal Hill" (Royal Gazette, November 6, 1838).

Signal Hill was officially turned over to the Newfoundland government. Although several of the remaining military buildings were then used as hospitals and isolation wards this aspect of the city's social history will not be gone into here. Instead I wish to examine the increasing use of the Hill as a lookout by visitors to and residents of St. John's.

Increased accessibility made the view from Signal Hill available to any who cared to look. And Signal Hill's summit was a popular and obvious choice for visitors and residents alike. Sir Richard Bonnycastle climbed the Hill in order to get a better view of a fire in the Conception Bay area; "the trailing column of smoke hanging over [St. John's], ... as though it was a vast pall" (Bonnycastle, 1842: 294). Of his "ramble" up the Hill with landscape artist Frederick E. Church, American clergyman, Louis L. Noble, wrote: "Little rills rattled by; paths wound among rocky notches and grassy chasms, and led out to dizzy 'overlook' and 'short-offs'From the observatory, situated on a craggy pinnacle, both the rugged interior and the expanse of ocean were before us" (Noble, 1859: 36/37).

But it was not just the panoramic view that brought people to the Hill. It was also a good vantage point from which to watch the activity in St. John's harbour. The Hill's "commanding" view made its slopes a vantage point from which to watch events such as the arrival of the Prince of Wales in 1860. (Figure 4 - 5, Appendix 5). Harbour events in 1879 included: a boat race between two city residents; the arrival of the *Uncle Sam*, an 18

foot vessel being piloted across the Atlantic; and the arrival of the 5600 ton *Arizona*, one of the largest and fastest steamships of its time.

The Sailing of the Fleet

Although a good lookout from which to watch harbour happenings, it was the annual departure and arrival of the sealing fleet that became a community event. Begun in the 1790s, the seal fishery had become a huge contributor to Newfoundland's economy by the 1830s (Neary, 1983: 81). Although there were other harbours from which the sealing fleets departed, the results of their harvest ended up in St. John's, the location of the island's one rendering facility. A fact there was no escaping in the spring of each year as the "effluvia from seal oil vats" made many parts of the town "scarcely habitable" (as cited in O'Neill, 1975: 54). Regardless, many men fought for a chance to participate as it offered up an opportunity to earn hard cash.

The departure of the fleet each spring was a festive occasion, looked forward to by many St. John's citizens. Signal Hill became a favorite place from which to watch "The Sailing of the Sealing Fleet:"

The Engines throbbed like throbbing hearts of living, moving things;
Ship after ship, like Giant bird, spread out her giant wings:
Beyond the port, beyond the fort and frowns of Signal Hill,
The cheers on shore we faintly heard, and heard more faintly still
(Johnston-Smith, 1897: 30).

The sealers' departure also drew reporters and illustrators from Canadian, American and British publications. The April 10, 1880 edition of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, included a story and image, "Cutting a Channel in the ice at St. John's to facilitate the departure of the Seal Fleet, March 10th" depicting the event. (Figure 4 - 6, Appendix 5).

Sealing was not without danger. Men who lost their footing jumping from pan-to-pan were in danger of drowning or, if rescued, suffering hypothermia. Ships frequently became stuck in the huge ice-fields on which the seals had their pups. Sir Richard Bonnycastle observed these hazards from atop Signal Hill where he also noted the presence of anxious relatives of those shipboard "mounted on the signal-house, with their glasses endeavouring to ascertain their state" (Bonnycastle, 1842: 134 vol. II). On March 18, 1882 a reporter from the Evening Telegram also took advantage of the vantage point to file a report on the scene: "Below lay the city just awakening....Seaward an illimitable stretch of ice met the eyes, with nothing to break the monotony beyond a massive berg here and there glittering in the sunlight, and a few "imprisoned" ships (Evening Telegram March 18, 1882: 4). (Figure 4 - 7, Appendix 5).

After weeks out on the ice, the sealers' return brought out crowds "to give a big lookout...at Signal Hill, for the first sealer" (Evening Telegram, April 15, 1895: 4). According to the Evening Telegram of March 26, 1900 this annual event drew "upwards of a thousand people" to Signal Hill. And if those on shore were excited by the return of

the fleet one can imagine how the sealers or *swilers* must have felt when the sight of Signal Hill meant that home was just ahead.

Sealing was an intense activity. For weeks on end men slept and ate in shifts, hardly ever changing the clothes in which they did their work. The jubilation on return to shore, especially with a hold full of pelts and pocket full of cash, meant celebrations were intense as well. Arriving on the heels of the sealing fleet, c. 1840, J.B. Jukes wondered at the atmosphere of “disorder and confusion” as “groups of idle and half-drunken sailors and fishermen” roamed around town (Jukes, 1842: 5). The description of this same scene over fifty years later perhaps explains why Jukes had seen little evidence of the local police force: “...on the arrival of the sealing steamers, there is stir enough in the streets of St. John’s to satisfy the demands of a more metropolitan centre, and the wits and sticks of the police are sometimes taxed to keep order....” (Roberts, 1891: 229). On rare occasions, however, the fleet’s return was marred by tragedy. In 1898, for example, forty-eight men were reported lost. Thousands gathered at the waterfront to await their arrival (O’Neill, 1976: 974).

Today there are fewer anxious eyes watching from Signal Hill. The harbour is no longer the busy place it once was particularly following the cod moratorium of the early 1990s. But in recent years the increasing numbers of cruise ships arriving in St. John’s harbour has brought many back to Signal Hill to once again watch for ships. (Figure 4 -

8, Appendix 5). And although faded, Newfoundland's long association with the sea is still a part of many an individual's sense of self (Wright, 1984: 97).

Conclusion

During the 18th and early 19th centuries the identities of many St. John's residents and Newfoundland inhabitants were connected to the various home areas from which they, or their families, had come. But as the struggle for self-rule demonstrates, Newfoundlanders were starting to see themselves as distinct from Britain. The formation of a cohesive Newfoundland identity, however, was delayed by struggles among opposing groups. The religious and political differences between these groups became more evident following the granting of Representative Government in 1832. Politics then became the arena in which Newfoundland's sectarian battle was fought.

Although divided by religion and politics the residents of Newfoundland's capital, St. John's, were slowly coming together as a distinct population—even if only as a force against the rural communities and outports. The economic impact of the fishing industry meant most residents, in one way or another, shared an interest in its development and future. The experience of events such as the Winter of the Rals, or the Great Fire of 1892, also gave city residents a shared history. And features of town life such as the Signal Tower and its flags, as well as the noon-day gun, contributed to a growing sense of place. Whether admiring the panoramic view or watching for the return of the sealing fleet, by the mid-19th century Signal Hill itself was a unique feature of town

life. In the next chapter I will examine the impact the 1897 Cabot celebrations had on furthering a shared sense of identity and attachment to place.

Chapter Five - Inscribing Signal Hill: Nation and Home

Introduction

The end of the 19th century was a period of world wide change. In Victorian Britain the industrial revolution and continuous technological advances triggered a “reactionary nostalgia for ways of life felt to be forever lost” (Lowenthal, 1986: 96). The commemorative icons and memorial events sweeping Europe and North America at this time were part of what historian Eric Hobsbawm identified as the *invention of tradition* (Hobsbawm, 1983). This linking together of the present to the past helped to relieve public anxiety about the future. In Newfoundland, this trend manifested itself with the 1897 Cabot-Jubilee celebrations and the construction of Cabot Tower. An opportunity to define and solidify the elusive Newfoundland identity the celebrations served also to create a national landmark and icon at Signal Hill:

A homeland has its landmarks, which may be features of high visibility and public significance, such as monuments, shrines, a hallowed battlefield or cemetery.

These visible signs serve to enhance a people's sense of identity; they encourage awareness of and loyalty to place” (Tuan, 1977: 159).

As another stage in the dynamic process, that strengthens ties to place, the construction of Cabot Tower served to bind Signal Hill closer to the sense of identity and place experienced by local residents.

Cabot and the Making of a Homeland

Cohesion-building ideas, or the *invention of tradition*—forging links with the past to strengthen the nation in the present—were in evidence both in Europe and North America during the late 19th century (Hobsbawm, 1983: 28). In Newfoundland it was the creation of the Cabot myth that became the foundation for a national identity (Smrz, 1994). Reflecting Newfoundland's position both in geography and history, the Cabot myth linked the Old World with the New as well as establishing "the ethnic and political identity of Newfoundlanders" (Smrz, 1994: 46). That identity emphasized Newfoundland's British heritage and its "long connexion with sea affairs" (Bonnycastle, 1842: 141).

The Cabot Committee and Controversy

In the last decades of the 19th century Newfoundland had experienced dramatic and sometimes devastating change. Its fisheries had been downsized as a result of the switch from sail to steam power, its capital city had been nearly destroyed in the fire of 1892, and following the Bank Crash of 1894 its economy had been on the brink of collapse. It was perhaps in reaction to these events that so many people, particularly in St. John's, became involved with the plans to celebrate and honor the 400th anniversary of John Cabot's North American landfall.

Cabot's exact landing site in North America was a controversial issue. Many of those who did not agree with the Royal Society of Canada's position of a landfall at Cape

Breton Island (Royal Society, 1895:xxx) supported Judge D.W. Prowse's theory of landfall at Cape Bonavista, Newfoundland (Prowse, 1895:10). A Newfoundland committee to celebrate Prowse's theory was formed (Daily News, September 29, 1896:4). Made up of affluent and influential St. John's residents, the committee soon ran into problems. Committee member Bishop Howley made it clear that he disapproved of the public's exclusion from the plans surrounding an affair that he felt significant to all Newfoundlanders. In response, a public meeting was arranged and held on November 5, 1896. At that meeting it was announced that any suggestions regarding the Cabot celebrations *and* Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee were welcome (Daily News, November 6, 1896:4).

This fusion of the Cabot celebrations with the Queen's Jubilee was significant and attributed to committee member Judge Prowse. Responsible for the Bonavista landfall theory Prowse declared himself unable to find enthusiasm for a Cabot celebration alone (Candow, 1981: 15). But comments by the meeting's chair, E.D. Shea, are more illuminating. With his announcement Shea also explained that a joint celebration would not only appeal to Newfoundlanders' loyalty and patriotism, but also work to make "Newfoundland better known to the outside world...[and] attract strangers to our shores," (Candow, 1981: 4). One of the few to oppose the move was committee member Bishop Howley who expressed concern that the Jubilee celebrations would overshadow Cabot's. (Figure 5 - 1, Appendix 5).

This addition of the Diamond Jubilee to the Cabot committee's responsibilities certainly helped popularize its efforts, but the move also proved problematic. After a number of suggestions for an appropriate memorial to Newfoundland's reigning monarch, and its founding father, successful St. John's merchant Edward Bowring made the winning suggestion of a signal tower and observatory at Signal Hill (Evening Telegram, February 20, 1897:4). Editor of the Evening Telegram, A.A. Parsons, was an early advocate of the proposal:

Instead of the trumpery wooden structure that now does duty for a signal station, we would have a handsome stone building, built of native granite, an imposing edifice to greet the first gaze of the mariner; something worthy of an important seaport like St. John's (Evening Telegram, January 12, 1897: 4).

The idea had a practical element to it as the signalling blockhouse then in use was only a temporary structure built to replace the one destroyed by fire in 1895.³⁹

The press initially approved the idea—the public, however, did not. A debate ensued as to the monument's final form and location. Originally a supporter for the tower observatory, A.A. Parsons soon changed his mind:

Holidays, and regattas, and observatories are all right enough in their way; but these are commonplace matters. The great mass of our local humanity would like

³⁹ The original blockhouse, built in 1796, was located at Ladies' Lookout. It was levelled in 1815 to make way for a Martello tower that was never built. A new blockhouse, however, was erected that same year in the area of Cabot Tower. This blockhouse was replaced in 1859, the same building was subsequently destroyed by fire in 1895 (Candow, 1981:8).

to see something done that would let a little additional sunlight into the lives of those whose lot, under the best of circumstances, is a very hard and uncomfortable one" (Evening Telegram, April 15, 1897: 3).

Suggestions for a more appropriate monument included a public market, a home for elderly fishermen, and a convalescent wing at the General Hospital.

A "Hardy Race of Mariners"

When plans for the Tower were announced the association with Newfoundland's fishery was quickly made by editor Parsons: "To commemorate the exploits of a great navigator like John Cabot, it is obvious that the permanent memorial and the celebration should be something connected with the sea and sailors; some project that would protect their lives and facilitate their labors" (Evening Telegram, January 12, 1897: 4). This association became a salient point in the monument debate. Although the argument was made that the memorial should benefit more than those involved in "nautical pursuits," Prowse pointed out, "Only those who have made winter passages in small schooners or brigs can understand the terrible dangers, the exposure and sufferings of the crews in the late fall and winter" (Daily News, February 24, 1897: 4).

After dismissing proposals for a public library, and reformatory, the discussion settled down to what would most benefit Newfoundland's fisherpeople: a home for "old and infirm fishermen" (Evening Telegram, April 15, 1897: 4), the establishment of insurance "for the benefit of wives and children of lost or incapacitated 'toilers of the sea'"

(Evening Telegram, April 15, 1897: 4), or the signal station. In April 1897, E.D. Shea resigned from the Cabot-Jubilee committee prompting the editor of the Daily News to claim that the whole affair had been mismanaged (Daily News, February 15, 1897: 4). Because much of the committee's problems revolved around the debate as to what would be an appropriate monument to Cabot *and* Victoria, a separate committee was formed to look after the Queen's Jubilee memorial. As the funds already collected had been given specifically in support of the tower observatory, the plans for Cabot Tower did not change. (Figure 5 - 2, Appendix 5).

This emphasis on matters of the sea was reflected in the monument debate and also in the people and personalities supporting the signal tower idea. Men like Bishop Howley and Judge Prowse, both educated and prominent citizens, were also members of St. John's influential merchant class.⁴⁰ A staunch supporter of the Cabot celebrations, Bishop Howley had been the one to express concern that the Jubilee celebrations would eclipse Cabot (Daily News, November 6, 1896:4). And although Edgar Bowring may have been credited with the idea for a signal tower it was Prowse who doggedly promoted it and raised the funds. The differences between these two men, one a Protestant the other a Catholic, seemed of little consequence in their joint efforts to commemorate Cabot, Queen and Empire. In fact, their relationship is evidence for the conservative

⁴⁰ Although educated in St. John's, Prowse attended Collegiate School in Liverpool and later became a practicing lawyer in St. John's. Like Prowse, Howley came from a merchant family. Born in St. John's, he was sent to study in Rome, where he was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1868. And like Prowse, he was also an avid historian.

element now dominating the community's Catholic Church (Neary, Newfoundland, 1996: 5).⁴¹ So, while Cabot helped establish Newfoundlanders as distinct British Imperial subjects it was his personal courage, represented by the transatlantic crossing, that came to represent the moral and physical qualities of Newfoundlanders (Smrz, 1994: 46). And these qualities, as seen through the eyes of St. John's mercantile elite, were best represented by workers in the fishery: "Cabot gave to Britain...her first and most ancient and loyal colony" but it was from Newfoundland's fishing fleets that came "the hardy race of mariners who carried her flag triumphantly around the world, and gave her the empire of the sea" (Evening Telegram, June 23, 1897).

The Cornerstone Ceremony

As "the first major ritual proclamation of Newfoundland identity" (Smrz, 1994: 1) the proposed construction of Cabot Tower became the first step in the linking of Signal Hill to Newfoundland's history and national identity. The day of the cornerstone ceremony was one of two set aside and declared public holidays for the joint celebration of Victoria's Jubilee and Cabot's landfall. The majority of planned events, including the cornerstone ceremony, occurred on the first day, Jubilee Day. (Figure 5 - 3, Appendix 5). That day, June 22, was warm and crowds of people wound their way up to Signal Hill's summit and the waiting platform of dignitaries. It was from there that Bishop Howley addressed the crowd with an oration that "made the ears of his hearers thrill with feelings

⁴¹ "The Roman Catholic elite...had fought...for a fair share of patronage, and once this was obtained it became a staunch defender of the new status quo..." (Neary, 1996: 5).

of patriotism" (Evening Telegram, June 23, 1897: 4).

The Bishop began his address with a recognition of the dual nature of the event and his opinion that, despite what others thought, the Tower's intended function as "a beacon of safety to the tempest-tossed mariner" made it a "work of mercy" worthy of its association with the Queen's Jubilee (ibid). Howley then moved on to the site of Signal Hill itself and the "associations connected with this spot." Associations that "strike with a thrill of the deepest love and patriotism the heart-strings of every son of Newfoundland" (ibid). First, there was the panoramic view of the city's "towers and domes," then Nature's "beauteous and varied scene," and finally the Narrows, "a scene admired by strangers from every land" (ibid). Howley then extended his view to encompass the whole Northern hemisphere and Newfoundland's position in the midst of the "great highway of commerce," between Europe and North America (ibid).

Howley understood that the completed monument would serve to enhance people's loyalty to place by making history visible in the landscape (Tuan, 1974:99). And so his third and final set of associations were based on the "whole history of our brave-hearted people" (Evening Telegram, June 23, 1897: 4). He summed up that history by recounting pivotal moments which "made sacred and celebrated every inch of the surrounding country" (ibid). Howley's list of "historical glories" included: the 1762 Battle of Signal Hill; D'Iberville's conquest of St. John's in 1696-7; Sir Humphrey Gilbert's claiming of Newfoundland for Queen Elizabeth in 1583; and finally Cabot's

1497 discovery of the "New-found-land." The battles of 1762 and D'Iberville's conquest were examples of Howley's assertion that Signal Hill had been consecrated by the "blood of heroes." While Gilbert and Cabot were examples of Newfoundlanders' courageous mariner heritage.

The fact that only one of these events actually took place on Signal Hill did not matter:

Each of the events of history, a revolution, the founding of a state, the coronation of a monarch, is constantly redefined, through the redefinitions of successive moments, of the ongoing, the unnoticed, the history of everyday life. An 'event,' meaningful in reflection, in comparison to the past, itself becomes the object of future comparisons once it is historic (Dolgin and Magdoff, 1977: 352).

Howley was well aware that this, his own moment, would one day be added to the list of historical associations: "To have my name handed down to future generations of Newfoundlanders in connection with this, I may say, most glorious event in history, was a privilege far beyond anything I could have aspired to" (Evening Telegram, June 23, 1897). This linking together of the past, present, and future was further reflected in the structure of Cabot Tower itself.

Completed in 1900, the gothic-revival architectural style of Cabot Tower is an example of what scholar Ian Baucom identified as the "mnemonic architecture" used throughout the British Empire to create "architectural spaces of belonging" (Baucom,

1999: 55). As an “an allegory of redemption in which the past redeems the nation's present, and in which the present will be redeemed as some future's past” (Baucom, 1999: 55) the Tower served to remind all Newfoundlanders of who they now were. (Figure 5 - 4, Appendix 5).

While Howley had made sure to declare his loyalty to the Queen and Empire, his speech loudly proclaimed his patriotism for Newfoundland: a patriotism he shared with others. As a highly visible and recognized landscape feature Signal Hill became the subject for the expression of these emotions:

We hail thee when the moon
Lights up thy wonted gloom,
And when winter's frost has harden'd
Heath and rill.
We hail thee in the dawning,
In the evening and the morning,
Our native Alpine, rugged
Signal Hill (Murphy, 1904).

The final construction of Cabot Tower gave Newfoundland an icon representative of its national identity.⁴² And as the location for that icon it was inevitable that Signal Hill would become Newfoundland's “native alpine.”⁴³

⁴² Cabot Tower that was the backdrop for many of the photographs taken of Marconi with local officials and dignitaries and not the run-down hospital where the event had actually occurred.

Signal Hill: Landscape of Home

In the early years of the 20th century several works entitled "Signal Hill" appeared in Newfoundland periodicals and publications. These works express affection and connection to home through references to its history and lore as well as vignettes detailing the Hill's presence in residents' lives. For example, a scene commonly described refers to the Tower's signal flags and the inclination to look for them that many residents shared. Signalling not just the arrival of a ship, the flags also indicated the arrival of mail, exotic cargo, news from the outside world, or even the return of a family member among the ship's passengers or crew.⁴⁴ Another frequently described scene depicts the crowds which would assemble at Signal Hill during the spring of the year to watch the departure and arrival of the sealing fleet. Much of the imagery in Lillian Shortis' piece (The People's Songster, 1900) refers to this use of the Hill as a lookout.

⁴⁴ According to Jiri Smrz in his paper, "Rear High Once More Old Terra Nova's Flag: Forging of National Identity on the Pages of the Newfoundland Quarterly 1901-1905," so much of the political, cultural and social characteristics of Newfoundland were under the influence of British imperial nationalism that the source for patriotic emotion became the landscape (Smrz, 1992).

⁴⁵ "The Homecoming - 1900" is one of several sculptural pieces in local artist's Joan Parsons Woods exhibit entitled "Newfoundland: A Place Called Home." This particular piece features a family group in Victorian clothing gathered at the base of Cabot Tower and looking out towards the Narrows. Of this piece she writes: "In 1898 my grandfather became captain of a barque called *Cordelia*, a sailing vessel of 600 tons. It was built for Bowring Brothers at Glasgow as part of the firm's large fleet of vessels named after characters in Shakespeare's plays. She flew the house flag of Bowrings, a red cross in the form of an X. During his twelve years as captain of that ship he sometimes took his wife and family on a voyage (seven girls and a boy), but usually they remained in St. John's. My mother told me that when his return was expected the family would watch daily for the house flag to be flown on Cabot Tower, atop Signal Hill to herald the *Cordelia's* approach. When they saw Bowring's house flag, my grandmother would rush the whole family to the top of the hill to watch the ship sail through the Narrows and enter the harbour" (Woods as in Newfoundland Parks Association, 1997: 9).

Lines such as “Tis on thy crest, we are at ease, / As we hear the gladdening cry, / ‘A steamer’s come from the North-east,’ / The sentry takes his spy,” are a clear reference to this practice.

James Murphy’s (Songs of Our Land, 1904) description of this practice is more explicit. He reports going to the Hill in spring, when “our sealers are expected,” to search the sea with “spy-glass to our eye” for the happy return of the first ship. The optimistic joy in Murphy’s vision of this scene is subdued in the work of Lydia Chancey in 1912. For Chancey, this event was also a time of anxiety for relatives who worried about the safe return of loved ones:⁴⁵

But once a year this hill top
Bears the print of many feet,
And anxious eyes are watching
The first coming of the fleet.
For many a ship is signalled,
And many a ship sail o’er,
And the saddened eyes oft watching
For the ship that comes no more.
Scan the flagstaff still

⁴⁵ Only two years after this poem was published the sealing industry suffered one of its most dramatic disasters. Two hundred and fifty-three men were lost in a single storm and in St. John’s the “familiar silent crowds lined the dockside...when the survivors and the dead reached port” (O’Neill, 1976: 975).

On old Signal Hill. (Chancey, 1912).⁴⁶

Other practices and activities referred to in these works include the signal flags, the noon day gun (Shortis, 1900), winter sliding and treasure hunting (Murphy, 1904), ice skating and lovers' trysts (Chancey, 1912). Many references are made to the past.

Nostalgia for Days Past

Soon after the construction of Cabot Tower was completed, Guglielmo Marconi and his men succeeded in transmitting the first transatlantic wireless signal from Poldhu in Cornwall, England to Signal Hill in St. John's, Newfoundland.⁴⁷ During the closing decades of the 19th century scientific advances such as these were taking place the world over. But while technological advancement made life easier for some, it left many unemployed. In Newfoundland the switch from sail to steam earlier in the century displaced hundreds of individuals as many outport fisheries closed and the entire sealing fleet was relocated to St. John's (Ryan, 1987: introduction).⁴⁸ Signal Hill's use as a lookout and Cabot Tower's function as a signal tower closely associated both with the seafaring and fisheries integral to Newfoundland's history, economy and lifestyle. More than a "native alpine," Signal Hill became a 'lieux de memoire' or 'place of memory' to

⁴⁶ Written in 1906 the tragic tone of the "Signal Hill" work that appeared in the July issue of the Newfoundland Quarterly evokes the potential for tragedy. Concentrating on the human freight of the ships that pass Signal Hill this poem reminds the reader of the many who have lost their lives at sea: "From thy bold rocks thy splendid heights / I saw a ship pass hence; / A ship! Nay, many a noble ship / Has gone that course! And whence? / Ah When? And why return they not? / Fond hearts by grief are riven / Aye, ships sail in – ships sail out / But some bear freight to heaven!"

⁴⁷ Threatened by Marconi's work, the Anglo-American Telegraph Company influenced the Newfoundland government in its decision to deny Marconi permission to continue his work in Newfoundland.

“stop time or, better yet...launch a voyage of return to the past” (Baucom, 1999: 19).⁴⁸

And as with many people, for the authors of “Signal Hill,” the past began in childhood.

Although children often have special places at which they play, it is not until well into adulthood that places, following a “steady accretion of sentiment over the years,” become “haunted by memories” (Tuan, 1977: 33). What begins this process are those places where children create the memories and experiences that bond them to place. In the works by Shortis, Murphy, and Chancey, it is obvious the Hill was such a place. Activities like ice skating, snow sliding, searching for treasure, or looking through a spyglass from the summit, all made Signal Hill a natural playground.⁵⁰ Adding to its allure were the stories told of the place, “Where fierce war waged, and treasure / Was entombed; and, without measure, / Stories told and gruesome feelings / Overcast” (Murphy, 1904). Memories brought back happy associations for these individuals and is an indication of the growing connection between people and place, between St. John’s residents and Signal Hill.

Although now distanced from their childhood and its simpler times, Signal Hill remained and individuals took comfort and solace from its seemingly “everlasting”

⁴⁸ The seal hunt’s near disappearance during the 20th century was not as a result of technological change but rather years of international protest against its perceived cruelty.

⁴⁹ During his address at the 1897 cornerstone ceremony, Bishop Howley publicly linked Signal Hill to Newfoundland’s past. Bolstering this association was the long established practice of signalling which, for over a century, had been a part of daily life in St. John’s. And while the success of Marconi’s experiments were evidence of the technological advances rapidly changing society, they were later absorbed into a tradition of communications at Signal Hill.

⁵⁰ This use of the Hill as a playground in more recent years is confirmed by several of the people I interviewed.

presence. This sense of permanence was strengthened by the history now commemorated by Cabot Tower. And so while the world changed around them, “For they’re driving cars and engines, Where our feet were wont to skate” (Chancey, 1912) one landmark endured:

Though the waves have lashed its strong holds,
And the torrents torn its brow,
And its sides are seamed and chasmed
Yet it never deigns to bow.
So, may we, like the hill,
Stand firm, be upright still (Chancey, 1912).

This sense of permanence offered comfort not only to aging individuals but also to those who, displaced by social and technological change, had to leave their homes in St. John’s and Newfoundland. The landscape of childhood leaves an impression that is never completely eradicated, often becoming the landscape against which all others are measured (Lowenthal, 1986: 8.) As a feature in the landscape of childhood Signal Hill also became an integral part of the landscape of home.

Leaving Home: Out-migration 1900 - 1930

Out-migration has been as much a part of Newfoundland’s history as the fishery. As pointed out in Chapter Three, during the 17th and 18th centuries a significant portion of Newfoundland’s population were European migratory fishermen. Travelling to where the work was, many of these individuals spent a season or two in Newfoundland before

moving on to Canada, the United States, or back to their homes across the Atlantic. In the early years of the 20th century thousands of Newfoundlanders did the same:

Between 1901 and 1921 migrants to Cape Breton alone accounted for over 50 percent of Canada's Newfoundland-born. Overwhelmingly male and unskilled, they were actively recruited by the Canadian government and the steel and coal companies of Cape Breton for jobs native-born workers were unwilling to fill. Low education levels impeded internal mobility in Newfoundland, it was noted, whereas on the mainland greater occupational opportunities were available to "even the most unskilled" (Bassler, 1992: 43).

So many Newfoundlanders left that by the 1930s census data showed 15 per cent of the Newfoundland-born living on the mainland (Bassler, 1992: 44). (Figure 5 - 5, Appendix 5).

The Newfoundland government did little to stop the exodus. The majority of those leaving were young men whose absence not only kept down levels of unemployment but reduced the number of potential trouble makers. Further, those who found work often helped subsidize their families' incomes by sending money back home. The numbers of people leaving dramatically increased following World War I. Partly as a result of war debt, Newfoundland was now experiencing an economic downturn. Although widely lauded by ally nations the cost of Newfoundland's contribution to the

war had been profound.⁵¹ The thousands of Newfoundlanders who never returned home meant few families and communities were unaffected. At a time when travel off the island was via ships and steamers, it is safe to assume that many people watched their loved ones depart from the brows of Signal Hill—one of the final landmarks of home.⁵² We get a sense of these moments from the perspective of someone on board through local artist, Joan Parsons Woods. Of her sculptural piece entitled “S.S. Belle Isle Leaving St. John’s” she writes: “Like many Newfoundlanders having to leave home, our departure on the S.S. *Belle Isle* was a heart-breaking time. When we sailed through the Narrows my mother was crying, while my sister stood at the rail and sang, “I See Those Harbour Lights,” as she sadly left her friends behind” (Newfoundland Historic Parks Association, 1997: 30).

Much like those Europeans who came to Newfoundland two and three hundred years earlier, many exiled Newfoundlanders found themselves longing for home. Although the traditional ties to England and Ireland had not entirely disappeared, they had diminished enough to allow for the creation of a unique Newfoundland identity.⁵³

⁵¹ Among the many monuments and plaques throughout the city are a number that commemorate Newfoundland’s sometimes devastating contributions to the wars of the 20th century.

⁵² It was also a landmark for those returning home as well. After studying in Europe for two years, one of my informants recalled her return home to St. John’s in 1952/53 via transatlantic travel: “*then I got on the boat in Liverpool which was, then I came across the North Atlantic...and sailed... through the Narrows, and where Signal Hill [was] over me, and the gun went off, cause it was an English boat with the mail on it and I realized. ‘Oh my god, here I am,’ (laughter) you know, back*” (Interview 24).

⁵³ In the early years of the 20th century W. Browne not only recalls steamers full of coal, tourists and commercial travellers, but also “the regular visits of the ‘home’ boats from England” (Browne, 1981:5). This is confirmed by the definition of ‘home’ found in the Dictionary of Newfoundland English: “used for...Great Britain. Atrrib home boat: a ship from the ‘old country’” (Story, 1990:256).

And so when those Newfoundlanders who found themselves living elsewhere cast their minds back home it was not to the “fertile fields of Albion” or “holy hills of Ireland,”³⁴ it was instead to the “majestic Signal Hill” of John Murphy (1904).

Murphy is explicit in his association with home. For him Signal Hill was high on the list of places that patriotic Newfoundlanders living in Canada or the United States brought to mind when recalling the people and places of home (Murphy, 1904).

But I love to sit and gaze
‘Cross the Narrows, out the bays,
And in other lands our brothers’
Hearts will thrill
As their patriotic mind
Wanders back to home and kind,
And to visions of majestic

Signal Hill (Murphy, 1904).

But for Chancey visions of the Hill are not enough. The only cure for homesickness was to stand once more on Signal Hill:

³⁴ The association between Signal Hill and a home “across the sea” also existed. From his bed at the Signal Hill hospital where he was quarantined with diphtheria, Irish Christian Brother Slatterly wrote: “I daresay you forget where this hospital is. You remember the Block House right over the sea. From my bed I can see the wild rolling waters below, and the fishing boats tossing around as they gather the precarious harvest of the sea. Off and on a large steamer breaks the monotony and pushes its way through a messenger from afar....All day long I look out at the wild sea below me....I listen to the never ceasing boom of the waters. You won’t be astonished to learn that sometimes my eyes wander farther seaward and across the miles of water, towards the “Fair Hills of Holy Ireland.” I daresay sickness makes the exile’s heart a little softer than usual....” (as cited in Darcy, 1996: 34).

How oft in distant countries,
When the very air is still,
What would the wanderer give
To stand again on Signal Hill.
To gaze out upon the ocean,
To drink in its blest ozone,
Would give to this life of his a zest
Those shattered nerves would tone.
But in memory still,
He sees his native hill (Chancey, 1912).

Signal Hill and its Tower helped perpetuate a collective self-awareness while at the same time validating personal identity.

Scenes from Home

Often difficult to articulate, the deep attachment to home experienced by many people is one that accumulates over time with “ familiarity and ease, with the memory of sound and smells, of communal activities and homely pleasures” (Tuan, 1977: 159). Perhaps this is why a last look at a view or visit to a particular place is an aspect of many home-leaving rituals. This type of ritual is well illustrated in “Farewell to Rennie’s River,” an anonymous poem published in 1929. In this tribute to his St. John’s home the narrator takes one last walk to a favourite haunt, Rostellan Bridge. There he relives the

summers spent with friends and romantic moments under the moon. Wishing he could stop time, but recognizing he cannot, the author contemplates his fate as well as the fate of other friends who will leave. Conflicting emotions of sadness and excitement make him defiant of the inevitable impact this change will have on his friendships as he leaves “this fairy palace / made strong by memories of the past” to follow those who have gone before:

Some already through the “gap,”
Have gone, exiles, their fortune seeking,
Some in the marble acres lap
Are laid, their souls are in God’s keeping.
Farewell! old Bridge! adieu old scenes!
O’er Signal Hill the dawn is breaking,
Gilding the road with dancing beams,
The course the exile’s ship is taking (Anon, 1929: 12).

Like the souls that lie “in the marble acres lap” the soon-to-be exile places himself in the hands of God as he sets his course for parts unknown.⁵⁵

In his book Writers in Exile (1981), Andrew Gurr suggests that the exile is often overwhelmed by the need to search for his/her own identity. A study of one’s own past and home helps confirm that identity, fixes it into place (Gurr, 1981: 10). From 1925 to

⁵⁵ A reference to the St. John’s Narrows, the “gap” may also refer to the many Newfoundland soldiers who never got the chance to come home from the First World War.

1934 the Newfoundland Weekly allowed Newfoundlanders away to do just that. Published in Boston from 1925 to 1934 by the Newfoundland Publishing Company Incorporated, this weekly publication featured news and features from home. Included in a series of articles entitled “Scenes Around St. John’s” were two items about Signal Hill.

What is most striking about these items, “The Trail Beside The Narrows” and “The Cabot Tower,” is their vivid detail. In “The Trail Beside The Narrows” the author describes a walk along what is today referred to as the Northhead trail. This close-up description includes the “motley collection of shacks, houses, sheds, fishflakes” of the Battery community, the “lumps of gray limestone” destined for the only limekiln in St. John’s, as well as the occasional “outcropping of rock jutting into the road” (Frost, 1925).

This type of detail is again repeated in “The Cabot Tower” as the author describes his ascent to the observation deck. But once there what’s left to describe is the “splendid panorama before us.” Along the “iron-bound coastline” is the “squat lighthouse” of Ft. Amherst, the South side hills, the “frowning brows of Blackhead,” and Cape Spear. Closer at hand is Quidi Vidi Lake “the rolling, wooded landscape with here and there farms and roads showing up as bare patches” that lies beyond (Frost, 1925). Also included in the description are the White Hills, Logy and Conception Bays as well as features of St. John’s such as the harbour, Water Street, the two cathedrals, the court house, Mount Scio, and Three Pond Barrens.

These vivid descriptions are evocative of the detailed records the displaced Israelites made of their homeland in the Old Testament. The attention to detail ensured that should the exile ever return they would recognize the land they remembered (Romer, 1988). Although Newfoundlanders were not exiled en masse from their homeland like the Jews of ancient Israel many did, and continue to, feel they had little choice. But through vivid descriptions like those detailed above, the exiled Newfoundlander can remain connected to home and therefore his or her sense of self.

Like the 18th century English and Irish migrants who had found comfort through association with people from home, Newfoundlanders in Boston and New York did the same.⁵⁶ During the 1920s, for example, a favourite gathering place for exiled Newfoundlanders in New York was Didder Hill, so named for the dialectal interrogative 'did 'er?' which was ubiquitous in the response to stories told there. Located in a South Brooklyn park it was at Didder Hill on Sunday afternoons that one "could get the taste and smell of home" (Pollett, 1974: 219). Just as their great, great grandparents had discovered, their descendants were discovering for themselves the challenges of leaving home behind. But while the process involves the inevitable comparisons to home, it also includes making connections to home through associations with familiar people and places.

⁵⁶ After the 'Great Migration' of African Americans from the South to the North many felt overwhelmed by their nostalgia for home and so banded together in social and fraternal clubs. The names of these clubs, the Alabama Club, Mississippi Club, and the Vicksburg Club, reflected their homeplaces (Lippard, 1990: 68).

Conclusion

As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, there was little, if any cohesive sense of a Newfoundland identity during the 18th and much of the 19th centuries. This was due, in part, to economic division between groups as well as the high proportion of people whose loyalties and ties to place were still to their original home areas in Europe, namely England and Ireland. According to Jiri Smrz (1994) the "New Imperialism" of the late 19th century helped foster a change in these circumstances. Becoming more aware of their own importance within the Imperial context, self-governing British colonies, like Newfoundland, developed their own nationalisms. As part of the forging of this unique Newfoundland national identity an icon was created—a place feature in the capital city that served to emphasize Newfoundland's British heritage, but also its own distinct values, history and identity. This national inscription onto Signal Hill's landscape by a largely Protestant mercantile elite in St. John's who were tied to Britain by "that thin red cord of sentiment and blood" (as cited in Neary, Newfoundland, 1996: 43) did not reflect all that local residents felt or believed about the Hill.

By the turn of the 20th century many of the people living in St. John's could add their own personal memories and associations to Signal Hill's official history. These associations are evident in the poems and songs created about Signal Hill during that century's first several decades. In a period of rapid societal change many individuals found themselves nostalgic for a simpler time; a time often associated with childhood.

As a feature in the landscape of childhood Signal Hill won a place in the hearts and minds of local residents. As such it is not surprising Signal Hill became a feature that those who had to leave looked back upon: 'Tis the exiles remember thee, / (As his eyeing with tears do fill) / Brought forth from childhood's memories -- / His own dear Signal Hill (Shortis, 1900).

Now associated with Newfoundland's beginnings the Hill became an anchor for those individuals who felt bruised by personal and social change. Its rock hard stability became a metaphor for the Newfoundland character and a promise that some things would never change. For those who had left Newfoundland, Signal Hill was a place to return to, if only in memory. And while those who moved away continued to call to mind this feature in the landscape of home, the cultivation of the Hill as an historic landscape continued.

Chapter Six - The Development of History and Heritage

Introduction

The second stage in the development of Signal Hill as an national landscape emphasized more fully the history of the area. It began in 1928 with the restoration of the 19th century Queen's Battery Barracks. Inspired in part by the same nationalist sentiment, and certainly backed by the same powerful St. John's elite, this development resulted in the creation of Newfoundland's first historic site. Although the development of tourism was an attempt by the Newfoundland government to diversify its economy, no amount of diversification could have held off the slow slide many Newfoundlanders made into the poverty and relief programs of the 1930s.

Newfoundland's economy improved following the declaration of war in September, 1939. Its strategic position in the North Atlantic made it integral to the allied defense of North America. The Second World War not only rejuvenated Newfoundland's economy, it had a lasting impact on its society. A new self-awareness and prosperity refocused the lives of many Newfoundlanders away from the sea. For others, particularly in St. John's, it re-lit the fires of a Newfoundland nationalist sentiment:

Nationalism is intrinsically about power and control over a territory and the people living within its confines, excluding from power and decision making those who are regarded as outsiders. It encourages a given population to identify with a given nation and discourages separatism as well as mixing of those who

'belong' and those who 'do not belong' in the congruence of the culture, history, language, religion, economy, and political structure (Anttonen, 1994: 22).

History played a part in this nationalist movement and became increasingly significant in the refining of Newfoundland's identity. In 1947 elaborate plans to develop Signal Hill as an historic site were proposed but placed on hold during the heated debate that culminated in Confederation with Canada in 1949. Following the promotional efforts of locals like newspaper editor, C.E. Jeffry, Signal Hill was declared a National Historic Site in 1958. Under the administration of the Canadian government Signal Hill entered the third stage of its development as a national *and* historic landscape—only now the nation was Canada and the history was yet to be written.

Queen's Battery Barracks

Although efforts to further develop Newfoundland tourism intensified during the 1920s, the industry's beginnings go back to the late 19th century. Early promotion of the country emphasized its abundant game and fish (Pocius, 1994: 47). Later, it was the restorative qualities of the island's rugged landscape that made it "the new playground of America" (Prowse, 1911: 8/9). But it was not until the 1920s that tourism development began to turn from Newfoundland's spectacular natural setting to its history and heritage. These efforts were exemplified by the restoration of the Queen's Battery Barracks at Signal Hill—Newfoundland's first historic site.

As part of the efforts to boost tourist trade during the 1920s, a group of local

businessmen came together to form the Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity Bureau. The efforts of this group began with the promotion of road tours featuring the culture and history of the Avalon Peninsula (Overton, 1996: 103). Initially a lecture tour the endeavor grew to include the creation of an Information Bureau and the services of a full-time agent to promote the industry, particularly in the United States. A travelling lecture, entitled "Unknown Newfoundland," was arranged through the Bureau of Commercial Economics and delivered by R.H. Tait, editor the Newfoundland Weekly, a publication which featured articles about the island's history and culture.

In celebration of the decision which saw Labrador declared territory belonging to Newfoundland rather than Quebec, a "Publicity Issue" of stamps was released on January 3, 1928. Intended to publicize Newfoundland and promote economic development through tourism in particular two of the series' stamps featured Signal Hill. The 50 cent airmail stamp, with its caption "Vickers Vimy Leaving St. John's..." depicted the bi-plane as it passed over Signal Hill and the Narrows. The 9 cent stamp featured Cabot Tower with the caption "Cabot Tower, Signal Hill, St. John's. First transatlantic signal received 1901." The only place to be featured on two stamps, Signal Hill was an obvious site for future tourism development.

During the same year the Publicity Issue of stamps was released, the Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity Commission began to fulfill their mandate to, "Discover, preserve, mark, restore or provide means of access to matters or places of

sporting, scenic or historical interest” (Candow, 1980: 27) by restoring the Queen’s Battery. Entirely made-up of prominent St. John’s merchants and importers (Neary, Newfoundland, 1996: 9) the Newfoundland Board of Trade announced that this “most interesting and historical sight” would be featured in all St. John’s and area tours (as cited in Candow, 1980: 32). To increase the site’s appeal six British ordnance pieces were rounded up from various locations and installed at Queen’s Battery. (Figure 6 - 1, Appendix 5). After all, “A past that lacks tangible relics is too abstract to be credible....To be certain there was a past, we must see at least some of its traces” (Lowenthal, 1982: 90). Although not of the correct period the guns contributed their own historical nuances to a site now reported as being visited “by almost every tourist...” (as cited in Candow, 1980: 35). This included American film-maker, Varrick Frissell. In Newfoundland to film his adventure epic “White Thunder,” Frissell used the site as the location for a film scene in which a young woman watches the departure of the sealing fleet.³⁷

The Queen’s Battery itself was among the few structures remaining of the substantial English garrison established at Signal Hill during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The first to establish defense works and fortifications at Signal Hill’s summit

³⁷ In the spring of 1931 Frissell, accompanied by a small film crew, was aboard the *S.S. Viking* hoping to shoot further footage for his film. On the evening of March 15 an explosion on board shook the ship. Most crew members were rescued, but among the few missing were Frissell and two of his companions. After an intense week long sea and air search no trace of Varrick or his two companions was ever found. The disaster was an eerie parallel to a scene in Varrick’s film in which a sealing vessel is blown apart by an explosion of gunpowder intended to free the ship from surrounding ice. Scenes from the film, later entitled “The Viking,” were used in several newspaper accounts of the events.

were the French (Department of the Environment, 1986: 5). In 1762 they built defensive works at Quidi Vidi and overlooking Cuckold Cove (Ferguson, 1986: 37). Following the defeat of the French at the decisive Battle of Signal Hill in 1762, their English opponents followed suit. From that time until the withdrawal of its overseas troops in 1869, the English military instituted work on several plans to fortify the Hill (Candow, 1979). It was during the first phase of construction, a response to the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars, that the Queen's Battery was built (Department of the Environment, 1986: 5). Renovations in 1832 included the construction of a new barracks building and in 1862, in response to the American Civil War, new guns were placed at the site (ibid).

Throughout the years, as various fortification plans were proposed and dropped, the Queen's Battery was among the few buildings to endure. The barracks' survival into the 20th century is likely the result of its use as a residence. As the only remaining evidence for this period in Newfoundland and St. John's history the Queen's Battery was part of its heritage. Used as "an 'instrument' to create a sense of belonging to a common place" the Battery became a tool for "nation-building" (Herbert, 1995:13) in Newfoundland. Its development furthered the Hill's historical associations made by Bishop Howley in his 1897 cornerstone address. (Figure 6 - 2, Appendix 5).

The Great Depression

Following the Wall Street crash of 1929 came the world wide Depression of the 1930s. In the United States, in 1930, unemployment passed 4 million and national income fell by \$13 billion (Trager, 1992: 798). The situation was no better in Newfoundland where the Great Depression “soon struck...with devastating force” (Neary, Newfoundland, 1996:11). Newfoundland’s financial situation was already in a precarious state as a result of debt incurred during WWI. With the addition of a collapse in fish prices (Fenwick, 1984: 34) and an increase in relief costs, a deficit was created that the government had difficulty handling. Emigration to the United States or Canada had virtually ceased and many Newfoundlanders were returning home thus increasing the numbers on assistance. In 1932 the announcement that relief rations would be reduced brought about accusations of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds by the Newfoundland government (Neary, Newfoundland, 1996:14). The outcome was the formation of the Amulree Royal Commission to investigate Newfoundland’s financial crisis.

After months of investigation and interviews the Commission’s report was released in October, 1933. As well as stating that 25% of the island’s population were receiving public relief the report also found that Newfoundlanders were so demoralized by their government’s political process they no longer had any confidence in its ability to govern (Fenwick, 1984: 3). The Newfoundland legislature adjourned in December 1933.

Several months later the new Commission of Government was sworn in at the Newfoundland Hotel and government Departments split between six Commissioners. The Commission was divided equally between representatives from Newfoundland and England. Among the later was the Englishman appointed Commissioner of Natural Resources, Sir John Hope Simpson.

Exiles in Newfoundland: The Hope Simpson Letters

Sir John Hope Simpson and his wife, Quita, arrived in St. John's in February, 1934. Quartered at the Hotel Newfoundland during their four year stay the Hope Simpsons maintained contact with their family and friends in England through a steady stream of letters. In these letters both expressed shock at the conditions they found among the poor in Newfoundland. They were, for instance, dismayed to discover how common Beriberi, a vitamin B deficiency, was among the poor who had only "their sects and the gambling game of fishing" (Neary, White Ties, 1996: 63) for comfort. Initially hopeful, Sir John soon discovered that the pace of change in Newfoundland was slow and his power limited. He was appalled at the dishonesty among commercial owners and believed that conditions would not change "until we get a generation decently educated, and until the standard of personal and commercial honesty changes entirely" (Neary, White Ties, 1996: 267).

But, no matter how "disheartened & dispirited" the Hope Simpsons became by complacency or the conditions of the poor, both found solace in the view from their hotel

windows. From this vantage point the Hope Simpsons often noted activities and events at the Hill and harbour. For example, soon after their arrival they witnessed the return of the first of the sealing fleet with “sirens...blowing hard” and “flags strung up on the signal tower” (Neary, White Ties, 1996: 65).³⁸ Other comforting scenes included tobogganing children, two horses rolling in the snow, the rise of the sun and moon, the “12 o’c gun,” and the signal flags (Neary, White Ties, 1996: 259). (Figure 6 - 3, Appendix 5). Serving as a nearby and “wonderful outlet,” walks or drives up to Signal Hill included attempts to capture the view in paint but more importantly to ponder thoughts of home as “we look from Cabot Tower up there away over the ocean to you all” (Neary, White Ties, 1996: 234). Missing her home and family back in England, Quita eagerly looked to Cabot Tower for the flags that signaled the arrival of the mail boat or “home boat,” as it was sometimes called.

Despite the many depressing sights both witnessed during their stay Sir John and Quita developed an attachment to “our Signal Hill” (Neary, White Ties, 1996: 72). When it came time to leave both expressed regret at leaving behind the island’s scenic beauty and the view outside their hotel window:

...when it [the moon] rides high over the harbour & the water glimmers in silver
iridescence or still as a mirrored world, the shadows are black as ink, and the light
in Cabot Tower shines dimly, & the beacon light blazes & dims, & the lighthouse

³⁸ That same season saw the return of the *Beothic* and “all the sirens hooted a welcome to old Captain Kean bringing home his 1,000,000th seal” (Neary, 1996: 81).

blazes & dims, & they throw a streak of golden light across the silver of the harbour. Every night we stand at one window and watch the beauty for a time”

(Neary, White Ties, 1996: 191).

Often ending their letters with a description of this view, Signal Hill (compared several times to Gibraltar) had become a significant landmark in a country that with each passing day the Hope Simpsons found more beautiful. It also gave them a deeper appreciation for why it was said “that the only people who have to be chained to heaven are the Newfoundlanders; they always want to get back to their island” (Neary, White Ties, 1996: 104).

Marconi and his Signal

Fully supported by Hope Simpson, efforts to develop the tourist industry continued throughout the depression when the Tourist and Publicity Commission became the Newfoundland Tourist Development Board (Overton, 1996: 23). Attempts were made to promote the area despite the vandalism and the scavenging of stone from remaining structure like Waldegrave Battery. For example, in 1935 the new board published a series of promotional photographs which included an image of the Queen's Battery. (Figure 6 - 4, Appendix 5). And in 1937, as one of the many work projects for “men on the dole,” improvements were made to Signal Hill Road (The Leader, August 28, 1937: 1). But after being empty for seven years and damaged by vandals, by 1938 the

condition of the Queen's Battery Barracks was less than ideal.⁵⁹ And so with the understanding that he would look after the site, the Newfoundland government gave possession of the building to a Mr. Walter Boone for a \$5.00 fee (Boone, 1980). During the tourist season, Mrs. Boone ran a canteen from the barracks.⁶⁰

In 1937, the year before the Boones moved in, the world mourned the passing of Guglielmo Marconi. The death of the man credited with the beginnings of wireless communication sparked a revisiting of his success at Signal Hill over thirty years earlier. It was then, on December 12, 1901, that Marconi and his assistants had received the first transatlantic wireless signal from Poldhu, Cornwall.⁶¹ Marconi's death prompted Lydia Chancey to revise her 1912 "Signal Hill" poem to honour his historic achievement. Appearing in Volume One of Smallwood's The Book of Newfoundland (1937), Chancey discarded the last four stanzas of her poem and replaced them with:

Here in the chill December
Stood a brave, undaunted man;
Electric waves not impeded
Across the Atlantic span!
Oh, for the masts at Poldhu,

⁵⁹ The signalman, a Mr. Chaytor, who had been living in the building, had been laid off in 1931. By the time Mr. Boone moved into the building the new signalman, Bob Gardner, was housed in a bungalow not far away.

⁶⁰ Among the complaints and suggestions I've heard about Parks Canada's development of Signal Hill, many people have suggested the development of a tea room or snack shack.

⁶¹ In 1938, on the first anniversary of his death, Ethel Weir's poetic tribute to Marconi "Ringing Through Space" appeared in Volume 3 of the Newfoundland Quarterly.

To stretch the wires high!
He frowned at balloons lying,
And the crazy kite to fly,
With indomitable will
He worked on Signal Hill.
To a telephone receiver,
And a kite that soared on high,
With bated breath he listened
As the hour set drew nigh.
A genuine transmission!
Three faint clicks sound anew,
Wireless waves 'cross the ocean!
His faith in his dream come true.
Across the Atlantic thrill
First received on our Hill (Chancey, 1937).

An accurate rendering of the events in 1901, the one fact the poem does not record is exactly where on "our Hill" it took place.

Although Marconi had received the signal in a deserted wing of Signal Hill Hospital, a popular misconception placed the event at Cabot Tower. This error appears as early as 1925 in an article from the Boston based The Newfoundland Weekly: "It was

from the Cabot Tower...that the first wireless messages ever sent across the Atlantic were successfully despatched [sic]..." (Frost, 1925: 3). Not only is the Tower incorrectly reported as the site of the signal, the article also states the signal has having been sent from there rather than received. And although in a 1929 issue of The Premier the signal is correctly reported as having been received at Signal Hill, the location is again reported as Cabot Tower: "It was at this historic Signal Station that Marconi rec'd his first wireless message in 1901" (The Premier, 1929: 27). The error appears again in A Summary of the History and Development of Britain's Oldest Colony from 1497 to 1939:

Crowning Signal Hill is Cabot Tower named after the discoverer of this Island, and used as a signal station for incoming shipping. It was at this tower that Signor Marconi, in 1901, carried on his wireless experiments and saw the successful termination of his efforts to transmit wireless messages..." (Tait, 1939: 38-39).

The Hill's history of communications, e.g. the blockhouse and signal flags, and the fiery destruction of the actual location in 1920, makes this oversight understandable. Other events that may have prompted this connection were; the Canadian Marconi Company's ship-to-shore voice transmissions made from Cabot Tower in 1920 and the establishment in 1933 of a Marconi wireless station on the Tower's second floor. The fact that in two of the above instances the same mistake was made by individuals working for the Newfoundland Weekly may or may not be significant. But the Newfoundland Tourist

Development Office itself did not help clarify the mistake. In fact their pamphlet entitled “Picturesque, Historic, Unspoiled Newfoundland” ambiguously states: “Cabot Tower crowns the historic Signal Hill fortifications at St. John’s. It was at this point that Marconi received the first transatlantic radio signal from the sending apparatus in Poldhu, Cornwall, England” (Newfoundland Tourist Development Office, c. 1940s.)

Although Marconi’s achievement had been greeted with awe around the world the new technology, like the association with Cabot Tower, took several years to perfect.⁶² But regardless of where exactly on Signal Hill it took place the event and its association with Cabot Tower succeeded in adding further historic significance to the site as a whole. Recognized instantly as an event Bishop Howley would have been delighted to add to his list, Marconi’s moment prompted this newspaper comment: “It will be a proud boast for the people of Newfoundland to weigh in the words of the poet... ‘Magna pars quorum fuimus’ [We will be counted amongst those who are mighty]” (Evening Telegram, December 16, 1901).⁶³

⁶² Threatened by Marconi’s work, the Anglo-American Telegraph Company had influenced the Newfoundland government in its decision to deny Marconi permission to continue his work in Newfoundland.

⁶³ A part of Signal Hill National Historic Site, Cabot Tower now houses a Marconi exhibit and an amateur radio station. Throughout the year 2001 various events and celebrations served to mark the Provincial Tourism Office’s communications theme “Ringing Through Space.” As foreseen a century ago by the newspaper reporter, Newfoundlanders continue to look back on the day when “one of the greatest achievements of science was accomplished” (Evening Telegram, December 16, 1901).

World War II

In 1939 Britain declared war with Germany and almost immediately life in Newfoundland changed. Newfoundland's geographic position made it integral to the defense of the North Atlantic and North America. As well as the introduction of defense measures, the opening of recruitment offices, and the training of a militia, St. John's was designated a "defence alarm area" (Neary, 1996: 127). Partial blackouts went into effect and a Commission committee was formed "to meet any emergency that might arise in connection with public administration in the event of an enemy raid on St. John's" (Neary, 1996: 127). American troops arrived at St. John's on January 29, 1941 and by the end of the following month were constructing a base on Signal Hill. As well as establishing an anti-aircraft battery, aircraft recognition station, radar installation and the "Burma Road," there were 18 barracks buildings, two mess halls, and two recreation buildings (Candow, 1989: 10).⁶⁴

The presence of so many Canadian and American troops (15,000) contributed to an economic boom all over Newfoundland. In St. John's rents were on the rise as well as health standards in restaurants and bars (MacLeod, 1986: 44). A guard house established near George's Pond ensured access to Signal Hill was now limited and strictly controlled.⁶⁵ So identifiable was the Hill that images or photographs of it and the

⁶⁴ Built to connect the Hill with the American's Fort Pepperell beside Quidi Vidi, the road was named after the Burma Road being built by allied POWs in Southeast Asia.

⁶⁵ Although one resident of the Battery I spoke with, Bert Sparkes, claimed to have had little trouble accessing the mess hall at Signal Hill many times.

surrounding area were censored throughout the war (Kenney and Murphy, 1989: 54). (Figure 6 - 5, Appendix 5).

Stories of the Hill

Relations between the Newfoundlanders and allied troops were, on the whole, friendly (MacLeod, 1986:1). As well as marriages and lasting friendships with locals, many of the visiting servicemen became interested in the places where they were billeted, including Signal Hill.⁶⁶ This interest extended to the history and folklore of the areas. Years after the war many ex-servicemen wrote about their experiences and sometimes returned to visit. Writing about his time at Signal Hill one American ex-serviceman hoped: "Now that the war is finally won, many of us will some day revisit the familiar scenes of Signal Hill. We hope 'Old Gardiner' will still be there, proudly pointing out the places of interest and basking in the reflections of its historic past..." (Murphy, 1946: 26).⁶⁷

And Signal Hill's historic past had much to offer those "from away." Another ex-serviceman, Ed Saunig, also recalled his time at the Hill. Fascinated by the area's history he found two willing storytellers at his favourite fish and chip shop. Filled with stories of pirate ghosts hanged at Gibbet Hill, Saunig had his own ghostly encounter while returning to his quarters at Signal Hill one evening (Saunig, 1950: 70). Inspired by local

⁶⁶ A comment on a Parks Canada survey sheet dated August 15, 1996 stated: "Husband POW. 4 yrs Aug. 15/45 Japs Surrendered. Tor Scots. Also knew vet who guarded the hill."

⁶⁷ It is likely this would have been Bob Gardner, the chief signalman at Signal Hill before the War.

legends and perhaps the appearance in 1939 of “The Ghost of Deadman’s Pond,” there was plenty of material to draw on for storytelling sessions:

Oh I am the ghost of Deadman’s Pond,
And I cannot rest – until,
Someone finds the gold
Of the pirate bold
That’s hidden on Signal Hill (Furlong, 1939).

Although tourist development was at a standstill during the War the numbers of service personnel in need of leisurely pursuits not only provided “a body of consumers for tourist services” (Overton, 1996: 24) but also a captive audience for local storytellers and historians. And seen through the eyes of people from elsewhere many Newfoundlanders gained a new perspective and sense of pride in their home.

Confederation

World War II had a lasting effect on the society and culture of Newfoundland. The presence of English, Canadian, and American forces dramatically improved the economy as many Newfoundlanders brought home a regular pay of cold, hard cash. And perhaps as a result of the new perspective many Newfoundlanders had of their home a push for an end to the Commission Government came amid rising nationalist sentiments, particularly among the St. John’s elite (Long, 1999: 136). Reflecting this sentiment was

the Newfoundland Tourist Development Board's post-war advertising campaign in which "a particular effort [was] made to excite nostalgia in Newfoundlanders living abroad" (Overton, 1996: 25). Full of nostalgic themes another "Signal Hill" poem appeared in the Newfoundland Quarterly:

Stand high on Cabot's Tower,
That beckons gaily still
To sea farers, and landsmen,
Who've pass'd thou way, and will
Rejoice again to linger
Upon the Signal Hill (Reakes, 1946).

The sights to see from atop Cabot Tower included "majestic icebergs" as well as the "homebound steamer" and "sleek laden sealers." In the harbour schooners would still be seen and the noon hour still "reported by the gun." But as reassuring as these familiar scenes may have been, change was again coming to Newfoundland.

In 1946 a Newfoundland national convention was elected to the House of Assembly at the Colonial Building. By 1948 the referendum debate regarding confederation or responsible government split the country's population. Confederation won by a slim margin. The split in the population's vote was possible to trace on a map. The majority of those who voted for a return to responsible government lived on the Avalon peninsula: "the further away the voters were from St. John's, the less likely they

were to identify with a “national” project whose interests, as they always had been, would remain dominated by the capital” (Long, 1999: 149). It was at this point that Signal Hill ceased to be the “native hill” of every Newfoundlander, if it ever had been, and became a symbol of the Newfoundland nationalist sentiment alive and well in St. John’s and the Avalon region.

Appropriation of a Newfoundland National Icon

As it had in 1897, the history of Newfoundland played a role in nationalist ideas. In 1947, two years before Confederation, the Newfoundland Historical Society celebrated the 450th anniversary of Cabot’s landing with another cornerstone ceremony at Signal Hill. The cornerstone in this instance was to be that of a solarium intended for construction at Signal Hill somewhere southeast of Cabot Tower (Harrington, 1970: 33). The plans “for the marking of the event and the turning of Signal Hill into a Newfoundland historic shrine” were made in collaboration with the Commission Government, but were sidetracked during the “turmoil” of Confederation (Harrington, 1957: 36). The plan resurfaced after 1949 with the efforts of Mr. C.E.A. Jeffery, editor of the St. John’s Evening Telegram and former executive member of the Newfoundland Tourist Development Board

For the men in power in St. John’s, it was vital that the history of the Hill be developed especially if the Canadian government paid the bill. In 1951, a recommendation was passed by Historic Sites and Monuments Board to recognize Signal

Hill as the location of the last battle in North America of the Seven Years War. In 1955 the Liberal member of Parliament for St. John's East, Alan Fraser, urged the Canadian government's acceptance of Signal Hill for development as a national historic park provided "the Provincial Government will give this land and if the park becomes a reality, it will mean that all present historic structures will be saved" (Newfoundland Quarterly 1955: 11). And in his article regarding this development, Michael Harrington agrees that it is fitting to at last have Signal Hill converted into a "national historic shrine" (Harrington, 1957: 36). But Harrington also makes the observation that Signal Hill is "the one place left in or around St. John's where the *city's* [my emphasis] ancient story can be successfully recreated" (Harrington, 1957: 36). As Signal Hill is officially declared a Canadian National Historic Park it no longer officially represents the nation of Newfoundland but rather that of Canada. And yet it also remains a local symbol representing St. John's, the one-time capital of the Dominion of Newfoundland.

Changing Sentiments

The switch from the claim on Signal Hill as national to local symbol is mirrored in several "Signal Hill" works that made their appearance during this period. The work, for example, that appears in the August, 1950 edition of the Atlantic Guardian refers to the Battle of Signal Hill, "When our foes feared the guardian hill / And shunned the cannon's frown," but especially noteworthy are the poem's final few lines:

And still you stand within our gaze,

A gallant old grey hill
Reminding us though times have changed,
We're Newfoundlanders still (Wadman, 1950).

Recalling a battle fought when Newfoundland was not quite a British colony points to the history witnessed by this “old grey hill.” The unchanging nature of Signal Hill is a metaphor for the unchanging identity of Newfoundlanders—regardless of entry into Confederation, “We're Newfoundlanders still” (Wadman, 1950).

The next work, “Battle of Signal Hill,” made its appearance in the same issue of the Newfoundland Quarterly as Fraser's plea to the federal government to make Signal Hill a national historic park. Comprised of eight verses this poem recreates in detail the battle that was to become the commemorated historical event at Signal Hill. Describing the Battle of 1762 as the defeat of D'Haussonville and his “timid Frenchmen” the author points to the “courage keen” and “spirits high” of the victorious Colonel Amherst and his men. Setting their standard in the sun “Of freedom's favoured rule” the work concludes:

No longer does the foreign yoke
Oppress the humble fisherfolk;
The thunders of Britannia spoke
To make Newfoundland free (Windross, 1955).

The pride of having once been a dominion in the Empire of Great Britain is evident as is the glossing over of “Britannia's” own role in the oppression of the “humble fisher folk.”

More importantly, however, is the point that the battle's outcome was Newfoundland's freedom.

The change to local symbol first appears in a "Signal Hill" work published in 1959. As well as the Battle of 1762, added to the historic events worthy of note in this work is Marconi's signal. Other references are to the Hill's role as navigational landmark and the welcoming shelter of St. John's harbour. But while throughout it all Signal Hill has stood in "stern serenity" it is no longer Newfoundland's "native hill" but instead "Our City's sentinel, our country's pride." The association with St. John's is made clear but whether the author was referring to Canada or Newfoundland with the phrase "our *country's pride*" is not. Either way, with its designation as a National Historic Park, Signal Hill became one in a set of Canadian national symbols strung across the country. And resentment on the part of Newfoundland nationalists that the place intended to be a national symbol of Newfoundland had been appropriated by the Canadian wolf was inevitable.

Conclusion

By the end of World War I Newfoundland's economy was in a downturn. As part of its attempt to diversify its economy the government backed the development of tourism. As a result one of the few remaining 19th century English garrison structures on Signal Hill, the Queen's Battery Barracks, was restored in 1928. Although development

of the industry and Newfoundland's first historic site slowed during the Depression and World War II, Signal Hill remained the landscape of home. This association was strengthened after the Second World War when a rise in Newfoundland nationalist sentiment, particularly in St. John's, carried over into the era of Confederation with Canada. This sentiment, as well as the continued development of tourism spurred the 1947 attempt to further develop Signal Hill as a National Historic Site. It wasn't until after Confederation with Canada in 1949, however, that these plans were fulfilled.

Today, Signal Hill National Historic Site is one of the most well attended tourist sites in Newfoundland. A visit to Signal Hill leaves many visitors with a knowledge of its role in military and communications history but not necessarily of its presence and meaning in the lives of local residents. A visitor will not learn that the Hill is a popular place to pick berries, look for sex-in-the-lights, tell stories of bottomless ponds, or that a farm and a community of squatters once existed on its lower slopes. This local knowledge involves the "emotions which local residents attach to their place and the components of their place, feelings which arise from a knowledge of place-based history and identity and which inevitably tinge their contemplation of their physical surroundings" (Ryden, 1993: 66) and often does not appear on maps or interpretive plaques.

A part of what makes us feel we belong, local knowledge contributes to our sense of identity. Whether defined as place-based meaning, invisible knowledge, local

knowledge or place identity, it is a part of an individual's and community's understanding of who they are, who they are not, how they have changed, and into what they are changing (Hull et al, 1993; Ryden, 1993; Feld and Basso, 1996). As a Canadian National Historic Site, Signal Hill is intended to contribute to a shared sense of identity among Canadians. But since Confederation in 1949, "there has been a steady rise in a self-conscious pride in being Newfoundlanders, in being different from everyone else, in asserting to Canada that shaping this land in its image will not work, that a solid core of disgruntlement exists here that is a mix of independence and resentment" (Walsh and Jamieson, 1996: 36). This resentment may have contributed to the city-based protest against Parks Canada's attempt to institute a user fee at the Hill in 1996. As will be seen in the following chapter this protest indicated that while Signal Hill may not matter to every Newfoundlander, for the residents of St. John's it holds a deep and widely shared significance.

Chapter Seven - The Battle for Signal Hill

Introduction

The designation of Signal Hill as a National Historic Site can be seen as the final phase in a process begun with the construction of Cabot Tower in 1897. As a constructed symbol representing Newfoundland's beginnings and national identity it was inevitable that the entire landscape at Signal Hill should become a site for the further definition of this identity through the development of its history.⁶⁸ If "the meaning of place depends on its boundaries" (Bogard, 1999:229) then it is not surprising that a restructuring of space has been a part of this process. Continuing on into the present this slow restructuring reflects in part a similar process occurring throughout the province and indeed the world. A step in this reorganisation of space provoked a protest early in March of 1996 when Parks Canada announced a the personal user fee (PUF) was about to be established at several Newfoundland National Historic Sites.

Essentially an access fee, similar to what is paid at the entrance to Banff National Park, the user fee incited a public outcry. (Figure 7 - 1, Appendix 5). Although affecting several other Newfoundland sites the protest quickly focused on Signal Hill. With its continued resonance as a symbol of home Signal Hill was an obvious choice for this focus as restricting access to it would seriously impact on its traditional use as a

⁶⁸ Although it has predominantly been the military history of Signal Hill that is interpreted at the site, the last ten years have seen an increased interest in heeding the public's recommendations made in 1984 to represent "all aspects of the Hill's history" (Parks Canada, 1984: 3).

commons—a development similar to what has been taking place throughout Newfoundland and Labrador over the last decade. In a province that has a high percentage of Crown land—the majority of which has been long been easily accessed and utilized—the land “has been regarded by many people as an extension of their own backyards” and free use of it and the resources harvested from it a “treasured tradition” (Jackson, 1995: 135).

In the early 1990s the Canadian government declared a moratorium on the cod fishery, a blow not only to the province’s economy but also to the identity of many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Most of those who had made their living through the harvesting of the “last great commons,” the sea, lost more than their livelihoods. More recent issues regarding other sea and land resources have further affected this “treasured tradition.” The PUF protest which focused on Signal Hill was not only against the enclosure of a community’s commons but, in a wider sense was a reaction to the continued restructuring of Newfoundland space and resources within a Canadian and increasingly global context.

The Tradition of the Commons

Belonging both to the city and its residents most communities contain within their midst a public space. Often in the form of a city park these spaces frequently evolve from a traditional *commons*, or what the Random House Dictionary (1992) defines as “a tract

of land owned jointly by members of a community.” In medieval European communities the central commons was used to raise food and/or graze farm animals. This tradition was upset in the 12th century when unoccupied or waste land began to be removed from common or public use. In Britain, for example, the land enclosures of the 17th and 18th centuries left thousands homeless and destitute. And despite the resulting increase in agricultural production many of these displaced individuals suffered from starvation. Those who could afford to emigrate to North America did so. Competition for land was not as fierce and there was plenty of space for the commons tradition to be carried on.

As towns and cities grew, both in Europe and North America, the central common areas were taken over. In place of pastures and community gardens, symbols of military and civil authority (fort, garrison, town hall, or hanging scaffold) were constructed. Although no longer at the community’s centre the tradition of the commons continued at its outer fringes. As time passed and towns grew into cities even these fringe areas became contested. For example, during the 19th century, these undeveloped areas often became the focus for a growing concern over the loss of wilderness:

As the conditions of industrial cities worsened, reformers within the elite appropriated nature in the form of city parks and vast regional preserves and private estates so as to mitigate urban conditions without changing the political structure of society. In the process, nature was conceived as something other than the fields and woodlands of subsistence communities; the ideal model of nature

became wilderness. As such, this assertion of cultural hegemony over the countryside was intrinsically patriarchal. It vested stewardship over the land in a national elite rather than in rural communities, and separated nature from nurture (Simpson, 1992: 573).

In St. John's this process may result in the slow and steady loss of one of the community's last commons—Signal Hill.

Social Control and the Restructuring of Space

The "rough" plebian culture" of blood sports, fist-fighting, November bonfires and unruly wakes and fairs became the target of Victorian reform during the mid-19th century (MacMaster, 1990: 117). Strategies to modify and curb popular street culture involved the restructuring and social control of space. As well as stricter regulations on public behavior there was "an attempt to deny physical access to the types of space, the traditional open locations, which were vital to popular leisure and ritual" (ibid). Civic authorities first concentrated on these central areas in which they constructed symbols of their control like the town hall and public park.

The creation of the public park, for example, was regarded as an "alternative provision for rational recreation" where it was hoped "The lower orders, through proximity to the model of good behaviour and dress offered by the middle class, would pick up respectable values through a kind of mimicry or cultural osmosis" (MacMaster, 1990: 119). But the "lower classes," forced out of the city's central area, had already

moved on to take up residence in the unregulated open spaces on the community's fringes. There they continued to practice their "deviant" recreational behaviours. With the continued development and growth of cities it was inevitable that these fringe areas would be encroached upon. And they were—by the increasing numbers of the middle class headed into the heathlands, woodlands, and commons to pursue their own brand of leisure.

The Battle for Mousehold Heath

According to Charles R. Simpson the social control of space, or "stewardship of the land," became a legitimating ideology for the cultural hegemony of the 19th century business class (Simpson, 1992: 556). This ideology was evident in the battle over an area known as Mousehold Heath, outside Norwich, England. Brought to the attention of Norwich's elite through the paintings of various landscape artists, the pits and quarries of the area's brickmakers were considered an eyesore. Several philanthropists came forward with donations to be put towards the development of the Heath as a public park. The plan met with opposition from the residents who organized against the proposed stewardship plan.

The area's inhabitants, who had a reputation for violence and criminal behaviour, were not easily moved. Each time a park plan was brought forward it met with resistance. Organized by a committee from the adjoining Pockthorpe community, residents claimed that they "from time immemorial exercised all right of ownership" over

Mousehold Heath (as cited in MacMaster, 1990: 136). Serving as a demonstration that stewardship was not agreeable to everyone a bitter battle ensued. Although the legal battle, begun in 1857, did not end until 1884, the restructuring of the Heath's space began almost immediately. The first step in this process was a series of restrictions placed on residents' behaviour:

Apart from the most obvious prohibitions on digging for minerals or cutting down trees and plants, they banned gamblers, card-sharps, gypsies, squatters, and vagrants; quots or any other game "destructive to the surface;" the throwing of any stone, stick or missile; any persons who shall "brawl or fight, or use violent or indecent or improper language;" the selling of "any indecent or infamous book, print, photograph or pictures;" any assemblage of persons who might obstruct the public; and the drying of clothes or beating of carpets (MacMaster, 1990: 150).

Added to these restrictions was the insidious landscaping or "skilful 'civilizing' of space" achieved through the creation of facilities like pathways (ibid). When the enclosure and landscaping of the heath was finalized, it was accomplished with the assistance of a local banker and, tellingly, a barrister whose expertise lay in the law of common land.

Signal Hill as Commons

Evidence for the early communal use of Signal Hill comes from its original name, the Lookout. Other examples of communal use include the harvesting of wood and stone,

the establishment of gardens (Harding, 1993: 9), land for grazing, community bonfires (Candow, 1981: 21), and presumably berry pickers.⁶⁹ (Figure 7 - 2, Appendix 5). In the 20th century traditional activities like the harvesting of berries continued (Figure 7 - 3, Appendix 5) while others like the drills of the Church Lads Brigade faded to be replaced with ceremonies, marches, and star gazing.⁷⁰ (Figure 7 - 4, Appendix 5). Exactly when it became a dumping ground for garbage is difficult to say with certainty. (Figure 7 - 5, Appendix 5).

The earliest reference to conflict over ownership at Signal Hill dates from 1803 when Joan Vinnicombe made a formal protest regarding the road built by the English garrison in 1786. Her protest stated that the road had been cut through a piece of land “which had been in the possession of her family beyond the memory of any person now living in this place” (Newfoundland Ancestor, 1991: 11). As an example of the informality of early land ownership, this passage is also the earliest evidence for a formal restructuring of space at Signal Hill.⁷¹

Later evidence for this type of negotiation of space occurs following the site’s declaration as a National Historic Park. In one instance a conflict arose over the Queen’s

⁶⁹ Parks Canada’s, “Preliminary Natural Resource Inventory” notes the Signal Hill area once had more tree cover (primarily spruce, alders and fir). Presumably, much of it was harvested for fuel and building materials. Stone from a quarry at Gibbet Hill later also provided building materials for much of the construction at Signal Hill and several buildings in St. John’s. And near the end of the 19th century, a Mr. John Score established a nursery and greenhouse on the Hill’s southern slopes (“Lovely ‘Limeville,’” Daily News, May 28, 1897).

⁷⁰ The Hill continues to be a focus for events such as the viewing of Comet Hale-Bopp that the local astronomical society arranged during the spring of 1997.

⁷¹ Vinnicombe was given a piece of property “on the Barrens near the town of St. John’s” in compensation.

Battery Barracks when its longtime resident, Mr. Boone, claimed ownership (Boone, 1980). Boone had been appointed caretaker of the Queen's Battery by the Newfoundland government in 1930. When, in 1958, Boone was asked to leave by officials from the Department of Indian Affairs he refused. The situation became a legal matter until the fire that destroyed the building in 1961 resolved the matter.⁷²

A lesser conflict arose when members of the small squatter community, made up of approximately 39 houses, were asked to leave by representatives of the federal government. (See Appendix 4). According to a long-time Hill resident the first families had moved into the area across from Deadman's Pond sometime in the early 1930s. This corresponds to the Hope-Simpsons letters in which the presence of squatters is noted on "government land either side of the harbour" (Neary, 1996: 125). Soon after the federal government takeover in 1958 the squatters were evicted from the area (Boone, 1980). Each household was offered a sum of money and while about half of the small community was upset at having to leave most were gone within two years (Interview 31). The last family left sometime around 1968 (Interview 29).

Although the removal of the residents of this small community did not seem to cause much of a public reaction at the time, the installation of a gate at the site's entrance during this period did. Intended to close the Hill off to vehicular traffic during the evenings, perhaps as an attempt to curb the numbers of lovers making use of the summit

⁷² This fire was attributed to vandals. The fire that destroyed the Signalman's residence was rumoured to have been set by a Park Canada employee.

parking lot, the gate was quickly removed when the “whole city just went berserk” (Interview 22). This early brush with conflict over public access to the Hill does not seem to have informed the decision made almost 40 years later to restrict access again.

Fringe Area Behavior

While the Hill is used today primarily as a casual recreation area it is clear from my informants and personally witnessed events that integral to the Hill’s function as a commons are the “deviant” or fringe behaviors performed there. A sampling of this behavior includes: the consumption of alcohol and illegal drugs—sometimes around prohibited camp fires; the performance of pagan and wiccan rituals; nude sunbathing, or the rarer nude photographer’s model. (Figure 7 – 6, Appendix 5). Among the more well-known behaviors are trysting lovers and the lesser well-known voyeurs or *skimmers* who spy on them.⁷³ (Figure 7 – 7, Appendix 5). Other evidence includes the presence of a flasher during the summer of 1999 and the discovery of a collection of sex toys, women’s clothing, shoes, lingerie, and several transvestite or transexual magazines in a trash can near the Visitor’s Centre during the summer of 2000.

Social Control and the Restructuring of Space at Signal Hill

While I’ve seen no evidence to suggest that municipal or federal employees are overly concerned with these examples of fringe behavior, nonetheless a slow restructuring of space is occurring at Signal Hill. Among the changes that have taken

place since the Hill's take-over by Parks Canada are: the paving of the summit parking lot; the construction of an interpretation centre; the reconstruction of Queen's Battery; archaeological excavations; the refurbishment of the Imperial Powder Magazine as well as Cabot Tower; and, as at Mousehold Heath, the institution of various prohibitions. For example, it is now illegal to harvest wood, start a fire, pitch a tent, or discharge a firearm within the boundaries of the National Historic Site. These and other prohibitions, however, are often ignored.⁷⁴ Dog owners, for example, pay little attention to the signs that order them to keep their animals on their leads.⁷⁵ (Figure 7 – 8, Appendix 5). Evidence that walkers and hikers often ignore the warnings to stay on the clearly marked trails can be seen in the many footpaths that criss-cross the Hill. Signs prohibiting climbing are also ignored, sometimes leading to dramatic rescues and the rare disappearance. (Figure 7 – 9, Appendix 5). Off-limits to swimmers, individuals occasionally have to be removed from George's Pond. And although Parks management has not yet erected signs to warn off berry pickers there have been some concerns expressed over their increased numbers.

⁷³ I first heard the term *skimmer* in reference to a group of individuals who regularly go to the Hill, binoculars or zoom-lens in hand, to spy on lovers. The definition, according to the Dictionary of Newfoundland English is "voyeur, peeping tom" (1990: 485).

⁷⁴ A long time Parks Canada employee related to me a story that an even older employee had once told her of having to chase off a cow sometime in the 1960s. Presumably the cow wandered up the hill from Conner's Farm located on the lower slopes across the road from the present-day Battery Hotel. I have also been told that a man was discovered in the Cuckold's Cove area doing some target shooting with live ammunition. And in 1997/98 an illegal campfire, set on the Hill's lower slopes, was discovered and contained before it could do much damage.

⁷⁵ Parks Canada maintains that dogs can frighten off the few remaining ground birds in the area.

These activities emphasize the prevailing local attitude towards Signal Hill as a commons; “people view this site as theirs. They don’t recognize the federal government’s jurisdiction over it...” (Interview 27). (Figure 7 – 10, Appendix 5). Contributing to this lack of recognition for federal jurisdiction is the unregulated zone of city property and crown land that surrounds the historic site. The boundary between these zones is not clearly marked. Markers embedded in rock and a few small yellow signs on metal posts are often all that distinguish the boundary between city or crown land and the historic site.⁷⁶ This almost invisible boundary is as sketchy in people’s minds as it is in the landscape; “it seems to have no beginning and no end, it just sort of leaches out of the landscape” (Interview 26).⁷⁷ (Figure 7 – 11, Appendix 5).

The prevalence of pathways leading on and off the site has contributed both to this lack of definition and to the reshaping of the landscape. Although the maintenance of pathways on the federal site is the responsibility of Parks Canada’s the development and improvements over the last decade, on and off site, has been financed in part by local philanthropist Paul Johnson:

So that’s really how it started...I think he just had a habit of going to Signal Hill a lot and decided, I guess, probably in the mid to late ‘80s that it was a shame that

⁷⁶ The location of the new Johnson Geo Centre at the edge of the historic site boundary may help establish the line more clearly.

⁷⁷ Although the citizens might not be, municipal authorities are very aware of the boundary. During the summer of 2000, while I was working at Signal Hill, a car was abandoned in one of the site’s parking lots. The city of St. John’s and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary were contacted, but both claimed the car to be beyond their jurisdiction as it was on federal property. A 24 hour notice was placed on the car, should the owner return, following which the car was towed away at the federal government’s expense.

there wasn't a little bit more development on the summit of Signal Hill to make it easier for...people to go up there and have a look...He just felt making it a little bit more user-friendly was important. From that came his concept for the walkway network for the whole city, for the whole region... (Interview 23).

Not everyone regards these widened, paved and stepped pathways as an improvement. In fact several of the people I interviewed expressed their disapproval stating their opinion that the Hill has become “much too under control” (Interview 2). A glimpse of the landscape before many of today’s improvements “when the North Head Trail was a dirt path, no gravel, no chains, no nothing....” (Interview 27), can be found in “Message from Signal Hill,” a poem by Gary Geddes;

I hadn't noticed
the path peter out until my foot settled
on a horizontal ladder of pegged logs
stretching over a narrow fissure in the rock.
A hundred feet below the sullen
Atlantic emits unfestive gutterals
and sharpens its teeth on granite.
Out here the elements are in cahoots.
Speech is a wound. The quaint harbour
and pastel houses might never have occurred.

A misplaced foot, or word, and I'm a goner (Geddes, 1990: 24).

People enjoy the element of danger that is present in the Hill's landscape because it represents the area's legacy of struggle against the odds. A visitor from England expressed her appreciation this way, "it's [Signal Hill] not made into this ultra-safe environment and that's...in a, it sounds weird, but in a way that's really nice about it, that it hasn't been too tamed and too subdued for the tourist, or the visitor, or the traveler, whoever walks around it, it still has that element of risk attached to it" (Interview 26). But the ongoing and subtle reshaping of the landscape has combined with prohibitions on behaviour to increase the social control of space at Signal Hill.⁷⁸ (Figure 7 – 12, Appendix 5).

Conflict at Signal Hill: The PUF Protest

The protest against the Parks Canada personal user fee at several Newfoundland historic sites was pronounced. Objection to the PUF appeared in local newspapers, on local television, radio broadcasts, and even the St. John's City Council officially announced its objection. City councillor, Dorothy Wyatt organized a petition. A protest song, penned and recorded by St. John's native, Janet Michael, was broadcast on CBC Radio which also conducted and broadcast live from the Hill a public opinion poll of the

⁷⁸ Identifying themselves as a former Parks Canada employee, one individual wrote in the Signal Hill Visitors Resource Centre guest book, "I'm completely disgusted, once again, with Parks Canada. What's with the paved walkway behind the Tower leading to the Queen's Battery? Put up a couple of signs (you like those) to warn people not to slip. When will Parks Canada just leave well enough alone. You are destroying the natural beauty you are mandated to preserve. This isn't the Rideau Canal. Why not put money into removing graffiti from the North Head Trail?" (October 2, 1999).

PUF. Needless to say there were few positive responses. Within two weeks of the original declaration Parks Canada reversed its decision with the announcement that it would not institute the user fee at Cape Spear, Castle Hill, nor at Signal Hill National Historic Sites. (Figure 7 - 13, Appendix 5).

The publicly expressed opinions via the local media regarding the fee were insightful. A photograph of a lone person strolling towards Cabot Tower swathed in fog appeared in the Express with the following caption:

Foggy Notion—An uneasy fog has settled over Signal Hill since Parks Canada announced voluntary users fees will be charged visitors to local national historic sites beginning May 15. Despite the poor outlook Tuesday, some local residents were trying to take in the view while it was still free (Express, February 28, 1996: 1).

Local resident, John Perlin, expressed his opinion that the fee was “sheer lunacy...we don’t want to pay anything at all to be able to walk around our publicly paid for parks enjoying the land in which we live!” (Evening Telegram, March 4, 1996). Concern over access to these sites by those with “lower incomes” was expressed by city councillors Dorothy Wyatt and Jeff Brace (Evening Telegram, February 27, 1996: 3). Similarly, Maura Hanrahan felt the fee would result in the sites’ commercialization ensuring their fate as a “reserve” for “an elite” (Evening Telegram, March 13, 1996). While these arguments were powerful it is important to remember that this type of legitimizing

argument for the preservation of open spaces has been made before: "...when expedient, those fighting encroachments offered humanitarian and medical reasons for preserving open park space as the 'lungs' of the poor" (Bogart, 1999: 243).

Although the protest did result in the withdrawal of the PUF some felt the victory was hollow:

It is important Newfoundlanders not be charged to see their beloved landmarks, but get a grip. Last week's rant and roar didn't change anything on the only hill that really counts in this country. We are still stuck with the same bunch of Quebec-whipped, gelatin-based, deficit-reduction worshippers we foisted upon ourselves in a moment of weakness... (Express, March 6, 1996).

These comments by Express staff writer, Curtis Rumbolt, exemplify the popularly expressed local opinion that the federal government knows, or cares, little about Newfoundland and Labrador. This suspicion of the federal government is also expressed in Janet Michael's protest song in which the user fee becomes one more example of the exploitation of Newfoundland's resources by Ottawa.

Have you heard the latest news in town about old Signal Hill

The boys in the capital dishing out crap again

When will it ever end?

Oh, they want to put their hands into our pockets one more time

And make us all pay some more for what was ours before

But they'll never get their hands on mine

(Chorus) Oh they'll never, Oh they'll never get a dollar out of me

Those rock cliffs I'll scale, they can land me in jail

But they'll never get a dollar out of me (song collected from Janet Michael, 1997).

Michael's lyrics specifically appeal to Newfoundland nationalists when she sings that it's one thing for the federal government to be introducing such restrictions, but it's inconceivable, as she states in the next verse, that "a townie born and bred would hatch this plan." That would make him/her "a shame to his race" and "a traitor to this land."⁷⁹

The indignation expressed in Michael's song lyrics was echoed by several of my informants when I questioned them about this issue:

- "The fee?! (laughter) Don't get me started. I knew there was going to be a problem as soon as they started building stupid little steps out there and it was just downhill all the way from that, you know..." (Interview 2)
- "Oh, that's ridiculous! That's completely ridiculous, I can't believe that....No, you can't do that, it's part of our city, it's part of our city, it's public space, it's part of the space that we use living in this city..." (Interview 25).
- "Oh god, don't talk to me about that, I think that's disgusting. That's typical (laughter) of the kind of thing that gets done you know" (Interview 24).

⁷⁹ Reference to tension between "townies" and "baymen," the former representing city residents and the latter representing the outport fishermen or 'true' Newfoundlanders.

The issue became a source of family tension for one Parks Employee: “To be perfectly honest, when this issue broke my father and I had fairly strong words because he is a very traditional user and he felt it wasn’t very appropriate” (Interview 28). Yet the concept of development at Signal Hill is not necessarily unwelcome. It is the type of development that seems at issue.

At the same time that many locals protested against the user fee some also expressed their opinion that the government’s control over the hill and its designation as a National Historic Site were important. Some even felt that the hill’s designation protected resources that would otherwise have been lost in commercial developments:

I’m fully convinced that if Signal Hill wasn’t a National Historic Park and if someone outside the province hadn’t told the provincial government that it was important and needed to be protected that there’d be people living up there now, there’d be a mall up there, there’d be...whatever. Cabot Tower, quite possibly, wouldn’t be standing” (Interview 16).

In 1976 local writer, Michael Harrington complained that the federal government had not done much more than “stabilize” the site since its takeover in 1958. He called for the development and reconstruction of the 18th century military buildings uncovered by the 1966/67 archaeological excavations:

The Historic Trust has stated they are willing to provide whatever resource assistance they possess. But they feel strongly that this is the ultimate

responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and they are absolutely right. There's no point in making the excuse that its difficult to select, and decide on a particular period of history or piece of construction" (Harrington, 1976: 18).

One of my informants had a similar opinion, making the very valid point that the federal government's interest in development was minimal; contextualizing the site primarily in military rather than local and social history. Recently the site's commemoration was expanded to include the history of communications, but there is still little to suggest that the site's medical history will be developed any time soon. In fact, four years ago plans for the replacement of signs that would expand the interpretation of areas like Gibbet Hill seemed to promise this oversight would be rectified. The new signs have yet to make their appearance.

An example of the type of history that has not been commemorated by anyone is the existence of the squatters' area once located just outside the National Historic Site's boundaries. Although aware of its past existence, I did not come across more than a few references to it during my research—until the summer of 1999. While working as a photographer for Parks Canada I met a woman who claimed to have lived in the squatter's area. Arriving at the Signal Hill Visitor's Centre with a large, framed photograph of several children playing hockey on a frozen pond, she was looking for someone to tell her story to. The pond in the photograph was called Frog Pond, and it

once existed in front of her family's house where this woman had spent her childhood. Located at the city's archives, it was the only photograph she had managed to trace that depicted her childhood neighbourhood. I was very interested in what this woman could tell me and arranged to talk to her further. At our subsequent meeting she told me that she had lived in the squatter's area with her family until she was about ten years old. What follows is based on the memories that she and her older sister shared with me.

When Parks Canada took over the area, 1957/58, the squatters were said to have been relocated. Some people were apparently bought out by the federal government while others tore their houses down in order to sell the wood. By 1968 they, and the evidence of their existence, were gone. The houses had been simple with no indoor plumbing. People got their water from a pipe that ran down from George's Pond. These two women recalled the daily collection of water from the pipe, which was located not too far from their house. Getting to the pipe was somewhat precarious as it entailed negotiating a small cliff. In the summer and fall they subsidized their diet with many of the Hill's berries, such as blueberries (Vaccinium spp.) partridgeberries (Vaccinium vitis-idaea) and plumboys (Rubus spp.). As well as skating on Frog and Deadman's Ponds they used to play in a submerged, possibly WWII, bunker near the pump house, which they referred to as the wishing well. Although off limits, particularly because of the newsprint which smoldered away for years, they occasionally went to Ross's Valley. The Grove was the name they called a favourite spot of theirs to play and picnic. After

moving away the two girls and their siblings would often return to visit the hill they loved. As parents both have brought their children to the Hill in order to show them the fast disappearing familiar landmarks of their childhood. Shocked at the changes in the area one sister told me she felt as if someone were purposefully “covering up the history” (Interview 29). While a concerted effort to neglect this aspect of history is doubtful, it is not the first time or place in which the presence of the poor, or disenfranchised, have been overlooked and forgotten.⁸⁰ (Figure 7 - 14, Appendix 5).

For the woman who approached Parks Canada with the photograph of the children playing on Frog Pond, Signal Hill was a nurturing place or, as she simply put it, “my mother” (Interview 28). For many others Signal Hill is simply home, its timeless quality making it one of the few remaining symbols of what is perceived to be a dissolving Newfoundland identity: “We have lost our railway. We have lost our fishery. We have lost a lot of things since Confederation. Don’t let us lose Signal Hill” (Express, February 15, 1996). This sentiment was echoed by one of my informants when I asked her what she thought of the importance of National Historic sites:

Well, I suppose it's a good thing to recover your history and everything. I think it's all, in one way I kind of resent it because it's something that has been taken away from us, you know? I see this in all kinds of life here, all kinds of things

⁸⁰ At the turn of the 19th century City Hall Park, in New York, was home to many poor immigrant children who played games, shined shoes, hawked newspapers, and often slept on park benches. The work that went into cleaning up the park, restructuring its space, “were clearly responding to the reality that the park was indeed a more broadly public area than many would have preferred” (Bogart, 1999:243).

going on here... people used to be able to fish quite freely in the season, now you can't fish anymore. Now you can't hunt anymore, you know? There are all these things that you can't do anymore and some of them, I think, are probably a good idea. But it does seem to me that there's great limitation on people's personal freedom. There's all kinds of rules and regulations that I'm not keen on. I think the kind of tourist development that they're going to do has very little to do with history and an awful lot to do with inducing people to come here and spend their money (Interview 24).

The fact that the user fee protest focused around Signal Hill and took place almost exclusively in St. John's proves its strong connection to a local identity that includes a tradition of access to the resources of land and sea. The patriotism, or love of one's home, expressed in this protest is born from the intimate experience and local knowledge many residents have not only of Signal Hill, but of the city and area as a whole. The natural environment demands nothing less. Centuries of living in close proximity to the land and sea has created this attachment and has made survival in a climate of constant rain, drizzle and fog a point of pride. Recognizing what they termed the 'Right of Residency' or strong feeling for the public right to use open space and Crown Land in Newfoundland, Parks Canada withdrew the PUF.

Kent Ryden (1993) has suggested that "local culture brings with it a feeling of care for place, for both natural and cultural landscapes" (Ryden, 1993: 253). And yet on

both sides of the debate over access to Newfoundland's resources are accusations of exploitation. In several communities where provincial and federal powers have restricted access to resources, locals accuse them of mismanagement. For example, in the communities which touch and cross over into the boundaries of Terra Nova National Park, residents point to the fire hazard caused by stands of deadwood they are no longer allowed to harvest. On the other hand there are local representatives of the federal government who accuse Newfoundlanders of thoughtless exploitation of resources.

One of my informants made the point that technology has changed how many Newfoundlanders harvest resources. For example, the use of fish finders and ATV's has changed the traditional usage patterns:

... if you walk the grounds you might get a dozen birds. With an ATV you can cover four or five times the amount and get access to four or five dozen birds. But rather than cut yourself off at a dozen birds you shoot those four, five dozen birds....And then they come back and say, 'Well, I don't know where all the birds are gone?' It's sort of the 'must be someone else's problem' kind of thing. And I find that really difficult at times with Newfoundlanders. And that extrapolates into an attitude that, 'I better get it because if I don't get it someone else will get it'—a very destructive attitude. It's only changing now over the last few years and I think in some ways the moratorium has helped that by realizing that these resources are not infinite (Interview 27).

Education, as this individual believes, may help foster change but discernible in these debates are the pressures resources are under the world over. Management of fisheries, forests, and water, will continue to be problematic as long as we view them as infinitely renewable. The only solution may be to impose boundaries and ownership over resources traditionally viewed as belonging to whoever harvests them first—a process that is sure to lead to conflict (Homer-Dixon, 2000: 177).

Conclusion

Space is often regularly redefined throughout the development of a community. Once integral to a community's subsistence, a central commons area may be regulated into a centre for the symbols of civic authority. Activities once pursued on the central commons move out into the less developed edges of the community. Continued growth ensures that these spaces will in their turn be redefined and subjected to regulation. And if inevitable expansion is "the destiny of our landscapes" then it is "the boundary that eventually becomes an instrument of contact and confrontation" (Jackson, 1995: 45).

Although the presence of the 19th century garrison at Signal Hill did provide a structuring of space for many years this order began to break down as the military presence in St. John's declined. But when in 1897 the construction of Cabot Tower began, so too did an effort to restructure and hence control the public space at Signal Hill. This process continued off and on throughout the 20th century with the development of

the Queen's Battery, the establishment of a WWII military base, and the 1947 plans to establish the Hill as a "Newfoundland historic shrine" (Harrington, 1957: 36). This particular plan was only achieved following confederation with Canada and the designation of Signal Hill as a National Historic Park.

As in several other eastern North American cities where a traditional commons areas has evolved into a prized, protected place and symbol of the city (Boston Commons in Boston, MA, Central Park in New York, NY, and Mount Royal in Montreal, QC) in St. John's, Newfoundland it is Signal Hill.⁸¹ But while development, landscaping and prohibitions have contributed to the social control of the space at Signal Hill it also continues to function as a commons: "the place where nature's bounty is available to all who live nearby....where a villager is reminded of the humble origins of the community: the coming together of people for survival" (Jackson, 1995:47).

Perhaps no longer used to harvest wood, graze animals, or grow food, Signal Hill maintains several of its traditional uses and so, as demonstrated by the user fee protest, came to represent the wider commons or wilderness of the province. And although the cod moratorium still rules, and restrictions on other marine and land resources (such as nickle, timber, oil and water) continue to be negotiated (on the federal, provincial, and international level) the fact that the recognition for a commons tradition in Newfoundland was essentially fought and won at Signal Hill demonstrates the evolution of its symbolic

⁸¹ Other popular city parks within St. John's include, Bannerman, Bowring, and Pippy Parks.

value into a landscape that represents not only the local, but also the wider Newfoundland and Labrador commons tradition.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

Introduction

In 2000 the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Western Australia announced a program entitled, "Land Place Culture Identity." Taking the significance of place as its central theme this program of research activities "recognised that people's sense of place is a critical aspect of how they articulate their identities as individuals, families, ethnic groups and nations" (http://www.ias.uwa.edu.au/land_trigger.html). While the connection between identity and landscape has long been recognized in studies of literature, regional folklore, and cultural geography today there appears to be a new emphasis within many disciplines on how place informs and reflects personal/group, regional/national, and cultural/political identity. If, as Lauri Honko states, identity is based on a "we experience and a sense of belonging" examining the meanings attached to symbols or icons of place contributes to our understanding of how place and identity inform one another (as cited in Suojanen, 1998: 117).

Thesis Outline

Framing the bulk of this thesis are two chapters which illustrate local understanding and use of Signal Hill by St. John's residents today. Through their words and actions we get a glimpse of a shared world view influenced by the surrounding environment. In the first of these two chapters, *A St. John's Sense of Place*, I explored the city's present day sense of place from my perspective as an outsider as well as

through the words of local residents. I discovered a significant theme involving the sometimes ambivalent feelings that survival here has brought about. This theme revolves around the determination to remain, to stay rooted in this place despite economic hardship and a quixotic environment. In part a reaction to the social change of the last 60 years this tenacity is reflected in the landscape of Signal Hill where, among its multiple layers of meaning are those which represent constancy and perpetuity. But this has not always been the case.

For early residents and visitors to Newfoundland and St. John's—many of whom regarded the environment as harsh and the landscape as inhospitable—home was often far away and elsewhere. In Chapter Three, *Far from Home; Early Perceptions of Newfoundland*, I explored this theme through examples of 18th and early 19th century writings. And what became clear are the reasons why Newfoundland was often seen as an unexplored and unknown periphery. The island's isolation and the fact that it was the site for frequent battles over territory and resources between European interests, made it easy to unfavorably contrast with an often idealized home. But, while everyone who came to Newfoundland brought with them their own sentiments and attachments to home, these bonds varied in strength.

A less than ideal life made it easier for people to leave their homes in favour of a new life elsewhere. Yet as people continued to migrate through or settle in Newfoundland, connections to their old communities and, more importantly, identities on

the other side of the Atlantic remained strong. This is the focus of Chapter Four, *Identity in an Emerging Capital* in which I illustrated the continuation, in Newfoundland, of the animosity already established between the English and Irish. This struggle, represented best by the division between Protestants and Catholics, was responsible for the creation of a rift in 19th century Newfoundland's emerging political system. In a rather backward way this division helped contribute to the beginnings of a distinct Newfoundland identity when it spurred the establishment of the Native Society. But as St. John's grew into the island's capital it was the distinction made between St. John's residents, or 'townies,' and virtually everybody else on the island, referred to as 'baymen,' that really helped establish it. And Signal Hill, the focus for ship's signals and time-keeping, became a central feature in the townie's daily routine.

In Chapter Five, *Inscribing Signal Hill: Nation and Home*, I examined the more official formation of a unique Newfoundland identity through the 1897 Cabot-Jubilee celebrations. Based on the transatlantic fishery and migration, this identity combined a new sense of Newfoundland nationalism with Imperial patriotism and local pride (Smrz, 1994). But dependent as it still was on the fishery the island's fluctuating economy often compelled its inhabitants to leave. And it was through these journeys away that the affective ties to home, the "centre of felt value" (Eyles as in Hay, 1998: 247), were re-discovered anew by the descendants of those European immigrants who long ago left their homes for Newfoundland. Now crowned by Cabot Tower, Signal Hill became

Newfoundland's "native Alpine" and was soon associated with the nostalgia for home experienced by economic exiles.

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Signal Hill continued to evolve as a national and historic landscape. In Chapter Six, *The Development of History and Heritage*, this evolution is demonstrably furthered through the development of tourism. One of several new industries created by the government, tourism was responsible for the establishment of Newfoundland's first historic site, the Queen's Battery at Signal Hill. The Hill itself, although delayed by Second World War and the Confederation debate, was declared a national historic site in 1958. Under the control of the Canadian Federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Signal Hill became one of many sites created throughout Canada as part of a national system of parks and historic sites.

Development since the take-over by Parks Canada has been relatively minimal. Other than the refurbishment or reconstruction of already existing buildings the only new additions have been a maintenance compound and a Visitor's Resource Centre (expanded in 1998). (Off site, the only notable addition to the landscape had been the Battery Hotel.) While some residents disapprove of what they see as Parks Canada's lack of interest in the development of this site, others feel there has already been too much. Therefore, the restructuring of this prominent social space became the focus of Chapter Seven, *The Battle for Signal Hill*, in which I suggest that a 1996 user fee protest was

prompted by the long-established use of the Hill as a community commons and the continuation of a commons tradition throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

As pointed out by Yi Fu Tuan, "world view...is necessarily constructed out of the salient elements of a people's social and physical setting...." (Tuan, 1974: 79). In Newfoundland and Labrador the relationship between people and the land/sea is long established. Technology has brought about changes in this relationship as have organizations existing outside the province. For example, during the 1970s, a storm of international protest against its perceived cruelty all but closed the seal fishery. And while technology, over-fishing, and climate change have been cited as reasons for the loss of cod stocks, the on-going, federally declared, cod moratorium continues to affect many lives. While the 1996 user fee protest made obvious the fact that Signal Hill helps sustain residents' psychological and spiritual ability to persevere in a challenging environment, it also made clear to me that a restructuring of space involving access to resources is happening all over the world. While this thesis may only touch upon these issues, its thread runs throughout because "Like means of livelihood, world view reflects the rhythms and constraints of the natural environment" (Tuan, 1974: 79).

Contribution to Research

In the 1970s cultural geographers began examining the strong positive feelings people had for their homes and their attachment to place. A key to the depth of these

feelings was the strength of the bonds people had to their communities (Relph, 1976, Cohen, 1982). The strength of these bonds was often related to the amount of time spent living and participating in a community. The more time spent in a place the more attached or rooted people become through the relationships and associations that developed over time. Generations of people living in the same geographical area passed on their experiences and stories, many of which were associated with particular place features. Therefore it should not be surprising to discover that feeling bonded to a place was found to be deeper among those who felt rooted to it through local ancestry (Hay, 1998). And as evidenced by the strength of existing social and family ties in Newfoundland and St. John's, after 400 years the roots run deep.

Today, indications are that globalization is changing the traditionally close associations people have had between home and specific geographic locations. Staying rooted proves increasingly difficult in a world where borders become permeable. Determining where home is, where one community, region or culture begins and another ends, has become more complex. Writer and place essayist, Wendell Berry expresses concern over what he sees as the eroding effects this global force has on local cultures:

...from centralized economies based in large cities, from electronic media which create and enforce a uniform national culture and discourage the exchange of talk and stories among neighbors, from modern patterns of schooling which educate children to leave their local communities and follow the dollar wherever it may

lead them...this erosion of local cultures, this washing away of patiently accumulated strata of local knowledge and experience and memory [is] disturbing and dangerous (as cited in Ryden, 1993: 253).

Berry sees in this loss of local knowledge an increasing sense of isolation and alienation. This may be the reason why, as Clifford Geertz has pointed out, issues of place and home, are on the rise the world over: "For all the uprooting, the homelessness, the migrations,...the sense of place, and of the specificities of place, seems...barely diminished in the modern world" (Geertz, 1996: 261). It may also be why place features, which strengthen sense of place, are sometimes the focus for conflict if not outright destruction.

Research into sense of place and the icons that represent it, is made more relevant in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. While the destruction to a portion of Washington's Pentagon shook local as well as national identity, it was the collapse in New York of the World Trade Centre's Twin Towers that mesmerized much of the world. The removal of these two buildings from the city's skyline destroyed a potent symbol of American economic influence as well as a significant feature in the local sense of place: "One of the most astonishing things about the aftermath of September 11th was the extent to which people perceived the skyline as an aesthetic object in itself, and the destruction of it as painful, even devastating" (Goldberger, 2002: 95). The repercussions of that day's events stress the significance

that symbols and place features have not only in the collective identities of their local communities but beyond as well.

Mary Hufford suggested that "issuing from them at the same time that it surrounds them" place provides the context for folklife resources (Hufford, 1986: 12). As an example of the reflexive process—whereby a society imbues its cultural expression with a sense of its own identity (Lightfoot, 1997)—we can not forget that meaning is also informed by economic, social and political institutions (McCabe 1998) and that new productions of meaning, especially of a collaborative image, can signify not only social change, but friction as well. Through the examination of cultural expressions (poetry, ballads, prose, and images) within their historic contexts, I have attempted to connect the present understanding of Signal Hill as home with the emergence of the sense of place and identity in St. John's, Newfoundland. I have also discovered that in a province that "still feels alienated from the country it is supposedly a part of" the collaborative image of Signal Hill provides a focal point for the continuing negotiation of a identity distinct from the rest of the country (O'Toole, 1994: 68).

The multiple layers of meanings that symbols like Signal Hill embody, fluctuate through time, some even fade from view, but those that last are often deeply inscribed onto the identities of those who live within their influence. For example, in Newfoundland fewer people make their living from the sea than did in the past, but as a cultural symbol the fishery remains. Although it once represented an abundant resource,

its vitality as a living symbol today comes from its association with the disappearance of this resource world wide. As the fishery has changed, so too has Signal Hill:

I mean we can't assume that it's going to be that indefinitely, you know? Who knows what... future generations are going, you know? Something else is bound to become of it...because it's never stayed static in 400-500 years. It's constantly changed meaning. And we have this concept now that a National Historic Park has certain strictures to it and it's come almost like, it fixes it in time. But I think that's impossible, nothing's ever, no places have ever been fixed in time. All places are constantly changing. And now it's become a site for tourism, you know?...But it can't stay like that forever. Something else is going to, you know. It may end up having to, you know, god I hope not, but it may end up having to go back to being of some military use again. Who knows... (Interview 25).

The loss of New York's Twin Towers landmark demonstrates that "any place is in part a concretion of history and...the future will bring both new layers of history and inevitable physical alteration" (Ryden, 1993: 255). Whether Signal Hill will continue to strengthen the local sense of place is difficult to predict, however, the key to its longevity may not be its meaning at any given time but rather its continued presence in the lives of city residents.

Future Research Areas

The rate of development at Signal Hill has been relatively stable for the last 40 years, but there are indications that change is again coming. Beginning with the attempt to establish a user fee at Signal Hill other indicators, outside the historic site's boundaries, include the formation of the Signal Hill Area Residents Association (SHARA), and the construction of the new Johnson Geo Centre. A project of the Johnson Family foundation the Geo Centre, located opposite Deadman's Pond, was opened to the public on June 10, 2002. Featuring exhibits on the geological formation of the Earth and the province, the Geo Centre will bring more attention, as well as visitors, to the Hill. This will likely increase visitation to the nearby historic site which, in turn, will impact on Parks Canada staff and management.

As another example of the on-going change at Signal Hill, the construction of the Geo Centre may have also played a role in the formation of Signal Hill's Area Residents Association. Initially formed in response to plans that would have seen the demolition of a collection of church and school buildings known as the St. Joseph's property, the association launched a campaign to gather residents' photographs and memories in an effort, perhaps, to preserve the cultural heritage of a community whose profile is on the rise (SHARA Newsletter, June 2000). While these indicators of change are not drastic they do point to a shift in emphasis, throughout Newfoundland, from natural to cultural or heritage resources.

I agree with Kent Ryden when he wrote that a sense of place is complex and no one study “will do full justice to the meaning that a place holds for its people” (Ryden, 1993: 61). In my attempt to illustrate how Signal Hill has evolved into a symbol which is today intricately bound into the local sense of place and identity, I had to pass by many other avenues of research. These include, but are not limited to:

1. recovering the history of the squatters’ community;
2. examining the area’s social history through the past presence of structures such as the prison, hospitals, greenhouse or nursery, and Connors Farm;
3. comparing Signal Hill to other Newfoundland cultural symbols;
4. analysis of the contemporary poetry, song, and prose related to Signal Hill which, since the 1970s, thematically centres on the intimate details of moments experienced by individuals in its natural setting (See Appendix 3);
5. the impact of Parks Canada and its various partners (e.g. Historic Sites Association, the Johnson Family Foundation) on the area’s future development;
6. further research and analysis of the Hill’s various legends.

Areas of research into sense of place that lie outside the scope of Signal Hill may include place features in other Newfoundland and Labrador communities and their associations to local identity. Outside the province, studies of what, if any, cultural symbols are used by expatriate communities to maintain a Newfoundland identity would also prove informative. Other possible topics include how identity is negotiated around

contested place features or the uses people make of public spaces that go beyond their intended functions. But making these studies particularly relevant will be those which recognize the significance that local knowledge can bring to research. For example, in his paper "Archaeology and Rocky Mountain Ecosystem Management: Theory and Practice," Martin Magne recommended that a key component of ecosystem management "be traditional environmental knowledge held by aboriginal peoples" (Magne 1999: 72). Examples of this insight can be taken from around the world where local knowledge is now often understood to play a pivotal role in the preservation or destruction of natural resources.

Conclusion

The source material examined within this thesis includes over 30 personal interviews as well as a collection of poetry, song, prose, and images spanning approximately 400 years (1600-2000). Yet the material examined here would be little more than a collection without the research of a large number of scholars from a variety of disciplines to give it meaning. By examining the cultural expressions specific to a landscape feature equated with home I hope to have added to their explorations.

Whether defined as local consciousness, place identity, invisible landscape, imagined communities, or sense of place, what all these terms have in common is an attempt to define the results and effects of people's interactions, perceptions, expressions

and representations of place—that nebulous cloud which hangs over a place and from which we all draw for our understanding. Place features that have evolved into icons, such as Signal Hill, offer an opportunity to further examine the link between place identity and one's own sense of coherence, community and connectedness. As an attempt to make visible some of the invisible landscape of Signal Hill I am confident that I have contributed something positive to the continued shaping of this place feature.

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APPENDIX 1
Questionnaire

1. What do you know about Signal Hill?
2. How old do you think Cabot Tower is?
3. Do you have any stories about Signal Hill and/or Cabot Tower?
4. Do you visit Signal Hill? When? Why?
5. What does Signal Hill mean to you?
6. What do you think of Cabot Tower?
7. Does the tower remind you of anything?
8. Does Signal Hill as a National Historic Park mean anything to you? If so, what? If not, why?

APPENDIX 2
List of Informants / Interviews

Interview	Informant	Location	Date
1	local photographer	proved irrelevant	
2	mature local woman	informant's home	Feb. 29, 1996
3	woman originally from Bay Bulls, NF - student	coffee shop	June 6, 1996
4	three women visiting from New Brunswick	North Head Trail	June 6, 1996
5	several young people visiting from Paradise and Kelligrews, NF	North Head Trail	June 6, 1996
6	two local women	North Head Trail	June 6, 1996
7	two local women	North Head Trail	June 6, 1996
8	woman jogger originally from Bauline - employed by Newtel	North Head Trail	June 6, 1996
9	local man - store clerk and lighting technician	local store	June 6, 1996
10	man originally from island's west coast - store clerk	local store	June 6, 1996
10a	man originally from Bell Island - musician woman originally from the Goulds - stage director	informant's home	June 6, 1996
11	man originally from Frederickton, New Brunswick - student	private residence	June 7, 1996
12	woman from Victoria, BC - student	private residence	June 7, 1996
13	man from Meeremeshee, New Brunswick - student	private residence	June 7, 1996
14	woman originally from Clark's Beach, NF - stage manager	informant's home	June 7, 1996
15	woman originally born in Nova Scotia - stage actor/singer	private residence	June 7, 1996
16	man originally from Petty Harbour - stage actor/playwright	private residence	June 7/8, 1996
17	local man - unemployed	private residence	June 8, 1996
18	local man - archivist	university archive	June 21, 1996
19	woman originally from Ontario - archive assistant	university archive	June 21, 1996

20	local woman back home from British Columbia for visit - mother/performer	researcher's home	Aug. 15, 1996
21	woman originally from Bonavista, NF - secretary	Signal Hill and local restaurant	Oct. 3, 1996
22	mature woman originally from Little Bay Islands and Springdale, NF - social worker	informant's home	Nov. 2, 1996
23	mature woman - Johnson Family Foundation representative	Johnson Insurance	Nov. 8, 1996
24	mature local woman - visual artist	informant's home	Nov. 12, 1996
25	mature woman originally from Ontario - visual artist	informant's home	Jan. 16, 1997
26	woman visiting St. John's from England - teacher/visual artist	researcher's home	April 11, 1997
27	local man - Parks Canada representative	Signal Hill Visitor's Centre	April 25, 1997
28	Commissionaire	Signal Hill Visitor's Centre	Summer, 1997
29	mature local woman	researcher's home	July 24, 1999
30	mature local woman	over the phone	Sept. 8, 1999
31	retired local man	Signal Hill	Summer, 2000

APPENDIX 3
Poetry, Prose and Song Related to Signal Hill

1. Excerpts from "A Description of Newfoundland"
Author: B. Lacy
Source: Miscellaneous Poems Compos'd at Newfoundland on Board His Majesty's Ship the Kinsale, 1729.

The Ship Kinsale was by the King's Command
Order'd to sail forthwith to Newfoundland.
May God (presiding over Land and Seas,
And who alone can raging Wings appease)
Breath on our Sails a prosperous Wind,
So smooth our Passage to the Ports assign'd!
Then I, in home-spun Lines and humble Verfe, [Serfe?]
Will every thing remarkable rehearse.

This worthless Isle lies from the British Shore
North-west six hundred forty Leagues and more;
Elliot and Thorn in good Queen Bess's Reign
Did, by a Royal Patent, leave obtain
To plant a Colony, and there remain.

[Lacy goes on to describe anchoring and greeting in Plaisance/Placentia.
It is not clear if when he describes the landscape if he is describing Placentia or
St. John's, where he claims he was anchored when he wrote his poems.]

Who then can represent this dismal Place?
(Thrown by itself to be the World's disgrace)
For whate'er offers to my present view,
Looks truly frightful with ghastly hue;
Number of crazy Rocks hang o'er the Sea,
Yielding an horrid Prospect from each Bay:
The Mountains lofty Tops do mount so high,
As if they proudly meant to reach the Sky:
The Land within is all a Wood entire,
That any home-bred Mortal must admire,
What frenzy could unhappy Men besot,
To settle where scarce Food is to be got...

Thus the whole Island, or by Nature curst,
Or Fate's decree, is certainly the worst
Of any Spot, which on the Globe doth lie,
Beneath the covering of the starry Sky.

A wretched Life, I may pronounce, they lead,
nor can they any formal Reason plead,
Why they remain all the long Winter there,
Unless to see their native home they fear;...

And therefore e'er I end I needs must say,
Happy are they that can in *Britain* stay,
And from their Native Shore ne'er strol away;
Receiving easy Food from Nature's hand,
And just returns of cultivated Land;
Whose home-bred Plenty does the Owner bless,
And rural Pleasure crown his Happiness;
Where, thanks to Heav'n! a Monarch's on the Throne...

2. "Lines on Capt. Court'nay's [sic] Grotto"

Author: anonymous

Source: Newfoundland Gazette January, 1812 - date and page number unclear.

Near the metropolis of that drear Isle *
Where sickly nature strives in vain to sm[ile]
Whilst o'er [sic] its rugged rocks and barren [terrain]
Silent and sad fell desolation reigns;
Stupendous mass, see Signal Hill arise
And brave the shock of hyperborean sk[ies]
Its [fixed sides] no pleasing verdure yield
Unlike the soil of Albion's fertile field
On its bleak summit to command our praise,
See forceful art its proudest trophy raise
A height so vast, a spot so wild and waste,
Has COURT'NAY [sic] chosen to display his taste.
There whilst its beauty all aloud proclaim,
His Grotto stands t'immortalize his name;
To friendship sacred, there no cares annoy
Our chasten'd [sic] pleasure and our temperate joy;
No Bacchanalian's [sic] these, a frantic rout,
Their midnight orgies tell with horrid shout;
But in that happy spot we ever find
The social joys that elevate the mind.
"Ne vile fano," hints to thoughtless boys
That which consists [not in blusterous] noise;
Whilst "pro amico" gives the welcome meet
To all who visit this perspective Seat.

* Newfoundland

-author unknown

3. Excerpt

Author: Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle

Source: Newfoundland in 1842. Volume I. London: Henry Colburn, Publisher, 1842: 110.

The next object was to dislodge the French from the hill, now called Signal Hill, which overlooked Quiddybidy [sic], and was separated from it by a small lake, a mile long by about a quarter in breadth. Signal Hill is surrounded by many eminences of rock, which rise out of its side towards this pond, and each of these is a strong military post; the whole mountain was, moreover, covered with brushwood and a low forest, and is a mass of broken and jagged rocks, five hundred and ten feet above the sea, near the abrupt crest of which is one large and another small pond, with several deep gulleys.

3a. Excerpt

Author: Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle

Source: Newfoundland in 1842. Volume II. London: Henry Colburn, Publisher, 1842: 230.

The view on entering the harbour from the ocean, particularly after a very long voyage, is extremely fine. The ship passing the open roadstead, or one-side Bay of St. John's scarcely sees the extremely narrow pass in the high land which she must make, and on entering the Narrows, she has nearly half a mile of intricate navigation before she opens the whole harbour.

On entering, she has, on her right hand, a precipice of sandstone and slate rock, nearly perpendicular, to the height of three hundred feet, above which, almost as steep, frowns the citadel called Signal Hill, a very narrow crest, five hundred and ten feet above the ocean waters. The Narrows themselves are only nine hundred feet across at their sea-face, and diminish to about four; so that from the deck, in passing, one looks up to batteries upon batteries frowning in the sky, or on the edge of perpendicular cliffs, from which a stone might, as it were, be thrown on board.

On the left, the mountain is above six hundred feet in altitude, broken, abrupt, and very picturesque, admitting, however, near the water, of a sort of shoulder of small elevation, bristled with dangerous rocks, and shewing again batteries nearer the water's edge with a jutting promontory of solid rock, on which the Atlantic every beats in hollow roar, and on which there is a formidable work, with the harbour-light perched on the top of a vaulted barrack.

4. Excerpts

Author: J. B. Jukes

Source: Excursions in and about Newfoundland during the years 1839 and 1840.
Volume I. London: John Murray, 1842. Toronto: Canadiana House, 1969: 4.

May 8th [1839]—The first view of the harbour of St. John's is very striking. Lofty precipitous cliffs, of hard dark red sandstone and conglomerate, range along the coast, with deep water close at their feet. Their beds plunge from a height of from 400 to 700 feet, at an angle of 70°, right into the sea, where they are ceaselessly dashed against by the unbroken swell of the Atlantic waves. This immense sea-wall is the side of a narrow ridge of hills which strike along the coast here, and through which strike along the coast here, and through which there are occasional narrow valleys or ravines. These transverse valleys cut down through the range to various depths, and the bottom of one being about fifty or sixty feet below the level of the sea forms the entrance to the harbour of St. John's, and is appropriately termed the Narrows.

Inside, the harbour expands and trends towards the S.W., and the land on the other side of it has a much more gentle slope, and a much less height than that immediately on the coast. It is also of a better quality, and more fertile. The dark naked rocks that grow along the coast near St. John's, their stern outlines unbroken by any other vegetation than a few stunted firs that seem huddled together in the more sheltered nooks and hollows, give a stranger but an unfavourable idea of the country he has come to visit, and seem to realize all the accounts he may have heard or read of the coldness and barrenness of the land. As we sailed backwards and forwards across the mouth of the Narrows, which in one place is only 220 yards across, with rocky precipitous heights of 500 feet on each side, we caught a view of the town, which, from its being built for the most part of unpainted woods, had a sufficiently somber and dismal appearance. The harbour, however, was full of vessels, and on landing there seemed to be much bustle and business going on.

5. Excerpt

Author: Charles G. D. Roberts

Source: The Canadian Guide Book: A Guide to Eastern Canada and Newfoundland. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1891: 230.

The city rejoices in a rickety suburb with the euphonious appellation of Maggoty Cove, through which we pass to limb to the vantage ground of Signal Hill. On Signal Hill is the observatory, from which, and from another point of vantage on the edge of precipitous steeps, we look down upon the city and harbour in their windless amphitheatre. The crest of the hill is clothed with soft, fine grasses. Amid them lies a deep lake 360 feet above the sea. Passing the great stone barracks we come at length to a little battery, perched on the edge of a cliff 500 feet high from which we look down directly at the Narrows, thronged with the sails of its fishing fleets.

6. "Oration on the Occasion of Laying the Foundation Stone of the Cabot Signal Tower and Jubilee Memorial"

Speaker: Bishop Howley

Source: The Evening Telegram, June 25, 1897: 4.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN—I need not tell you that when the Cabot and Jubilee Celebration Committee invited me to perform the ceremony of laying the corner-stone of this Signal Tower my heart was filled with joy at being thought worthy of so great an honour. To have my name handed down to future generations of Newfoundlanders in connection with this, I may say, most glorious event in her history, was a privilege far beyond anything I could have aspired to.

The event which we are assembled here to commemorate to-day, I may say, the dual event, of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of our Island home and the sixtieth of the accession to the Throne of our Most Gracious Sovereign Queen Victoria, —these two events, I say, form one epoch in our history which will be memorable as long as time shall last. We are assembled here to-day to plant firmly and truly upon this adamantine rock the first stone of a monument which, while it shall hand down to future generations a pledge and a testimony of our patriotism and nationality, shall also, in a most eminent degree, come within the scope of the desire of our good and merciful Queen. Standing out as it will a beacon of safety to the tempest-tossed mariner, it will be pre-eminently "A WORK OF MERCY." This day, then, my friends, is a great and glorious day for Newfoundland. And the spot on which we stand is worthy of the great occasion. The associations connected with this spot are such as to strike with a thrill of the deepest love and patriotism the heart-strings of every son of Newfoundland--whether it be those who, like myself, claim her as our motherland, or those who, forsaking, perhaps, more genial shores, have come to settle among our fjords and bays, giving us the best sentiments of their hearts and the nation-building strength of their thews and sinews.

1 - Whether we look around from this vantage point upon the beautiful and varied scene which Nature displays to our view, or whether

2 - Taking a broader sweep with the mind's eye we include, the whole northern hemisphere of the globe, or, again,

3 - Going back upon the wings of memory we recall the historic events which have made sacred and celebrated every inch of the surrounding country. From all these points of view the land whereon we tread brings up into our hearts a deep sentiment of harmony and honorable pride.

Cast your eyes around, my friends, and tell me what country on earth can present such an unparalleled variety and beauty of scene as that which meets our eye from this lyric height. Vast and unbounded distance--tremendous and thrilling altitude. Soft and

pastoral scenery interspersed with grave and somber forests. The gleam of inland water. The towers and domes of the city beneath us and the rugged hills of Nature, stern, bare and gaunt around us, and the great eternity of ocean. I doubt if such a combination could be found anywhere else on the face of the globe.

If we look down into the giddy gorge below us we see the wondrous entrance to our harbor, the dear, familiar old "Narrows," a scene admired by strangers from every land who come to visit our shores. Guarded on each side by beetling cliffs which almost threaten to tumble over and engulf the numerous craft which constantly flit in and out. How aptly may we apply to it the graphic description which we read in the first book of the Aeneid (159 seq.): --

"Est in secessu longo locus.
Hinc atque hinc vastae rupes, geminique minantur,
In caelom scopull quorum sub vertice late
Aequora tuta silent."

Which may be translated as follows: --

"Within a long recess there lies a bay.
On either side great cliffs in grandeur rise
Their threat'ning peaks uplifting to the skies,
Within their circling arms in placid sleep
Th'unruffled water lie, securely deep."

There, gleaming like a sheet of burnished gold in the summer's sun, lie those placid waters, which, though within a stone's throw of the mighty giant ocean, are safe from his seething fury.

"No halsers [sic] need to bind the vessels there,
Nor bearded anchor, for no storms they fear."

[smudged]..our dizzy height to-day we look [smudged] upon the thousand sail of busy craft which throng our harbor. Here we see the small coastal schooners loading the food supplies from our great mercantile store-houses; and the gear for a season's work; and the fancy articles for the adornment of home and loved ones. How many an anxious heart in the distant homes of our sea-girt isle awaits their return, bearing to the bosoms of the family the comforts and luxuries of the capital, and no less welcome news of friends; and the loving greetings which spread light and peace in homes and hears, which brighten the hearthstone and cheer the homestead. From this point, in fact, we can read, as in a living panorama, the whole history of our brave-hearted people. Here again we behold

the great foreign-going ship, the mighty Argosy bringing her valued freight from far-off strands, or going forth laden with the golden harvest of our ocean fields to the marts of the outside world:-- "Swift shuttles of an *empire's* loom, That weave us main to main."

And again we see, riding peacefully side by side, like painted pictures, the mighty iron-clads—the fierce dogs of war—of the three greatest nations of the world. And now extending our gaze inland, a beautiful spectacle spreads out before us. Far away to the west and northward the horizon is bounded by gently swelling hills clad with the russet verdure of fir and spruce, marbled into a pleasing serpentine by the more delicate tints of the birch and aspen. Nearer yet we see the neatly cultivated fields and gardens dotted with grateful dwellings, whether the neat white cottage of the farmer, or the more stately suburban residence of our wealthy citizens and merchant princes. The whole checked out by a hundred lakelets, which sparkle in the sun-light like sapphires set in an emerald sheathe. Now turning our eyes still nearer we behold the domes and towers of our city with all the amenities of civilization, and near still a wild and weird scene of massive rocky grandeur such as Scott describes:--

"What a scene is here!--
Full many a waste I've wandered o'er
Climbed many a crag, crossed many a moor,
But by my halidom!
A scene so rude, so wild as this,
Yet so sublime in barrenness
Ne'er did my wandering footsteps [press?]

Rarely human eye has known
A scene so stern as that dread lake
With its dark ledge of barren stone,
Seems that primeval earthquake's sway,
Hath rent a strange and shattered way
Thro' the rude bosom of the hill,
And that each naked precipice,
Sable ravine, and dark abyss
Tells of the outrage still."

(Lord of the Isles, XIII)

And now finally casting our glance eastwards we behold the vast and boundless ocean, stretching away in unmeasured distance till it strikes the shores of the eastern world, bearing upon its swelling bosom a welcome greeting from Newfoundland. Now, raising our thoughts beyond the visible horizon, let us consider for a moment the

geographical and strategical [sic] importance of this spot on which we stand. Look at it position on the surface of the globe! It stands out prominently in mid ocean, on the great highway of commerce between the old and new worlds. it is the nearest point of America to the western shores of Europe; jetting out a thousand miles beyond the average coast line of the new world, it stretches forth, as it were, a warm hand of greeting to the weary exile, after its long journey across the deep. It bids a kindly welcome to the wanderer, and raises the despondent heart with pulses of hope and joy. The light-house there beyond upon Cape Spear—the Cape of Speranza, of Esperance, of Hope, sends a ray of gladness into the lonely bosom of the traveler.

It is a beacon of safety to the anxious mariner after long and tedious night watches. Oh, surely, my friends, if for no other reason than that, this is a spot worthy chosen for the erection of a monument which shall be a signal tower of hope and safety. Here within sight of these empurpled cliffs pass the great ocean steam palaces, charged with their thousands of living freight. From here as from a great international heart shall go forth on the flash of electric arteries, to the old world and the new, the happy announcement to dear ones left behind in sorrow, and to others anxiously expecting on this side that the dangers of ocean are passed and the good ship is nearing her destination, flying the cheering signal “all well.” In the third place my friends, let us briefly consider the historical glories of this hallowed spot. Going back on the records of our history we will find that every inch of this ground is consecrated by historical memories and moistened by the blood of heroes.

A little over one hundred years ago, what a scene this place presented! The hillsides were bristling with bayonets, the boom of cannon and the crack of musketry awakened the echoes around about. It was in 1762. The town of St. John’s was in possession of the French. The English, having landed at Torbay, off there to the Northward, led by the gallant Captain McDonell, marched by a wood-path over the White Hills to Quitty Vitty [sic] there below. Here they were met by the French, and the first battle took place. The French retreated back to the fort (afterwards Fort William, now the Railway Depot). The English, pursuing, occupied these surrounding hills. From the summit of gibbet hill, where you still see the ruins of Crow’s Nest Battery, they were able to pour shot right in to the fort. The French fleet left the harbor by night, and under cover of a fog escaped the English ships, which were cruising about outside in the Bay under Lord Colville. The garrison capitulated on honorable terms, and the English took possession.

Going back another hundred years, to 1696-7, the scene is changed. This time the fort is in possession of the English, and the French are the aggressors. Under the intrepid D’Iberville they marched from Placentia, captured Ferryland, Bay Bulls and Petty Harbor, and marched over the hills to St. John’s. On the Southside Hill, on the Old Petty Harbor Road, a skirmish took place and the British retired to the Fort. The citizens fought bravely, but were finally overcome, and the French took possession of the Fort.

They conquered at this time the whole country, with the exception of our local Gibraltar, Carbineer's Island, which successfully resisted. We now stride back another century to 1583, and we have a spectacle of a different kind—a pageant of peace and pompous ceremonial. The gentle slopes, in which now stands our noble city, were then in primeval beauty, wooded down to the rippling beach.

But, even then, the nucleus of the future city seems to have made a good beginning. The place was (as we are informed by Hayes) “very populous and much frequented.” There were in the harbor at the time “between 30 and 40 sail....English, Spaniards and Portugals and other nations.” Here, then, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, with all his noble retinue, is performing the solemn ceremony of taking possession of this new territory by the rule of the Patent received from Queen Elizabeth. And, now, one last leap backwards of another century, and we find ourselves in this bright month of June, on the Feast of St. John in the year 1497. On that day, at four o'clock in the morning, the staunch little ship Matthew, with here brave crew and noble Captain Cabot, is nearing the coast, after buffeting with the waves for more than six weeks. The morning mists roll up from the ocean and reveal to the weary, and well nigh disheartened, mariners the purple-brown cliffs with their verdant covering of moss and trees. A joyous shout rings forth from the bold sailors as their long tried hopes are realized. And before their enchanted gaze lies, nestling in the blue water, the glorious object of all their longings, the “New-found-land.”

On that day the brave old Cabot gave to Britain the new World, here first and most ancient and loyal colony, the brightest gem in her zone, the foundation of her future [smudged]. From the fishing fleets of the Newfound Land were to spring the hardy race of mariners who carried her flag triumphantly around the world, and gave her the empire of the sea. It is fitting, then, that on this 400th anniversary of the discovery of our country we should lay the foundation-stone of a monument to commemorate for all time to come this great historical event. It is by a happy coincidence that we are able also to unite our voices in the [smudged] of praise which around the whole world greets the completion of the longest reign of the noblest queen who ever sat on England's throne, Victoria, the Good!

We have happily been able, by laying this monumental stone, to give enthusiastic expression to our patriotism and national pride, and at the same time to comply to the full with the expressed wish of our Most Gracious Sovereign. This monument will be as I have [smudged] said, a work of mercy—a work [smudged] will bring hope and joy to many a wave-tossed fisherman. It will be a guiding star which will save many a life from the cold embrace of a watery grave. I declare then, my friends, duly and solidly laid, this foundation-stone of the Cabot Signal Station and Victoria Jubilee Tower. It is as hard as the cliff itself, for, over a hundred year ago, this very stone was hewn from the iron sides of these same hills to be applied to the self-same purpose to which we have put it today. may it stand unmoved till the end of ages!

7. Excerpt from “The Captain of the Dolphin”

Author: F. J. Johnston-Smith

Source: The Captain of the Dolphin and Other Poems of the Sea. London: Digby, Long and Company, 1897: 22 and 30.

section - “St. John’s, Newfoundland is reached”

With later day came warmer ray, and gaily sang the crew
Of sunlit ships with sunlit sails on sunlit seas of blue.
The man aloft gave joyful shout (Oh, I can hear it now!) —
“Ahoy!” said he, “There’s land, I see, upon the starboard bow.”

The sea-fowl came in wondrous flocks—we blessed the beauteous things!
All round about, and in and out, the air seemed filled with wings,
Now soaring past, now ‘twixt the masts, now plunging in the sea:
We knew that soon—ere stroke of noon—the ship would anchored be.

At length, high on the right and left rose cliffs six hundred feet
We passed a fort, we entered port and saw the anchored fleet,
O’er ships and haven, hills and town, a calm repose was spread -
A snowy pall lay over all as if the whole were dead.

section - “The Sailing of the Sealing Fleet”

From lips on ships, from lips on shore came loud and lusty cheers,
While wives and sweethearts waved their hands and wiped away their tears.
The very birds which winged about seemed in excitement bound
As far and near, cheer after cheer burst forth with thrilling sound.

The Engines throbbed like throbbing hearts of living, moving things;
Ship after ship, like Giant bird, spread out her giant wings:
Beyond the port, beyond the fort and frowns of Signal Hill,
the cheers on shore we faintly heard, and heard more faintly still.

8. "Signal Hill"

Author: Lillian Shortis

Source: The People's Songster, Buyers' Guide, and Gems of Poetry and Prose, Containing Some of the Most Recent Songs of the Day. St. John's, 1900.

Oft have I cast my eyes on thee,
 (Which requires the miner's drill),
And think of what thou dost contain,
 Thou rugged Signal Hill.

Tis on thy crest, we are at ease,
 As we hear the gladdening cry,
"A steamer's come from the North-east,"
 The sentry takes his spy.

Each watch the words that fall from him,
 (As the ball is near the yard).
"She has painted ports, she's round on stern,
 I think it's the *Vanguard*."

Far down below, we see the men,
 (Their great hearts with joy do thrill),
As they think of what they have 'neath decks,
 When viewed from Signal Hill.

Far along the coasts we view the boats
 O'erhaul their trawls and lines,
And many's the yarn of former years,
 Skippers explain to youth -- the signs,
Whereby the'd know the storm was near
 And this would save the twines.

In former years a battle was fought,
 And the former foes did kill;
When the great armies march'd up and down
 On the crags of Signal Hill.

The masses glance with anxious eyes,
 Towards the Cabot Tower;
And listen for the glad report

That thunders forth the hour.

To hurry to home and family,
"The inner man to fill,"
Which they do with many a blessing,
On dear old Signal Hill.

'Tis the exiles remember thee,
(As his eyeing with tears do fill)
Brought forth from childhood's memories --
His own dear Signal Hill

9. "Signal Hill"

Author: James Murphy

Source: Old Colony Song Book. St. John's: James Murphy, 1904: 26.

Seated on the craggy mountain,
Near its forts and Nature's fountain,
With its lore of written history
Of the past;
Where fierce war waged, and treasure
Was entombed; and, without measure,
Stories told and gruesome feelings
Overcast.

'Tis the famous signal station
For the alien and the nation,
And with joy the relic seeker's
Heart will fill.
As in silent speculation,
He begins his exploration
'Mongst the crannies of our famous
Signal Hill.

It has subterranean passage,
And old guns and other massage,
And many other obsolete
Things still.
And that steep, uprising angle,
Where the boys of old did scramble
For a winter's slide on rugged
Signal Hill.

There is Prowse's Folly dated,
There, the Cabot Tower is rated,
There, the Gibbet that e'en yet with
Horror fill.
There are rivers to explore,
Ancient sights, a score or more,
That repays us when we visit
Signal Hill.

And 'tis there we all repair,
Whilst the frost still crisps the air,
When our sealers are expected
 In the spring.
And we search the sea, oh joy!
With our spy-glass to our eye,
The first is here, the hill with
 Cheering ring.

But I love to sit and gaze
'Cross the Narrows, out the bays,
And in other lands our brothers'
 Hearts will thrill
As their patriotic mind
Wanders back to home and kind,
And to visions of majestic
 Signal Hill.

We all love thee for thy stand,
Like a sentinel so grand,
Guarding city from the fierce North
 Easter's will.
Though tragedy and crime
Have been yours from time to time,
Yet our people's nature hail thee,
 Signal Hill.

We hail thee when the moon
Lights up thy wonted gloom,
And when winter's frost has harden'd
 Heath and rill.
We hail thee in the dawning,
In the evening and the morning,
Our native Alpine, rugged
 Signal Hill.

10. "Signal Hill"

Author: Ellen Carbery

Source: Newfoundland Quarterly, 1 (1906): 4.

From thy bold rocks thy splendid heights
I saw a ship pass hence;
A ship! Nay, many a noble ship
Has gone that course! And whence?
Ah When? And why return they not?
Fond hearts by grief are riven
Aye, ships sail in – ships sail out
But some bear freight to heaven!

A bride stands on the deck of one—
She waves her hand "Goodbye" ! --
A volume's in the little word
That flutters ere it die;
This mists turn purple o'er the land,
The wavelets whisper low –
The good ship hastens on its course
Unheeding weal or woe!

Another bears away the dreams
Ambitions built so high!
Fond hearts are aching way inshore
A speck 'twixt sea and sky
Recede the ship! Where are the dreams?
Why comes not back the form
Who waved his bonny hand to her
Before that awful storm!

The eye that watches each fair ship
And notes each pennant bright
Sees many dreams, hears many shrieks
Beyond the Beacon Light;
Our ships sail in, our ship sails out
by storm or tempest riven;
Today we stand with waving hand,
Tomorrow port is Heaven!

11. "Signal Hill"
Author: Lydia Chancey
Source: Shortis 3 (c.1912): 3.

Sometimes we sit lamenting
As memory traces back,
The old familiar landmarks
We miss from off our track.
For they're driving cars and engines
Where our feet were wont to skate,
And they motor over by-paths
Where our lovers used to wait.
But there's one left still,
Dear old 'Signal Hill.'

They have made a solid path way
Where we plied the gentle oar;
And the merry boating parties
Hold sway there now no more.
And mighty ships from the waters
Are lifted high and dry,
And Leviathans of the ocean
Are handled like a toy.
So turn we still
To our own loved hill.

'Tis loved as when in childhood
We frolicked off from school;
When to reach the wondrous spy glass
We were helped upon a stool.
But, of the hands that clasped our fingers,
Naught is left but mouldering clay,
Like the old familiar landmarks,
Missing, too, from off our way.
But the grand old hill
Points Heavenward still.

Sometimes we quiz the children,
How would they like to slide,
From the Cathedral down the hill sides

Right to the water side?
But visions of cars and motors
Say it can't be done;
They vote we are only joking,
That we're only poking fun.
These pleasures are nill,
'Tis an everlasting hill.

How oft in distant countries,
When the very air is still,
What would the wanderer give
To stand again on Signal Hill.
To gaze out upon the ocean,
To drink in its blest ozone,
Would give to this life of his a zest
Those shattered nerves would tone.
But in memory still,
He sees his native hill.

But once a year this hill top
Bears the print of many feet,
And anxious eyes are watching
The first coming of the fleet.
For many a ship is signalled,
And many a ship sail o'er,
And the saddened eyes oft watching
For the ship that comes no more.
Scan the flagstaff still
On old Signal Hill.

Lift up thine eyes to the hill sides
From when thy help comest free,
As the hills are around Jerusalem,
So the Lord guardeth thee
Though the waves have lashed its strong holds,
And the torrents torn its brow,
And its sides are seamed and chasmed
Yet it never deigns to bow.
So, may we, like the hill,
Stand firm, be upright still.

11a. "Signal Hill"

Author: Lydia Chancey

Source: The Book of Newfoundland. Volume 1. St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, Ltd., 1937: 462.

[In this version the first three verses are the same except for some minor changes, but the last two verses are different, having to do with Marconi's signal.]

Sometimes we sit lamenting
As memory traces back,
The old familiar landmarks
That we miss from off our track.
They've built the railway station
Where our feet were wont to skate,
They motor over footpaths
Where our lovers used to wait.
But there's one left still--
Dear old Signal Hill.

There stands a solid dockyard
Where we plied the gentle oar;
And merry boating parties
Hold sway there now no more;
Mighty ships from the waters
We see lifted high and dry;
Leviathans of the ocean
Are just handled like a toy.
So turn we still
To our own loved hill.

'Tis loved as when in childhood
We would frolick off from school;
To reach the wondrous spy-glass
We were helped upon a stool;
The hands that clasped our fingers
Are naught but mouldering clay,
Like the old familiar landmarks,
Missing, too, from off our way.
But the grand old hill

Points heavenward still.

Here is the chill December
Stood a brave, undaunted man;
Electric waves not impeded
Across the Atlantic span!
Oh, for the masts at Poldhu,
To stretch the wires high!
He frowned at balloons lying,
And the crazy kite to fly,
With indomitable will
He worked on Signal Hill.

To a telephone receiver,
And a kite that soared on high,
With bated breath he listened
As the hour set drew nigh.
A genuine transmission!
Three faint clicks sound anew,
Wireless waves 'cross the ocean!
His faith in his dream come true.
Across the Atlantic thrill
First received on our Hill.

12. "Farewell to Rennie's River"
Author: Unknown
Source: The Premier, August, 1929.

Dear old Rostellan Bridge farewell?
A fond adieu thou laughing river,
Fast rushing to the sea to tell,
That I must part from thee forever.

Our glancing feet in merry maze
Have often made the old plants tremble,
At close of golden summer days
When on they board we did assemble.

In memory's dream once more I hold,
The vanished hand of sylph-like Kitty,
As up the sky the wan moon rolled
And shed its gold on field and city.

And thought with pleasure kin to pain,
Why should the fates such friendships sever?
If Time would only halt its reign,
And this glad hour stand for ever.

My risk heart sank at thought of change
And what would come to us to-morrow,
In stranger countries some would range
And some would sink in pain and sorrow.

Defiant of this sad forecast,
To-night I leave this fairy palace,
Made strong by memories of the past,
To dare the mock of Time's cruel malice.

Some already through the "gap,"
Have gone, exiles, their fortune seeking,
Some in the marble acres lap
Are laid, their souls are in God's keeping.

Farewell! old Bridge! adieu old scenes!

O'er Signal hill the dawn is breaking,
Gilding the road with dancing beams,
The course the exile's ship is taking.

13. "The Ghost of Deadman's Pond"
Author: E.T. Furlong
Source: Newfoundland Quarterly 3 (1939): 27.

Oh I am the ghost of Deadman's Pond,
And I cannot rest – until,
Someone finds the gold
Of the pirate bold
That's hidden on Signal Hill.

We buried the treasure
Good and deep
'Neath the gaze of our captain bold,
Who when the task was done,
Asked if anyone,
Would stay and watch the gold.

When this speech I hear
My chance I saw
To get away from the pirate's grip,
So I forward stood / And I said I would,
As I gave my cap a tip.

Then to the front
Quickly strode the mate,
I did not hear what he said,
But a crack on the skull,
With a thud quite dull,
And forthwith I was dead.

'Twas a fateful day,
As I remember now,
'Twas cloudy, dull and rainy,
And his name, 'tis well
That I should tell
Was Monti Victor Maney.

It did not take long, / Tho' I cannot tell,
As I had no means to measure;
But I was quickly thrown,

And left alone
To guard the pirate treasure.

So I am the ghost of Deadman's Pond,
And I cannot rest – until,
Someone finds the gold
Of the pirate bold
That's hidden on Signal Hill.

And ever since then / My vigil I keep,
I cannot break my bond;
For that pirate bold
Ne'er claimed his gold,
It still lies near Deadman's Pond.

And so it is / I cannot rest;
Nor never can – until,
Someone find the gold
Of the pirate bold,
That's hidden on Signal Hill.

'Tis a well known fact
As you may know,
Ghost's have no gift of speech,
Yet – twixt me and you
It is quite true,
They have a ghostly screech.

Where there's a will
There's also a way,
Altho' some folks don't know it;
So I'll be bound, / I just have found,
A medium in a poet.

You've heard and read / Of spiritualists,
Who I know are fakers ever;

But 'tis no use to warn,
As fools are born
To be duped by folks more clever.

And I'll use the bard
Who is not aware
He's to my will - abided;
He doesn't think / His pen and ink
Are by ghostly fingers guided.

Then he can tell,
Tho' he doesn't know,
He's a factor to my will;
I'll still instill in his mind
Some clues to find
The gold on Signal Hill.

Near Deadman's Pond
There lies a rock,
It bears a South-West by West;
The seeker here / need have no fear,
This rock shall aid his quest.

If he shall stand / Upon this rock,
And then correctly measure
One hundred yards, unto the left,
He'll come upon a tiny cleft,
Here lies the pirate treasure.

Now this is all / That I can tell,
Tis by ghostly laws illicit
To point unto the very spot,
And sad am I - it is my lot
Not to be more explicit.

For I am the ghost of Deadman's Pond,
And I cannot rest - until,
Someone finds the gold
Of the pirate bold
That's hidden on Signal Hill.

As I paced on
By Deadman's Pond,
My ghostly eyes have seen,
The mundane happenings in life,
The city's toil, the city's strife,
And other things I ween.

Yes I have seen
In early Spring
Shy lovers grow more bold,
Have seen them lay
On the very clay
That covers the pirate gold.

And woe is me
I've also seen,
With ghostly eyes ope'd wide,
And tho' I prayed
I could offer no aid
When hero Carter died.

Ah me, it was / A woeful sight,
Yet he lives in memory fond;
He showed me then
Some men are men,
By his deed at Deadman's Pond.

And now and then,
I steal away
From my vigil on the hill
And read all alone,
Where carved on stone
His memory lives on still

I am the ghost of Deadman's Pond,
And I cannot rest - until,
Someone finds the gold
Of the pirate bold
That's hidden on Signal Hill.

14. "Signal Hill"

Author: John White

Source: Pigeon Inlet Productions and VOCM Present All the Best: Folk Music from St. John's. Produced by Kelly Russell, 1988.

One night in December I'll never forget
A charming young maiden I happened to met (sic)
Her eyes shone like diamonds, she was dressed fit to kill
And I met her, I was sliding, on Sig-in-al Hill
Will you come along with me, boys, come along with me boys,
Down Sig-in-al Hill.

I said now, "My fair one, if you will excuse,
To partake of me arms," sure she didn't refuse;
But then I must say that I first me love's truth (?),
When I met her, I was sliding, on Sig-in-al Hill.
Will you come along with me, boys, come along with me boys,
Down Sig-in-al Hill.

Well, the very next day to the church we did go,
Which made all the people chew the rag you must know,
Says she, "Will you marry?" And sez I, "Faith, I will."
And with buckle (?), we were up, on Sig-in-al Hill.
Will you come along with me, boys, come along with me boys,
Down Sig-in-al Hill.

And now we are married and children have three.
Sure meself and the missus could never agree,
With one christened William, the other one Bill,
Be gar, sez I, call the other one Sig-in-al Hill.
Will you come along with me, boys, come along with me boys,
Down Sig-in-al Hill.

15. "Signal Hill"

Author: Albert S. Reakes

Source: Newfoundland Quarterly 1 (1946): 35.

The soul in search of grandeur,
Peace and tranquillity,
From Signal Hill has often
Look'd out across the sea;
Has watch'd the wild birds skimming,
or drifting leisurely.

Has seen majestic icebergs;
Tall peaks, that piercced the sky,
With growlers in attendance;
All sailing silent by.
Blue rising wisps revealing
A homebound steamer nigh.

In winter, caught the warning,
That mariners most fear:
When flurries hid the Narrows,
And sweep across Cape Spear;
Has seen sleek laden sealers
Thro' mist and ice appear.

Look'd down along the harbour,
Where schooners tack and run:
To wharves that creak and shiver,
When loading has begun;
Heard noon days noisy greeting
Reported by the gun.

Stand high on Cabot's Tower,
That beckons gaily still
To sea farers, and landsmen,
Who've pass'd thou way, and will
Rejoice again to linger
Upon the Signal Hill.

16. "Signal Hill"
Author: Kevin Wadman
Source: Atlantic Guardian 8 (1950): 25.

I

Embattled hill of old grey stones
What secrets do you hide
Of bygone days when whitened bones
Shore on the bleak hill side
When your old cannon guarded still
Beleaguered St. John's town,
When our foes feared the guardian hill
And shunned the cannon's frown?

II

When Frenchmen came by sea and land
and terror reigned supreme,
While people died on either hand
You seemed to sleep and dream.
What bloody battles did you watch,
What victories did you view?
But the defeats were hard to scan
while victories were few.

III

So many years have passed since then,
And times have changed a lot.
For now we love our fellow men
and quarrels have been forgot,
And still you stand within our gaze,
A gallant old grey hill
Reminding us though times have changed,
We're Newfoundlanders still.

17. "Battle of Signal Hill"
Author: T.B. Windross,
Source: Newfoundland Quarterly 1 (1955): 48.

In 1762, in the Month of May,
When ice was melting in the bay,
St. John's and all its people lay / Under the Frenchman's Rule

D'Haussonville and his infantry,
were boastful of their gallantry,
In martial pride and pleasantry, / Like giddy boys at school

When thunder of the cannon's roar,
Off the narrows' guarded shore,
Echoed through the hills and o'er / Quidi Vidi's salty pond

Amherst with 700 men,
were ready in the little glen
To storm up Signal Hill and then / Destroy the foreign tool.

With courage keen, spirits high,
His soldiers let the bullets fly,
And swore to conquer or to die / And keep their valour cool.

They put the Frenchmen on the run,
Captured the fort and every gun,
And set their standard in the sun / Of freedom's favoured rule.

700 men against the foe,
700 heroes there to show,
And let the timid Frenchmen know / The glory of true liberty.

No longer does the foreign yoke
Oppress the humble fisher folk;
The thunders of Brittain spoke / To make Newfoundland free.

18. "Signal Hill"

Author: A.C. Wornell

Source: Newfoundland Stories & Ballads 2 (1959): 29.

Here, where the French & British infantry,
In bloody combat, met and fought and died.
Stands Signal Hill in stern serenity: --
Our City's sentinel, our country's pride.

Marconi here fulfilled his cherished dream,
And justified his scientific quest:
Mankind was shown a miracle supreme
When wireless signals linked the East & West.

For centuries this land-mark made rejoice
The hearts of those who braved the broad Atlantic,
When riggings shrieked with Dooms appalling voice,
And raging seas made seasoned seamen frantic.

This ancient shrine of hospitality
Still offers refuge from the tempest's roar:
As modern ships, imperilled by the sea,
Find welcome haven by its sheltered shore.

19. "Ode to the Cabot Tower"

Author: Mrs. Albert Harris

Source: Newfoundland Stories & Ballads 2 (1959): 31.

Over a winding road I tread
Up to the top of a hill
Up where the sea gulls silver wings carry
them where ever they will
Lofty and mighty in open space
Rugged and wind worn with time
I see the greyness of its face
As it challenges the salty brine
Long has it stood with its brow unbent
Like a soldier standing on guard
Scanning the seashore round about
with its history still unmarred.
It has witnessed the action of many wars
When hope hung upon the hour
And many a signal of life or death
Was sent from this historic tower.
The storms have beaten its way across
The wide surrounding lands
Thru snows or rain, or loss or gain –
Steady and staunch it stands.
And sailor Brave, who have crossed the waves
of the shores of Newfoundland
Have gazed at its height in the pale moon
-light and praised its stature grand
fate that have kept thee thru the years
Give strength to thy firm foundation
And may thy fame never lose its name
From nation unto nation.

20. "The House on Signal Hill" (excerpt from 1st installment)
Author: P.J. Wakeham
Source: New Land Magazine 18 (1970): 45-53.

For many months now, because of his health, he had been unable to leave the little flat in which they lived in the centre of the city's congested area. She felt that a few hours of sunshine and fresh air would do him a world of good; as the air alone was bracing and besides, she had often heard her father say that since his childhood he had loved the sea and always enjoyed looking out at the vast expanse of water that one can take in on a clear day from Signal Hill.

"Angela, my dear," said her father when they had reached the summit. "This is indeed a commanding site. Let's rest here awhile. When I was a young man, I often spent hours up here looking out at the sea. I was always fascinated by the wonderful view from here. You can look right out along the coast line to Cape Spear, and then to our left as we look southward, the towering cliffs and rugged shoreline makes a splendid view. It is one that is not easily duplicated."

21. "Evening, Signal Hill"
Author: Thomas Dawe
Source: Quarry 1 (1973): 20-22.

Up here on the dark north wind
I cannot see
the clumps of stained grass
seeking cover in deep faults of stone.
Off into the eastern void of fog
between Europe and myself
a needle-point of light
seems moving closer.

Down on a southern point of rock
some solitary light-pulse throbs
in case of ships.
And on the flushed fog
in the west below
a city is disconnected
dots of light.
I turn from the city
and look to the salted east again
where there are fewer dots to connect
and fewer games
from the starting point of me.

22. "To Signal Hill, St. John's, Newfoundland"

Author: R.A. Parsons

Source: The Legend of the Isle. Don Mills: Ontario Publishing Company Ltd., 1973: 73.

Men guess and speculate and deal in time,
To bind the infinite, or to divine
All origins, not I, but it must seem,
That thou art from creation and hast been
Since earth was fashioned, or convulsed to rear
Thy pillars narrowing the entrance here,
Into the harbour, delved, as of some plan,
Conceived in timelessness, designed for man
To hide from storm, to fit and to careen
His ships. What must thou in thy time have seen
If we may be permitted to confine
Or span thy presence by such means as time,
since earth made first her cycle of the sun,
Or roused thee, of unrest within, as one
Of stature vested, fashioned to descry
The earth about, the ocean and the sky
As fractured lands fell in, yet seemed to rise
Or equipoise, remote, if in disguise;
As forest vanished leaving scarce a sign,
That men might mark, save in the pit and mine;
As force contrived, in cosmic order spent
The destiny of ev'ry element.

Yet out of all thy great antiquity,
I would, wert thou articulate, have thee,
Within the compass of our history,
Tell us the tale, as one, contempo'ry
With all the kings and captains of the cast,
That led the drama of this island's past;
And as intimate of these, revive
their ways and manners, as of men alive,
Remembered not as they, whom we contrive
To raise from parchment in some bleak archive!
Regroup Sir Humphrey's men upon King's Beach,
That we may savour well, plain seamen's speech,

And check the accents that methinks have clung
To ev'ry honest Port de Grave man's tongue;
Portray her company, resound the shout
As luffs the merchantman or comes about
Off Torbay Head, her cannons rammed to boom
The passage of the Narrows at high noon.
And with thy tale, I would have thee review,
The faults and foibles of the men you knew,
Who served the guns or slogged on sentry beat
And grouched of tongue, most likely indiscreet;
The songs they sang and verses they might quote,
From plays and sonnets Master Shakespeare wrote,
So late. 'Tis nigh two hundred years since when,
You felt the climb of colonel Amherst's men
To meet the French – As of some interest –
Betwixt these brave, where did thy favours rest?
It matters not, for we thy slopes now claim,
And conquest means, at time, but better aim.

But on red war, I would that we should cease,
That we more fitly turn to arts of peace;
And as I seem to sense the strength of thee,
As one beyond the snare of flattery,
I would indeed, have thee confide to me,
As young Marconi flies his kites o'er thee,
And taps the signal of the century
Along two thousand miles of open sea,
Why, out of all the hills and mountains, he
Should choose to speak across the world from thee!

But I confess of ships, that as a boy
And grown man, I, vast leisure would employ
On their account, and often from thy crest,
I've viewed a thousand schooners, East and West,
In Summertime, within the harbour near
Along the waterfront, by dock and pier,
And in the stream, to take on salt and gear,
Or all-to-rights, to sail, if winds be fair,
At dawn, to fish along the Labrador,
The Belle Isle Straits, the Banks or Southern Shore.

And early March, as through the Narrows passed
The sealing ships, in pennant, yard and mast,
I'd count these all, the first unto the last,
Of wood and steel, into the hazard cast
Each Spring, and to their latest blast,
Or they would vanish in the icy vast;
Then turn about to look upon the town,
Upon the little houses, as the street
Encounters others, widening to meet
the traffic there, and then, on those that greet
The thoroughfares by shops that must defeat
All reckoning, and then toward the hill,
Up to the great Cathedral, solemn, still
Inviting worshippers, or those, who may
Find solace there, or know a will to pray.

But, as your streamers March or April flew,
In their announcement of the ships that drew
Within thy view towards their homing port,
I would return, as one by habit taught,
And mount they crest, to hail these from the hunt
As one, by one, they came from Gulf and Front.

Mount, thy fame is sure, nor shall it cease
Until forgetfulness shall men release
From fealty; or honour shall have ceased
For thou dost hold the gateway at our East,
With access to domain, in boundary
Of half a continent by land and sea;
Yet mighty signal, raised above the sea,
I leave one word, the last of mine with thee,
As it hath been, still let thine office be
A beck'ning sign to all, who would be free!

23. "Signal Hill"

Author: Georgina Cooper

Source: Newfoundland Quarterly 1 (1979): 26-29.

I watched the treeless spaces leading up to Signal Hill;
And crests of rock thro' crusted snow up showing
All black against its whiteness and the night was mystic, still,
A deep blue cloudless sky with no winds blowing.

About this stern old Hill which saw the coming of our race
There is splendour awful and abiding;
But merrily sails the full moon on, up thr' star-strewn space,
And down the crusted slopes bright beams come sliding.

24. "A Walk on the Old Burma Road"

Author: Percy Janes

Source: Newfoundland Quarterly, 3 (1980): 47.

Neutral in metro money war, I turn
from clashing traffic too and walk
by Quidi Vidi to the Battery;
and as I climb creation-anchored hills,
surprised to have survived on rock and frost,
my spirit for a moment slips the lead
of loneliness in art, my thoughts flow back
to those who early perished in the fight
against alliance of this wilderness
with a free-booting pirate merchant's gain.

As heavy as the hills, my vision stays
on every man and woman, viking to clerk,
who lived in slavery to the daily bread
and had to scorn as cod or hangashore
the one who yearned to stretch their treadmill lives
beyond myopic, gut necessity:
poet and music maker, painter who saw
the brutal beauty of our dwelling place
and, aching to mould it in the shape of art,
could not contrive to eat while spirit strove.

No anthem to these martyrs has been raised,
yet here their gathered voices, echoing
like a lament for winter love that gave
no birth, cry out across the centuries
for answer to the riddle of their pain;
in vengeance and in triumph answer comes
bloodless, magnificent --- as with the land
now tamed, the pirates coming under check,
a host of our young singers, golden-aging, rock
these mountains with their free and fiesty beat.

25. "Signal Hill"
Author: Margaret Rehner
Source: Tickle Ace 14 (1987): 186.

This tidepool is a bird
until one flies over
refusing to be caught in the surface.
But I can twist those white wings
to fit the rock.

I know the concert
in the wake of a dory
because I lied it there,
The truth is just wood and water,
one man
with his crown of gulls
and the rocks too far away
but never far enough
while the lichen grows flat
to them
like a green stain.

This is a place of tears
or of silence;
there is no poem here.

26. "Signal Hill" (excerpt - author's first ideas and impressions of Signal Hill)
Author: Jessie Beaumont Mifflin
Source: Newfoundland Quarterly 3 (1989): 33.

I have gone up at night and seen the city, its ugly sores effaced by the friendly darkness, become wholly a thing of beauty with its myriad twinkling light. And sometimes, if sleep eludes me, I sit at my bedroom window and look up at the Hill.

I see, perhaps the moon rising above it or...the morning star heralding the approach of day. I stay there for a while savouring its beauty and its peacefulness and, as I turn to sleep again, I am conscious of a feeling of gladness that in the beginning was Signal Hill and that it is now and ever shall be, world without end.

27. "The Lonely Goat Herd" (excerpt)

Author: Lisa Moore

Source: Digging Into the Hill: A Collection of Prose and Poetry by Newfoundland Writers. St. John's: Writer's Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1990: 12.

Carl tries to remember what it is he loves about Anita. The smell of turpentine in her flannel painting smock, burnt match sticks and beer bottle caps between the bed sheets. The squeezed paint tubes in her leather box, curled in on themselves, the limbs of their shirts and jeans twisted together on the floor. The photographs in his sock drawer, in the beaten Tooton's envelope, of the night they had walked to Signal Hill. It was summer and the sky was a skin of ticklish rain. Anita was drinking orange crush which turned the town of her upper lip and tongue orange. She tasted like a long green summer. In the photographs the lights of the city at night burned coloured sizzles on the film. They made love on the grass watching out for the broken bottles the glittered all around them.

28. "City of Second Chances: Entries from a Journal" (excerpts)
Author: Carmelita McGrath
Source: Digging Into the Hill: A Collection of Prose and Poetry by Newfoundland Writers. St. John's: Writer's Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1990: 22.

Tableau #2 There is a place on Signal Hill
 close to a cavern, a place of vertigo,
 past where the Fever hospital must
 have filled the night / with the stirrings of delirium,
 past rocks, / easy to imagine as jade
 so veiny green are they, past / there an apple tree
 stretched its arms last summer.

I asked and asked, / "Have you seen the apple tree?"
No one admitted; it was as if I'd / seen a submarine or ghost....

I like to think it threw its own seed there,
was scattered madly by / a delinquent wind, and grew
perversely on that point of rock.
Its blossoms nod gently out to sea, / mocking with a soft endurance
the brawny men who stand by the rails of
ships imagining / that they will civilize /the landscape within.

29. "Message From Signal Hill"

Author: Gary Geddes

Source: Light of Burning Towers. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1990: 159.

So far, so good. The well-worn path
and scab of scarlet ground-cover
almost distract me from my height

above the water. See if a brisk walk
doesn't clear your head,
she intoned, ringing off and promising

to pick me up in three hours' time.
First a few rough shacks and jerry-built
hammered into rock or welded there

with iron rods and concrete. Primitive
but picturesque. A solitary man,
summoned by the barking of his dog,

stands naked in the door to watch me pass.
He makes neither gesture nor sound
in the cold november air, while the dog

contests the chain's bleak
conclusions. Today even the fog
is unemployed in St. John's, tanked up

down the coast or getting a proper head on / for the next assault. I hadn't noticed
the path peter out until my foot settled

on a horizontal ladder of pegged logs / stretching over a narrow fissure in the rock.
A hundred feet below the sullen

Atlantic emits unfestive gutturals / and sharpens its teeth on granite.
Out here the elements are in cahoots.

Speech is a wound. The quaint harbour
and pastel houses might never have occurred.
A misplaced foot, or word, and I'm a goner.

30. "Colonial Aristocracy"

Author: Lake Sagaris

Source: Medusa's Children: A Journey from Nfld to Chiloé. Regina: Coteau Books, 1993: 60.

The lighthouse keepers tend
their stony towers and
lamps Polish the brass
reflectors, wind clockwork
nights to keep them
turning, while wives
sew in parlours, where
boredom's lived with 167
layers of wallpaper and
screens protect the
faces' wax foundations

Just off this coast swells a rich
viscous tide On Ladies Lookout
bees devour buttercups, women
flutter fans: farewells to
vanished seamen, while steel tankers
transport the earth's black
blood Nothing will grow
but flames, the fierce
old ways are
put to death

31. "not just any spell"

Author: Anne Hart

Source: Signatures: Newfoundland Women Artists & Writers. Ed., Carmelita McGrath. St. John's: Killick Press, 1996: 21.

in a far distant land
Muffet runs through Senior
Hall straight down Sunny Run
through Prefects' porch & jumps
into a trunk marked HOME
days later her ship is
sighted from a magic
tower high atop a
chameleon hill & when / the cannon booms above
the Narrows Muffet knows
she's made it safe & sound
what feasting what dancing
but all the while in the
Waterford River a
Mermaid is waiting no
one has seen this Mermaid
since R. Whitbourne in sixteen
ten but here comes Muffet
walking off the feasting
splash ah my darling says
the Mermaid you think no
ransom is owing for
such joy well here's your spell
see the chameleon
hill that guards our city
from this day on your fate
will be to ever paint
her portrait still life wild
life sun nude storm frenzied
monotone polychrome
chiaroscuro & / splash her discourse done the
Mermaid disappears &
Muffet ever after charmed
begins that very day
her artful thralldom's task

32. "Signal Hill Melting"

Author: Agnes Walsh

Source: In the Old Country of My Heart. St. John's: Killick Press, 1996: 31.

More rain, the end of winter.

Signal Hill melts like MacArthur's Park,
all that sweet white icing flowing
down into the sea.

The harbour takes on the shape
of a sleeping whale,
the cold wind biting still,
swelling spring back into winter.

In this piercing April light
all sins dissolve into the water,
life flushes the body pink and wondrous.
Like a child's-eye view,
the light from the sun spreads awe,
pardon, and promises...promises.

33. "Oh they'll never..."

Author: Janet Michael

Collected from the author in August 1996.

Have you heard the latest news in town about old Signal Hill
The boys in the capital dishing out crap again
When will it ever end?
Oh, they want to put their hands into our pockets one more time
And make us all pay some more for what was ours before
But they'll never get their hands on mine

(Chorus) Oh they'll never,
Oh they'll never get a dollar out of me
Those rock cliffs I'll scale, they can land me in jail
But they'll never get a dollar out of me

Oh I can't believe a townie born and bred would hatch this plan
And if that's the case he's a shame to his race
she's a traitor to this land
Oh there's those that go to church each day to pray and do God's will
But there's those that find peace of mind, leave all their pain behind
rambling on the banks of Signal Hill

(Chorus)

34. "A Night Vision"

Author: F.G. Lockyer

Collected from the author during the Summer of 2001

I chanced to stroll atop Signal Hill, on a wonderfully cold winters night.
Bright jewels of frost hung about in the air, and the stars, what a glorious sight.

A full moon shone clear, to the east of Cape Spear, with the sea, a dark heavenly blue.
When to my surprise, and delight of my eyes, a sailing ship came into view.

Her course it was bound, into old St. John's Town, passing now in the lea of Black Head,
Having been headed down, I at once turned around, then on too Queen's Battery instead.

Her sails shone out bright, and her decks seemed alight, like she wore a thin layer of frost.
I could scarce drag my eyes, away from this prize, such beauty would surely be lost.

Past the cannon she flew, what a glorious view, a picture from out of the past.
Round the Fort Amherst Light, and out of my sight, a vision, one to good to last.

Then down to the wall, taking care not to fall, for the footing was all ice and snow.
Not to close to the ledge, you'll go over the edge, here, this is as far as you go.

Just the top of her mast, could I see as she past, down below me and by the Chain Rock.
In a minute or two, she sailed back into view, headed on up the harbour to dock.

When a cold blast of air, knocked me over I swear, was the first breath of wind felt all
night.
I was back to my knees, just as quick as you please. But the schooner had vanished from
sight.

35. "Ahh! Glory"

Author: F.G. Lockyer

Collected from the author during the Summer of 2001

Yea Royal and Montgomery men, McDonnell's voice did ring.
Kiss your Besses on their butts, and make those lassies sing.
It's three shots to the minute lads, we'll load and fire at will.
And when our smoke has blown away, we'll own this barren hill.
Lets shoot and shout, sound pipe and drum, we'll screech we'll roar and yell.
Let the Frenchie think the devils here, and sounding his death knell.

We came out from the morning mists, and hit them from surprise.
One volley sent from twenty yards, put stark fear in their eyes.
With two more done, from well aimed gun, their world is now a hell.
Some turned and ran, more raised a hand, the rest just slumped
And fell.
All over, quick as it begun, the scene now quiet and still.
Well done my lads, McDonnell said, you've taken Signal Hill.

36. "Mr. And Mrs. Bates"
Author: Bob Hunt
Collected from the author during March of 2001

Far upon a hill top
Looking over old St. John's
Sits the lonely Cabot Tower
It's where Alex first met John

Alex was a cashier
In the gift shop well to do
And John Bates was a Captain
In the Signal Hill Tattoo

To a wedding he would take her
But John stood Alex up
He didn't think she'd go with him
This beauty from the shop.

But on a beach in Middle Cove
The two went out there walking
And Alex being very shy
John done all the talking

John must have been a charmer
Because on August 7th '98
The couple took their wedding vows
And are John and Alex Bates

APPENDIX 4
Regarding the Squatter's Area

Questionnaire given to Art Barnes, Sr. [answers in bold]

1. How many people used to live in the area across from Deadman's Pond?
2. How many houses were there? **39.**
3. When did the first people start to live in the area? **1933 - 34.**
4. Did all the houses have electricity and plumbing? **Electricity - Yes. Plumbing - No.**
5. Who asked them to leave the area? Was it Parks Canada or the City of St. John's?
Parks Canada.
6. Was anybody offered money for their house? **Every house was offered money**
[amount depended on how many rooms in house].
7. Were people upset when they were asked to leave? **50 / 50.**
8. Did anybody get money for their property? **Yes.**
9. How long did it take for people to move out? **Everyone was gone in about two**
years.
10. Did people tear down their own houses or did someone else? **The people had to tear**
down their own house.
11. Was there a farm? Who owned it? **Conner.** What was it called? **The Farm.**
12. Did many people visit the hill? **Not many.** Did they come to pick blueberries? Look
at the view? Anything else? **Pick berries.**
13. Do you know any ghost stories from the area? **No.**

14. Have you heard stories about Deadman's Pond being bottomless? **Yes.**
15. Have you heard any stories about Gibbet Hill? **No.**
16. Have you heard any stories about treasure on Signal Hill? Or about pirates? **No.**

Names of Squatter Area Residents, c. 1934 provided by Art Barnes, Sr.

Leo Alyward	Cy Dobbin	Gerald House	Ned Royle
Bill Baker	Jim English	Bill Kelly	* Joe Sampson
Art Barnes	Bill Foley	Mary Lacey	Beth Sampson
John Barnes	Jerry Fordem	Gordon Lambert	Jack Smith
Nathan Barrowing	Bob Gardner	Joe Lambert	? Smith
Jim Bluden	Dick Gollop	Jack Leform	Ches Strickland
Walter Boone	Mike Hamlon	Bill McGrath	Mike Walsh
Bill Butler	Frank Hayes	Jerry Monahann	? Warwick
Bill Clarke	Alfons Hayward	Leo Murrin	Jack White
Bill Davis	Jim Hearn	Peter O'Leary	George Whiteway
Jack Davis	Bill House	Harry Reid	Bill Whiteway

* Joe Sampson's name provided by Bob Hunt

APPENDIX 5
Images of and Regarding Signal Hill

ST. JOHN'S & AVALON REGION

Visitor
Guide
1999

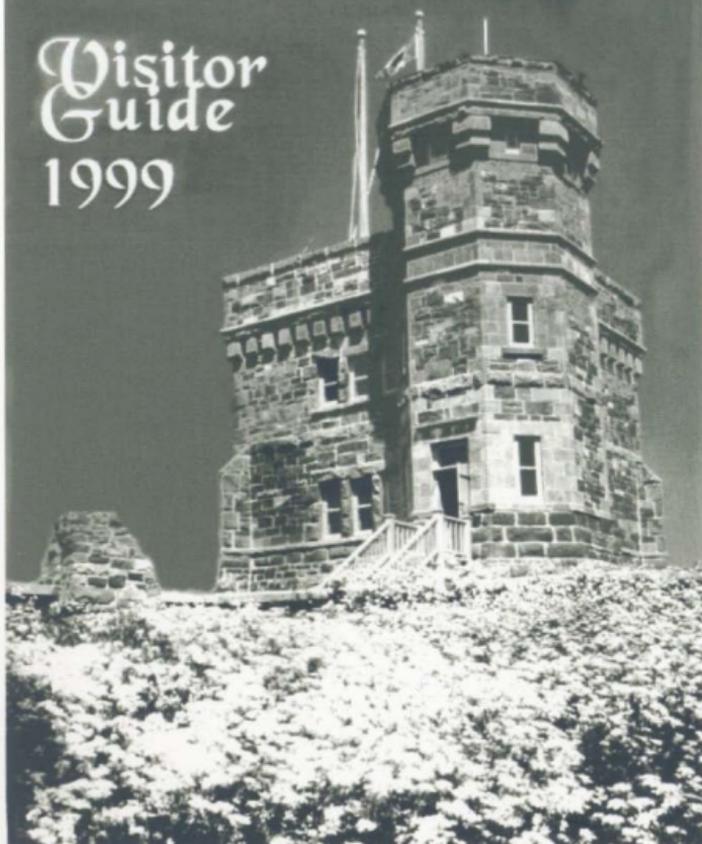


Figure I - 1 Front cover of the St. John's Visitor Guide, 1999
- City of St. John's (original photograph by P.E. Coristine)



Figure 1 - 2 United Sail Works

This local business sign illustrates the ubiquitous presence of Signal Hill and the Narrows in the lives of St. John's residents.

- P.E. Coristine, Summer 2000



Figure 1 - 3 The Landmarks of St. John's Basilica and Cabot Tower, c. 1980
- courtesy Robert Hong



Figure 1 - 4 Fog Creeps Over the Summit of Signal Hill and Cabot Tower
- P.E. Coristine, Summer 2000



Figure 2 - 1 Signal Hill Summit

Ladies Lookout is located at the far end of the summit parking lot, opposite Cabot Tower.
- P.E. Coristine, Summer 1998



Figure 2 - 2 Signal Hill from the South Side, c. 1910
- Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Geography Collection



Figure 2 - 3 Deadman's Pond and Gibbet Hill
- P.E. Coristine, Summer 1998



**Figure 2 - 4 School Tour at Signal Hill Visitor's Resource Centre
- P.E. Cristine, Summer 1999**



Figure 2 - 5 Young Love at Gibbet Hill
- P.E. Cristine, Summer 1998



Figure 2 - 6 Man Contemplates City View
- P.E. Coristine, Summer 1998



Figure 2 - 7 Annual Canada Day Sunrise Ceremony at Signal Hill
- P.E. Coristine, Summer 1999

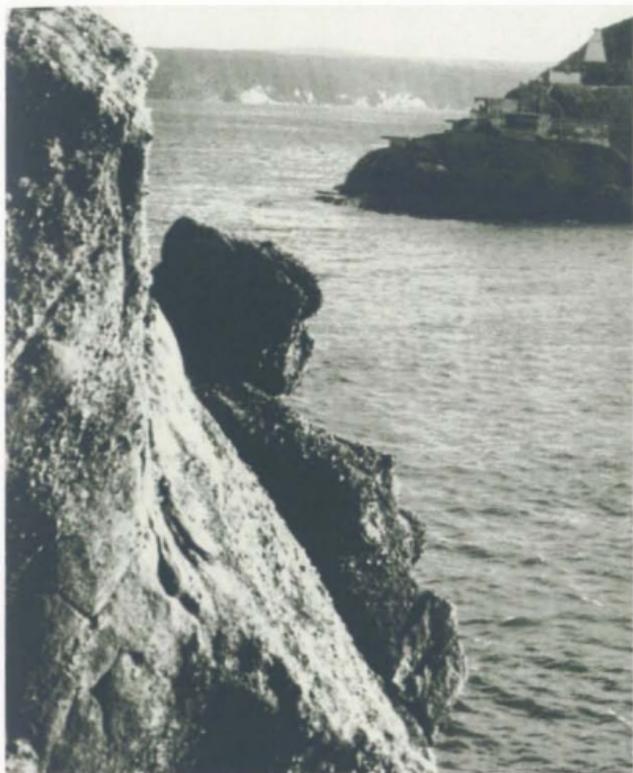


Figure 2 - 8 Rocky simulacrum of a female figure
- P.E. Coristine, Summer 1998



Figure 3 - 1 The View of Signal and Narrows, c. 1750 - 90

The fish flakes on the slopes of Signal Hill illustrate the predominance of the fishery during this period.

- Newfoundland Museum (artist - unknown)

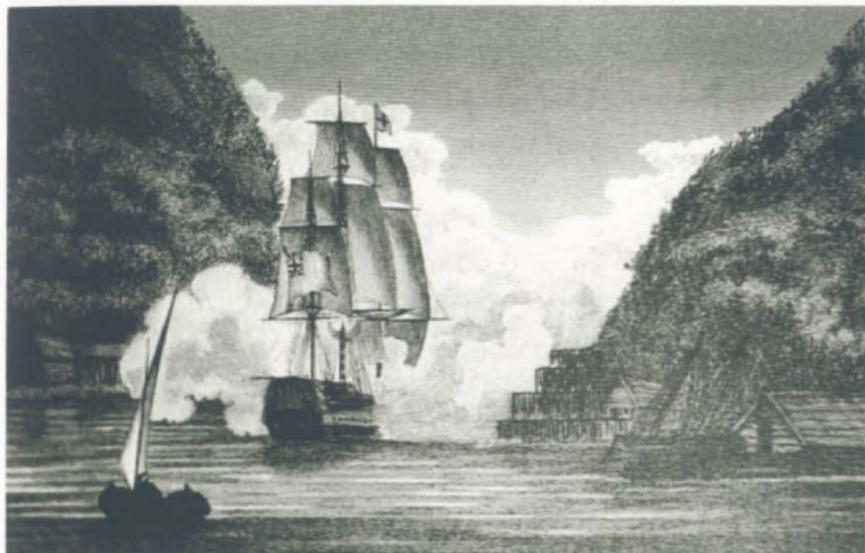


Figure 3 - 2 St. John's, Newfoundland, 1818

Perhaps setting sail back home to England this vessel moves through the Narrows and into a heavy coastal fog.

- from de Volpi's Newfoundland: A Pictorial Record (artist - E.P. Brenton)



Figure 3 - 3 Outside View of St. John's Harbour, Newfoundland, 1811

The hardships endured by the military personnel stationed at Signal Hill were often due to the exposed location of barracks and other buildings at the summit.

- from de Volpi's Newfoundland: A Pictorial Record (artist - Nicholas Pocock)



Figure 3 - 4 Town and Harbour of St. John's from Signal Hill, 1831

This detail from a larger painting that features the Queen's Battery area points to the existence of at least one "happy spot" where a military man could enjoy a quiet moment.

- Public Archives of Canada (artist - William Eager)



Figure 3 - 5 Entrance to St. John's Harbour, Newfoundland, c. 1813
- from de Volpi's Newfoundland: A Pictorial Record (artist - Lt. Edward Chappell)



Figure 4 - 1 Town and Harbour of St. John's from Signal Hill, 1831

This image illustrates the expansion of St. John's during the early 19th century.
- Public Archives of Canada (artist - William Eager)



Figure 4 - 2 Fifty Years Ago Old Time Fools and haul of Wood for Church Heating, c. 1900

- Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (artist - J.W. Hayward)

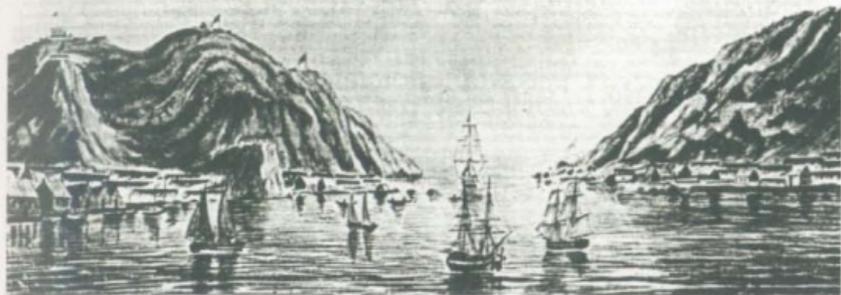


Figure 4 - 3 Narrows and Signal Hill, c. 1798

In this illustration flags fly from several different points at Signal Hill.
- British Library Board (artist - E.P. Brenton)



Figure 4 - 4 Firing the Noon Day Gun by members of the Signal Hill Tattoo
- P.E. Cristine, Summer 2000



Figure 4 - 5 Arrival of the Prince of Wales at St. John's, Newfoundland, 1860
The Royal Welcome of 1860 included the fire of canons as well as town residents waving from atop Signal Hill, as can be seen in this detail from an illustration of the event.
- Centre for Newfoundland Studies



Figure 4 - 6 Cutting a Channel in the Ice at St. John's to Facilitate the Departure of the Seal Fleet, 1880

- Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, April 10, 1880



Figure 4 - 7 Icebergs off the Harbour of St. John's, Newfoundland, 1884

Looking seaward from Signal Hill's summit this illustration depicts the presence of off-shore ice as well as the presence of Signal Hill Hospital (centre) and the Imperial Powder Magazine (left foreground).

- Harper's Weekly, October 4, 1884 (artist - William Hayward)



Figure 4 - 8 Watching the arrival of a cruise ship from the North Head trail
- P.E. Coristine, Summer 2000



Figure 5 - 1 Plaque at Cabot Tower

This plaque located on the first floor of Cabot Tower would seem to confirm that the celebrations for Queen Victoria's Silver Jubilee did overshadow those for Cabot.

- P.E. Coristine, Summer 1997

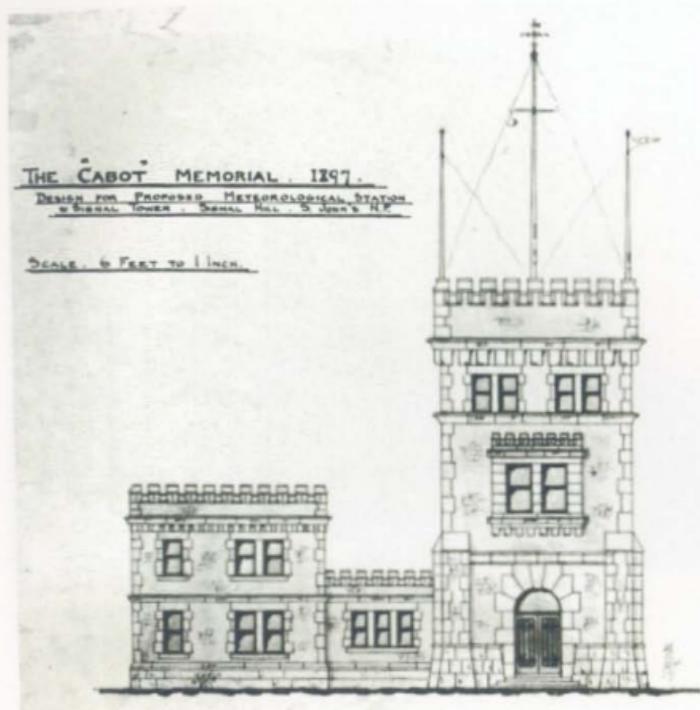


Figure 5 - 2 The Cabot Memorial, 1897

Design for Proposed Meteorological Station and Signal Tower

Lack of funds simplified the original plans for the Tower.

- Public Archives of Canada

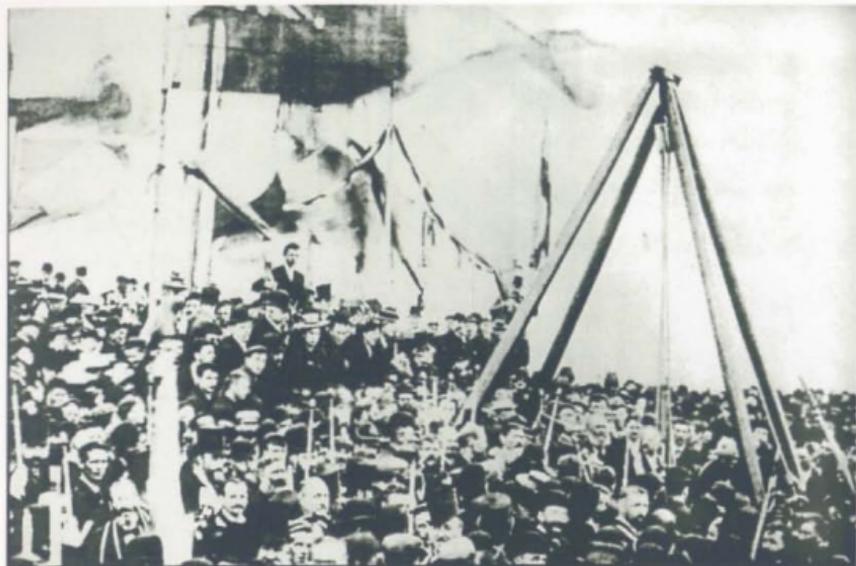


Figure 5 - 3 Cabot Tower Cornerstone Ceremony, 1897
- Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL)



Figure 5 - 4 Band members pose in front of Cabot Tower, c. 1907

Soon after its construction the Tower became a popular backdrop for photographs.

- Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Geography Collection



Figure 5 - 5 St. John's from the *S.S. Mongolian*
- Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Geography Collection



Figure 6 - 1 Queen's Battery, c. 1925
- Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Geography Collection



Figure 6 - 2 The reconstructed Queen's Battery Barracks
- P.E. Coristine, Summer 2000



Figure 6 - 3 Signal Hill in winter as seen from the Hotel Newfoundland, c. 1930s
- Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Geography Collection



Figure 6 - 4 Queen's Battery, 1935

A. Shelton's image of the Queen's Battery Barracks for the Newfoundland Tourist Development Board.

- Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Geography Collection



Figure 6 - 5 *Night Patrol Returns to St. John's*, c. 1943
- War Museum (artist - Tom Wolf)

City says 'no way' to historic park user-pay

By GLEN WHIFFEN
and BERNIE BENNETT
The Evening Telegram

John's City Council doesn't want to become a pay-to-use park.

The council decided Monday night to object to user fees for entry to the site.

"A lot of people in this city and surrounding areas are unemployed haven't got the option of going to rent places," said Coun. Cathy Wyatt, who made the motion.

"The one place they can go is park."

St. John's Canada will introduce user fees this year at its national historic sites in Newfoundland: Signal Hill, Cape Spear, Castle Hill in Placentia, Howlstone Cottage in Trinity. User fees, \$2.25 per person (\$5.50 family), would be in place even if more just wishes to take in the view or hike up the hill. Parks Canada, however, says nobody will be asked to pay because the fees are not in the honor system.

Jeff Bruce noted that two years ago, visitors at Gros Morne National Park were charged \$4.25 a day with payment also based on honor system. He said most didn't pay, and the park eventually set up a gate to force visitors to pay as soon as they entered. "People who cannot afford to visit historic sites are now expected to follow their pride and principles at these sites, or simply not use it," he said. "Anyone who believes that mandatory admission is not coming is dreaming." Sites are among the last to be put in place user fees. It

the summer. She added that young children, as well as adults, go there to learn about history.

Passengers on tour buses going to the sites will be charged a volume discount rate of \$1.50 each. There will also be a family season pass available for \$29 before June 1, and for \$38.50 after.

Wyatt said she's been expecting the move, and fighting against it, for more than a year. She presented council with the minutes of council meetings over the past year in which the issue was raised.

At council's regular meeting on April 3 of last year, a letter from Michel Dupuy, minister of Canadian heritage, was read advising council that neither a gate nor parking meters would be installed at Signal Hill or Cape Spear.

Wyatt said she wanted copies of the minutes sent to MPs for St. John's East and West, Bonnie Hickey and Jean Payne, and to Dupuy and Premier Brian Tobin.

She also will be asking students and people in general to sign petitions objecting to the imposition of user fees.

Meanwhile, Hickey, in whose riding the historic site is located, said she knows people do not want to see a fee gate going up at Signal Hill.

"That's why I have ensured that the user fees for the site will be collected on a voluntary basis," she said Monday.

User fees are somewhat new to Newfoundland but have been implemented in other parts of the country for more than 15 years, said Hickey. The fees will be voluntary only at Signal Hill and Cape Spear.

Revenue collected at a national



While St. John's City Council meetings have been known to be exciting from time to time, these visitors were more interested in the meeting's agenda than in anything else. Keel Combs had to say at Monday's session.

Figure 7 - 1 City Says 'No Way' to Historic Park User-pay
- Evening Telegram, February, 1996 (photographer, Joe Gibbons)

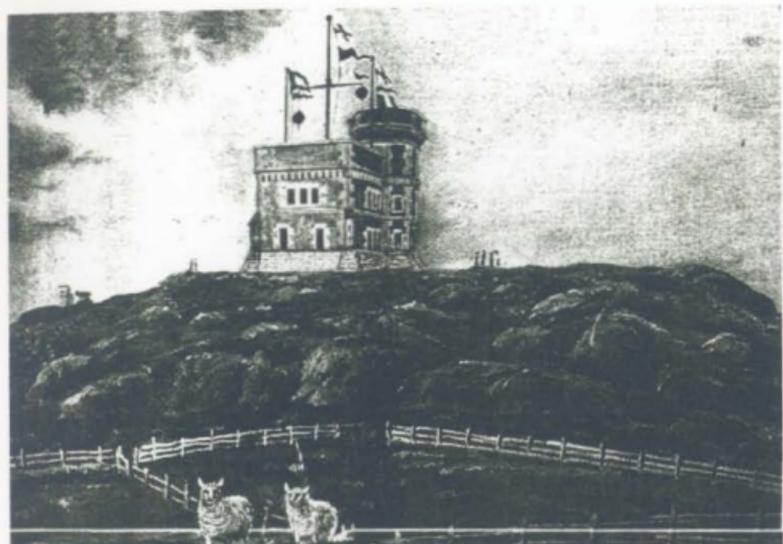


Figure 7 - 2 Cabot Tower and sheep, c. 1904
- Centre for Newfoundland Studies (artist - William Hayward)



Figure 7 - 3 Berry pickers at Signal Hill
- P.E. Coristine, Summer 2000



Figure 7 - 4 Church Lads Brigade at Signal Hill, c. 1900
- courtesy Philip Hiscock



Figure 7 - 5 Abandoned car at Signal Hill

The designation of the National Historic Site began a clean-up process that included the removal of many abandoned vehicles and truckloads of garbage. Newsprint taken from the torpedoed hull of the *Kelmscott* and dumped at the Hill during the Second World War was finally removed during the 1970s.

- P.E. Coristine, Summer 2000



A



B



C

Figure 7 - 6 Fringe behaviour at Signal Hill

A - This van belongs to "The Prophet," a man who frequents Signal Hill with messages of salvation and apocalypse.

B - I discovered this medicine-wheel on the North Head—evidence perhaps for the pagan rituals that I was told are occasionally performed there.

C - In the summer of 1971 the Hill's appeal to free-spirited individuals attracted a small group of "freaks" or "hippies" to its slopes. Following the closure of the city's youth hostel a group of its guests moved into the abandoned bunkers near Chain Rock. A month of controversy ended with their eviction by city officials.

- P.E. Coristine, Summers 2000,1999, and 1997



B

A

Figure 7 - 7 Sexual Activities at Signal Hill

A - "Have you got the new signs on your truck tonight?" The punch line for this cartoon by F.G. Lockyear—"Yes, but we don't need them up here at night. People know that if your windows aren't steamed up you must be the commissioner"—hints at the popularity of the summit parking lot among local lovers.

B - One of the many discarded condoms that can be found around the Hill.

- P.E. Coristine, Summer 2000



Figure 7 - 8 Prohibitions at Signal Hill

A - "Hey kid, your dog should be on a lea!!! Leak!!!" This caption for this cartoon by F.G. Lockyear illustrates an attempt to enforce the historic site's prohibition against loose dogs.

B - Retrieving a ball its owner threw, this dog is breaking the prohibition against swimming in George's Pond.



A



B

Figure 7 - 9 Danger at Signal Hill

The stories and reports of the loss and rescue of various individuals at the Hill are numerous. In 1939, for example the October 23rd issue of the Daily News reported the rescue of two local boys from a rocky outcrop. On October 22, 1998 the Evening Telegram reported a similar rescue of two would-be climbers trapped near Queen's Battery. But not every story ends with a rescue. For example, despite the search efforts launched in the fall of 1998 no trace of a visiting university student, who had gone rock-climbing at the Hill, was ever found.

- P.E. Coristine, Fall 2001 and Summer 1999

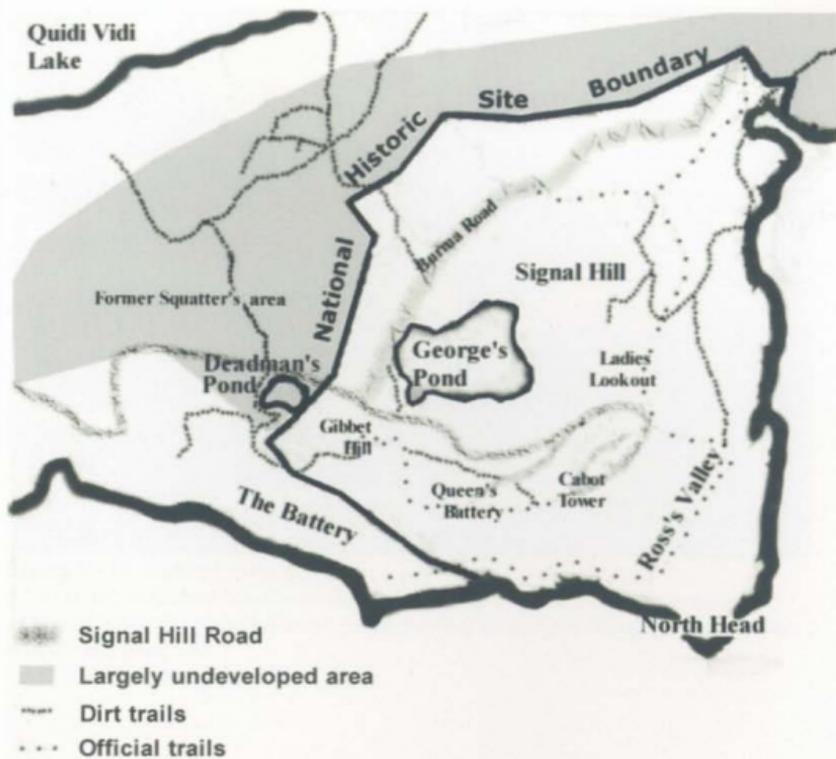


Figure 7 - 10 Boundaries at Signal Hill

Although clearly distinguished on a map, the boundary between the historic site and crown land is difficult to see in the landscape.

- Map based on those that appear in Parks Canada's "Management Plan for Signal Hill," 1996



Figure 7 - 11 Public Entrance

An example of blurred boundaries this deck was built by Parks Canada in order to appease the owners of the home whose door fronts on this public entrance to the historic site's North Head trail.

- P.E. Coristine, Summer 1997



A



B

Figure 7 - 12 Improved trails at Signal Hill

The construction of boardwalks, staircases, and paved pathways are all examples of the improvements of the Hill's trails over the last several years.

- P.E. Coristine, Summer 2000



Figure 7 - 13 "Free at Last," editorial cartoon
- The Express, March 13, 1996



Figure 7 - 14 Squatters Area

Crumbling foundations like this one are all that remain of the small community that once existed here.

- P.E. Coristine, Summer 2000

