

**The Making of Scotty Carmichael's Collingwood: Folklore and Vernacular History
in a Central Ontario Shipbuilding Community**

by

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Abstract

As a study in vernacular history, this thesis examines the repertoire and history making practices of William “Scotty” Carmichael of Collingwood, Ontario. Focusing on stories he told over radio, in print, and in conversation, the concept of vernacular history is used as a theoretical framework, exploring how Scotty Carmichael mediated the decline of industrial shipbuilding after the Second World War through narratives about local sports heroes. As a theoretical reassessment of folk history, this thesis proposes that vernacular history is the reflexive discursive practices and locally conceptualized systems of meaning that people use to think and speak about the past, drawing attention to the oral, customary, and material genres and practices that shape local traditions of history making.

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Introduction

One winter sometime at the end of the nineteenth century an epic battle for hockey supremacy between the fishers of Collingwood, a small shipbuilding community in Central Ontario, and the Christian Island First Nations was waged across a wide frozen section of Lake Huron. With a hundred men on each team and an open air rink that stretched more than twenty-two miles, this hockey game was the greatest of all hockey games in local history. Its two goal posts were marked by red flags driven into the thick ice with wooden stakes. One extended from the east tip of Clark's Island to the edge of the Collingwood grain elevator dock, and the other across the entire shore of Christian Island. The match lasted three days, with three periods lasting from daylight to day's end. It was undoubtedly the greatest hockey game in history.

This story was one of the most famous in the repertoire of William "Scotty" Carmichael (1908-2006), a well known journalist, radio broadcaster, and local historian from Collingwood, Ontario. In Carmichael's own words, "the greatest hockey game of all time was staged on the biggest open air rink in history," and "be it fact or fiction, the story has been told and retold so many times that many old timers accept the tale as the gospel of truth" (Miscellaneous Papers, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). Over forty years after this story was first reported by Carmichael in print sometime during the 1940s or 1950s, he remarked to his radio audience that "up until twenty years ago, I often heard people swear that they actually witnessed the game" (Miscellaneous Papers, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). This tall tale was one of Carmichael's most popular and it was

indeed told and retold again and again by the residents of Collingwood. It became one of the most important stories in the folk history of Collingwood sports.

As a study of Carmichael's stories and his reputation as a local historian, this thesis focuses on folk history: it is about how people think, speak, and write about the past, their interpretive frameworks and sense of historical awareness in the everyday. Defined as the "native" or "insider's" view of the past (Danielson 1980, 64; Hudson 1966, 54-8; Tye 1989a, 1), folk history includes the oral narratives that people tell about the past, and the oral historical traditions that shape the content and form of historical narratives (Montell 1996, 369-370). As folk history, the stories Scotty Carmichael told on radio, in print, and in conversation reflected personal experience and aesthetics, as well as local oral historical tradition and its embodied ideas about how the past is remembered, created, represented, and debated through narrative.

As a local newspaper journalist and radio broadcaster, Scotty Carmichael told stories about Collingwood's history and its residents by drawing on his extensive knowledge of local history and his involvement with numerous community organizations and groups, as well as local oral historical tradition and his large repertoire of jokes, tall tales, anecdotes and reminiscences. These stories included first- and second-hand accounts of local events, people, and places, and were shaped by many different interrelated discursive practices and processes. Popular local oral historical genres such as the reminiscence and the tall tale were a prominent part of his repertoire, and his familiarity with these important local narrative forms provided a foundation for creativity and innovation.

Ever the tireless sports fan, Carmichael followed and reported on every Collingwood team and sports league. This lifelong passion for sports also became a passion for sports history, particularly local sports heroes. Combining his personal interest in local sports and his familiarity with the community's oral historical traditions, Carmichael used the reminiscence as a framework to create his own stories, and thus his own folk history of the community and its heroes through sports.

As an ethnographic study of a local historian, and the relationship of folk history to local conceptions of place, identity, and historical awareness, this thesis is about more than simply describing what people remember – it is a study of history as both a resource and a creative process. Instead of using ethnographic methodology to reconstruct the past, this thesis is an attempt at an anthropology of history using folkloristic analysis and theory to bring new insight to the larger questions of philosophy and epistemology that have been integral to the scholarly enterprise of academic history. To ask “what is history?” seems futile and cliché, but it is the starting point for any cross-cultural examination of the processes and discursive practices that people use to remember and interpret the past. Some might argue that such a broad philosophical question is beyond the academic specialization and of little of relevance to the materials folklorists study, however, I argue this is not the case. The study of folk history by folklorists, as well as the burgeoning field of oral history, demand discussion of the wider philosophical questions that shape scholars' understanding of historical awareness as a product and process of identity and memory construction. As a response to the work that folklorists have already done in this field, my case study of Scotty Carmichael and his repertoire

highlights the strengths of scholarship in folk history while drawing on wider interdisciplinary perspectives and suggesting new approaches.

The Forms of Oral Testimony and the History of the Folk: Locating Folk History in the Study of Oral History and Oral Tradition

Using Scotty Carmichael as a case study, this thesis critically reassesses the concept of folk history as both genre and process. As an under-theorized and infrequently studied aspect of folklore, folk history is in need of new conceptual tools and a more comprehensive definition. Often understood as a method of oral historical research or as a perspective on oral history as a scholarly discipline, folk history is conceptualized as *first* or *second hand accounts*, or the *oral historical traditions* of a community (Montell 1996, emphasis added). I agree with this broad definition, but propose that as both a form and process of folk culture, folk history is concerned with the rhetorical devices, creative processes, discursive practices, and expressive forms that people use to create the past. In essence, folk history is a process of history-making – one that draws upon and enacts tradition.

All three conceptual dimensions of Montell's definition of folk history reveal different, but yet complementary, understandings of the relationship between history and oral tradition. These differences reflect folklorists' changing theoretical and methodological approaches to folk history scholarship, as well as the increasing influence of oral history studies. As the literature to be discussed will demonstrate, these three dimensions are dynamic and interrelated, reflecting the distinctiveness of folklorists' conceptual understanding of how history is created, debated, and negotiated through

narrative and the transmission of tradition. However, they are also reactionary, responding to the critique of oral testimony and oral tradition begun by historians in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of the growing popularity of oral history. Folklorists' response to this critique ultimately shaped the thematic focus and conceptual scope of later folk history scholarship and the wider influence that oral history would have in North American folklore studies.

First-Hand Oral Testimony and the Intersection of Folklore and Oral History

Firsthand accounts of the past – oral testimony, eye witness accounts, reminiscences, personal experience narratives – can provide important information about the people and events of the past. Their use as a primary source in historical research has been both celebrated and fiercely debated. Concerned with establishing a science of history, post-Second World War American historians advocated the use of quantitative, statistical studies and the primacy of written sources. Ideally, this empirical research methodology would eliminate conflicting interpretations of the past by identifying the specific patterns of political, economic, and social development that had led to the growth of American free market capitalism. (Iggers and Wang 2008, 251-55). However, this approach to historical scholarship was challenged by the emergence of the New Left and a new generation of social historians interested in the documentation of lived historical experience. In turn, the use of oral testimony as both a supplement to written records and as a method of examining socio-cultural processes such as cultural representation and memory making generated intense criticism from academic historians (Tosh 2006).

Initially, oral historians attempted to demonstrate that first-person oral testimony provided “facts,” objective and empirically verifiable pieces of information that helped fill the gaps in the historical record. Opponents were immediately sceptical and argued that the unreliability of oral testimony, the subjectivity of personal recollection, and the frailty of human memory were serious impediments to the use of oral materials and thus warranted their exclusion as a primary source in historical research (Tosh 2006). However, there was a growing sense among oral historians that the use of oral testimony was the beginning of a project of radical reclamation, documenting the lives and experiences of those whose stories were absent in the written record (Nevins 1966; Thompson 1988; Haley 1998; Perks and Thomson 1998; Richie 2011). With the democratization of history as a goal, oral historians, as well as historians within the emerging fields of social and cultural history, were therefore willing to embrace oral history as a new methodology and increasingly as a separate interdisciplinary field of study.

As oral historians began developing a theoretical framework that bridged the gap between method, interpretation, and praxis, many of the early criticisms of oral history became its primary strengths. According to Abrams (2010) the distinctiveness of oral history as an independent interdisciplinary field of study is built upon the interconnectedness of theory, method, and interpretation. She argues that the oral history interview and the intersubjective multi-vocality that produces it are always primary in oral historian’s considerations of method and interpretation. She states that “in oral history research, practice and theory – doing and interpreting – are entwined,” wherein

“we approach the oral history interview as a means of accessing not just information but also signification, interpretation and meaning” (Abrams 2010, 1). Oral history is therefore a dialogic process of meaning-making shared by both the narrator and the interviewer (Frisch 1990), and according to Portelli (1998) is “artificial, variable, and partial” (37). In identifying the distinctive discursive properties of oral historical narration and meaning construction, Portelli highlights the significance of the performative and narrative features of oral testimony, as well as their subjectivity and contemporaneity. The stories that people tell about their past ultimately reveal how they situate their own experiences in relationship to wider socio-cultural processes. Deviations or departures from “fact” are therefore not to be identified as failures of credibility, but rather as markers of the active process of meaning construction (Portelli 1998). As the theoretical foundation of contemporary oral history scholarship, identification of the distinctive discursive properties of oral historical testimony reasserted the primacy of orality, subjectivity, and memory in the process of history-making.

From its onset, folklorists paid close attention to the development of oral history, as well as the polarized debate among historians who questioned the accuracy and reliability of oral testimony and oral tradition. The reassessment of the place of orality, performance, and narrative structure in oral history testimony encouraged increased interdisciplinary dialogue within and between oral historians and folklorists. Like the first generation of oral historians who challenged the primacy and authority of written sources, folklorists were quick to highlight the distinctive features of oral composition and transmission through studies of oral literature (Foley 1988), as well as first-person

oral historical testimony and second-hand accounts that entered into wider circulation via community oral tradition (Vansina 1985; Goody 1992; Goody 2010). Abrams (2010) explain that oral historians have been insistent on maintaining a clear distinction between *oral history* and *oral tradition*, identifying the former as “the remembering of events and experiences within the lifetime of the narrator” (2010, 26), whereas the latter is distinguished by its lack of contemporaneity and its transmission from one generation to another. While folklorists do not outright dismiss this distinction, they do contend that the conceptual boundaries between oral historical testimony and oral tradition are fluid and shaped by similar processes of transmission, narrative construction, and performance, as well as shared motifs, genres, and discursive practices.

In an early call for greater dialogue between oral historians and folklorists, Joyner (1979) outlined the methodological requirements for the ethnographic description of oral history interviews as communicative events. In line with the growth of performance theory and the contextual school in folkloristics pioneered by Ben-Amos (1972), Dundes (1964), and Bauman (1982; 1986), among others, Joyner argues that processes of communication in the narration of oral testimony often reveal important things about the narrator and the socio-cultural context in which narration occurs:

Such elements of an oral history testimony as the degree of explicitness, the use of conventional phrases and formulations, the use of direct vs. indirect speech, modes of addressing and referring to other persons, the means of issuing commands and requests, means of indicating politeness or rudeness, and the means of opening and closing conversations are not accidental. They have both linguistic and social meaning and are analyzable for historical meaning in ways that written documents are not (Joyner 1979, 51).

The negotiation of social meaning and memory construction in oral history narration share similarities with other performative forms such as storytelling. Abrahams (1981) explains that narrative performances often follow well established patterns in response to the expectations of their audience. He states that folklorists conducting oral history research must be aware of “how the telling demonstrates the power of certain patterns in the process of storymaking and how such matters might be mapped onto community structures and sentiments and values” (2). This, in part, explains why Montell links first- and second-hand historical accounts with oral historical traditions in his definition of folk history. It also marks an important difference in oral historians’ and folklorists’ approach to history told by word of mouth: while oral historians make a clear distinction between oral history and oral tradition, folklorists have often been more interested in the socio-cultural processes that they share, as well as intersection of oral historical narratives and genres such as life history and personal experience narratives (Stahl 1977; Stahl 1984; Stahl 1989; Titon 1980; de Caro 2013) and the processes that transform first-hand oral history into oral tradition and vice-versa.

The larger relationship between oral history and oral tradition as either interrelated or separate fields has also been shaped issues of classification. As a form of discourse shaped by other discursive practices such as storytelling and community oral tradition, and communicative forms such as written sources and digital media, oral historians and folklorists have debated the generic classification of the narratives that oral history research creates. Questions that have dominated this discussion include: does oral history as a whole constitute a distinct genre? Or, is it a broad overarching (and perhaps

imprecise) classification for different narrative forms collected for a specific research purpose? These questions are rarely addressed directly. However, they have played an important role in shaping oral historians' and folklorists' approaches to oral testimony. More directly related to my discussion is the impact of genre analysis in folk history as a distinctive feature of its approach, which in turn may reflect epistemological differences in the historical methodology employed by oral historians and folklorists.

In response to the criticisms of oral history by historians discussed earlier, oral historians have often explored the wider theoretical issues and questions that rose out of the growth and development of their methodology. This centred on the recognition that oral narratives and testimony are not simply primary sources that fill in gaps in the historical record. Instead, they are collaborative discourses created by both narrators and researchers with multiple sites of meaning construction and signification. Portelli (1998) argues that oral history is a *composite genre* that is created in the context of fieldwork. The dialogic nature of oral history narration historicizes personal experience in response to the goals and agendas of both narrators and researchers. As Portelli states, "...oral history is a dialogic discourse, created not only by what the interviewees say, but also by what we as historians do – by the historian's presence in the field, and by the historian's presentation of the materials" (1998, 23). Therefore the generic classification of oral history is determined by the methodological processes of fieldwork that create it, rather than by objective categories.

As my discussion will show, most folklorists agree with Portelli's discussion of the composite nature of oral history, however, they also highlight how specific genres, as

well as the processes of narration involved, are shaped by the larger oral historical traditions of a group. This includes the way that historical narratives are told, who tells them, what is told, to whom they are told, and why it is told. Portelli discusses this in the context of the relationship formed between the narrator and researcher, however, a folkloristic approach must also differentiate the specific kinds of discourse that contain historical information and the performative contexts in which they are communicated. Legends, folktales, ballads, myths, anecdotes, tall tales, and place names all have different structural, formal, and linguistic characteristics, and may be performed in different kinds of contexts, each containing valuable historical insights in different kinds of ways.

While oral historical testimony contains valuable information about people's first-hand experiences, I disagree with the tendency of oral historians to sharply distinguish oral history from oral tradition. This is not to say that a folkloristic approach would understand them to be one and the same. As my discussion of folk history as second-hand accounts will show, folklorists do identify different textual and performative characteristics in first-hand oral testimony and second-hand accounts. However, they also assert that the two are not dichotomous and instead exist in a dialogic relationship. First-person accounts are frequently shaped by a group's shared conventions of narration and often incorporate traditional phrases, opening and closing formulas, motifs, and themes that follow well established cultural patterns. In conjunction with the theoretical insights of oral historians, folkloristics enriches oral history research, providing important conceptual tools and methodological approaches. The body of theory oral historians have

developed to explore the complex and dynamic collaborative relationship between narrators and researchers in the creation of oral histories provides a good starting point, but further research is needed. The tendency toward exclusivity, either in the separation of oral history from folklore or oral history from oral tradition, ignores the important perspectives and insights that arise from interdisciplinary dialogue. Folk history attempts to bridge the divide, focusing on the cultural expression of historical experience and consciousness by the people who themselves experience and create their own history.

Second-Hand Accounts of the Past and Oral Historical Tradition: The Traditionalization of Historical Narratives and the Historicity of the Folklore Text

As the study of second-hand oral historical narratives – of hearsay, legends, tales, and anecdotes – folk history is often differentiated from oral history. It explores how and why narratives become traditional, as well as the historicity of folklore texts and processes. As scholars interested in the documentation and analysis of tradition, folklorists are interested in history: the history of a specific tradition's development, transmission, and transformation over time; the study of traditions that no longer exist; the impact of history on living tradition; or even the cultural and intellectual history of folklore studies as a scholarly discipline. In all of its manifestations, folklore is shaped by history and contains history. It is the informal expressive forms and cultural processes that link past and present, and in some cases the processes that transform past into present, or present into past. Embodied in these interactions are fundamental questions: why are certain stories remembered, and how is it they move from personal recollection to oral historical tradition? Folk history scholarship attempts to answer both of these

questions, focusing on the processes that transform, or traditionalize, first-person narratives and the kinds of historical information that are contained in the materials folklorists collect.

The dynamic relationship between first-hand oral testimony and oral tradition, as well as the socio-cultural processes that mediate the formulation of historical narratives has often been the focus of folk history scholarship; however, folklorists have also been interested in the historical origins and development of the traditions they study. In the past, folklore was considered a historical science concerned with the study of pre-industrial customary culture preserved as survivals among the rural, uneducated “folk” (Bronner 1986; Bonner 1988; Stocking 1987; Zumwalt 1988). Collectors were often concerned with the *authenticity* of the materials they collected and went to great pains to search out the geographical distribution and temporal chain of transmission in their work (Bendix 1997). While most would acknowledge that such an approach is problematic, the examination of folklore as cultural artifacts with histories has retained scholarly authority. As such, the historical dimensions of folklore have been conceptualized as survivals from the past, the continuity of human behaviour from past to present, the revival of traditions from the past, or the use of folklore as a source of historical information (Georges and Jones 1995). Folklore is thus historical; its materials contain historical information and the study of the materials it collects, as well as the processes of communication it documents, may be used to enrich historians’ understandings of the past.

The often tumultuous and suspicious relationship between folklore and history has often detracted attention from folk history and its possible research potential. Folklorists of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries benefitted from the fluid disciplinary boundaries that separated folklore from history, anthropology, literary studies, and archaeology. They frequently conducted historical research and sometimes identified as cultural historians or anthropologists. Joyner (1986; 1999) notes, however, that interest in historical folklore studies greatly diminished as folklorists interested in the New Folkloristics shifted the focus of research toward the ethnographic study of cultural communication and performance. This ultimately undermined the rapprochement of folklore and history that began emerging out of the influence of both the new social history and the folklife studies movement. However, the rise of “history from below” and the rediscovery of popular culture by historians have made collaboration easier as the growth of interdisciplinarity produces new fields of study such as oral history, cultural studies, and memory studies that encourage dialogue and cooperation (Burke 2004). Ultimately, historical context is fundamental to understanding tradition just as folklore is likewise important in understanding the cultural context of people’s ideas and behaviours in the past.

In some circumstances written sources may be unavailable for consultation, or may exclude certain groups and voices from the documentary historical record. In such cases, oral history and oral tradition may provide the only available means for accessing the history of the excluded and marginal. Such was the case in Montell’s (1970) study of the African-American farming community of Coe Ridge in the foothills of the

Cumberland Mountains in Southern Kentucky. Marked by periods of cooperation and confrontation between whites and blacks, Montell documented accounts of the community from its foundation in the aftermath of black emancipation to its demise in the 1950s. His reconstructive efforts at weaving together oral accounts of the community were not simply focused on historical facts. Instead, Montell considered the wider context of the community's folk history which he defined as "a body of oral traditional narratives that are told by a people about themselves, and, therefore, the narratives articulate the feelings of a group toward the events and persons described" (1970, xxi). In fact, many traditional accounts of the past contain narrators' positionality and subjectivity, revealing how they feel about an event, person, or cultural practice, and its meaning to them and their community, either historically or retrospectively.

Contemporary folklore scholarship focuses on the dynamic and creative aspects of informal culture and aims to document the temporal and spatial dimensions of group traditions. This contextual focus on the wider cultural norms, values, and practices that shape the creation, reformulation, and continuation of tradition emphasizes the significance of historical study to folklore scholarship regardless of the genre, theory, or methodology that individual folklorists study or employ. In short, embedded in the materials folklorists collect are rich accounts of group, community, regional, and even national history.

While historical information can often be extracted from the materials folklorists collect, it can also be subject to folklore processes, encapsulated and transformed through the transmission, communication, and performance of tradition. Narratives often contain

fragments, isolated bits of the past selectively chosen by individuals and groups for one reason or another. Together, historical narratives reveal how the past is remembered and created from many vantage points by many people for many different reasons. These accounts, as fragmentary and variable as they may be, create a multi-vocal history that weaves personal recollection and experience into the narratives people tell about their past.

The component parts of a community's history can be examined separately for their stylistic, structural, and linguistic characteristics, but never in isolation from the larger whole. Studies of the family saga, such as Mody Boatright's 1958 essay "The Family Saga as Form of Folklore," explore the relationship between a specific narrative genre and the process of history-making and debate. For Boatright, the family saga was a cluster of narratives that formed "a connected history" formulated according to local and regional conventions of narration. He was particularly interested in the narrative forms and motifs that were characteristic of the family saga, as well as why certain narratives were more likely to be transmitted across generations and thus become part of family and community oral tradition. As "a lore that tends to cluster around families, which is preserved and modified by oral transmission, and which is believed to be true" (1), the family saga is the product of a process of traditionalization. David Bynum (1973) makes a similar observation and argues that the transformation of first-person oral testimony into second-hand accounts often leads to the reformulation and restructuring of narratives, wherein they take on the structural and formal characteristics of hearsay, myth, or legend. Therefore, it is through process of traditionalization, or "enfablement" in

Bynum's terms, that second-hand accounts enter oral tradition. As oral tradition, these narratives exist somewhere between fact and fiction, history and oral narrative, and it is the folklorist's job to differentiate one from the other. Overall, the examination of family sagas and oral historical testimony from a folkloristic perspective identifies many of the themes that have been fundamental in folk history scholarship, in particular, the identification of the socio-cultural processes responsible for the transformation of first-hand oral historical narratives into oral tradition.

Linked to the study of the traditionalization and transmission of first-person oral testimony is the notion that folklore, as both text and process, contains historical information. Richard Dorson, a trained historian and one of the founders of contemporary American folklore studies, emphasized the historical significance of the materials folklorists collected and advocated for a close relationship between academic folklore and history. For Dorson, oral tradition contained the *folk memory* of a group or community formulated through a process of cultural selection and traditionalization (Dorson 1972; Dorson 1973). Within legends, anecdotes, memorats, and family sagas were fragments of the past preserved in tradition and encapsulated by "legendary growth" (Dorson 1972). Upon closer analysis, these fragments would reveal both the individual idiosyncrasies of the narrator as well as the collectively shared conventions and characteristics that shaped the narrative texts they produced.

In proposing a historical approach to American folkloristics, Dorson called for a closer relationship between the disciplines of history, folklore, and American studies that would spur interest in the history of everyday people. To do so, Dorson distinguished

oral folk history from *elite history*, arguing that a folkloristic approach to the study of the past “seeks out the topics and themes that the folk wish to talk about, the personal and intimate history with which they are concerned.... for the play of tradition upon the events [of history] leads us into the folk mind and the folk conceptions of the meaningful past” (1972, 45). He also argued that oral folk history is comprised of both first-hand historical accounts, *oral personal history*, and second-hand accounts that have been traditionalized, reformulated, and modeled according to local oral tradition, which he called *oral traditional history*. The combination of both to form the larger oral folk history traditions of a group or community is often a site of debate and negotiation – it is the product of multiple voices and perspectives combining in the assemblage of shared historical mosaics while maintaining the distinctiveness of the experiences and meanings that make up their component parts.

As an integral part of culture, history is not static – it is constantly revised and reconfigured. The passage of first-hand oral testimony into oral tradition is a dynamic process through which personal recollection and experience is crafted into community memory and history. It becomes the stuff of conversation, stories shared between friends and strangers on street corners, at work, and over coffee. History is a collectively crafted mosaic of memories and stories – the past and present living side by side. When Montell (1970) wrote his influential oral history of Coe Ridge he was confronted by four positions on the relationship of oral tradition to the study of history: the view that folk tradition is inaccurate and thus wrought with historical inaccuracy and fallacy, the methodological position that folklore is history embellished by storytellers and in need de-enfablement,

the notion that folklore is a mirror of history capturing the recollections of ideas of the folk, and finally the notion that folk tradition contains historical fact. The debates in oral history and folklore that I have discussed so far about the relationship between oral testimony and oral tradition are the culmination of the proponents of these four positions responding to one another in disagreement or cooperation. However, do they have to be exclusive, and is it possible that they are in fact component processes of a much larger cultural practice? Is it possible to answer these questions? Is it even worthwhile? I believe it is, and I argue that the ethnographic study of history as an expression of culture, of individual and shared understanding of what history is, and of the people who create, use, and enact the past is good place to begin.

Folklore and History: Oral Historical Tradition as a Source, Resource, and Discourse

Folk history seems to exist somewhere amidst the cultural conventions and patterns of history-making, in the endless remembering and retelling of the past, and within people's wider cultural understandings of history, historical consciousness, and history-making, as well as in the debate and theorizing of scholars. However, it also seems to have been lost somewhere along the way – lost amidst the disagreements about method and theory, in questions about the legitimacy of oral materials as historical sources, in the debated relationship between oral testimony and oral tradition – folk history is lost in polarizing monologues of exclusion, it has been separated from the flesh and blood people that are actors in their own history. It is time for reclamation and rapprochement. It is time for a holistic approach to folk history, one that appreciates the

micro-level analysis of community studies and collections of stories from individual narrators while looking at larger trends, patterns, and discursive practices. Folk history must become part of a larger anthropology of history that examines the past as source, resource, and discourse.

As a starting point for discussion, Montell's three dimensions of folk history as both text (first-hand oral testimony, second-hand accounts, and oral testimony) and performance (oral historical tradition) cannot be separated. Folk history as source, resource, and discourse are interrelated cultural practices and processes that inform and interact with one another. They must be understood holistically in the context of expressive vernacular culture. To do so means looking beyond individual case studies and methodological issues in search of the salient structural, formal, and discursive properties that are characteristic of folk history as a genre and methodology of research. Much of the literature I have discussed has attempted such a distinction, and as a result folk history has been known by many names: grass-roots history (Blegen 1947), incapsulated history (Evans-Prichard 1937), oral folk history (Dorson 1972), and history from below (Thompson 1966). Hudson (1966) was one of the first to attempt a holistic understanding amidst the frequent debate and disagreement. Folk history, he argued, is fundamentally "emic," subject to variation, structured by culturally bound categories of time, crafted according to the worldview or folk beliefs of a group, and governed by cultural conventions, revealing points of conflict within wider social structures. As an anthropologist, his insistence on a holistic perspective required the differentiation of folk history from the methods of ethnohistory:

the aim of ethnohistory is to reconstruct, using all available materials, what ‘really happened’ in terms that agree with our sense of credibility and our sense of relevance. In contrast, in a folk history we attempt to find what people in another society believe ‘really happened,’ as judged by *their* sense of credibility and relevance (Hudson 1966, 54).

Folk history is what people believe that past to be and how they explain what happened.

Implicit here is the insistence that folk history begins, like all good anthropology, from a holistic perspective grounded in cultural relativism and ethnography.

If folk history is how people think, speak, remember, and understand the past, it is therefore integral, if not foundational, to worldview. History makes people think – think about who they were, who they are, who they wish to become – it is a process of self-exploration. Glassie (1994) insists that history begins with “evident reality,” explanations of the present that look to the past. It can never be separated from the present or contained by a single paradigm: “Historical practice is political, but it is not necessarily subservient to or subversive of prevailing power. The historian’s story, the tale of the priest or the man who cuts the hay, expands through enlarging circles of identity from the self through the gathering of active participants to a wide imagined culture” (Glassie 1994, 963). Thinking about the past creates connections, bringing people, the places they inhabit, the events that shape their lives, and their thoughts into dialogue. These connections can also transcend the local or immediate. In his study of Ballymenone and Irish folk history, Glassie (1982) writes,

Ballymenone’s history is Ireland’s. Telling their own tale, people gain at once a connection to their small place and to their whole nation. Both are sanctified and blood stained, places to live and love and leave, lands to ponder. The locality, divided like the nation, proves interesting, worth inhabiting and defending. Distinctions between local and national history, between folklore and history, prove false, untenable (8).

As Glassie writes, “history is not the past”; it is the people in the present trying to understand themselves and their communities. Folk history is personal and subjective, but never separated from the wider culture that shapes how people understand the past.

If folk history is concerned with ideas and cultural assumptions about the past and its relationship to the present, where does documentation and analysis begin? It seems that community history, or local history, is the primary focal point of study, focusing on individual communities or regions. Tye (1989a) in her examination of an artifact collection amassed by a local barber from Nova Scotia states that “folk history constitutes the ‘native’ view of the general populace of a community or region holds of its past” (1). Likewise, Montell (1996) asserts that the documentation of folk history should begin by allowing narrators to define their sense of the community’s geographical and cultural boundaries. In fact, he states that “folk history is valuable to researchers because of the manners in which it reveals people’s feelings about themselves in relation to their families, their communities, and to the land itself” (Montell 1996, 370). As both “collective tradition” and “personal reminiscence,” Danielson (1980) argues that folk history is a “community’s perception of the past,” as well as “traditional patterns of behaviour in past contexts” (65). In sum, folk history exists at the intersection of narrative and community tradition.

As a point of departure, my study of Scotty Carmichael, his repertoire, and the reception by the community of the stories he told begins with the existing literature and the insights it offers. Folk history can be first-hand oral testimony and recollection, second-hand narratives, or oral historical tradition contained in narratives, cultural

practices, and communicative processes. My analysis focuses on emic, native, or insider understanding of what constitutes history using the community as the base unit of discussion. The struggle of folklorists to establish folk history as a legitimate field of scholarly study, and the need for clear definitions and conceptual boundaries also informs my perspective and approach. The polarized debate over the validity of using written documentary sources as the sole source for historical study no longer seems relevant and the methodological and theoretical insights of oral history appear to offer the potential for the revitalization and reconceptualization of folk history. With this in mind, I am using my case study of a local historian and his repertoire to push further, incorporating previously excluded bodies of literature and theoretical approaches. My intent is not to return to the drawing board, but rather to suggest a new synthesis bringing folklore, oral history and the philosophy of history together for the purpose of reappraisal and rapprochement.

Folk History and Vernacular Theory: Toward a Definition of Vernacular History

Drawing upon Thomas McLaughlin's work on vernacular theory, I propose that folk history be reconceptualised as the study of *vernacular historical traditions*, or *vernacular history*. According to McLaughlin (1996), vernacular theory is the "practices of those who lack cultural power and who speak a critical language grounded in local concerns" (1996, 5-6). As individuals interpret and question the wider systems and ideologies of a culture, they engage in vernacular theory construction. Building upon this, I propose that vernacular history is the reflexive discursive practices and locally conceptualized systems of meaning that people use to think and speak about the past.

History is therefore more than a scholarly discipline, a genre, or a methodology: it is lived, remembered, shared, discussed, debated, and created by ordinary people in the context of the everyday. The oral, customary, and material genres that shape local vernacular historical tradition and the discursive tools that people use to construct historical awareness are the focus of this thesis.

Vernacular historical traditions – the processes and forms of vernacular history – are produced through two main discursive practices: folk historiography and assemblage. Historiography, writing about how others have written and thought about the past, is a quintessential conceptual tool of scholarly historical study (Bentley 1999; Elton, 1969; Tosh 2002). It analyses the theories, concepts, and philosophical assumptions that inform historical research, as well as the historian’s craft (Bloch 1992). Historiography identifies and makes visible patterns in scholarship, as well as patterns of representation, understanding, and historical awareness. That is, awareness of both the “stuff” of history – the people, the events, the themes, and the issues – and the representations and understandings that historians construct as interpreters of the past. As a tool of scholarly historical study, historiography operates as a delimiting strategy (Zeitlin 2000), reinforcing a professional/amateur dichotomy that situates non-academic historians outside the boundaries of scholarly history (Ambrose 1997; Wright 2000; Wright 2005). From a folkloristic perspective, the vernacular historical traditions of a community produce *folk historiographies* that establish an accepted canon of local historical knowledge. Based in local experience, folk historiographies are the personal interpretations of a community’s history and its historians, situating individuals in

relationship to the ideological frameworks that produce vernacular historical traditions. I argue that all vernacular history is historiographic – the historians of the past, their styles, repertoires, and ideologies serve as models for the creation of new histories in the present.

Involving both the shared vernacular historical traditions of a community and individual aesthetic choices, vernacular history is also a process of *assemblage*. Drawing on art criticism and theory, Jack Santino defines assemblage as “the combining of a variety of symbolic elements within a single frame, and the creation of a single aesthetic entity by grouping together disparate things” (1992a, 159). It is also a process of *bricolage* that creates something new through the combination, synthesis, and appropriation of artifacts and meanings (Lévi-Strauss 1967; Santino 1992a; Santino 1992b; Hartley 2002). Vernacular historical traditions involve assemblage in two ways. First, the vernacular history of a community is an assemblage of folk histories and historiographies, combining first- and second-hand historical accounts with the interpretations and ideological frameworks of its historians. Second, vernacular history’s multitude of forms ranging from scrapbooks and family history albums to historical narratives in the form of anecdotes and reminiscences, are products of the process of assemblage. From the range of personalities, events, and places in a community’s or individual’s past, choices are made about what constitutes history, or as Glassie (2003) states “history is not the past; it is an artful assembly of materials from the past, designed for usefulness in the future” (176). Through the process of assemblage, history is constantly reformulated and re-envisioned.

Folklore and Vernacular History: Scotty Carmichael and the Vernacular Historical Traditions of Collingwood

As a case study that examines the craft of history-making practiced by one man, this thesis is an exploration of the stories and biography of Scotty Carmichael. It seeks to identify and analyse the intersection of his craft and the local vernacular historical traditions of the community that influenced his work and shaped the reception and memory of the stories he told. Like the processes, discourses, and texts of history-making that I am examining, this thesis is an assemblage of fragments – of memories, reminiscences, and second-hand oral historical accounts created by local narrators in a spirit of hospitality and goodwill at my request. As a project in folklore and oral history, I interviewed current and former residents of Collingwood about their memories of Scotty Carmichael, their perception of his stories, their perception of the community during Scotty's lifetime, and their own history-making practices. This was supplemented by archival research using materials at the local museum, library, and Simcoe County Archives, in addition to extensive examination of Scotty Carmichael's personal papers and manuscripts. Drawing on both local oral historical tradition and written primary sources, this thesis is a composite project in history-making concerned with both the discourses that surround local history and the processes of history-making that local historians employ.

To orient my case study, I begin by providing a biography of Scotty Carmichael and a history of his craft. **Chapter One** therefore focuses on the development of his repertoire and its relationship to popular local oral genres such as the tall tale, anecdote,

and reminiscence. The stories he broadcasted over local radio, and told in print and in conversation, blurred distinctions between fact and fiction, truth and embellishment. Good history, according to Scotty, was the product of good storytelling, and good storytelling required “added colour.” His success as a local historian who transgressed the boundaries of accuracy and truthfulness in Collingwood’s vernacular historical tradition owed heavily to his status as an eccentric local character. Drawing on his own reputation, Scotty liked to tell stories about other local characters, people with a colourful personality who he believed were good for history-making.

Chapter Two examines stories Scotty told about Collingwood’s local athletes, and how profiles of local sports personalities were transformed into local sports heroes. It also examines Scotty’s most famous story: the hockey game on Georgian Bay between the Collingwood Fishing Fleet and the Christian Island Indians. As an in-depth analysis of specific items from his repertoire, Chapter Two situates Scotty’s history-making within the wider context of Collingwood history. Together, the first two chapters locate Scotty Carmichael’s practice of history-making in relationship to folklore processes such as the folklore and popular culture continuum, the link between tradition and creativity, and folkloric phenomena such as local vernacular historical tradition and the local character phenomena.

Moving from the practices and processes of Scotty Carmichael’s history-making, **Chapter Three** focuses on the community’s reception and memory of his craft. Arguing that the vernacular mosaic history of Collingwood is created through the dialogic process of debate, I explore how local history is represented, remembered, and contested. To do

so, I examine Collingwood's earliest historians and their model of vernacular history-making. I contrast this with Scotty's predecessors, local genealogists who conceptualize their craft and the work of local history in alternative, yet complementary ways. In each case, local vernacular historical tradition shapes the practice of individual historians, providing a common thread that weaves through the mosaic. As a vernacular cultural practice, I also argue that local history-making is a practice of commentary, of folk historiography, an ongoing commentary on the historian's craft that constantly redefines and redraws the contours of local history.

Vernacular history blends history, biography, and genealogy; it is a craft and an art. I am interested in how the past is incorporated into everyday life. I am also interested in the people who pursue history, who want to do more than remember. Scotty Carmichael was passionate about Collingwood's history and its local sports heroes. He fused the two together, combining what he knew of the community through local oral historical tradition and his own personal interests and aesthetics. In doing so it became part of himself, an expression of his identity, creativity, and passion. However, he is not unique in his passion for the community's past or in his incorporation of his personal interests. Collingwood has had many historians, each with their own focus, perspective, and aesthetics. Each recollection, story, or artifact adds to the community's mosaic history, each one is a new assemblage, recreating, recycling, and re-crafting the past in new ways. Collingwood's mosaic history is an emergent creation as well as a site of debate and negotiation. Everyone is a participant, but some more than others. I am interested in why this is the case and why particular people become more central in the

process of community history-making. Scotty Carmichael is my entrée into the inner workings of this mosaic. This thesis is my attempt to understand Scotty Carmichael the vernacular historian, and his stories as vernacular history.

Chapter One

“Just Give Me the Facts and I’ll Distort them to Suit Myself”: The Biography and History-Making of Scotty Carmichael

History and narrative, history-making and storytelling, truth and embellishment – these processual and discursive relationships are integral to the creation and negotiation of collective historical consciousness and identity. They provide boundaries for defining what may be, what can be, and is not history. However, these boundaries are not static. Shared ideas about what constitutes “good history” and how it is enacted in performance and formulated in response to established patterns and expectations of narration continually redefine and re-envision a community’s oral historical traditions. This process of redefinition and re-envisionment is both a collective and individual project. As a carefully crafted mosaic, history is a meta-narrative, the story of its constituent pieces together as a whole, and a fragmentary assemblage with individually distinct parts that bear the unique mark of their creators. These dimensions exist simultaneously and reveal how the boundary lines of history-making can be sharp, jagged, or smooth depending on one’s vantage point. Narratives can flow seamlessly from, through, and alongside a community’s sense of historical consciousness and identity. They can also cut across and transcend shared ideas about the past creating something new by introducing new characters, events, places, and interpretations. Community oral historical traditions are thus in keeping with the observations of Toelken (1996) – they exist somewhere between the conservative and the dynamic, the impulse to preserve and the need to innovate.

This chapter seeks to situate the biography and history-making, of one man, Scotty Carmichael. It is about wholes and fragments, Scotty Carmichael's contributions to the history-making of Collingwood and the distinctive features of his style of narration, repertoire, and ideas about history. The goal of this chapter is to provide a broad panoramic outline of Scotty Carmichael's biography and his place in Collingwood's history. Like all history, this chapter is by necessity a fragmentary assemblage created to serve a specific goal. In particular, I am interested in the narratives he told about the people of Collingwood, and in addition, the narratives that people told, and continue tell about him. To do so, this chapter explores the relationship of folkloristic concepts such as repertoire in relationship to the processes and discursive practices of vernacular history-making. My approach begins with the premise that Scotty Carmichael crafted his own oral historical narratives using the stylistic, formulaic, and discursive properties of popular local oral genres such as the tall tale, anecdote, and reminiscence. I argue this was a conscious choice, and that the features of each of these genres, in both their linguistic structure and performance, reveal how people think about the past and their ideas about historical truth, community identity, and the value of a good story.

The Craft of Vernacular History-Making: Preservation and Innovation at the Intersection of Repertoire and Tradition

History, like tradition, is a resource – a collection of artifacts, ideas, and memories. As a shared source of inspiration, critical reflection, or nostalgic yearning for the past, the malleability of historicizing discourses and cultural flow of historical consciousness nurtures the artists for whom history-making is their craft. This craft is a

process of cultural selection and choices are made about what to preserve and designate as unalterable, as well as what to change through innovation and reformulation. The “things” or texts of history-making often become part of the repertoire of their creators. Through transmission in performance they may also become part of the repertoire of others, or of the community at large. Like culture, history, and tradition, these repertoires are dynamic and under constant revision, contain variation, and are enacted in performance. They are the product of individual aesthetic choices and shared patterns of cultural enactment and performance.

Repertoire studies of storytellers, singers, and musicians have long been a staple of folklore research. As Georges (1994) rightfully points out, folklorists frequently use the term without providing a definition or discussion of its meaning and significance to their field. Understood as a *stock* or *inventory* of known examples from a particular performer, Georges argues that folklorists often conceptualize repertoire analysis as quantitative examinations that inventory and classify the *complete* stock of folklore known by an individual according to the generic classificatory categories of folkloristics. These studies, he contends, intend to reveal how the repertoire of an individual performer is “a microcosm of a collective repertoire of her or his society or of some group(s) of which she or he is a member” (1994, 319). In this sense, repertoires are finite and culturally bound.

Neither Georges nor other folklorists interested in a critical examination of the folkloristic importance of repertoire as a conceptual and analytical tool have been content to accept a static definition. Instead, individual repertoires are understood to be dynamic

and emergent (Goldstein 1972). Toelken (1996) emphasizes that repertoire(s) are rarely restricted to any one particular generic category, and states that “folk ideas and expressions have a way of appearing in several genres, and people in a close group are likely to know many genres and perform in more than one of them, making their choices on the basis of personal preference and a traditionally shared aesthetic” (184).

Additionally, the performance of a specific tradition may be left to a particular person, despite others in the group knowing the tradition as well. This *traditional deference*, Toelken argues, determines who will perform a tradition, and “in turn this widespread deference – in the ways we actually encounter in conversation – indicates an awareness of genre (‘Oh, yes, he’s the best storyteller in these parts’.) and of a set of shared aesthetics” (1996, 196). Often incorporating many genres into their repertoire, or repertoires, individuals combine different expressive forms and discourses through a process of assemblage that exists along a continuum of creativity and conservation.

Beyond the contextualization of repertoire formation and enactment, in-depth analysis of the discursive and processual dimensions of individual “items” within a repertoire, and their relationship to the wider whole, has yielded important insights. In his study of New Brunswick fiddler Don Messer, Neil Rosenberg (2002) explores two issues related to Messer’s repertoire and larger canon of technique: “the significance of repetition and innovation, and the question of repertoire’s representative powers” (192). Drawing on an earlier work (Casey, Rosenberg and Wareham 1972), Rosenberg states that the storage of traditional knowledge through repertoire formation enables innovation and the creation of performances. In the case of Messer and his public television

performances, he was successful because he was able to present his audience with something they understood as an “authentic” or recognizable representation of Maritimes fiddle tradition. The relationship of individual items within a repertoire to the representation and construction of cultural identity raises important questions for further study. In particular, what discursive practices are involved in processes such as repertoire formation and performance, and in turn, how can these processes be understood as ideational or cultural discourses? In keeping with Rosenberg’s foundational study, I argue that the relationship between repertoire, tradition, and performance is dialogic and fundamental to vernacular history-making.

Using his own case study and insights from studies such as Pocius (1977a; 1977b; 1978a; 1978b), Rosenberg also states that performers often keep notes, lists, texts, or files, and that “characteristically these artifacts document not just the past or potential performance repertoire of the individual but also include items from popular culture and from other performers’ repertoires” (2002, 194). These *repertoire documents* are simultaneously referents to the past and resources for future performances. They are created, stored, and enacted at the intersection of the personal and the collective, the popular and the vernacular, the private and the public, and the amateur and the professional (Rosenberg 2002).

In my research for this thesis I had access to Scotty Carmichael’s personal files – his newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, radiobroadcast scripts and notes, and other personal writings. I have also collected stories from residents in Collingwood, stories that Scotty told and stories people tell about Scotty. In this chapter I am documenting the dialogue

that has shaped, and continues to shape, the reception of Scotty's stories. Even after his death his stories are remembered and retold; Scotty is someone people remember, someone who had an important impact on the community, its identity, and its history. His repertoire – his assemblage of artifacts, narratives, and performances – was a site of history-making; a web that linked genres, identities, and traditions, a repertoire with its own history. This history is inseparable from the life of its creator and the community that inspired and shaped its creation. As my point of departure into the life history of Scotty Carmichael and his ideas about the history of Collingwood, I begin with his life history and the development of his repertoire. Based on the data that was available to me, I am unable to provide an enumerative inventory of his tall tales, jokes, reminiscences, and anecdotes. Alternatively, I have focused on the themes, discursive practices, and processual relationships that were frequently employed in his storytelling. These dimensions of his repertoire I argue, are fundamental to the craft of vernacular history-making, in fact, they *are* vernacular history-making.

Scotty Carmichael's Collingwood: The Life History of a Historian, His Repertoire, and His Craft

Just out of reach of the hustle and bustle of Collingwood's main street, on the second floor of an old Victorian building, Christie Coutts sat in her office and reminisced about her uncle, her time as a journalist, and her life growing up in Collingwood. Amidst telephone calls and the sound of the fan cooling the warm late-August air, she remembered Scotty, or Bill as she knew him as a child – the “fun uncle,” the storyteller, the reporter, and the community organizer. “He had a story about everything,” she

recalled, “sometimes they were a bit fantastic, sometimes we felt that he maybe stretched things a bit – never-ever in a malicious way, it was always to maybe make the story a little bit better” (Coutts 2013). Now an employee for a local children’s advocacy agency, Coutts previously worked as a general reporter for the now defunct *Collingwood Times* newspaper covering items of local news and municipal council meetings. At the press table in the Collingwood Council chamber Christie worked alongside Scotty, her father’s brother who was at the time working as a stringer for the *Enterprise-Bulletin*. She recalls being amazed by his detailed knowledge of the events, personalities and inner workings of the council, demonstrated by the quality of his reporting and his humorous commentary at the press table. He knew the community, he knew how it worked, he knew the people, and he knew their stories. Furthermore, he also knew how to tell a good story. “He had something he said, I heard this from him when I was working at the newspaper: ‘*just give me the facts and I’ll distort them to suit myself.*’ I love that line, it was pretty clever” (Coutts 2013). Transforming facts into stories and memories into narratives, Scotty Carmichael reported on and told stories about the Collingwood he knew, the Collingwood he envisioned in his articles, radio broadcasts, and storytelling, the Collingwood he created through history-making – Scotty Carmichael’s Collingwood.

Born above a shop on Collingwood’s main street to Scottish parents on 17 August 1908, William “Scotty” Carmichael was born to be a newsman. His daughter Nancy recalls that it began with his editorship of the high school “Gleaner,” or yearbook and grew into various jobs as stringers for local and regional newspapers. Reporting on local events, clubs, wedding anniversaries, council proceedings, and sports teams, Scotty had a

‘nose for news’ and wrote freelance articles for at least four newspapers over the course of his life. Based on an article written by Scotty in the *Enterprise-Bulletin* in 1978, it appears that his freelance work began in 1928 with coverage of a Collingwood council meeting for a local newspaper. Soon he was reporting items of local news for larger regional and national newspapers.

Scotty’s coverage of local news between 1928 and 1939 reveals the important relationship between news-making and history-making in the formation of his repertoire, as well as his ideas about historical truth and the value of a good story. At the heart of Scotty’s news reports was a concern for accurate reporting, and frequently Scotty simply *reported* the “facts.” Compiled together into a series of scrapbooks, the headlines of articles written during this period such as “Mayor G. Kohl Promises New Deal for Collingwood,” “New Officers Elected by Collingwood I.O.D.E.,” and “Collingwood Seeks Harbour Deepening,” chronicled the regular ebb and flow of community life (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). Reflecting on her uncle’s career as a freelance reporter, Christie Coutts remarked that Scotty had to be careful about the accuracy of his articles, a point similarly echoed by his daughter Nancy. He was a reporter and he had a responsibility to provide readers with an accurate account. Similarly, Scotty was in his 20s when his newspaper career began and it appears that he was seriously considering journalism as a future profession. According to Nancy, Scotty left Collingwood in 1929 to “ride the rails,” traveling to the United States with the intention of becoming a reporter for the *New York Times* (Liotta 2013). Beginning when he was seventeen, Scotty regularly left Collingwood for periods of time

in search of work and his first excursion was to Western Canada to work on prairie farms as a harvester (Local History Files: William “Scotty” Carmichael, LHF CARMI, Collingwood Public Library). However, he eventually returned to Collingwood, and for a short period of time tried to start his own newspaper. This entrepreneurial venture was unsuccessful and it appears that he began regularly contributing to the *Toronto Evening Telegram* and its special section dedicated to the Simcoe and Georgian Bay region in the early-to-mid 1930s.

A good writer with a personable and elegantly descriptive style, Scotty’s articles captured the life of the community, both the celebratory moments of community pride and the impact of the Depression on the economic, political, and social life of the town. The pages of his scrapbooks containing the articles he wrote during this period assemble side-by-side the victories of local sports teams, the celebration of wedding anniversaries, and the achievements of local youths with the polarized debates of local councillors, labour unrest, and the plight of families applying for assistance from the local relief board (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts).¹ In an article titled “Owen Sound Needy Family Used Like a Shuttlecock,” Scotty reported on the case of a single mother caught in an argument between the Collingwood and Owen Sound relief boards. As a resident of Owen Sound, the Collingwood relief board asked the woman to return to her home town and request assistance from her local board, however “the city of the Greys saw things in a different light and when the family

¹ Within the privately held Carmichael Manuscript Collection there are three scrapbooks containing articles clipped from the *Toronto Evening Telegram* newspaper. These articles are attributed to Scotty Carmichael and are unsigned and largely undated. Based on my own cross-referencing with local newspapers, I have determined that these articles are from the 1930s, possibly through to the early 1940s. The materials are uncatalogued, and as such, I have assigned a general title to the materials for reference purposes.

arrived back in their home town, they were not allowed to unload their furniture” (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). After returning to Collingwood and again being sent back to Owen Sound, Scotty remarked that “so far the woman and children have not returned and it looks like the *score* is one up for Collingwood Council,” followed by a statement by Mayor Kohl that victoriously affirmed that “this council will see that Collingwood people will receive fair treatment, but we certainly will raise the bars against outsiders coming for the sole purpose of obtaining relief” (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts, emphasis added). It is difficult to determine if Scotty’s sporting metaphors are intended as coded criticism of the confusion and difficulty created by both relief committees for the woman and her children, or as a literal declaration of Collingwood council’s victory. However, the blurring of the boundaries between celebration and hardship in Scotty’s reporting was in itself an aesthetic and ideological choice, a discourse of survival and coping embodied in the practice of news-making.

Embedded in the local experience of the Depression, Scotty’s news-making was not simply a matter of reporting “facts.” It was a process of creation and formulation, and in some cases, embellishment and possibly fabrication. As his daughter Nancy recalls, he liked to “put colour to things,” enacting his own maxim: “If you don’t have a good story, then create one” (Liotta 2013). Even with a careful analysis of the articles that Scotty Carmichael published in the *Telegram*, and later collected, it is difficult to determine exactly what was “pure” journalistic fact and what was creative licence. It appears that it was never a case of one or the other, both are parts of the same creative process of news-

making, although in some cases it appears that a few of Scotty's articles may have been total fabrications or hoaxes.

Morgan Ian Adams, a recent reporter for the *Collingwood Enterprise-Bulletin* in a piece he wrote on the journalistic career of Scotty Carmichael reports a case from a 1937 issue of the *Telegram* in which Scotty and another freelance reporter, Frank Tesky, published a fabricated anniversary notice (Adams 2007). The couple had celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary the previous year and both Scotty and Tesky submitted articles about the couple's 71st anniversary to their respective papers. The couple died that year and members of their family confused by the announcement contacted the editor looking for an explanation. Apparently it had been a slow news week and both Scotty and Tesky were starved for materials to report. Adams states that Scotty was prepared to resign his post, but in the end the editor laughed off the incident and Scotty continued to write articles for the *Telegram*.

In a similar case, Scotty submitted an article to the *Telegram* about a rough, violent hockey game played by the Collingwood Collegiate Institute's girls' team while at a tournament in Toronto. Based on stories told to him by his mother and other people in town, John Kirby, a retired teacher and real-estate agent in Collingwood, explained both the story and its fallout:

So Scotty was – he was probably eighteen or nineteen – a little bit older than my mother.... he was reporting for the *Enterprise-Bulletin*, but he was also a reporter at large for the Toronto Telegram and he got wind of this hockey game – the CCI girls hockey team was playing in a tournament in Toronto. So, Scotty was trying to make a name for himself – *he never saw the game*, well, I shouldn't say that, he may have gone down with the team to report on the game, but he submitted his report to the *Toronto Telegram* not the local paper... and in his report he talked about the game, *and then*

*he talked about all the fights that took place, 'it was a rough game and there was pushing and shoving' – this was girls hockey, high school hockey, and he reported this into the Toronto Telegram as a way of embellishing the story, but also to make it exciting (laughs). Well, I guess that news story was published by the Telegram on the Monday or Tuesday of the following week, and then the Wednesday my mother and the other team members were called into the principal's office and he was ready to disband the hockey team, just say 'that's it!' when he read this article in the Telegram. So the principal called them in and was threatening *not only to disband the team, but suspension from school*. And my mother, and I know the other women on the team probably were mortified, and they couldn't understand. And the principal says, "well, I've read the *Toronto Telegram* and it sounds like your whole team was involved in all kinds of fights and all this rough play, aggressive play, and that's not what I want to see in Collingwood Collegiate teams".... The principal was assured by every team member that no fights took place; it was a good game and that this whole story that was printed in the *Telegram* was a fabrication. I guess the next person that the principal was going to see was Scotty Carmichael! Needless to say, my mother and her teammates weren't suspended or expelled from school and the hockey team went on to finish the year, but I'm not sure what happened to Scotty (Kirby 2013).*

It's unclear what motivated Scotty to fabricate and publish this story in the *Telegram*.

Perhaps it was to make a name for himself as John Kirby suggests, or perhaps it was a practical joke or hoax played on the town's residents, the newspaper, or the newspaper's readers at large. What is clear, however, is Scotty's reputation for embellishment and his status as a local character, an eccentric "larger-than-life" local personality. According to Peck (1992) and Tye (1987; 1988; 1989b) local characters frequently use their marginal or central position within a community to mediate social conflicts, present a particular image of a community by drawing on local tradition, or use their status to communicate a specific message. In the instance reported by John Kirby, it appears that Scotty was certainly establishing himself as a local character and using the medium of print

journalism to potentially engage and debate issues of community identity as expressed and represented in sport.

Rarely were Scotty Carmichael's articles as brazenly fictitious as the above examples, however, many of his regular contributions to the *Telegram* seem to have been carefully selected, or embellished, to emphasize their bizarre, whimsical, or humorous quality. In one such article Scotty reported a case of a local hunter, Walter Woolgar, who managed to escape an attack by a twelve-pound jack rabbit:

While hunting in an open field near Collingwood, Woolgar suddenly noticed the big jack bearing down on him. Before he could raise his gun, the jumper dived between his legs, knocking him over, but became imprisoned when Woolgar promptly sat on him. To his surprise the jack put up a battle and Mr. Woolgar was forced to hit him on the head with the butt of his gun to save himself. "That story may sound like an entry in the liars' club," said Woolgar, "but I have witnesses and there is the rabbit" (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts) .

In another example, Scotty reports on a case of his friend and fellow freelance reporter Frank Tesky being offered a stray puppy by the Chief of Police that turned out to be a skunk. Titled "Collingwood 'Gift Puppy' Turns into Striped Kitty," Carmichael reports,

Frank Tesky, Collingwood girls basketball coach, vows he will get even with Chief of Police Harold Hough if it takes a lifetime. Yesterday the chief received a phone call from a west end resident asking him to dispose of two skunks which had made their home under the verandah.

Right at the opportune time Mr. Tesky happened to drop into the Chief's office.

'How would you like a nice puppy?'" said the chief. 'I have to destroy the little fellows if some one doesn't take them before to-night.'

Tesky readily agreed and he lost no time in driving up to claim his gift. Apparently Chief Hough telephoned ahead to the aforementioned home and tipped them off.

'They are right under the verandah,' said Miss Margaret Warren when Tesky inquired about the dogs. The would-be dog fancier took but one minute to discover his error.

‘Skunks,’ he shouted in horror as he backed out from underneath the verandah. Tesky went in a search for Chief Hough, but the officer had left for parts unknown (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts).

These published reports are characteristic of both Scotty’s written style and the stories he told in conversation. The negotiation of truth and fact in the overlap between Scotty’s published reports and his repertoire of stories existed on a continuum, blurring the boundaries between reported fact and innovative embellishment. As a family friend of the Carmichaels, and having worked with Scotty on council, John Kirby explained that Scotty often enjoyed leaving his audience to question the accuracy or truthfulness of the stories he told. Scotty, he explained, “always had a little story to tell you, or a little joke, just a little bit of information that he loved to share.” He explained that his stories were often humorous, and “... at the end of it there was a little smile on his face and you always – I remember going away many times thinking ‘OK, was that true or was that another Scottyism that he made up’” (Kirby 2013). Similarly, John also commented that Scotty’s print articles had much of the same kind of quality, “they were very informative, and again, just like his personality there was always a hint of humour interwoven into the story.” Blurring the distinction between truth and fiction, fact and embellishment was part of Scotty’s craft, an integral component of his personal aesthetic and style in both print and performance.

The overlap between Scotty’s love for reporting and his skill as an embellisher is most evident in the types of stories that he regularly selected to report and the emergent themes that developed he developed in reporting over the course of his life. The most striking example is the local character anecdote, and in particular, stories about local

sports heroes. Beginning in the 1930s period, Scotty often singled out eccentric local characters for feature stories to be published in the *Telegram*. A.J. Staples, locally known as “Collingwood’s Man of Nature,” was one of Scotty’s favourite local characters and his reports of the sixty-five-year-old man, his “snow baths,” and extreme exercise routines were a regular feature (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). Scotty reported that one December morning sometime in the 1930s, Mr. Staples provided a demonstration of his “back-to-nature” routine to an audience of local townspeople. He reported that “at eleven o’clock, Staples appeared at his front door, clad only in short trunks, stepped on top of a snow bank, and proceeded to give a fifteen minute lecture on ‘mind over matter.’” After his lecture the Man of Nature began his demonstration: “first he plunged into a high drift then rolled, crawled and romped all over the snow-covered lawn, and as a grand finale, stood in the centre of the audience and rubbed his whole body with snow” (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). Countless other articles document Staples’ lifestyle and exercise routine, as well as the community’s reception of Collingwood’s Man of Nature. In one such report, Gordon “Punch” Beatty, a local hockey player in the Collingwood industrial league, decided to understudy Staples to improve his physique. He was quoted by Scotty as stating that “I will try and keep up with Mr. Staples’ daily routine, with one exception, I will not follow him to the lake for that early morning bath” (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). References to Staples are littered throughout Scotty’s scrapbooks and published articles. It is unclear if he ever told stories about the Man of

Nature in conversation, however, it is clear that reports of Mr. Staples and his routine were perfect for good news-making. Interwoven with the “facts” was a humorous, larger-than-life quality that reflected both Scotty’s aesthetic preferences and, quite possibly, his personality and role in the community.

The period from 1928 to 1939 was formative in the development of Scotty’s career as a freelance journalist, as well as the development of his repertoire. He enjoyed reporting on the humorous and larger-than-life people and events of Collingwood, publishing them side-by-side with news articles that documented the social and economic impact of the Depression on the community. For Scotty, humour was a constant thread woven throughout community life. It existed somewhere between reported “fact” and creative licence – the craft of news-making was the ability to suspend the two, creating humour by blurring the distinction. This, however, did not happen without consequence and it appears that Scotty was willing to push boundaries in order to make a good story or deliver a good performance. In particular, he developed a preference for certain kinds of stories, stories about eccentric local characters and stories about local sports heroes.

Sitting and reflecting on her memories of her father in the living room of her condo in the east-end of Collingwood, Nancy Liotta, Scotty’s only daughter, recalled that if there were only two things that people remembered about her father, they would be his stories and his whistling. He whistled everywhere he went, he was a happy man, a jovial, kind, and generous man who loved his community. Born in November 1941, Nancy’s first memory of her father is a humorous anecdote going back to May 1945. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Scotty enlisted with the Grey and Simcoe

Foresters and was sent overseas in 1943 (Adams 2006). After being wounded by a grenade in 1944 and suffering from diphtheria, Scotty was hospitalized for month and returned home to Collingwood in 1945. Laughing, she recalled that her father did not just get off the train like everyone else; he pretended to be injured and hobbled off. Scotty was a character, a jokester, a storyteller, and a passionate sportsman. He loved sports and he loved Collingwood. His life from his return to the community in 1945 to his death in 2006 continued patterns well established in his youth: he continued to freelance, tell stories, and build his reputation as a local character. When the Second World War ended, Scotty returned to his family and his community. He was hired by the post office where he worked until his retirement in 1972, and in addition, he once again began freelancing for local and regional newspapers. Writing for the local *Enterprise-Bulletin* and the *Owen Sound Sun Times*, as well as the *Toronto Evening Telegram* and the *Globe and Mail*, he followed local sports closely. Sometime in the 1970s or 1980s he also began broadcasting short, regular programs on CKCB, the local radio station. Writing and broadcasting for a local audience, his storytelling was dialogic, influenced by both the community and its traditions of vernacular history-making. It was also influenced by his understanding of the community's identity and vernacular historical traditions, as well as the community perception of him as a local character and historian.

In addition to his love of sports and 'nose for news,' Scotty was also passionate about history. His experience as a freelance reporter no doubt helped him secure his position as the official keeper of his regiment's war diary while he was in active service during the Second World War (Carmichael 1974). His work documenting the persons,

events, and places in the regiment's history during the period was also accompanied by his wit and love for humour. In addition to stories he created and collected, his fellow soldiers also created and told stories about him. In one such example, a short chapter published in a history of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters Regiment, a publication to which Scotty himself contributed a piece based on his diary entries and memories during the war, Major Harold "Peaches" Graham cited a particular incident of Scotty playing a practical joke on soldiers waiting to receive an inoculation (Graham 1974). Graham served with Scotty during the Second World War at Base Borden, a military camp in Simcoe County south of Collingwood. In his entry he states rumours that the doctor was dulling the hypodermic needles to make them more painful were spreading through the camp, and after his own inoculation, in front of a line of men waiting for their own, Scotty fell to the ground screaming in pain. Graham reports that,

One of the first to enter was Sgt. Scotty Carmichael, perhaps our greatest practical joker. When he came out of the tent he put on the most spectacular act that could be imagined. He held his arm, moaned and groaned, fell down and writhed like a rattle snake, and at times broke into a scream. Dr. Morris came rushing out to see what had happened, but Scotty had faded away quietly into the ranks. But 2 of our boys fainted and had to be carried into the tent. The others I don't think were very comfortable as they entered the tent for their needle (Graham 1974, 76).

Scotty's reputation for telling jokes and anecdotes apparently built on, and was reinforced by, his love of being the inspiration for jokes and anecdotes told by others. Scotty loved to reminisce, and he appears to have loved inspiring the reminiscences of others. In this sense, Scotty's history-making and storytelling was collaborative. The reception of his stories was shaped by his reputation. In turn, this reputation provided him with

considerable space for innovation and creative licence; people knew what to expect when Scotty told a story.

Interested in local concerns, people, and events, Scotty often began a narrative performance following the mention of someone's name or in response to a statement about Collingwood's history. His niece Christie recalls that when her father, Scotty, and their sister Ruth met for family occasions they often talked about growing up in Collingwood, telling stories of the "old south end." According to Christie, "a lot of it was very much their growing up, the stories of families and that kind of small town things that probably a person who grew up in the city would never know, but those stories were really – they told the story *of the community* – you know, those people who were good, hardworking, solid people that built the town really, and there were always stories about them" (Coutts 2013). Reflective of Scotty's personality, his stories, and the community at large, these stories were performed in the context of conversation amidst the flow of everyday life – in coffee shops, at the post office counter, in the arena, or around the table. As such, for Scotty conversation was a site of memory and reminiscence, a site for history-making.

Based on the articles Scotty published in the *Telegram* it is clear that he enjoyed collecting, writing, and telling stories about local residents, especially local characters. It appears that these local characters may have also been an important source of some of Scotty's stories, borrowing from them to expand his own. In July of 1974, Scotty published a series of stories in the *Enterprise-Bulletin* about an old army friend named Slugger Frost. A local character and tall tale teller in his own right, Frost often told

stories related to the extreme weather on Manitoulin Island where he lived. In one such story recounted by Scotty, “a cold spell dropped down so suddenly one night that a huge flight of mallard ducks once got its feet caught in the fast forming ice on the pond. With a great quacking, the ducks flapped their wings and flew away with the whole pond” (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts).

It is clear from the reports that Scotty respected Slugger Frost’s repertoire, and carefully distinguishing it as reputable genre and legitimate form of verbal art in contrast to “lies.” Scotty stated that “a lie is usually designed to help the instigator of said lie to get out of trouble, for monetary gain or to try and destroy the character of an enemy imagined or otherwise,” whereas a tall tale “is strictly for amusement and often serves to brighten a dull day with a much needed laugh” (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). From the perspective of academic folkloristics, tall tales are humorous, fictional narratives, and according to Carolyn Brown can be defined as “a fictional story which is told in the form of personal narrative or anecdote, which challenges the listener’s credulity with comic outlandishness, and which performs different social functions depending on whether it is heard as true or fictional” (1987, 11).

In the case of Scotty Carmichael, fictional stories such as his account of the violent Collingwood Collegiate girls hockey game were intended as exaggerated humour, and thus may have been modeled on the tall tale. Additionally, Scotty explicitly states in the above passage that his embellishments, jokes, or his focus on particular people from the community were never intended be malicious. His goal was to tell a good story – a story with colour, a story with humour. As a man with a reputation as a local character himself,

Scotty expected the same kinds of stories to be told about him. In fact, it seems that he invited and encouraged members of the community to make him a protagonist in their own tales of Collingwood and its eccentric local characters.

In addition to tall tales and anecdotes about famous or popular residents of the community, Scotty also printed stories related to nicknames, often as etiological narratives explaining their origins. Don Rich, the retired parks manager for the municipal government, explained that in the past everyone had a nickname:

One thing I think and I find different now than even when I was a lot younger – *everybody in town had a nickname*. Nicknames, I find are very far and few between. Any group, probably it was associated with either – could be a person's looks, it could be something to do with the person's family, it could be the person's occupation – but *everybody had a nickname*, and I think again, that a lot of Scotty's stories were nicknames and what was interesting was the story itself (Rich 2013).

Many of Scotty's written articles and radio broadcasts about local athletes contain references to nicknames. According to Scotty, "the course of a man's life has often been changed or shaped by the acquirement of an appropriate nickname," adding that "nicknames have always been part of sport and in many cases the non de plume has actually helped athletes in gaining crowd appeal" (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). Similarly, a nickname could also be a marker of status and popularity and, in Scotty's case, material for the creation of a good story or a potential cue to begin a narrative performance. For Scotty, nicknames were an integral part of the creation of local sports heroes as a practice of vernacular history-making and a celebrated form of Collingwood folklore.

In addition to stories about people, Scotty also told stories about local events and historically important locations. This was especially true of later publications in the *Enterprise-Bulletin* and other publications in which he was requested to write about the community's past. Many of these pieces incorporated historical research using primary documents alongside memories and stories from Scotty's repertoire. A common discursive practice evident in many of these pieces is Scotty's focus on individuals as active agents in their own history-making. In an article about the history of Collingwood's local annual fair, the Great Northern Exhibition, he mentions twenty local men by name and their role in the Exhibition's history (Carmichael *Toronto Evening Telegram* Scrapbooks, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts). First and foremost in his storytelling, the residents of Collingwood, both past and present, were Scotty's main resource for history-making – he told the history of Collingwood through stories about its residents, their achievements, and their place in the community.

In turn, people in Collingwood also tell stories about Scotty Carmichael. The mention of his name is often a launch point for the narration of an anecdote or of a retelling of one of Scotty's stories. Based on obituaries and news stories written about his life and career, people in Collingwood remember many Scottys: Scotty the reporter, Scotty the athlete, Scotty the sportsman, Scotty the storyteller, Scotty the jokester, Scotty the municipal councillor, and Scotty the historian (Local History Files: William "Scotty" Carmichael, LHF CARMI, Collingwood Public Library). In addition to his job at the post office, Scotty was involved with multiple local sports organizations. He was a member of the Intermediate Junior and Minor Hockey Association Executive, and President of the

Collingwood Senior Hockey League, District Football League, and Baseball League. In addition, he was elected to municipal council in 1971, serving four terms until 1985, and sitting on numerous boards including the parks and recreation board and the library board. As a councillor he was also instrumental in creating the Collingwood Sports Hall of Fame in 1974, which held induction banquets every two years to celebrate the accomplishments of local athletes. In 1984 one of the upper rooms in the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena was renovated and transformed into the Collingwood Sports Hall of Fame room incorporating photographs of inductees and biographical information written by Scotty (Local History Files: William “Scotty” Carmichael, LHF CARMI, Collingwood Public Library). While sports were undoubtedly one of his greatest passions, he was also an active member of the local legion and a member of St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church. He was firmly rooted and committed to his community, and even declared “Mr. Collingwood” at the Collingwood Rotary Club Good Citizen of the Year award ceremony in 1986 (Local History Files: William “Scotty” Carmichael, LHF CARMI, Collingwood Public Library). Up until his death in 2006, his niece Christie recalls going to visit him at the Sunset Manor nursing home and being amazed by his memory, “he had a wonderful memory, he knew, he could tell you things that happened, even toward the end of his life he would remember things that had happened years before” (Coutts 2013). In many ways, Scotty’s storytelling, as well as the stories tell about him, can be understood as news, history, and memory-making embedded in community life.

As vernacular history-making, the repertoire of Scotty Carmichael is an assemblage – a collection of texts and performances constantly rearranged, reformulated, and remade. Scotty assembled anecdotes about local characters and reminiscences about the achievements of local residents in the past. For Scotty, good history was made from good stories, and good stories needed “colour.” As a discursive practice and rhetorical device, embellishment was never intended to be malicious, although in some cases it may have had the potential to cause trouble. Embellishment marked Collingwood and its residents as a vibrant and cohesive community.

As esoteric folklore (Jansen 1959), the stories in Scotty’s repertoire were formulated and performed through dialogic engagement with the structural and stylistic features of popular local genres. Based on the articles he wrote and collected in his scrapbooks, it is clear that Collingwood had a history of eccentric local characters. Scotty celebrated these figures and went to great lengths to foster and develop his own status as a local character. He used this status to his advantage, widening the threshold between accepted standards of historical truth and accuracy by blurring the boundary between fact and fiction, and celebrating the ambiguity of the “truthfulness” of his own stories. In the Collingwood presented in Scotty Carmichael’s repertoire, good stories made for good history.

Chapter Two

“The Greatest Hockey Game of All Time”: The Vernacular History of Collingwood Sports and the Making of Local Heroes

As discourse, vernacular history is shaped by the ideologies, world view, and systems of meaning that people use to make sense of their lives and the world around them. Integrating processes of cultural selection based on personal aesthetic choices, as well as shared vernacular traditions of history-making, vernacular history is a processual discourse located at the intersection of the personal and the local. It reveals local concerns and debates, as well as personal interests and aspirations – it is history that bears the unmistakable mark of its creators, their passion, their thematic focus, and their craft. History needs actors and events, themes and debates, and the immediacy of the vernacular. The flow of everyday life and conversation is the context in which the vernacular historian’s craft is practiced. History is created and enacted, and like all folklore texts and processes, is embedded in the expressive culture of a group or community.

As a well liked and respected local storyteller, news reporter, and radio broadcaster, Scotty Carmichael told historical narratives that defined and debated the community’s identity and history. Collingwood, according to Scotty, was a sports town, an industrial shipbuilding community with a long list of celebrated athletes. Drawing on his early experience as a reporter for the *Telegram* and his reputation as both a jokester and local character, Scotty told stories about other local characters, people with a colorful personality, people he believed were for good *story-making*. These personalities were

woven into the fabric of community life, as well as Scotty's presentation of vernacular historical tradition. For Scotty, telling stories about Collingwood meant telling stories about people: the residents of the town, its eccentric local characters, and its celebrated local athletes.

In the history-making of Scotty Carmichael, celebrated sports *personalities* were transformed into local *heroes*. They were the men and women of Collingwood who had achieved local, regional, or even national fame. As the most important aspect of Scotty's vernacular history-making, Collingwood history was told through sports, presenting a vision of the community's identity and history in response to the emergence of a celebrated local working-class culture in the decades following the end of the Second World War. The emergent identity of post-war Collingwood was the larger historical context in which Scotty situated his own history-making. Having begun reporting during the Depression, Scotty understood humour as a means of survival, the survival of community spirit in response to severe economic hardship. His most famous story, the hockey game played on Georgian Bay between the Collingwood fishing fleet and the Christian Island First Nations, as well as his book *Sports Personalities of Collingwood* and his popular radio programs *The History of Sports* and *Carmichael's Comments* combined sports reporting and history-making, local folklore and popular culture. Using the mediums of print journalism and radio broadcasting, Scotty brought the stories he told in conversation and the themes that perked his personal interest together. He crafted them into new works of history at the intersection of local vernacular historical tradition and news journalism, spanning the continuum of folklore and popular culture. As an

exploration of Collingwood sports heroes as vernacular history-making, this chapter explores the ideological goals of Scotty's history-making and situates it within the wider history of the community and debates about its identity. In particular, it analyzes Scotty's story about the hickey game on Georgian Bay, as well as his book *Sports Personalities of Collingwood*, which was based on his popular radio program *The History of Sports*. I argue that Scotty's radio broadcasts and publications were more than entertainment or local sports history. Through his local sports heroes Scotty discussed and debated issues of community identity, history, and vernacular historical tradition.

Sports Heroes as Emergent Collingwood History

Sitting in her office slightly reclining in her office chair, Christie Coutts, Scotty's niece, recalled her uncle's most famous story. "He told a story, and I'm sure you've heard this one, about a hockey game on the bay between the Indians in Christian Island and people in Collingwood..." (Coutts 2013). Having been told about my project and knowing that I had already completed months' worth of research, Christie fully anticipated that I knew exactly what she was going to tell me next. "...and of course it was made up, but it was – people *loved* that story about how they were shooting the puck and skating across the bay." I knew the story that she was referring to, the famous hockey game on Georgian Bay between Collingwood and Christian Island that lasted for three days and was played across a twenty-two mile stretch of frozen water. I had heard it many times before, from other narrators and from members of my own family. "I had more people say to me 'oh I love that story about the hockey game between Collingwood and the Christian Island

people’...” she continued before pausing, “I don’t know, I think a lot of people *actually believed it*” (Coumts 2013). This famous hockey game allegedly played sometime during the late-nineteenth century was one of the most famous to be reported in print and on air by Scotty Carmichael. There was no question, it sounded like a “Scotty” story. It was full of *colourful* characters, exaggerated episodes, and rich, imaginative description.

Based on its popularity and wide distribution throughout the community, it was possibly Scotty’s most popular story – people loved to hear it and Scotty loved to tell it, but why was it so popular? What made it different from the other stories that Scotty reported in print and broadcast over radio? and what does it reveal about Scotty, his repertoire, narrative style, and history-making, as well as the community that embraced it and incorporated it into its own tradition of history-making? As a microcosm of Scotty’s repertoire and craft, this story contains multiple discursive devices and ideological constructions, presenting the Collingwood that Scotty Carmichael envisioned. Interwoven with the characters and episodes of the game are reflections on the town’s history and alternative interpretations that call for a new local historical consciousness that combined vernacular historical tradition and popular culture. The story was intended to be something for Collingwood – it was Scotty’s story, but it was Collingwood’s story as well. Scotty reported it as he reported his other stories; he suspended it between fact and fiction, truth and embellishment. It was a tall tale reported as news – reported as history.

The version of the story that I am analyzing in this chapter is from a script likely prepared for an episode of *Sports History* or *Carmichael’s Comments* to be broadcast on CKCB sometime in the 1970s or 1980s. I have used this version because it is the only

complete version of the story that I have been able to find. It was found amongst Scotty's files, his repertoire documents, and contains revisions and references to earlier versions of the story published in the *Enterprise-Messenger*:

It is one hundred years since the greatest hockey game of all time was staged on the biggest open air rink in history.

We are talking of course, about the match between the Christian Island Indians and the Collingwood Fishing Fleet.

Be it fact or fiction, the story has been told and retold so many times that may old timers accept the tale as the gospel truth.

Up until twenty years ago, I often heard people swear that they actually witnessed the game.

As a matter of fact, I first wrote the story for the old *Enterprise-Messenger* forty-seven years ago.

The site of the great game was the wide sweep of the Georgian Bay from Clark's Island to the south shore of the Christian Island.

There is no reason to doubt this particular statement because the Georgian Bay quite often froze solid in those good old days of the hard winters and harder men.

The game had been planned for two years following a challenge from Christian Island and the following rules were set up by a joint committee.

One goal was placed at a point extending from the east tip of Clark's Island to the edge of the old elevator dock. The other stretched completely across the south shore of the Christian Island, twenty-two miles away. That was the length of the granddaddy of all open air rinks.

The width measured approximately three miles and was marked with stakes driven in the ice and topped with red flags.

The teams played one hundred men to a side. Seven goalkeepers, forty-three defensemen (called points in those days), forty forwards and ten rovers.

There were many colourful names on both rosters.

The Indians had such quaint characters like "Hooked Stick Harry", "Big Chief Butt End", "Slap Shot Sam", "Bird On Skates", "Big Beaver", "Willie The Wolf", "Billy Big Hands", and "Ralph in Reverse".

Ralph in Reverse picked up that moniker because he always skated backwards when in possession of the puck. He said he was not interested in where he was going – he just wanted to see where he had begun.

The Collingwood Fisherman had legendary names like: "Daytime McInnes", "Bull O'Grady", "Pike Pole Pete", "The South End Slasher", "Willie the Weep", "Paul Bunyan, Jr.", "Herman the Hook", "Big Sandy", "The Blue Mountain Gopher" and "Poke Check Paddy".

The game lasted three days. Three twelve-hour periods, all straight time.

Each period started at six in the morning and ended at sunset.

There was no limit to the length of the sticks and it was said that the "Big Beaver" (he was seven feet tall) used a stick twenty-two feet long with a dip net on the end.

He was quite adept at snaring long passes. Some of the passes were a mile and a half long. The players lost a lot of pucks that way.

The pucks were cut from hickory saplings, about five inches in diameter and weighing about half a pound (when frozen).

Since the game was played in sub-zero weather, the pucks were frozen all the time.

On the second day of the game the temperature dropped to thirty below zero. That kind of weather did not deter those hardy athletes.

Every player carried a flask of the best swamp whisky on the hip. The whisky froze solid but that situation created no problem. The players would stop skating every now and then and bite off a drink.

The Indians scored the first goal at the seven-hour mark and it was a picture score.

"Slap Shot Sam" had the wind at his back when he pulled the trigger around about Lafferty's Shoal (two miles off the breakwater wall).

The puck sailed along the ice, hit the inside corner of the elevator (which was the goalpost), knocked down three goal keepers, bounced off the drydock and knocked Jiggly Dana and Fiery Ann off their junk wagon on Hurontario Street.

The game became very rough near the close of the first period.

"The Blue Mountain Gopher" started it all when he hit "Big Beaver" with a block of ice as the Indian star broke into the clear. It took ten men with Cant hooks and Peavey Bars to get him back on his feet.

"Daytime McInnes" tied it up for Collingwood an hour after the start of the second period.

The Indian goalkeepers had been magnificent as they blocked shots from all angles, with sticks, hands, teeth, heads, feet and tommyhawks. "Daytime" saw it was no use trying to get the puck past that kind of goal keeping.

He faked a pass to "Big Sandy", covered his next action by stopping sharp and sending up a shield of ice particles, and then tucked the puck in his mackinaw shirt.

The Indians lost sight of the puck and all forty defensemen broke ranks and spread out in search of a puck carrier.

The wily "Daytime" was waiting for such a manoeuvre and he just pulled straight through and skated for the goal.

He dropped the puck fifty feet from the goal line and let fly with a swinging golf shot. The puck slid over the lines but “Daytime” never stopped.

He caught sight of a hostile group of Indian skaters, bearing down on him, out of the corner of his eye.

Well, “Daytime” kept skating right up on the shore and took refuge in a wigwam, followed by ten or twelve tommyhawk yielding Braves.

“Daytime” managed to escape but never did get back in the game. What’s more he never took his hat off again.

That night the weather turned very mild and the third period started on slush covered ice.

That day the teams lost two stoneboat loads of pucks.

The break came around three in the afternoon when the Indians worked the puck to within a quarter mile of Clark’s Island. “Willie the Wolf” laid over a perfect pass to “Ralph in Reverse”.

Ralph almost drowned three goalkeepers as he sent up a cascade of water with a mighty swipe of his “paddle like” stick. Before the goalies could get the slush out of their eyes, Ralph had the puck over the goal line and the Indians led 2-1.

The Fisherman made one more gallant rush and succeeded in battling the puck to within three miles of the Island goal.

Then the miracle happened. The Indians suddenly halted all opposition and turned and skated “pell mell” for the Island.

The Fisherman stood in awe before continuing the attack.

But it was too late. Suddenly, the ice cracked open, clear across the bay, in the front of the Collingwood team.

Within minutes there was two hundred yards of open water between then gapping Fisherman and the fleeing Indians.

It was the Spring break-up and it was all over for the vanquished Collingwood Fishing Fleet.

An hour later the sun went down like a big red ball ad the game was over. Final score: Christian Island Indians 2 Collingwood Fishing Fleet 1.

The two teams never met again. For many years, they tried to organize a return match but it never materialized (Miscellaneous Materials, undated, Carmichael Manuscripts).

Whenever I ask people about Scotty Carmichael and his repertoire of stories this is the story they often remember or cite. George Czerny, the former editor of the *Enterprise-Bulletin*, explained to me that it was probably Scotty’s most famous story. Similarly, John Nichols, the former morning man for the local CKCB radio station from 1971 to

2013, remarked that people would sometimes ask Scotty to retell the story during one of his weekly radio programs, and that he did so on a number of occasions. In interviews or passing conversations people frequently told me that it was one of Scotty's greatest stories, tales, or yarns. With a smile or a laugh they usually told me about some incident or episode that happened during the game, but no one ever told me the story from beginning to end. The basic details were often the same: There was a hockey game played on Georgian Bay between Collingwood and Christian Island, or in some versions Midland, and it lasted three days. It seemed that the recounting of the basic details of this story was intended more as an anecdote about Scotty, rather than a retelling of a story from his repertoire. His niece Christie's belief that people in Collingwood *loved* the story appears to be true, and the relationship between this story and Scotty's status as a local character, reporter, and historian is complex and dynamic.

An analysis of the story itself reveals key features of Scotty's narrative style and preferences in theme and content. As a highly episodic and descriptive narrative, the story focuses on each team's roster of "colourful names." These larger-than-life characters "in those good old days of hard winters and harder men" have humorous and carefully crafted nicknames that describe an important feature of their personality, physical appearance, or skill as an athlete. According to Scotty the players from Christian Island were "quaint characters," and were given names that primarily describe their individual roles on the team in a humorous way: Big Chief Butt End, Bird On Skates, and Ralph in Reverse. In the case of Ralph in Reverse, Scotty provides an etiological anecdote describing the origins of his nickname, highlighting his eccentric and

idiosyncratic style of skating and puck-handling. Their names also suggest an essentialized representation of aboriginal culture in names such as Big Beaver, Willie the Wolf, and Bird on Skates, that contrast with names of the Collingwood team. The “legendary names” of the Collingwood Fishing Fleet, such as Daytime McInnes, The South End Slasher, Paul Bunyan Jr. and Poke Check Paddy, implied each man had a reputation in the community, both off and on the ice. The distinction between the “quaint characters” of Christian Island and the “legendary names” of the Collingwood Fishing Fleet is an important discursive strategy. Both sets of names emphasize their folkloric quality, but for different reasons.

The actions of individual players throughout the story are meant to be emblematic of the wider folkloric qualities associated with each team. The Christian Island players are skilled competitors committed to winning the game, and their names reflect this. For example, Big Beaver used a twenty-two foot stick with an attached dip net that he used to make mile-and-a-half passes, and according to Scotty, the Christian Island goalkeepers “had been magnificent as they blocked shots from all angles, with sticks, hands, teeth, heads, feet and tommyhawks.” The goal made by Ralph in Reverse is similarly skilful, however, it is his strength and natural skill that defeats the Collingwood goalkeepers “as he sent up a cascade of water with a mighty swipe of his ‘paddle like’ stick,” shooting the puck across the goal before the opposing players could recover. Alternatively, the Collingwood Fishing Fleet are represented as skilled tricksters and clever strategists. In fact, the only goal scored by the Fishing Fleet is the result of trickery and cunning in addition to athletic skill. According to Scotty, Daytime McInnes “faked a pass” to Big

Sandy, covering his actions by “sending up a shield of ice particles, and then tucked the puck in his mackinaw shirt” before shooting the puck across the goal “with a swinging golf shot.” The Collingwood players were also responsible for much of the roughness, epitomized by The Blue Mountain Gopher’s attack on Big Beaver with a block of ice during the first period. In each case, the greatest players on each team have a larger-than-life quality. Their three-day battle for hockey supremacy was played by extraordinary players with super-ordinary athletic skills in a game of exaggerated scale.

On the “granddaddy of all open air rinks” these players not only played for victory, they also enacted Scotty’s vision of the community and its history, his definitions of its identity, and his ideas about what kinds of stories and personalities made for good news-making. Scotty’s description of the names, behaviour, and reputation of the Collingwood team resembles those of Collingwood’s Man of Nature, Slugger Frost, and himself. They are “colourful” men and the focus of “colourful” narratives. It is as if the story is a string of anecdotes, an assemblage of local characters enacting the identity and history of Collingwood. Adjectives such as “hardy” and “colourful” are referents for both the history of local settlement and industry, as well as the vibrancy of community life in spite of economic hardship. The game, a specific moment in Collingwood’s legendary history, is more than a single event; it is a comment on the local historical experience spanning multiple generations and different historical periods. The “greatest hockey game of all time” is Scotty Carmichael’s Collingwood envisioned and enacted – a vibrant, resilient working-class town with a passion for sports and a host of colourful personalities.

Situating the Vernacular History of Collingwood Sports: Local History and the Context of Collingwood Vernacular Historical Tradition

The Collingwood of Scotty's youth and the Collingwood of Scotty's later life were very different places, transformed by economic and social processes throughout the twentieth century. When Scotty was born in 1908, the municipality of Collingwood had existed for not over sixty years. The settlement of Collingwood began after its selection as a terminus for the Ontario, Simcoe, and Huron Union Railway (later renamed Northern Railway) in 1852-3. Incorporated as a town on 10 June 1857, rapid population growth combined with the economic prospects of the new railway and the town's excellent natural harbour produced a steady stream of development.

On 1 January 1855 the Northern Railway was completed, and regular steamship service began in 1857 (Hunter 1909a), further driving development and the emergence of new local industries such as shipbuilding and small-scale manufacturing, as well as canning, and the export of local vegetables and tender fruits such as peaches and plums. However, this stream of development was not immune from wider economic problems, and the development of the local industry and infrastructure was severely hindered by the collapse of inflated land prices associated with the rapid construction on new railways across Ontario (*Jubilee History of Collingwood* 1887). The experience of fluctuating periods of economic boom and bust, punctuated with dramatic moments of economic transformation, has been a common feature of Collingwood history, and thus has had an important impact on people's lives and understandings of the community's identity and historical experience.

The period from initial settlement to incorporation lasted only five years and was followed by continued growth and development throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. By 1861 Collingwood had a population of 1,408, and by 1901 it had increased to 5,755 (Arp 1983). This rapid growth in population followed the establishment of local institutions and infrastructure projects in the 1850s and 1860s. This included the construction of a number of churches, a Town Hall building on St. Paul Street, an elementary school on Pine Street, and a covered train station that was later destroyed by fire in 1865. The *Enterprise-Messenger* newspaper was started by John Hogg in 1857, and the *Collingwood Journal* by J.H. Laurence in 1858 (Arp 1983). This level of growth continued, and the town became increasingly more economically developed, especially after the construction of a new dry dock in 1883, and the opening of an American Consulate office on Hurontario Street. This was followed by the continued construction of new institutions such as the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital in 1889 and a new City Hall in 1890, as well as municipal water and electrical systems.

This economic and demographic growth ultimately proved to be an important catalyst for the growth and maturation of cultural institutions during the 1890s and well into the twentieth century. The founding of new clubs and associations, as well as the construction of an arena, an opera house, a curling rink and a golf club provided leisure and recreation, and the opening of new bank branches, law offices and medical practices also brought a growing number of professionals to the town, who ultimately helped to establish the identity of the local middle class.

This emergent local middle-class culture played an important role in the construction of community identity and was actively supported by a prominent group of local residents that dominated the development and operations of key institutions. For example, William Williams, the Principal of Collingwood Collegiate Institute and the Vice-President of the Collingwood Mechanics' Institute, moved to Collingwood in 1873 with his family, and he and his son David quickly became important public figures. In the 1870s, the elder Williams joined the *Collingwood Bulletin* newspaper, which was the Liberal alternative to the Conservative *Enterprise Messenger* (*Jubilee History of Collingwood* 1887). Like other prominent local men, William and David volunteered for committees, joined local clubs and societies. David was also heavily involved in town affairs and was president of the Reform Association and served on numerous municipal committees, including the Board of Trade, the Board of Finance, the Board of Works, the Board of Town Property, the Board of Fire and Police, and the Board of Licensing (Hodgson 1894). He was also one of the founding members of the Huron Institute, a local museum and intellectual society founded in 1904. He was also elected mayor in 1933 and served one term in office before returning to his post as editor of the *Enterprise- Bulletin*. Like the Williams family, members of Collingwood's middle-class elite attempted to enhance the physical and social environment of their communities by creating institutions that tended to reinforce their political and cultural authority.

A tour of the current displays in the Collingwood Museum, or a browse through the holdings of the local history section of the Collingwood Public Library, offers a visceral and tangible reminder of the power and influence of the local middle-class.

These institutions bear the unmistakable mark of their founders, both in their holdings and embodied ideas about history and history-making. Founded in 1904 by a group of “leading citizens who had assembled by invitation for the purpose of organizing such a society” (*Enterprise Messenger* 1904), the Huron Institute was intended as a place for the study of important local specimens and artifacts, as well as scientific enterprise and self-discovery. Its vision of Collingwood’s history was romantic and aimed at seeding the growth of a flourishing civic identity and historical consciousness.

In a report published in the *Enterprise Messenger* about its mission, the founders of the Huron Institute remarked that “in our woods and fields are myriads of birds and plants which we pass unheeding by. In our rocks are a variety of fossil remains which tell the story of ages past; and buried beneath the soil are innumerable relics of the ancient races who flourished here long years before the advent of the European” (*Enterprise Messenger* 1904). This proclamation is bold, passionate, and possessive. It asserts that Collingwood is unique, and has an important place in Canadian history, exalting its natural history and appropriating the material culture of the Petun people who had lived in the region until the seventeenth century for its own ideological purposes. History-making was *civic identity building*, and the Huron Institute was intended as an instrument of civic development.

The Huron Institute, which was housed in the basement of old Collingwood Library, was destroyed by fire in 1963. However, many of its artifacts were saved and transformed into the Collingwood Museum which was relocated to the former Collingwood Train Station after it was renovated and the museum was reopened in 1966

(*Collingwood Enterprise-Bulletin* 1965). Today the museum honours its institutional predecessor with a group of display cases that house an eclectic assemblage of curiosities that are as much an artifact of the Huron Institute's broad curatorial mission as it is a grand history of the success of Collingwood's middle class. Birds' eggs and fossils, a portion of a sawfish skeleton, and treasures brought home by local missionaries are carefully arranged and displayed in tall oak cases. Without a prior knowledge of the Huron Institute and its history these displays seem unconnected and decontextualized. Other displays in the museum reveal the history of the Petun First Nations, the development of the local railway, life in late-nineteenth century Victorian Ontario, and of course, the history of local ship-building. A walk through the museum reveals a history compartmentalized and fragmented into loosely interrelated themes – it seems like history fraught with contradiction and conflict, debates about civic and historical identity.

The pages of Scotty Carmichael's scrapbooks, however, seem to tell another story, a different history about a different kind of community. Scotty Carmichael's Collingwood appears to be different from David William's Collingwood, and different again from the Collingwood that I remember when I went to visit my grandparents, returning to the hometown that I had left behind when my parents moved away in search of work in the early 1990s. It is also different from the history I encountered when I worked for the Collingwood Museum for a summer, cataloguing and researching artifacts in its collection. Amidst the rare books, photographs and old Victorian porcelain where were the larger-than-life sports heroes of Collingwood who had braved the elements for three days playing in the greatest hockey game in history on Georgian Bay? Where were

the anecdotes about Collingwood's colourful characters? Where were the stories I had heard about Collingwood's greatest story teller? Where was Scotty Carmichael's Collingwood? Upon reflection it is apparent that I have created my own ideas about Collingwood's history and local history-making as a former resident who lives outside the community, as a member of a growing diaspora.

My historical consciousness is a response to my family's experience of the unfolding of local history, to the economic forces that transformed the community and the cultural politics that shape people's relationship to history. For me and my family, and I think for Scotty as well, an important date in Collingwood's history stands out more than any other: 1986, the year the shipyard closed. Debates about working-class consciousness and identity and their relationship to local history-making were seriously reconsidered and discussed as people began to envision what post-1986 Collingwood might be – what was at risk of being lost and what stood to be gained.

Sitting on his back porch discussing his time working as the morning man for CBCK radio, John Nichols reminisced about his time broadcasting hockey games with Scotty Carmichael and his perceptions of the community when he arrived in 1971 and how it had changed. When I asked him about local shipbuilding there was no hesitation in his response, "it was the town" (Nichols 2013). According to John the shipyard employed between eight hundred and one thousand people when it was at the height of production. He described the familiar sights and sounds of the shipyard, the sound of the whistle that announced the beginning, ending, and breaks in the work day, and the sight of crowds of men walking down Hurontario Street for lunch wearing their hard hats and boots. These

were the visual and aural markers of a community defined by its primary industry, and the Collingwood that Scotty Carmichael knew and understood.

Beginning with the formation of the Collingwood Dry Dock, Shipbuilding, and Foundry company in 1882, shipbuilding was quickly developed as an important local industry. In 1899 the dry dock was expanded and town council granted \$50,000 to the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company to begin building steel hull ships. Throughout the twentieth century the shipyard filled contracts for various clients for different kinds of vessels, including passenger and freight ships, ferries, barges, and oil tankers. During the Second World War production reached its zenith with the production of Corvettes and mine sweepers for military service (Arp 1983). Contracts continued through the next three decades, but by the early-1980s contracts were beginning to dry up and the shipyard was closed in September 1986.

By the time that production ceased, many of the shipyard's employees had already been laid off and only a few remained right through to the end. However, the sense of loss associated with the decline of shipbuilding was intensified by the collapse of other local industries. John explained to me that the federal government provided generous subsidies and incentives for manufactures to open facilities in the Collingwood area during the late-1960s. These too were in decline by the mid-1980s and other local businesses that depended on shipyard employees and their families were equally worried about the impact that the decline of industrial shipbuilding and manufacturing would have on their own businesses. When I asked John how Scotty reacted to news of the shipyard's closure, and if it was ever addressed on either of his radio programs, John

exclaimed that “he was devastated.” He explained that Scotty knew many of the shipyard’s former employees and told me “I remember him saying ‘Boy, I’m really worried about the future of this town,’ because there just wouldn’t be the government assistance at that time” (Nichols 2013). Without new industry to offset the closure of the shipyard and other local factories, Collingwood entered a new phase of economic development – a period of transition that transformed Collingwood from an industrial shipbuilding town into one of Central Ontario’s premier tourist destinations.

Leisure, recreation, and tourism are now synonymous with Collingwood and the nearby Blue Mountains. George Czerny, who moved to Collingwood in June 1977 to work for the *Enterprise-Bulletin* remembers Collingwood as a sleepy community on the verge of transformation. He explained to me that in 1970s Collingwood was beginning to implement new development initiatives to improve local recreational and leisure opportunities for residents and visitors. Forty-six acres of land along the Collingwood harbour front adjacent to the shipyard was home to the local dump and fallow undeveloped land. This was transformed with the construction of an arboretum and walking trails, as well as other projects that have continued to transform the local landscape such as the conversion of old railway tracks into biking trails (Czerny 2013).

George also explained that Collingwood’s relationship with the Blue Mountains has also had an important impact on the development of local tourism, attracting tourists to the nearby ski hills and resorts. Additionally, Collingwood has also begun to attract retirees, and a number of social clubs, businesses, and cultural organizations have been established to support the growing number of people who have chosen to retire and move

to Collingwood full or part-time (Czerny 2013). These changes were already in progress before the closure of the shipyard, however they intensified after 1986 as the community began looking for new opportunities for economic development.

The transformation of Collingwood from an industrial shipbuilding town to a retirement community and tourist destination occurred within Scotty's lifetime, and the Collingwood of his youth was very different from the Collingwood of his later life. Like other residents of the town, he was forced to negotiate this change. Debates about community identity and local responses to wider economic process were rarely explicitly discussed in Scotty's printed news reports or radio broadcasts.

As far as John Nichols can remember, Scotty's broadcasting style tended to be "lighthearted," often focusing on topics, events, and personalities that brought the community together, rather than those that may have been potentially divisive (Nichols 2013). When John first began working for CKCB Scotty was primarily responsible for bringing in local news items and coverage of Collingwood Council. He explained that he was quickly impressed by Scotty's expansive repertoire of jokes, colourful personality, and encyclopedic knowledge of Collingwood and its sports history:

Usually he would talk about the characters of Collingwood, but he would also share a lot – it was kind of like *folklore type stories* that were synonymous with the *characters of Collingwood* – you know. And there was one, and it escapes my mind, all of the details on it, but he always talked about this *imaginary hockey game* that was played between rival factions and it went all the way – it was played all the way from Collingwood Harbour to Christian Island, and it's got an interesting story. I'd wish I'd kept the tape. He even shared that one time on his – *Carmichael's Comments* it was called. It was one of the shows that I eventually got him to get involved with a little further with the radio station rather than just reporting the news.. (Nichols 2013, emphasis my own).

With a unique voice and style of delivery, Scotty Carmichael was asked to record and broadcast two feature programs each week, *The History of Sports* and *Carmichael's Comments*. *The History of Sports* was Scotty's first feature which lasted three to five minutes and was broadcast on Mondays before the six o'clock news. Some of these broadcasts consisted of histories or profiles of local athletes, which were later used by the Collingwood Sports Hall of Fame Committee and published together in Scotty's book *Sports Personalities of Collingwood*. His second feature program, *Carmichael's Comments*, was broadcast on Wednesdays and tended to focus on items of a historical note, such as past mayors, council affairs, and local history.

These programs, John recalls, produced a lot of feedback from listeners and Scotty's reputation as a local character and colourful personality seems to have helped ensure his programs' sustained popularity. The positive reception and popularity of Scotty's feature programs featuring local sports personalities and "folklore type stories" may have struck a particular note with the people of Collingwood. In fact, it was a kind of history-making that spoke to local concerns because it was deeply informed and embedded in local experience – it negotiated the transformation of Collingwood from industrial shipbuilding town to tourist destination.

Local Sports Heroes and Local Sports History

In the sports personalities featured in Scotty's storytelling, triumphalism and community spirit connect subtle themes of survival and endurance with local concerns and experience. Based on his radio broadcasts and newspaper articles, *Sports*

Personalities of Collingwood is a compilation of sports statistics, anecdotes, and life histories, the sixty-eight women and men profiled in the book are all athletes who have been inducted into the Collingwood Sports Hall of Fame. While their profiles represent athletic achievement in many different sports and levels of competition, Scotty insists that “this town’s sporting history has been built around hockey since the first Shipbuilders club was formed almost one hundred years ago” (Carmichael 1983,1).

Scotty goes on in the introduction of the book to state that “every candidate is judged on the manner in which he or she has played the game. Class, creed, or color are the three words omitted in the Collingwood Hall of Fame Constitution and the private life of an athlete has no bearing on selection or rejection” (Carmichael 1983, 1). Sports, according to Scotty, were an arena of achievement that should be unencumbered by internal community rivalry, conflict, or division. Issues of class, race, ethnicity, and denominationalism could be overcome and mediated by the celebration of athletic achievement. As a Roman Catholic, Scotty was aware of the latent tension between Catholics and Protestants in the community’s past as a result of increased denominational rivalry during the 1930s and the longstanding influence of the Loyal Orange Lodge, a Protestant fraternal organization that harboured anti-Catholic sentiments. Collingwood’s sports personalities and its local characters were thus presented as an alternative to the ethnic and denominational divisions of the past. They were the embodiment of humour and local “colour,” a response to economic uncertainty and the possibility of community conflict and division.

While Scotty always prided himself on his sports knowledge and demonstrated skill as a sports “statistician,” his entries in the book closely resemble the kinds of stories that he often told in conversation, or shared with his audience on radio or in print. His first entry, a profile of local hockey champion Ernie “Rabbi” Fryer, sets the stylistic tone and thematic orientation for the remaining entries:

Back at the turn of the century a Collingwood hockey coach watched a wiry red headed nipper weave back and forth through thirty or forty kids on a west end mill pond.

He wore a pair of beaten up spring skates and he carried a home made hockey stick. With the stick he performed miracles with a wooden puck. He only relinquished possession of that wooden missile when he felt like a rest (Carmichael 1983, 3).

Descriptive and laden with “colour,” Scotty’s account of Fryer’s early passion for hockey is followed by his rapid introduction “into the line-up of the next Collingwood Shipbuilders and for the next three decades he wrote his name across the record books of the Ontario Hockey Association.” Between 1910 and 1920 Fryer led the Shipbuilders to five intermediate “A” provincial titles, and continued playing in the amateur leagues until 1934. Dedicated to their hometown team, Fryer and another player named Frank Cook even turned down an offer to play for the Montreal Canadians during the latter half of their 1920 season, and according to Scotty, “they said at the time that they could not leave Collingwood with the Shipbuilders on the way to a third straight championship” (Carmichael 1983, 3).

Emphasis on Fryer’s localness and humble beginnings are interspersed with references to his athletic talent and leadership. Beginning his career on the local mill ponds, it is implied that Fryer’s Collingwood-born natural talent was discovered and

nurtured by local coaches. His “beaten up spring skates” and “homemade” stick are metaphoric referents to scarcity and economic hardship, as well as the importance of ingenuity and the centrality of survival in the face of adversity. When given the opportunity to move on and play in the big leagues, he stayed and led his home town team to victory. Fryer was a local champion, a local sports personality, a *local sports hero*.

Many of the inductees included in *Sports Personalities of Collingwood* did go on to play in regional, provincial, or national leagues. Some even competed in international tournaments. Among the inductees are numerous Collingwood men who played in the National Hockey League and women who won medals and titles in skiing such as Greta McGillivray, Anna Weider Marik, and her twin sister Katherine Weider Canning. It also includes some of the community’s most celebrated athletes such as Edward “Eddie” Bush. A gifted and dedicated sportsman, Eddie Bush played in the NHL and helped the Detroit team win a Stanley Cup championship in 1943. He eventually returned to Collingwood after serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War and another ten years playing for a number of other hockey teams. Also known for his coaching ability and his efforts to revitalize local hockey in Collingwood, Scotty remarked that “this brash, flamboyant, swashbuckling competitor came a long way since he made the Collingwood Juniors as a kid from the other side of the east end tracks back in the hungry thirties” (Carmichael 1983, 6). Later in the profile entry Scotty attributes the golden age of Collingwood hockey to Eddie Bush’s coaching talent and dedication, stating “he put his town back on the hockey map in 1951 when he closed off his active pro career to give

Collingwood three consecutive Junior 'C' provincial titles and a pair of back to back Intermediate 'A' championships..." (Carmichael 1983, 6). Whether competing at home or abroad, Scotty wanted the community to recognize the achievements of their local athletes.

Successful local athletes stand out as members of the community to be celebrated and revered, however, not all of Scotty Carmichael's sports heroes were championship-winning athletes. They were also coaches, administrators and community organizers. George "Trainer" Montgomery was instrumental in organizing the Collingwood Minor Hockey Association in 1946 and served as president or director of many sports organizations and, according to Scotty, "...was a pint sized man with the heart of a lion and the courage of a wounded wolverine" (Carmichael 1983, 35). My grandfather, Andy Morrith, was also inducted to the Sports Hall of Fame for his involvement and support of various sports teams, leagues, and organizations. In the index at the end of the book, Scotty lists the sports that each inductee played. In the case of non-athlete inductees, such as my grandfather, Scotty listed them under the title "builder, meaning an organizer, supporter, and administrator, someone working behind the scenes to create sporting opportunities for others because of their love for sports and their dedication to the community" (Local History Files: William "Scotty" Carmichael, LHF CARMI, Collingwood Public Library). Scotty too was a builder. Officially he worked for the post office, but that was never the first thing that anyone I spoke to told me about Scotty. First and foremost, Scotty loved sports, and Scotty loved Collingwood. In *Sports Personalities of Collingwood*, these two passions, passion for the game and passion for the community,

are the mark of a local hero. For his contribution to Collingwood Sports Hall of Fame, local sports, and the community, Scotty himself was inducted and too is remembered as a sports personality of Collingwood.

Together, local athletes and sports organization “builders” were celebrated and venerated in Scotty’s storytelling. Many of Scotty’s sports personalities, much like himself, began their careers during the Depression of the 1930s. These were women and men who endured, who had overcome economic hardship to win glory and prestige for the town and its sports clubs. For Scotty, they were community builders, a resource for identity construction and history-making. Having overcome obstacles and challenges, Collingwood’s sports personalities were transformed into heroes in Scotty’s history-making discourse. As the shipyard began to decline, the uncertainty of Collingwood’s economic future presented potential challenges to the community’s sense of identity. The potential future collapse of industrial manufacturing and shipbuilding might redefine the community, its identity, and history. Scotty Carmichael’s stories, the three-day hockey game on Georgian Bay and his sports personalities, mediated local anxiety by presenting representations of the community’s identity and history that were deeply embedded in local experience and concerns. Unlike the civic development ideology of the town’s early twentieth-century middle class elite, Scotty’s sports personalities were instruments of a new kind of community development – agents in the making of a new historical consciousness.

The popularity of his radio broadcasts and his story about the hockey game on Georgian Bay were connected to the importance that people in Collingwood ascribed to

sports and local history. When I asked John Nichols why the story about the hockey game on Georgian Bay was so popular, he explained “Well, it’s our Canadian game for one thing, and Collingwood had an incredibly rich history with successful hockey teams, and I think at last count we’re probably fourteen, maybe fifteen players that had made it to the NHL – yeah, for a small town that’s pretty darn good!” (Nichols 2013). Over and over again people I talked to told me that Collingwood was a sports town. John reinforced this point, explaining that between two thousand and twenty-five hundred people used to jam themselves into the Eddie Bush Memorial Arena on Hurontario Street to watch the games. Away games were often broadcast live over local radio, and Scotty frequently traveled along to help with show. These broadcasts were used by John and Scotty as an instrument of identity making, using the intermissions as a time to share with their listeners moments and characters in the history of Collingwood sports:

...[Scotty] knew his stuff, that was the thing about him, he knew all of the rules, and the other thing was that whenever we had intermissions, you know between the first and second, second and third – those intermissions he was able to *share a lot of historical moments*. You know, I’d tell him “get a little bevy of information that we can share during the game tonight,” and he’d always have lots of stuff, or he would just bring it off the top of his head (Nichols 2013).

Episodes in the history of local sports thus became the foundation for other history-making. Scotty’s story about the hockey game on Georgian Bay could therefore be artistically crafted into a larger narrative that told the history of Collingwood through colourful local characters transformed into heroic sports personalities.

Conclusion: Scotty Carmichael's Vernacular Sports History of Collingwood at the Intersection of Folklore and Popular Culture

As vernacular history, Scotty's *Sports Personalities of Collingwood*, his radio broadcasts, and his story about the hockey game on Georgian Bay combined shared vernacular historical tradition and personal aesthetics at the intersection of folklore and popular culture. Through the lives and accomplishments of local sports personalities, Scotty told the history of Collingwood, and in his vernacular history-making local athletes and builders were transformed into local sports heroes. Scotty's history-making, his history of Collingwood sports, was a processual discourse that made use of local vernacular historical tradition, as well as popular culture and local media. It was also framed by specific ideological goals and rhetorical strategies – the history of local sports heroes was the history of community spirit and survival.

His history also discussed and debated issues of identity and historical awareness. Scotty's representation of the community and its vernacular historical traditions was significantly different from that of an earlier generation, the local middle-class elite who had been committed to an ideology of class-based civic improvement and development. Through stories about local sports heroes, Scotty presented an alternative vision of the community's identity and history, one that valorized its identity as a working-class shipbuilding town. To do so, he sought to raise historical consciousness by encouraging residents of the town to celebrate the achievements of local athletes and community builders, the people who had overcome adversity either as the result of local economic hardship or social divisions caused denominational rivalry. As a popularizer of important

local folklore genres and vernacular historical tradition, Scotty Carmichael's cultural politics used local folklore as a resource, a site of discussion and mediation.

The stories Scotty liked to tell about people, the colourful local characters and sports personalities of Collingwood, were not necessarily folkloric. In many instances he was reporting facts for newspapers, conducting himself and his work like any other journalist. However, Scotty's style of narration, his frequent use of embellishment to "add colour" to the stories he reported, and his use of local vernacular historical tradition, a tradition that emphasized and celebrated the creation of "colourful" stories, was shaped by both local folklore genres and processes. His success as a broadcaster, journalist, and local historian stemmed from his knowledge of Collingwood folklore and his mastery of mass media mediums such as print journalism and radio broadcasting. In short, Scotty's vernacular history-making combined folklore and local news reporting, using local media as a medium for his own folkloric, or in some cases folkloristic, performances of vernacular historical tradition.

The relationship between folklore and popular culture is complex and dynamic. According to Narváez and Laba (1986), popular culture refers to "cultural events which are transmitted by technological media and communicated in mass media contexts," with a significant spatial and social distance between performers and audiences (1). They use the term media sense to refer to the continuum that exists between folklore and popular culture, stating that "as artistic forms of communication, both folklore and popular culture demand creative enactment within a variety of conventionalized systems that engender and disseminate their own aesthetics and traditions" (Narváez and Laba 1986,

1). The interface between folklore and popular culture is best demonstrated in the appropriation and repurposing of popular culture productions by groups as part of their own expressive culture. These expressive activities can be folkloric, and according to Laba (1986), discussions of popular culture through audience response and interpretation are “...an interpretive transaction among individuals which involves a customary content and pattern of interaction” (11).

Scotty’s repertoire of tall tales, anecdotes, jokes, legends, and reminiscences were transmitted through multiple mediums, including face-to-face conversation, as well as print and radio media. As such, Scotty was both a creator and disseminator of folklore, and in addition, the reception of his productions included audience response and interaction that influenced his performances and repertoire formation. In essence, Scotty knew what the people of Collingwood wanted to read and hear, and he presented this in his newspaper columns and radio broadcasts.

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, and in Chapter One, Scotty Carmichael’s repertoire included popular local genres such as the tall tale, anecdote, and reminiscence, and he transformed these through his own history-making into discussions of community identity, history, and vernacular historical tradition. Narváez (1986) in his study of *The Barrelman* broadcasts of Joseph R. Smallwood from 1937 to 1943 examines how Smallwood used the medium of radio to broadcast Newfoundland oral tradition and validate local culture. He argues that the program was political in purpose, aimed at creating regional confidence by focusing on successful Newfoundlanders and the richness of local history and heritage. Similarly, in his work on Newfoundland radio programs and

broadcasters, Philip Hiscock (1987) argues that folklore and folk culture can both inform and shape popular culture, and its mediums of transmission. He also examines how the programs themselves, as well as the materials presented, inform folk culture, entering into the folk history of Newfoundland radio broadcasting. Focusing on Smallwood's radio broadcasts, Hiscock (1994) also explores how Smallwood used the medium of radio to establish himself as an expert in regional folklore and culture by collecting and reinterpreting individual items. These reinterpretations transformed items of local tradition into regional Newfoundland folklore, demonstrating how mediums such as radio can be used to transmit both folklore texts and interpretations (Hiscock 1994).

Scotty Carmichael's articles and broadcasts had a similar objective. He wanted to inspire confidence and community pride amidst growing uncertainty about the town's economic future. To do so, Scotty believed the people of Collingwood needed to be conscious of their history and celebrate important local achievements. Without the use of the local media this project may not have been as successful, and Scotty's ability to navigate the continuum of folklore and popular culture was an important dimension of his success. Like Smallwood, Scotty established himself as an expert in local culture and folklore, using the mediums of print journalism and radio broadcasting to reinforce his status as a local historian and local character.

Discussions of Scotty's stories also generate debate and discussion – discussion about the importance of truth, accuracy, and the value of a good story in the craft of local history. These local debates about the role of local history and local historians as history-making and history makers, as well as the memory Scotty Carmichael, are the focus of

Chapter Three. These debates are part of the vernacular historical mosaic and ultimately shape vernacular historical tradition. Scotty's stories can also be understood as discussion and debate, a response to the wider socio-economic process impacting local life. Through stories about local sports personalities – Collingwood's sports heroes – Scotty Carmichael re-crafted his community's mosaic history and revitalized local vernacular tradition.

Chapter Three

Vernacular History and Vernacular Debate: Scotty Carmichael and the Folk Historiography of Collingwood

History is rarely agreed upon – it is discussed, negotiated, contested, and debated. It is part of everyday life, a rhetorical strategy and discursive practice that shapes how the past is created and expressed in the present. Vernacular history and the debate that it generates are expressed in oral tradition, customary practice, and material culture, and is an integral process of folklore and folk culture. As folklore, both vernacular history and vernacular historical tradition bring together past and present at the intersection of creativity and tradition. Locally situated and shaped by both personal aesthetics and local vernacular historical tradition, history-making is a craft, a process of folklore continually reshaping and transforming the past while simultaneously maintaining the continuity of flow in historical consciousness. Each new work of history-making expands and reshapes the local historical mosaic, redefining the contours of identity and historical memory. These are the sharp, jagged lines that weave through the mosaic, drawing attention to its individual pieces while connecting each fragment to the larger whole. Multi-vocal and constantly under revision, local history is a site of debate and negotiation. Each of its creators, everyday people making history in everyday contexts, brings forward new materials and resources, but as it is with many traditions, certain creators, craftpersons, or tradition bearers stand out. They are the active, enthusiastic practitioners and promoters of their tradition, the people who become local historians.

Aware of each other's work and the wider canon of their community's vernacular history, the local historians of Collingwood, the bearers of local vernacular historical tradition, develop their own craft in response to work of others. In Chapter Two I discussed Scotty Carmichael's vision of the community and its history. In particular, how his vision of Collingwood's history differed from that of the town's early-twentieth century middle-class promoters. In this chapter I extend this analysis further, situating Scotty's sense of historical awareness in relationship to craft of other local historians. To do so, I explore two dimensions of vernacular history – concepts that try to explain the processes and cultural practices that shape the creation of historical assemblages and community historical mosaics.

The first, *folk historiography*, is the reflexive, critical practice of vernacular historical criticism. Reflecting on the work of other people within, and outside the community, the products of vernacular history – oral historical narratives, customary practices, and items of material culture – are created in response to the processes and discourses of history-making. As I have shown, Scotty Carmichael's history-making was both idiosyncratic, incorporating his personal aesthetics and preferences, and a reflection of wider community traditions. In this chapter I will contrast Scotty's vernacular history with the discursive properties and practices of other local Collingwood historians. The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate how local historians continually reshape how history is represented, remembered, and created. Vernacular history is therefore dialogic and produced through discussion and awareness of past history-making.

Local debates about history also highlight the pieces, or portions of the historical mosaic that are considered to be the most important, or most indicative of a community's vernacular historical tradition. These established *canons of vernacular historiography* have fluid boundaries and are an important site of historical representation, memory, and meaning-making. Their diversity of scope and subject matter addresses issues of local identity, memory, and political economy in different, although not in entirely unrelated ways.

In Collingwood's canon of vernacular historiography, Scotty's personal character anecdotes, tall tales, jokes, and stories about local sports history exist side-by-side with family histories assembled by local genealogists, museum displays created by past curators, books about the history of the shipyard compiled by a former employee of the *Enterprise-Bulletin*, historical plaques commemorating important events and industries, tours of historic homes, historical societies, and everyday conversation in addition to many other activities. In short, people in Collingwood are passionate about local history and the people, organizations, and institutions that are responsible for its commemoration and preservation. Therefore, this chapter extends my examination of Scotty's vernacular history, exploring the discursive properties and cultural practices associated with his craft in addition to his status as a local historian. I move from discussing the role of vernacular historical tradition in the history-making of Scotty Carmichael to examining how he understood it, spoke about it, and transformed local tradition – Scotty's practice of folk historiography and his place in the canon of Collingwood vernacular history.

The Historiography of Collingwood Vernacular History: Establishing the Canon

Many of the residents of Collingwood are interested in their past. Described in newspaper articles, books, pamphlets, and display boards, commemorated during memorial church services and community celebrations, expressed in municipally commissioned murals, photograph collections, paintings by local artists, and the preservation of local architecture, and in conversation, Collingwood's history is made visible, tangible, and audible for residents and visitors alike. Each composition, celebration, or conversation about the past is an enactment of cultural selection, highlighting particular themes and characters, locations and events. Thus the contours of Collingwood history are constantly in flux, redrawn and redefined in each new performance or retelling. At the intersection of the personal and the collective the folk historiographies of Collingwood add an additional dimension to the "colour" and texture of the community's local history. Embedded in the process of history-making is the practice of critique, rendering each act a commentary on the historian's craft. These commentaries are arranged and re-arranged over time, creating a meta-narrative that flows through the canon. To situate Scotty Carmichael in this canon, I have selected specific persons and texts that demonstrate this flow, and alternatively, those that are disruptive. I argue that history-making as critique and commentary is integral to vernacular history – it is participatory and exists in many different forms, constantly transforming and revitalizing vernacular historical tradition.

In the beginning, Collingwood was an "impenetrable mass of cedar swamp," the dream of railway engineers looking for a terminus on the waters of Georgian Bay. Thus is

the tone of the *Jubilee History of the Town Collingwood*, written and published in 1887. The writing of the *Jubilee History* is attributed to the editor of the *Enterprise* newspaper, John Hogg (Hunter 1909b). Collingwood, according to Hogg was a creation out of nothing, a community created by good fortune, industrious settlers, and a vision:

The Railway arrived in Collingwood in the Fall of 1854, and certainly at that time there could not have been a more unpromising site for a town. The whole place was one impenetrable mass of cedar swamp, with no roads into or out of it. The surrounding country was very sparsely settled, and in the now wealthy Township of Nottawasaga there were not half a dozen teams of horses. Indeed, in those days, Collingwood had no existence except on paper and in the prophetic visions of the determined pioneers who came to displace the swamp and forest (*Jubilee History of Collingwood* 1887,1).

A chronicle of its first settlers, founders, and business owners, the *Jubilee History* is one of the earliest published histories of the community. Amidst the names of settlers and the founding of important local institutions are recognizable themes: survival through hardship, commitment to civic development, and community pride.

Hogg's history-making mapped out the defining characteristics of Collingwood's identity creating a mould for future histories. The span of time covered in the *Jubilee History*, the distance between past and present, is minimal. The events and persons described were likely fresh in readers' memories, the chronicle itself more reminiscence than researched historical reconstruction. Thom's objective is unmistakably clear; a careful demonstration of cause and effect:

Now Collingwood people can point with pride to the fact that the Town is increasing in size, population, and wealth; that the new buildings continually being erected are improving in size, cost, and architectural beauty; that the Town itself is gradually taking an important position as one of the leading towns in the country; that the credit of the Corporation stands high in the money market; and the credit of the merchants is today

deservedly as high as that of any other town in the Dominion of Canada
(*Jubilee History of Collingwood* 1887, 3-4).

A liberal ideology of civic improvement and economic development is ever-present.

History is thus the success of progress and development, the source of civic pride and the blueprint for future community building.

In the *Jubilee History*, history-making, cultural politics, and political economy are inseparable. Collingwood, like many other communities during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, sought to attract new settlement and investment through policies that encouraged the growth and development of local institutions and industry. This pattern of community building and civic development is referred to as boosterism by American and Canadian historians (Boorstin 1965; Artibise 1982; Mitchell and Morrison 1992; Wetherwell 2005), and in Collingwood, it had an important impact on local history-making. As I explained in Chapter Two, the creation of new institutions such as museums and libraries often served the goals of specific socio-economic groups, in particular, the local middle class. The *Jubilee History* is therefore an extension of boosterist ideology and cultural politics. In laying out the economic successes of the town entrepreneurial ventures, it is exoteric-esoteric history-making – a stylized, ideologically motivated discourse intended for both residents and non-residents alike. The *great men* of Collingwood's history presented are its merchants, doctors, politicians, and prominent citizens. Each description, fact, and episode is intended as evidence of the town's success, evidence of the successful cooperation and mutual reinforcement of political and economic power structures. From the humble beginnings of the town's earliest settlers through to the success of its merchants by the 1880s, the *Jubilee History* reminds the

people of Collingwood that they overcame adversity and built a community where there was once only swamp and cedars.

Influenced by boosterist and civic development ideologies, Collingwood's local historians of the early-twentieth century continued along the path of their predecessors. More than a decade later, Collingwood organized its first successful historical society under the purview of the Huron Institute. Founded in 1904, the Huron Institute was intended as a scientific society and organized into five departments: zoology, botany, geology, history, and civic development. Its mandate was broad and expansive, and its institutional goals included "collecting and preserving information relating to the Natural History and Social History of Collingwood and the surrounding district, and... the promoting of measures for the beautifying of the town" (Huron Institute Minute Book, X974.997.1, p.1). Collecting and preserving history was intended as avocation, a leisurely passion for the educated middle class.

Set up in the basement of the Collingwood Public Library, relics and specimens were displayed in cases, shelves, and frames for its members to view and study. They believed these studies would produce valuable knowledge that could be used to sustain continued economic and civic development. For example, the zoology department focused on collecting and studying economically valuable local bird and insect species, as well as those with the potential to damage local gardens and agricultural products (*Enterprise-Messenger* 26 March 1904, 4). Alternatively, the historical department focused on creating the Huron Institute Museum and setting up an archive to document "...the rise and progress of Collingwood and the surrounding district" (*Enterprise*

Messenger 26 March 1904, 4). The Huron Institute's mandate to build a collection of historically and scientifically important local specimens and artifacts ultimately continued and reinforced a model of history-making grounded in boosterist ideology.

Conceived as a project of community building, the history-making of the Huron Institute was intended to be confined within its institutional structure. Between 1909 and 1939 the Huron Institute published three volumes of *Papers and Records*, a set of anthologies that included papers written by the directors of each of the Institute's departments, profiles of former prominent Collingwood residents, reminiscences about the town's history written by David Williams, and a catalogue of the museum's photograph and ship model collections (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1909; *Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914; *Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1939). As works of local history these publications cut across generic boundaries, incorporating elements of elite, popular, and folk history. Their content was presented as official history, well researched and carefully verified by their authors and editors. However, the influence of local vernacular historical tradition and the incorporation of folkloric material are apparent. In all three volumes, boosterist ideology and the local vernacular tradition of history-making exist side-by-side as discursive strategies of local cultural and identity politics.

David Williams, the Huron Institute's general secretary and curator, was a driving force within the Institute and one of Collingwood's most celebrated and accomplished local historians. The last two volumes of *Papers and Records* were heavily influenced by Williams, both in their content, scope, and ideological objectives. A learned man with a

passion for history and archaeology, Williams used his position as editor of the *Enterprise-Bulletin* to publish the Institute's volumes. He never attended university, but was well known throughout Ontario for his active support of numerous organizations such as the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association, the Ontario Library Association, the Ontario Historical Society, and the Canadian Historical Association, as well as role in municipal politics and his extensive network of social connections (*Collingwood Enterprise-Bulletin* 26 October 1944, 1, 5-6). His acquaintances included C.T. Currelly, T.F. McIlwraith and E.S. Moore of the Royal Ontario Museum, Fred Landon and J.J. Talman of Western University, George H. Locke, the chief librarian of the Toronto Library Board, and W.T. Allison of the University of Manitoba (David Williams Scrapbook, 1933-1939). Williams was well connected to the province's learned establishment and his own history-making spanned the widening gulf between local vernacular historical tradition and the emergent professional field of academic history developing in Canadian universities.

Volume Two of *Papers and Records* demonstrates the interrelationship of vernacular tradition and the practices of scholarly method in the history-making of David Williams. Separated into two sections, Volume Two began with profiles of prominent men who had moved away or retired from public life (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914). The second section consisted of a series of *reminiscences* and a short history written by Williams. According to the preface,

The present volume is unique in its character. It deals in the main with two features of the past life of the town of Collingwood. The first is a brief record of those who have lived far removed from the town and who have spent much of their life and energy in building up other towns and cities,

but who have never in sentiment been disassociated from the place of their birth and early life. The second is historical and deals at some length with certain features of the life, growth and development of the town in the past, that can never fail to have a lasting interest to our people. It is hoped that these pages will be of historical value, will recall much that is interesting, and furnish pleasing reminiscences of the past which will linger long in the memory (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914, 3).

Entrenched in local tradition and local historical experience, Collingwood history and Collingwood folklore are presented as an interwoven, interconnected whole. No attempt is made by the authors to unweave and separate the strands. Instead, they narrate Collingwood's story for their readers. This story was meant to be reflective of local tradition – reflective of the local personalities that provide colour for the anecdotes, legends, and reminiscences reported by Williams and the two other contributors to the volume.

F.T. Hodgson, the author of one of the “reminiscences,” remarked that this story was fundamentally fragmentary, remarking that his “brief annals” were “...but a fraction of the real ‘living things’ that did happen” (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914, 12). History according to Hodgson is reminiscence about *living things* and living people, history alive in living memory: “It is a far call from 1848 to 1857, the period of which I am to talk, and seems like harking back to the tombs” (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914, 3). Episodic, moving from fact to fact, tale to tale, Hodgson's *Reminiscences* begin with his arrival at Scotch Corners sometime around 1848, the modern village of Duntroon eleven kilometers south of Collingwood, and proceed through a series of humorous stories about early settlers adapting to life in the harsh and largely unsettled swamplands and forests of Nottawasaga Township.

His first mention of Collingwood is to “The Village” and the log homes that housed those who were to become the town’s founding families. However, Hodgson laments that “most of the names of the villagers are lost,” focusing instead on the “tales” that he claims have remained in their stay. In one such tale, he describes the extent of the early village’s flea infestation, and the experience of two young millwrights from Kingston who had travelled north for work. To escape the infestation of their assigned bedroom the two young men tried sleeping in the small, hastily constructed shop. However, Hodgson reports that neither man was able to find relief. In his retelling of the story, Hodgson quotes “we gathered forces together, and took to our heels, retired to the water’s edge, and stretched our weary bodies along the shore” (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914, 6).

Their troubles, however, were not over and he reports that the two men immediately began to notice a rattling sound on the gavel above them:

Finally the rattle increased to such a degree that we felt sure the ghosts of the slaughtered Hurons, the Petuns, and the whole Six Nations had been let loose for a scalping raid and directed all their forces against us. It was not, however. It was the fleas! We jumped up, took to the water, lay down with our heads on stones – submerged to our lips. We felt we had the little active fellows beaten. But alas! for “the best laid plans of mice and men.” Through six or eight feet from the shore, they took running jumps and landed on us just the same, and covered every spot we had left exposed (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914, 6).

The struggle against the untamed and restless frontier is symbolized by the “champion jumpers.” He insists on the story’s truth, and reminds readers that “fleas and other nocturnal insects, black flies, mosquitoes, and fever and ague, were abundant and continually busy during the summer season, making life miserable” (*Huron Institute:*

Papers and Records 1914, 6-7). The fleas, the ghosts of the Huron, and the harsh conditions of the Village provide a useful and important contrast. The Village of 1849 and Collingwood of 1939 were very different places: one a sparsely settled, rough and isolated settlement, the other a cosmopolitan town, the proud achievement of local booster and community builders. Hodgson's *Reminiscence* makes this contrast clear as he chronicles the progress of the railway and the early development of the town and the Township of Nottawasaga.

Continuing where Hodgson left off, John Nettleton provided a second *Reminiscence* to cover the period from 1857 to 1870. Arriving in Collingwood on 9 July 1857, Nettleton had purchased a lot within the town at an auction in Toronto where they were advertising with a beautifully illustrated map of the planned town. The beginning of his entry describes his first impressions of Collingwood, and of its residents. According to Nettleton, "I was very much disappointed at the appearance of the town, and could see no traces of the fine streets that were shown on the map." Instead, Nettleton describes improperly cleared roads dotted with stumps, houses built on cedar posts, and dampness of the swamps surrounding the town. His description continues with a survey of the public buildings and businesses of the town, followed by a listing of its residents. The focus of this list were its leading, prominent citizens. He explains that "the population of Collingwood when I came was a very cosmopolitan one. I suppose they came like myself, expecting it to become the Buffalo of Canada" (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914, 16). The *Reminiscence* is concluded with a description of the town's early economic difficulties and other local events.

Like Hodgson, Nettleton's history-making also incorporates local history and local folklore. The folkloric content of his *Reminiscence* is interwoven into his impression and description of the community. In particular, Nettleton provides two local character anecdotes about an African-Canadian man named Wesley Collings. In the first, he recalls his impression of the town as "western" like, describing an instance of Collings being arrested:

I saw a little western life that morning, for the town constable arrested a big colored man, called Wesley Collings; he got as far as the Montgomery Hotel, but he refused to go further until he had a drink. The constable pulled out a revolver, and threatened to shoot if he went in. He went in all the same, and he had his drink, and the constable did not shoot. When he got him to the lockup, Daddy Miller lectured him on his duties as a citizen, and Collings danced a jig on the platform before they locked him in (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914, 13).

In the second, Collings wore a jocular, stylized denim suit to a Church of England service upon the encouragement of local men. Nettleton reports that "we made Wesley Collings, who was quite a character, a suit just like the dandies, on condition that he would go to church in them. He did, and that was the end of the Kentucky suits" (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914, 16). Both of these examples demonstrate the popularity of the personal character anecdote and local character phenomena as an important source of local vernacular historical tradition.

While colourful and humorous, these stories also highlight potential divisions and fracture lines in the project of history-making as it was understood and practiced by middle-class boosters. The relationship between Wesley Collings' status as a local character and his racial identity is linked to Nettleton's explicit strategy for the management of cultural, racial, and socio-economic difference. In the first anecdote,

Collings was lectured on the duties of a good citizen, and later in the entry he describes a British Emancipation Day celebration at the “extensive colored settlement” in the southwest part of town. He reports that the mayor and other prominent citizens attended and “delivered orations to them about the glories and freedom of the British Empire,” which was followed by a dance attended by residents from every part of the town (*Huron Institute: Papers and Records* 1914, 15). Anecdotes about humorous local characters may have added “colour” to local life, however, they were also incorporated as a discursive strategy, a demonstration of the cooperative and cohesive social structure of the community. Ferry (2008) in his study of middle-class associational culture and the construction of liberal identities argues that boosters and community builders made a concerted effort to eliminate conflict and social fracturing created by ethnic, denominational, and class-based divisions. Similarly, Collingwood’s earliest local historians modeled their own history-making upon a common ideological strategy of boosterism and civic development shared by middle-class community builders across Ontario with similar objectives in mind.

The lasting impact of boosterist ideology and the important link between history-making and community building persisted in both the elite and vernacular historical traditions of Collingwood up until the Second World War. The interconnected history and folklore of the community ultimately produced a composite local historical tradition that incorporated practices of both elite and vernacular history. By elite history I am referring to the ideologically motivated historical discourse produced and disseminated by Collingwood’s middle-class residents. Their history-making had clear objectives,

encouraging the continued development of local institutions, the successful management of cultural, racial, and socio-economic difference, and the reinforcement of middle-class control over local cultural and identity politics. Additionally, local historians such as Hogg, Hodgson, Nettleton, and Williams drew upon local folklore and vernacular historical tradition in order to situate themselves and their craft in the context of local knowledge and experience.

In the history-making of David Williams, whom I have already mentioned earlier in this section and again in Chapter Two, the composite nature of Collingwood historical tradition gained an added dimension. Straddling the growing division between “amateur” and “professional” historians occurring within organizations such as the Ontario Historical Society and the Canadian Historical Association, Canadian universities, and granting agencies such as the provincial government, Williams established himself as an expert in regional and local history. Historians such as Wright (2000; 2005), Boutilier and Prentice (1997), and Ambrose (1997) have examined the impact of professionalization on academic history, and in addition, the amateurization of local history that followed as historians working within learned institutions more intensively differentiated themselves and their research from those outside academia. Largely, they have focused on the gendered implications of labels such as “amateur” and “professional,” but have ignored, or failed to examine local historians that do not easily fit into either category. David Williams is one such example, and upon closer examination it is clear that historians concerned with the impact of the professionalization of academia on local history have generally ignored the impact of folk culture and local

traditions of history-making in shaping how local history was understood, practiced, and communicated. David Williams may not have had a university education, but he certainly understood the methods and craft of professional history, and was well connected to the academic establishment. Instead, he created history embedded in local experience and shaped by local traditions of history-making – David Williams was a vernacular historian.

Williams' vernacular history was a composite craft that incorporated elements of the boosterist project of history-making that had been popular in Collingwood throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, as well as local vernacular historical tradition and the methodology and practice of academic history. From the end of the First World War through to his sudden death in October 1944, Williams combined these elements in his various publications and curatorial work for the Huron Institute. More specifically, he used his composite, transactional craft of history-making to transform the Huron Institute Museum into a site of redefinition and reformulation, presenting alternatives to the middle-class boosterist history of the Institute's earliest founders. In his work at the museum, he focused heavily on the large photograph and ship model collection that had been amassed. He was especially interested in the history of local navigation and shipbuilding, highlighting the centrality of these industries to the local economy. Throughout the 1930s he collected artifacts related to the community's early pioneer heritage and trophies won by local teams and organizations. In short, Williams oversaw the transformation of the Huron Institute from scientific society to community museum. Williams, however, never disassembled the Institute's boosterist foundation or

purged it from his own conception and practice of his craft. Instead, he opened the Institute Museum up to alternative understandings, definitions, and practices of history – the Huron Institute became a mosaic history, a site of community identity building and history-making.

The boosterist model of history-making inherited by Williams and the Huron Institute was eroded and transformed over time. As such, Collingwood's canon of vernacular historiography began as a composite discourse and cultural practice, influenced by both elite and folk conceptions of history. This, however, was debated, reconceptualised, and reconfigured by later local historians through their contributions to the mosaic. The Collingwood represented in the published works of David Williams, and in the display cases of the Huron Institute, were different from the Collingwood presented in Scotty Carmichael's newspaper articles and radio broadcasts. Despite their differences, both David Williams' and Scotty Carmichael's contributions to the vernacular history and folk historiography redrew the boundaries and contours of Collingwood history, each leaving a lasting mark on the vernacular historical mosaic and vernacular historical traditions of the community.

From Hogg to Hodgson, Nettleton to Williams, through to Scotty Carmichael, each new work of history has a unique texture and style, thematic focus and content. As a response to local conditions – local political economy, culture, and identity politics – as well as the craft of other historians, each work of history occurs in context. Deeply rooted in local concerns and local tradition, Collingwood's canon of vernacular historiography is a practice of vernacular history. It documents local debates about what makes good

history and the qualities of good historians. As a blueprint, model, or outline for the historian's craft, the collective works of Collingwood's historians inform and shape the history-making of future historians. The people, institutions, and practices of local history that I have discussed in this section therefore established the local canon – they were the forerunners of Scott Carmichael and the foundation of the vernacular historical traditions upon which Scotty developed his craft.

What Makes a Good Local Historian?: Debates in the Method and Purpose of the Historian's Craft

Folk historiographies and the canons they create map the boundaries of local history and define the task and purpose of local historians. Embedded and enacted in every new work of history are debates about the method and purpose of the historian's craft, statements about what techniques, themes, and materials make for good history-making. Aware of the community's history and historians of the past, Scotty Carmichael learned the craft of history-making. Influencing the formation of his repertoire and understanding of local vernacular historical tradition, Collingwood's canon of vernacular historiography shaped the development, performance, and reception of Scotty's craft. Known for telling "colourful" stories about eccentric local characters and successful sports personalities, Scotty was a local character in his own right. His stories transgressed and suspended the boundaries of fact and fiction, truth and embellishment. For Scotty, this was an integral practice of his craft, and its reception is a launch point for debates about the importance of accuracy and truthfulness in the practice of local history – the

beginning of new folk historiographies that emerge in everyday conversation and reminiscence.

When I interviewed current and former residents of Collingwood about Scotty Carmichael, his repertoire, and their memory and reception of his stories, there was never any question about the role of embellishment in his stories. As John Kirby remarked, “he would embellish a story without batting an eye” (Kirby 2013). Remembered as a good narrator, writer, and broadcaster, Scotty was known in Collingwood as a storyteller, or as former *Enterprise-Bulletin* editor George Czerny explained it, someone “with the gift of the gab,” someone who could spin a good yarn. Never an impediment to his popularity or status in the community, this reputation for embellishment and colourful storytelling captivated readers and earned him a spot on local radio. As a local historian, Scotty Carmichael established the distinctiveness of his craft and differentiated himself from other local historians through the practice of crafting colorful history.

John Nichols, the former morning man for CKCB, Collingwood’s local radio station, explained that the purpose of Scotty’s embellishments were not to distort facts or manipulate the truth; rather, he enhanced stories by adding a bit of “colour” (Nichols 2013). When I asked John why Scotty embellished stories he explained that he usually had the basic facts right, but would fill in the detail between the facts by adding imaginative and rich description intended to enhance the story. I wondered if people in Collingwood ever took issue with Scotty’s added description or enhancements. John replied,

No. No because they knew Scotty was a storyteller and they actually got a kick out of it. Quite often I would hear people that would stop me on the

street and say, “was Scotty really at that game last night?” and I said “yeah.” “Oh, OK,” you know – but no, nobody ever got mad at him for anything that I recall, whether it was in *Comments* or in the *History of Sports...* (Nichols 2013).

Having worked with Scotty for a number of years and with a good sense of the texture and content of his stories, as well as his performance style, John also explained that, in Scotty’s craft, storytelling and history-making were one and the same. Scotty’s use of added description was a process of assemblage through which he created stories about people, places, and events from other stories and pieces of information he learned and collected in conversation. Storytelling was part of Scotty Carmichael’s craft, the foundation of his history-making and integral to his understanding of local history.

The reception of Scotty’s stories, and in turn the stories that people tell about him and his repertoire, are influenced by his status as a local character and storyteller known for embellishing or adding colour to stories. Reflecting on his memory Scotty and the stories he used to tell, Don Rich, the former parks manager for the town, laughed when I asked him if Scotty liked to tell stories, he quickly replied “That’s all Scotty did!” (Rich 2013). Sitting forward in his chair, slightly leaning on the table with a cup of coffee as music and conversation streamed through Paula’s Pantry coffee shop, Don commented on Scotty’s local reputation and the reception of his stories: “some of them you could believe, most of them you had to take with a pinch of salt, and fortunately for his stories there aren’t very many, if any, from around here that are around to set the facts straight. So, we *have to believe* what Scotty told us” (Rich 2013). Embedded in Don’s statement is an assessment of both Scotty’s craft and the relationship between history and truth, accuracy and storytelling. Scotty’s audience expected added colour, imaginative

description that blurred the boundaries between fact and fiction, the expected texture and style of Scotty Carmichael story.

Reflecting on his time working with Scotty and what he knew of his reputation around town, George Czerny remembers him as someone who stood out, someone who was always around town and active in the life of the community, comparing Scotty to the children's story character Curious George. "Curious Scotty," George explained was always getting the scoop on local happenings for use in his newspaper articles, and usually had a joke or story to share. Remarking on the materials he turned in for publication, George explained,

He never turned in an untruth that we know of, but I did hear of him spinning yarns about people having – one of [his] most famous story was about people playing a hockey game on Collingwood Harbour, and it got foggy and somebody got a breakaway and followed the puck out north on a breakaway and disappeared into the fog and they think the person ended up by Christian Island, but nobody knows for sure – but I think that was one of Scotty's stories (Czerny 2013).

Cited as an example of the "yarns" that Scotty liked to tell, George's recounting of the story about the hockey game on Georgian Bay was as much a commentary on Scotty's oral style and the texture of his stories as it was an example from his repertoire. In fact, when people are asked about Scotty and his stories this is often the story that they tell, both as an example of his style and repertoire, and as an anecdote about his character and reputation – when people tell the story about the hockey game on Georgian Bay they are telling a story about Scotty Carmichael. Told as local character anecdotes, stories about Scotty reinforce the link between embellishment and storytelling, local history and added colour.

The relationship between history and story within Collingwood's vernacular tradition of history-making has ultimately shaped the reception of Scotty's stories, and additionally, alternative conceptions of the best methods and purpose of local history. Sitting in the living room of her nineteenth-century Collingwood home, Marie Cruickshank, a former teacher and the retired genealogy and local history librarian at the Collingwood Public Library, explained the process of local and family history research. Born in Collingwood, Marie lives in the house her father purchased in 1910 when he moved to town to work for the railway. After attending the Toronto Normal School for teacher's training and working in St. Catharines teaching, Marie married and lived away for about thirty years. At the age of sixty-seven, she began taking courses through Laurier University, earning a bachelor's degree in history. Around the same time she applied for a position at the local library and began working at the front desk. Soon after, the librarian responsible for the small collection of genealogical and local history resources left and Marie began caring for the materials once a week for two hours. Eventually her hours were increased and Marie spent her time as a part-time local history and genealogy librarian helping people with research and building the collection. In order to "gather up information," Marie collected books and materials related to Collingwood and surrounding townships, amassing a larger collection of microfilmed newspapers, cemetery records, maps, family history books, and general local and regional histories (Cruickshank 2013a). Over the course of her nineteen years as the librarian, Marie created a collection and a regional hub of genealogical research founded upon the

methods of research she had learned in university, bringing together the practice of scholarly history and local genealogy.

Now in her eighties, Marie has continued her genealogical research. Committed to proper documentation and verification of historical sources, Marie's practice of genealogy is the practice of systematic and accurate assemblage. The expression of her craft in material and oral form includes twenty large binders filled with documents, family trees, photographs, and family history information, as well as the collection she helped build at the library and stories that she now shares about her craft, its value, and the once-forgotten relatives she has connected with as a result of her research. After years of research and countless reels of microfilm, Marie has been able to trace the history of her ancestors in Canada:

I was able to trace every ancestor that lived in Canada, and the first one was the first person born in Canada in 1620, and I have found every one of my family and my husband's family, I did them too, every single one, and where they came from. That was my goal, [it] was to find every ancestor in Canada and where they came from in Europe and I found them all (Cruikshank 2013a).

Perseverance, dedication, careful documentation, and attention to detail are paramount skills and attributes needed by any genealogist. As composite creations, her binders are a combination scrapbook, family history, photo album – her craft, the “gathering up” of “all the little things that are important” (Cruikshank 2013b). Laughing and reminiscing as she supports the large binders in her lap, flipping through the pages quickly looking for examples of interesting ancestors or documents, each turn of the page is like a walk through Marie's family history. She frequently stopped and pointed at names set apart by a green sticker, exclaiming “that's us,” indicating that she used them to identify her direct

ancestors. Watching her flip through the binder page-by-page, I was curious about how many ancestors she had identified. She was not sure, however, she commented that in one book alone over 2,500 ancestors names were listed, a small number compared with the pages of names carefully organized and arranged across the other nineteen volumes (Cruickshank 2013b).

The collecting and assemblage of family histories is more than the documentation of names and the charting of ancestors and descendants. According to Marie, genealogy is personal history, a process of self-discovery: “it’s a personal thing because it’s *your family*, it’s a *part of you*, and you see part of you in history” (Cruickshank 2013b). As history that connects the researcher to lives of ancestors past, Marie believes genealogy is a personal passion, a craft that should follow both the academic standards of good historical research and a desire to connect with the past. Commenting on her own family history binders, she explained that the product of her craft, the style, manner, and process of assemblage differs from genealogist to genealogist:

Well they’re not the sort of thing that’s useful to anybody else, there’s information yes, but the way that they’re formatted – they’re a *personal thing* aren’t they? They’re not ‘descendants of so and so’ that anybody can “Oh yeah, I’m a descendant of them” and find them. You can up to a point, but they’re basically *my personal family thing* (Cruickshank 2013b).

Illustrated with photographs, maps, and printed copies of archival documents, Marie’s binders connect her to her ancestors, to distant places, and important moments in Canadian and European history.

As Marie flipped through the pages of her binders, she explained to me the principal methods and purpose of her craft, how “gathering up” family history makes

ancestors come alive. Good genealogy, according to Marie, makes people in the past “real,” rescuing them from the hidden recesses of the past, uncovering their story:

When you get back in generations you don’t know them, and you’re doing the same thing, then they *become real people* rather than just a name and I think that’s important because you want to *make them come alive again* (Cruikshank 2013b).

Fundamental to her craft, the process of “gathering up” provides names, places, and events in an ancestor’s past that provide the motivation and materials for history-making. In keeping with Collingwood’s tradition of vernacular history-making, the “gathering up” of materials provides colour, a vibrant historical assemblage that reclaims and revitalizes the voices of Collingwood’s past.

The processes and purpose of making people in the past “come alive” or adding colour to a history to make it a better story are both an integral part of Collingwood’s tradition of vernacular history-making. For Scotty Carmichael, embellishment and added description were an integral practice of his history-making, a requirement for good stories and, by extension, good history. Alternatively, Marie’s definition of good history, as well as her conception of her craft, emphasizes the centrality of accuracy and proper documentation. Commenting on the accessibility of family history materials online and the possibility of erroneous information being included in online family trees, Marie explained that good genealogists always verify the information they include in their own work:

Computers have been a wonderful thing for that, but there is a lot of erroneous material out there on the computer too, on local history, because people grab hold of somebody and say ‘Oh that sounds like Uncle Jack,’ you know, and of course it’s somebody else’s Uncle Jack. But, they put it on anyway and then somebody takes it as gospel. You still have to *check*,

check, check, and the only way to do that is to *go to the source*, to go to the actual *real* [source], to go to the libraries, to the *primary materials* that's there (Cruikshank 2013a).

Marie's insistence on careful verification of information is a statement of methodology extolling the necessity of detailed research and diligent documentation. As practice of history-making, genealogy demands diligence and careful attention. Misidentified ancestors introduce discrepancies and false information into the historical record, reducing the quality of one's work and the integrity of one's craft.

Carole Stuart, the current local history and genealogy librarian who replaced Marie in May 2008, echoed many of her predecessor's sentiments emphasizing the importance of careful research, diligent documentation of sources, and providing convincing evidence for the relationship between ancestors. As she explained, good genealogists consult as many primary documents as possible, proving each relationship as they work from themselves back through the generations: "You can say that your father or your mother is your father or your mother, but to actually prove that you should actually have the long form registration of your birth, which is one that your mother would have filled out at the hospital" (Stuart 2013). Good genealogists verify every piece of information, checking every source. According to Carole,

That's what you want to do: *verify, verify, verify*, and document and write it down, and that's what makes a good genealogist because you want to have *everything verified, everything sourced*, and properly sourced so that somebody else can come in and look at that and say, "oh if I go there," and know they will find it instantly. And then you know you've done a proper job (Stuart 2013).

As researchers, genealogists have a responsibility to their craft, each other, and the historical record. In creating family trees, genealogists are creating history, tracing their

ancestry and discovering their connections to the community and the wider events, people, and places of world history.

Conceptualized as the discovery of past ancestors and the reconstruction of generational relationships, the practice of genealogy is understood by both Marie and Carole as a practice of reclamation. For both, genealogy provides an intimate and personal link to the past, history-making embedded and enacted in familial relationships. Commenting on the relationship between genealogy and history, Carole explained that through family history “you see the whole picture because it becomes a search in history as well as in genealogy because you can’t do one without the other – you have to look up what the conditions were, what the period in history was” (Stuart 2013). The reclamation of familial relationships requires contextualization, situating the lives of ancestors in the passage of time, the historical worlds re-envisioned and articulated through the craft of genealogy. At the end of the slog through records and microfilm, Carole explained,

You can end up with a book, and I’ve actually seen some books like this, where you have a book and it’s full of a list of a thousand people’s names, their birthdates, their marriage dates, their death dates, where they’re buried, but that’s kind of dry. You actually want to fill out and try to make these people come to life if you can, and that’s where it’s really, really important to speak to different members of the family to see if they’ve got any stories that they’ve heard from their parents, their grandparents, something that makes that person come alive (Stuart 2013).

These stories, the “silly little things” that raise people from the depthlessness of vital statistics, contextualize the lives of ancestors past, adding colour and validating the importance of lived experience (Stuart 2013). The genealogist’s craft uncovers pieces and fragments of past lives that make people come alive, shortening the distance between past and present.

As a practice of reclamation, Marie further extolled the importance of genealogy, defining her craft as the practice of reclaiming lost voices, the affirmation and validation of those ancestors marginalized and silenced by historians of the past. Pointing to an entry for Catherine Cruickshank, Marie explained the frustration of not knowing this women's maiden name. She exclaimed,

I feel very strongly about the mother's part in the family, and a lot of people don't, the mothers just have kids and carry on the family name – I think the mothers are very important because they've got a family, a name, a person, and they give all that up to get married, they lose their identity within their family (Cruickshank 2013b).

Pointing to the scrapbook open in her lap, Marie proudly stated, “none of these women have lost their identity, except Catherine Cruickshank!” (Cruickshank 2013b). As an agent of reclamation, Marie's practice of genealogy challenges the boundaries and calls for a redrawing of her community's mosaic history, linking the genealogist's craft with engagement with feminist identity politics. According to Marie, “these women are just as important as the men,” identifying and contesting patriarchal definitions of the historians craft. Genealogy as the reclamation of local women's history extends beyond the redrawing of the community's mosaic history, it reconceptualises the practice of vernacular history, creating space for women in the practice and discourse of Collingwood vernacular historical tradition.

Creating history through the reconstruction of familial relationships and the reclamation of voices lost or ignored in the mosaic history of the community, Marie and Carole's practice of vernacular history is conceptualized within a framework of local vernacular historical tradition shared with other vernacular historians such as Scotty

Carmichael. Just as Scotty understood his craft as “adding colour” to local history, Marie and Carole make the voices of the past “come alive” through the practice of genealogy. The cultural practice and discursive strategy of vernacular history in each of these cases defines history-making as the creation of stories from the materials of the past, bringing vibrancy and vitality to once dry and unimaginative facts and statistics. Vernacular history is thus a reflection of what contemporary local historians believe is important about their community, its identity, and its past. Their repertoires, folk historiographies, and practices of history-making constantly re-envision and recreate their community’s mosaic history, making and unmaking the canons vernacular historiography that form in response to each enactment of the historian’s craft.

The Folk Historiography of Scotty Carmichael’s History-Making

The reception of Scotty Carmichael’s history-making is a site of debate and launch point for discussions about the method and purpose of vernacular history. Scotty’s vernacular history-making was grounded in his reputation as a local character and the expectation that a Scotty Carmichael story would undoubtedly contain “added colour.” Questions about the accuracy or factuality of his stories are undeniably present in the stories that people tell about him and his repertoire, however, these commentaries – the practice of folk historiography – acknowledge and assert the primacy of local vernacular historical tradition and the importance of “colourful” storytelling as an enactment of that tradition. More important than the truth or accuracy of Scotty’s accounts of events in the town’s past or his profiles of local athletes was his folk historiography, his ideas about

local identity and historical consciousness. The texture of his stories, the ideological objectives of his discursive practice, and the style of his performance in conversation, print, and on air, were framed in response to local vernacular historical tradition as well as the craft of Collingwood's earliest historians. Scotty Carmichael thus contributed to the mosaic history of Collingwood through both the practice of assemblage and folk historiography.

Embedded and enacted in the context of local cultural politics, political economy, and historical consciousness, Collingwood's historical mosaic is constantly in flux, always under revision. The emergent folk historiographies of local vernacular historians continually redraw the boundaries of local history-making, and revitalize the practice of the craft. Genealogists such as Marie Cruickshank and Carole Stuart conceptualize and understand their craft as a practice of reclamation and reconstruction. Carefully searching for and documenting primary sources that prove familial relationships through the generations, these two women recreate the stories of their ancestors. Their goal is to bring the past to life, to raise names recorded in vital statistics from the darkness of dusty records, injecting them with new life. The practice of their craft also challenges local vernacular historical tradition, calling for greater inclusion of those who have often been ignored by the historical record. While the contrast between the history-making of Scotty Carmichael and these two women seems distinct, there are also clear similarities – the importance of storytelling and the practice of “adding colour” to make history vibrant and relevant in the present. Interwoven in the multitude of local defections and practices of

the historians craft is Collingwood's vernacular historical tradition and the celebration of local history as a meaningful and useful craft.

Conclusion

At the intersection of folklore and local history, Collingwood vernacular historical tradition is the *added colour*, the *gathering up*, the *silly little things* that lift stories about the community and its residents from the dry and dusty pages of library tomes – the long forgotten recesses of the historical record, the archives of community memory. Enacted and performed, the history of Collingwood is emergent, an ongoing process of creativity and tradition. Lived experience is its foundation, the rich and colourful detail that people use to create the vibrant, living mosaic of their community's history – the shared cultural practices and discourses of history-making that link past and present, tradition and innovation.

As an exploration of the relationship between folklore and history, I have examined how folklore processes shape and inform the practice of history-making within a community. I have done so by documenting the discursive practices, expressive forms, and socio-cultural contexts that make up Collingwood's vernacular historical tradition, its tradition of history-making. As living history about flesh and blood people, Scotty Carmichael's history-making, and the vernacular history of Collingwood, are embedded in the flow of everyday life. This is not history researched and written for publication in scholarly monographs and articles; it is history created amidst the flow of everyday life, a resource for a wide array of cultural practices. I have referred to these practices, and the processes that shape and inform them, as vernacular history. Together, the vernacular historical practices of Collingwood are numerous and range from the telling of stories to

the creation of family histories, giving shape to the vernacular historical tradition of the community.

Focusing on the stories and history-making practices of one man, Scotty Carmichael, my analysis examines how history-making – each telling of an anecdote, each radio broadcast, each clipping added to a scrapbook – remake, reformulate, and re-envision the past. Moving from his biography and repertoire through to the examination of specific examples of history-making and the reception of his stories by the community, I explore Scotty’s processes and practices of vernacular history. Additionally, I also examine the making of vernacular historians, their craft, and the ways that they use and shape local tradition, conceptualizing local history as a mosaic – a collaborative, multi-vocal, fragmentary assemblage of discourses constantly re-envisioned, re-arranged, and re-created in each enactment of the historian’s craft. By focusing on one individual, I identify and highlight themes, discourses, and processes that connect the individual pieces of the mosaic, the contours that give it its shape and texture.

Collingwood’s vernacular historians, the David Williams, Scotty Carmichaels, Marie Cruickshanks, and Carole Stuarts situate and enact their craft in the context of local experience. They are cultural insiders, tradition bearers, and history enthusiasts. Their craft is learned, practiced, and debated at the intersection of their own personal aesthetics and local vernacular historical tradition. They develop their own styles, methods, and ideas about history – their history-making bears the distinct mark of its creators, a distinctive texture and context of enactment. It also draws on local tradition, Collingwood’s tradition of colourful history-making. In stories told in conversation,

articles published in local newspapers, radio broadcasts, local history books, museum displays, scrapbooks, photograph albums, and personal family histories, people of the past *come to life*, they *become real*, a part of the living history of the community.

As the enactment of Scotty's craft, anecdotes about local characters, reminiscences, tall tales, and legends provide colour, emphasizing the important role of storytelling in the practice of local history. In Collingwood, discussions about accuracy, truth, and the proper documentation of historical facts are an important part of local debates about history. Scotty's success as a historian and storyteller is unmistakably connected to his ability to blur the boundaries of these debates by expanding the ambiguous continuum that links historical truth and embellishment. He celebrated Collingwood's eccentric local characters, people like himself who loved the community and "added colour" to local life. This colour presented a cohesive and cooperative community determined to thrive in the face of adversity. The experience of both the Great Depression and the decline of industrial ship building in Collingwood reaffirmed the importance of this message in Scotty's ideas about the purpose and method of history. For Scotty Carmichael, telling stories and making history was a project of consciousness raising, a personal mission to share with his audience what was special about the community and its past.

Informed and shaped by the genres and processes that folklorists study, the examination of vernacular history and vernacular historical tradition may be an important topic for future folklore scholarship. I do not believe that the practices and processes I have discussed in this thesis are unique to Collingwood, and I believe that further

documentation and analysis of the vernacular historical traditions of other groups and communities is warranted. As an attempt at an anthropology of history, my examination of Scotty Carmichael, his repertoire, and his practice of history-making has used folkloristic theory and ethnographic methodology to explore how people think, use, create, and interact with the past in the socio-cultural context of everyday life. My approach in this thesis – my own history-making – is grounded in the practice of folkloristics, the ethnography of history. To do so, I have tried to avoid a purely synchronic approach, examining the development of Collingwood's vernacular historical tradition over time, and describing how different historians have changed or reconceptualised it in the past. By doing so, themes emerged, and these themes became the basis for my theoretical analysis. Future studies of vernacular history and vernacular historical tradition thus cannot separate history from folklore, or the cultural practices associated with traditions of history-making from their historical context.

In addition to my historical examination of Collingwood vernacular history and the vernacular history-making of Scotty Carmichael, I have also shown the points of intersection where history combines with folklore genres and processes. This includes genres such as local character anecdotes, tall tales, reminiscences, and legends, phenomena such as the relationship between folklore and creativity, tradition and innovation, and the local character phenomena, and finally, the folklore and popular culture continuum. I have also argued that Collingwood's tradition of vernacular history incorporates specific discourses and cultural practices such as the practice of assemblage

and folk historiography. My goal has been to identify and examine patterns of meaning-making, representation, and historical consciousness that are practiced by local historians.

In sum, the folkloristic study of history is far more than oral history collection, it is the documentation and examination of local traditions of history-making and how they influence how people think, feel, remember, and enact the past as a vital and integral part of everyday life. Embedded in discussions about history are issues of identity, cultural politics, local political economy and historical memory. Local historians actively discuss and debate these issues, presenting their own vision of the community each time they enact local vernacular historical tradition, constantly transforming and revitalizing tradition in each new act of history-making.

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