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Abstract

A Different View from the Water: Place Naming on Cape Breton Island

George Story's paper "A View from the Sea: Newfoundland Place-Naming," "suggests other complementary methods of collection and analysis" (1987, 41) than those used by his colleague E. R. Seary. Story examines the names of rivers, islands, and underwater features to illustrate the wealth of material and insights found in travel accounts and fishermen's knowledge. This paper takes a different view from the sea as it considers the development of key Cape Breton place names using cartographic evidence from several historic maps, including Samuel Champlain's *Carte de la Nouvelle-France* (1632), Nicolas Bellin's *Carte de l'Isle Royale* (1744), the *New Map of Nova Scotia* in Thomas Chandler Haliburton's *Historical and Statistical Account of Nova-Scotia* (1829), and the county maps of Cape Breton in the *Historical Atlas of the Maritime Provinces* (1878). The focus is on the shift names from water and coastal features to designate other features like settlement. As fishers first came to Cape Breton, they saw and named the Island's bays, lakes, and landmarks from the water. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the shores of Cape Breton Island were an international fishery as reflected in names like the *Basque Cape*, *Spanish Bay*, *St Peter's* (anglicized from the Portuguese *S. Pedro*), *English Harbour* (later Louisbourg Harbour), *cap fumé* (later Cape Smokey), and Mi'kmaq names like *Menadou* (later Main-à-Dieu). Four of these are now community names and *Cape Breton* designates both a cape and the island itself. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many of the early names assigned to water features along the seacoast (e.g., *Glace Bay*, *Baleine*, *Fourchu*) and the Bras d'Or Lake (e.g., *East Bay*, *West Bay*, *St. Andrew's Channel*) became shift names for the settlements as first the French and then the English established colonies on the Island.

Story, George. 1987. "The View from the Sea: Newfoundland and Place-Naming. In *Proceedings of the XVI International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*, edited by Jean-Claude Boulanger, 41-58. Québec, QC: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.