

# Transmission

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## **Abstracts of Papers Presented at FSAC 1998 Meeting, Ottawa**

**John Bodner (MUN).** "Space and Place in the Occupation of Tree Planting." This paper outlines the dual effects of work technique and space as a social

construction in the shaping of an occupational folk group. Of central importance is the question of how the tradition (as both a conservative and dynamic force) of tree planting is re-created by young seasonal workers from year to year. It will be argued that the study of occupational groups needs to be broadened beyond considerations of technique to include the study of workers' environment (both that which they create/control and that in which they operate with only a limited degree of agency.) Studying both the skills involved in tree planting as the "central shaping principle of an occupation," and the spatial arrangement of the camp in which the tree planters live, addresses issues of innovation, invention, and continuity.

**Anna Kearney Guigné (MUN).** "Talking About the National Museum and Folksong Research in Newfoundland: "Who is Margaret Sargent Anyway?" In 1949, having recently graduated from the Toronto Conservatory of Music with a degree in Musicology, Margaret Sargent joined the National Museum of Canada. She worked for two years transcribing material from Marius Barbeau's wax cylinder recordings. During this period, on behalf of the National Museum, in 1950 Sargent also conducted fieldwork in Newfoundland, Canada's newest province. Her work was later taken over by Kenneth Peacock.

Today little is known of Sargent's activities while in the province. Some suggest that she collected very little because she was so inexperienced. Drawing on first-hand documentation from Sargent

as well as correspondence of the period, I examine her motivations for going to Newfoundland and her findings in relation to folklore studies of the period. In so-doing I re-evaluate Sargent's contribution to Folklore Studies in Canada.

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**Kristin M. Harris (MUN).** "The Hazards of the Global Village: An Examination of E-mail Virus Hoaxes as Contemporary Urban Legends." This paper will examine the phenomenon of the computer e-mail virus hoax as it exists in our technologically entrenched society. With increased and widespread use of the World Wide Web in our lives, concerns about use and misuse of this technology prevail. Buzzwords and symbols such as "global village", "surfing the net" and :) are part of a codified language that has invaded our everyday sensibilities. Thus it is not at all surprising that urban legends about e-mail viruses such as "Penpal Greetings" and "Join the Crew" exist. Along with all the advantages that this advanced technology brings, new fears about dominance and dependence arise. This paper will discuss the use of the word "virus" as a metaphor for the fear of medical viruses that has taken hold of contemporary society, and analyze the ramifications of these contemporary legends on the culture of the Internet.

**Mikel J. Koven (MUN).** "You Don't Have to be Filmish: The Toronto Jewish Film Festival." Are film festivals true festivals as folklorists understand the term? Some folklorists shy away from viewing festivals whose focus is popular culture oriented, seeing instead a commercialization factor as replacing the expression of the community itself (Stoelje, 1992, 261-262; Abrahams, 1982, 171). Through this paper, I shall be outlining the many ways in which the Toronto Jewish Film Festival community is indeed a festival, and could even be classified as a "nativistic movement." For here is a festival developed by, run by, and attended by members of the Toronto Jewish community, with the specific affect to be part of a

city-wide cultural revival. Film, for this festival, is just the medium of cultural transmission that was chosen.

**Lara Maynard (MUN).** "The Make-Workers Behind the Label: The Hibernia Offshore Oil Development and Oppositional Newfoundland Identity." The application of the "make-work" label to the Hibernia Offshore Oil Development and its broader association with Newfoundland has been lamented as being akin to the Newfie joke. This paper relays the comments of Newfoundland workers involved with the construction phase of the Hibernia offshore platform on the label and then considers how their responses rely on ideas of oppositional identity, including the dichotomies of "have" and "have not" Canadian provinces, and Newfoundland and the "mainland" other.

**Neil V. Rosenberg (MUN).** "Following the Swallow: How a Folksong Took Off." "She's Like the Swallow," a lyric folksong that has been documented from oral tradition only four times since it was first collected in Newfoundland by Maud Karpeles in 1930, is, in spite of its relative rarity in local singing traditions, one of the best-known Newfoundland folksongs in Canada. The reasons for this popularity lie in the ways in which it has been presented in print and on record. After describing the ethnographic data and suggesting a possible "ur-form", this paper examines the song's media history. Showing how both text and tune of the two variants presented in the media have been recast from their original ethnographic forms for publication, it discusses its art song and folk revival histories. The aesthetic and ideological changes it has undergone are discussed in

terms of issues of region and class in the uses of folk song for purposes of symbolic identity.

**Contessa Small (MUN).** "Words of Wisdom: Accident Narratives in a Pulp and Paper Mill." In this paper I will discuss occupational accident narratives collected from Corner Brook, Newfoundland pulp and paper mill workers. Relying mostly on personal experience accident narratives, I will introduce issues related to death, danger, safety and survival in the workplace, and address how mill workers actively and passively participate in accident narration in order to socially and personally deal with these issues. I claim that the abundance of first and second hand accounts of accident narratives not only indicates worker awareness of this potential danger in the workplace, but also points to strategies for handling this potential. Characteristics and classification of the death narrative, the injury narrative and the close call narrative will also be provided along with illustrations of each type.

**Diane Tye (MUN).** "I Could Just Go On and On (and On!)": An Analysis of Annual Christmas Letters." Writers of annual Christmas letters come from a broad cross section so that their expressions differ markedly in content, structure and language. Authors draw on conventions that range from poetry and religious symbolism to humour and cynicism; messages may be explicitly expressed or coded. Yet in their reporting of physical, social, emotional and spiritual journeys, letters externalize inner challenges and affirm ties to kin and community.

### **Abstract of Paper Presented at 1998 IASPM-Canada Conference, "Taste, Texts and Markets," Montreal.**

**Holly Everett (MUN).** "Garage Sales and Ice Cream: Marketing Classical Music to Popular Audiences in Austin." KMFA-89.5 FM is a listener-supported, non-profit classical music station broadcasting out of Austin, Texas, a city better known for its popular music (e.g., "Austin City Limits"). Now in its thirtieth year of operation, KMFA has gone from fewer than 100 member/supporters to over 6,500, each of these pledging annual financial support. Throughout its history, the station's board of directors, staff and listeners have wrangled over the station's mission, not to mention the very definition of "classical music." While current programming continues to focus on compositions in the Western classical tradition, it also collapses cultural hierarchy (high culture/popular culture) by including Broadway show tunes, "traditional" fare by ensembles such as the Chieftains, and orchestral arrangements of songs by groups like The Beatles, in order to capture a broader audience.

In the mid 1990s, KMFA hired a development director to increase not only the station's revenue, but also its public profile. A number of events, including garage sales and old-fashioned ice cream socials, were staged to increase interaction between station personnel and listeners. While, publicly, KMFA pursued a larger share of Austin's radio market, competing with two other public radio stations, internal constructions of the station's mission were crashing and, in many cases, crumbling.

### **Abstract of Paper Presented at 1998 Women's Studies Conference, Ottawa**

**Contessa Small and Diane Tye (MUN).** "Playing Out Female Sexuality: An Analysis of Women's Shower Games." Based on interviews, participant observation, and archival documentation, this paper explores games played at home-based wedding and baby showers held in Newfoundland. Here we argue that games incorporating implicitly sexual talk and joking or the mimicry of sexual acts are a traditional form of female bawdy humour. Relying on folklorist Joan Radner's theory of feminist coding, we show how shower games not only help bond party participants but help celebrate.





## Folkloric Fiction

Reviews by Niko Silvester

Haunting used bookstores is a favourite pastime of mine. It is especially therapeutic for the times when I become dissatisfied with the current offerings on the fantasy shelf in Coles or Smithbooks (take your pick, they are both owned by the same parent company). Every once in a while, among the familiar titles I find something I've been wanting to read for ages, or something I hadn't heard of before. Unfortunately this has been a rare occurrence lately, something I had put down to moving out of Victoria, British Columbia (used and antiquarian book capital of Western Canada). However, I am happy to say that I have had a few good finds in past months, and they are the focus of this issue's column. Most of these books are fairly old (compared to other works in the genre, not relative to fiction in general), but all of them are worth searching out. And just to show that there are good books on the new fantasy shelf, I will review the new novel by one of my very favourite authors, Charles deLint. Anyone with questions,

comments or suggestions can write to me care of *Tr@nsmission*, or I can be reached via e-mail at [s64ns@morgan.uccs.mun.ca](mailto:s64ns@morgan.uccs.mun.ca).

### *John the Balladeer* by Manly Wade Wellman (Baen, 1988).

The copyright date of this book is deceptive, as it is actually a collection of stories which range in publication date from 1951 to 1987. *John the Balladeer* contains all of Manly Wade Wellman's short stories about his most well known character, Silver John. John is a wandering musician "who, wandering through the backwoods of Appalachia, battles supernatural evil with his silver-strung guitar and the magic of his voice" (so says the dust-jacket blurb). The stories are written as if narrated by John himself, and thus contain much of the dialect and speech patterns of Appalachia. Each story sees John encountering a different folkloric creature or magical obstacle, which he must overcome by using his own folk magic. Because much of the prose is written in dialect, I had thought it would be difficult to read, but when I actually did get into the book, I found that the "speech

patterns" represented in the prose very much enhanced the work. This book is fiction for folklorists, as well as an essential work for anyone looking at the uses of folklore in fiction. It may be of special interest to ballad scholars, partly because of the snippets of ballads found throughout the book, and partly because Wellman is supposed to be the writer of the ballad "Vandy, Vandy". *John the Balladeer* should not be too difficult to find in a used bookstore since the Science Fiction Book Club picked it up as one of their selections not long after it was originally published.

### *The Old Gods Awaken* by Manly Wade Wellman (Doubleday, 1979).

Manly Wade Wellman didn't begin to write novels about his character, Silver John or John the Balladeer, until after the bulk of the short stories about that character were published. *The Old Gods Waken* is the first novel about John. This book contains not only folklore drawn from Appalachians of European descent, but also from the Native American peoples of the area. The premise of the novel is

that the actions of two English brothers to "awaken" their own European Druidic gods are also awakening an evil that was there even before the first native inhabitants. Most of the Druid lore in the novel is based on theories current at the time the novel was written (and thus outdated today), but the meshing together of several different folklore traditions makes for an interesting and entertaining read. Like *John the Balladeer*, this novel is one I would recommend to any folklorist (or anyone else, for that matter).

***The Perilous Gard* by Elizabeth Marie Pope (Houghton Mifflin, 1974; Tempo, 1984).**

This is a book about faeries. Not little winged sparkly female humanoids, but thin, mysterious beings who live in hollow hills. The main character is a young woman named Kate, banished to a remote castle in the north of England for an insult to the Queen that she didn't write. She stumbles across strange goings-on at Elvenwood Hall, also known as the Perilous Gard, and ends up a captive of the faery Queen. Without giving away too much of the plot, I can say that the story has rescues and escapes, love and friendship, and faery dances in the wildwood. The idea of what faeries actually are that is followed in this novel is similar to the theory that the belief in faeries originated with memories of sharing the land with an earlier people, but is not quite identical to it, and still contains enough magic to satisfy those who read for a regular dose of enchantment. This is a lovely book with an interesting take on faery lore. To make it even better, my copy (the Tempo paperback, published in their "MagicQuest" series) has a frontispiece by Terri Windling (who is not just an excellent author and one of the best

fantasy editors in the business, but also a wonderful illustrator).

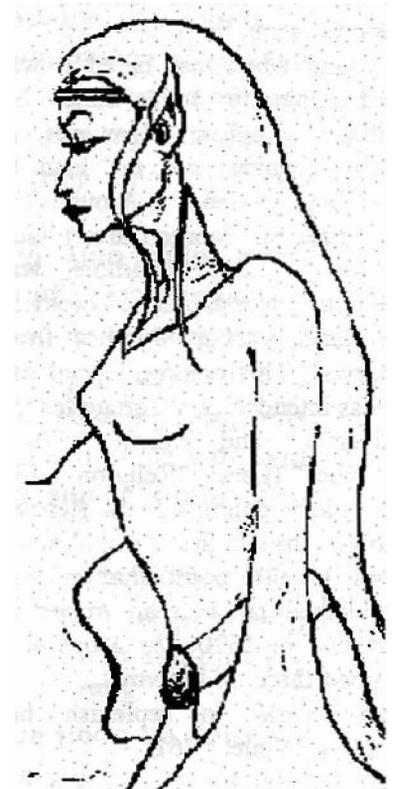
***Queen of Spells* by Dahlov Ipcar (Dell, 1973).**

Another book for ballad lovers, *Queen of Spells* is a slender volume based on *Tam Lin*, and although it is a short novel (a mere 142 pages in length) it is full of snatches of ballads and folksongs. It follows the traditional *Tam Lin* story fairly closely, but filtered through the author's own viewpoint. I can't say much more about the book without spoiling the surprises, but I recommend it highly. It is one of those delightful used bookstore finds that I had never heard about until I found it jammed on the shelf, but am very happy to have discovered.

***Someplace to be Flying* by Charles deLint (Tor, 1998).**

Readers of this column will probably have figured out by now that I think deLint is by far one of the best writers in the fantasy genre today. He is also one of a fairly small number of Canadian authors who have made it big in the US book market. Most of deLint's past writing has been in the urban fantasy subgenre, and *Someplace to be Flying* is no exception ("urban fantasy," like "urban legend" is a label that doesn't quite fit, but is commonly used, and most people know what you are talking about when you use it). The book, like deLint's other works, has a varied cast of fascinating characters ranging from homeless people, to artists, to record store owners, who constantly challenge our stereotypes. Shape-changing is a prominent theme in this novel, as it centres around the "Animal People," ancient, almost archetypal, beings who can take on human or animal shape. Thus Jack is an old Native American man in one shape, and a jackdaw in the other; the Crow Girls, Zia and Maida, are teenaged punks dressed in black in their human shape, and crows in their animal shape;

and Ray is a tall red-headed man in one form, and a fox in the other. The plot involves the loss of Raven's pot, which can remake the world, and the Cuckoos, malicious Animal People who find the pot and want to create a world with no humans and no Corvae (Animal People whose animal forms are birds in the Corvid family: jays, crows, ravens, magpies and the like). As the dust jacket blurb states: "Weaving Celtic and Native creation myths with a modern tale uniquely his own, deLint has created a novel that will forever alter the way we look at the world around us."



## Secret Masses at Midnight: The Legend of Mass Rock in Renews, Newfoundland

by Tammy Lawlor, MUN

### Historical Background

The community of Renews has existed since the early sixteenth century. In 1506 Jean Denys, a French explorer left boats in Renews, or Rougenoust as it was then known (English) and in 1536 Jacques Cartier completed his second voyage to Newfoundland by leaving boats in the harbor (Rowe 62). To some researchers the leaving of boats by these two men suggests that there may have been wintering inhabitants in Renews as early as this time. Official attempts at settlement in Renews began in 1612 under John Guy and when that failed it was tried again in 1616 under Sir William Vaughan. However, in 1620 Vaughan sold the land to Viscount Falkland. Around the same time Sir George Calvert, later known as Lord Baltimore, was attempting to establish a colony at Ferryland, a short distance from Renews. This colony, legend has it, was intended as a "refuge for the Calvert's and their fellow Catholics" (Lahey "Religion" 7-8). Settlement continued in Renews during these first troublesome years to the point that it was established as such an important port that in 1620 *The Mayflower* stopped there on her voyage to the New World to replenish her supplies (Winter 576).

The population of Renews continued to grow and by the early 1700's the number of Irish Catholics settling there was growing rapidly. This was the time of penal law in Britain and many Irish Catholics may have come to the new world to escape the persecution they faced in their homeland. They soon found,

however, that the laws were the same in Newfoundland. In fact, the orders given to the governors from 1729 to 1776 were:

You are to permit a liberty of conscience to all, except Papists, so they be contented with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same, not giving offence or scandal to the government (Rollmann 64).

Most of the time these laws were not strictly enforced. In fact, there may have actually been a church in St. John's as early as 1754 (Howley 181). However, around the mid 1700's there was a crack down on the practise of Catholicism. In 1743 the governor of the time, Smith, wrote to the magistrate in Ferryland, John Bengier, instructing him to be mindful of the "Irish Papists" in the area and to attempt to send as many as possible out of the country. When William Keen, the chief magistrate of St. John's was killed by a group of Irishmen in 1752, penal laws were enforced to the full extent for the next thirty or forty years (Howley 179). Court documents from the Renews area in the 1750's show there was growing concern over the number of Irish Catholics living in the area and there was a fear of insurrection (Barnable 9). Long before the 1750's, though, the servant fishermen in Renews had proven they had no loyalty to the resident planters. In November of 1696 the French war ship *Profound* attacked Renews where there were seven residents and one hundred and twenty servant fishermen, many of whom would have been Irish. These servants are recorded as not caring who owned the place (Prowse 230). There is no doubt that these feelings remained or perhaps even worsened with the increased oppression of these people into the eighteenth century.

It was in this climate of fear and persecution that fascinating events are said to have taken place in Renews. These events have lived on through the legend of the "Mass Rock."

### The Legend and Its Historical Accuracy

Growing up in Renews one of my favorite pastimes was to walk through the woods adjacent to my house and climb a hill known as Midnight Hill. I would run down the other side of the hill to a grove of trees where there is a spring with a well by it. We called this "Nun's Well" because it used to provide water to the nearby convent. A few steps from the well is the back of a grotto built on the Mass Rock. This was my favourite view of the grotto, facing away from the community, shielded from site. Even at a young age I was effected by the legendary atmosphere of this spot. I must have been very young when I first heard the legend of the Mass Rock because it seems as if I have always known it. I was told that in the 1700's the people of the community would gather behind this rock at midnight to celebrate mass or say prayers in secret. They did so because they were Catholic and at the time it was a penal offence to celebrate mass in Newfoundland. For this reason this area has always been a source of pride for me and for many other members of the community. However, most people who visit the grotto view its front with marble statues and so-called miraculous spring, and never venture to the back, oblivious to the historic events said to have taken place there.

I have seen written versions of this legend in quite a few places<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> See bibliography for various sources of the legend.

have heard it told a number of times among Renewers people. The common thread of each story is statements like "mass was a penal offence at the time" and "a special tax was levied on Roman Catholics," as if there is a need by the various narrators to emphasize the persecution suffered by the Catholics.

In 1883 Rev. M. Harvey makes reference to the oppression of Catholics in Newfoundland in his *History of Newfoundland*. He also tells of priests who came to Newfoundland disguised to administer to the people in secret (*Renews* 10). The earliest reference to the legend itself is by Archbishop Howley in his *Ecclesiastical History*. He mentions the "Midnight Rock" and tells how a Father Fitzsimmons officiated there. This version of the legend is also told by Sister Sheila Guerin of Renewers in her unpublished paper "History of Renewers."<sup>2</sup> Another unpublished paper by Marion Harte, also of Renewers, titled "An Outport Study of Renewers"<sup>3</sup> mentions the legend as well. While Ms. Harte quotes Archbishop Howley about Midnight Rock, she omits his reference to Father Fitzsimmons, possibly because it did not fit the tradition with which she was familiar.

The Father Fitzsimmons alluded to in some versions would likely be Father Henry Francis Fitzsimmons (1783-1819) who arrived in Newfoundland c. 1812 (Byrne 358). He is said to have come to Renewers where he raised a cross and celebrated Mass on the Mass

Rock (Howley 243). While Father Fitzsimmons's arrival came after the proclamation of 1784 which gave liberties to the Roman Catholics, it is interesting that he has been brought into the legend of the Mass Rock by some sources. Father Fitzsimmons's arrival in Renewers would have been within living memory of the secret masses if they had occurred. This may actually be why he raised a cross on the rock and celebrated mass there, for there was a chapel in Renewers at the time built in 1806 by Father Ambrose Fitzpatrick (Barnable 25). Fitzsimmons stayed in Renewers for only three years (Howley 243). This priest seems to have been considered an eccentric by quite a few people and perhaps there were rumours which sprang up about him and his deeds at that time. These rumours may have since filtered down so that all that remains is his name in the middle of another legend.

While Fitzsimmons was not one of the disguised priests who came to Newfoundland in penal days there was, in fact, another priest who came in the early days travelling under an alias. In 1627 a Father Anthony Pole came to Newfoundland with Baltimore under the assumed name of Smith. This same man later smuggled himself back into England under the name of Gascoyne. While this is quite some time before the events of the legend are said to have taken place, the activities of this priest in Ferryland stirred trouble with the authorities. He had obviously practised an outlawed religion quite openly in the colony and a complaint was sworn out against him (Lahey "Religion" 15-19). It is quite possible that through the years other priests followed Pole's example, while being more discreet in their behaviour.

It is easy to see that there are kernels of truth within the versions of this legend. The historical truth of legend is, of course, different than the truth that we normally associate with historical documents. The legend describes "truths" about the feelings and worldview important to the people who tell them (Alver 144-147). This legend was told by Renewers people for many years and was commemorated with a shrine in 1927. Father Charles McCarthy, later Monsignor McCarthy, an Irish priest who came to Renewers in 1920 and remained until his death in 1957, instigated the construction of "The Grotto." The Grotto is a replica of the shrine at Lourdes, France, where Bernadette saw a vision of Our Lady and it is complete with a "statue of the Immaculate Conception and the kneeling Bernadette and the stream issuing forth from the rocky wall" (*Reunion* 6). It was constructed with the free labor of the men of Renewers and once it was completed in 1928 every man in the harbor planted a tree.<sup>4</sup> The tradition of the Mass Rock was "fostered by Father McCarthy, an Irishman sensitive to English wrongs." In a letter regarding the Grotto he related that a man named Michael Kane, who was born in 1867, told him of the secret Masses that were held on that spot. This man had never attended a Mass there himself but had heard of them (Barnable 122).

The legend of the Mass Rock has refused to die; in fact, it has grown over the years with new elements connected to it. Since the building of the Grotto it has been rumoured that "The Monsignor" (pronounced Mons'nir in Renewers), purchased the statues "of Bianco marble

<sup>2</sup> This paper is located in CNS, call number FF 1036 R48 G8 1971.

<sup>3</sup> This paper is located in CNS, call number FF 1036 R48 H2 1973.

<sup>4</sup> This information came from an informal conversation with Mary Lawlor of Renewers.

imported from Genoa, Italy through the Muir Marble Works of St. John's" with his own money. There have also been reports of cures from the water of this shrine (*Reunion* 6). The late Kate Squires of Renew's told of a girl who "had trouble with her 'side'" which could not be helped by several doctors. She was eventually cured after visiting the Grotto with her mother to say the rosary. There was also a young boy whose coughing was cured by the water from the Grotto (Ponnambalam 19-20). The water from the Grotto has long been valued by the residents of Renew's and surrounding areas for its healing qualities. Many members of my own family bottle the water and bring it home to have on hand in case of an illness. In fact, up to the 1960's there was a "common cup" at the Grotto and people who went there to pray would drink from the cup. "At one time you could always see people at the Grotto kneeling to pray; drinking from the Lourdes water[,] which was taken from a common cup and no one ever seemed to worry about germs" (Johnson 16).

My own grandfather has been brought into the tradition by some of the older people of Renew's. It is said by some that a priest who came to Renew's in the 1960's tried to beat the crosses on the top of the Grotto off in a fit of rage one day and that my grandfather, who worked for the priest at the time, stood in front of the Grotto and challenged the priest—something unheard of at the time. My grandfather told him he would have to beat him first to get to the Grotto. My grandfather arrived too late to save the crosses, though: there was so much damage done that they had to be taken off completely.<sup>5</sup> I have tried to

substantiate this story from family members but they were unaware of the incident. According to a paper written by Sumathy Ponnambalam in 1987 the pillars were removed because "one was in danger of falling down" (Ponnambalam 11). Her information came from the priest at the time, Father Gordon Walsh.

### Analysis

The legend of the Mass Rock continues to survive years after Catholic emancipation. The community is now almost completely Catholic with the exception of one family. Even in 1759 around the time of the secret Masses, Catholics outnumbered the Protestants in the community; there were twenty-five families in Renew's, sixteen of which were Irish Catholic (Barnable 14). Perhaps the survival of this legend says more about the people of Renew's than a first glance would suggest. Jansen suggests that it is generally assumed local legends survive because they preserve local information. However, he says, there is more at stake than just a general account of past events, and suggests that local legends continue to exist because of their specific function for both performers and audience. Functions which he isolates include the recording of "a local triumph over an alien force" and eliciting emotions like "delight in seeing the law flouted" (Jansen 260-268). Both of these functions seem to be served by the legend of the Mass Rock.

However, this legend may also help to preserve some historical facts for the people of Renew's. In most legends there are elements of truth preserved. It does not seem to matter that the legends themselves may be historically inaccurate, such as the version with Father Fitzsimmons as the

disguised priest. The elements of truth which are important to the people are preserved in the legend (Alver 144-147). The historical accuracy of oral tradition has been debated among scholars since the last century. There were those like Lord Raglan and Robert Lowie who tend to dismiss all claims of historical elements within these types of legend, and others who claim complete historical accuracy of the legend (Dorson 19-22). Perhaps the answer lies somewhere between the two. While some versions of the legend may contain false or misleading information, there are elements contained which are relevant for historians. Robert Lowie conceded that some legends provided "information about the general historical conditions of a...culture, but he categorically refused to concede any historical credibility to the details of the narratives" (Dorson 21-22).

Other scholars, like Svale Solheim, suggest that at times the historical legend can shape history. He cites examples from Russia, Sweden, and Norway which deal with the invasion of foreign forces and the resistance of usually one brave person. He states that at times these legends can serve to inspire and encourage people: "the psychological effects of the story...worked as a potent cure against defeatism and pessimism; it gave encouragement and strengthened the will to resist" (Solheim 343-344). Perhaps this can be said of the Mass Rock legend. It is evident that elsewhere in Newfoundland there was strong persecution of Catholics. In 1755 Governor Dorrill ordered the authorities to "hunt down" an Irish priest in the Conception Bay area: "The priest himself alluded authorities, but premises in which Mass had been said were burnt to the ground, and Roman Catholics who were known to have attended

<sup>5</sup> This was told to me by John Lawlor of Renew's in an informal conversation.

Mass were subjected to harsh fines, and even exile, on account of their religion" (Lahey "O'Donel" 87). It does not appear that there were any major cases of documented persecution of Catholics in Renews. This would not be because of isolation from authorities because, as stated earlier, Renews was an important port in Newfoundland at the time. Perhaps the authorities in the area were sympathetic or more likely afraid, as can be seen from the court documents mentioned earlier. After all, they were outnumbered by the Catholics. They may have turned a blind eye to such activities as midnight Masses, or they may not have. In any case, the defiance of the people was important enough to have been remembered in legend. And, in the case of the Mass Rock of Renews, locals believe that the defiance was uniquely orchestrated: the inscription on the second marble tablet inlaid in the Grotto says that "it is the only rock regarding which we have such a tradition in this country." The country at the time would have been Newfoundland itself.

### Conclusions

It appears that local legends serve many functions for the people who tell them and the receptive audience. The legend has an "open-endedness" about it: "the action or plot of a legend is not completed in the narrative itself, and in fact the action continues into the present or even into the future" (Dundes 165). While the actual secret Masses are no longer said there are Masses at the Grotto each Lady Day, August 15th. The rock also continues to inspire stories of good will for the "good guys" and resistance to the "bad guys." This legend is comparable to other stories and songs popular in the community of Renews. The songs

learned for generations, even by myself, have always been the "rebel songs" of Ireland, like "James Connolly," "A Nation Once Again," and others of a similar nature. It is perhaps this attitude which has ensured the survival of the legend of the Mass Rock, of Irish people defying the British Crown. The same can be said of other legends common in the area, like one from the same time about the Masterless Men, a group said to have lived in the hills behind the communities of Newfoundland's Southern Shore in order to evade British authorities, but that is another story.

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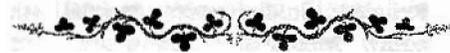
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## Field Notes

### From Tree Planting Camp

by John Bodner, MUN

In the summer of 1997 Memorial University's Department of Folklore released another group of MA students loose on the general population. This uncontrolled experiment is also called fieldwork. It is a vital part of folklore research, but one with its own hazards and growing pains. I hope that by bringing together some fieldwork experiences both the writer and the reader will expose the process of data collecting and the imprecise science behind the polished (we hope) thesis or paper.

My own fieldwork took me to northern Ontario to a tree-planting camp. I knew what I was getting into since I'd done the work before. That is, I'd tree planted before; fieldwork was another story. Unlike many fieldworkers, I was fortunate enough to have a study group with a high level of

formal education who knew what the process of fieldwork entailed. I would often be hauled aside by someone who "had something for me." This meant that I'd run and get my tape recorder in order to collect whatever it was that they thought was important for me to know. Most often it was great and surprising. Also surprising was the planter who came up and wanted to know how I was going to deal with the theoretical problem of participant observation and the inclusion of myself in the observer/observed paradigm. All I can say is that the folk are no longer who we think they are.

There are some technical problems that I have encountered that the average fieldworker may not have faced. Tape recording and photography in a communal shower come to mind. In each case the equipment and my ingenuity were not up to the task—scratch one chapter. One day I nearly had the opportunity to tape record my own death when I heard the sound of crashing and general mayhem in the bush behind me and thought it was a bear. Luckily it was a crew boss. Unluckily I missed my chance to be the most famous folklorist to never complete an MA. In the end, neither my tape recorder nor my camera survived the bush. All the Luddites might want to know that my pencil and field journal stood up quite well.

On the whole I was surprised by the trust and generosity of my informants, even though this is the nature of tree planting. I collected stories of lost love, of found love, of pain and success. There are hours of foolishness and horseplay on the tape and an annoying amount of me nervously laughing. As I struggle over the tapes, what their contents means and how it fits into the structure (or straitjacket) of our discipline, I have only one

hope: to display with respect and joy the beauty of people's lived existence which they allowed me to capture and use. Thanks to the hardcore crew of Mile 82 and Cariboo Cut, 1997.

### A Personal Look at Research and Safety in the Field

by Contessa Small, MUN

During the summer of 1997, I began fieldwork for my MA thesis entitled, "Occupational Narratives of Pulp and Paper Mill Workers in Corner Brook, Newfoundland: A Case Study in Occupational Folklife." As a young female student, preparing myself for field research within a male dominated industrial workplace was not an easy task. Upon consulting the works of Robert McCarl and Jack Santino, I was advised to join the mill workers' group as a participant observer. The simple fact is that finding the time and the connections to join a work force does not happen, nor does placing a twenty-three-year-old woman among seven hundred men in hope of passing her off as "one of the boys." However, I was not discouraged. I eagerly sought to discover and apply strategies which would enable me to collect occupational narratives from male workers in both a safe and academically credible manner—the ultimate challenge of every female fieldworker in such circumstances.

Having first familiarized myself with the occupational environment and working conditions of the mill, I began to conduct personal interviews with workers from various mill departments and positions. While I did not engage in group "story swapping" events or have the advantages of participant observation as McCarl would have preferred, I feel that these research methods provided me with equally valuable

narratives. Safety is, however, the most important consideration for any researcher. Not unlike the cautionary tales I collected from the mill workers, I too have heard and heeded fellow folklorists' narratives of sexual harassment and violence in the field. As a woman, the best advice I can offer regarding this issue is to always remain aware of and alert to potential danger when conducting interviews. I am convinced that my successful and rewarding field research experience has partially resulted from my cautious behaviour and my own personal fieldwork guidelines--guidelines which every fieldworker must personally create and abide by.

While these few words have by no means resolved the issue of research and safety in the field, it at least brings to attention the importance of preventive measures for women field researchers. I invite other female scholars to share their stories and their suggestions to further promote both safe and engaging research.

### The Interview

by Deva McNeill, MUN

I don't think I will ever feel prepared for fieldwork. Each time I foray out in the field with my tape recorder and notebook, I encounter some experience which throws my carefully laid plans (and preconceptions) to the four winds. The first thing I think I need to get over is the idea that I'm the one conducting the interview. After having been questioned on my name, birthplace, kinship ties, marital status and current place of residence, my informant gets to work with the more serious questions. I have been grilled several times on my political views and religious beliefs, which are admittedly eccentric by anyone's definition. I've found that honest

general statements of respect are usually enough to ease through the awkwardness of the moment. I am usually questioned about exactly whom I've spoken to so far, who told me to contact them and what has everybody else said. I have yet to find a neat, satisfactory and ethically aware response to those inquiries (read: "help!").

When I take my son with me to an interview, I'm treated to either voluminous praise on what a fine young lad I have, or a saddened comment on the lack of discipline with kids these days. I've found that letting my son hang out with anybody who might be playing or puttering in the yard makes everyone happy (especially him!).

Finally comes the questions which make my stomach turn over. What do you want to know that for? Is that what you wanted to hear? What kind of job do you think you're going to get going around collecting ghost stories?

But then I suppose it is the unexpected that makes fieldwork so exciting, and some of those questions have made me take a hard look at what I'm doing. Now if I could just stop feeling guilty for having so much fun at it...



## Progress Report

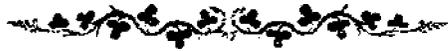
### Newfoundland's Supernatural Landscapes: A Progress Report

by Deva McNeill, MUN

Beginning in the spring of 1997, I've been collecting sacred and supernatural legends and memorates associated with landscape features, both built (bridges, grottos) and natural (barrens, hollows), across Newfoundland. Particular emphasis has been on the areas around the Codroy Valley and on the Southern Shore of the Avalon Peninsula. Fieldwork is being supplemented with material from MUNFLA and historical sources from the nineteenth century. Looking for common features in the stories and the landscapes they are associated with, it is my hope that this work will bring me closer to understanding the interaction between people and the familiar landscapes of home. This research was initiated by my desire to investigate such questions as: Why do we feel the way we do about a particular place? What is it about a place that makes us feel uneasy, filled with awe, or safe? Why does one landscape inspire us with its beauty and another fill our hearts with dread?

Although there has been considerable research in recent years on human/landscape interaction, I've found that approaching the subject through an examination of its associated folkloric expressions has yielded insights which differ considerably from those found within the disciplines of cultural geography, environmental psychology and ecological anthropology. Thus far, it would seem that beauty is very much in the eye of the beholder, and many of our perceptions of the sacred and supernatural in the landscape are strongly influenced

by the oral traditions that surround them. Oral history, legend, belief and tradition are subtly woven in our perceptions of the numinous the moment we approach the bogs, bridges, hills or hollows of home.



## Notables

**John Bodner**, MUN, has been awarded the 1999 F.A. Aldrich Graduate Award and was the recipient of the David Buchan Graduate Research Award in Folklore for winter 1999.

**Jane Burns**, MUN, has been awarded an Institute of Social and Economic Research Doctoral Fellowship for 1998-1999.

**Holly Everett**, MUN, was named a Fellow of the School of Graduate Studies and awarded the University Medal for Excellence in Graduate Studies upon convocation.

**Paul Gruchy**, MUN, was the 1998 recipient of the F.A. Aldrich Graduate Award, the Very Reverend Edward and Marjorie Rusted Harlow Travel Award and the Bowring/Harlow Scholarship.

**Kristin Harris**, MUN, has been awarded The David Buchan Graduate Research Award in Folklore for winter 1998.

**Dale Jarvis**, MUN, was named a Fellow of the School of Graduate Studies.

**Douglas Jole**, MUN, has been awarded an honourable mention from the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research for his submission for the 1999 David Buchan Student Essay Prize, "The Bigfoot Legend: Towards a Diachronic Study of Changing Texts and the Effects of Media on Contemporary Legend."

**Mikel Koven**, MUN, was named a Fellow of the School of Graduate Studies.

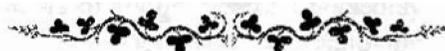
**Lara Maynard**, MUN, has been named a Fellow of the School of Graduate Studies and awarded the Guigné International Ltd. Graduate Research Award in Folklore and Technology for 1998 and the Women's Association of Memorial University of Newfoundland Graduate Scholarship for 1998.

**Cathy Rickey**, MUN, received the Mary A. Griffiths Memorial Bursary for Folklore Field Research for 1998-1999 and the Neil Murray Graduate Research Award in Folklore for 1998-1999.

**Niko Silvester**, MUN, has been named a Fellow of the School of Graduate Studies.

**Ranald Thurgood**, MUN, has been named a Fellow of the School of Graduate Studies.

**Wendy Welch**, MUN has been awarded the Guigné International Ltd. Graduate Research Award in Folklore and Technology for 1999 and the David Buchan Graduate Research Award in Folklore for fall 1998.



## Folklorists Work in Alberta

After much blood, sweat and tears (and a few grant applications), the Huculak Chair of Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography at the University of Alberta in Edmonton hired four students for the summer of 1998 under the supervision of Dr. Andriy Nahachewsky. The four students worked on a variety of projects. Linda Jendzjowsky and Roman Tarnowsky had the huge task of pulling together the incomplete catalogue of some 20,000 books, manuscripts, cassettes, videos, photographs and artifacts that comprise the Ukrainian Folklore Archive. Rita Dirks worked on refurbishing a manuscript of the memoirs of Peter Svarich towards publication. Jason Galinowski, an MA student in the Ukrainian Folklore Program, conducted interviews and gathered information about life in the Alberta Ukrainian communities in earlier years, concentrating on the biographies of key individuals in several locales.

*Submitted by Jason Galinowski,  
University of Alberta*



*The fairy art in this  
issue was created by  
Niko Silvester, MUN.*



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