

Coming Home: Nostalgia and Tourism in Newfoundland

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RESEARCH NOTE

Coming Home: Nostalgia and Tourism in Newfoundland

LIKE MOST OF ATLANTIC CANADA, Newfoundland has been since the 19th century an area of relative surplus population in a North American context. Since at least the 1860s a fairly constant stream of people have been forced by economic circumstances to seek temporary or permanent employment in Canada and the United States.¹ It is one thing, however, to describe the structures of uneven regional development and to chart the dynamics of the labour market which causes this process. It is another thing to appreciate the way in which such conditions are experienced by the people involved. The separation from friends, family, familiar landscapes and ways of working and living that leaving home usually involves has been a significant experience for many Newfoundlanders.

The word nostalgia comes from the Greek *nostos*, to return home, and *algia*, a painful condition. It describes a painful yearning to return home and was coined by a Swiss physician, Johannes Hofer, in the late 17th century.² Presumably homesickness or *maladie du pays* had existed before this time, but it was in the Enlightenment climate of the late 17th century that this emotion came to be characterized as a disease. In the 18th and 19th centuries nostalgia was increasingly recognized as a sickness of soldiers, sailors, emigrés and provincials. In the 19th century nostalgia also took on a romantic significance, especially in terms of recollections of a past, usually preindustrial, golden age of innocence and youth. Today nostalgia is no longer looked upon by the medical profession as a disease, and the symptoms are more likely to be discussed in terms of social maladjustment or depression. For Freudians, nostalgia is often considered a mild kind of neurosis stimulated by "a concern over, or denial of the future" rather than as a kind of "homing instinct".³ The uncertainty and discomfort of

- 1 For background information and specific details on outmigration see, R.A. Mackay, *Newfoundland Economic, Diplomatic and Strategic Studies* (Toronto, 1946), David Alexander, "Development and Dependence in Newfoundland", *Acadiensis*, IV, 1 (Autumn 1975), pp. 3-31, David Alexander, "Newfoundland's Traditional Economy and Development to 1934", *Acadiensis*, V, 1 (Autumn 1976), pp. 56-78, Ralph Matthews, "The Pursuit of Progress: Newfoundland's Social and Economic Development in the Smallwood Era", in Neil B. Ridler, ed., *Issues in Regional/Urban Development of Atlantic Canada* (Saint John, 1978), pp. 27-49, Peter Neary, "Canada and the Newfoundland Labour Market", *Canadian Historical Review*, LXII, 4 (December 1981), pp. 470-495, Peter Neary, "Canadian Immigration Policy and the Newfoundlanders, 1912-1939", *Acadiensis*, XI, 2 (Spring 1982), pp. 69-83.
- 2 Jean Starobinski, "The Idea of Nostalgia", *Diogenes*, 53, 1966, pp. 81-103, George Rosen, "Nostalgia: A 'forgotten' psychological disorder", *Psychological Medicine*, 5, 1975, pp. 340-354, Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York, 1979).
- 3 M. Mike Nawas and J.J. Platt, "A Future Oriented Theory of Nostalgia", *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 21(1), 1965, pp. 55.

present life gives rise to a search for a more stable and secure world in the past. Various elements from the individual's past — places, events, people — become internalized as part of a fantasy-producing process.⁴

But this is not simply a fantasy, for it guides action and is a powerful creative force. Among Newfoundland emigrants, nostalgia has produced a variety of cultural expressions, not the least of which is the sentimental view which many expatriates have adopted towards the remembered way of life in Newfoundland. The idea of returning home is very often important for migrants. Going away to work is regarded as a necessary, but temporary, hardship to be endured.⁵ As Teodor Shanin points out: "The dream of return, rich and successful, into one's own village, has been the grand utopia, around which strategies, norms and claims were structured by the migrants. Nor were these only dreams, for one can barely find a south Italian or Irish village without some 'Americans', i.e. returnees. Indeed, to sustain a dream one usually needs some consistent proofs of its realism, even if only limited in scope".⁶ And migrants do return home in large numbers. Evidence cited by Shanin, for example, suggests that almost half of the European migrants to the United States went back home in the first 20 years of this century.

If returning home is the "grand utopia" for many migrants, the visit may be regarded as a little utopia. The visits of returning expatriates have, in fact, become a very significant form of tourism in Newfoundland. Surveys have shown that the VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) market accounts for a large part of the Newfoundland tourist trade.⁷ The heritage of unemployment and poverty has thus offered the social and cultural basis for a developing tourist industry.

The process of adjusting to a new location may be a difficult one for migrants, depending particularly on the problems of finding employment and making friends. There is some evidence that migration is especially difficult for married women who do not work. Anne Martin's study of Newfoundland women in Hamilton suggests that this is the case. The words of one woman she interviewed show that dissatisfaction is the other side of the longing for home: "If I had my time over, I would have stayed in Newfoundland. I hate it up here. There's

4 Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents", in J. Strachey, ed., *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London, 1930), pp. 64-145.

5 John Berger and Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man* (Harmondsworth, 1975).

6 Teodor Shanin, "The peasants are coming: migrants who labour, peasants who travel and Marxists who write", *Race and Class*, 19(3), 1978, p. 285.

7 For example, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *Non-Resident Auto Exit Survey* (June 20-Aug. 31, 1974) (Tourist Services Department, Department of Tourism), p. 4 showed that 37 per cent of the parties leaving Newfoundland for the mainland had come to visit friends and relatives. Similar figures emerged from two later surveys: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *Non-Resident Auto-Exit Survey (June 18-Aug. 30, 1977)* (Development Branch, Tourist Services Division, Department of Tourism) and Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *Air Exit Survey Report* (Planning and Evaluation Division, Department of Tourism).

nothing here for me. People don't know how to be friendly. They don't have any respect for people here like in my home town. I will never stay in this God-forsaken bloody hole".⁸ The insecurity and painfulness of adjusting to a new place are eased by association with people from similar backgrounds. Migrants from the same part of Newfoundland often tend to work and live together. Around such groupings of immigrants a whole cultural milieu tends to develop as people create some form of community, perhaps tied together, in part, by the common desire to eventually return home. Around the turn of the century the Cabot Club in Boston was a particularly important focus of attention for ex-Newfoundlanders. The heavy post-Second World War emigration also gave rise to associations in Canadian cities, such as the Terra Nova Club in Montreal and five or six clubs in Toronto.

People may maintain links with Newfoundland in a variety of ways, but music is especially important. The clubs in Toronto, of which the Caribou is the oldest, are a key element in the production and reproduction of exile culture, and a number of important musicians made their start in these clubs. Harry Hibbs went from Bell Island to Toronto in 1962 and worked in "the plants" until he was injured. As a result of his accident he became involved in the club run by Ray Kent, another former Bell Islander, playing the squeeze box. Similarly with Dick Nolan, Bert Cuff, Roy Payne and others. Eventually Hibbs started his own club — the Conception Bay Club and became a popular recording and T.V. star, producing record albums such as the recent *Memories of Newfoundland*.⁹

Much of this music is the epitome of emigré culture, containing recollections of "home" and expressing a longing for Newfoundland. Like the various artifacts and customs that people keep, music provides a symbolic link to the other life from which they have been exiled. A whole spate of "exile" songs date from the end of the 19th century, one of the periods of high outmigration from Newfoundland. These include the "Terra Novean Exile's Song" written by P. Dyer, an emigrant to the United States, "Newfoundland" written by Barrington Lodge, who "died in a foreign land some few years ago", and "The Exile's Christmas", written in Boston in 1892.¹⁰ Another song from this period is "A Heart's Cry From the West", to be sung "*con expression*".¹¹

These romantic recollections of home are echoed in similar songs and verses from the post-1940s period, especially those from the singers associated with the Newfoundland clubs in Toronto. Consider the songs of Roy Payne, "Happy An-

8 Anne Martin, "The Case of the Migrant Wife: Looking at the World from the Underdog Perspective", *Occasional Papers of the McMaster University Sociology of Women Program*, 1, 1977, p. 185.

9 "The Newfoundland Herald Questions Harry Hibbs", *Newfoundland Herald*, 11 December 1979, pp. 18-20.

10 James Murphy, *Murphy's Songs and Ballads of Newfoundland* (n.p., 1902), pp. 36-8, 39-40, 54-6.

11 Gerald S. Doyle, *Old-Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland* (St. John's, 1966), p. 11.

niversary Newfoundland”:

Some like me, we waved goodbye, and went chasing after rainbows,
Some left never to return again
But I'm sure there's no Newfie alive
Who doesn't wipe a tear from his eye
When he recalls “God guard thee, Newfoundland”,

and “There's No Price Tag on the Doors in Newfoundland”:

Surrounded by a mighty sea there's an island dear to me
Described by some a place of rock and sand
But so many a man has found when the world has turned you down
There's no price tag on the doors of Newfoundland.¹²

The “Isle of Newfoundland” by Jason (Tex) Shaw is similar:

Where the people make a living
On the land and in the sea
There are people on the island
That mean the world to me
I wish I had the power
To change the course of time
And live again in Newfoundland
The home of childhood time.¹³

Many of the themes taken up in these songs are really no different from that whole genre of literature about Newfoundland which presents idyllic scenes from “old-fashioned” outport life. This literature flourished in the 1940s and 1950s in the pages of magazines such as the *Atlantic Guardian* and it is currently very popular in Newfoundland.

Ron Pollett's 1950 article in the *Atlantic Guardian*, “Summer Madness”, can be seen as a classic account of the nostalgia of emigré Newfoundlanders. Nostalgia, writes Pollett, is “as much a disease as canker in potatoes”: “There are an estimated 200,000 of us Newfoundlanders living on the mainland, mostly in cities. That's more than half as many as on the Island itself. Many were reared in seaside villages rimmed by woods and fields which, in summer setting etched pictures forever on our minds”. It is the “summer madness”, the “going home again” complaint, which is the permanent affliction of the exile and must

12 Bennett Brewing Co. Ltd., *The Ninth Edition of Newfoundland Songs* (St. John's, 1974), pp. 5, 27.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

be cured sooner or later at least temporarily by a visit home. In the mind of the ex-resident of Newfoundland “in search of the Golden Fleece”, images of home “dance like demons”. The sweltering heat of summer in New York or Toronto helps create a longing for “home”. Such homesickness in emigrants is made easier but is at the same time maintained by association with other emigrants:

The biggest mistake the yearning exile in search of a cure could ever make is to marry one of his own kind. Yet that’s what often happens since Newfoundlanders, like other national groups, build their own nests in whatever foreign city they happen to settle in numbers. The folk-dance tempo of the get-togethers is far from waltz time, but it plays a gypsy tune for the homeside and the inevitable ensues.¹⁴

Together Newfoundlanders become “fully-fledged addicts” of nostalgia. With tales of outport life and adventure, they also “socialize” their children to an urge to “go home”.

The literature of exile in general and Pollett’s writing in particular contains an “out of time” vision of Newfoundland. One obvious clue to this is that it represents a vision of Newfoundland which is frozen at the time of the migrant’s departure. As Pollett says:

we envision tall-sparred schooners, white sails spread tautly for spring airing, mirrored in the harbour calm. At least, that’s the picture we are likely to recall. Most of us in the States came here before the high bars went up on the U.S. border in the early 30’s. We can’t picture the modern craft, which are mainly mechanized hulls sans canvas, sans romance. Anyway, who wants to dream about a steam trawler?¹⁵

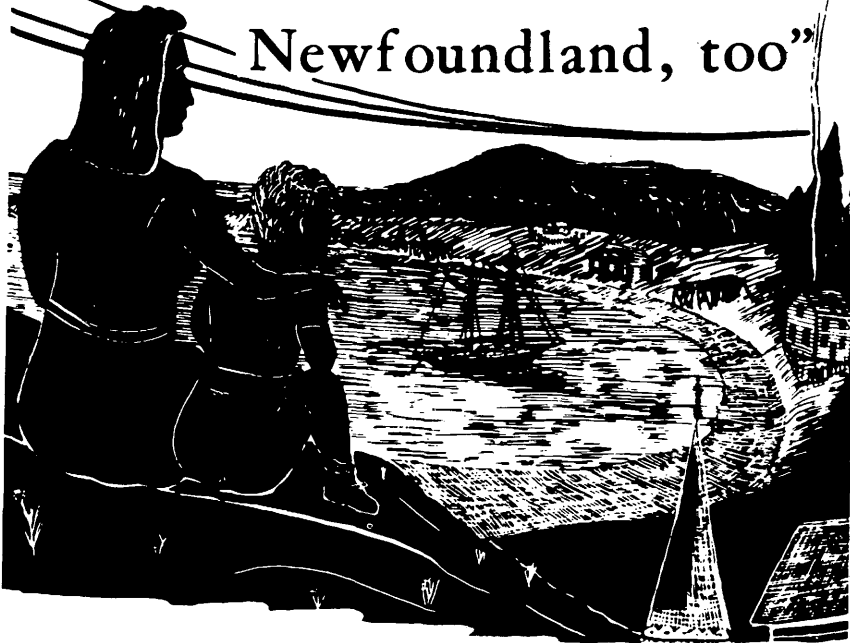
But, more importantly, the golden age vision is a kind of utopia. It is less a description of Newfoundland than an expression of current alienation and a longing for a more satisfying life. Elements from people’s pasts are incorporated into the vision, however, especially childhood memories, childhood being for many something of a golden age of innocence compared with adult life. Several writers have analysed this aspect of nostalgia; in particular, the way in which the images of past golden ages grow out of present dissatisfactions: “We are always dissatisfied enough to be ready for some form of flight into the past, a package tour to one of our preferred Arcadias”.¹⁶ In a way “golden ages” are imaginative constructions of a “fantasized past” which never existed, but which represent a

14 Ron Pollett, “Summer Madness”, *Atlantic Guardian*, 7(8), 1950, pp. 18-25.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.

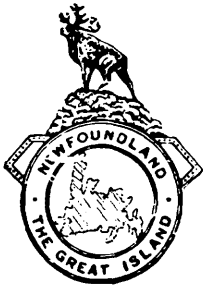
16 Michael Wood, “Nostalgia or Never: You Can’t Go Home Again”, *New Society*, 30(631), 1974, p. 343.

"I want my Son
to Know and Love
Newfoundland, too"



This is Newfoundland's 450th anniversary year, and a fitting time for Newfoundland-born parents living abroad to return for a visit with their children. Plan your summer trip now to avoid disappointment and delays later.

The lad was born in the United States. Good schools, a high standard of living, fine opportunities in a great and rich country — these things were his by right of birth. But to his mother, who was born in Newfoundland, that was not enough. She wanted him to see and know her forbears and his, the folks back home who, knowing few of the amenities of modern life, had toiled through difficult times and developed sturdiness of character and resourcefulness. She wanted him to see the headlands and the bays of Newfoundland, to feel the thrill and the strength of the sea, to discover for himself that life for his ancestors had been a constant challenge . . . so the lad's mother took him "home" in the summer, and he learned to know and love Newfoundland as she did . . .



**NEWFOUNDLAND TOURIST
DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

ST. JOHN'S and CORNER BROOK - NEWFOUNDLAND

Also: Newfoundland Government Information Bureau, 620 Fifth Ave., New York.

Figure One: The nostalgia theme in Newfoundland publicity, 1947 (Source: *Atlantic Guardian*, Vol. 3, No. 2 [1947])

future society which could and should exist.¹⁷ This is the past as the “good life”. This kind of valuing of rural society and community as a “locus of socially desirable characteristics” is of course a dominant feature of much 19th century thought, in particular in the romantic movement.¹⁸ It is a current of thinking which informs literary and artistic production as well as the human sciences — forming one of the major paradigms in sociology and anthropology and human geography.¹⁹ For small producers and rural dwellers forced by economic circumstances to leave and find work, the old way of life and the place they leave often continues to exist as a spiritual home, a world of friends, families, landscapes and communities which has been lost but which might in the future be recaptured. In the face of current difficulties and uncertainties, the old home exists as something to measure the present and future against, even if it is largely impossible to return except for visits.

A number of studies, especially those dealing with Scotland, have examined the economic and social roots of the kind of sentimental rural literature that is in a Scottish context called “kailyard” literature. Ian Carter points to the rise of tourism in those parts of Scotland which were the settings for many kailyard authors.²⁰ Tom Nairn links this literature with “cultural emigration” from Scotland, especially the areas which were the focus of “kailyard”, and raises also the question of why such literature fell upon such fertile soil at that time.²¹ A similar approach may be useful in explaining the outpouring of nostalgic sentimental culture in Newfoundland in the late 19th century and in the period after the Second World War. Both periods saw exceptional changes in rural Newfoundland, involving heavy outmigration. Some useful comments on this point are offered in the recent writings of Patrick O’Flaherty on Newfoundland, especially his comments on E.J. Pratt and the writers of the post-Second World War period. With regard to the latter period he argues that “the traditional, communal way of life” of the outports, “undermined in the hungry 1920s and 1930s, kept crumbling as more and more men left the fishery”, first under the influence of the war and then of Confederation. Both opened up Newfoundland to the “vulgarity” of the North American way of life.²² The development schemes of the 1950s and 1960s virtually completed the task.

17 Frank Hearn, “Remembrance and Critique: The Uses of the Past for Discrediting the Present and Anticipating the Future”, *Politics and Society*, 5(2), 1975, pp. 201-27.

18 Malcolm Chapman, *The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture* (London, 1978), p. 201.

19 Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition* (New York, 1966), James Overton, “Promoting the ‘Real’ Newfoundland: Culture as Tourist Commodity”, *Studies in Political Economy*, 4 (Autumn 1980), pp. 115-37.

20 Ian Carter, “‘Kailyard’: The Literature of Decline in Nineteenth Century Scotland”, *The Scottish Journal of Sociology*, 1(1), 1976, pp. 1-13.

21 Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London, 1977), p. 156.

22 Patrick O’Flaherty, *The Rock Observed: Studies in the Literature of Newfoundland* (Toronto, 1979), pp. 111-26, 144-83.

It was precisely in the post-war period that a group of what O'Flaherty calls "outraged patriots" started writing about Newfoundland.²³ Often distinctly nationalistic or chauvinist in their approach, these writers, including Harold Horwood and Herb Cranford, produced a number of small magazines. The most famous of these was the *Atlantic Guardian* produced by Art Scammell, Brian Cahill and Ron Pollett in Montreal, "three young Newfoundlanders who have left Newfoundland in body but not in spirit".²⁴ Advertised as "Every Issue a Souvenir", the *Atlantic Guardian* was a prime vehicle for the production and reproduction of the culture of exile. Often the tone of the publication was one which blended romantic and nostalgic scenes from outport life with short articles on current developments in Newfoundland. A populist literature, it was a celebration of the virtues of the vanished and vanishing way of life of the small producer in the fishery. For this group of exiled intellectuals with strong ties to rural Newfoundland, the outport way of life and stories about it had great symbolic value. For them it represented a supposedly happier past and a potentially happier future and a dissatisfaction with the present. It is also worth noting that this populist trend in culture corresponded with similar trends in politics. The period was that of Joey Smallwood's efforts to mobilize rural Newfoundland — especially the neglected small producer — to become a powerful political force and challenge the hegemony of the Water Street merchants in St. John's. These writers tended to articulate the values, concerns, hopes and anxieties of the small producer in rural Newfoundland in both cultural and political terms, demonstrating the essential link between these two spheres. In general, via various forms of literature and the media this group of people formed and shaped the Newfoundland of the mind for a large number of people both inside and outside the island in the years after the Second World War.

There are strong similarities between the meaning of the return visit for expatriates and pilgrimages. For many migrants, as for many members of particular religious groups, everyday life is lived in exile, in a profane space away from the sacred centre from which much of life's real meaning is drawn. Pilgrimages and the return visit are important, for as Erik Cohen points out, "The experience of life at the centre during his visit sustains the traveller in his daily life in 'exile', in the same sense in which the pilgrim derives new spiritual strength, is 're-created', by his pilgrimage".²⁵ Thus for many "existential tourists" the journey's goal is an almost indefinable one of travelling towards a spiritual centre, a sacred space in the migrant's memory. For many emigrants the Newfoundland of the mind is a metaphor: it represents tradition, the past,

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁴ *Atlantic Guardian*, 1(1), 1945, p. 12.

²⁵ Erik Cohen, "A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences", *Sociology*, 13(2), 1979, p. 190. Victor Turner's *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, 1974), pp. 166-230 is also useful here.

community, the sacred. In a temporary visit, one can celebrate the positive aspects of community, even though this may be a largely mythical community constructed in the memory of the exile. People may not be quite as friendly as expected, and the realities of life for the majority of people may be difficult to accept.²⁶ The small workless community is very different for a temporary visitor in summer than it is for the people who struggle to survive there year round. Yet returning migrants themselves have a profound effect on the local scene and local conceptions of their community. As studies of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland also suggest, returning exiles praise the special qualities of life in rural communities, and, while local residents may be sceptical of such praise, the emigrants do speak with authority — for after all they have been away and seen the world outside.²⁷

Since the latter part of the 19th century efforts have been made to develop tourism in Newfoundland. Many of the earlier attempts were spearheaded by transportation interests, especially the railway company. Much early tourism was based on hunting and fishing, but sightseeing and science were also important. It is in this period around the turn of the century that an interest in tourism based on the return visits of expatriate Newfoundlanders first emerged. The high outmigration rate of the last 20 years of the 19th century was the basis for this tourism. In 1904, ex-Newfoundland residents throughout the United States, with the support of the Newfoundland government, organized an Old Home Week. This was to be a grand re-union in St. John's for exiles. Similar events were becoming popular in the United States, and the Cabot Club of Boston provided the initiative for arranging such an event in Newfoundland. The arrangements included cheap sea and rail excursions to the Island. James McAuliffe of Boston suggested that the Old Home Week would not only provide "a great source of revenue" for Newfoundland, but it would also promote a "spirit of patriotism" and be a means of "rolling back the clouds of misrepresentation and calumny indulged in by some of the representatives of the foreign press".²⁸ It would also, he argued, be a means of spreading tourist information about the country.

Old Home Week, 3-10 August 1904, attracted some 600 ex-Newfoundland residents from the United States.²⁹ Most came by rail and attended a public welcome in Bannerman Park in St. John's on August 1st. Several local "songsters" were published for the occasion, emphasizing the Newfoundland identity, often with a fine blend of patriotism and attempts to promote certain

26 There may be "no hello in the store", as a writer to the *Evening Telegram* (St. John's), 8 October 1979, pointed out.

27 Chapman, *The Gaelic Vision*, pp. 195-206.

28 James J. McAuliffe, "Old Home Week in Newfoundland", *Newfoundland Quarterly*, 3(4), 1904, p. 19.

29 H.M. Mosdell, *When Was That?* (St. John's, 1923), p. 93.

commercial products.³⁰ Many of these songs place great emphasis on Newfoundland pride. The song "Avalon is Calling" was written especially for Old Home Week by Sir Cavendish Boyle:

Avalon is calling you, calling o'er the main,
Sons of Terra Nova, shall she call in vain?
Dwellers in the new land gather to her shore,
Gather in the Old Land, the Homeland loved of yore.³¹

Boyle was the Governor of Newfoundland from 1901 to 1904, between jobs as Colonial Secretary in British Guiana and Governor of Mauritius. He is well-known for his patriotic and sentimental verses, especially the "Ode to Newfoundland". In fact, the folk music of Newfoundland increasingly became the symbol of national identity and pride in a fairly widespread growth of nationalist sentiment. At the same time the folklore representing local distinctiveness and ethnicity became important inputs into the tourist trade.

Nostalgia was fed on and fed by many entrepreneurs in the period. For example, in 1907 Dicks and Co. produced a "new album" of St. John's views printed in colour on toned cardboard. In their *Daily News* advertisement they stated: "Both album and art views will furnish pleasant memories of the Old Land, to Newfoundlanders abroad and to visitors, whilst in attractive terms they will tell to strangers the manner of the land in which we dwell".³² Again, the nostalgia theme comes through in a discussion of picture post cards, the production of which was becoming an important activity for several enterprising firms. Reporting on those produced by Mr. Garrett Byrne, it was noted that he "deserves the thanks of all who love our Island Home for this offering...an opportunity to remind their absent friends of the scenes of their youth".³³

The development of tourism in Newfoundland continued, especially in the 1920s, but was interrupted by the depression of the 1930s and the Second World War. In the period after the war attempts were made to promote tourism again. One of the major themes that emerged in the promotional literature of this period was that of trying to encourage ex-residents to return home for a vacation. An effort was made to excite and use nostalgic sentiments towards this end, by both government and non-government organizations. The *Atlantic Guardian* was from its inception committed to promoting Newfoundland as a tourist resort, aiming:

30 Paul Mercer and Mac Swackhammer, "The Singing of Old Newfoundland Ballads and a cold glass of good beer go hand in hand: Folklore and 'Tradition' in Newfoundland Advertizing", *Culture and Tradition*, 3, 1978, pp. 36-45.

31 Frank W. Graham, "*We Love thee Newfoundland*": *Biography of Sir Cavendish Boyle, K.C.M.G. Governor of Newfoundland 1901-1904* (St. John's, n.d.), pp. 183-4.

32 *Daily News* (St. John's), 1 July 1907.

33 *Daily News*, 13 July 1907.

To make Newfoundland better known at home and abroad: To promote trade and travel in the Island: To encourage development of the Island's natural resources: To foster good relations between Newfoundland and her neighbours.

Guardian Associates Ltd. also published guide books, postcards and a variety of other promotional literature. The editors of the *Guardian* recognized the potential for tourism in people like themselves. As a 1946 editorial claimed:

Scattered throughout Canada and the United States are thousands of Newfoundland born men and women, as many, it is said, as there are living in the Island...These colonies of Newfoundlanders in New York, Boston, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, and other places represent a source of almost unlimited assistance to the homeland...At the present time, Newfoundlanders abroad make their greatest contribution to Newfoundland in the indirect form of money spent during vacation visits home.³⁴

However, the *Guardian* recognized that to make such a trade viable much publicity would be needed. A later editorial urged Newfoundlanders to keep their relations homesick:

Now the whole point of this editorial on letters-to-the-editor is not to boast about the fact that we get scores of such letters every month (proud as we are of it), but to emphasize the importance of *keeping those Newfoundlanders abroad homesick*. Feed them with magazines, newspapers, clippings, pictures, letters — from home; give them by mail a steady diet of nostalgia, so that more of them will be stirred to say as James King of Windsor, Ont., says in this issue: "I am going home again".³⁵

The prospect of economic depression and a surplus population problem, exacerbated by the phasing out of military bases, stimulated efforts to promote tourism in the post-Second World War period. The Newfoundland Tourist Development Board played a part in this and also exploited the nostalgia theme. In 1947, for example, "Newfoundlanders living abroad" were urged to "re-discover Newfoundland", and presumably their own past, to celebrate the 450th anniversary of John Cabot's discovery of the colony.³⁶ A second advertisement in 1947 portrayed the nostalgia theme in a slightly different way. Here we are presented with a young woman and her son looking over a peaceful outport

34 *Atlantic Guardian*, 2(7), 1946, p. 32.

35 Editorial, "Let's Keep Them Homesick!", *Atlantic Guardian*, 10(8), 1953, p. 3.

36 *Atlantic Guardian*, 3(1), 1947, end cover.

scene. The caption makes it clear that the advertisement is appealing to Newfoundland war brides now resident in the United States.³⁷

By the mid-1960s the provincial government was heavily involved in promoting this aspect of tourism. 1966 was designated Come Home Year, and organization was undertaken on a large scale to ensure its success. A newsletter was published, a committee formed, contacts with various Newfoundland clubs in Canada and the United States established, and efforts made to smarten up local communities and ensure sufficient accommodation for visitors. In fact, the year was also intended to be a celebration of the economic development and progress of the Smallwood era. An article by Dr. F.W. Rowe, chairman of the Come Home Year committee, made clear the celebratory nature of the event. In particular there was great emphasis on the infrastructure which has made the success of the Come Home Year possible:

...sleepy fishing and logging communities with primitive standards have been transformed into growing bustling municipalities with paved streets, water and sewer services, lovely homes and schools. Now both town and country can offer all the facilities and amenities essential to modern living. This process of modernization has been accelerated by a great program of electrification, which will soon encompass the entire province.³⁸

The Trans-Canada Highway, the first paved road across the Island, was completed only in 1966, the Gulf Ferry service was improved and, the Island was now ready for the influx of tourists. In addition, many small outports were now easily accessible for the first time by road and a network of provincial parks was completed to cater to the motorized tourist.³⁹ The government was, more generally, hoping to attract the new mass motorized tourist who had emerged in the affluence of the post war period of economic expansion. Ex-Newfoundland residents were invited back to witness the transformations which had taken place since they left: a "revolution" not only of physical things but of the "spirit" also.⁴⁰

In a flurry of activity, bumper stickers, licence plates, maps and information booklets were produced for Come Home Year. Field workers visited various parts of the province organizing local committees to aid the celebrations. Crash courses for workers in the "hospitality field" were set up, and people were instructed on their personal responsibility with regard to making the event a success and on the correct behaviour they should exhibit towards tourists. A

37 *Atlantic Guardian*, 3(2), 1947. See Figure One.

38 F.W. Rowe, "Come Home! Come Home!", *The Atlantic Advocate* (April 1966), p. 13.

39 Overton, "Promoting the 'Real' Newfoundland"; James Overton, *Restructuring Provincial Parks Policy in Newfoundland*. Working Papers on Contemporary Social Issues, Number 1 (Sociology Department, Acadia University, 1983).

40 Rowe, "Come Home!", p. 14.

number of promotional songs on the "Come Home" theme were penned, including one by Art Scammell which is included in his book of nostalgic scenes from outport life, *My Newfoundland*, which was especially published for the Come Home Year:

Then come in your thousands our first Come Home Year(sic),
 Give us your blessing and join in the cheer;
 Though letters and phone calls we always enjoy,
 You in the flesh is what we want, me boy!⁴¹

If the appreciation of the new was one of the main themes of the Come Home Year - Canada Centennial celebrations of 1966-67, the other main theme was the attraction of the "old" qualities of Newfoundland. The new and the old together was the message: "But even with all the changes and progress, our people remain same as always; friendly, hospitable, proud and happy, the traits that have made us so well-known".⁴² The Come Home Committee were responsible for the re-issue of Gerald S. Boyle's *Our Newfoundland Songs* — songs which, it was claimed, mirrored the "very soul of our Newfoundland people".⁴³ The express purpose of many of the songs was to excite nostalgia and pride in heritage: "To acquire the right interpretation to many of these songs one has to find not only the right singer, but also the right atmosphere which is quite often a fishing schooner's fore-castle, an open motor boat, a lumber camp, or the banks of a fishing stream on a summer night, rather than a concert hall".⁴⁴ The book included a variety of old and new songs, including "The Emigrant's Return" by J.W. McGrath to the tune of Galway Bay.⁴⁵ Again, the song blends the old and the new:

When the wind blows from the East, it brings sweet voices,
 'Tis the Siren call, you hear as plain as day
 That says "Come Home" to every Newfoundlander
 And when you hear it, you've got to obey.

No more you'll hear the fishing skiffs at dawning,
 But cars, and Trucks and Vans go all night long
 On that road that runs from Gambo down to Lumsden,
 And now they want a Causeway to Greenspond.

41 A.R. Scammell, *My Newfoundland* (Montreal, 1966), rear cover.

42 "Come Home Year Ends", *Come Home Year Newsletter* (September 1966), p. 4.

43 F.W. Rowe, "Forward", in Doyle, *Old-Time Songs*, p. 5.

44 *Come Home Year Newsletter* (August 1966), p. 2.

45 Doyle, *Old-Time Songs*, pp. 13-14.

Nostalgia and Tourism 97

Now Joey says he's going to build a tunnel
Across Belle Isle, connecting Labrador
Through which we'll get Electric Power and Pulpwood,
And fish and Furs and many kinds of Ore.

But some things have not changed since when you left us,
The Sea Air, Ocean Rote and Northern Light
The Headlands, Rocks, and Ponds and Brooks and Marshes
Come feast on these unto your heart's delight.

It is clear that much contemporary "folk culture" has been shaped by and in turn has shaped the nostalgic and sentimental view of Newfoundland that is of key importance to the tourist trade for both ex-Newfoundland residents and other potential tourists.

Since the 19th century the nature of the Newfoundland economy has given rise to high rates of outmigration. Associated with this continuing exodus has been the destruction of many rural communities and the disruption of friendship and family ties. In the modern world people resist such changes in a variety of ways. Nostalgia, since the 17th century the disease of the exile, may be seen as one expression of dissatisfaction with the migrant's lot. Yet nostalgia is more than a "homing instinct", for it is also in many ways a yearning for a secure and stable existence in a more acceptable world. It is too pervasive a sentiment to be ignored, but it is highly unlikely that the promotion of tourism can satisfy the important needs, values and hopes expressed in nostalgia. As one element in the popular culture of Newfoundlanders, nostalgia contains the residuals of a powerful opposition to the contradictory changes which have resulted from capitalist development.

JAMES OVERTON