

## Editor's Note

Jeff Webb

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

THIS YEAR MARKS the 25th anniversary of the first issue of *Newfoundland Studies*. That is no small accomplishment; many academic enterprises have had shorter life spans. Its success reflects the hard work of many of those who over the years have contributed to *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, as it was renamed in 2005. Particularly striking is the fact that this issue is devoted to the contemporary literature of Newfoundland and Labrador and contains essays from a young generation of scholars who are not affiliated with Memorial and who teach at universities across Canada; and in one case, in Japan. Such a thing would not have seemed possible in 1985, since then there were so few authors of fiction and poetry in the province and even fewer people studying Newfoundland literature. Today it would have been possible to have another half dozen articles by other critics engaging in analysis of a whole set of worthy authors that are not included here. That fact that so many scholars at other universities contributed to this issue reflects both the place of respect that *NLS* has earned, and more significantly, it is testament to the recent fluorescence of Newfoundland and Labrador literature which has earned national and in some cases international critical attention. I thank Paul Chafe, a scholar of Newfoundland literature currently working at Ryerson University, for conceiving of this issue, soliciting the contributions and aiding in the selection of peer reviewers.

At its beginning, the journal almost exclusively published people affiliated with Memorial and the first issue had a historical bent — which was not surprising given the commitment to Newfoundland scholarship of those at the university and the sense that Newfoundland's culture was endangered and needed to be rescued. Volume One, Number One contained essays by many faculty at Memorial and one graduate of Memorial who remained very much a member of the local scholarly community. Increasingly over the years, authors at other universities have published in these pages and both residents of the province and those living elsewhere have engaged in a dialogue about the contemporary state of Newfoundland and Labrador. Over the last quarter century *NLS* has published some of the best scholarship and counts among its contributors nearly every significant author working on the culture, history, and society of this place. Given the proliferation of venues for

publication they all had other opportunities, and we thank them for sending such fine work to us. During my three-year tenure as editor I have particularly enjoyed my small role in helping young academics into print for what is sometimes their first time. My own first publication was in these pages, and I remember how that essay helped establish my academic credibility while I was still a doctoral candidate.

We owe a debt to those who in the 1980s had the foresight to found a forum for communication across disciplinary boundaries. This journal's multi-disciplinary character and commitment to prose accessible to the non-specialist has been a particular strength for us, during a period when the academic norm in some fields seemed to be "if I can understand it, it must not be very good." There has not been an issue of this journal which has not contained articles of interest to social science and humanities scholars who engage with the place. During these past 25 years we have enjoyed the constant support of the Faculty of Arts of Memorial University and the Social Science and Humanities Federation of Canada. I am also grateful to the more than 50 experts across many specializations who have assessed manuscripts in the last three years. They did so without any benefit to themselves, and their sense of obligation to the community of scholars makes this journal possible. With their continued support and the new editorial team we can be confident that *NLS* will continue to foster and disseminate the best of scholarship of this place.

Jeff Webb