

the

trident

PRESENT

PAST

FUTURE

OCT 31 1994

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The History Of the Nfld. Museum The Past — The Present

The history of a Museum in Newfoundland began over 130 years ago in St. John's, when a group of wealthy merchants decided to preserve a collection of items originating from such places as Brazil, The West Indies, Europe, etc. Their first exhibit was called the "Cabinet of Curiosities" and was on Public view at the Merchant's Club on Water Street. Alas, the date of this event has been lost to posterity, we can only assume that it took place in the early 1800's. The Club soon became the focal point for business men interested in intellectual speculation and stimulation. Around the year 1849, the Merchants decided to form a joint committee with the Mechanic's Institute and the St. John's Library Board. This new Committee concerned itself with the Natural History of the Island, they displayed in a small building such things as mounted polar bears, native birds, and artifacts pertaining to the Beothuck Indian era.



The old Gosling Memorial Library, which is our museum today.

It is indeed interesting to note that this group of people received National Acclaim by winning three prizes for an exhibit entered in the New York Exhibition in 1855 for "its quality of artifacts." In the late 1870's, the Museum collection moved to a very impressive looking building, The Athenaeum, seat of intellectual life. (This building was sadly destroyed by the Great Fire of 1892). About ten years later the collection was

moved yet again, this time to the upper floor of the New Post Office on Water Street. Mr. J. P. Howley, F.G.S. was appointed as the first Curator.

In 1907, Sir Robert Bond erected a new building on the site of the present museum. The collection included a full Natural History Section but very little else of Historical interest. It was said, however, that 70 years ago, the Newfoundland Fossil collection was the largest in North America.

The struggles of this ill-fated Museum were far from over, during the Depression years of the 30's the Museum closed by order of the Commission of Government, to make room for a new Government Department. From that time onward most of the artifacts were lost, destroyed or ruined in some way. The Natural History Section was destroyed by fire.

After the war, public interest began to generate toward the need to preserve remnants of a heritage, so easily ravaged by fire or war, and the Department of Provincial Affairs, under the newly appointed Provincial Legislature, re-established the museum. The perseverance of two dedicated people, Mr. Leo English, Curator, and Mr. Adrian Digby, a British Consultant, (who incidentally set up the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto) proceeded to salvage the old collection of artifacts, and set the stage for the museum's completion in 1957. Two years later a major breakthrough

occurred, the Government with Hon Dr. G. A. Frecker, Minister of Provincial Affairs, passed an Act relating to the Historic Objects, Sites and Records, this stated that "the Museum is a repository for relics, artifacts, models, paintings and other devices, materials, articles and things which are of Historical value."

The memory of that first group of Conservation-minded individuals is still alive today. The Newfoundland Provincial Museum was passed over to the Department of Tourism's Historic Resources Division, under the Directorship of Dr. Martin Bowe. It is presently undergoing extensive renovations, the floor space has been expanded, with the addition of a new floor, a theatre and hopefully a Museum Gift Shop, selling among many other things, hand made Newfoundland crafts. The design section, under the watchful eye of Derm Duggan, the Design Chief, have completed a model replica of the interior of the Museum as it will be following the renovations.

The imagination and artistic ability of the Researchers and Exhibit Planners, have tentatively formed a basic plan for the display of the exhibits. The Main floor will house the Natural History section, and areas have been included for Temporary Exhibits, which will be changed at various intervals. The Mezzanine floor will house the Archaeology and Ethnology exhibits, depicting

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The Athenaeum. The seat of intellectual life in the late 19th Century. The building (which was erected on the site of our present day museum) was sadly destroyed by the fire of 1892.

The PAST PRESENT FUTURE
trident

The Trident is the quarterly publication of the Newfoundland Historic Trust, P.O. Box 5542, St. John's.

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Mini-Series of Programme Meetings

"Buying and Restoring an Older Home"

With the considerable interest in the downtown "Heritage Conservation Area", and a general interest in the preservation of the old, the Newfoundland Historic Trust decided to hold a mini-series titled "Buying and restoring an older home" in January and February. To help promote further interest in the downtown area, we decided to hold this series in the L.S.P.U. Hall on Victoria Street.

The series consisted of four evening programmes, the first of which was a general discussion of Architecture, its adaption and redesign. Mr. Phillip Pratt gave a slide presentation with his own commentary, illustrating a variety of older buildings in the St. John's area, as

well as structures in other areas, which had been successfully adapted to today's world. Mr. Joe Carter discussed the architecture of many of St. John's older homes, and pointed out their architectural distinctions.

On the second evening of the series a panel discussion was held. The panel consisting of Mr. Peter Densmore, real Estate Agent. Mr. Vernon French, Lawyer, Mr. Harry Megann, Director of Johnson's Ltd., Mrs. Joan Short, NIP Manager and RAPP Housing Officer and Mr. Edgar Ellis, Manager of Montreal Trust Company. A variety of helpful information was presented by each of the panelists on their particular area of expertise. Following the panel

discussion a general question and answer period was held, at which time many of the thoughts and concerns of the audience were expressed. During this lively interaction considerable information was exchanged.

On the third evening of the programme, Dr. Michael Stanley and Mr. Stratford Canning recalled their personal experiences in restoring an older home, which they shared with the audience by means of coloured slides. These greatly enhanced the groups appreciation of both restoration projects. Both speakers gladly shared a number of "tips" for the amateur renovator.

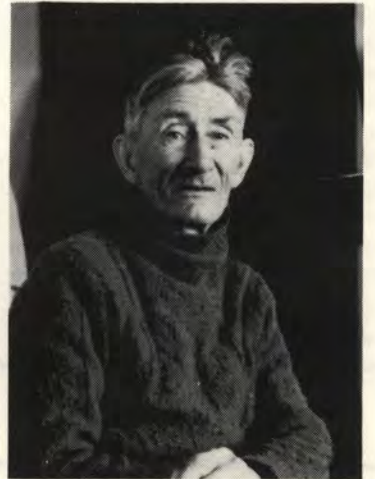
The last evening of the programme on February 15th, was unfortunately "snowed out" and was postponed until March 8th. Luckily the weather was then in our favour and we had a "full house" to enjoy Mr. Walter Peddle's discussion on "Furniture in the NFLD Outports — A Statement of a Unique Heritage." Mr. Peddle spoke with great conviction and knowledge of his subject. He also brought along with him several fine examples of early NFLD Outport Furniture, and these he discussed with the audience. He welcomed a variety of questions from the group, including many on refinishing furniture.

Those who attended this series enjoyed a considerable exchange of information in a casual setting. Our only regret is that more of our membership did not take advantage of this opportunity to hear such a variety of knowledgeable speakers. Hopefully a larger number will benefit from similar presentations in the future.

Barbara Koski

Them Days History

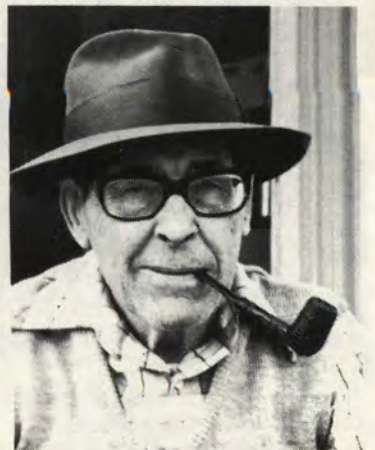
Them Days is a quarterly magazine, published jointly by the Labrador Heritage Society and The Old Timers League, dedicated to documenting and preserving the old ways and early days of Labrador. In 1794 Isaac Rich was hired by CYC to collect stories on tape from some of the older citizens around the Happy Valley area. It is through the gathering of this material that the idea of a magazine was born. The Old Timer's League then applied to New Horizons for a grant to finance the printing of the first issue. Doris Saunders was hired, as editor, in March 1975 and with a group of volunteers has, to date, turned out five issues of Them Days. Some of the volunteers, past and present, were/are, Isaac Rich, John Broomfield, Bruce Bourque (St. John's), Nigel Markham, Clara Michelin, Pat March, Mary Johnson, Noreen Heighton, Selby Learning, Oakley Michelin, Dave and Peggy Lough, Bella Brown, Vervan Haysom, Valerie Hearder, Bill Merritt, Laura and Lawrence Jackson (Forteau), Millie Davis (Cathwright), and Pat and Charmaine Dyson.



Isaac Rich, Happy Valley trapper.

The magazine is constantly facing many problems, the greatest being the transfer of experienced personnel and the difficulty in replacing them. Another major problem is the lack of funds which could make it possible to send researchers to every Labrador community. As it stands now the magazine is totally dependent on stories and pictures sent in voluntarily by people from those places.

Many Labradorians are concerned that the stories of our early days will soon pass from this world to the great beyond and few people will know of the hardships, joys and adventures that faced the pioneers of a territory that is, in many ways, unexplored. Thanks to Them Days, some of those stories are



Wallace McLean, North West River trapper.

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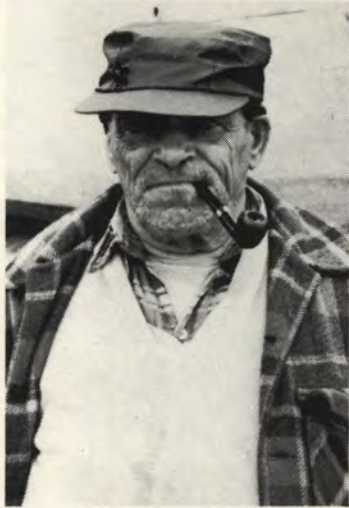
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Them Days con't

now being recorded for all time. Although some of the stories are not told by Old Timer's (persons 65 or older) they still tell of the old ways because, on the whole, in Labrador things had not changed very much until fifteen or twenty years ago. In fact there are still places on the coast of Labrador that have not changed noticeably even yet.



Austin Montague, North West River trapper.

If you haven't bought your copies of Them Days yet here's what you've missed; feature stories on Trapping, S.B. Fequet & Son, The Moravian Mission in Labrador and North West River, numerous short stories like Shooting the Bull, How Embarrassing and Chasing Oakum Balls. You've missed stories of high adventure with Herman Koehler, an eccentric German explorer, as told by John Michelin, stories of death and heartbreak as related by the survivors of the Spanish flu of 1918, stories of women who raised their families, virtually alone, "liberated" by the constant struggle to survive, excerpts from a diary kept between 1892 and 1902 by W.H. Elworthy of Pinware, two biographies written by Elizabeth Goudie (author of Woman of Labrador), a couple of articles on boatbuilding by Robert and John Davis and much more.

If you would like to subscribe to Them Days, send your name and address and six dollars for each year's subscription to THEM DAYS, P.O. Box 939, Happy Valley, Labrador, AOP 1E0.

Labrador Crafts

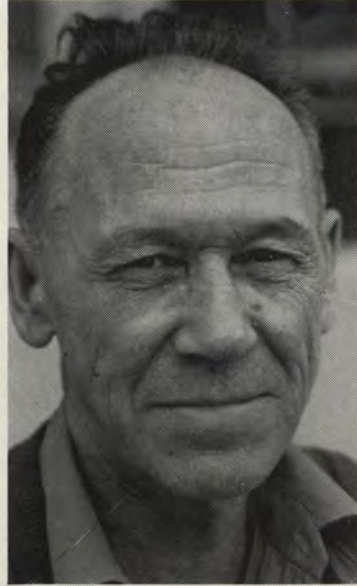
"Campstove" Charlie Bird

Anyone that's got anything to do with hunting and trapping are pretty well prepared to make their own camp stoves. It's not too complicated an arrangement. If you see one you know how it is done. You made sure your tent and stove was as light as possible. The stove, if used for a winter's trapping, was expected to last that season, however, if it was only used occasionally it would last a considerable long time.

The size of the camp stove doesn't matter too much. Different people makes them different sizes. The usual size is about 8" x 8" x 26". I use galvanised sheet metal, about 26 or 28 guage, for the body of the stove and 30 or 32 gauge for the stove pipes. Make them with anything heavier and it's too heavy for packing around. I made one once out of 20 guage metal. It was all right if you were going around by dog-team but it was too heavy for carrying in a pack-sack.

First you mark your design out on the metal. If the stove is gong to be 8" x 8"

you measure it 32" and a bit extra for the join. Your metal is laid out flat on a level surface. You turn one edge down and the other edge up, this is for your lock join. You make your square by bending



your metal on a piece of hard wood, a piece of square edge steel or iron. When it is squared, one folded edge comes against the other, that forms a lock. You press that together and hammer them down flat and the join is locked. The stove pipes are joined the same way. You form your stove pipes around a stick of wood or a heavy pipe about 3" in diameter. You make four or five lengths of pipe slightly shorter (about 22") than the stove. When your packing it around your stove pipes are carried inside the stove. The ends are put in the same was as making a box. You make a piece the size of the square with a flange about an inch all around and part of that flange turns back around the main part of the stove. You cut your door in one end, whatever size you want it and make a metal door. You make your hinges of metal straps, two riveted on the door and two on the stove. You fold your straps and that makes loops and you run a piece of stiff wire down through. That's your hinge. You put a hole where

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Museum History con't
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Beothuck Indian, Dorset Eskimo and Maritime Archaic era's. The top floor will include the Human History section, exhibits on early exploration, Offical Colonization, the Development of the International Fishery, Settlements between 1700 and 1900, and a replica of a Victorian Parlour and an outport

kitchen. (The above descriptions are proposed exhibits only).

A new computer terminal will be installed on the lower-ground floor of the building, linking together all the major cities in Canada. The data in this bank will one day be available to Researchers, Historican and University Students alike.

The Museum owes alot of its success to the National Museums of Canada, with whom it is affiliated. It has come a long way from its humble beginnings, and with sufficient Government funding for the proposed exhibits, the Newfoundland Musuem will take its place alongside some of the major musuemns of Canada, with an identity of its own.

Maria Bradshaw



Interior view of Museum Exhibits before renovations began.

What's New in Museums Around the Province?

Beothuck Park Logging Exhibit tells you all about the "logging" history of Central Newfoundland. The information centre provides an overview of the Exhibit as a whole and then a five minute walking trail leads to the central attraction of the exhibit — a reconstruction of an old time logging camp.

The Conception Bay Museum will open this year on June 1st, daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. 1977 being the 50th Anniversary of the beginning of pioneer trans-Atlantic flights from the Harbour Grace Airstrip. Emphasis will be on the History of these flights. On July 9th An Aviation monument and Plaque will be unveiled on the Museum grounds. In keeping with the meaning of the Conception Bay Museum, it is planned to have a display of artifacts, Archives and Pictures from Carbonear, similar to the 'Brigus Month' last year. Other rotating displays will be shown in the National Exhibition Centre rooms. On July 19th the Museum will be visited by a group from the Society for Preservation of Canadian Architecture, and on July 27th by a convention from the Society of Architectural Historians of Philadelphia.

Durrell Museum hopes to open in the Arm Lad's Brigade Armoury sometime this summer if successful in obtaining their grant! Lots of luck to the Durrell Museum Association for this worthwhile project!

Ferryland Musuem alas, is sadly in need of funds. The building is in need of repairs, display cases must be aquired, a heating system will have to be installed, etc. If the Historical Society is going to make the Museum a success this year, as in past years, the money will have to be found, either in the form of a grant or from donations!

The Mary March Regional Museum and National Exhibition Centre is due to open its new building, sometime in April, with an exhibition prepared by the Newfoundland Museum entitled "Conquest of the Atlantic."

Permanent collections include artifacts related to the Beothuck Indian era, an ever-growing Natural History collection, Household artifacts and a number of photographs.

Southern Nfld Seamen's Museum. March 7th to 11th an Education Week was held at the Museum. 2,200 students attended the programme consisting of; films relating to the fishery. Slides were shown depicting pictures of the South Coast showing the fishery, schooners and buildings. Four of the old silent movies were shown, and a video tape of a conversation with Captain Harry Thompson and Frank Thornhill regarding sailing experiences and various vessels.

Trinity Museum and Archives will open this year from mid-June to mid-September daily, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. A reminder that the oldest fire engine in North America is on display here in a glass walled shed!

Look for more Museum News in the next issue of the Trident!

Maria Bradshaw



Conception Bay Museum

Labrador Crafts can't
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stove pipe on. Others rivets a small collar around the hole.

Usually you set your stove in the tent depending on the number of people using the tent. If there's just two hands you'll get your stove in the center of the tent and more towards the door. The back end of the tent is used for holding your odds and ends and what-not.

The first thing you'll do after your tent is set up, is cut four green sticks, small trees, and trim them off and cut them off according to the depth of the snow. Next you notch them on the top end and drive them down until they're levelled up, depending on how high you want your stove. You usually set it about a foot or more off the brush. If it's too low, the stove gets hotter on the bottom than anywhere else. Those legs (green sticks) are as far back on the corners of the stove as you can get them, so that they don't get too hot. Some have the stove pipes going through the roof, others puts them through the peak. There's a metal flange sewed into the tent where the stove pipe passes through. Some have a ring of wire but not too many. When the pipe goes out through the peak, gabled end, it goes out on an angle. If you have that arrangement you'll usually have elbows. You can burn anything in a camp stove but dry wood is best.

I've made camp stoves off and on since I was about 16 or 17 years old.

you want your latch. You make a loop out of a piece of wire and poke the ends through the hole which you made in the door. Next you flatten out the ends of the wire on the inside part of the door, having it long enough so that when you turn the loop it catches the inside of the stove and this holds the door closed. Now you make a hole about 1½" in diameter near the bottom of the stove and rivet a disc on the door just above the hole. When you want some draught you open the hole up and close it when you don't need a draught. You cut your hole for the stove pipe in the top of the stove near the end opposite from the door. Some just makes notches around the hole and turns that up to shove the



Bridge House, Bonavista

The Oldest Documented Structure

The Alexander House, (Bridge House) in Bonavista is the oldest surviving documented in Newfoundland. This is not to say that they may not be older surviving structures in the province but that Bridge House is the one to which the oldest date now known can be assigned. On the basis of a fairly substantial folk tradition, the house is said to have been built in 1814 by Alexander Strathie of Greenoch in Scotland. It was built for Strathie's fellow countryman, William Alexander, a prominent merchant of Bonavista.

The house is a fairly straightforward gable roof house with gable end chimneys and a central hall. The photograph taken by Herbert Swyers sometime in the 1920's shows single storey gable bays at either end. The one on the left side is now missing but both were built around 1912-1916 when the house was in the ownership of Robert and was used as a boarding house for commercial travellers. The interior may also have been remodelled but interestingly enough, in keeping with its original style, at the same time as the bays were added. It is also possible that the porch may date from the same period.



Bridge House, Bonavista. Photo c.1920 by Herbert Swyers.

Because of the way records were kept in Newfoundland, it is unusual to find a house which it is possible to accurately date as early as Bridge House and to know the name of both the builder and the original owner.

The age of the house, its state of preservation and its architectural character make it one of the most significant Newfoundland structures. In addition, it is presumably the first work by the

Strathie family in Bonavista, the first of the many buildings built by Alexander Strathie and his decedanta which still stands in Bonavista.

The house is now the property of Charles Swyers of Bonavista and while unoccupied and in need of repair is still in a retrievable condition.

Shane O'Dea

Carver Chairs

This photograph illustrates one of a number of outport Carver chairs found in Newfoundland. The reason I refer to them as outport carvers is because I know of none that have been found that are attributed to St. John's. Examples of these chairs have been found in communities on the Avalon Peninsula more particularly in Conception Bay area and the Southern Shore.

Most people would think of a Carver chair as being synonymous with an arm chair. However, this is not necessarily the case with this particular variety as both the side and arm chair are commonly referred to as Newfoundland Carver chairs, modeled after the English and American carvers of the seventeenth century. This same chair with three horizontal rails and three vertical spindles was in common use from 1620-1700 by first generation Americans who came over on the Mayflower and it gets its name from John Carver who was a passenger who sailed from Plymouth England on the Mayflower. After 1700 there was apparently a notable absence of the use of this style of chair in North American until the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century, this being the approximate period of the earliest known versions found in New-

foundland. From this time up until the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Carver chair appears to be unique to Newfoundland and more specifically unique to the Avalon Peninsula. The reason for its then sudden popularity in Newfoundland, almost a century after its expiration in the States is not known.

Variations that are in the hands of collectors include arm chairs of which there are very few, the more popular side chairs, rockers, a child's chair and a most recent discovery of a cobbler's bench incorporated into a Carver side chair that originally served as a rocker. The frame construction of most of those found to date is birch with a pine seat unlike the earlier American versions which had rush seats.

The Newfoundland Carver is recognized among Canadian collectors and has been illustrated in such publications as "The Early Furniture of Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces" by Henry & Barbara Dobson and in the "Canadian Collector" magazine which describes the chair as an unusual find in Canada.

The arm chair illustrated in this article was owned and could possibly have been made by Thomas Sutton of Tre-

passey c. 1850. Residents in the community recall a set of these chairs in the old Sutton family residence which has since been demolished. This particular

chair because it has arms would have had its place at the head of the dinner table.

Chris O'Dea



“Don't Let Anyone Ever Tell You They Can't Replace Something....”

Although there has not been an extensive fire in the old city since the great fire of 1892, and modern fire fighting methods make another holocaust unlikely, each winter a number of older structures fall victim of flames. The most common causes are overhead space heaters, overburdened and outdated wiring and vandalism

of vacant structures has seen fewer usual due in part to excellent work done under the Neighborhood Improvement Program, encouraging the repair and upgrading of buildings. Building Code officials and residential property owners.

Heritage Lost . . .

In the case of Number 310 Water Street, neither the contractor, Mr. Seymour Dyke, nor the owner, Mr. Joseph Lee, saw any value in preserving the architectural heritage of a building which once was the studio of Mr. S. H. Parsons the 19th century photographer who left a priceless legacy of photographs of old St. John's. The City Council was also unwilling to hold the line and insist on a proper restoration following a fire which badly damaged the third story of the building.

This is all the more unfortunate because the structure, built following the fire of 1846 is one of a handful of commercial buildings surviving in virtually original condition from this period and was an essential part of an area which was to form the key to the Newfoundland Historic Trust's proposal for a Heritage Conservation Area in St. John's.

When the fire occurred in November, an old city by-law was still in force which did not permit the replacement of a gable roof for fear of danger to pedestrians from falling ice in winter. Aware of the implications of this by-law for the preservation of the older structures in the city, particularly those west of Beck's Cove on Water Street, the Trust had approached Council some months before about having it changed. The Trust pointed out to Council that the ice problem could be safely controlled by proper guttering and the use of a low voltage eaves defroster.

There was some delay while the city Engineer's Department checked the proposal but by January a favourable recommendation had been received and a notice of motion given to change the by-law.

Mr. Lee was caught in a situation where for a short period he was not granted a permit for a flat roof because the building was a heritage structure and at the same time not permitted to replace the original roof because the by-law had not been changed.

The Trust made strong representations to Council and to the owner and contractor to wait until the change in the by-law has been passed and to have the original roof line preserved because of the importance of the building and the area. The cost would have been covered by insurance but Mr. Dyke was anxious to 'get on with the job' and Mr. Lee was totally unsympathetic to heritage arguments. Pressure was put on Council about the financial hardship of replacing the roof instead of substituting a flat pitch and gravel roof and on the



Number 308 and 310 Water Street following the November Fire which badly damaged both buildings. The building of Government had the original roof retained. Photo Sheppard Burt and Associates.

day that the by-law was changed Council gave Mr. Lee his permit to remove the original roof. In spite of the financial hardship, which Mr. Dyke represented as being the main reason for not replacing the gable roof, a third storey was added to the building which cost considerably more than a gable roof. The city has lost a valuable heritage structure. Mr. Lee's building has lost its value as an original example of early 19th c. commercial architecture and the only real winner is Mr. Dyke who was able to 'get on with the job', in fact a somewhat bigger job than had been originally proposed.



The E & W studio graph the effect of the old Council as part of the city has lost its heritage.

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Unfortunately, among this year's victims of fire are two very significant heritage structures, Number 203 Gower Street and Number 310 Water Street.

One has been completely restored to the last detail. Number 310 Water Street, although it still stands, has been vandalized by an insensitive

repair job to the point where its value as architectural heritage is lost.

Both fires were extensive, but the structures because of their heritage value and the fact that they are within the boundaries of the Heritage Conservation Area, could have and should have been preserved. Both properties were ade-

quately insured and the restoration of the original exterior could have been preserved without financial hardship. The difference is in the attitude of the owners about the value of our architectural heritage.

The two stories make interesting points about the problems of heritage conservation.

Heritage Saved . . .

201 and 203 Gower Street are identical late Victorian houses in the Queen Anne Style. They are among the most outstanding examples of residential architecture in old St. John's and are particularly remarkable for their craftsmanship and the fine decorative detailing of their facades.

The houses were built by a local Henry J. Thomas from patterns obtained in Boston. Mr. Thomas's descendants are still in business in St. John's today. Number 201 was originally the home of the master of a sealing vessel, Captain Levi Diamond, who later opened a business on Water Street as a tinsmith. Captain Diamond lived in the house until his death in 1921 and it was occupied by his daughter, Mrs. Jessie Cameron until it was sold to the present owner Mr. George Whiteway in 1975.

The adjoining house was built for a local businessman, Mr. Moses Monroe, who later sold it to the Worsley family. Miss Mina Worsley sold the house to Mr. Donald Dawe, a local lawyer, Mr. Dawe sold the house to Mr. Whiteway in 1975. Mr. Whiteway occupies number 201 as his home and has converted the

adjoining house into four apartments. A fire, caused by a fault in a newly installed electric heater, broke out in number 203 on December 26th, virtually destroying the two upper storeys of the dwelling and causing moderate damage to Mr. Whiteway's home.

Mr. Whiteway is a local contractor who owns a number of older homes in the city but his is interested only in houses which have what he refers to as "style." He feels very strongly that these homes, which "were something when they were built, should be kept as something today, and not destroyed."

It is only Mr. Whiteway's strong interest in the architectural features of older homes and his knowledge of building which has prevented the house from becoming a faceless nonentity.

He is understandably bitter about the attitude of Insurance Appraiser (1974) Ltd. and the contractor hired by them to do the repairs, Mr. Duncan Rice. As the owner of the property and a contractor himself, Mr. Whiteway was not even consulted before everything was signed, sealed and delivered and Mr. Rice was at City Hall looking for a permit to 'eliminate the bay windows and all the fancy work and to install a straight front using today's materials which are readily available.'

Mr. Andy Cahill the City Building Inspector, with Mr. Whiteway's complete agreement refused to give a permit unless the front of the house was repaired as close as possible to the original. Mr. Rice was not pleased, and Mr. Whiteway has put in three very frustrating months making sure that the job was done properly. He has provided the roof brackets and much of the decorative detailing himself and kept a daily check on the repairs.

Mr. Whiteway feels he could have done the job for \$15,000 cheaper than it will cost the Insurance Company and he feels that there is a very tight little circle in St. John's of Insurance Appraisers and selected contractors.

According to Mr. Whiteway, "It's nothing to repair these older houses properly because you have the pattern there to go by." He told me never to accept a statement from a contractor that something can't be replaced, all the necessary pieces are available in St. John's.

Thanks to Mr. Whiteway's feeling for 'older houses with style' and his persistence in making sure the job was done properly, number 203 Gower Street is now as beautiful as ever.

Shannie Duff



ing on the right, owned by the Provincial

The E. and W. Restaurant, once the studio of 19th century photographer S.H. Parsons, in spite of the efforts of the Trust to convince the owner, the contractor and the Council of the value of the building as part of our architectural heritage has now an additional storey and has lost its heritage value. Photo Richard Stoker.



Number 203 Gower Street.

The top two storeys of this building were almost destroyed by fire on Dec. 26th. Under the watchful eye of the owner, Mr. George Whiteway, every detail of the facade has been restored to its original condition. Photo John Bradshaw.

Outport Furniture Reflects the Roots of our Culture . . .

Most Newfoundlanders are aware they are a remarkable people, but few it seems, consider this desirable. Many give a great deal of lip service to 'doing their own thing' while becoming more and more like their fellow North Americans. It appears that a majority of Newfoundlanders take no pride in their roots and, in fact, even regard some of their heritage with contempt.

One important part of our heritage almost completely ignored is the hand-made furniture created by the outport people for their own use 50 years ago and more. Because of the relatively isolated settlements scattered along our coast had populations normally too small to support full-time craftsmen, Newfoundlanders had to be resourceful. Many not only made their own furniture but also made the tools necessary to accomplish this work. The wood most often used was locally available pine. However towards the end of the 19th Century this wood became scarce so that boards from dilapidated buildings and packing crates were used. The furniture made at this time was often imaginatively embellished and represents a unique folk-art because it occurred when people elsewhere were buying mass-produced furniture.



Because outport Newfoundlanders were not normally schooled in formal furniture design and because much of it was 'tailor-made' for the home, it sometimes appears odd or ill-proportioned. This pine child's chest exhibiting Chippendale influence is exceptionally shallow because it was probably made for a small room, or to fit behind a door. Found on the north shore of Trinity Bay. Circa 1850.



This profusely carved washstand reveals the makers enthusiasm for life. It is reputed to have been made by John Mugford of Port de Grave, Conception Bay. Circa 1900. He was appropriately nick-named "Happy Jack."



A hand-carved pine washstand. North Shore, Conception Bay. Circa 1900.

Harbour Grace Historical Society

1977 is the 50th anniversary of the construction of the Harbour Grace Airstrip and the hopping off point of pioneer Trans Atlantic flight from this strip on August 27th., 1927.

The Harbour Grace Historical Society in conjunction with the Conception Bay Museum is observing this anniversary

with various activities and events during 1977.

Plans are now being firmed up by the Historical Society for these programs and will hopefully be commenced by June 1st.

A promotional program, such as, distribution of brochures describing the history

of the strip, bumper stickers and windshield decals will soon be ready. Other activities include; a display of the mock-up of the airstrip describing "Atlantic Conquest" now on tour in Newfoundland by the Historic Resource Division of the Department of Tourism will be at St. Francis School for a month commencing some time in July, tentative arrangements are under consideration and awaiting confirmation for a visit of the R.C.A.F. Aerobatic Team "The Snowbirds" Display in August, by Air Rescue at a date to be announced when

Outport furniture reflects the roots of our culture more than most other items of our past. It not only demonstrates the skills, tastes, and other personal traits of the many people who made it, but together reveals the way of life, ideals and aspirations of a whole people. However, many Newfoundlanders spend large sums of money buying antique furniture and other items regularly imported into St. John's from Europe, while this important part of our heritage is literally thrown into the dump and axed for firewood. Furthermore most Outport furniture that survives today is not in Newfoundland. Hundreds of pieces are whisked away annually to the mainland by antique dealers and masqueraded as everything from Early American to Early Quebec.

Outport furniture is truly in great danger of going the way of the Dodo bird, unless something is done immediately to preserve it. Newfoundlanders must be aware of the situation regarding it and of its considerable value. Setting up a permanent exhibition of Outport furniture would represent a good beginning. Where this exhibition would be set up or who would sponsor it is of secondary importance.

Newfoundlanders should not only help preserve and study their heritage, but strive towards the continuance of creative traditions. Perhaps then we would gain the self-confidence we may need to contribute vitality and distinctive colour to Canadian society, rather than becoming colourless copies of our fellow North Americans.

Mr. William Parsons

Heritage Day 1977

For the past three years, the Newfoundland Historic Trust has joined with Heritage Groups across the nation in celebrating Heritage Day on the third Monday in February. Heritage Canada has encouraged all its member groups to help promote the idea of a national holiday as a day set aside for the special recognition of our Canadian Heritage. Although the legislation declaring a national holiday has not yet been passed

the Government of Canada and many Provincial and Municipal Governments have officially declared the third Monday of February as Heritage Day.

This year the Newfoundland Historic Trust's Heritage Day Committee, under the able chairmanship of Mrs. Penny Rowe, extended its celebration into a Heritage Week at the Avalon Mall and presented a programme which included an exhibition of photographs of old St.

John's, an old fashioned bake sale and an information booth maned for the full week in two hour shifts by Trust volunteers.

The Exhibition was officially opened by C.B.C. personality Jennifer Davis on Heritage Day and opening ceremony included a concert by Figgy Duff, a group of six Newfoundlanders working to bring back our musical traditions by playing jigs, reels and ballads.

A hundred and twenty volunteers participated in preparing the exhibition, manning the information booth and or-

ganizing and cooking for the bake sale. The week was a great success and brought the Trust in contact with many people who were unaware of our efforts to promote and protect Newfoundland's heritage. The public interest in the exhibition surpassed all expectations.

Heritage Week would not have been possible without the co-operation of Mr. Ron Curran, Manager of the Avalon Mall and the Mall Tennants Association. The interest and participation of so many members of the Trust made it an outstanding success.



The Old Fashioned Bake Sale, part of Heritage Week activities was a great success and netted the Trust \$500.00. The members of the bake sale committee, in suitable old fashioned attire are left to right Diane Hogan, Margie Mercar, Bette Anderson, Kay MacCallum and Margeurite Guihan. The decor, including a pantry stall, checked gingham tableclothes, and suitable signs made the bake sale a festive occasion and were provided by Mr. Jim Long and Mrs. Young of Ayre's Ltd.



Shannie Duff presenting Jennifer Davis with a special bound copy of "A Gift of Heritage"



C.B.C. Personality Jennifer Davis cuts the ribbon to officially open the Newfoundland Historic Trust Exhibition of photos of old St. John's at the Avalon Mall. Left Mrs. Emma Horwood and Right Mrs. Kay MacCallum, members of the Trust Executive.



Figgy Duff, the well know Newfoundland Music Group, whose specialty is traditional Newfoundland music, livened up the Avalon Mall with some toe tapping music as part of the Heritage Day celebrations. The performance was made possible by a donation from the Avalon Mall tennants association.



Jennifer Davis, examines a copy of A Gift of Heritage, part of a display of Trust publications available at the information booth in the Avalon Mall from February 21st to 28th. Standing, Heritage Day Chairman Mrs. Penny Rowe, and on duty at the boot are L. Shannie Duff, Nfld. Historic Trust President and Mrs. Marion Andrews.

The Barbour House of Newtown

A 102 year old house by British standards is relatively young, but for Newfoundland, considering our history, it is positively an historical structure. The Barbour house in Newtown is one of Newfoundland's finest homes today, even after a very full one hundred year history. Built by Benjamin Barbour of Newtown, the house is now owned by his grandson, Carl.

While the house was being constructed, the Barbour family, which included nine sons and two daughters, lived in a log cabin in the community. Because of the large size of the family, it was originally going to be a double house, but the partitions never got built and the family lived together until each of the sons eventually built his own home in Newtown.

This thirty-two room house has twelve bedrooms, two dining rooms, one upstairs parlour, five halls and two kitchens. In addition there are 5 staircases, two of which are located in the same front hall. Two separate entrance doors in the hall are the two separate staircases which ascend the a second floor hall and the twelve bedrooms. The staircases are thought to be the most notable feature in the house and were featured in MacLean's magazine several years ago, as well as in a film on



The original Barbour Family Home. Over 100 years old, it still stands proudly as a testament to the skills of those who built it.

Newfoundland's architecture.

Although Carl Barbour is not sure who actually built the house, he does know that a Mr. Bridle built the concrete wall around the house and he also helped in the actual house construction. A Mr. O'Grady from St. John's was hired to do the inside painting and decorating. But for the most part, it was the Barbour family who did the major portion of the work.

Says Carl Barbour, "My uncle used to tell me that he and his brother, my father, were too small to do any carpentry work, but they used to stuff the shavings down between the uprights for insulation. Then they would drive the nails

and would flatten out the heads so they wouldn't split the lumber."

All the pine wood for the house was cut near Gambo Pond and then brought to Newtown by schooner. The wood that couldn't fit on the schooner was towed behind. The main timbers in the house consist of two wooden sides flattened out, some of them 4 or 5 inches thick. The actual width of some of these boards run as much as 22 inches wide and it was all cut by hand with a pit saw. These boards are all loose tongues. "In other words," says Carl Barbour, "there is a groove let on each side of the board and the loose tongues are a quarter of an inch thick by three-quarters of an inch wide."

The beams inside of the house are all still showing, but unlike most of the low ceilings built at that time, the Barbour house ceilings are 8' high.

The house stands on a solid rock and mortar foundations and that may be one of the reasons why it is in such good condition today. The only major change over the years has been to replace the roof shingles.

Today the house still stands much as it did many years ago. No longer does the large Barbour clan make use of all the rooms, but Carl Barbour visits it frequently from his home in St. John's and his sister spends the summer months in this fine old sea captain's house.

Susan Sherr

Mr. Mac Lee, who passed away at St. John's General Hospital December 21st at the age of 70.

During a very moving and impressive ceremony Msgr. J. M. O'Brien, in an excellent eulogy, paid well merited tribute to "Mac". He said in part; "With a pursuit of excellence that was unyielding, and with generosity and enthusiasm he sought to protect those historic things so important to all of us."

Taking part in the service, as well as the clergy, were some close friends of "Mac" including Dr. G. A. Frecker, Aiden Maloney, and Dr. Roy Goodwin.

As the cortege moved from the church the St. Francis High School Glee Club, accompanied by trumpets from the school band, under the direction of another close friend, Brother G. Blackmore, gave a stirring rendition of The Battle Hymn of the Republic, which sounded very much in keeping with so many of "Mac's" characteristics.

Passing The Conception Bay Museum, where the flag was flying at half-mast, the procession paused briefly

in recognition of his devotion to the Museum and its works.

"Mac" was one of the prime movers of an Advisory Board set up at Harbour Grace in 1966 to promote the establishment of a museum in the area and the preservation of local history and artifacts. His enthusiastic energy was greatly responsible for the restoration of the old Harbour Grace Customs House now in use as a museum and of which, at the time of his passing, he was Director. It is significant that his last public function was on September 30th., 1976, when Heritage Canada presented Conception Bay Museum with their "Regional Award" for "an outstanding contribution to heritage conservation in Canada" in connection with the restoration of the Customs House.

Besides being Vice-President and Director of the Conception Bay Museum "Mac" was an executive member of The Bristol's Hope Historical Society and The Placentia Historical Society as well as member of The Newfoundland Historic Trust. He was also an active member of The Harbour Grace Library

Board and of The Newfoundland Public Libraries Board. He was directly connected with many historic restoration projects including the interior of St. Paul's Church at Harbour Grace, schoolhouse and sites at Bristol's Hope and cemeteries of the area, as well as the preservation of much historic information, archives and artifacts.

"Mac's" activities were widely known, and appreciated abroad as well as at home. In 1973 he received an "Award of Merit" from The American Association for State and Local History" for resourceful and devoted contribution to the preservation of Newfoundland History", and, during the Bicentennial Event at Harbour Grace on August 7th, 1976, the members of The Conception Bay Museum presented Mac and his wife Marie with a suitably engraved silver tray as a token of appreciation and acknowledgment of their dedicated and continuous efforts on behalf of the museum.

The Trident extends sincere sympathy to Mac's wife Marie, daughter Diane, son Robert and daughter-in-law Brenda.

Gordon Simmons



Mr. Mac Lee

On Christmas Eve funeral Mass was held at the Immaculate Conception Church in Harbour Grace, where many friends and associates of Martin R. (Mac) Lee gathered to pay their last respects to one of Newfoundland's most dedicated champions of historic preser-

Heritage Conservation Area Study Released



St. John's Heritage Foundation Members answer questions about the conservation area during a press conference on March 24th. L to R. Mr. Beaton Sheppard, one of the study consultants, Mrs. Beverley Miller, Chairman, Research Committee, Mr. Paul Johnson, Foundation Vice-Chairman, Mr. Lewis Ayre, Chairman, Mrs. Shannie Duff, Secretary and Heritage Canada Representative, Mrs. Mary Griffen, resident of the conservation area.

The long awaited feasibility study, which strongly recommends the establishment of a heritage conservation areas as the best form of development for the centre of the old town was released to the media on Thursday, March 24th by Mr. Lewis Ayre, Chairman of the St. John's Heritage Foundation.

The study, which took over a year to complete was initiated by the Newfoundland Historic Trust with funding from Heritage Canada and the Provincial Government. A consortium of local firms, Sheppard Burt and Associates and Hans Arends Associates were chosen as consultants for the study on the basis of a National Competition.

The Area of St. John's recommended as most suitable for development as a heritage conservation area is bounded on the East by King's Road and on the West by Beck's Cove and Adelaide Street. The area extends from the

Waterfront to Queen's Road. The Basilica Square and the Fort Townshend site have been recommended as Associated Conservation Area.

Mr. Ayre explained that the St. John's Heritage Foundation had been established in November as a private, non-profit corporation under the Companies Act of Newfoundland and would be the body responsible for the co-ordination and management of the Conservation programme. The twenty-five members include property owners and residents from the area, businessmen, lawyers, historians, engineers, architects and conservationists who share a concern for the future of old St. John's.

The recommendations of the study have been endorsed by Heritage Canada and the Foundation and have been presented to the City Council and the Provincial Government for consideration. Heritage Canada has made a

commitment to invest \$500,000 in the area as a property revolving fund to purchase and rehabilitate buildings which are presently vacant or for sale. These will then be sold and the money reinvested in other properties. The participation of Heritage Canada is contingent on appropriate support from the Municipal and Provincial Government. Meetings have been held with the City and the Province and there is every indication of support from these levels of government.

Mr. Ayre stressed that much of the success of the programme will depend on the co-operation and support of the property owners in the area and the Foundation will be undertaking a public information programme to inform the public of the benefits of the programme to the area and the city.

One of the major projects the Foundation hopes to undertake is the rehabilitation of the historic A.H. Murray Pre-

mises along the lines of the Historic Properties Development in Halifax. This group of buildings has recently been designated as a Site of National Historic Significance and is eligible for funding from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Other proposals for which it is hoped to attract Federal Government support include the development of the War Memorial, King's Beach Area is a major historic site and the clean-up and development of the network of back alleys and lanes in the area.

The rehabilitation projects will use local labor and materials and should provide a considerable number of jobs, particularly in the building trades. Such programmes also generally result in greatly increased tourist spending in the area. Mr. Ayre said that the development of a heritage conservation area in old St. John's will be of great benefit to the city and should be one of the most exciting developments to take place in St. John's in many years.

Shannie Duff

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

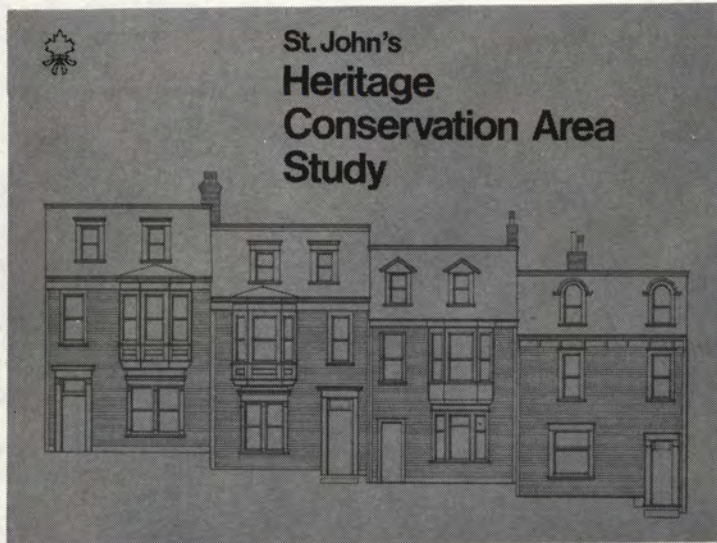
The St. John's Heritage Conservation Area Study is now available to the general public at the low price of \$10 a copy.

Supplies are limited.

To order please write:

The Newfoundland Historic Trust,
P.O. Box 5542,
St. John's.

Telephone: 753-9029



Personally Speaking

As many readers of the Trident are not doubt aware, an exciting development is about to begin in the establishment of a Heritage Conservation Area in Downtown St. John's. Among many factors that will make this project a success is the availability of high ratio mortgage loans and fire insurance for prospective homeowners.

Today the most likely story of an individual who wanted to try and rehabilitate an older home in the downtown area would be as follows. He would first sign an agreement to purchase with a real estate agent, subject of course to financing. He then contacts the banks and trust companies to arrange his mortgage and is quick to learn that banks and trust companies have no intention of making conventional mortgage funds available for houses in the downtown area. He may then possibly resort to a lawyer who have monies in trust that are available for mortgage purposes. However, the rates are usually a few percentage points higher than conventional mortgages. Before he can finalize a mortgage it is most often the case that he must arrange adequate fire insurance payable to the mortgagor so he calls a number of insurance companies only to find that they are not about to write a policy for a house in the downtown

area unless of course they have other business to protect. After this frustrating experience he probably resorts to a less desirable alternative of purchasing a town house in Virginia Park after all mortgages and insurance are readily available.

I myself have gone through the process of attempting to arrange a mortgage and insurance on older properties. The first occasion was when myself and an association of mine decided to make an offer on an attached house at 115 Gower Street that was built by Southcott, a very solid and substantial house that was in need of minor repairs only. Many unsuccessful attempts were made to arrange a mortgage and insurance. As a last resort we were successful in obtaining a mortgage from the estate that owns the house. If that were not the case the house would still not be sold to a client requiring a mortgage. In terms of insurance, most companies simply refused indicating that it was a high risk area and they therefore refused to write a policy. Eventually, we were successful in obtaining insurance from my associates insurance company only because they wanted to protect the already existing business he had with them.

As another example, I recently

signed an agreement to purchase for a house outside the Heritage Conservation Area, Roseaurue, at 351 Hamilton Avenue. This is a detached Southcott style house that is in very good condition. I contacted the manager of a Trust Company who came out to appraise the house. He advised me that the house was very sound and with the land, was certainly good value at the purchase price. However, because of the age of the structure, he would have to process the application through the Halifax office. To make the application more attractive I agreed to apply for 75% financing. A few days later the Halifax office responded saying that the property in question is one of historic significance and that the request for a mortgage had been denied because the company did not want to set a precedent of mortgaging such properties as they would be called upon to do the same in the future. Determined to purchase the house, I was eventually successful in arranging a mortgage at a chartered bank.

Insurance, however, was not really a problem as it is a detached house. I must mention in passing, however, that the company that held the policy on my previous home would not convert that policy from a homeowners to a rental pol-

icy unless I agreed to sign up my new home with them. I refused and brought my business elsewhere. This however is a common practice among most insurance companies. As a constraint against competition one would think that this would not be in keeping with the intent of the federal "Combines Investigations Act."

With the development of the Heritage Conservation Area, it is the hope of the Trust that people will realize the viability of the housing alternatives that exist and that a gradual process of rehabilitation and restoration will begin. In order for this to take place, the road has to be open for people to purchase downtown residential properties. At the present time there are roadblocks at every turn and it is imperative that these be removed immediately to facilitate the development of a very viable housing alternative.

The feasibility study into the establishment of the Heritage Conservation Area is now available and I strongly urge that all Trust Companies, Banks and Insurance Companies purchase copies for themselves and their head office. After reading it then maybe your company can revise its policy in this regard to facilitate the development of this most historic area.

Chris O'Dea

Guess Where?

If you recognize any of the buildings below, please let us know!

