

PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE



# The trident



NEWFOUNDLAND  
HISTORIC TRUST  
NEWS BULLETIN

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Harbour Breton, Fortune Bay, 1880. Oil painting, lent by Mrs. Huston Dixon.

The dwelling house in the immediate foreground was once occupied by Dr. Conrad Fitzgerald (1847 - 1933), the beloved doctor who cared for so many people on the South Coast of Newfoundland. The house was later occupied by the merchant John Smith. The buildings on the waterfront were the

fishing premises of Newman & Company, whose house flag can be seen flying at the left. The structure with many windows and steeply pitched roof housed Newman's wine vaults; Harbour Breton was one of Newman's principal bases in Newfoundland.

## The President's Message

This is the third issue of **The Trident** and I think that it contains much of interest not only for our members, but also our friends and possible future members.

The two most important items concern the Third Antique Exhibition organised by Mrs. Frank O'Dea and her committee, and the possibility of completing the restoration of Quidi Vidi Church.

The Third Antique Exhibition is scheduled to open on July 28 in the Art Gallery of the St. John's Arts and Culture

Centre. Judging by the amount of preparatory work that has already been carried out, it should prove to be a most interesting and unusual display.

Undoubtedly the best piece of news that can be given to members is that a group of students at the College of Trades and Technology has been successful in their application for an Opportunities For Youth grant to provide the labour and technical knowledge in order to complete restoration of the Quidi Vidi church by the end of the summer. It is the responsibility of

the Newfoundland Historic Trust to supply the necessary materials and arrangements have been made to obtain them on long-term credit through the generosity of local suppliers. The Trust will have to pay these bills. Any donations or suggestions for paying off the debt will be appreciated by Mrs. Peter Gardiner, the Treasurer of the Trust.

I would like to express appreciation to our past President, Dr. George Story, for the excellent Brief which he prepared and presented to the Commissioner on Plan

91 for the city of St. John's. It was a time-consuming effort but I am sure it has made a tremendous impression on the people concerned at City Hall.

Although the Newfoundland Historic Trust is only a small group of people working as a public watch-dog of our architectural heritage, our voice is getting louder and being heard more often. We must keep up the good work so that we will have a City and Province aware and proud of its past.

JOHN C. PERLIN



**SUMMER EXHIBITION IN ARTS AND  
CULTURE CENTRE IN ST. JOHN'S JUNE 28 -  
JULY 28, 1972**

In mid - April the following letter appeared in the local press

The Newfoundland Historic Trust is now making preparations for an exhibition of Victorian paintings, glass and some furniture, to be held this coming June in the Arts and Culture Centre in St. John's.

The Exhibitions' Committee would like to hear from people both outside and in St. John's who might be interested in lending exhibits. The Committee is especially anxious to get in touch with the owners of paintings, either in oils or water colors, of Newfoundland scenes, activities and portraits, dating from about 1840 to 1900.

At this stage, we do not wish anything to be actually sent to us. We are first attempting to ascertain the nature and extent of available material. We invite all those who are interested in offering exhibits, ESPECIALLY PAINTINGS, to write or telephone.

(MRS) RAYMONDE O'DEA  
Chairman Exhibitions Commission,  
Nfld. Historic Trust

8 Winter Place  
St. John's  
Tel. 726 - 9616

The response from members of the Trust was not as encouraging as had been hoped for. It is assumed that the appeal was not seen by most of them. However, as Mr. Perlin points out in his message, Mrs. O'Dea and her committee have rounded up a most interesting collection of Victorian glass, paintings and furniture which will be opened to the public on June 29th and to members of the Newfoundland Historic Trust at a Wine and Cheese Party on June 28th.

New  
officers  
of the  
Newfoundland  
Historic  
Trust

The annual meeting of the Newfoundland Historic Trust was held on Tuesday, November 9, 1971, at 8:00 p.m., in the former Legislature Chamber of the Colonial Building. A large number of members attended and heard reports from the officers on the previous year's activities. Mr. T.S.A. Freeman conducted the election of officers for 1972. The following members were elected: President, Mr. John Perlin; First Vice - President, Mr. Richard Crewe; Second Vice - President, Dr. G.A. Frecker; Secretary, Mrs. Frank Duff; Treasurer, Mrs. Peter Gardiner; Chairman Exhibitions Committee, Mrs. Frank O'Dea; Editors of The Trident, Mr. and Mrs. Huston Dixon; Membership Chairman, Mrs. William Rowe; Chairman, Fund - Raising Committee, Mr. Gerald Walsh; Chairman Research and Planning, Dr. George Story

# Highlights from The Trust's brief on Plan 91

On Thursday, April 27, Dr. George Story, former President of the Newfoundland Historic Trust presented on behalf of the Trust a Brief on "Plan 91" (The Draft Community Plan for St. John's). The Commissioner was Mr. John Murphy, a former President of the Trust. Dr. Story referred especially to volume 6 of the Plan: "The Essential St. John's" which takes cognisance of the historic and architectural importance of many buildings in the city. He argued, however, that

1. The Plan needs to be drastically amended by the inclusion of a greatly increased number of specific historic buildings and sites.

2. The Plan needs to be vigorously re - enforced in its observations on the importance of older buildings and historic sites (and the old town in general) in the on - going life of St. John's.

3. The Plan contains certain features which actually militate against the preservation of historic buildings and sites, and the character of the old town, and what these represent to the community.

4. The Plan makes

recommendations on the preservation of historic buildings and sites, and the old town generally, which call for urgent re - enforcement through legislation.

Dr. Story pointed out that one third of the population of St. John's actually lives in the old town where the buildings and sites with which his brief is concerned are most thickly clustered.

Dr. Story strongly urged that the transportation proposals in "Plan 91" be reviewed and that as far as possible alternate systems be studied with a view to the adoption of solutions to transportation problems less inimical to the preservation of the historic structures and life of the old town.

The Appendix to the Trust's brief lists about two hundred and fifty structures in St. John's that deserve serious consideration for preservation. The city therefore constitutes a valuable historical resource, and, properly viewed, that resource is a national resource. It is obvious that there is urgent need for legislation to control the alteration and preservation of historically valuable sites and buildings.





A RARE PICTURE OF TRINITY c. 1887.  
 Courtesy of Newfoundland Provincial Archives

# The Trinity Historical Society

Mr. Walter White, Corresponding Secretary of the Trinity Historical Society has kindly sent an account of the activities of that body.

When our Trinity Historical Society, founded in 1966 and incorporated in 1971, was fortunate enough to acquire in 1967 one of the older and architecturally interesting houses in Trinity, it was felt that, in choosing the name, TRINITY MUSEUM - ARCHIVES, this six-room house would serve to present and display both our archival material and museum artifacts. With this arrangement there are many instances where both the item exhibited and its related documentation are each enhanced by the other.

There are over fifteen-hundred items on display and in storage, with their evidence of age and use in connection with the various fisheries, including sealing and whaling; the tools, implements and products of such trades as the ship-

builder, carpenter, rigger, sawyer, sailmaker, blacksmith, tinsmith and shoemaker; ships' half-models that were made and used by a master shipbuilder of Trinity; pump-boring equipment used manually in boring ships' pumps; navigation instruments, now obsolete; charts' including many of the famous British bluebacks; ships' iron work made by local blacksmiths; a display showing every item of equipment of the "icehunter" on the "Sealing Adventure" of many years ago; photocopy-pages of inventories showing items supplied and charged to vessels built in Trinity and going on the "Sealing Adventure" in 1820; a completely equipped cooper's shop; a shoemaker's shop; sports equipment such as the cricketer's, and bowling pins and balls locally made and of the type mentioned in a diary as used in bowling on the ice of Trinity

Harbour in 1762. The kitchen is equipped in the period of the museum house dating from 1880. Other rooms display town plans from surveys dated 1833, 1850, 1852, with records giving the names of fifteen streets, roads and lanes, most of which were in use in 1730, the year the first church of The Established Church of England was built.

Copies of extracts of the early Trinity Court Records dating from 1753 are on display together with police truncheons of 1815, and jail and Court House hardware locally made.

Plans of the Admiral's Point fort of 1748 at the entrance to Trinity, and those of 1762 are exhibited; the latter drawn in great detail by French engineer Marc Antoine Sicre de Cinq-Mars, staff officer with the French land and sea forces that occupied Trinity from July 17 to August 1, 1762, when the fort was destroyed.

are two accounts of this event; one by English merchant Benjamin Lester in his day to day detailed diary account, and the other by French officer Chevalier de la Motte several years later after he returned to France.

In their History of England, Vol. 111, p. 194, Hume & Cook refer to this occupation in the sentence ".....The French, therefore, took possession of St. John (sic), Trinity and Carbonear without opposition....."

The Admiral's Point fort was built some years after George Pley's communication of March 17, 1675, to the Imperial authorities, on his return to England, recommending ".....a settled government in Newfoundland.....", and that ".....It is therefore offered that Trinity, Harbor de Grace, St. John's and Ferryland are the most fit harbors to fortify....."

(Continued over)



# Trinity

## Historical Society — (Continued)

Archaeological exploratory excavations were begun at the Admiral's Point fort in 1969. Available also in the archives section are the Royal Engineers Reports of 1812 on the fortifications in Newfoundland, in which there are references to "Fort Point," Trinity, (formerly known as Admiral's Point), and to a small battery of two, twelve pounders at Ryder's Hill overlooking the town. In a house designed and built for the purpose, on the museum grounds, there is exhibited a manually-operated fire engine, on one end of which is painted "Geo. Garland, Trinity, 1811," and on the other, "Hopwood, Black Friars Bridge, Lon-

don." An identical fire engine is on view in the Museum of the City of New York. It was built in England and used in New York City in 1731.

In the pictorial section there are photographs showing sections of the town and waterfront with houses and buildings which have long since disappeared. One display, with documentation that attracts a good deal of interest, shows Trinity's connection, through the Ash family of master mariners, with the Greely Relief Expedition of 1884 with members of the Expedition on the deck of the S.S. Bear which sailed out of Trinity to the seal fishery for several years, as did the steamer-barquentine

"Lion." A large oil painting of the "Lion" is exhibited with accounts of her unexplained loss at sea with her crew and many passengers on the night of January 6, 1882, on a voyage between St. John's and Trinity.

Two, five-foot long oil paintings show Benjamin Lester's business premises and fleet of thirty brigs in Trinity in 1770.

While many items are exhibited in glass show cases, there are others that lend themselves to being arranged so that they may be handled while being examined. On display also are several samplers that were done by girls of Trinity school, one of several in the country that operated under the Newfoundland and

British North America School Society of 1823. Two of these samplers were returned from England three years ago, as donations to the museum.

Over twenty-one hundred non residents visited the museum archives during the two months, July and August, 1971, when paid high-school students were available as attendants.

This number of visitors is considered as very satisfactory, having regard to the condition of long stretches of roads being reconstructed in preparation for paving in 1972.

Walter White,  
Corresponding  
Secretary.

## Survey of old buildings in the Province

Members of the Trust must have been delighted to read in the local press of the survey of historic buildings to be undertaken this summer by four students of Memorial University under the sponsorship of the National Historic Sites Service. The survey is part of a ten-year federal project to catalogue and describe structures built across Canada before 1880 in the east and before 1914 in the west.

During the summer, the Burin Peninsula and the Notre Dame Bay area will be covered and the inventory of historic buildings for these regions will be added to the results of the survey conducted last year in Placentia Bay, Bonavista and Trinity Bay.

It is expected that the whole of Newfoundland and Labrador will have been covered by 1975 and appropriate structures fully described for assessment of their architectural and historic value.

## Quidi Vidi Church... the last word?

The President's message carries the good news that Quidi Vidi Church may at long last be coming into its own, not, to be sure, as a place of formal worship, but it is to be made structurally sound and will cease to be a lifeless shell. Its future use is being discussed between various parties and it is hoped that its doors may be opened once more next Fall.

However, as Mr. Perlin has said, the Trust's responsibility has not ended. We have committed ourselves to raising funds to cover the cost of the materials required for the renovation of the building.

Members of the Trust are urged to support the Officers in their efforts to conclude their work on this historic building. The Wine and Cheese Party that will be a prelude to the opening of our next Exhibition on June 28th will give everyone an opportunity of showing their interest and good will.