

***Cows Don't Know It's Sunday: Agricultural Life in St. John's.* By Hilda Chaulk Murray. (St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2002. Pp. 338, photographs, index, bibliography ISBN 0-919666-53-1)**

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trying to capture a real or natural sense to a composed image and sound is as present in fieldwork when the ethnographer captures the life and times of his/her surroundings. In a sense, what can be learned from film studies can reflect a similar pattern in folklore and folkloristics. This compilation achieves its goal in illustrating and analyzing all possible facets in film studies through excerpts of larger works written by influential film theorists and critics. The reader will enjoy gleaning the intelligent and challenging debates highlighted in this collection.

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Cows Don't Know It's Sunday: Agricultural Life in St. John's. By Hilda Chaulk Murray. (St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2002. Pp. 338, photographs, index, bibliography ISBN 0-919666-53-1)

This publication is a detailed account of the agricultural community which existed in and around St. John's in the first half of the twentieth century. As the author rightly points out, "much has been written in Newfoundland about fishing and the lives of outport people"; by comparison, the province's agricultural history has been sadly neglected (9).

Murray initiates her study with a brief account of the historical developments which prevented the growth of agriculture from flourishing in St. John's for several years (13-33). Farming was never an intuitive part of Great Britain's mandate for exploiting Newfoundland's resources. Like permanent settlement itself, agricultural activity was discouraged because it was viewed as being a deterrent to the fisheries. Despite such policies, by the late 1700s, to protect supplies and goods held over for the annual fisheries, some overwintering was necessary in the colony. This in turn led some settlers to establish kitchen gardens and to take up small scale animal husbandry. By the 1770s, some lands in and around St. John's had also been allocated mainly to certain military personnel (24). Although Newfoundland was always viewed as being "unsuitable for farming" (29), with the onset of the Napoleonic wars, the resident population of St. John's suffered great hardships because vessels were prevented from crossing the Atlantic with supplies (30).

Early nineteenth century agriculturalists such as William Carson, with a vested interest in making Newfoundland a viable colony, advocated that for political, social and economic reasons, it made sense for settlers to own and cultivate lands. Realizing that some agricultural production was essential for the colony's survival, the British government initially granted settlers permission to lease lands (33). From the 1830s onward, individuals were then allowed to purchase land grants. Agricultural activity within the St. John's region blossomed. By the early twentieth century, dozens and dozens of farms surrounded St. John's, supplying the resident population with considerable agricultural produce by way of fresh vegetables, butter, milk, eggs, poultry, beef and other meat products.

Murray is not the first to document this agricultural activity in St. John's. Cultural geographers such as John Mannion (1974, 1987: 358-363) and Robert MacKinnon (1981, 1991: 32-61) have created important studies that provide a critical template for other researchers to build upon. Murray's research does offer something new because it takes into account the activities of the farming community within living memory, covering the period mainly from the 1920s to the late 1950s.

Murray initiated the study in 1991 with her friend Isobel Browne. The two women worked together over a three year period tracking down and then interviewing informants who were able to provide details about farms, farm families and farming practices. Following Browne's untimely death, Murray continued on. The final work is based primarily on extensive oral history interviews with 84 informants (7) supplemented by substantial archival research. Murray lists no less than 118 farms in and around the city area (284-290) known to have been in existence which she came across as part of this study. Many of her informants were able to give details about a number of these properties because they had either lived on them or near them.

The author has had to cover considerable territory in this publication; her initial manuscript extended to 800 pages. Faced with the choice of a reference book, an historical document or an account of people and their connection to the farms, she chose the latter (12). As with her earlier work, *More Than 50%: Woman's Life in a Newfoundland Outport 1900-1950*, Murray's talents as a folklorist shine through. She is keenly interested in the details of peoples' lives. She presents us with her informants' firsthand accounts of living on the farmsteads (chapter 3),

the lives of women and children and their yearly work (chapter 4), handling milk production and farm animals (chapters 5 and 6), income, daily living and social interaction (chapters 7, 8 and 9).

For those doing research within the city, this will be a useful source to consult. In addition to providing information on traditional farming practices, this work is a nice starting point for documenting the locations of a number of farms and country estates. Murray gives us useful descriptions of typical farmhouse interiors, flowers and crops grown, hay production, transportation, poultry production, berry picking and vegetable storage. She also covers many aspects of the daily life of the farming community. There are entries on social activities such as picnics and garden parties, ice racing, involvement with the annual regatta and at agricultural fairs. She documents customary participation in special celebrations such as Christmas and Easter as well as practices associated to wakes, funerals, and burials. Through this account we begin to see a distinct part of St. John's society as many knew it to have existed years ago.

Up to the mid-twentieth century, the population of St. John's depended almost exclusively on its extensive agricultural community to supply it with fresh vegetables, dairy and poultry products. The demise of the farms from this period onward can be directly traced to the city's outward growth commencing with World War II (251) and Confederation. By the late 1950s, the province had access to new produce which could be imported from other provinces; many of the local farms found it difficult to compete. As St. John's expanded outward, several of the farmlands surrounding the city were converted to new urban uses providing already cleared land space for the construction of commercial businesses, government and university buildings, as well as residential areas.

Many residents of this region are unaware of the historical and economic importance of this farming community: "When most people under the age of 60 hear the phrase 'farmers of St. John's' they have no idea that farms existed within the limits of the 'old city' until the mid-twentieth century" (62). As Murray points out, a city is "a collection of neighborhoods" (11). In St. John's, several of these localities are the last vestiges of large country estates which, in some cases, date back over 200 years (11). This activity, as recounted by Murray, has left a distinctive mark on the city by way of existing niche landscapes such as

may be found in Bally Haly (now a golf course), Pippy Park and Bowring Park. Streets such as Rostellan Place, Grove's Road, Brookfield Road, Stamp's Lane and Westerland Road bear the names of former farm properties which existed in these areas. The vegetation in many locations throughout the city, in the form of mature shrubs and linear tree plantings at places such as Northbank, Riverdale Road and Belvedere, is also linked to this earlier agricultural development.

The farming community around St. John's as Murray documents it no longer exists. Much of the province's agricultural produce continues to be imported. Lest we think the author has documented a dying tradition, substantial farming still takes place as is evidenced by the seasonal Open Air market in Churchill Square. Several poultry and dairy farms surrounding the city continue to provide eggs and milk to the residents, distributed mainly through grocery stores. Some small-scale door-to-door marketing of agricultural produce continues as well. Murray's *Cows Don't Know It's Sunday* offers a solid context for considering these present-day activities.

Farmers as a cultural group have not been extensively studied by folklorists in Canada. By way of illustration, the recent *Ethnologies* subject index contains no entries for farms, farmers or agriculture (Posen 1998: 293-320). Yet, as Murray shows, this is a rich area with great research potential. Even in Newfoundland, where it is still assumed that not much can grow, the farming tradition has a lengthy, cultural heritage. For those who are interested in extending the study of the farming community in new directions, Murray's work will provide a nice point of reference.

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Close Harmony: A History of Southern Gospel. By James R. Goff Jr. (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002. Pp. xiv + 394, notes including bibliographical references, index, ISBN 0-8078-5346-1)

While the title of this book speaks of gospel music and harmony, to this reader, the emphasis is squarely on the people and contexts that shaped the gospel music of the southern USA. Inadvertently perhaps, Goff also gives a good look at how America has become a commercial giant. For example, while describing gospel history Goff shows the personal ambition and work ethic of the performers — he mentions at least three that held down a full-time job while their music career was developing; secondly, how the very popularity of singing made it fertile soil for a music publishing industry; thirdly, while they seem strange bedfellows to many, business, family and religion were the glue of success for the gospel quartets; and fourthly, how the gospel music industry was constantly impelled by new media technology. Goff dedicates an entire chapter to James David Vaughan's remarkable achievements in the late nineteenth century. Vaughan established a successful music school and journal. He bought a license for a radio station and developed a host of new fans; issued more than 60 records on his own label; published the weekly newspaper and had an army of salesmen, "... singing-school students and quartet members alike..." (74) In Texas, another music empire was run by Virgil Oliver Stamps and later joined by J. R. Baxter. These men recognized the importance of radio to reach listeners and partnered with the 50,000 watt station XERL in Del Rio, Texas, to reach most of North America.

All of this is fine, but the book title may attract music lovers whose main interest is in the music sound and how it changed over time. In