

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE TOWN OF CARBONEAR. The following historical notes belong to folklore rather than to history. However, they are retained in this revision for several reasons. Because of my lack of training in historical research, I do not feel qualified to make any significant improvements in my fable of Carbonear. Moreover, I claim “psychological reality” for my account since it represents what many people in Carbonear believe to be the historical facts about their community. Such beliefs are significant in that their effects on behaviour may equal or exceed the effects of actual historical events. Like J.D. Rogers, who wrote my favourite history of Newfoundland, “I write as a pure impressionist” (Rogers 1911:ix).

The story of Carbonear is the story of Newfoundland in miniature. Like the island in general, Carbonear has been heavily dependent on the cod fishery whose boom-and-bust economy has seldom provided a firm economic basis for community growth. Coupled with the problems of the uncertain economy was the generally shoddy and sometimes pernicious treatment of the settlers by the British Government.

Nothing reflects the fluctuations in the fortunes of Carbonear more than its population figures: 161(1674), 220 (1697), 345 (1700), 327 (1730), 622—222 English, 400 Irish servants—(1753), 2500 (1828), 4808 (1857), 4127 (1891), 3201 (1921), 3472 (1945), 3351 (1951), 4234 (1961), and 4584 (1966) (see Seary *et al.* 1968:50).

Only two periods of fairly rapid growth mark bright periods in its long history—between 1828 and 1857 the population nearly doubled; between 1951 and 1966 it increased by more than a third. The first reflects that period of enlightened British policy in which Newfoundland first received Representative Government (1833), followed by full Responsible Government (1855). The second reflects the rapid economic and social changes which have occurred since Confederation with Canada in 1949.

The nineteenth-century boom saw Carbonear grow to become the second largest town of Conception Bay, exceeded in population by Harbour Grace only. Carbonear was then the headquarters of Conception Bay’s largest commercial interests (see Toque 1878:117). These prosecuted the fishery for both cod and seals.

A circulating library (c. 1830), a newspaper (1833), a commercial society of merchants (1834), a grammar school (1843) all marked it as an oasis in the general cultural desert of Newfoundland. In 1857 it boasted four clergymen, three doctors and lawyers, seventeen farmers, sixty-seven mechanics, eighteen merchants, 2043 fishermen-curers, and 1231 fishermen (see Seary *et al.* 1968:50).

This nineteenth-century boom had been preceded by two centuries of painful growth—calamities and periods of adversity interspersed with short periods of progress.

Carbonear no doubt had permanent settlers by 1650, and slowness of progress (as compared with that of similar settlements in New England) was largely due to British policy, which was designed to discourage settlement in Newfoundland. The powerful merchants of south-western England, afraid of losing exclusive control of the lucrative Newfoundland fishery, used their influence to enact laws in 1660 (see Perlin 1937:173) forbidding settlement in Newfoundland. Not until the early nineteenth century was full freedom to settle granted.

Rough and ready government was provided by the Fishing Admirals. Laws of 1633 and 1660 stipulated that the captain of the first British fishing vessel arriving in a Newfoundland harbour in the spring should be the governor (Admiral) of that port for the season. During their short summer stays, the Fishing Admirals provided more harrassment than justice for the settlers; no official authority existed during the long winter. Having made themselves virtual outlaws by settling in defiance of British policy, the settlers had no legal means of securing better government. The first real governor of Newfoundland was appointed in 1729, but for some fifty years thereafter the Fishing Admirals continued to flout the governors' royal authority by appealing to their own parliamentary authority. Not until 1791 was the first real civil court established in Newfoundland in St. John's. British policy now began to change rapidly, and by 1832 Newfoundland was granted representation in the British Parliament.

To the persecutions by English fisherman and British navy were added those of the French. Charles II gave the French extensive rights along much of the Newfoundland coast. From Placentia, which they settled in 1662, they directed a number of destructive raids overland at the English-speaking settlers.

In the winter of 1696-1697 a strong raiding force under d'Iberville captured and sacked St. John's, the leading town, and the settlements in Conception Bay. The main settlement of Carbonear was defenceless, but armed settlers withdrew to the island which lies off the south side of the harbour entrance where they successfully resisted French attack. Early in 1705 the French again attacked, and burnt the town of Carbonear, causing extensive damage; but, again, Carbonear Island defied them. However, the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) allowed the French to retain their fishing rights in Newfoundland.

Near the end of the Seven Years' War, a French fleet from Brest captured the important Newfoundland strong points, including St. John's and Carbonear (1762). Though defeated in this war, the French retained rights in Newfoundland by the Treaty of Paris (1763) and the Treaty of Versailles (1783). Not until 1904 did they finally lose these rights on the island of Newfoundland.

The nineteenth-century boom in Carbonear had come about for a variety of reasons. The economy had been stimulated by the good demand and price for fish during the Napoleonic Wars when European fishermen were cut off from the Newfoundland grounds. There had been Irishmen among the original settlers, but now, attracted by this wealth and repelled by the civil strife in Ireland, large numbers of Irish settlers came to Newfoundland early in the nineteenth century. Carbonear received its share of the wave of immigrants, which petered out around 1830. Many Irish settled inland, in the valley to the west of the town, (see road no. 38 on appended map) so that for a period there were virtually two towns. Gradually, the two ethnic groups have moved together so that today the houses and other buildings form an unbroken pattern.

Unfortunately the Pax Britannica did little for Newfoundland. European wars have always stimulated its economy. With peace came competition and lower prices for fish. The Responsible Government over-extended its slender financial resources (especially in railway building), and a general recession set in during the last third of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth. The brief economic reprieve of World War I brought no permanent relief.

In Carbonear, the population declined, so that in 1921 it was about 1600 less than it had been in 1857. By 1877, Carbonear

had lost its circulating library, its newspaper, and its commercial society (see Toque 1878:119). The general lack of education, and of large communities, the want of skills, and inadequacy of finance all prevented industrial growth in the country.

Carbonear, however, has not forgotten its former greatness. The citizens are proud of their Island's defiance of the French. Until the present century, Carbonear shared with Harbour Grace the distinction of being one of the two chief towns after St. John's. The community has always maintained quite good schools and has produced leaders in academic and other fields, both in Newfoundland and abroad.

The dialect of Carbonear should represent some of the oldest and most respectable Newfoundland English. The proportion of Irish to English in the town is about the same as for the whole province of Newfoundland. Unusually wide social and economic differences are found within the community. A careful survey of the speech should reveal elements which are perhaps widespread in the province, and at the same time avoid a narrow concentration on the rare or peculiar which might be found in more isolated communities.

The employment in Carbonear is not typical of a Newfoundland outport community, in which most workers are primary producers. Carbonear is, instead, a commercial centre which serves many people from the settlements along the north shore of Conception Bay and the south shore of Trinity Bay. Though a fish plant was recently opened, a much higher than usual percentage of the population is employed in the distribution of goods and services. There are several large wholesale and retail businesses in the town. Its regional high school and hospital also increase its focal nature.

1.2 SELECTION OF INFORMANTS The time available allowed me to interview twenty-four informants. In order to achieve the widest sampling of the community's speech, I attempted to divide the limited number of indigenous informants into: (1) three equal Groups based on social and economic status and education, (2) two equal divisions based on religion and ethnic origins, (3) two equal divisions based on age, and (4) equal numbers of men and women.

The members of Group I have limited financial means, and generally occupy a lower social position in the community. The

average education of informants in this group amounts to only three and one-half years of grade school.

Group III represents the opposite end of the socio-economic scale. The eight members of this Group occupy positions of responsibility and financial security, usually as owners or directors of local businesses. Most of them are prestigious members of the community, being leaders in local social and community activities. Their average education is about twelve years, and, in the case of the five Protestants in this Group, part of this education was received outside Carbonear.

Group II occupies a middle social and economic position. The average education of members of this Group is nine years. Such an education, coupled with permanent employment, "qualifies" an informant for inclusion in this Group. However, because of his prestige as a leader in part of the community, one informant is assigned to Group II without these qualifications. On the other hand, two informants who qualify financially for Group III are placed in Group II because they assume no role of leadership in community affairs.

In Carbonear, most Roman Catholics have ultimate origins in Ireland, whereas many Protestants descend from British settlers (mostly English). Thus, the religious division of Roman Catholic versus Protestant roughly parallels that of ethnic origin. Exceptions to this generalization are three male informants, two of whom are Protestant but of Irish stock, whereas the third is Catholic and of English ancestry. Only three informants had any Scottish ancestry, which in each case was mixed with English. Only three informants had mixed Irish-English ancestry, and in no case did this represent marriage between Catholic and Protestant.

Thus, the religious division is accepted as more basic than the ethnic one. Unfortunately, the two religious divisions are not equally represented, there being only nine Roman Catholic informants as against fifteen Protestants. This is due to the difficulty I experienced in finding Roman Catholic women informants in Groups II and III. This reflects the old economic disadvantage of the Irish settlers which has not yet been fully overcome.

The informants are divided into an older and a younger generation with age sixty (in 1965) being taken as an arbitrary divid-

ing line between the two age groups. All but two of the twelve in the older generation are seventy or above; the average age of the twelve is seventy-five. All but one of the twelve informants in the younger generation are fifty or below, and the average age is forty-two. There are seven in their forties, two in their thirties, and two in their twenties—the youngest being twenty-six. Thus, one can say that the two generations are divided by a period of roughly twenty years (50-70).

The final division is based on sex. In attempting to interview equal numbers of men and women, I was again frustrated by the lack of Roman Catholic women in Groups II and III. So as to achieve a closer balance of men versus women, I compensated by interviewing additional Protestant women in Groups II and III. Thus, there is a total of thirteen male informants as against eleven females.

Each of the twenty-four informants is assigned a code number. The numbers are arranged in the accompanying table which involves the four variables of Group, religion, age, and sex. Note that the code numbers for all male informants are odd, for all females even.

	GROUP I				GROUP II				GROUP III			
	<i>Prot.</i>		<i>R.C.</i>		<i>Prot.</i>		<i>R.C.</i>		<i>Prot.</i>		<i>R.C.</i>	
Older	1	2	3	4	9	10	11		17	18a 18b	19a 19b	
Younger	5	6	7	8	13	14a 14b 14c	15		21	22	23	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F

Throughout this thesis I attempt to correlate variations in linguistic data (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary) with one or more of the non-linguistic factors of Group, age, religion, and sex. The degree of correlation varies, but on the whole it seems quite high. It is most statistically reliable in connection with Group and age, where the desired balance of numbers is

available; in the case of religion it is least reliable because of the difference between the numbers of Roman Catholics and Protestants. Such correlations are summarized in chapter five.

I do not claim that the idiolects of my twenty-four informants constitute a statistically reliable sample of the community's speech. The informants should be regarded as twenty-four cases of separate idiolects rather than a representative sample of a unified dialect. However, Carbonear's long history of almost fixed population, coupled with very slow economic and social change, has allowed, I believe, such a consolidation of linguistic habits that my findings should agree well with any that might be based on more statistically reliable sampling.

1.3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND TRANSCRIPTIONS All interviewing of informants was done during the summer of 1965 at Carbonear. In the four to eight hours spent in interviewing each informant, some four hundred and fifty questions were asked from a questionnaire provided by Memorial University at Newfoundland.

This is the "Linguistic Atlas of Newfoundland Dialect Questionnaire", compiled by William J. Kirwin and George M. Story of the English Department at Memorial University (St. John's, Newfoundland) in 1959 and revised in May, 1963. This questionnaire is based on the "Short Work Sheets" of the *Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England* (Kurath, 1939), revised in 1949 by A. L. Davis and Raven I. McDavid, Jr. The Newfoundland questionnaire differs from the "Short Work Sheets" in that many items have been omitted or changed to suit the local environment—for example, a specialized section on the fishery is included.

A phonetic transcription was made of all responses during the interviews. In addition, I attempted to make a tape recording of all or part of the interviews with each informant. Only one informant declined to be recorded on tape. The tapes possess a two-fold value: they enable me to check my own transcriptions, and they often contain free conversation which enables me to check elicited forms against non-elicited forms.

The phonetic symbols used in the field transcriptions conform largely to the practice outlined in Chapter IV of the *Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England* (Kurath 1939). I also recorded, in traditional orthography, spellings which informants sometimes gave for lexical items they guessed might be unfamiliar to me. This report gives spellings in the traditional

alphabet for most items. In some cases, such spellings were provided by informants; in others they represent traditional Newfoundland spellings found in written records; and some of them are my own arbitrary creations. In all cases, writing as one word and hyphenation indicate that the first element is stressed (as in *hayloft* and *dampers-dogs*) whereas separation means that the second element is more heavily stressed (as in *barn loft*).

My field transcriptions are now filed with the dialect collections of the English Department at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Their narrow concentration on one community supplements the field records compiled since 1960 by William J. Kirwin and J.D.A. Widdowson in their broader survey of the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland as well as other parts of the island.

Findings in recent fieldwork and older written sources both contribute items to the file card collection for the proposed "Newfoundland Dialect Dictionary" undertaken by William J. Kirwin and George M. Story. This collection proved to be a valuable source for rechecking of usage, spelling and meanings.