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NEWFOUNDLAND

the Newsletter of the Newfoundland Historic Trust

July  
Southcott Edition 1997

## 1997 Southcott Awards

**T**he 14th Annual Southcott Awards took place at the E. B. Foran Room, St. John's City Hall on Friday, June 20th, 1997.

The Southcott Awards, named after the firm of J. & J.T. Southcott, are intended to recognize those who have undertaken restoration work and, through the illustration of these projects, show others what can be done with our architectural resources.

The Trust would like to thank this year's sponsors: Newtel Communications, Canadian Heritage Parks Canada, and the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Recipients of this year's awards include:

### Alexander and Jennie Templeman House



The Alexander and Jennie Templeman House in Bonavista is a classic two-storey fisherman's cottage, built sometime around or just before 1905, the year Alexander and Jennie were married. The Templeman family has roots in the community well

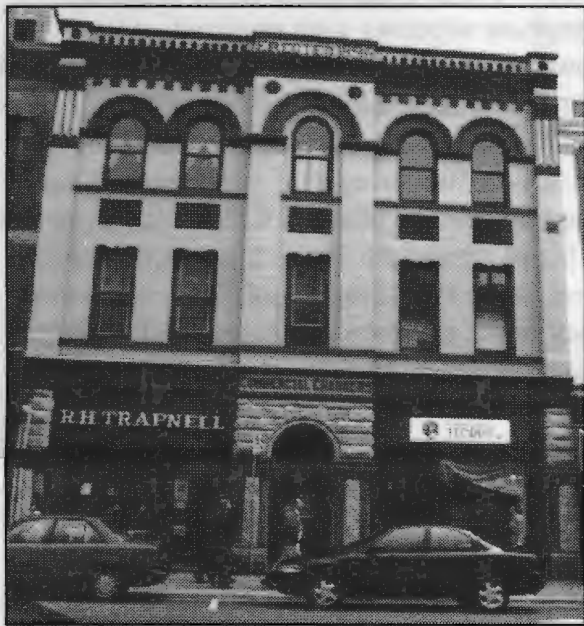
back into the eighteenth century.

The Templeman House is built of wood in the predominant vernacular style found in Bonavista, decorated with double peaked-gable dormers in the second storey. It had fallen into disrepair, until its owners Philip Templeman and his wife Elaine arranged for Harvey Templeman and Sharon Miller to supervise a restoration. Rotting clapboard was removed from the house and new boards were installed in a style sympathetic to the original. Inappropriate windows were removed, and new windows in an architecturally-appropriate style were constructed by Jack, Lloyd, and Jason Russell, three generations of a Bonavista woodworking family. Characteristic "two-over-two" windows with heavy drip caps and carved pilasters were installed, as was barge board around the eaves of the Gothic peaked dormers, and a new shingle roof. The old porch at the back of the structure was redesigned to provide more interior space, and was given appropriate windows.

In 1996 the Alexander and Jennie Templeman House was designated a Registered Heritage Structure by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, and a grant was also provided by the Foundation to assist with their restoration. The restoration of the Templeman House celebrates the work of an outpost family in their community, the central place which the fishery holds in Newfoundland life, and not incidentally, the importance of the people, the town, and the history of Bonavista, to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador during our Cabot 500th year.

## The Commercial Chambers Building

Constructed in 1896 in St. John's by the contractor William Ellis, the Commercial Chambers Building located at 199 Water Street is a fine and well maintained example of post-fire architecture. William Ellis established his business in 1890, and was one of the most important reconstruction contractors in St. John's after the Great Fire of 9 July 1892. By the early 1900s Ellis was one of the city's largest employers. In addition to the Commercial Chambers Building, his most significant projects were the main tunnel of the St. John's sewage system, the St. John's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society Hall, and "Merchant's Block" on Water Street. Ellis served as Member of the House of Assembly for Ferryland from 1904-1909, as Mayor of St. John's from 1910-14, and as Minister without Portfolio from 1918-1919.



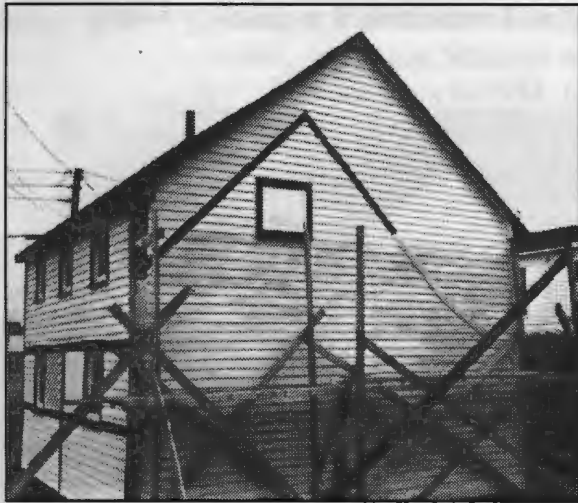
The Commercial Chambers Building was primarily occupied by various merchants and insurance companies. The ground floor was devoted to mercantile and specialty operations in the early twentieth century, the inheritors of nineteenth-century fish exporting merchant traditions. Most notable were the firms of R. H. Trapnell, the Ewings, and Robert A. Brehm, who began to manufacture margarine in Newfoundland in 1883.

The office space, located above, was occupied by William Ellis, the American Consulate, the lawyer and politician Sam Foote and T.B. Clift Limited.

A three-storey Victorian structure, with five bays and a stained glass window, the Commercial Chambers forms an important and instantly recognizable contribution to the downtown cityscape. The powerful effect of the rose granite columns, set against the more passive grey of the dressing stone, lends a sense of permanence and authority to the commercial premises on the streetscape. The interior of the building is characterized by a sky lit, open stairwell. The Commercial Building is a former recipient of the St. John's Heritage Foundation Award, the first commercial property to be so honoured. In 1996 the Commercial Chambers Building was designated a Registered Provincial Heritage Structure by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, and a grant was provided to assist with the restoration. It has been restored by Geoff Hiscock, whose care for architectural and stylistic consideration have allowed the building to survive as one of the great downtown commercial premises.

## The Lane House

The residents of Tilting, Fogo Island believe that the Lane House is the oldest structure in the community. The original house was built by Augustine McNamara, who came from Ireland in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Several owners held it before Mr. Lawrence "Lar" Lane acquired it in 1929. According to Robert Mellin, the exterior appearance of older houses in Tilting cannot often be relied upon to give an indication of the original house types in this northeast coast community. Houses were often changed over the years: roofs were cut down and changed from a gable roof to a low pitch roof, or cut down from two stories to one. Stairs were often relocated, and additions or renovations were made which transformed the house.



In this restoration, an attempt was made to demonstrate to the viewer the ability to preserve some of the features of the original structure. Outside, deteriorating asphalt shingles on the roof were replaced with wooden shingles. All clapboards, trim, soffits, and eaves were replaced, and inappropriate windows were replaced by the more historically-correct two-over two on the ground floor, and a unique one-by-one on the second floor, all constructed of wood in traditional patterns by craftsman James Youden, of St. John's.

Peeling paint was removed from trim and exposed floor joists. The semi-circular winding staircase had fallen into decay and badly lacked paint and stain, but it was repainted and its rail restored. The handrail collides with and intersects the ladder to the attic. According to architect Robert Mellin, "the builder could have simplified construction by compromising one of these two elements, but he chose to demonstrate his skill and carefully wove the two together." Inside, the attic of the house reveals that the structure had at one time been transformed by placing a centre-hall plan for the second floor on top of a hall-and parlour plan house.

The Lane House was designated a Registered Heritage Structure by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador in 1994. It was restored by the Tilting Expatriates Association with the assistance of a grant from the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador. Robert Mellin donated architectural consulting assistance

during the planning and restoration process. Artifacts and exhibits have been collected, and the house is now open to the public as a museum during the summertime. It stands as a testament to the dedication of a group of volunteers who wish to preserve and commemorate their community's history, and presents the best of our culture to visitors so that they may understand our unique culture and way of life.

### The Imperial Tobacco Factory

Among the dealers of tobacco and snuff in early 20th century St. John's, the Imperial Tobacco Company was one of the most easily recognized and the most important. Formed originally through a merger between Empire Tobacco of Quebec and the American Tobacco Company, the Imperial Tobacco Company's first St. John's branch was established by James H. Monroe in 1903. Located on the corner of Bond and Flavin Streets, the building was subsequently destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1910. By 1906, it was the only tobacco factory in Newfoundland, producing over 800,000 cigarettes a year.



After confederation, the loss of tariff protection, stiff competition from central Canadian manufacturers, and an increase in labour and transportation costs forced the factory to close.

The buildings were then converted to a sales and shipping office, all processing having been moved to the mainland in a cost-cutting strategy. Once an imposing and powerful commercial building, the Imperial Tobacco factory was neglected and suffered damage. The stonework, once elegant, became marred and took on a lackluster quality. The restoration work undertaken by Reardon Construction has returned the exterior of the building to a certain grandeur.

As one of the few poured-concrete industrial buildings in the province, the project of its restoration and maintenance must be commended as a more-than-worthwhile endeavor. The exterior has been brought back to its original calibre, with stylistic appropriate additions and minimal changes. The restoration of the exterior and the adaptive re-use of the interior of the Imperial has given new life to this fine building, which has played an important role in Newfoundland's commercial past.

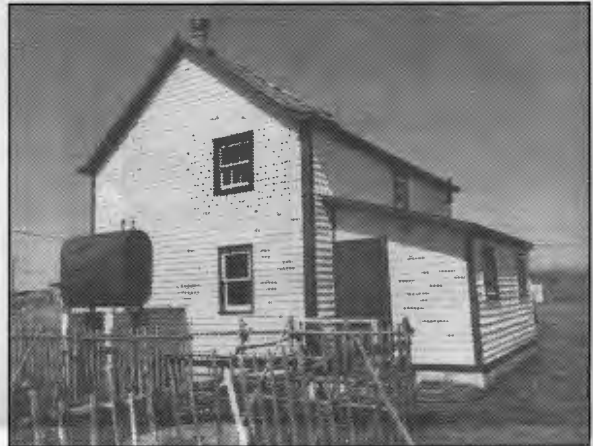
### Dwyer House

The Dwyer House in Tilting, Fogo Island, is a centre-hall plan family house with a flared gable, bell-cast roof. It was built by Gerald Dwyer in 1888, and it is a good illustration of the well-established seasonal occupations and lifestyle of fishing families in outport Newfoundland.

When the house was completed, the Dwyer family spent the summertime fishing season at this residence, but wintered away from Fogo Island westward in Boyd's Cove, in the Bay of Exploits, where they could take advantage of access to resources and a less inclement climate.

The Dwyer house was always painted white on the front, with a different color for the trim. The back of the house and the outbuildings (which have since disappeared), used to be painted with red ochre. In 1987 Robert Mellin and Heidi Kravitz acquired the Dwyer House with the intention of restoring the property, which took 4 years. All details of the house were meticulously recorded, plans were

drawn up, and restoration was carefully begun.



In 1990, the Dwyer House was designated a Registered Heritage Structure by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador. Restoration work was done by local carpenters including Gerald Reardon, Lambert Dwyer, Peter Penton, and Daniel Dwyer, the great-grandson of the original builder, Gerald Dwyer. Windows were constructed by James Youden.

The modern windows were removed, all clapboard and trim were replaced, and the fine finish detail of trim was restored. Rotting wood in the eaves and soffits was replaced, and a new roof was installed, replacing modern asphalt shingles with wooden roofing shingles. A back pantry was converted into a bathroom, while a number of pieces of furniture, such as nightstands and bedroom dressers, were built by Fergus Dwyer, the son of the builder, and remain in the house.

### 112 Military Road

According to archival documents, the majestic second-empire style house located at 112 Military Road was originally known as Park House. Of all the properties in this year's awards, this dwelling has the most affinity with the Southcott style of architecture, and according to the best estimate, it was designed by J.T. Southcott himself. Built in the 1880s, it survived the 1892 fire. Its most famous

occupant was possibly A.E. Hickman, merchant-prince of Water Street, and Prime Minister of Newfoundland for thirty-one days in 1924. In recent history it has been owned by the graduate student society of Memorial University.

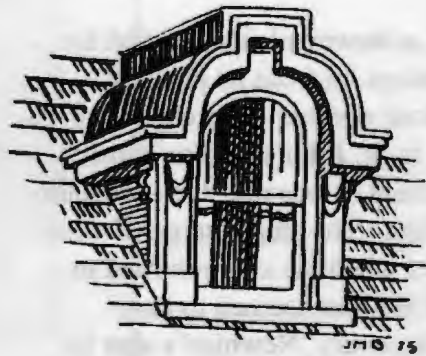
The house is an exceptional example of the Second-Empire style associated with the Southcott firm. It is instantly identifiable by its polygonal bay windows, surrounding mansard roof, hooded dormer windows and other features typical of Southcott designs. Neglected maintenance over time dulled the grandeur of this St. John's mansion, and it faded into serious decay.



The interior needed great attention: floors were damaged, walls, plaster, wallpaper, and finishes needed tending to. Walls were rebuilt. Plaster ceilings, crumbling and cracked under the strain of age and over-use, were made new once more. A mansard-roofed porch with stairs and newel-posts was restored.

Interior staircases, mouldings, walls, and hardwood floors were taken apart, and given new life. Floors were stripped and refinished, plaster arches and brackets were returned to their proper places, and mouldings were specially-made. The paneling and plaster in the formal parlour was restored, and in both the parlour and the dining room, floors and walls were refinished, all due to the restoration efforts of Kevin Nolan and Robert Hall.

For the first time in the history of the Southcott



awards, a member of the Southcott family, Ms. Mary Hopkins, was on hand to present an award. It was also the first time that a Southcott property received a Southcott Award.

**Are you a member of the Trust?**

**Would you care to become one?**

**Check the back page for membership information.**

## Newfoundland on the Web.

The following is a short listing of Newfoundland and Labrador heritage and/or heritage related internet sites. Happy surfing!

<http://www.avalon.nf.ca/heritage/>

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador web site. Lots of links, a glossary of architectural terms, and info on designation/grants.

<http://www.netfx.iom.net/nhpa/>

Newfoundland Historic Parks Association. Info on sites, Newfoundland crafts, gifts, food and music.

<http://www.iosphere.net/~jholwell/nlrsh/>

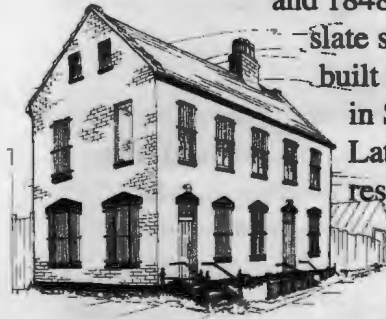
Genealogy in Newfoundland and Labrador. A great site for finding information on Nfld roots.

Conservation Action Report: The Newman Wine Vaults, St. John's.

- Dale G. Jarvis

According to tradition, a Newman's ship bound for London in 1677 was driven far from its planned course by pirates and foul weather. The captain of the ship sought shelter in St. John's, and as winter was closing fast upon them, it was decided to remain in the harbour until spring. The ship's cargo of wine was stored in caves, and when the ship returned to London, the flavour of the port seemed to have improved. After that discovery, Newman's sent its port to Newfoundland to mature in the wine cellars there.

and 1848, and has a steep gable, slate shingle roof, and was built for the Newman agent in St. John's, Mr. Morey. Later it served as the residence of Mr. Lewis Tessier, a local merchant and member of the legislature for over twenty years.



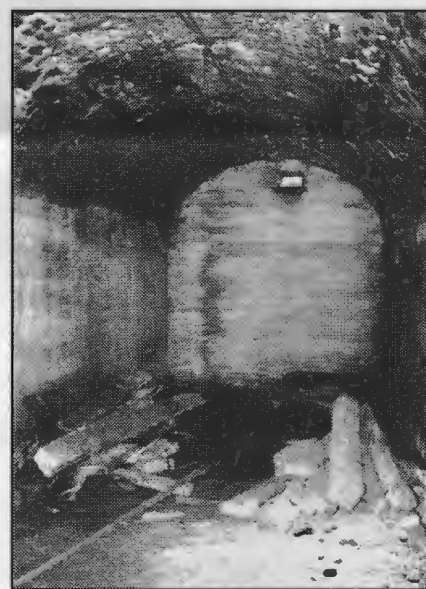
*Peter and Richard Newman visit the Vaults*

The Newman Wine Vaults, located on the north side of Water Street just west of Springdale were most likely constructed in the very early part of the nineteenth century. The earliest known printed reference to the Newman vaults is from a letter dated November 3, 1845, which reads: "If the store over the Wine Vaults is decidedly unsafe it must be taken down, and the roof of the Wine Vaults secured in the most economical manner."

Two other letters from July and August of the following year refer to the Wine Vaults in relation to the "New House" to be built "with the brick against the Wine Cellar". This "New House" is the Newman Building on the corner of Springdale and Water Street, currently home to the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as the Arts Council and the Museums Association. This building was most likely constructed between 1847

As it presently stands, the Newman Wine Vaults consist of two large rooms running parallel to Water Street. Stone was used as the basic building material with lime mortar made from seashells. The vaults themselves are constructed of stone and fired red brick. The bricks are tapered to fit the curve of the vaults, with the headers always facing the floor, and are bound with lime mortar, although some cement was used during repairs on the building circa 1947. Each room is slightly over 11' wide, with the vaults reaching an average height of 10'5". The Vaults are currently enclosed by a 20th century structure of rubble stone and hydrostone block. Many of these blocks bear a date of May 1901 and

an inscription "Lane, New York".



*Vault Interior*

The Vaults were used specifically by Newman's, and also in this century they were let to a variety of tenants, including a tobacconist named Simon G. Faour in 1919. The Board of Liquor Control used the building

from 1937 to 1957, and the buildings also served as a bonded Government warehouse. The vaults have been vacant since circa 1966.

The historic and architectural importance of the Newman Wine Vaults were officially recognized when they were designated as a Registered Heritage Structure by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador on May 10, 1997. The building is currently being restored by the Newfoundland



Interior Vault Door

Historic Trust, with financial assistance from both the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Currently, work is progressing on the interior of the vaults. Archaeological work done on the site in the 1970s left piles of dirt and rubble that needed to be removed. In addition, excavation pits that had undermined the stone foundations of the vaults needed to be backfilled.

Since the 1970s the vaults have been used as storage space for Historic Resources, and the current restoration work has meant that the materials stored within the vaults have had to be relocated. This has included a large section of a beaver lodge, collected by the Newfoundland Museum.



Moving the beaver lodge

Over the summer, Peter and Richard Newman, descendants of the original Newman family and partners in the firm, visited the vaults and witnessed some of the restoration work in progress, including repairs to the roof and support beams.

Vault photos by P.E. Coristine. For more information, see:

Barakat, Robert A. Report of an Archaeological Excavation at the Newman Wine Vaults St. John's, Newfoundland. St. John's: MUN, 1973.

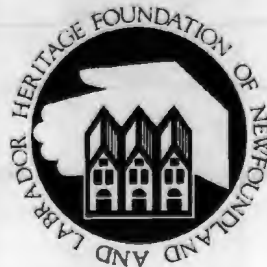
Reports on Selected Buildings in St. John's, Newfoundland. CIHB Report # 256. Parks Canada, 1974.

### The Newman Wine Vault Restoration project is a partnership between:

Newfoundland Historic Trust

Heritage Foundation  
of Newfoundland and Labrador

Canadian Heritage



Canadian Patrimoine  
Heritage canadien

**Publication Notes**

The Newfoundland Historic Trust, in cooperation with the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, is offering for sale its remaining copies of "Ten Historic Towns". This soft cover publication features the drawings of artist Jean M. Ball and introduction and text by Shane O'Dea. The book highlights the heritage architecture of ten Newfoundland outport communities: Ferryland, Placentia, Brigus, Harbour Grace, Carbonear, Trinity, Bonavista, Fogo, Twillingate and Grand Bank.

Your copy of "Ten Historic Towns" can be ordered directly from the Historic Trust for a cost of \$17.00, which includes postage and handling. Community museums or gift shops should contact the office for information on pricing of bulk orders. Cheques or money orders should be made out to "Newfoundland Historic Trust". Send your order along with payment to:

"Ten Historic Towns" c/o Newfoundland Historic Trust  
PO Box 2403, St. John's, NF Canada A1C 6E7

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Editor: Dale G. Jarvis

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**Membership Renewal Notice**

Fees are \$10 per person, \$20 per family and \$35 for groups, institutions and organizations. Please clip and complete the following form and mail with cheque for membership payable to "The Newfoundland Historic Trust" to The Newfoundland Historic Trust, PO Box 2403, St. John's, NF A1C 6E7

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (fax)

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in serving on any of the Trust's committees (Board of Directors, Southcott, Publications, Public Relations)?  
If so, please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_