



1.61 Sometimes “outsiders” may have their own perceptions of what a group’s identity is, although these may be based on false assumptions. These perceptions can sometimes lead to stereotypes of a place or people. A stereotype is an oversimplified view of the characteristics held by members of a certain group or place. Sometimes stereotypes are negative and can lead to a prejudiced view of a group. Do you think the pictures shown here are good representations of our provincial identity or do they portray some stereotypes? If you had to shoot three photographs that were representative of Newfoundland and Labrador, what would you feature?

TOPIC 1.8

Culture and Identity

Is the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador unique?

What symbol is the best representation of your identity?

Introduction

When people share a culture (or parts of it), they often feel a sense of belonging. This feeling is often based on shared experiences in some of the areas discussed – economics, geography, history, and politics. Similar ways of interacting with the environment, similar lifestyle experiences tied to economic activities, and a common history all contribute to the idea of having a **group** identity or set of collective characteristics and qualities.

Having a group identity can create a sense of unity among its members. A group may be as small as a sports team* or as large as a nation. Most people identify with a variety of groups. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, for example, are also Canadians; they may further identify themselves as residents of a specific community.

The distinctive expressions of culture that are found in a particular region contribute to that area’s sense of identity. In our province, for example, it is not uncommon to hear

a particular expression or dialect and have someone say, “Oh, you must be from such-and-such community.” However, if you look at Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole, you will notice that there are some expressions of culture that tend to be common to many people. While there are differing opinions on what these are, mass media portrayals of Newfoundland and Labrador often feature the fishery, a rugged coastline, and friendly, unpretentious inhabitants.

Despite these depictions, it is important to understand that not all people who belong to a single group will have the same definition of what that group’s identity is. For example, people living in rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador may have a different perspective of the province than those living in urban centres. Likewise, individuals who live in a non-fishing community may not identify as readily with symbols derived from the sea.

*For some people, cheering for a local sports team contributes to a sense of belonging to a group.

**“Trying to define
yourself is like
trying to bite
your own teeth.”**

— Alan Watts, British philosopher, writer, speaker

*Do you agree? How would
you define your identity?*



1.62 Identity is also shaped by adversity.

For example, during the First World War, over 1300 men out of the more than 5000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who travelled to Europe to fight were killed in the conflict. These losses affected almost every community in the colony. But it also became a sense of pride for many when King George V granted the title “Royal” to the Newfoundland Regiment in 1917 for its contribution to the war effort. Shown here is the dedication ceremony following the unveiling of the National War Memorial, St. John’s, July 1, 1924.

1.63 This British Passport for a Newfoundland resident was first stamped on July 11, 1934.

Older adults may have a different sense of identity as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians than younger people – as people born before April 1, 1949 were not “Canadians,” but rather “Newfoundlanders.”

*This term was used before our province
officially changed its name in 2001 to
Newfoundland and Labrador. Post-2001 we
refer to “Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.”*



Symbols of Identity

Groups and individuals often use symbols or icons to represent their identities to other people. Symbols also allow members within a group to develop a sense of community, which strengthens their ties to one another and to the group as a whole.

A group's history tends to have a significant influence on its sense of identity and therefore the symbols by which it chooses to portray itself. For example, images of saltfish drying on flakes, although not a major part of contemporary society, are widely associated with Newfoundland and Labrador. Other symbols are borrowed from physical geography, economic activity, or political events.

1.64



PINK, WHITE, & GREEN

The origins of this flag are obscure. One tradition holds that it descends from the flag of the Natives' Society, another that it was the creation of Bishop Fleming as a result of his intervention in disputes between sealers hauling wood for churches in St. John's. Recent research suggests that the flag appeared later in the nineteenth century, and was probably based on the colours of the Star of the Sea Association, a Roman Catholic fraternal society founded in 1871. The Pink, White, and Green was never an official flag.

THE FLAG OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

Archbishop Howley.
Tempo di marcia.

Charles Hutton.

1. The pink the rose of Eng-land shows, The green St. Pat-rick's em-blem bright,
2. What-e'er be-tide our o-cean bride, That nes-tles 'midst At-lan-tic's foam,

While in be-tween the spot-less sheen Of An-drew's cross dis-plays the white.
Still far and wide we'll raise with pride, Our na-tive flag o'er hearth and home.

Then hail the pink, the white, the green, Our pa-triot flag long may it stand;
Should e'er the hand of Fate de-mand Some fu-ture change in our ca-reer,

Our Sire-lands twine their em-blems trine, To form the flag of New-found-land.
We ne'er will yield on flood and field, The flag we bon-or and re-ver-e.

CHORUS.

Fling out the flag o'er creek and crag,..... Pink, white and green so fair, so grand;

Long may it sway, o'er bight and bay, A-round the shores of New-found-land.

DEAR, OLD SOUTH-SIDE HILL.

His Grace, Archbishop Howley.

Hutton

Moderato. mf

1. The fond-est tho'ts of child-hood's days
2. I love each nook, each dark-ling dook
3. I've seen the hills that proud-ly stand
4. I've seen Kil-lar-ney's loft-y Reeks
5. Thou stand-est o'er our har-bor's mouth

round thee, dear old hill. And as I gaze, thy bare, bleak brags With love my bos-
Each gul-ly pond, and lan-guing brook That tum-bles rat-
copes of rus-set brown: In man-y a bright and fa-vored land Far-famed in son-
stretch from shore to shore, Ben Lo-mond's and Ben Ne-via's peaks, And Snow-don's Gl-
no-ble Gall-tee Mor, And shield't us from the storm-y South And wild At-lan-
sen-try stern and hoar,

thrill. Of all the hills that stud earth's breast, And foreign countries fill, I love thee
down. I love thee, bathed in sun-ner sun, With o-pal light a-glow, Or robed in
lore; But oh, there's none so dear as thou, Old, shag-gy, South-Side Hill, Thy i-ron
Fawr; The lord-ly Alps and Ap-e-nine, And Hermon's sacred Height, But with all their
roar; When breakers blanch the o-cean's crest And sur-gees dash thy side, With-in thy

CHORUS.

all the rest, Oh, dear old South-Side Hill.
garment, spun From woof of silk-en snow, Or robed in
beetling brow My soul with rap-ture fill. Oh, dear old South-Side Hill, Old, rag-ged
none like thine Can cheer my wear-y sight.
arms at rest Our ships se-cure-ly ride.

creak.

hill, I look with pride on thy sun-brown side, Oh, dear old South-Side

CHARLES HUTTON—FIRST-CLASS PIANOS.

↖ Dr. Harry Paddon was a doctor with the International Grenfell Mission at North West River. He wrote this piece in the 1920s.



1.67

Ode to Labrador

Written by Dr. Harry Paddon (c. 1927)

Dear land of mountains,
woods and snow,
Labrador, our Labrador:
God's noble gift to us below,
Labrador, our Labrador:
Thy proud resources waiting still,
Their splendid task will soon fulfill,
Obedient to thy Maker's will,
Labrador, our Labrador.

Thy stately forests soon shall ring,
Labrador, our Labrador:
Responsive to the woodsman's swing,
Labrador, our Labrador:
And mighty floods that long remained,
Their raging fury unrestrained,
Shall serve the purpose God ordained,
Labrador, our Labrador.

We love to climb thy mountains steep,
Labrador, our Labrador:
And paddle on thy waters deep,
Labrador, our Labrador:
Our snowshoes scar thy trackless plains,
We seek no city streets nor lanes,
We are thy sons while life remains,
Labrador, our Labrador.



Labrador Identity

Labradorians have always had a strong sense of identity. This sense of identity is exemplified by various symbols, including: the “Ode to Labrador,” written c. 1927 by Dr. Harry L. Paddon; the Labrador flag, which was designed by Michael Martin in 1973 and celebrates the unique identity and common heritage of Labrador’s people; the Labrador coat of arms; and the Labrador tartan, designed and registered by Michael Martin in 2009.

Labrador was really the eastern edge of the Hudson Bay territory and what distinguishes its identity is just that. It has, of course, an Aboriginal population. It has the most southerly Inuit population anywhere in Canada. It has an Innu population, which Labrador shares with the north shore of Quebec, and there is a Metis population, as well.

We are fortunate to have Labrador as part of the province. That special identity of Labrador has been recognized. The identity of the island was so strong that for a long time it was difficult for people to accommodate, let us say, another strong identity, but that has now been done. In 2001... the name of the province was changed to Newfoundland and Labrador so that we now recognize that there are two strong, separate identities in one strong province.

— Senator William Rompkey
May 2009

Experiencing The Arts
Learn more about conceptual art by visiting page 602 to read about and view the work of Marlene Creates.

Questions:

- In this section of the chapter you examined four forces that influence culture: economics, geography, history, and politics. Organize your answers for (a) and (b) in a chart.
 - Interview an older community member to determine how his or her sense of provincial identity was influenced by each of the areas noted.
 - Interview someone in his or her early to mid-20s to determine how his or her sense of provincial identity is influenced by each of the areas noted.
 - What are the (i) similarities and (ii) differences between these two perceptions of Newfoundland and Labrador identity? What might account for this?
- Each of us belongs to different groups. Our association with those groups influences our sense of identity. For example, most people living in your community would all identify as (insert name of your community), Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, Atlantic Canadians, and Canadians. In addition, someone may belong to a service club, a sports team, or a musical group. List all of the groups to which you belong. Which group most influences your sense of identity? Why?
- In this section, there are a number of symbols tied to Newfoundland and Labrador identity. Which three symbols do you feel best represent Newfoundland and Labrador identity today? Would these same three symbols have applied 100 years ago? Explain. Do you think there are other symbols which would be better representations?

SELECTED DATES IN THE HISTORY OF LABRADOR

- 7000 BCE** Evidence of earliest known peoples in Labrador
- 1497 CE** Innu and Inuit have long tradition of living in Labrador before the arrival of Europeans
- 1700s** By the middle of this century Labrador Metis culture becomes established
- 1763** Royal Proclamation placed the coast of Labrador, Anticosti, and the Magdalen Islands under the jurisdiction of the Government of Newfoundland
- 1774** Labrador was re-annexed to Quebec under the *Quebec Act*
- 1809** The *Newfoundland Act* re-annexed the Labrador coast to Newfoundland
- 1825** The 52nd parallel was established as the southern boundary of Labrador and the jurisdiction of Newfoundland over Labrador east and north of Blanc Sablon was confirmed
- 1927** Following decades of dispute, Labrador was awarded to Newfoundland by the judicial committee of the Privy Council, the highest court in the British Empire

