

# Adult Education on the Newfoundland Coast: Adventure and Opportunity for Women in the 1930s and 1940s<sup>1</sup>

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*“When a comprehensive economic history of Newfoundland comes to be written, its unsung heroines may well prove to be the working women.”<sup>2</sup>*

THE WOMEN WHO ARE AT the heart of this article were indeed unsung heroines of Newfoundland. They were primarily educated outport women who travelled throughout coastal communities in Newfoundland to implement a unique system of adult education in the 1930s, one that internationally known adult educator Albert Mansbridge was delighted to describe as “indigenous to Newfoundland.”<sup>3</sup> Although many of them left no historical records, they were central to the reconstructive efforts of the 1930s and 1940s under Newfoundland’s Commission of Government. This paper explores the contributions of Elsie Farwell, Jessie Miffen, and Sara Coady to adult education in Newfoundland, focusing on their role in teaching basic literacy and in providing home support and social service.<sup>4</sup> Attention is given to how the various aspects of the chosen model of adult education fit into their available career and life patterns, offering alternatives to early marriage, nursing, and school teaching.

Historian Linda Kealey has wondered why the history of women in education in Newfoundland has been neglected when forays into areas such as women’s struggle for the vote and participation in the law have been far better documented.<sup>5</sup>

Exceptions include the work of Katherine McManus,<sup>6</sup> James Overton,<sup>7</sup> and Phillip McCann.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, much is unique about the experience of women adult educators in Newfoundland — the opportunities afforded them were affected both by their gender and by their participation in the Newfoundland Adult Education Association (NAEA). The NAEA was a membership-based organization formed in 1929 to increase basic literacy and thereby rebuild the economy.<sup>9</sup> By education and career choices, the adult educators employed by this organization were distinct from schoolteachers, and they were pioneers in establishing a new profession for women in Newfoundland.<sup>10</sup>

Existing adult education histories show the early twentieth century was a time of foment and increased social movement/community development activity in Canada.<sup>11</sup> In the Atlantic region, the Antigonish Movement in Nova Scotia was the standard bearer of the time, creating massive educational and development activity including study clubs, reading circles, literacy programs, library growth, and large-scale co-operative movements.<sup>12</sup> Clearly change was in the air, and adult educators took up the challenge to use education as a means of socio-economic progress. Within the Antigonish Movement, women played a key role, hosting radio programs, editing a co-operative newspaper, running study clubs, and championing arts and crafts. Many of the same activities were occurring simultaneously in Newfoundland, under the aegis of the Newfoundland Adult Education Association, which mostly employed women as teachers. These women have not been studied with any great intensity, save for the extensive historiography on Florence O'Neill by Katherine McManus.<sup>13</sup> Arguably, part of the struggle has been the lack of archival material and the absence of scholars primarily interested in adult education in this province.

## THE NEWFOUNDLAND ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Thanks to funding by the Carnegie Corporation, the NAEA was formed in 1929, some three years after the first American association.<sup>14</sup> This funding was part of an extensive philanthropic endeavour that extended to the nearby provinces of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The NAEA was the first adult education association in what is now Canada, and its formation was coincident with a Carnegie-funded tour by Albert Mansbridge, then president of the UK Workers Education Association (WEA) and founder of the World Association for Adult Education (WAAE). Mansbridge was a friend and colleague of the Memorial University College president, British-born John Paton, who saw the need to foster literacy in the general population.

The NAEA was operative in the years between the founding of Memorial University College in 1925 and the establishment of the island's first university, Memorial University of Newfoundland, in 1950.<sup>15</sup> Its inception was key to building

capacity and addressing widespread social, educational, and economic issues in a place that was bankrupt for many of these years.<sup>16</sup> The Carnegie Corporation had helped to establish the College and it was also generous in funding the NAEA's early activities.<sup>17</sup> By 1926, Carnegie had already given \$5,000 to set up travelling libraries, part of a pattern of funding that Carnegie had established in the Maritimes region.<sup>18</sup> The request to Carnegie for funding libraries and assisting in adult education in Newfoundland came from the superintendents of education, who were representatives of the principal denominations — Anglican, Roman Catholic, United Church — though the NAEA itself had no religious affiliation and did not offer an overt religious curriculum.<sup>19</sup> The first president of the Association was William W. Blackall (1864-1943), a member of the board of trustees of Memorial University College and Anglican Superintendent of Education.<sup>20</sup>

The NAEA was championed by a group of influential men who had been instrumental in forming Memorial University College, namely Vincent Burke<sup>21</sup> (Roman Catholic Superintendent of Education), John Paton (first president of Memorial University College), and others such as Levi Curtis (1858-1942, United Church Superintendent of Education) and William W. Blackall. Complete with its own constitution and newsletters, the Association was to become an official part of government in 1936 when Burke was appointed Director of Adult Education, ensuring the Association's solvency.<sup>22</sup> Shortly after its inception in 1929 the NAEA<sup>23</sup> offered a number of programs in rural areas of the province to promote adult literacy.<sup>24</sup> Though founded by men, the NAEA was staffed mainly by women, who were mostly Protestant, and it had an amazing cadre of influential and upper-middle-class women on its governing board. The first executive of the NAEA included Margaret Mulcahy Burke, wife of Vincent Burke; Violet Cherrington, principal of the distinguished Bishop Spencer College; May Goodridge, a prominent citizen; Elizabeth G. Howley, daughter of noted geographer and author James Howley and niece of the historian and Roman Catholic bishop of St. John's, Michael Howley; and Rhoda Sainsbury, principal of the Salvation Army College for Officers and later, Newfoundland's first social worker. May Goodridge, Violet Cherrington and Margaret Mulcahy Burke were also very active in other volunteer organizations and in the suffragette movement.<sup>25</sup> Male board members included Alex Mews, assistant auditor general, Eric Holden, a prominent businessman, and J.G. Higgins, a lawyer.

The NAEA began with a Field Secretary, Mrs. Elsie May Farwell, and six field staff.<sup>26</sup> An early professional photograph published in the *Newfoundland Quarterly* shows six bright, enthusiastic and well-groomed women gathered around Elsie:<sup>27</sup> Jessie Miffen, Bertha Northover, Kathleen Thompson,<sup>28</sup> Ida Parsons,<sup>29</sup> Laura Cantwell and Mary Maddock.<sup>30</sup> Of these, not a great deal is known, save for Jessie Miffen (never married) and Elsie Farwell (widowed). By 1947, only one of the original group was directly involved in adult education,<sup>31</sup> some, like Kathleen Thompson having resigned in 1936, and others, such as Elsie Farwell and Ida Par-

sons, having died, Ida tragically in a boarding-house fire in Harbour Grace where she was teaching an adult school. The only men involved in its early stages seem to have been the teachers of navigation, such as Leo English. They were called special lecturers and were paid more generously than the women, even those holding university degrees or diplomas such as Mary Maddock, Jessie Miffen, and Elsie Farwell. In 1937, for instance, the navigation teachers received \$900 and the regular teachers received \$600 — there is no distinction for those with university degrees.<sup>32</sup> By 1942, male teachers had been hired, and the situation for women had not improved much, though there was financial recognition of educational qualifications. Annual salaries in 1942 were \$1,000 for the Field Secretary; \$900 for the Assistant Field Secretary; \$700 for women with degrees; \$600 for women without degrees; \$900 for men without degrees; and \$1,500 for the male teachers of navigation. One of these, Leo English, received a “Special Living Allowance” of \$250 per year.<sup>33</sup>

The wages were gendered, as was the women’s actual decision to be involved in education. Phillip McCann has commented on women’s key role in both the fishery and in education, noting that women were heavily employed in education in part because their labour was cheap.<sup>34</sup> In many ways, attitudes and conditions for the NAEA teachers had not changed a great deal since the nineteenth century. For example, in the grading system used to classify teachers, as detailed in the Education Act of 1876, “females are not required to pass examinations in Algebra.... They shall however be required to be able to give instruction in domestic economy, needlework, knitting, and netting.”<sup>35</sup> By 1901, 59 per cent of teachers were female and presumably they were not expected to know or teach “male” curriculum to children.<sup>36</sup> McCann observes that it was not coincidental that the curriculum being taught and the expectations of female teachers in the nineteenth century were also gendered and that “female teachers were to find themselves subject to the adverse effects of patriarchy.”<sup>37</sup> This tradition from the nineteenth century continued through to the NAEA activities in the 1930s. The NAEA female teachers taught a curriculum strong on household science and literature: “Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Art, Classical Languages, Modern Languages, Instrumental Music, Community Singing, Household Management, Cooking, Sewing Knitting, Weaving.”<sup>38</sup> As noted above, navigation also was taught, but by men. One wonders how such a basic program, weak on science and advanced mathematics, might have limited the students’ futures.

The original plan of the NAEA was to use 14 activities to teach: study circles, reading and books, evening classes, day classes, correspondence lessons, prisoners’ classes, radio and broadcasting, lectures, working men’s clubs, women’s clubs, finance, music, arts and crafts, and physical exercise.<sup>39</sup> Although it did in fact employ elements of many of these activities, the NAEA adopted a model of teaching, the Opportunity School method, which was quite gendered.<sup>40</sup> This method included the night schools and home visits during the day to teach women, alone or in

groups, basic literacy. Often they focused on household science such as food preparation, child care, and mother's health, and formed clubs to learn skills like weaving. So seriously did Carnegie and the NAEA take this particular model that they invited its main proponent, Miss Wil Lou Gray, State Supervisor of Adult Schools in South Carolina and her secretary, Miss Erin Kohn, to Newfoundland in 1930.<sup>41</sup> Teaching by day and then conducting evening schools by night had long been a practice in Newfoundland's education system,<sup>42</sup> but home visits to do group or individual teaching brought a new dimension to the work. Women were chosen to do the home visits since they were seen to have an affinity with the mothers. At the end of the eight-week session, when most of the program was finished, a male teacher arrived to teach navigation. In a nod to their unique nature, Burke called the Opportunity Schools "home day schools." These schools were very successful.<sup>43</sup> From 1931 to 1937 alone, adult classes were "held in 203 centres, with an enrolment of over 10,000 students."<sup>44</sup> Often they conducted night classes in the regular school facilities or in church premises. These arrangements were facilitated by the positioning of the NAEA within the Department of Education.

### THREE PIONEERING WOMEN EDUCATORS

Though no doubt all the women in the NAEA had stories to tell, three are chosen for profiling here. Of these three, two — Elsie Farwell and Jessie Miffen — were among the original seven who pioneered adult education. Their lives parallel the growth of adult education in Newfoundland and as such are of particular historical significance. Fortunately, both women left papers and documents that could be examined for historical purposes. The third woman chosen, Sara Coady, joined the NAEA a little later but she, too, left a collection of papers that could be mined for data.

#### *Elsie Farwell*

Elsie Farwell, the first Field Secretary of the NAEA, was born Elsie May Payne in Fogo on the northeast coast of Newfoundland on May 27, 1884.<sup>45</sup> She was educated at the Church of England school in Fogo and at the Teacher's Training Academy in St. John's. Elsie taught in the regular school system from 1901 to 1918 in a number of coastal communities as geographically diverse as Lamaline on the Burin Peninsula; Channel (Port aux Basques); Herring Neck near Twillingate on New World Island; and Happy Adventure near Eastport.<sup>46</sup> Married to Richard Farwell of Eastport in 1921, she was widowed within three years when Richard (aged 32) drowned crossing a pond in winter. Her marriage at 37 was late by the standards of the day, as was her decision, following Richard's death, to attend the University of

Toronto at the age of 39. She was at the university from 1923 to 1925, and graduated with a diploma in social science. It is unknown whether Elsie was from a prosperous rural family, had relatives to stay with in Toronto, or had saved enough from her years of teaching to help finance this study. Graduation was quite an achievement for a woman in this time, especially for one who was 41 years old. It took quite a while for educational levels of teachers in Newfoundland to improve. By 1949 only “57 of the country’s 2,375 teachers had degrees.”<sup>47</sup> In her marriage, educational, and professional choices Elsie was an anomaly for her time. Yet, we have minimal personal information about her, which makes it difficult to know if she saw herself as a trailblazer.

Elsie Farwell was no stranger to hard work and teaching when she was hired by the Newfoundland Adult Education Association to direct the other six field staff and to begin an innovative adult education program of Opportunity Schools. One of her first tasks was to attend a summer school at Clemson College, in South Carolina, directed by Miss Wil Lou Gray. The NAEA had been encouraged by the Carnegie Corporation to send her to Clemson College in 1931 and she willingly travelled to attend.<sup>48</sup> Having lived and studied in both St. John’s and Toronto, Elsie likely welcomed the challenge and saw it as a continuation of her already extensive studies. In January 1932, following summer school at Clemson, Elsie was charged with giving the six teachers she employed a “special and intensive course of training” in the methods she had learned. Under Elsie’s direction, in 1931-32 these six women started their work in a variety of remote places such as Upper Island Cove, Carbonear North and South, and Botwood. The NAEA also had experimental schools in areas such as St. John’s, Bell Island, and Goulds.<sup>49</sup>

By the time of her hiring, Elsie was a woman in her late forties, well educated, and clearly very dedicated. She is said to have “organized night schools in fifty five communities for 3500 students”<sup>50</sup> Her educational efforts and leadership were not unrewarded. In fact, she received the King’s Jubilee medal for her work in adult education.<sup>51</sup> She was considered significant enough a citizen to be listed in the 1937 *Who’s Who of Newfoundland*, one of only four women including Lady Walwyn, wife of the Governor.<sup>52</sup> These distinctions indicate the regard in which she and the position of Field Secretary of the first Opportunity Schools were held. Yet, her male contemporaries were destined for much higher honours. Leo English, who taught navigation, received the Order of the British Empire, as did Vincent Burke. Clearly, the bar for women was much higher in this time period, in effect reinscribing gender boundaries.

Elsie Farwell held a distinguished position that would not have been open to her in the school system. She attended conferences and she wrote articles for the *Bulletin* of the World Association of Adult Education (now the International Council for Adult Education or ICAE).<sup>53</sup> Her work included not only administering the adult schools but also convening a yearly conference and providing training for the teachers. She also published her own *Bulletin* of the NAEA, modelled in part on the

*WAAE Bulletin*, and she ran a very successful organization. Along with being a good administrator, Elsie could show a lighthearted and even whimsical side. In describing the home visits, she said, "It would not surprise me if someone found poetry in our knitting needles these days. It is just beautiful to feel the power coming from our combined clubs of women all over the country."<sup>54</sup>

Elsie shared a great deal in common with the other women in the NAEA and it seems that they were quite friendly with each other. In her correspondence with Elizabeth (Liza) Northover, adult education teacher in the Goulds, who was leaving the Association to get married in Petite Forte, Elsie wrote an endearing letter, beginning with how she "felt the pang of coming separation." A charming tone to the December 1938 letter shows a depth of friendship with Elizabeth that was to continue in the ensuing years.<sup>55</sup> In acknowledging the resignation, Elsie said, "Now will you always come to me, as you have been doing, if at any time in your life you feel you need the human touch." She was a compassionate and caring woman who shared friendship with the women she supervised.

Mrs. Farwell, as she was invariably referred to, perhaps in deference to her widowed status, died at the age of 60. In a somewhat flowery obituary in the *Newfoundland Quarterly*, Leo English said that sorrow "tinged and pervaded her life."<sup>56</sup> Perhaps he was alluding to her widowed status or even mental depression, since we know that Elsie had taken a year of "rest" in 1936 after her first five years as Field Secretary.<sup>57</sup> The romantic way in which he describes her suggests that his own view of women in leadership, in this case a well-established woman, is somewhat stereotypic. Elsie returned to her post after that leave and held it until her death in 1944. Of her personal life after having been widowed we know little except that she lived at the YWCA and spent summers at home in Fogo. She was buried beside her husband in Eastport.<sup>58</sup>

Elsie chose a path that other women of her generation did not choose or have open to them. Her social class would have been a step above that of the many outport women who went to work as domestics in St. John's, and it also would have been higher than that of the working-class St. John's women who went to work in retail until they married. A senior administrative position for an outport woman was unique at the time.<sup>59</sup> She and her contemporaries in the NAEA did not belong to the upperclass of St. John's, such as suffragettes Armine Gosling (wife of the mayor of the city) and Adelaide Browning (wife of a prosperous merchant).<sup>60</sup> They also had little in common with Roman Catholic women who could enter religious orders and become school principals and teachers.

Elsie was an intelligent outport woman who had many assets but few options. As a relatively well-educated teacher she might have been expected to teach children for a few years and then leave teaching for marriage, and it seems she did that until she was widowed. Elsie's social positioning and her chance employment with a new initiative in adult education made a rewarding career possible for her. Adult education work and the Opportunity Schools were not just a job — or an interlude

— for Elsie and her peers; they provided a career with opportunity for advancement and for further education. Elsie continued teaching and administering but with adults, an option that few women of her time would have had. Whereas most of the provincial-level positions in education at this time were held by men such as Vincent Burke, this one position of Field Secretary was held by a woman, marking a major occupational victory in the 1930s and 1940s. Elsie appears to have been most able for the challenges of her position.

### *Jessie Miffen*

Jessie Beaumont Miffen, the second of the original six field workers, was a cause célèbre in the adult education world, known in local and national circles as a successful writer, leader in adult education and most especially as a pioneer in establishing the library system in Newfoundland. She was born in 1906 in Bonavista and educated at the Methodist College and Memorial University College, after which she taught for two years. She left Newfoundland to get her BA at Mount Allison University and when she returned she was hired by the NAEA to teach adult education using the Opportunity School method. In later years she earned a Bachelor of Library Science at the University of Toronto Library School, as well as studied at Columbia University in New York City.<sup>61</sup>

Jessie's early career in adult education included years spent in outport Newfoundland teaching at night and doing home visits during the day. Field Secretary Elsie Farwell's report for 1935 shows that Jessie had her hands full "with home groups three miles in one direction, four miles in another, and a mile and a half in a third."<sup>62</sup> An *Evening Telegram* article when she was named "Woman of the Week" in 1947 said that "for the first four years [1932-36] ... she travelled all over the island, covering the north coast down to the Straits of Belle Isle, and along the south coast, spending two months in one settlement, two months in another."<sup>63</sup> The excitement and the busyness of it all appealed to her, especially since it did not involve teaching children in one place all year long. In her own words she was "not dying to be a teacher" and, in fact, she had entered the teaching profession because "there seemed to be no alternative when I was ready to earn my living."<sup>64</sup> Of those early years teaching children in rural Newfoundland, Jessie said she was soon disillusioned. Indeed, living in rural Newfoundland was quite a shock since her hometown of Bonavista was very large by comparison. In later years she admitted, "I never did get to enjoy the actual classroom teaching."<sup>65</sup> One suspects that this was true for many of the adult education teachers who had started out teaching children.

Of her adult education career, Jessie was much more positive. She liked it so much, "it isn't work at all. It's a pleasure."<sup>66</sup> After graduating from Mount Allison University she had been waiting for seven months for "something to turn up" when she had an offer to be a field worker with the NAEA. Her own recollections of those



days include a fond remembrance of a public performance to mark the end of the term, which “was always enjoyed by both the performers and the audience.”<sup>67</sup> She felt more successful in this career than she had as a schoolteacher. Indeed, her own descriptions of these Opportunity Schools make the experience sound somewhat adventurous. In describing the rigour of her travels, she noted that sometimes she went by train but more often by the coastal steamer.<sup>68</sup> Like the other adult educators, she sometimes taught in communities with a religion different from her own, which caused local gossip; she reports finding the residents’ surprise somewhat amusing. In looking back on her years in adult education Jessie reflected, “Whenever it happened to be I enjoyed the work in its infinite variety.”<sup>69</sup>

Jessie wanted her work to be interesting and varied. Proof of her need for variety is shown in her decision to join the RCAF in the latter years of World War II, presumably for excitement, though that experience turned out to be “deadly dull. All I did was count nuts and bolts and airplane parts.”<sup>70</sup> Jessie was somewhat relieved to be called home to succeed Elsie Farwell as Field Secretary in 1944. Jessie had held that position for a year in 1936 when Elsie was on sick leave so she probably looked forward to taking a position with which she was familiar. She had much more responsibility in the new position but “it was an interesting and challenging [position].... It also involved much more travelling which made it even more interesting. I remained happily in that job for some three to four years roaming around the out-ports preaching the gospel of education.”<sup>71</sup>

Even in the 1940s a woman in a leadership role was somewhat suspect. When she went to communities to hold meetings it “raised a few eyebrows where people were used to addressing a chairman not chairwoman.”<sup>72</sup> Her groundbreaking work as a woman in a senior civil servant position, along with her later leadership work in libraries, earned her the distinction of being “outspoken on the rights of women.”<sup>73</sup>

Jessie’s work in adult education set the basis for her later career in the library system where she spent more than 20 years (1949-72) helping to establish in excess of 50 libraries. When she retired as director of the regional library system it included 75 libraries. Her leadership did not stop with her paid work. Jessie gave generously of her time, serving as president of the Atlantic Provinces Library Association and vice-president of the Canadian Library Association. Not surprisingly, her honours were legion: honorary doctor of laws from Mount Allison University and Memorial University; second winner of the Canadian Library Association’s Outstanding Service Award; member of the Order of Canada; and honorary membership in the Newfoundland Teachers Association.<sup>74</sup>

Jessie’s educational career in rural Newfoundland is presented in a humorous way in her own publications of later years, including *Be You a Library Missionary, Miss?* (1981); *Journey to Yesterday in the Out-harbours of Newfoundland* (1983); and a *Collection of Memories* (1989).<sup>75</sup> These offer a gentle view of Newfoundland and are written in a folksy style common to Newfoundland writing of the time. Notably, she also co-wrote and published with some established male academics

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and authors a collection titled *A Yaffle of Yarns* (1985). Others involved in this work included Otto Tucker, Professor of Education at Memorial University; Ted Russell, a well-known writer and teacher; Cyril Poole, principal of the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College (of Memorial University) in Corner Brook; and George Earle, a canon of the Anglican Church, former principal of Queen's Theological College, and sometime television actor.<sup>76</sup> She was in very fine company indeed, and it speaks to both her confidence and the esteem in which she was held that she would be part of this writing collective.

Jessie died in St. John's, on April 1, 1994, at the age of 87, having lived a very long and distinguished life.<sup>77</sup> Adult education had offered her a career possibility unlike that of a classroom teacher of children. It offered adventure and challenge, and served as a springboard to even greater career success in advancing adult education through the library system. She is distinguished among the three women described here in her career achievements, likely because she was younger than the other women and her working life extended into the 1970s, when opportunities for women expanded. There may also have been mentors in her career that made it possible for her to far exceed the expectations of a woman born in Bonavista in 1906. Plus, even after retiring from her second "major" career in the library system, she wrote and published a great deal.

### *Sara Coady*

Sara Coady was born at Fox Cove on the Burin Peninsula in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>78</sup> Although a later addition to the NAEA staff than the original seven women, she also had a distinguished career in adult education, and her life story evidences many of the same choices and opportunities. Sara was trained as a schoolteacher and began her teaching career in 1922 in Tors Cove. Soon after, she served as a principal, and by the time she was hired by the NAEA in 1935 she was well established as a professional teacher. In 1936 she attended the summer school at Clemson College and was appointed Acting Assistant Field Secretary.<sup>79</sup> Indeed Sara's files contain a play by Erin Kohn from Clemson that she used in her classes. She became Acting Field Secretary with the sudden death of Elsie Farwell in 1944, a death that seemed to have troubled her deeply:

To find words to express this shock which we all experienced when we heard of Mrs. Farwell's passing in May is indeed a task. It is difficult to think of Mrs. Farwell as gone – gone and left the work for which she was so pre-eminently qualified, and which she loved so much. But she will live on in her work and in the hearts of those who knew and appreciated her many sterling qualities. The sudden termination of her life's work came as a great blow and our loss is great. Newfoundland has lost a fine teacher — a splendid Social Service worker, the cause of Adult Education, — a great friend.<sup>80</sup>

Sara's years in adult education were busy, and like her colleagues in the NAEA, her work involved extensive travel and teaching in many remote villages. Her files contain reports on Opportunity Schools she had taught in Joe Batt's Arm and Tilting (Fogo Island), Corbin, Rushoon, and Salmonier (Burin region), Chapel's Cove and Holyrood (Conception Bay), Springdale and Poole's Island, St. John's, Trepassey, and Argentia. In later years she seems to have taken a teaching position at the Waterford Hospital, St. John's, where she met and married Humbert Giovannetti, a widower and staff dentist, in the mid-1960s.<sup>81</sup>

The depth of Sara's concern for her adult education work is reflected in her musings on education and what it demanded of the teacher, especially in a time of war. Describing what is needed to teach in a city context, she says in her 1939-40 report to Dr. Burke:

To keep a group of city boys interested and enthusiastic five days of the week for four continuous months requires enthusiasm, interest and tact on the part of teachers ordinarily, and much more so this year with so much unrest and disturbance in the air.<sup>82</sup>

Although energetic and innovative, Sara was challenged at times by a few difficult students. In her reports, she notes she has taught "youth not unknown to the criminal court," an indication that she had some adult troublemakers in her class, which was presumably all male. She was challenged, too, by the fact that some of her students were slow learners, although they worked hard for her: there were some who were "genuine plodders, who having put their hand to the plough, had not the slightest intention of looking backward."<sup>83</sup> Overall, Sara had a sense that "every day we felt we were helping some man to live a better and fuller life."<sup>84</sup> This sense of hope and of being involved in work that helped people live richer and fuller lives was common to these adult educators, and suggests that they saw themselves as being part of something bigger.

Faced with any form of adversity, Sara's tendency was to persevere. Along with her adult schools on Fogo Island, she saw the need to set up a club specifically for the women and girls on Saturday evening. When there was no longer a church-sponsored adult education program in St. John's, she set up a school there in 1937. Her efforts were applauded. Mrs. Farwell singled her out for special mention in a report in 1935:

Rushoon with its closing on Nov. 30 and here we have some startling things to report. We expected from the way Miss Coady assimilated her Training Course that something would result, so we gave her a new centre, virgin soil, a big problem, and we were not disappointed. Aided by Rev. J. Fleming, Miss Coady held her own public meeting.... Miss Coady's music evidently drove dull care away.<sup>85</sup>

Along with being a teacher, Sara seems to have supported extracurricular activities. While teaching at the US naval base in Argentina during and after World War II, she encouraged the publishing of a school newspaper in which both the Newfoundland and American students contribute articles and poems. The paper was called the *Mirror* and the society that sponsored it had a full executive, including a president, vice-president, and secretary.<sup>86</sup> Obviously, she was innovative.

A large part of the curriculum Sara Coady taught had to do with civics and hygiene, not surprising since she had training in these areas. Her papers include a guide for going to an interview, which had a section specially designed for women. Readers were told to “make sure the seams of your hose are straight” and to “take a bath, brush your teeth, and attend to your personal hygiene.” Other guides told them to “wash your hair every three weeks.” Yet, Sara seemed to have employed music, plays, and literature to stimulate the students’ imagination. She thought her job was in part to foster well-being. She noted that the students “enjoyed the music side of the programme very much, and although we had but a few moments each day to devote to this very important branch of our work, yet we feel that much joy and harmony was brought into many hearts.”<sup>87</sup> Her files contain a number of plays and poems used to teach, including a jaunty version of “The Night before Christmas,” dated 1959, that jests about being released from the local sanatorium. These days of teaching and her students meant a great deal to her.

Sara’s papers reveal a life that was both rich and broad. She kept news items and bulletins from the World Association for Adult Education, which no doubt served as an inspiration for her student newspaper in Argentina. Her private papers reference the Scandinavian folk schools and credit unions, as well as the National Film Society of Canada, a voluntary organization founded in 1935, which had a role in the establishment of the National Film Board several years later and encouraged film appreciation and the value of film in education, especially in adult education.<sup>88</sup> She held onto class lists from a night school in Branch in 1940-41, in which she and Jessie Miffen taught 58 students, and she kept a handwritten thank-you note from those students.

Sara seems to have felt deeply about the circumstance of her students and of the value of her work. In a report on a community centre in St. Johns from 1939-40 she related the great distances people walked to go to school, including a 61-year-old man from the Lower Battery who walked several hours each day to go to the classes. Her concern for the truly poor and unlearned was strong enough that she begged Vincent Burke to “get in touch with *more* pure illiterates, such men as these are shy, self-conscious, and quite naturally, are not quick to come forward.”<sup>89</sup> Sara continued her career in adult education for many years, working more and more in St. John’s and after a time as a staff teacher in the Waterford Hospital. Clearly, adult education was her life’s work, and she saw herself mainly as a helper of the disadvantaged. Her career path shows she believed people, male and female, to be equally capable.

## GENDER AND THE NAEA ADULT EDUCATION EFFORTS

The adult education efforts of the NAEA seem to have been effective not only for the teachers who were hired but for the students they taught, especially the women in rural Newfoundland. Certain elements of the NAEA strategy and mode of working appear to have been appealing to women such as Jessie Miffen, Sara Coady, and Elsie Farwell. Some of these distinctive elements are highlighted here.

### *The Opportunity School Model*

The Opportunity School model, designed to build on relationships and to involve the whole family, furnished the female educators with new ideas and skills.<sup>90</sup> For women like Jessie and Sara, the model and their positioning within it provided an opportunity in a very constrained social and economic environment to experience teaching in a unique way, as well as to benefit from education and travel. As shown in Jessie's recollections, it provided them with a viable alternative to teaching children in an isolated setting for a full year, as well as helped them push the boundaries of women's work to include the new profession of adult education.

The Opportunity School model allowed women to help women. Visiting the home and teaching women in groups allowed the teachers a more personal kind of relationship with their adult pupils while it gave greater educational access to women at home. Blackall's initial description of the Opportunity School model makes clear that it was conceived as an innovative approach to teaching literacy, for it took women's needs into account.<sup>91</sup> He boasted that during home schools the teacher can reach the women who cannot attend — "the teacher goes to them" and provides instruction on "the management of the home, the management of the children, and the management of the mother's health."<sup>92</sup> When one considers twenty-first-century efforts to focus on women to improve maternal child health in developing countries, such a focus in Newfoundland in the Depression years seems to be well ahead of its time. As well, an effort to recognize and accommodate women's multiple roles and responsibilities in the home and the barrier these presented to educational access also seems prescient. In 1935 alone, these adult educators made 3,040 home visits and taught 630 people in evening classes.<sup>93</sup>

The Opportunity School model included women's clubs in the home whereby the "teacher becomes the leader or director of a group rather than a teacher" as they learned in groups to read and write, or to weave, for example.<sup>94</sup> In addition, a household science teacher was provided to teach cooking, nutrition, and balance.<sup>95</sup> Given the reality of many women's lives at the time, this kind of in-house teaching was likely welcomed. Yet, it must be said that there was a somewhat paternalistic tone to the plans for both the women's clubs and the home visits. Women's work in the

home was viewed as so dull that it needed to be brightened up.<sup>96</sup> In commenting on the need for women's clubs, the inaugural pamphlet on the NAEA had this to say:

How continuous and monotonous day by day and week by week, is the work of most of our women folk. They are at it from early morning till late at night and through it all carry the care of children. It is amazing how they stand up to it. What a delight to them surely would be a happy gathering together of the women of the place for one night a week! Some reading aloud could be done, some songs sung, and all sorts of talk could be had about the next way to do things at home. A good, sensible active woman – no matter of what age, young or old, – would be necessary to keep the organization going.<sup>97</sup>

The “good, sensible active woman” descriptor hints at some of the stereotypes of what a female leader or teacher might look or act like. Yet, the very fact that these classes, groups, and visits provided access to women students was no doubt pleasing to the female teachers such as Sara, Elsie and Jessie. They could use this opportunity to be part of the amelioration of troubling home circumstances, especially during the Great Depression.

Along with the clubs and the home visits, on occasion the NAEA had female-only classes, such as one they hosted at the Church of England cathedral, which was described as the “outstanding event of our year.”<sup>98</sup> Another was “a special class for women [which] was established in the Synod Building, St Johns. Many of the girls who attended this ... were girls from the outports.”<sup>99</sup> The tradition of separating girls and boys already had been established by religious groups, Protestant and Catholic, in Newfoundland. As well, the upper-class supporters of “The Girls’ Department of the King George the Fifth Institute” operated a residence for outport girls working as domestics in the city. This started as a home for Labrador girls who came to St. John’s as helpers on the schooners, and it soon broadened to be a home for outport girls. Lady Davidson, wife of the Governor, Mrs. W.C. Job, and Mrs. Armine Gosling, along with Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, set up the residence and initiated the weekly literacy classes for girls.<sup>100</sup> Having separate classes for NAEA students, then, was an accepted practice and it likely allowed some flexibility in the curriculum and an opportunity for the women involved, either as teachers or learners, to be freer in discussion and in content focus.

### *Feminized and Gendered Work*

Of course, these adult education teachers were not free of the constraints of their sex. Some evidence suggests that “classic” feminine traits constituted competence or effectiveness in their jobs. In correspondence from 1940 with the Secretary for Education, the Field Secretary, Elsie Farwell, describes the work of Miss Marion

Christian who had been in Isle Valen, Placentia Bay, noting that Marion has the “personality, tact and sympathy so much needed in a world which brings the teachers very near to the daily lives of people” and she has “keen interest in everything pertaining to their [students’] welfare.” Thus, the model of teaching was one of personality, and the feminization of this role is reflected in language like “tact and sympathy,”<sup>101</sup> very stereotypic feminine qualities.<sup>102</sup> So ingrained were these expectations and beliefs about women that the teachers themselves perpetuated them.

There is no doubt that Burke saw adult education work as women’s work. According to him, they were engaged partly in teaching and partly in social service in that they visited homes, “among with which were found many social problems, some which were diagnosed and help given towards a solution.”<sup>103</sup> When he described their work elsewhere Burke noted that they used first aid kits from the Public Health Department so that the “teachers were able, in places where no nurse or doctor was available, to administer to minor ills and accidents ... and in some cases, assisting in the work of inoculation.”<sup>104</sup> In many ways, Burke’s leadership and his expectation of caring behaviour reinscribed class and gender roles for these women. It is instructive to think of what he does not say in his reports and writings: he does not refer to these women as leaders, as possible successors to him, or as deserving of positions like his own. It is also instructive to think of what the women themselves do not say: they do not indicate other career aspirations or show any resentment to the primarily male leadership. For them, adult education work appears to be a reprieve from what Jessie Miffen described as the tedium of teaching children. Seemingly, they are caught in the confines of their own gender and class expectations.

The use of eight-week stints was a contributing factor in the adult school success and in the educators’ satisfaction with it. Jessie remembered that that she “enjoyed adult education much more [than school teaching] as we went from community to community and never stayed more than two months.”<sup>105</sup> The language of the educators shows that to some degree they saw themselves as part of a larger effort to cure illiteracy, despondency, and poverty. In her 1935 annual report Elsie says that they are fighting “the fight with our most alarming peril, illiteracy”<sup>106</sup> and that they need to “slay the dragon in our midst” even if it means continuing on “the front line trenches”<sup>107</sup> to combat illiteracy. Apart from the use of fighting language, Elsie is quick to point out that this work is adventuresome: “the winter months for Field Secretary and teachers must continue to be venturesome, thrilling even dangerous, particularly with a winter like last. Any person reading this report with aspirations to do the work in either of these capacities should do so with body, mind and soul searchings before taking the final plunge.”<sup>108</sup> Clearly, this was not just any job. For Elsie and her colleagues, it was a bona fide career made possible by the Opportunity School model. While the model had gender constraints, it also allowed great freedom and possibility for women at the time.

## THE SUMMER SCHOOL OF 1938

One of the major achievements of the NAEA was its leadership in the summer school held in St. John's in 1938. The school, almost totally funded by Carnegie, was a major undertaking for the NAEA.<sup>109</sup> Although it was proposed as a yearly event there is no evidence that it continued after the first year, possibly because of World War II and the need to concentrate on education on the American bases, such as at Argentina.<sup>110</sup> Mary Maddock, BA, who had been with the NAEA since its inception, was appointed principal and all the best-educated adult teachers were involved, including Mercedes Marshall, BA, and Eleanor Coady, BSc.<sup>111</sup> Such summer schools, also funded by Carnegie, were not uncommon in the United States as a way of bringing working-class women out of their home environments to give them a taste of middle-class life and liberal education (the curriculum was nursing, weaving, literature, etc.).<sup>112</sup> Most notable among these residential experiences was the American school at Bryn Mawr in Pennsylvania, which hosted 1,700 women from 1921 to 1938 and is documented in a film titled *The Women of Summer*. The Bryn Mawr school was written about in the *WAAE Bulletin* that the NAEA staff members received.<sup>113</sup> Unlike the Newfoundland model (both the summer school and the Opportunity schools), which reinforced class and gender roles, the Bryn Mawr school was infused with critical perspectives on life and work.

The NAEA summer school was designed for women who had been students in the outpost Opportunity Schools.<sup>114</sup> It was modelled on the Danish folk school, according to Dr. Burke, who makes repeated efforts in his writing to connect adult education activity in Newfoundland to larger international efforts in the field, of which he would have been aware from conferences, meetings, and Carnegie and WAAE linkages.<sup>115</sup> The women themselves likened it to the summer schools at Clemson College, which both Sara Coady and Elsie Farwell had attended.<sup>116</sup> Of the 15 chosen female attendees, nine were mothers, and of these, four were grandmothers. The students came from as far away as Lourdes and St. Alban's to as close as Brigus, Bay de Verde, and Heart's Delight, and they ranged in age from 17 to 66 years.<sup>117</sup> Although men attended the Opportunity Schools, this summer school was just for women and they were housed at the YWCA, where Mrs. Farwell lived.<sup>118</sup>

Like the American summer schools, students at the NAEA summer school helped with the cooking and cleaning which gave them experience and training in household sciences. Tea, or supper, was served at five, and the students learned how to set the table, as well as how to cook vegetables. Though there was no running water and indoor plumbing at the YWCA, and no fridge, it seems to have been quite an enjoyable experience for both the teachers and the students.<sup>119</sup> One of the benefits, no doubt, was the attention they enjoyed from well-placed citizens and organizations such as the Rotary Club, which served them lunch. They were hosted by the former Prime Minister, Sir Richard Squires, and his wife, Lady Helena Squires, who had also been a politician. This adult education summer school was





Summer School of 1938. Front Row: Eliza Bishop (far left); Mary Maddock, summer school principal (3rd from left); Vincent Burke, Director of Adult Education (Centre). Middle Row: Amelia White (Centre); Florence Reid (2nd from left); Jane Field (far right). Top Row: Ella Brown (2nd from right); Maud Grant (Centre).

Unidentified others in the photograph include Mrs. Patrick Flynn, Petite Forte; Mrs. Wilhelmina Penney, Cannings Cove, BB; Mrs. William Budgell, New Bay, NDB; Miss Mildred Bursey, Goulds, Brigus; Mrs. Bridget Collier, St. Alban's; Mrs. Lillian Ivany, Ivanhoe, TB; Mrs. Andrew Benoit, Lourdes, Port au Port; Miss Mary Norman, Red Island, PB; and Miss Monica Noonan, Bay de Verde. These names (complete with marital status) appear in "Acceptance for Summer School, 1938." Newfoundland Adult Education Association Summer School, 1938. (GN/77/1/B Box E17, PANL). "Sheila Sills, granddaughter of Mrs. Florence Reid of Heart's Delight, contributed from her private collection the photograph of the 1938 summer school class that appears here and on the cover of this issue."

held in concert with the Cooperative and Jubilee Guilds summer schools and a teachers' summer school run by educational leader Dr. Albert Hatcher. The NAEA plan for the summer school indicates that they were strategically linked so that they could take some classes with the Cooperative school.<sup>120</sup> Yet, despite the efforts to encourage economic co-operation, which was part of the Commission of Government's plan, the summer school reports read like social diaries and it likely accomplished little more than teaching lessons in genteel living.

In addition to inviting them to Government House, Lady Eileen Walwyn, wife of the Governor, also visited them at the YWCA; Lady Helena Squires gave a lecture

on gardening to a conjoint group of adult education and Jubilee Guild students.<sup>121</sup> Each adult education student was asked to keep a diary and there was a room provided for writing, ensuring that they reinforced their literacy skills.<sup>122</sup> They had classes on subjects ranging from public speaking to philosophy, and even a class on weaving conducted by a Miss Isabelle Warren. Perhaps the highlight was having 13 of the women do a radio broadcast from the broadcasting room of the Newfoundland Hotel.

This method of residential teaching, bringing the women together to experience life away from their everyday cares, allowed the NAEA teachers to work with women in a concentrated time, to do as the experts in the *WAAE Bulletin* recommended, and to be in step with adult education efforts across the continent. This special residential school helped to solidify the identity of the women as adult educators and to allow them to participate in one of the finest educational experiments of the day. Yet, in its emphasis on class betterment and in its focus on feminine topics such as gardening and housework, it did not advance in any great way the equality of women. In some ways it reinforced class status and the stereotypic feminine traits of nurturing and care. That said, it was a short-lived moment in adult education history.

## LOOSENING OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CONSTRAINTS

The adult education movement led by the NAEA was distinct from contemporaneous movements like the Antigonish Movement in that it was not a Catholic or religious endeavour and was not led by groups of religious women. The large religious orders in Newfoundland at this time, the Mercy and Presentation sisters, focused on schooling and health care. The NAEA funding did not come from churches, and it was not connected to Newfoundland's denominational school system. Women served as Field Secretary, staff, and leaders in this association, which was not often the case in the church-led school system. When one considers that in Newfoundland everything from settlement to marriage and schooling was identified with religious institutions, this non-denominationalism was quite remarkable. It allowed the female adult educators freedom from some of the constraints imposed on women in the day schools.

Yet, there is no doubt that for men like Blackall, who was the first president of the NAEA, adult education was a religious calling.<sup>123</sup> He approached it with religious zeal. "I exhort you to form a real brotherhood.... Like a gathering stream ... [t]his brotherhood shall grow bigger and bigger. Your name shall be legion, and you will constrain the government of Newfoundland to make a really generous annual grant."<sup>124</sup> This religious zeal is not reflected in the existing curriculum materials of the NAEA or in its correspondence.

When the summer school was held in 1938, the students and the teachers visited different churches, yet no clergy were invited to speak during the class. The organizers turned instead to government leaders for speeches and lectures. Like other NAEA activities, the adult education or literacy work of these female educators was not religiously oriented, there were no religious involved in the teaching or organizing, and the curriculum was not overtly religious. Burke and others likely made a deliberate effort to avoid church involvement.<sup>125</sup> Burke, Blackall, and Farwell may not have seen adult education as requiring religious oversight since adult education required different skills and personnel than denominational schools. Unlike the school system, which had been thoroughly denominational for the best part of a century, the NAEA did not have clerics or nuns on its governing board, though the denominational superintendents had been responsible for instigating it.<sup>126</sup> No doubt, Burke's status as Superintendent of Roman Catholic schools would have helped him avoid interference in deciding which teachers taught where, which areas got schools, and what the curriculum was.<sup>127</sup> As it was, distance from the church allowed these female adult educators a certain degree of autonomy, which was not true of teachers in the school system. In addition, of course, adult education focused on people who already were fully socialized and who, from earlier schooling and life experience, had had the values of society, including religious values, inculcated in them.

The degree to which women like Jessie, Elsie, and Sarah thought about religious inspiration or vocation in their work is not known. Yet, they were aware that they were part of the reconstructive efforts in Newfoundland during the Commission of Government years. How deeply they considered this to be central to their participation is unclear. As Overton argues, adult education was an integral part of rebuilding, and these women were pleased to contribute to citizenship and to overall growth in prosperity. There is no indication, however, that they saw adult education as a moral mission to work with wayward men and woman in addressing their personal weakness.<sup>128</sup> After all, they were teaching the same kind of people they had grown up with in rural Newfoundland. They were conscious of making the world a better place, of providing needed services, and of improving the general lot of their students. Basically, they were educated single women from the outports who had tried regular school teaching and who saw adult education as a way to use a variety of skills and abilities, and to experience life apart from their families of origin. One can imagine that these educated women would have served as inspiration for each other and encouraged further education and training. They would have been a support for the women they educated in their homes, in evening schools, and in their summer school. Their view of their work is best represented in the words of the constitution of the NAEA: "the mission of adult education is to give knowledge for understanding and joy, to free judgment from prejudice, to strengthen faith, to foster good-fellowship and to let charity abound."<sup>129</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This movement in Newfoundland, and the experiment it represented, was unique in adult education history. For women in the first half of the twentieth century it allowed for freedom from the typical fields and occupations of nursing and teaching children, and it gave them scope for travel, challenge, and variety. The way in which the NAEA program was structured with a combination of day home visits, women's clubs, and evening classes maximized women students' opportunity to participate and to be taught by women. As an independent association and movement, the original NAEA had a short life, which seems to be the case of many similar associations in Canada at the time. Ironically, it precipitated its own demise by folding into government in 1936; yet, the NAEA did provide a reprieve and an opportunity for women, both teachers and students, in a depressed era.<sup>130</sup>

The women of this adult education movement in the 1930s and 1940s experienced career growth and numerous challenges. They had occasion to travel around Newfoundland and to further their education in ways that other women of their generation did not. Elsie Farwell held a major provincial and administrative post during the Depression years; Jessie Miffen had one of the most distinguished careers of Newfoundland women in the twentieth century, both in libraries and in adult education work; and Sara Coady was a successful adult education teacher and administrator. The educational processes used seemed to be conducive to teaching and learning for women at this time. These women were of the emerging middle class, positioned above poor outport domestics and beneath the rich and married socialites in St. John's. Their capital was education and marital status (single or widowed), and they forged new ways of thinking about women's work. Yet, questions remain about how the NAEA reinforced stereotypes and feminized notions of teaching. Further research needs to be done on women in this period in Newfoundland for us to understand more fully their situation and its implications for adult education.

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## Notes

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<sup>2</sup>Phillip McCann, "Class, Gender and Religion in Newfoundland Education: 1836-1901," *Historical Studies in Education* 1 (1989): 190. See also McCann, *Schooling in a Fishing Society* (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1994); McCann. "The Educational Policy of the Commission of Government," *Newfoundland Studies* 3, 2 (1987): 201-15.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Vincent P. Burke (Director of Adult Education), "Adult Education in Newfoundland," draft manuscript, 29 Oct. 1938, GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL. In 1903 Mansbridge founded the Workers Education Association in the UK, which soon spread to Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. He also founded the World Association of Adult Education in 1918.

<sup>4</sup>All too frequently, women's identity is obscured. The author deliberately refers to these women by their full name, or their first name, as a way of making them visible as women. For the implications of naming, see Susan M. Tescione, "A Woman's Name: Implications for Publication, Citation and Tenure," *Educational Researcher* 27, 8 (1998): 38-42.

<sup>5</sup>Linda Kealey, ed., *Pursuing Equality: Historical Perspectives on Women in Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's: ISER Books, 1993), 7.

<sup>6</sup>Katherine McManus. "Before the 'Fogo Project' There was Florence O'Neill: A Glimpse of Early Adult Education and a Dedicated Advocate," in Linda Cullum, Carmelita McGrath, and Marilyn Porter, eds., *Women in Newfoundland and Labrador. Weather's Edge: A Compendium* (St. John's: Killick Press, 2006), 36-47.

<sup>7</sup>James Overton, "Moral Education of the Poor: Adult Education and Land Settlement Schemes in Newfoundland in the 1930s," *Newfoundland Studies* 11, 2 (1995): 250-82.

<sup>8</sup>McCann, "Class, Gender and Religion."

<sup>9</sup>Newfoundland Adult Education Association (NAEA), *What Is It? What Are Its Aims?* (St. John's: Advocate, 1930), in CNS, Memorial University. This pamphlet shows that the NAEA had its own constitution and a rather large agenda.

<sup>10</sup>The women were variously referred to as "teachers in adult school" (Adult School Application, GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL); "social service worker[s]" (*Twelfth Annual Report of the Teaching Staff of the Adult Schools*, presented at the annual meeting of the Newfoundland Adult Education Association, June 1944, GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL); "community workers" (letter from L.W. Shaw, Secretary for Education, to Mrs. Elsie Farwell, Field Secretary for Adult Education, 26 Feb. 1940, GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL); and as doing "community work" (Field Secretary [Elsie Farwell], "Opportunity Schools of the Nfld. Adult Education Ass'n," *Evening Telegram*, 5 Nov. 1934). Meanwhile, the male

teachers were referred to as “special lecturer[s] in adult education” (Leo E.F. English, “Report of Navigation Schools, 1943-1944,” addressed to Dr. V.P. Burke, Director of Adult Education, 29 June 1934 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL). Leo English is no relation to the author.

<sup>11</sup>There has been considerable historical scholarship on adult education and social justice movements in Canada. See, for example, Gordon Selman, Michael Cooke, Mark Selman, and Paul Dampier, *The Foundations of Adult Education in Canada*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 1998); Dorothy MacKeracher, “Social Change in Historical Perspective,” in Patricia Cranton and Leona M. English, eds., *Reaching Out across the Border: Canadian Perspectives on Adult Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 83-92. For a focus on the Maritimes, and especially women’s contributions to the Antigonish Movement in northeastern Nova Scotia, see Rusty Neal, *Brotherhood Economics: Women and Co-operatives in Nova Scotia* (Sydney, NS: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1998).

<sup>12</sup>Michael R. Welton, *Little Mosie from the Margaree: A Biography of Moses Michael Coady* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishers, 2001). Also, Anne Alexander, *Antigonish Movement: Moses Coady and Adult Education Today* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishers, 1997).

<sup>13</sup>Katherine Anne McManus, “Florence O’Neill, a Newfoundland Adult Educator: Alone in the Wilderness,” PhD thesis, University of British Columbia, 2000. An undergraduate thesis by Jonathan Luedee contains a chapter on Sara Coady but the focus of the thesis is much broader than Coady. See Luedee ““For the Rehabilitation of This Country’: Adult Education in Newfoundland, 1933-1946,” BA honours thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2003.

<sup>14</sup>When the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), also funded by Carnegie, was founded in 1926, its first president was James E. Russell, dean of Teachers College, Columbia University, 1898-1927. Russell was affiliated with Carnegie. Indeed, he visited the NAEA in 1931, resulting in further funding from Carnegie. See *Second Annual Report of the NAEA* (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL). For a history of the Carnegie Corporation and the AAACE, see Amy D. Rose, “Beyond Classroom walls: The Carnegie Corporation and the Founding of the American Association for Adult Education,” *Adult Education Quarterly* 39, 3 (1989): 140-51.

<sup>15</sup>In-depth discussions of the NAEA are in McManus, *Florence O’Neill*; Luedee, “For the Rehabilitation of This Country”; and Overton, “Moral Education of the Poor.” Attempts have been made to revive the original voluntary organization, but these efforts appear to have languished in recent years.

<sup>16</sup>The Newfoundland government had given \$10,000 to night schools in 1920 but the efforts clearly were sporadic and underfunded. Fred. W. Rowe, *Development of Education* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1964), 70.

<sup>17</sup>In a letter to J.A. Winter, Commissioner for Home Affairs and Education, dated 12 Aug. 1941, Burke observed that Dr. Frederick Keppel would be retiring as “distinguished President” of Carnegie so he asked Winter to make a testimonial or gift “even if only a statuette of the Newfoundland Caribou” for Carnegie’s generosity to Newfoundland.” Burke reminded Winter of the considerable sums that the Corporation had given over time for Memorial University College and for adult education. (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL). For further information on Carnegie grants to Newfoundland, see Stephen H. Stackpole, *Carnegie-*

gie Corporation Commonwealth Program 1911-1961 (New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1963).

<sup>18</sup>For notes on the funding of libraries, see V.P. Burke, "Adult Education in Newfoundland," in J.R. Smallwood, ed., *The Book of Newfoundland*, vol. 1 (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, 1937), 295-98.

<sup>19</sup>That Burke clearly saw adult education as distinct is clear from the fact that he wrote a separate entry on schools for Smallwood's *Book of Newfoundland*. See V.P. Burke, "Education in Newfoundland," in J.R. Smallwood, ed., *The Book of Newfoundland*, vol. 1 (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, 1937), 287-95.

<sup>20</sup>Blackall, among his other achievements, was first president and founding member of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association. Burke was the second secretary of the NTA. See Stanley J. Carew, *The Nine Lives of Paton College* (St. John's: Paton College, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1974), 10-11. Also, Harry Cuff, "NTA's Secretaries 1890-1965," extract from the *N.T.A. Journal*, Feb. 1966, n.a. (PAB File: Education to 1949, CNS, Memorial University).

<sup>21</sup>Burke was born in St. Jacques, Newfoundland, and educated at St. Bonaventure's College, St. Francis Xavier University, Columbia University, and the University of Ottawa. Michael McCarthy, "Dr. Vincent P. Burke — His Life and Times," *The Monitor* (Dec. 1979): 23; "Vincent P. Burke," *Who's Who in and from Newfoundland*. 3rd ed. (St. John's: Hibbs, 1937), 92-93; "Dr. Vincent Patrick Burke," in J.R. Smallwood, ed., *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 1 (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, 1981), 295-96; Bert Riggs, "Burke, a Peer Among Educators," *Evening Telegram*, 3 Aug. 1999, 9; and on the occasion of his promotion to Officer of the Order of the British Empire, "Dr. Vincent P. Burke," *Newfoundland Quarterly* 30, 4 (1931): 23. Burke's biographies show that he was one of the key educational leaders of the day, involved at the highest levels of school boards, the teachers' union, government departments, university, and educational associations. He retired as a senator.

<sup>22</sup>For the correspondence concerning the move of the NAEA to the Department of Home Affairs and Education, see Letter from Commissioner of Home Affairs and Education [J.A. Winter] to V.P. Burke, Director of Adult Education, 23 Nov. 1936 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL). The letter suggests some urgency in the matter: "It is desirable that the Adult Education Association should be established without further delay as a branch of the Department." Clearly, Burke, Blackall, Winter, and likely Farwell realized that they needed government funding if the work of the NAEA was to go on. Their decision to transfer to government was wise, yet it may have made them unintentionally complicit with the Commission of Government's goals to suppress public demands for more money, resources, and help. See Overton, "Moral Education of the Poor."

<sup>23</sup>The NAEA continued as an association within government, holding yearly general meetings, well into 1944. See *Twelfth Annual Report*. As adult education became more centralized after World War II, the need for the Association diminished. In 1945 a school for ex-servicemen was formed to teach trades and in 1959 the Department of Extension at Memorial University was established to undertake community development. As well, a centre for adult education was funded in St. John's. See W. Moore, *Adult Education in Newfoundland*, Brief to a Commission on Education and Youth, 1965. CNS.

<sup>24</sup>Radio broadcasts were part of the adult education program even from the beginning. Some of the reports of the NAEA annual general meetings indicate that they sponsored radio

broadcasts through the Dominion Broadcasting Company on topics as diverse as numbers, music, Brazil, health, and fisheries. See Elsie Farwell, *Third Annual Report of the NFLD Adult Education Association*, 15 June 1935 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL). These broadcasts have all been taped over, unfortunately. For a discussion of government use of radio broadcasts to help improve the moral character of the people, see Jeff A. Webb, *The Voice of Newfoundland: A Social History of the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland 1939-1949* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), especially ch. 1.

<sup>25</sup>Margo I. Duley, "'The Radius of Her Influence for Good': The Rise and Triumph of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Newfoundland, 1909-1925," in Linda Kealey, ed., *Pursuing Equality: Historical Perspectives on Women in Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's: ISER Books, 1993), 14-65. Women in Newfoundland won the right to vote in 1925.

<sup>26</sup>Elsie Farwell's appointment is noted in the *Second Annual Report*.

<sup>27</sup>W.W. Blackall, "Adult Education in Newfoundland," *Newfoundland Quarterly* 32, 3 (1932): 11-12. At the time of writing, Blackall was president of the NAEA, and in this article announcing the formation of the Association and its proposed activities he takes the liberty of asking for donations, with hopes that someone might be willing to give "two thousand dollars, or a considerable portion thereof, as we are sorely in need of funds" (p. 12). The photograph of the first NAEA staff appears also in Overton, "Moral Education of the Poor."

<sup>28</sup>Kathleen Thompson left the NAEA, possibly to be married, in 1936. See *Fifth Annual Report of the Teaching Staff of the Adult Schools*, presented at the annual meeting of the NAEA, 18 June 1937 (Sara Coady Papers, NHS). The women's marital status is mentioned here because it was an expectation that they quit teaching when they married.

<sup>29</sup>The 1911 Newfoundland census reports that Ida Parsons was born to John and Elizabeth Parsons, one of three children, in Coderick's Cove, Fogo district, in May 1894. Newfoundland Grand Banks: Newfoundland Genealogical and Historical Data, at: <ngb.chebucto.org/C1911/11-fogo-isl-fogo.shtml> (accessed 11 Nov. 2010). The *Daily News* for 18 Jan. 1934 records Ida's death. Vincent Burke considers her death to be of such moment that he also records it, drawing attention to the fact that she died in service to her work: See Burke, "Adult Education in Newfoundland" (1937), 298.

<sup>30</sup>Mary Maddock continued with the NAEA for many years. Like Jessie Miffen, she had already earned her BA when she joined the Association. See Blackall, "Adult Education in Newfoundland." Mary took a leadership role as the principal of the NAEA summer school in 1938. She is later identified as NAEA staff in the *Eighth Annual Report of the Teaching Staff*, 27 June 1940 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL).

<sup>31</sup>"Woman of the Week," *Evening Telegram*, 10 May 1947, 8.

<sup>32</sup>As small as their salaries were, teachers in the school system were not doing well either. In 1933-34 the Newfoundland education budget had been cut in half from 1932, resulting in a similar reduction in teachers' salaries. Salaries did not return to pre-Depression levels until 1939. See Robert D. Pitt, *A Legacy of Leadership: A Commemorative Book Honouring the Centennial Celebrations of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association* (St. John's: Newfoundland Teachers' Association, 1990). The one area where the adult educators saw themselves as hard done by was in the area of pensions. Unlike schoolteachers, they were not covered by the pension provisions of the Education Act. See "Letter of Shaw to Burke." It is unclear how long it took to have this matter resolved.

<sup>33</sup>V.P. Burke, "Newfoundland Adult Education Association, 1943-1944" [salaries and expenses], 19 Oct. 1944 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL).



<sup>34</sup>McCann, "Class, Gender and Religion," 190.

<sup>35</sup>Cited *ibid.*, 187.

<sup>36</sup>See Burke, "Adult Education in Newfoundland," (1937), 297.

<sup>37</sup>McCann, "Class, Gender and Religion," 185.

<sup>38</sup>Burke, "Adult Education in Newfoundland" (1938), 2.

<sup>39</sup>NAEA, *What Is It? What Are Its Aims?*, 5. See also: "The Newfoundland Adult Education Association. Provisional Constitution," in *Annual Report of the Bureau of Education, 1928-1929* (St. John's: Government of Newfoundland), xx-xxi.

<sup>40</sup>Though all of the early correspondence discusses the Opportunity School method, the final reference to this term seems to have been by Burke in "Adult Education in Newfoundland" (1937). The NAEA reports last used the term in 1935. See the *Third Annual Report*. Yet, the essential elements of combined night school and home visits remained.

<sup>41</sup>Burke, "Adult Education in Newfoundland" (1938), 2. Kohn was the author of some of the curriculum materials used by the NAEA. One of her plays, "Life or Death," is included in the Sara Coady Papers, NHS.

<sup>42</sup>The Newfoundland School Society, which operated in Newfoundland for almost 100 years, at various times offered day and night schools, both taught by the same teacher. See Phillip W. McCann, "The Newfoundland School Society, 1823-55: Missionary Enterprise or Cultural Imperialism?" in J.A. Mangan, ed., *Benefits Bestowed: Education and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 94-112.

<sup>43</sup>Burke, "Adult Education in Newfoundland" (1937), 297.

<sup>44</sup>Burke, "Adult Education in Newfoundland" (1938), 6.

<sup>45</sup>Ellen Mary Dinn, "Elsie May Farwell," in J.R. Smallwood, ed., *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 2 (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, 1984), 18; "Elsie May Farwell," *Who's Who in and from Newfoundland*. 3rd ed. (St. John's: R. Hibbs, 1937), 168.

<sup>46</sup>The *St. John's Daily News* reported that on 16 Aug. 1918 Elsie Payne of Fogo married Richard Farwell of Eastport. Newfoundland Grand Banks: Newfoundland Genealogical and Historical Data, at: <[ngb.chebucto.org/NewsPaper-Obits/news-1918b-e.shtml](http://ngb.chebucto.org/NewsPaper-Obits/news-1918b-e.shtml)> (accessed 10 Sept. 2010).

<sup>47</sup>See Pitt, "A Legacy of Leadership." See also Jennie Higgins, "The Commission of Government and Education," 2007, at: Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage website: <[www.heritage.nf.ca/law/educationcomm.html](http://www.heritage.nf.ca/law/educationcomm.html)> (accessed 10 Oct. 2010).

<sup>48</sup>This is noted in the "Brief Report of the Expenditures of the \$6000 Given by Carnegie in 1931." The writer is likely Burke, though he is not named (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL).

<sup>49</sup>Blackall, "Adult Education in Newfoundland," 11-12.

<sup>50</sup>"Elsie May Farwell," *Who's Who*," 168.

<sup>51</sup>Dinn, "Elsie May Farwell," 18.

<sup>52</sup>"Elsie May Farwell," *Who's Who*," 168.

<sup>53</sup>E.M. Farwell, "News from Newfoundland," *World Association for Adult Education. Bulletin* 33, Second Series (1943): 1-2.

<sup>54</sup>See "Newfoundland Adult Education: The Adult Schools," *Bulletin* 16 (Apr. 1940): 11 (Sara Coady Papers, NHS). She had been publishing these bulletins from early on in her administration since she references the Christmas bulletin in "Letter of Elsie Farwell to

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Elizabeth Northover,” 17 Nov. 1938, letter in the private files of Elizabeth’s daughter, Patricia Hayden Ryan, St. John’s.

<sup>55</sup>“Letter of Elsie Farwell to Elizabeth Northover.” Elizabeth is not to be confused with Bertha, who was one of the first six field workers and presumably Elizabeth’s relative.

<sup>56</sup>Leo E.F. English, “In Memoriam. Mrs. Elsie May Farwell,” *Newfoundland Quarterly* 44, 1 (Summer 1944): 8. Her death is also reported in “Review of 1943-1944,” *Annual Report to the Department of Education* (St. John’s: Government of Newfoundland, 1945), 30.

<sup>57</sup>*Fifth Annual Report*.

<sup>58</sup>Stonepics, a pictorial database of cemeteries in Newfoundland, indicates that Elsie Farwell was buried in Eastport alongside Richard Farwell who died in 1921. The *St John’s Daily News* reported Richard’s accident, Thursday, 1 Dec. 1921.

<sup>59</sup>Nancy Forestell, “Times Were Hard. The Pattern of Women’s Paid Labour in St. John’s between the Two World Wars,” in Carmelita McGrath, Barbara Neis, and Marilyn Porter, eds., *Their Lives and Times: Women in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Collage* (St. John’s: Killick Press, 1995), 76-92.

<sup>60</sup>See Duley, “The Radius of Her Influence for Good.”

<sup>61</sup>Pearce Penney, “Jessie B. Miffen 1906-1994,” *APLA Bulletin* (May-June 1994): 5.

<sup>62</sup>“Opportunity Schools of the Nfld. Adult Education Ass’n,” *Evening Telegram*, 5 Nov. 1934.

<sup>63</sup>“Woman of the Week,” 8.

<sup>64</sup>Otto Tucker et al., *A Yaffle of Yarns* (St. John’s: Harry Cuff Publications, 1985), 86.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>66</sup>“Woman of the Week,” 8.

<sup>67</sup>Tucker et al., *A Yaffle of Yarns*, 97.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>70</sup>“Jessie Miffen Library Missionary,” *Decks Awash* 15, 1 (1986): 31.

<sup>71</sup>Tucker et al., *A Yaffle of Yarns*, 100.

<sup>72</sup>“Jessie Miffen,” *Decks Awash*, 31.

<sup>73</sup>Obituary [for Jessie Miffen]. *MUN Gazette* 26, 18: 2.

<sup>74</sup>Jessie’s various honours are noted in: “Awards,” *Quill and Quire* 46, 8 (1980): 24; “Honorary Membership to Dr. Miffen,” *Newfoundland Herald*, 23 Mar. 1985, 15; “Outstanding Service to Librarianship Award,” *Canadian Library Journal* 37, 5 (1980): 355; “Teachers’ Assoc. to Award Honorary Membership to Dr. Miffen April 9,” *Newfoundland Herald*, 23 Mar. 1985; “Outstanding Service: Miffen Takes Honours,” *Feliciter* 26, 6 (1980): 1; “Jessie Beaumont Miffen,” in Cyril Poole, ed., *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 3 (St. John’s: Harry Cuff Publications, 1991), 537. A collection of articles on her life is available in a biography file, CNS, Memorial University.

<sup>75</sup>Miffen, *Be You a Library Missionary, Miss?* (St. John’s: Harry Cuff Publications, 1981); *Journey to Yesterday in the Out-harbours of Newfoundland* (St. John’s: Harry Cuff Publications, 1983); *A Collection of Memories* (St. John’s: Harry Cuff Publications, 1989); also Miffen, *The Development of Public Library Services in Newfoundland 1934-1972* (Halifax: Dalhousie University Library and School of Library Service, Occasional Paper Series, #17, 1978).

<sup>76</sup>Tucker et al., *A Yaffle of Yarns*.

<sup>77</sup>“Former Library Director Dead at 87,” *Evening Telegram*, 7 Apr. 1994, 3.

<sup>78</sup>Her birth was likely around 1904 since she started teaching in 1922. Apart from the NAEA files at PANL and the Sara Coady Papers at the NHS, the author was unable to find any other information on Coady, such as birth and death records.

<sup>79</sup>Letter to Miss Sara Coady from V.P. Burke, Director of Adult Education, 13 June 1936, Sara Coady Papers, NHS.

<sup>80</sup>*Twelfth Annual Report*.

<sup>81</sup>Personal Files, Sara Coady Papers, NHS. His death is listed as 1979 on the Stonepics database Newfoundland Grand Banks: Newfoundland Genealogical and Historical Data, at: <ngb.chebucto.org/Stonepics/stonepics-gg.shtml> (accessed 10 Oct. 2010). Though his gravestone shows Sara’s name, no date of death is given for her. One wonders about her reception into the Giovannetti family. When Humbert’s son, Gerald, also a dentist, died in 2002 his obituary did not mention Sara, though she had been married to his father for about 14 years. Gerald Adrian Giovannetti. *Cape Breton Post*, 23 May 2002.

<sup>82</sup>Sara M. Coady, “[Report from the] Community Centre, 1939-1940,” Sara Coady Papers, NHS.

<sup>83</sup>Sara M. Coady, “Letter to V.P. Burke,” 30 Apr. 1937, containing her Community Centre report from November to April 1937, Sara Coady Papers, NHS.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup>*Observer’s Weekly*, 30 Dec. 1935, 22.

<sup>86</sup>“*Newfoundland Adult Students: Mirror*” (an issue for June 1946). (Sara Coady Papers, NHS).

<sup>87</sup>Coady, “Letter to V.P. Burke.”

<sup>88</sup>See Charles R. Acland, “Patterns of Cultural Authority: The National Film Society of Canada and the Institutionalization of Film Education, 1938-1941,” *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 10, 1 (2001): 2-27.

<sup>89</sup>Coady, “Letter to V.P. Burke.” Emphasis in original.

<sup>90</sup>See Burke, “Adult Education in Newfoundland” (1937), for an extended description of the Opportunity School methods.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*; Burke, “Education in Newfoundland.”

<sup>92</sup>Blackall, “Adult Education in Newfoundland,” 12. Reporting to Carnegie in the same year, the NAEA also acknowledged the “manifold household duties” of women, which affected their attendance at night schools. See “Brief Report on the Expenditure of \$6000,” 2.

<sup>93</sup>*Third Annual Report*.

<sup>94</sup>Burke, “Adult Education in Newfoundland” (1937), 297.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>96</sup>Burke sees adult education as a means of setting people free “from materialism, from bad taste in living, in music, in drama, in recreation, and most of all free from the utter drabness of unfulfilled lives.” *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup>See NAEA, *What Is It? What Are Its Aims?*, 5.

<sup>98</sup>*Second Annual Report*.

<sup>99</sup>Burke, “Adult Education in Newfoundland” (1937), 296.

<sup>100</sup>Annie H. Hayward, “The Girls’ Department of King George V Institute,” *The Dis-taff* (1916): 11 (DAI Files, CNS). Also, Women’s History Group [Angela Drake, Peggy

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Keats, Linda Cullum, Susan Morrison, Maeve Baird], "St. John's Women's Walk," Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage website, at: <[www.heritage.nf.ca/society/womenswalk/wtour212.html](http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/womenswalk/wtour212.html)> (accessed 10 Oct. 2010). See also Wilfred T. Grenfell, "King George the Fifth Seamen's Institute, St. John's, Newfoundland," *Newfoundland Quarterly* 13, 1(1913): 20-24; "The Seamen's Institute," *Among the Deep Sea Fishers* 12, 1(1914): 23-27.

<sup>101</sup>Letter from E.M. Farwell to Mr. L.W. Shaw, Secretary for Education, 23 Feb. 1940 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL). For further discussion, see Alison Prentice and M.R. Theobald, eds., *Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). Also Alison Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching in British North America and Canada 1845-1875," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 8, 15 (1975): 5-20.

<sup>102</sup>Stereotypes or expectations of women's behaviour and characteristics have been the subject of much discussion within adult education literature. Classic works include Mary Field Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger, and Jill Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). Belenky et al. point to the ways in which women have been socialized to be silent, act only in nurturing ways, and doubt their own abilities. This essentializing of women as caring, quiet, and subservient is a central issue for critical feminist educators. See also Leona M. English and Catherine J. Irving, "A Review of the Canadian Literature on Gender and Learning," *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* 20, 1 (2007): 16-31.

<sup>103</sup>Vincent Burke, "Adult Education. 1936-1937," 31 Dec. 1937, 2 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL).

<sup>104</sup>Burke, "Adult Education in Newfoundland" (1938), 6.

<sup>105</sup>"Jessie Miffen — Library Missionary," 31.

<sup>106</sup>*Third Annual Report*, 1.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>109</sup>O.F. Mews, "Adult Education Summer School, 1938," 23 Aug. 1938. This statement of accounts shows that Carnegie paid \$997.45 of the total cost of \$1199.02 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL).

<sup>110</sup>Farwell, "News from Newfoundland." She notes in this bulletin update that they are going all out because of the war — there are classes for navy, air force, and home defense, among others, including American service personnel located in the province.

<sup>111</sup>Mary Maddock, "Report of the First Adult Summer School," July 1938 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL). Eleanor is not to be confused with Sara Coady. Whether they were related or not is unknown.

<sup>112</sup>Newfoundland Adult Education Association Summer School, 1938. List of Subjects (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL).

<sup>113</sup>*The Women of Summer*, a 1986 film by Suzanne Bauman and Rita Heller, documents this summer school held at the elite college Bryn Mawr, and funded by Carnegie. See also Rita Heller, "Blue Collars and Blue Stockings: The Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers, 1921-1938," in Joyce Kornbluh and Mary Frederickson, eds., *Sisterhood and Solidarity: Workers' Education for Women, 1914-1984* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

<sup>114</sup>Of course, they would be aware of other residential schools for female workers being held across North America in this time period. The *WAAE Bulletin*, which they received

and contributed to, had articles on the American “Bryn Mawr Summer School,” *WAAE Bulletin* no. 43 (Feb. 1930): 25-29. See also “The Value of Residential Institutions in Adult Education,” *WAAE Bulletin* no. 39 (Feb. 1929): 1-5. The *Bulletin* author stressed the need to relieve the student of the pressures of being at home where she had no free time to concentrate and study. These responsibilities were part of the rationale used by the NAEA for home visits and women’s groups. Articles and reports in the *WAAE Bulletin* on Newfoundland include: “Newfoundland and Adult Education,” *WAAE Bulletin* no. 43 (Feb. 1930): 19-21; “Newfoundland: The Inception of a Movement,” *WAAE Bulletin* no. 44 (May 1930): 1-9 (containing a speech by W.W. Blackall); “Newfoundland’s Adult Education Association,” *WAAE Bulletin* no. 27, second series (Nov. 1941); “Round the World,” *WAAE Bulletin* no. 39, second series (1944): 4; Muriel Luters, “Adult Education on the Canadian Labrador,” *WAAE Bulletin* no. 38, second series (Aug. 1944): 13-14.

<sup>115</sup>Burke notes that their summer school was “somewhat on the lines of the Danish Folk School”: “Adult Education in Newfoundland” (1938), 6. Others, too, saw the international links. At the summer school, Dr. Shaw gave a lecture on Scandinavia and its folk schools. The summer school organizers included this lecture since “the former state of Denmark is somewhat similar to Newfoundland’s today, and their present prosperity may be attributed chiefly to education first, and then to their methods of cooperation.” “First Adult Education Summer School, Third Week” (GN/77/1/B, Box E17 PANL, File: Adult Summer School, 1938).

<sup>116</sup>“Newfoundland Adult Education Association Summer School, 1938.” This document appears to be the plan for the summer school (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL).

<sup>117</sup>Burke, “Adult Education in Newfoundland” (1938), 6-7.

<sup>118</sup>The Newfoundland summer school was reported on in the *WAAE Occasional News Sheet* no. 12 (Nov. 1938): 10 (Sara Coady Papers, NHS).

<sup>119</sup>Eleanor Coady, *Report of the First Adult Education Summer School*, 8 Aug. 1938 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL).

<sup>120</sup>“Newfoundland Adult Education Association Summer School, 1938.”

<sup>121</sup>Mary Maddock, “First Adult Summer School, Fourth and Closing Week,” 3 Aug. 1938 (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL).

<sup>122</sup>Although the author was in contact with the families and friends of five of the students, none had any record of a diary.

<sup>123</sup>“Newfoundland: The Inception of a Movement.” This article includes the text of a speech given by W.W. Blackall in 1930 to the St. John’s Rotary Club, in which he likens Newfoundland’s destitute conditions to “a valley of dry bones” and recommends reading the book of Ezekiel. See p. 7.

<sup>124</sup>*Third Annual Report*, 4.

<sup>125</sup>Several years earlier the churches had successfully lobbied the Amulree Commission to protect denominational schools, a position that must have made many government officials suspect of the churches. The Amulree Royal Commission of Inquiry was appointed by Britain in 1932 after Newfoundland declared its bankrupt status. Reporting in 1933, the Commission recommended that Newfoundland be governed by three commissioners from Newfoundland and three from Britain. McCann, “The Educational Policy of the Commission of Government.”

<sup>126</sup>See Overton, “Moral Education of the Poor.”

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<sup>127</sup>Burke did have contact with the church leaders in the course of his work. In a letter of 12 June 1937, Burke wrote to the chairmen (“Reverend Sir”) of the denominational school boards to ask for suggestions for timing and locations of adult schools in their districts (GN/77/1/B, Box E17, PANL). Burke acknowledged “there are no more enthusiastic supporters and helpers in Adult Education today in Newfoundland than the clergymen of the various denominations.” Burke, “Adult Education in Newfoundland” (1938), 1.

<sup>128</sup>See Overton, “Moral Education of the Poor.”

<sup>129</sup>*Annual Report of the Bureau of Education, 1928-1929*, xxi.

<sup>130</sup>Historian of adult education Gordon Selman makes this point in “Early Adult Education Associations in Canada: Short-lived Experiments in the 1930s and 1940s,” *Proceedings, 11th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, May 1992), 279-84.