# "Dispensing Good Books and Literature" to Coastal Communities: The Role of the Grenfell Mission in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1890s–1940

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That recent studies of books, reading, and libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador have tended to focus on nineteenth-century or later twentieth-century activities[1] becomes clear in an updated survey by William Barker dating back to the seventeenth century.[2] Yet it was during the unexamined period of the early twentieth century that Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell's private medical mission played a major role in disseminating reading material to coastal communities in the region. Under the auspices of the London-based Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen (from 1896 called the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen), a non-denominational mission for fishing fleets in the North Sea, in 1892 Grenfell began to dispense medical care initially to the seasonal fishing families — 20,000–30,000 people who returned each summer to their temporary shelters along the Labrador coast. Their poverty made such an impression on Grenfell that, according to his biographer, Ronald Rompkey, he quickly saw "the Labrador work as his personal creation."[3] His mission work along the coasts of northern Newfoundland and southern Labrador to residents thereafter became known internationally and incorporated in 1914 as the independent International Grenfell Association (IGA).[4]

In the 1920s Grenfell reflected that his ship, the *Strathcona*, had been "healing the sick, feeding the hungry, carrying clothing to the naked, picking up orphans and widows, and dispensing good books and

literature"; furthermore, he had been "carrying 'books, books, books,' to and fro along our coasts of Labrador, in steamers and sailing vessels and small boats" for over 30 years. He knew how much books meant to everyone along the coast: to the people, the mission's "peripatetic workers," and others whose journeys were delayed in harbours.[5] In 1935, Grenfell recalled the encounter that gave rise to his plan to distribute books along with medicine. A man signalled him from a small open boat, and thinking it was for medical aid, Grenfell took the man aboard his ship to ask what he needed. "I want a book to read," the man replied. He showed two books that he had read over and over again, wondering whether Grenfell might exchange them for two others: "I could hardly believe my eyes," wrote Grenfell, "when out of his rough bag he produced a copy of Josephus and then Plutarch's 'Lives.'" He fetched some dilapidated books of a "somewhat lighter nature" from those on-board to give the man in exchange. Grenfell then started his work of distributing books and exchanging them each year from the mission hospital steamer. He decided to have boxes made of 50 books in three rows with a place to record the date when the "small library" was issued. He also determined to fix the boxes to a wall, beyond the reach of dogs, for huskies had once eaten prayer books in another mission run by the Moravians because "blubbery fingers had conferred an appetizing flavor of oil upon the pages." Grenfell included this encounter at sea in his book, *Forty Years for Labrador*, with different dialogue and description of the man as elderly, and explained that thanks to the generosity of Andrew Carnegie and others, the mission had about 75 library boxes; each summer, the hospital steamer then moved "these peripatetic libraries one more stage along the Coast."[6]

Grenfell's recollections may have been embellished and somewhat romanticized through repeated publication, but they do connect his mission work to known activities in the history of book and print culture. At the same time, they raise several important questions about these activities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Fundamentally, Grenfell's mission was not engaged in converting people to Christianity or to a particular denomination; nor was it engaged in projects that

aimed to make print-literate a population that spoke its own language and was essentially an oral culture. In this regard, his mission differed from that of the (Protestant) Moravians further north in Labrador, whose work among the Inuit since the late eighteenth century promoted the kind of prayer-book literature Grenfell mentions.[7]

In order to align his mission with North American supporters, especially during the early twentieth century as it transformed into an international association, Grenfell and his workers widely proclaimed their affiliation with the Anglo-Saxon, Christian population of southern Labrador and northern Newfoundland that had descended from British ancestors common to them both.[8] Many of these often mixed-descent people in Labrador (Inuit-Métis, now members of NunatuKavut) were already avid readers during this period, having been taught to read by those educated by the Moravians or by their own family members, including those who were employees of the Hudson's Bay Company.[9] It is therefore not so surprising that the man in the boat would be able to read, or perhaps that he had these particular volumes, which were commonly held in the libraries of English gentlemen a hundred years earlier and therefore migrated to both America and the British colonies — as with, for example, a copy of Plutarch's *Lives* in a farmer's home in the colony of Upper Canada. Just like the man Grenfell met, early Canadian settlers were known to study their few books intensely until they knew them thoroughly.[10] We are left to wonder only who this man was, what he did for a living, and how he acquired these books in this remote coastal area. In these ways, with centuries-long interactions by ship the region of Newfoundland and Labrador differed little from other isolated regions of the world where books and reading material circulated to even the remotest of outposts.[11]

Grenfell's recollections therefore raise serious questions about previous studies of Newfoundland and Labrador, such as that by David Alexander, that emphasized the degree to which the ability to read and write was not widespread in the region before the second half of the twentieth century.[12] Indeed, Grenfell unwittingly corroborates Bruce

Curtis's strong critique of Alexander's work on literacy in particular as ahistorical and as adopting a simplistic version of human capital theory: from the perspective of scholars well versed in the broad history of literacy, employing official (mainly census) sources and context for historical interpretations of literacy is exceptionally problematic.[13]

Finally, Grenfell's recollections raise questions about priority in forming both travelling libraries and in the establishment of public libraries with the involvement of librarians. He and his private mission may have been carrying "books, books, books" to coastal communities for 30 years by the 1920s, but what kind were they? How did this activity differ from government-sponsored efforts, and why has it been overlooked in the history of libraries in the region? Was there a reason for Grenfell to record this activity at this particular time in the 1920s? Part of the answer is that just as they have used official documents to examine literacy, scholars and librarians have used official or other kinds of public sources such as newspapers and their own experience to examine library history. In her entry for the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, librarian Ruth Konrad wrote that a "pioneering body in providing reading material to outport readers" was the Travelling Library initiated by the Bureau of Education in 1926, with the help of a grant from the Carnegie Foundation; this government entity sent boxes of books to coastal communities and exchanged them for new boxes every few months until the travelling library was turned over to the new Public Libraries Board in 1936; that same year, Konrad stated, the "first free public library in Newfoundland" opened in St. John's.[14]

The activity of this Travelling Library was followed in the 1930s, and later in the 1940s, by librarian Jessie Mifflen visiting isolated communities to distribute reading materials. Mifflen recalled that because the government determined there was "a great deal of illiteracy" in Newfoundland in the 1930s, it appointed adult education field workers — including herself — to teach the basic 3 Rs in small communities. On one occasion when she visited a northeast community to investigate the possibility of establishing a library, she mused on

the question that one resident asked her: "Be you a library missionary, miss?" On reflection, she thought, the idea was not "so ridiculous": "I roamed the countryside 'at sundry times and in divers manners,' in season and out of season, to propagate the gospel of library service for all the people."[15] However, in recounting this anecdote from her own frame of reference, Mifflen probably did not realize the full import of the question posed to her by an elderly, somewhat deaf, man. His question was not only logical but also informed, likely derived from knowledge of private — missionary — library activities that long preceded her official visit to the region.

In short, scholars and librarians alike have not considered developments in the early decades of the twentieth century that might have laid the foundation for government involvement in the 1920s. This study therefore examines the Grenfell mission's routine distribution of reading materials in many communities and the development of the mission's public libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador until the end of Grenfell's life and the disruption of war in 1940, with particular emphasis on the 1920s. It also describes a reading club that was briefly active at a mission base in Pilley's Island, Newfoundland. The mission's own reports reveal the degree to which reading entered the lives of the people of northern Newfoundland and coastal Labrador in this period. In so doing, the study offers insights into the extent of literacy not previously understood from state-based sources, whose claims of priority in library service are explored here. Finally, this study suggests the extent to which American — not British or Canadian — printed materials shaped the literary, cultural, and aesthetic sensibilities of a far-flung populace at the coastal margins of the industrialized world.

## Grenfell Mission Travelling Libraries

After Grenfell implemented his plan to distribute books from his ship, the demand for them grew, and until 1940 the magazine of his mission, *Among the Deep Sea Fishers*, was filled with reports about donations received and packages sent that routinely included books, magazines,

newspapers, and journals, mainly from the New England Grenfell Association and the Grenfell Association of America,[16] along with later appeals for material to continue to stock Labrador bookshelves.[17] Donations to these affiliated American societies, and to Canadian and later British branches of the mission, came from individuals, other societies (such as the Red Cross), and publishers; one of the most important publishers for Grenfell's work, Fleming H. Revell, also provided space in its basement for storage of all donations to the mission.[18] The distribution of so-called travelling libraries by boat was expanded over the course of this 50-year period to include circulating libraries at the key centres of St. Anthony, St. John's, and Harrington Harbour, Quebec (which the mission called "the Canadian Labrador").

According to a New England Grenfell Association report, the first travelling library sent from the United States was in 1903 and came from the Young Ladies' Society of the First Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts; this society also sent a "fine oak case" made especially for these books, all of which were to be taken on Grenfell's ship.[19] Three years later, Grenfell recorded that:

> the loan libraries have done considerable good during the winter. Libraries have been sent in the past week to four more new places on the Labrador. Many other places are calling for books, and immediately [as] books come to St. Anthony they are made up into libraries and sent out to some of these places. Gradually the children are picking up knowledge, and many of the older people are learning to read.[20]

In 1908, Edith Mayou of Harrington Harbour captured the essence of the mission's activities with book and magazine donations along the coast of Labrador:[21]

> In the summer we distribute them along the coast by means of the launch, trading vessels, Church of England

> clergy, who have a sailing boat in which they visit in the summer the settlements along the coast from Natashquan to Blanc Sablon, fishing boats and schooners. Numbers of fishing boats come here from Newfoundland to fish; they are delighted to get magazines, papers and cards.
>
> I lend boxes of books to different places along the coast; when read, they are exchanged for others. In the summer the people are too busy to read, doing fish and housework all day long, going to bed at 11 and 12 and getting up at 3; but in the winter I have quite a circulating library, a source of great pleasure to the many who borrow books, giving occupation to the mind and other topics of conversation but dogs, fish, and petty gossip. For the boys, books by Henty, Kingston, Mayne Reed, Ballantyne, Alger, Gordon Staples, Lady Barker, any of adventures, especially by sea, are most welcome. I should particularly like to have a copy of Cast Up by the Sea, by Sir Charles Baker, and Gulliver's Travels for one of my boys. For the girls and women, books by L.M. Alcott, Charlotte Yonge, E.P. Roe, Mildred Books, Elsie Books, Bessie Books, fairy stories, stories teaching temperance, kindness to animals, natural history, Bible history, Greek, Roman, Hebrew or English history, and simple stories for children of six, seven, eight and nine, such as are given to Sunday School scholars. After the illustrated papers have been read they are used for papering the houses, which would otherwise have bare walls.
>
> . . .
>
> You are quite right about saying that some of the books sent are unsuitable, but I fortunately looked through the last before lending them, and promptly put two into the furnace.

These mission activities occurred at a time when travelling libraries became popular around North America. Their organization, however, was government-based; that is, travelling

libraries were developed by state-level governments and their state-supported public libraries. The movement began with Melvil Dewey in New York State in the 1890s, modelled on attempts in Britain and Australia, and, according to library historian Joanne E. Passet, librarians, club women, educators, and philanthropists ensured that travelling libraries "spread like wildfire" through 30 American states: "sturdy boxes of books soon traveled by rail, livery, stage, and boat to library stations located in sod houses, mining and lumber camps, general stores, post offices, schools, and homes."[22] In South Dakota, for example, legislation in 1913 led to the operation by 1920 of over 250 travelling libraries throughout the rural state, including its remote parts.[23] In Canada, too, the impetus for travelling libraries to lumber, mining, and railway workers in northern Ontario came from the provincial Department of Education; reading rooms were set up in camps, bookcases of selected items were shipped, and some of the materials were received by donation.[24] This movement of travelling libraries keyed strongly into larger social reform movements of the era that promoted the progress of civilization. Because Grenfell's enterprise similarly tapped into these larger movements, it is likely that the government-supported initiatives elsewhere provided Grenfell and his workers with models of library service they could adapt for circulation of book donations to northern Newfoundland and coastal Labrador.

The Grenfell mission work continued unabated during the First World War. In 1914, 1,000 books, divided into 24 travelling libraries, were distributed by the *Strathcona*. However, the total number distributed appears to have been much higher in 1915: "some fifty libraries, as usual, [were] changed and given out in Labrador," and this writer applauded "the special value of being able to put good and suitable literature in reach of people cut off from so many civilizing blessings."[25] The New England Grenfell Association reported that several cases of books were contributed in 1916 by the Brockton, Massachusetts, public library, in addition to 400 school books made up into nine packages for various settlements, another hundred books to be distributed from Battle Harbour, and other literature from various individuals.[26]

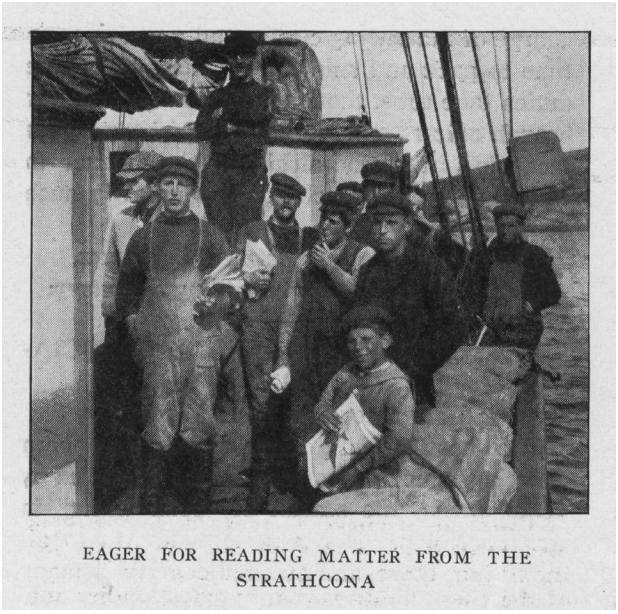


Figure 1. An image of some donated reading material shipped by the New England Grenfell Association (*Among the Deep Sea Fishers* 14 [Oct. 1916]: 112).

Robert Scott, a volunteer that year at the Indian Harbour Hospital from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, published a narrative of his travels in Labrador to determine what kind of books the people liked and whether they would patronize a library if one were to be established.[27] "I sat back in a corner and watched the family of eight in their patched, ill-fitting clothes looking over the bundle of books on the bare table," he began. Again and again, he found that girls liked fairy stories, boys liked adventure tales, and parents liked "good" books. By modern standards, Scott's naive goal was somewhat paternalistic, and a little cruel. In one house where only the "Esquimaux" could read, he remarked favourably on the father's preference for a geography book: "'Very good' I thought. Knowledge of other countries where life is less harsh would awaken ambition in the hearts of these simple people; would give them some standard at which to aim." At another community, when he found four women who could read and were overjoyed at the sight of the books, they "did not understand at

first that I could not leave any with them": "Disappointment showed in their faces when I explained that I merely desired to learn what type of books they preferred. They questioned me as to how soon the library would be established. They would have liked to have books for the coming winter." Scott ended up leaving them two books. By 1917, the mission's travelling libraries were declared a "great source of education and the families of the neglected villages eagerly seek the books"; as the secretary of the *Strathcona* explained, it was his duty to distribute these materials "as long as they lasted, and certainly reading matter is appreciated in this land of few books"[28] (Figure 1).

It is against this background of travelling libraries supported by a private mission that subsequent claims by the Newfoundland government stand out. Grenfell wrote his recollections of 30 years' experience with these libraries in 1924. That year, the Department of Education noted in its annual report that while its focus had been on "libraries" (specific collections) of published readers for children in school, it had not made any attempt to organize this work for those who had left school. It is therefore possible that Grenfell wrote to correct the historical record, for details of what became the government's Travelling Library make categorical statements in the annual reports about the lack of precedents for the government's proposed new initiative. The matter was first considered by the department in 1924: Dr. Levi Curtis, Superintendent of Education (Methodist), Dr. W.W. Blackall, Superintendent of Education (Church of England), and Vincent Burke, Deputy Minister of Education, approached the president of the Carnegie Corporation to establish a circulating library. The purpose was to provide both recreational reading and an opportunity for older residents to improve their education, with the ultimate goal of developing adult education in Newfoundland. Burke hoped to hear favourably from the Carnegie Corporation and to receive funds to start this work in connection with the newly established Memorial University College.[29] Clearly, this library would be based in St. John's, and it was intended for evening classes attended by adults. After more thought, based on the experience of other countries, the next year the department

suggested that to benefit people in centres outside St. John's, travelling libraries "would be at the disposal of those desiring them, not only in the outports but also those who go to sea." Consequently, Burke wrote to the corporation, and met with its president, to seek financial support in terms that neatly capture the Newfoundland situation:

> The problem of supplying educational advantages to a small population distributed over such a large territory, 42,000 square miles, is very difficult. . . . It is desirable to supply [the] settlements with some literature, and if an allocation could be made for this purpose, it would be a great boon to the country. There is no public library on the island and as yet no attempt has been made to supply the seamen and fishermen who spend many days of their lives at sea, with reading matter. There is a great field here, and the supplying of the men on our coastal steamers and fishing vessels with good reading matter, would be the means of adding greatly to their contentment and happiness.[30]

The result was a $5,000 grant from the corporation, and the department began to prepare suitable boxes and regulations for distribution of books.

In 1926, the department was still attempting to establish these travelling libraries and sent a circular to communities about it:

> This announcement goes forth to tell, through the teacher, a number of small settlements the glad news that owing to a generous gift from the Carnegie Foundation this lack of books will in some measure be met. A supply of books of an interesting nature has been purchased, special boxes have been manufactured for their transportation, a fine room has been hired in St. John's as a centre from which the books can be distributed, and Mr. R.H. Richards, Secretary of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, has been appointed to the care of it all.[31]

Both the grant and the travelling library fell under the auspices of Memorial University College. The trustees of the college apparently had something to say about the selection of content: they desired that the books "be entirely free from objectionable statements"; "should reflect on no person's religion"; and "maintain a proper moral standard."[32] Progress was made the next year, with further support from the Rhodes Trust (in Great Britain) and publishers, and organizational matters had been decided, including rules for the library; details of the location of the distribution centre and librarian salary for Richards supplied by the government; and work of women in the Old Colony Club to select and distribute boxes of 30 to 50 books to 10 steamers and 44 places from North West River, Labrador, to the southern part of Newfoundland.[33] It is not known how — or whether — this government work progressed alongside that of the Grenfell mission, but it is clear that the mission's long-standing commitment to travelling libraries continued for decades after this time, along with its own public libraries that it had also established long before as centres for local communities and for distribution of materials along the coast of Labrador.

## Grenfell Mission Public Libraries

In its support of regional book culture, the most significant activity for the Grenfell mission was the establishment in 1914 of a library in St. Anthony, run by a trained librarian. A quarter-century later, this library was still going strong, and was recognized as "the first public library in an outport of the island."[34] Three librarians travelled from the United States in 1914 to help in the endeavour. Marian Cutter, a librarian in charge of the children's department of a Brooklyn, New York, public library branch, left in July to oversee the mission's library work, along with Carolyn Ulrich, an assistant from the Brooklyn Public Library, and 600 books that Cutter had selected, acquired from publishers, and catalogued for the library at St. Anthony. Their first stop was St. John's to catalogue books at the Grenfell mission's Seamen's Institute, before continuing to St. Anthony to catalogue the books there while

investigating whether to establish travelling libraries to the outports "to provide the families with reading matter during the long hours of the winter season."[35] Cutter also hoped to develop a librarian's class to train some of the older girls in the community with prior education to take over as librarian on her departure. Caroline Burnite, from the Cleveland Public Library, later arrived in St. Anthony as a volunteer.

Cutter submitted several reports to the mission's magazine about her library work. Her first, in October 1914, observed that there were no libraries in Newfoundland: in St. John's, two department stores circulated popular fiction, a law reference library existed at Government House, children had access to a few Sunday school libraries, and a library (which incorporated a Girls' Department) had recently been established at the Seamen's Institute. She deemed the Institute's several hundred books in strong bindings as suitable for reading matter aboard the ships leaving St. John's on long trips. In St. Anthony, about 1,200 books had accumulated from which Grenfell drew portions for distribution from the *Strathcona*, and Cutter spent the summer sorting, classifying, and systematizing the collection. By summer's end, over 1,000 books were distributed along the coast: "The people are eager for them. Those who cannot read get others to read to them. This desire for 'anything to read' in the long winter evenings gives us the opportunity of sending them the very best which literature affords."[36] Cutter also undertook to provide annual funds to increase the book collection and to help systematize it.[37]

In April 1916 several accounts provide more details about the library work. First, Grenfell summarized Cutter's reports. Emphasizing that there was "not a single public library in Newfoundland or Labrador," he asked, "How can any country develop its best without access to books?" Cutter's efforts had ensured that books were stored at the school in St. Anthony and the institute in St. John's; that boxes of 50 to 100 books were circulated to coastal communities via the *Strathcona* and exchanged when the ship returned; and that increasing awareness had led to requests for books from southern communities, with promises to bear some of the financial costs. Grenfell therefore

appealed for a permanent head librarian, with associated salary and expenses, to handle the work.[38] For her part, Cutter aimed to obtain funds to bring "one of the promising Mission girls" (that is, from Grenfell's orphanage) back to the United States for library training to return her to Newfoundland "a full-fledged librarian" to oversee the work[39] (Figure 2). She reported that the top floor of the schoolhouse was the distribution centre, from which all but 200 books had been distributed by summer's end in 1914 (Figure 3). Her work was left in the hands of temporary and inexperienced workers, but her detailed outline allowed the continued circulation of travelling libraries of 50 books that were loaned to a community for one year. The books comprised hygiene, travel, history, basic sciences, fiction, and "a goodly number of juveniles." The latter, Cutter remarked, were "particularly suited to the simple lives of the people, and are greatly enjoyed by the adults, in addition to affording a broadening scope and real pleasure to the children."[40]


Figure 2. Two girls reading in the orphanage, c. 1908 (The Rooms, Provincial Archives Division, MG 175 IGA Photograph Collection, Series VA 118 Grenfell Mission Staff Photograph Albums, VA 118-45.1).

Figure 3. Upper floor of Grenfell School used as dormitory, c. 1911–1913 (The Rooms, Provincial Archives Division, MG 175 IGA Photograph Collection, Series VA 129 Beeckman Jousseaumeam Delatour albums, VA 129-29.2).

As with other observers, Cutter emphasized the need for reading material during the winter months; however, she also recognized the need for good print and good illustrations that would be more easily read by people whose eyes "were often weakened by the glare of the snow." Another need was for reading rooms. She also believed, owing to requests in St. Anthony from the "fairly prosperous" southern portion of the island, that the Seamen's Institute in St. John's should act as headquarters for the south. Indeed, the building is "similar in all respects to our Young Men's Christian Association buildings," she told her mainly American readers, and it contained a reading room and small library. However, because the book collection of standard works — donated by Andrew Carnegie, Dr. Henry van Dyke, and Francis Sayre — needed oversight that would allow it to become a circulating department to people of St. John's, she proposed that a permanent librarian would spend winters in the city on this work for the southern part of Newfoundland, with towns paying a fee for expenses.[41] Cutter's report concluded by stressing the changing nature of the mission's role in the development of libraries for people of Newfoundland:

> It seems incredible that this island on the very borders of Canada should be only now awakening to the realization of the modern library's existence. . . . It is interesting to note that this work, begun solely for the poor fishermen on the Labrador, has been extended further and further south to meet the needs of the entire island of Newfoundland.[42]

Until the government was able to assume responsibility for the library, Grenfell hoped to maintain its work on the whole island with the help of friends in the United States. Cutter's essay immediately drew support in the next issue from Marie Hemingway, a librarian in Syracuse, New York. From her perspective, the life of the "followers of the sea," which she described, turns them into philosophers. Her visit to the Seamen's Library in Liverpool, where the reading room was filled, confirmed the fishers were reading the best literature: "what has been done in England can be done in Labrador," she declared, "and will be accepted with the same spirit by our northern brothers as by those across the sea."[43]

By the fall of 1916, a full-time trained librarian from the Brooklyn Public Library, Ethel May Angel, had rapidly gathered together a reading community in St. Anthony. Apparently from Newfoundland herself, she opened the library two afternoons a week for circulation; established a Girls' Patriotic Club of St. Anthony and a mothers' meeting that met separately each week for sewing while she read aloud; and ran a Sunday afternoon story hour. The mothers' meeting was successful, with more than 25 attending, while about 40 children attended the story hour. Angel also corresponded with towns for distribution of books, which were sent to public buildings such as a post office — as much to break down "denominational prejudices" while simultaneously developing town spirit through mutual co-operation, as Cutter described: called travelling libraries, the boxes entered the outports not as gifts but as a "public institution, acquired by public request and placed in public trust."[44] As her report explained more fully, 90 members had registered as library readers, with well over

700 books circulated, not including those who read books within the library. One borrowed book would be read by a whole family, and likely more than one family. As a government inquiry into the affairs of the Grenfell Association observed in 1917, the library was "well patronized."[45] Angel herself later reported that for 1917 about 4,500 books were accessioned, catalogued, and provided with borrowing slips, and records were created to show the number of times each book was read; during the spring and summer of 1917, 18 requests for books were received from towns.[46]

Despite normal appearances of trade and travel from these descriptions, difficulties in transportation occurred along the way: "Naturally," Grenfell recalled, "accidents occurred; some books were lost overboard, some got wet and mildewed, some got burnt, some were used to paper walls, and all got dirty. Some librarians were afraid such things would happen, and did not want the books around."[47] It was also during this time, in the fall of 1916, that the ship often used by the mission and its volunteers, the *Stephano*, was sunk by a German U-boat with the librarians Marian Cutter and Carolyn Ulrich on board. Their losses fortunately appeared to be only their wardrobes, for which the International Grenfell Association provided small sums for replacement.[48] Difficulties arose with replacement of trained librarians as well. Angel apparently had also organized the books at Indian Harbour, along with two small collections at the two winter stations in Labrador, for distribution to boats. However, because there were no more funds to pay Angel's salary — which had been paid by Marian Cutter — in 1918, Helen Curtis, a volunteer from Simmons College in Boston, continued the library work in St. Anthony.[49]

The staff reports of the mission identify others from the United States who had volunteered as librarians for the seasons up to 1922.[50] Around 1926, however, the library work — probably mainly the sorting and distribution of books — was overseen by Alice Blackburn, of the mission's industrial department and later the clothing department; when Blackburn and her husband left St. Anthony and the mission in 1928 after 17 years of service, the library became inactive.[51]

Memory of the almost 15-year history of a library at the Grenfell mission in St. Anthony appeared to be short, for according to May Dean Gates, a volunteer in the orphanage from Detroit, only two years later, in December 1930, Dr. Charles Curtis of the mission hospital asked her to "get some old books that were stored in another building and start a circulating library with them, open to the public for a few hours each week, on Tuesdays and Saturdays." This, she continued, "was a small beginning, and we had no idea at the time it was destined to grow into a really big thing." Indeed, the new library was housed in the new community centre in 1931: it was this physical beginning to which Gates must have referred. Because the ground floor of the old, abandoned mission building was dark and unattractive, they decided to use the second floor for the library. The whole building was renovated and repaired. Gates described their renovation for the library as everyone "had a finger in the pie": "Linoleum was laid on the floor; woodwork, furniture and book cases were repaired and then painted in soft shades of green and brown. . . . A heating stove and a fine victrola were installed." By the time they were finished decorating, the library had bright yellow curtains, cushions in the window seats, "gay hooked mats of local make," caribou heads and horns hung on the walls, all lending the "warm and friendly atmosphere as one finds in a hunting lodge." Before long, with the library open only two days a week, its circulation grew from 50 books to more than 200 a week; it could seat 40 people, but on stormy winter nights there was "standing room only." From early May, with the arrival of the fishing fleet, the library was so crowded it could not keep up with demand. Once again, an appeal to American donors immediately brought 250 new books to the library from the Women's Club of Bronxville, New York. More donations filled boxes for Labrador stations.[52]

In 1935, reports of the library at the community centre in St. Anthony demonstrated its success: people were able to borrow books, and had taken out 2,500 that year, making this "one of the first circulating libraries in Newfoundland"; moreover, children and adults visited the library to read magazines, play games, and peruse the books.[53] By 1940, the lending library at Harrington Harbour, run by the wife of the

physician in charge, Dr. Donald Hodd, had also grown, to 2,000 books with 200 regular readers; for his part, Hodd took boxes of discarded books with him on his boat trips to various communities. Dr. Harry Paddon did similar work of distribution along the Labrador coast from his boat. Of note, the Harrington Harbour library catered as well to French-Canadian patients, who often could not speak English.[54]

## Donations, Distribution, and Reception of Reading Materials

From the 1920s, donations of books and other reading material poured in from the United States, England, and Canada. Appeals for publications of all kinds accompanied those for volunteers in various media, including university student papers such as the *Yale Daily News*.[55] Through the New England Grenfell Association, donations arrived from the Lend a Hand Society, which had established a book mission decades earlier that sent books to the rural American South. In 1922, this Boston society "remembered its reading room in the Seamen's Institute [in St. John's] with a good box of books; they also sent a box for the orphanage"; on another occasion, it donated 500 volumes of textbooks and story books, 100 of which were to be distributed to children specifically for Christmas. A Boston publication society also gave a box of new books, which included poetry, Dickens, and recent novels.[56] Given the source of all these donations, it is little wonder that a volunteer mission teacher in Labrador declared on children's behalf "We like American books"; another noted the difficulty of teaching by classes with no two books alike, while titles such as "The two little Confederates" suggests a strong American presence among them[57] (Figure 4).

By the 1930s, Grenfell explained that although books were constantly exchanged and used in one small library, the demand for reading material was greater than ever:[58]

> We need more good books for distribution, and for our mobile libraries — more of the simple, large print, illustrated, good, sensible, idealistic books. We used to have

> many more when we were less busied with many cares. The need for them is greater now and the supply far less. If this falls under the eyes of any who review books, will they not send us a consignment of just such literature? It is immensely appreciated and has a wonderful message of help for our returned pupils, now scattered all along the fringe of this northern isolated land. "Haven't you brought us any reading, Sir?" is a constant query, and it is hard to have to say, "We have none this year." But nowadays dollars are so much needed for other purposes, and so many can send along good books which they no longer really need or use that I am fain to play the mendicant and ask them to "think of Labrador," look over the bookshelves, and send a package of books along to our offices for next year.

ENJOYING BOOKS DONATED BY JUNIOR RED CROSS

Figure 4. One of the images of children reading donated health books in the mission magazine's section on Nutrition and Child Welfare Work; location unknown (*Among the Deep Sea Fishers* 21 [Jan. 1924]: 133).

Grenfell repeated his appeal a few years later, sending an "S.O.S." for books from donors who had outgrown boys' and girls' books, or who had cupboards, shelves, or drawers of books they did not read and could spare. Describing the impact of such works as *Robinson Crusoe* on one man, he sought books that were easy to read and understand, not too long, "still not altogether of the Plutarch or Josephus type."[59]

Distribution outlets included the used clothing stores, for as a director reported, "Every one who comes to the store for clothing appreciates 'some reading.'" Requests at the store were frequently for Bibles and testaments, but boxes of books were sent from the store to eight districts, such as the White Bay district. A "wonderful supply of books" reached the main store in St. Anthony in 1939, then was distributed to all the Grenfell stations. The library had been moved into a new annex and continued to be visited three nights a week by fishers and their families, who also took books home to "pass away the long winter evenings."[60]

The value of reading was emphasized in 1939 by George Whiteley, who maintained that the mission's travelling libraries "provide our people with the real mental food. They have been starving for it for years." Comparing their need with that of people in Alberta who entered mental hospitals ostensibly as a result of isolation and loneliness, Whiteley (who was not medically trained) suggested that "Only those whose minds are stored with mental food can stand up; they have that within them which keeps them sane; they have a reserve to fall back on. Does not that apply to some extent to our outport people, scattered as they are like birds on rocks, cut off from contact with the world for months? They need mental food."[61] Through the mission magazine, he took the opportunity to describe for a wide North American readership that his own love of books began as a small boy in Labrador thanks to his father: the 12 children in his family always had a book in their stockings at Christmas, an impressive feat with books ordered in August to reach their home in time for Christmas. He also described the impact of a young Oxford graduate who visited, bringing with him a large case of books from England: in a somewhat romanticized memory, Whiteley recalled that this man read Longfellow's "Hiawatha" to the family on a "wild, wintry night," and that his family read many books that winter. In this way, despite the fact that Whiteley came from an educated family and would himself be educated in St. John's, his essay would help dispel any lingering notions about the population served by the Grenfell mission and its already accomplished level of literacy.

Figure 5. Captain Joseph Trezise, master mariner, and physicians Wilfred Grenfell, Alfred Bobardt, and Eliot Curwen reading on MS *Albert*; crewman J. Rogers at wheel, June 1893 (The Rooms, Provincial Archives Division, MG 175 IGA Photograph Collection, Series VA 152 Eliot Curwen photograph albums, VA 152-37).

The libraries and reading material were not just used by fishers and their families. Mission staff also found the need to read, especially during winter months, as did patients who had long periods of hospitalization and convalescence. Interestingly, most evidence for this activity is in the form of photographs taken by mission staff and volunteers (Figure 5). Books appear in the earliest photographs of the mission from 1893 — on-board ship, belonging to Dr. Bobardt in Battle Harbour, and in the male ward of the hospital there — with a few images of patients or children with books in later years, and mission staff continued to be photographed reading throughout the period to 1940. Indeed, the diary of Dr. Curwen for 1893 describes how routine was reading, especially on-board ship, around the long hours of medical service and physical activities, and identifies books and magazines sent by mail from Britain.[62] In this pre-antibiotic era, concern was often expressed about the risk of infection acquired from books.[63] Grenfell himself believed that books had spread scarlet fever

from one isolated community to another in 1910, brought by "some well-meaning fisherman, who had scarlet fever in his house in the spring."[64] However, this was the only time that possible infection was mentioned in the mission publications, despite a heavy emphasis in its hospital treatment for patients with all kinds of tuberculosis.

Clearly, the advantages and significance of reading in this period were carried with the staff into the communities where they visited and worked. They include separate activities initiated for a specific community, the most notable being a club and library established in 1912 at Pilley's Island, Newfoundland, by Dr. Hugh Greeley and his wife, Floretta Elmore Greeley. A weekly Reading Club began in January that year with 14 people, with the ambitious aim of studying English literature from its earliest times; with books shared among individuals, the group began the evening with study and then discussed the literature. At the first meeting, they were assigned Bede, Caedmon and Cynewulf, and Alfred the Great, and Howard Pyle's *Robin Hood* was then read aloud; at the February meeting, the group covered history up to Spenser and the English Renaissance, and Dr. Greeley read King Arthur stories aloud. Greeley also read alone during evenings, on one occasion Longfellow and Tennyson. In February 1912, a public library in the hospital was announced, possibly with a barrel of books that Greeley expected to arrive on the *Prospero*; by April the library was apparently a great success, with only one person failing to return a book on time. Pilley's Island represented an "experiment" in running a small hospital with the fees from local residents, and hence it was short-lived.[65] However, from the reminiscences of a former resident, after it was disbanded the library seems to have obtained a second life in the home of the former hospital custodian. Gwendolyn Poole Molnar describes both the collection and her reading of it in terms that strongly suggest it was the original library collated by Dr. Greeley. Molnar had no personal recollections of the pyrite mine on Pilley's Island, as it was phased out in 1908 before she was born, and so she perhaps mistakenly attributed the operation of the hospital to the mine rather than to the Grenfell mission; however, the mission leased and adapted the hotel

building once owned by the mining company to establish a hospital briefly. Nevertheless, Molnar did remember the extensive library that had been housed in the hospital. "Every spare moment," she wrote about her siblings, "we read. Through Aunt Susie Vineham and her books from the hospital library I had my first introduction to Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, and Victor Hugo, and such volumes of poets as Shakespeare, Keats, Byron, and Shelley. . . . We would memorize poems that have stayed with me to this day."[66] Thus, the legacy of the Grenfell mission's experimental attempt at operating a small hospital between St. Anthony and St. John's was, ironically, not in health care but in book culture, as Greeley's collection of books was read by children in the Poole family of Pilley's Island for decades afterward.

## Private Mission, Public Role

As this exploration has shown, from the late nineteenth century until the Second World War the Grenfell enterprise played a significant role in disseminating reading materials of all kinds to countless communities in northern Newfoundland and coastal Labrador. The mission operated the first true travelling libraries, decades before the one begun by the Newfoundland government in 1926. It also established the first public libraries in the region, the most notable and recognized being the one in St. Anthony, which had been active and apparently well patronized for a dozen years before 1926. It is therefore remarkable that references to a proposed travelling library in official reports of the government's department of education describe the government's efforts in this regard as the first: "There is no public library on the island," the government made bold to declare, "and as yet no attempt has been made to supply the seamen and fishermen who spend many days of their lives at sea, with reading matter." More than this, "the supplying of the men on our coastal steamers and fishing vessels with good reading matter, would be the means of adding greatly to their contentment and happiness." Without record of the discussions leading up to these reports, we cannot know whether, or how much, the government

had implicitly extended the Grenfell mission's work as a model without wishing to acknowledge publicly that a private organization that it, and others in St. John's, had often maligned had in fact done considerably more for their seafaring folk than they had themselves. On the surface, as presented, these published reports are disingenuous. Indeed, the international stature of the librarians Marian Cutter, and especially Carolyn Ulrich, whom Grenfell brought to Newfoundland to establish a library service illustrates the degree to which official perspectives in St. John's were extremely parochial despite government attempts to reach out to British, Canadian, and American contacts for advice based on the premise of adult education.[67] Cutter herself hailed the mission's boxes of travelling libraries to coastal communities as a "public institution, acquired by public request and placed in public trust."

The only claims to originality for the Newfoundland government rest on the models of other state-supported travelling libraries around North America. These versions relied to a great extent on new books in selections provided in purpose-built cases, whereas the Grenfell mission relied on donations of reading material — a hodgepodge of publications that may or may not have been suitable. It is true that for the Carnegie Corporation, other precedents would have been known, such as travelling libraries and rural library services developed in Great Britain, in some American states, and in Canada by McGill University. Moreover, in this period, when the Carnegie Corporation operated its British Dominions and Colonies Fund, the emphasis in grants was on libraries and adult education. According to one analyst, decisions about grants were based more on "hunch, coincidence, opportunity, friendship, and a wish to help than by clear, specific, consistently applied 'scientific' goals or principles."[68] Almost all the grants from this fund between 1912 and 1927 were given to Canada, with the Atlantic provinces receiving most attention.[69] The Newfoundland government — not yet a part of Canada — obviously wrote their request for funds, within the context of establishing Memorial University College, with this educational focus and approach in mind. The government apparently did not seek input from librarians about library work.

Yet what Cutter did for Newfoundland and Labrador was important enough that others outside the region heard, and wrote, about it. Cutter published an article for a larger audience of fellow library professionals in the *Library Journal* in 1916 that drew upon her reports in *Among the Deep Sea Fishers* describing her pioneering work in sorting, classifying, and shelf-listing the collection in St. Anthony and the mission's attempts to circulate materials to Labrador communities. Here, she provided context for this readership, together with photographs: donations came initially from a dozen publishers, including, in addition to Revell, Doubleday Page, Century, Macmillan, Houghton Mifflin, and Dutton; amusing anecdotes were included; and the origins of the people from Great Britain and France were explained. She appealed to her American readers in terms of the Progressive Era: "The task of bringing higher standards of living to a worthy people is urgent, and although so many years have been lost they should be able to reap the benefit of our years of progress."[70]

The subject of Cutter's "interesting" article, the Chicago-based *The Dial* observed, "might be thought to be about as barren as Snakes in Ireland," but her work meant that "many a book has gone out to relieve the monotony and cheer the loneliness of Labrador life." Furthermore, although Cutter had not identified the number of communities and readers served, or how many travelling libraries were in use, this observer noted the large size of Grenfell's "parish": the Labrador coast, the Strait Settlements, and all of Newfoundland north of the railway from Bay of Islands to Lewisporte. "Now that the world has heard of this 'pioneer library work in Labrador,'" the writer concluded, "it will not be so very surprising to learn of similar activities in Greenland."[71] In this international context, an elderly resident's much later question about whether Jessie Mifflen was a library missionary takes on added meaning. Indeed, even with American news reports of the sinking of the *Stephano*, Cutter's mission work with Grenfell was prominent in her interview about her experience up close to the German U-boat: she had been returning with Carolyn Ulrich from Labrador, "where she has been aiding Dr. Grenfell to formulate plans for the establishment of libaries [*sic*] for

illiterate fishermen."[72] (The slip in logic between libraries and illiteracy likely reveals the Connecticut reporter's ill-informed assumptions.)

As well, apart from Cutter reportedly having paid the salary of her Newfoundland-born mission successor for a year, the careers of these two volunteer librarians speak volumes about the high professional standard of their work for the Grenfell mission even for such a short period. The career roles of Cutter and Ulrich to some extent subsequently reversed. Cutter became head of the children's department of Bridgeport Public Library in Connecticut and later opened a children's book shop in New York,[73] but Ulrich, originally her mission assistant, attained — and has retained — international recognition for her eponymous work, *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory*. Ulrich pursued a stellar career in librarianship as the head of library departments, on faculty in library schools, as an active member of the American Library Association, and as an author in scholarly journals, and she appears in *Who's Who* directories. When she joined Cutter for the work with the Grenfell mission in 1914, she was an assistant at the Brooklyn Public Library, but soon after she trained in the library certificate program of the Pratt Institute in New York. After her graduation in 1918, in her new position at the Bridgeport Public Library she replicated her mission work by developing travelling libraries for factory workers in Connecticut (an activity wholly in keeping with American state-sponsored travelling library collections from public libraries).[74] Ulrich's famous international periodicals index ultimately went through dozens of print editions for decades after it was first published in 1932 and is currently maintained online as *Ulrichsweb: Global Serials Directory*.[75] By overlooking the work of the Grenfell mission in travelling libraries and a public library in St. Anthony, in their intense focus on adult education in the 1920s government officials in St. John's evidently overlooked the expertise of two profoundly professional women who had direct experience with the very initiative the government proposed to undertake.

Through Grenfell mission work, reading became familiar to people in northern Newfoundland and the southern Labrador coast, whether they were able to read, whether they listened while others

read, or whether they used the distributed materials to learn to read. Clearly, however, enough people in the region had learned to read that this activity alone raises questions about claims of illiteracy from what Bruce Curtis has called "a rather sanguine use of census reports."[76] Furthermore, the mission magazine provided ample evidence of reading and the desire to read that would belie statistical accounts derived from questionable sources; as one mission writer exclaimed in 1911: "The children do love books so and many read very well. . . . Most of them are so bright and eager to learn. . . . I never saw children learn as these do and their spirit is splendid!"[77] Study of the Grenfell mission's role in disseminating reading material thus helps to answer some of the questions posed by William Barker in his survey: it shows that reading was not considered wasted time in communities burdened by hard labour; that residents found the time to read, especially in the winter months; and that a community did emerge around the book, with expectations of exchanges each year by ship, by lending libraries, and by story hours and reading clubs.[78]

Moreover, apart from one small club for English literature, the emphasis in the mission's distribution of literature was clearly on American publications of all kinds. This emphasis was not just owing to the huge influx of American volunteers and staff, and donations to the mission in the first half of the twentieth century,[79] but also reflected sentiments of the government's Department of Education, which seemed to look Janus-like towards England and North America for advice and models. For instance, in 1925, the Newfoundland department included a list of recommended literature for children that was issued by the US Bureau of Education, with about a quarter of the fiction by American writers (Alcott, Twain, Hawthorne) mingling with British writers (Defoe, Kipling, Carroll, Pyle, Mallory, Scott, Kingsley).[80]

Finally, from this study we can also perhaps infer larger historiographical trends at play in book history for Newfoundland and Labrador that are identical to those discovered for other recent historical research in the province: that is, a seeming reliance on political activities and attendant amnesia for nodal points in the history of

Newfoundland before Confederation in 1949, before Commission of Government in the 1930s, before the First World War. This representation of history is inherently top-down and urban-centric, meaning that effectively anything now considered "public" that was not done by or in St. John's has been overlooked, downplayed, or outright ignored, especially anything done for the people by Dr. Wilfred Grenfell and his private medical mission.[81] While historical study of the Grenfell mission is not from the bottom up, it offers greater insights into activities at the local level in this early twentieth-century period than can ever be achieved from examining selected sources generated by the state.

## Notes

1 Nancy Earle, "Introduction: Book Culture in Newfoundland and Labrador," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 48 (Spring 2010): 9–19. See also entries relating to Newfoundland and Labrador in the three volumes of the *History of the Book in Canada*: *Volume 1, Beginnings to 1840*, ed. Patricia Lockhart Fleming, Gilles Gallichan, and Yvan Lamonde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); *Volume 2, 1840–1918*, ed. Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming, and Fiona A. Black (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); *Volume 3, 1918–1980*, ed. Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

2 William Barker and Sandra Hannaford, "Towards a History of the Book in Newfoundland" [History of the Book in Canada Project Background Paper] (1998), at: http://www.hbic.library.utoronto.ca/fconfnfld_en.htm; William Barker, "Three Steps towards a History of the Book in Newfoundland," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 48 (Spring 2010): 21–48.

3 *Missionary Campaigner* 1 (Nov. 1896): 5–6; Ronald Rompkey, *Grenfell of Labrador: A Biography* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009 [1991]), 73.

4 The history of Grenfell's mission is beyond the scope of this discussion and has yet to be written. The best overall consideration of it remains Rompkey, *Grenfell of Labrador*. A collection of essays currently being

considered for publication, *American Aid and Influence in Newfoundland and Labrador: The Grenfell Medical Mission, 1890s–1940s* (tentative title), edited by Jennifer J. Connor and Katherine Side, attempts for the first time to explore many of the facets of this expansive, non-denominational medical mission.

5 [Wilfred T. Grenfell], "Dr. Grenfell's Log," *Among the Deep Sea Fishers* (hereafter *ADSF*) 19 (Oct. 1921): 76; Wilfred T. Grenfell, "Beginning of a Holiday," *ADSF* 22 (Oct. 1924): 95.

6 Wilfred T. Grenfell, "Books," *ADSF* 33 (July 1935): 66; *Forty Years for Labrador* (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1919; reprint ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1932), 168–69. The anecdote about dogs eating hymn books appears also in Dr. Eliot Curwen's diary: see Ronald Rompkey, ed., *Labrador Odyssey: The Journal and Photographs of Eliot Curwen on the Second Voyage of Wilfred Grenfell, 1893* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 1996), 123.

7 The Moravian mission and the literacy of Labrador Inuit have received fairly extensive attention from scholars such as Robin McGrath and Hans Rollmann. For a recent discussion that cites their work, see Kristina Fagan, "'Well done old half breed woman': Lydia Campbell and the Labrador Literary Tradition," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 48 (Spring 2010): 49–76. On the specific role of printed publications in a range of religions, see Charles L. Cohen and Paul S. Boyer, eds., *Religion and the Culture of Print in Modern America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

8 Jennifer J. Connor, "'We Are Anglo-Saxons': Grenfell, Race, and Mission Movements," in Jennifer J. Connor and Katherine Side, eds., *American Aid and Influence in Newfoundland and Labrador: The Grenfell Medical Mission, 1890s–1940s*, in progress.

9 Hans Rollmann, cited in Fagan, "'Well done old half breed woman,'" 54–55.

10 John Howison, *Sketches of Upper Canada . . .* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd; G. & W.B. Whittaker, London 1821; facsimile ed. Toronto: Coles, 1970), 177; Michael H. Harris, "Books on the Frontier: The Extent and Nature of Book Ownership in Southern Indiana, 1800–1850," *Library Quarterly* 42 (1972): 416–30; Bertrum H. MacDonald, "Print in the Backwoods," in Fleming, Gallichan, and Lamonde, eds.,

*History of the Book in Canada, Volume 1*, 185–86. For fuller discussion, see Jennifer J. Connor, "'Amidst the Awful Solitude of the Forest': Reflections on an English Professional Gentleman's Library in Upper Canada," paper presented at the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, St. John's, Oct. 2010.

11 On the increasing interest of book historians in more nuanced investigations than binary centre-periphery claims, such as book reception on a sheep station in New Zealand, see James J. Connolly, Patrick Collier, Frank Felsenstein, Kenneth R. Hall, and Robert G. Hall, eds., *Print Culture Histories beyond the Metropolis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

12 David Alexander, "Literacy and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland," *Acadiensis* 10 (Oct. 1980): 3–34.

13 Bruce Curtis, "Some Recent Work on the History of Literacy in Canada," *History of Education Quarterly* 30 (Dec. 1990): 613–24. For later review of documentary sources for the study of literacy and their criticism in Canada, see Michel Verrette and Yvan Lamonde, "Literacy and Print Culture," in Lamonde, Fleming, and Black, eds., *History of the Book in Canada, Volume 2*, 451–58.

14 Ruth Konrad, "Libraries," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 3 (St. John's: Harry Cuff, 1991), 290–91. On the establishment of Memorial University College in 1925 as stimulus for the travelling library as well as the adult educational system founded in 1926, see R.A. MacKay, ed., *Newfoundland: Economic, Diplomatic, and Strategic Studies* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1946), 165.

15 [Jessie Beaumont Mifflen], *A Collection of Memories by Jessie Mifflen* (St. John's: Harry Cuff, 1989), 71, 79. Mifflen's earlier histories of libraries in the province begin with the 1930s; for example, *Development of Public Library Services 1934–1972* (Halifax: 1978). See also Brenda Parmenter, comp., *Public Libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador: Selected Materials in the Newfoundland and Labrador Collection, St. John's Public Libraries*, 2010.

16 For example, see *ADSF* 8 (Oct. 1910): 9; 10 (July 1912): 22, 29, 35; 10 (Oct. 1912): 26; 13 (Apr. 1915): 24, 25; 13 (July 1915): 73; 14 (Oct. 1916): 97, 109; 15 (Apr. 1917): 28; 16 (July 1918): 72; 17 (Apr. 1919): 35; 17 (Oct. 1919): 96; 19 (Oct. 1921): 104, 108; 22 (July 1922): 40;

21 (Oct. 1923): 104; 23 (Oct. 1925): 136; 26 (Oct. 1928): 122, 125; 33 (July 1935): 81; 34 (July 1936): 74; 36 (Oct. 1938): 116. Books were also received from Great Britain: see, for example, Grenfell Association of Great Britain and Ireland, *Medical Work in Labrador and Northern Newfoundland: Eighth Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30th, 1934* (London, [1934]), 12.

17 [Wilfred T. Grenfell], "Sir Wilfred's Log," *ADSF* 27 (Oct. 1929): 121; "Association Items: Grenfell Association of America," *ADSF* 33 (July 1935): 80.

18 *ADSF* 26 (July 1928): 82; Grenfell Association of Great Britain and Ireland, *Medical Work in Labrador and Northern Newfoundland: Sixth Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30th, 1932* (London, [1932]), 7; J.L.G., "Items from the Grenfell Association of America," *ADSF* 8 (July 1910): 8. On Revell, see J.T.H. Connor, "Putting the 'Grenfell Effect' in Its Place: Medical Tales and Autobiographical Narratives in Twentieth-Century Newfoundland and Labrador," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 48 (2010): 77–118.

19 E.E. White, "Association Items: New England Grenfell Association," *ADSF* 14 (Oct. 1916): 111.

20 W.T. Grenfell, "Dr. Grenfell's Log," *ADSF* 3 (Oct. 1906): 13.

21 Edith Mayou, "Harrington Hospital Letter," *ADSF* 6 (Oct. 1908): 8.

22 Joanne E. Passet, "Reaching the Rural Reader: Traveling Libraries in America, 1892–1920," *Libraries & Culture* 26 (Winter 1991): 100–18. For fuller examination of this broad cultural endeavour, the women behind it, and reactions from the people served, see her *Cultural Crusaders: Women Librarians in the American West, 1900–1917* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), especially ch. 5.

23 Lisa Lindell, "Bringing Books to a 'Book-Hungry Land,'" *Book History* 7 (2004): 215–38, especially 228.

24 Lorne D. Bruce, "Reading Camps and Travelling Libraries in New Ontario, 1900–1905," *Historical Studies in Education* 26 (Fall 2014): 71–97. See also his *Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850–1930* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), especially 126–28, 138–39.

25 Charles E. Parsons and Wilfred T. Grenfell, "Strathcona's Secretary's Report," *ADSF* 12 (Oct. 1914): 113; Wilfred T. Grenfell, "Report of

the Superintendent," *ADSF* 13 (Apr. 1915): 34; E.E. White, "New England Grenfell Association," *ADSF* 14 (Oct. 1916): 112.

26 White, "New England Grenfell Association," 111.

27 Robert Scott, "From House to House," *ADSF* 15 (July 1917): 41–42; "Indian Harbor Hospital, Labrador: Other Helpers," in "Staff and Volunteer Workers — Season, 1916," *ADSF* 14 (July 1916): 56.

28 S. Emma Demarest, "Association Items: Annual Report of the Acting Secretary of the Grenfell Association of America," *ADSF* 15 (Apr. 1917): 28; Theodore A. Greene, "Report of 'The Strathcona's' Secretary," *ADSF* 15 (Oct. 1917): 93.

29 Vincent P. Burke, "Libraries," *Annual Report of the Department of Education Newfoundland 1924–1925* (St. John's: Evening Telegram, 1926), xix–xx.

30 Vincent P. Burke, "Adult Education," *Annual Report of the Department of Education Newfoundland 1925–1926* (St. John's: Evening Telegram, 1927), xv–xvi.

31 W.W. Blackall, *Annual Report of the Bureau of Education Newfoundland 1926–1927* (St. John's: Evening Telegram, 1928), 22–23; see also xvi.

32 "Traveling Library," in "Report of Memorial University College for Year Ending June 30th, 1927," in *Annual Report 1926–1927*, 173; "The Travelling Library," in *Annual Report 1926–1927*, 118.

33 "Traveling Library," *Newfoundland Annual Report of the Bureau of Education 1927–28* (St. John's: Manning & Rabbitts, 1929), xiii–xv, 111, 147.

34 Charles S. Curtis, "St. Anthony in 1937," *ADSF* 36 (Apr. 1938): 18. Perhaps echoing this observation, descriptions of library photographs housed at the Provincial Archives Division of The Rooms in St. John's also call this the first public outport library in Newfoundland.

35 Wilfred T. Grenfell, "The Library," *ADSF* 12 (July 1914): 77–78; "Librarians," in "The Summer Staff," *ADSF* 12 (July 1914): 80.

36 Marian Cutter, "The Library," *ADSF* 12 (Oct. 1914): 110–11. See also Marian Cutter, "The Grenfell Library," *ADSF* 14 (Apr. 1916): 37. This emphasis on reading in winter echoes residents of South Dakota: see Lindell, "Bringing Books," 228.

37 "Report of the Superintendent," *ADSF* 13 (Apr. 1915): 34.

38 "A Librarian's Salary?," *ADSF* 14 (July 1916): 59.

39 Wilfred T. Grenfell, "Dr. Grenfell's Log," *ADSF* 14 (Apr. 1916): 11–12; "Association Items: The Grenfell Association of America," *ADSF* 14 (Apr. 1916): 36; Cutter, "The Grenfell Library," *ADSF* 14 (Apr. 1916): 38.

40 Cutter, "The Grenfell Library," *ADSF* 14 (Apr. 1916): 37.

41 Heidi Coombs-Thorne, "A 'Radiating Center of Helpfulness': The Early Years of the King George V Seamen's Institute in St. John's, 1912–18," *Newfoundland Quarterly* 109 (Winter 2016–17): 40.

42 Cutter, "The Grenfell Library," *ADSF* 14 (Apr. 1916): 38.

43 Marie Helen Hemingway, "The Library," *ADSF* 14 (July 1916): 52.

44 Marion [*sic*] Cutter, "New Fields Worth Developing," *ADSF* 15 (Apr. 1917): 13. On Angel's name and library affiliation, see "St. Anthony Hospital, Newfoundland: Other Helpers," in "Staff and Volunteer Workers — Season, 1917," *ADSF* 15 (July 1917): 46.

45 [Magistrate R.T. Squarey], "The Newfoundland Government Inquiry into Charges against the Grenfell Association," *ADSF* 15 (Jan. 1918): 160.

46 Ethel M. Angel, "Report of St. Anthony Library Work — 1917," *ADSF* 16 (Jan. 1919): 172.

47 Grenfell, "Books," 66.

48 "The Sinking of the Stephano," *ADSF* 14 (Oct. 1916): 120–21; Demarest, "Annual Report," *ADSF* 15 (Apr. 1917): 27.

49 Harry L. Paddon, "Indian Harbor, Labrador," *ADSF* 15 (Jan. 1918): 149; Wilfred T. Grenfell, "My Log on the Land," *ADSF* 15 (Jan. 1918): 125; "The Grenfell Association of America," *ADSF* 16 (Apr. 1918): 26. See also Charles S. Curtis, "St. Anthony," *ADSF* 15 (Jan. 1918): 149; L. Marion Lockhart, "A Friend to Fisher Folk — Dr. Wilfred Thomason Grenfell," *ADSF* 20 (July 1922): 32. Helen Curtis volunteered first in 1917 as a housekeeper in the Battle Harbour Hospital; and in 1918 served as librarian at the St. Anthony Hospital, where she also taught classes in shorthand, typewriting, and book-keeping: see "Battle Harbor Hospital, Labrador: Other Helpers," in "Staff and Volunteer Workers — Season, 1917," 47; "St. Anthony Hospital, Newfoundland: Other Helpers," in "Staff and Volunteer Workers — Season, 1918," *ADSF* 16 (July 1918): 64.

50 They were Margaret Greenwood, Winsor School, Boston, and Olive Robinson, Northfield, Mass.: "Librarian," in "St. Anthony, Newfound-

land," in "Staff and Volunteer Workers — Season, 1920," *ADSF* 18 (July 1920): 70; "Wilfred T. Grenfell School Teachers," in "St. Anthony, Newfoundland," in "Staff and Volunteer Workers — Season 1922," *ADSF* 20 (July 1922): 41.

51 Charles Curtis, "St. Anthony Hospital," *ADSF* 23 (Apr. 1925): 26. On Alice Appleton Blackburn and her husband, A.C. Blackburn, see Dorothy Stirling, "Mr. and Mrs. Blackburn Leave St. Anthony," *ADSF* 26 (Oct. 1928): 107.

52 May Dean Gates, "The New Community Center in St. Anthony," *ADSF* 29 (Oct. 1931): 116–18. Gates appears as an assistant, "Mrs. John M. Gates," in the list of volunteers: "Orphanage," in "St. Anthony District," in "Report of the Staff Selection Committee," *ADSF* 28 (July 1930): 86.

53 Charles S. Curtis, "Activities at St. Anthony in 1934," "Community Centre," *ADSF* 33 (Apr. 1935): 12.

54 "Harrington Happenings," *ADSF* 37 (Jan. 1940): 139–40. On Paddon, see Sir Wilfred Grenfell, "Log of the 'Strathcona,'" *ADSF* 29 (Oct. 1931): 103.

55 "Men Wanted in Labrador," *Yale Daily News* No. 173 (13 May 1915): 6, at: Yale Daily News Historical Archive, http://web.library.yale.edu/digital-collections/yale-daily-news-historical-archive. For fuller discussion of student recruitment on campus, see Jennifer Connor, "'We Are Anglo-Saxons.'"

56 "Association Items: New England Grenfell Association," *ADSF* 20 (Oct. 1922): 95; ibid., *ADSF* 26 (July 1928): 82; ibid., *ADSF* 26 (Jan. 1929): 179. On reading books at Christmas, see, for example, "Lockwood School, Cartright," in *Medical Work in Labrador and Northern Newfoundland: Sixth Annual Report*, 20. The Lend a Hand Society in Boston even today notes its donations for many years to the Grenfell mission, which likely included hospital supplies: see "Lend a Hand Society History," at: http://www.lend-a-hand-society.org/about-us/history.

57 Isabel Dennett, "The 'Four-Leafed Clover School' St. John's Island," *ADSF* 20 (Jan. 1923): 140; Clement B.P. Cobb, "The School," *P&S on the Labrador: An Account of the Work of the Columbia Unit of the Grenfell Mission at Spotted Islands, Labrador: Annual Report for 1921* ([New York, 1921]), [8]. See also Edith M. Howes, "The Labrador Traveling

Unit," and Ann Stuart Logan, "In the Land of the 'Chanty Punts,'" *ADSF* 21 (Jan. 1924): 129, 131.

58 [Grenfell], "Sir Wilfred's Log," *ADSF* 27 (Oct. 1929): 121.

59 Grenfell, "Books," 67.

60 Margaret Currie, "Clothing Store Report," *ADSF* 37 (Jan. 1940): 143; "Clothing Store Operations," *ADSF* 36 (Jan. 1939): 155–58.

61 George Whiteley, "A Labrador Man Talks of Books," *ADSF* 36 (Jan. 1939): 142–44. Assuming this is George C. Whiteley, he was born in Bonne Esperance, Labrador, to the Honorable William Henry Whiteley and subsequently was educated at the Methodist College in St. John's: George Whiteley, Jr., "George C. Whiteley, M.B.E.," *ADSF* 59 (Oct. 1961): 78–79.

62 Rompkey, ed., *Labrador Odyssey*, passim.

63 Passet, "Reaching the Rural Reader," 108; Jennifer J. Connor, "Prescribed Reading: Patients' Libraries in North American Tuberculosis Institutions," *Libraries & Culture* 27 (1992): 252–78.

64 Wilfred T. Grenfell, "Dr. Grenfell's Log," *ADSF* 8 (Oct. 1910): 19.

65 Hugh P. Greeley and Floretta Elmore Greeley, *Work and Play in the Grenfell Mission* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1920), 114, 117, 134, 150, 133, 98, 165–66, 184, 187, 189.

66 Gwendolyn Poole Molnar, *Tapestry of Yesteryear: Growing Up on Pilley's Island* (St. John's: Flanker, 2009), 23–24, 45, 105.

67 The government sought counsel from McGill University, the University of Alberta, the Seafarers' Association in New York, and the World's Adult Education Society in London: see "Traveling Library," in *Annual Report 1926–1927,* 173.

68 Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, quoted in Maxine K. Rochester, "Bringing Librarianship to Rural Canada in the 1930s: Demonstrations by Carnegie Corporation of New York," *Libraries & Culture* 30 (1995): 366–90; reprinted in Peter F. McNally, ed., *Readings in Canadian Library History* 2 (Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1996), 243.

69 Lagemann, quoted ibid., 244.

70 Marian Cutter, "Pioneer Library Work in Labrador," *Library Journal* 41, 1 (Feb. 1916): 103.

71 "Libraries in Labrador," *The Dial: A Semi-Monthly Journal of Literary Criticism, Discussion, and Information* 60 (2 Mar. 1916): 198.

72 "Grenfell Aide, Sister of Local Clubman, Can't Find Words for Praise of U.S. Naval Officers," *Bridgeport [Conn.] Evening Farmer* (10 Oct. 1916): 10.

73 Chuck Whiting, "Marian Cutter and The Children's Book Shop in New York," *Bibliophemera: Ephemera Related to Books* (2012), at: http://bibliophemera.blogspot.ca/2012/04/marian-cutter-and-childrens-book-shop.html.

74 Charles D. Patterson, "The Story of Carolyn Ulrich," *Reference Services Review* 16, 2 (1988), at: www.ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb/carolynUlrich.asp. See also "Carolyn Ulrich, Library Luminary," *Libraries Luminaries*, at: https://za3038.wordpress.com/tag/marion-cutter/.

75 As might be surmised, Cutter and Ulrich were life partners, reflecting a gendered aspect of the Grenfell mission that needs further study. Cutter and Ulrich lived together in New York, Bridgeport, and Florida for over 50 years until Ulrich's death in 1969; Ulrich had also identified Marian Cutter as the person to contact in lieu of family (Patterson, "Story of Carolyn Ulrich," n. 24). Other professional women who similarly travelled to Newfoundland and Labrador for volunteer work with the Grenfell mission include Drs. Musson and Clark from Philadelphia, who lived together possibly until the former's death in 1913 (see Ada Peirce McCormick Papers, Archives and Special Collections, College of Medicine, Drexel University, Philadelphia).

76 Curtis, "Some Recent Work," 613.

77 Alice Appleton, in E.E.W., "Items from the New England Grenfell Association," *ADSF* 9 (Jan. 1912): 10.

78 Barker, "Three Steps," 47.

79 For fuller discussion, see "Introduction: 'Untainted by American Ways'? Newfoundland, the United States, and the Grenfell Mission," in Jennifer J. Connor and Katherine Side, eds., *American Aid and Influence in Newfoundland and Labrador*, in progress.

80 "School Libraries," *Annual Report of the Department of Education 1924–1925*, 119–20.

81 For fuller discussion, see J.T.H. Connor, Jennifer J. Connor, Monica G. Kidd, and Maria Mathews, "Conceptualizing Health Care in Rural and Remote Pre-Confederation Newfoundland as Ecosystem," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 30 (2015): 113–38.