

Julie O'Brien

Julie O'Brien invites us to glimpse the everyday world of her outport village of Tors Cove in Newfoundland. She reminds us that she is part of a proud tradition and that in her province the past is not forgotten.

Before Screening the Film

Some of these questions could be discussed in a general way.

1. Not all homework assignments are looked upon as pleasurable experiences but some of them turn out to be valuable to us.
When have you had this kind of experience?
 2. (a) What kinds of things do you take pride in?
(b) What causes us to feel proud of the place in which we live or the specific groups to which we belong?
(c) Have you ever visited other parts of Canada where the people were particularly proud of their region? What kinds of things did they point to with pride?
3. What aspects of life in your community do you value and would not want to see changed?

From listening to older people around you what kinds of changes have you heard about in your community that have been (a) detrimental (b) beneficial?

After Screening the Film

Some of these questions could be raised to encourage a discussion.

1. In the film, Julie says that the old times are still remembered. In how many ways were you made aware of this as you watched?
2. (a) Different families have different dates and times during the year when they celebrate special occasions or events. What are the most important times for your family? Why is this a special time? What happens? What do you do?
(b) How do your celebrations compare with those of Julie's family?
(c) Do some research and find out what times were special occasions in the early days of Newfoundland (try *Wake of the Great Sealers* by Farley Mowat).
3. Of Newfoundlanders, Farley Mowat says in his book *Wake of the Great Sealers*, "they neither knew nor wished for any way of life not of the sea." Like all those who have gone before her, Julie lives in a community where traditions are valued. Like us she will have new ideas, new causes, new inventions, etc. to explore in her lifetime.
 - (a) Can you think of any other examples of new ways that will challenge us?
 - (b) How do you think Julie's way of life could be changed in the near future?
(c) Her priest cautions his congregation, "Be wary of change. Prepare for it. What we value so dearly will be changed." What do you think he is trying to tell Julie and her neighbors?
4. Many isolated Newfoundland outport villages became ghost towns in the 1950s and 1960s as a result of the province's resettlement program. Do some research to find out why this happened and what the results were.
5. (a) Look at reproductions of Canadian art or books such as *This Rock within the Sea* for examples of Newfoundland outport villages.
(b) On a map of Newfoundland, examine the place names. What do they tell you about the history of the province?
6. Fishing and seal hunting have inspired many Newfoundland songs.
Bring lyrics of some of these songs to class and talk about what they tell of Newfoundland's past.

Related Activities

1. Research some of the books listed in the bibliography and others in order to locate interesting snippets of description or dialogue that capture the feelings of the Newfoundland people for the land and the sea.
2. Find out what you can about an Indian tribe called the Beothuks, the first known inhabitants of Newfoundland.
3. Most industries or trades use special words. Find words from the fishing industry. What do they mean?
4. Traditional inland fisheries carry on in much the same fashion as they have for hundreds of years. (Julie mentions this in the film.) Find out how a typical fishery would operate.
5. Prepare a local heritage scrapbook based on reminiscences and anecdotes of people in your community.

Selected Bibliography

Mowat, Farley and Blackwood, David. *Wake of the Great Sealers*, McClelland and Stewart.

Mowat, Farley and deVisser, John. *This Rock within the Sea*, McClelland and Stewart.

Major, Kevin. *Doryloads* – A collection of prose, poetry and photos from Newfoundland.

Pittman, Al. *Down by Jim Long's Stage*, Breakwater.

– Rhymes and drawings introduce some Atlantic fish to young children.

Moore, Tom. *Tom Cods, Kids and Confederation*, Jesperon Press.

– A pre-1949 controversy is explored – should Newfoundland become part of Canada.

Mowat, Farley. *The Black Joke*, McClelland and Stewart.

– Two Newfoundland Boys outsmart rumrunners in the 1930s.

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– Historical fiction.

Feather, Jean Hayes. *Sawtooth Harbour Boy*, Nelson.

– Billy's outport life was happy but without frills in 1920s Newfoundland.

Summers, T. *Geography of Newfoundland*, Copp Clark, 1972.

– Physical and social geography for children.

Newfoundland Status of Women. *This Is Our Work*, 1975.

– Some Newfoundland women talk about their careers. Profiles and pictures of 20 Newfoundlanders who enjoy their work.

Related Films

The Children of Fogo Island
Adventure in Newfoundland

Julie O'Brien is one of the films
in the Children of Canada series.