

## Loved Not Wisely: The History of Homeless Men in Halifax

David Hood

This article is about one man's story and how it came to be told. It is about the history of homeless men in the city of Halifax, or rather the absence of that history. It is about hope, the hope that more stories will become known to us. And through our knowing we will welcome the homeless back into the community.

A recent study done by Jack Layton, *Homelessness: The Making And Unmaking of a Crisis* confirms that tens of thousands of Canadians are homeless. Homelessness is rapidly increasing. At the same time homelessness is becoming harder to recover from. Layton provides an up to date survey of homelessness in Canada. However, he is not the first to identify the problem. Jim Ward *Organizing for the Homeless*, Sheila Baxter *Under the Viaduct: Homeless in Beautiful B.C.* and Thomas O'Reilly-Flemming *Down And Out In Canada: Homeless Canadians* have been sounding the alarm for over a decade. Homelessness is real and it isn't going to go away just because we learn to step over the ruff sleepers and ignore the bag ladies.

On any given night in the city of Halifax more than one hundred men seek refuge in homeless shelters or rehabilitation programs. Similar numbers of women and children find themselves in the same predicament. Homelessness is an historical consequence of urban settlement. Homelessness has intensified and expanded in the postmodern era, particularly in North America. Compared to Toronto or New York, Halifax has a small homeless population. The numbers vary, but the suffering is held in common. Alone or in a caste of thousands, life on the street is degrading and powerless. And, just as it does in New York or Toronto, homelessness in Halifax points out the fragility of our social safety net. College graduates who beg spare change make it painfully clear just how

easy it is to slip from homefulness to homelessness in the wake of corporate downsizing, global competition and ever changing technology. The homeless are members of our community and they need our help. Our response is a barometer for fairness, equity and social justice.

Who are the homeless? Any attempt to understand and address homelessness begins with this question. Unfortunately, there is no universally accepted answer. In their 1991 study *Solutions to Homelessness: Vancouver Case Studies* Hulchanski et al. argued against narrow definitions of homelessness which "focus upon homeless peoples' ability to find shelter" (7). Narrow definitions minimize the problem by assuming that there is no lack of affordable housing in Canada and that homelessness is a matter of personal shortcomings and choice. Assumptions of this kind are wrong. Layton, Baxter and Ward have shown that in cities all across Canada the stock of affordable housing is shrinking at an alarming rate. Rooming houses and long term occupancy hotels are being demolished in favour of expensive condominiums, luxury hotels and office towers. At the same time neo-conservative governments have all but stalled the production of social or public housing. Shelters across the country are full of people who landed on the streets simply because middle class professionals have taken up the space they once held. There are certainly shortcomings among the homeless population; addictions, mental illness and lack of education. The same negative characteristics exist in similar proportion throughout all segments of our society. However, there is an essential difference between the homeless and members of other groups with similar problems. The homeless lack a safe retreat from the madness of urban life. They lack a place to regenerate and gain comfort. The homeless have no place to display mementos that assure themselves and others of their worth and connectedness to society. They have no place of their own. They have no home. Without a home their problems get worse not better. Homelessness is about constantly being moved on by police, security guards and store clerks. It is about hobbling on blistered feet. It is about sleeping on pavement, always with one eye open. Homelessness is about falling prey to society's predators; about rape, robbery and hate crimes. It is about enduring the sting of rejection all day from employers, then going hungry for not getting back to the soup kitchen on time. Homelessness is about fatigue, alienation and loneliness. Homelessness is not a choice, it's a sentence. Ruth McGlothin a homeless woman in Tampa Florida put it this way:

*...I've worked all 39 years of my life; I've worked every damn day. I lived on a farm for 18 years and worked. Because I'm down now, they condemn me. They look at ya like you're trash, and we're not, we're human beings, we just had bad luck, all of us...there is not one person, not even one homeless person, that can tell you exactly what it's like until you live it. That's the honest to God truth (Bulman 41).*

The United Nations designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). Oberlander and Fallick contributed a Canadian definition of homelessness to IYSH:

*The absence of a continuing or permanent home over which individuals and families have personal control and which provides the essential needs of shelter, privacy, and security at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social, economic and cultural public services (Hulchanski et al. Solutions 7).*

In this essay, the terms homeless and homelessness refer to this definition and the stark realities of homelessness noted above.

How many homeless people are there in Halifax? More specifically: how many homeless men are there in the city of Halifax? In large centres like Toronto, New York and London the homeless number in the tens of thousands. The homeless men of Halifax are a much smaller group. An exact count is impossible because the homeless are in flux. However, a quantitative sense of things is possible. Between 1992 and 1999, I provided income support (welfare payments) to Halifax's homeless men (age 19+). I typically carried between 80 and 100 men on my caseload and on average transferred five cases per month to a regular caseworker. In an average month I would interview 30 men and take on approximately 20 new cases; about half of which would move on within 60 days - usually temporary employment or relocation. On most nights, the Metro Turning Point, the city's primary shelter, offers refuge to at least 30 men. In the summer months, I suspect that half as many sleep outside or stay up all night. On any given night in Halifax there are no less than 150 men either on the streets; in a shelter; or in insecure housing from which they will soon move on. Every year 300 homeless men pass through the city. Between 1992 and 1999 I interviewed over 2000 homeless men. There are separate programs for homeless youth (16-19), and homeless women and their children. These caseloads reflect similar numbers. The Nova Scotia Department of Community Services provides income support to approximately 7000 persons in the metro area. If the Oberlander and Fallick definition of homelessness were applied to this group perhaps as many as half, 3500

men, women and children would be considered homeless. Layton points out the difficulty in coming to terms with the numbers:

*In this city, estimates of the number of homeless differ widely. Halifax's social-service staff member Barbara Nehiley said, "Those in the know calculate that there are about 300 to 500 people without a permanent address. It's a guess, but there may be fewer than ten people who really live "outside" (70).*

The homeless men of Halifax are a relative few. But they suffer just as much as their big city counterparts. Every year I worked with the homeless at least one man died due to violence, a rooming house fire or chronic illness caused or exacerbated by homelessness. I have seen rooming house keepers get rich by forcing homeless men to live in appalling conditions. Some rooming house keepers are manipulative and physically violent. The deplorable state of Halifax rooming houses was documented in *A Study of Rooming House Conditions in Downtown and South End Halifax* prepared for the Metro Non-Profit Housing Association in 1996. I knew one man who lived in an abandoned freezer. Another man told me of being held captive and raped. I have seen countless tradesmen, a doctor, a research scientist, a newspaper editor, a former politician and many once successful businessmen all reduced to homelessness. At past times in their lives these men built things, paid taxes and helped others in this community. Most continue to do so as best they can despite now being homeless. They are our brethren. They are entitled to our respect and to the restoration of their dignity. Moreover, in today's economy of fast paced technological change, corporate downsizing and rapidly shifting demands, not of us are immune. Susan Holly a homeless woman in Miami Florida offers this appraisal:

*...I thought people cared. They don't care, people don't care... They only care about themselves, and until they can see that today it's me, tomorrow it could be them, until they can see that, nothin's gonna change (Bulman 170).*

During the summer of 1998 a small group of residents in Halifax's north end clashed with the city's homeless male population and their advocates. At issue was the relocation of The Metro Turning Point, then located at 2155 Barrington Street. Since 1996 the Turning Point had been seeking an alternative to the dilapidated mold infested office building which had been converted into a shelter in 1987. In general, both City Council and the Provincial Government were in favour of relocation. Nevertheless, as in all things political, there were thorny questions regarding cost and administrative responsibility. True to form, the City and the Province were

at odds over the fine points. Eventually the concentric circles of bureaucratic shuffling passed a resolution. The City would provide land at the cost of a dollar as well as start up funds for the construction of a new building. The province would back the mortgage and ongoing administration costs. All seemed to be well. Enter the Brunswick Area Residential Ratepayers Association (BARRA).

BARRA consisted of a few middle class property owners. They stood to defend property value acquired via gentrification; an ongoing process in various sectors of the inner city. The site proposed for the new shelter would see it move diagonally across Barrington Street a mere few hundred feet. However, the move would place the shelter directly adjacent to properties owned by BARRA members. The not in my backyard or 'NIMBY' response to social welfare programs is common. What was unusual in this case was the ostensible basis of opposition. Using their association as a base of legitimacy, members appeared before City Council on June 30, 1998 claiming privilege - their right to reject prospective neighbours.<sup>1</sup> Their argument was largely based on the identifiable and positive history belonging to their homes and their ancestry. The strength of their argument lay in its inference: the homeless are transient, ahistorical, and therefore have no place in, or are antithetical to, a heritage community. Moreover, those without heritage (known contribution) must not be allowed to usurp the rights of permanent members of the community.

Halifax is well over two hundred years old and filled with celebrated and governmentally protected historical sites. BARRA's argument would have been very effective under normal circumstances. But, in the summer of 1998, politicians nationwide were under pressure to deal with the emerging issues of homelessness. Ironically for BARRA, gentrification was (and remains) largely responsible for increased homelessness and resultant political pressure. Many members of City council held genuine concern for the homeless. Moreover, Council had other plans for the existing site and with Halifax about to hold a national conference on homelessness, continuing to shelter homeless men in an unhealthy building would seem hypocritical. So, on this occasion good will combined with political necessity to win the day. In May of 2000, a handsome new shelter opened

---

1. Several residents spoke that night at Council. They do not identify the name of their association on this occasion but very clearly speak as associated property owners in support and defense of each other. At other community meetings and letters to Council referred to on June 30, they formally identify themselves as BARRA.

its doors: suitably ensconced amidst some of Halifax's most venerable gateways.

Nestled into the side of the hill on Barrington Street, the shelter has the look of a very residential building with its clapboard siding and hip roof. The site has been known over the years as "the jungle," where many homeless people not only lived in the rough but responded to their additions with needles and Lysol. Homeless people have died in the jungle. Now, the emergency shelter stands in defiance of such misery (Layton 72).

I opposed BARRA but I found their tactics instructive. Afterward I began thinking about the history of homelessness in Halifax and elsewhere. I began to think about the history of other groups such as coal miners, Natives and fishermen and how history can successfully sustain and legitimize various groups as well as their demands. What is the history of Halifax's homeless male population? How might it be used to gain desperately needed services? I turned to various sources for answers: historical literature, social work journals, co-workers, educational writings and the experience of homeless men. This essay is the product of my research and the foundation of my thinking about homelessness and how best to respond.

The first section surveys the existing historiography of Atlantic Canada with particular attention paid to the city of Halifax.<sup>2</sup> A glaring absence is revealed. The historiography of Atlantic Canada fails to define homelessness or to seek any confirmation of its presence or change over time. The second section focuses on works that do deal directly with homelessness (primarily done outside the Atlantic Region).<sup>3</sup> The second section also examines local historiography for characters that bare a resemblance to the contemporary homeless.<sup>4</sup> The results confirm a recent historical presence as well as a more distant group of men who would today be defined as homeless. Homeless males are not ephemeral or ahistorical. Their stories simply have not been boldly written into the historical record.

---

2. For a useful sample, see Beck, Buckner and Frank, Burrell and McKay, Bruce, Choyce, Fairly, Leys and Sacouman, Forbes, Forbes and Muise, Inwood, Macgillivray and Tennyson, and Soucoup.

3. See Bacher and Hulchanski, Bahr and Caplow, Baxter, Glasser, Hicks, Humpherys O'Reilly-Flemming, and Ward.

4. For an illustration, see Fingard, Greenhous, Images From Nova Scotia Archives And Record Management, Kroll, McGahan, and Whalen.

The third section speaks to the importance of having a documented known history. In the absence of documentary evidence to the contrary, it is possible for detrimental stereotypes to grow and persist. The homeless are rejected and rebuked every day of their lives based on erroneous stereotypes. Current work with the homeless, as well as others, confirms that the recovery of their history can instruct and empower disenfranchised groups.<sup>5</sup> Recent work with the homeless also confirms that with proper support, the homeless are willing and able to very actively participate in finding and implementing solutions to the problems they face.<sup>6</sup> Demonstrating the willingness and ability of homeless men to participate is an essential support to the position taken in the fourth section.

The history of homeless men within the city of Halifax could be documented in a variety of ways and for different purposes. It could also be done without any direct input from the current population of homeless men. Section four presents oral historiography as the best means of gathering and documenting the history of homeless men. Existing literature is used to demonstrate the empowering, self-affirming, healing and community building processes inherent in oral methodology.<sup>7</sup> In the case of homeless men, the process of gathering their history is as important as the record itself. The homeless lack vital skill sets and the group solidarity they need in order to extract greater benefits from society. Oral historiography is inclusively with, rather than objectively about. By drawing the men together in an effort to recover their history, oral methodology can build much needed cohesion within the homeless population. Moreover, by connecting them to other members of the community (i.e. academics, helping professionals, and fellow citizens), oral history gives the homeless a chance to build useful social contacts. Unlike other methods, oral methodology can not only document their history, but it can also give homeless men the strength and the insight to do something constructive with their history for themselves.

The final section offers an example. It presents an edited transcript of a series of interviews done with Robert Higgins in the spring of 1998. Robert is one of Halifax's homeless men. This is his life story up to the time

---

5. For example, see Artenstein, Bulman, Homeless, Moore and Morrison, Murphy and Johnsen, Parker, Plugh and Tiejen, Roach, Ryan, Stringer, and VanderStaay.

6. See Baxter, Hulchanski, Street Feat, and Ward.

7. For example, see Jones, Kikumura, Plugh and Tiejen, Popular Memory Group, Thompson, VanderStaay, and White.

of the interviews. The words that appear here are Robert's. The editing process focused on organizing his thoughts. Great care was taken to leave his words and meanings intact. Robert reviewed and approved the final text and it appears here with his formal consent. A copy of that consent, along with complete copies of the recorded interviews, are available for review at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Robert's story demonstrates the explanatory power of a complete oral narrative. It is an artifact of modern day homelessness. The work Robert and I did together is only a beginning; a foreshadowing of the potential offered to the homeless and those who will partner with them through oral historiography. A short epilog follows Robert's story. It suggests ways of listening that can help us make the most of oral artifacts.

#### Section one:

In *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* Forbes and Muise have gathered together writings from thirteen of the regions leading historians. It is a work of social history that endeavors to see the lives of ordinary people as they react and contribute to broader socio-economic and political contexts. The work identifies the major trends running through the past 150 years of life in Atlantic Canada. We see a continuous pattern of out migration as Atlantic Canadians are forced to seek economic prosperity elsewhere. Dissatisfaction with the terms of Confederation has persisted, but so has our desire to remain a part of the Canadian whole. 19th century progressive optimism and self-confidence eventually faded into government dependency and an economic inferiority complex. Lack of resources and an inability (some real some perceived) to dictate to foreign capital sees government favour multi-national rather than local investment. A focused coherent Atlantic regional voice is never able to gain lasting precedence over local often-shortsighted political opportunism. *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* is a most useful reference and contextual setting with which to bolster future historical writing. But despite its focus on ordinary people and its acknowledgment of economic hardships it leaves out those ordinary people most drastically affected by economic austerity, the homeless. The homeless and issues of homelessness are absent from this text.

In *Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic History of the Maritime Provinces* Kris Inwood gathers together respected selections of Atlantic Canadian historiography. As the title suggests,



economic trends are the principal focus. The tools of analysis are such things as railway policies, investment patterns, per capita income and industrial ownership. Here too, useful trends immerge that future work can set itself within. But, again issues of homelessness are left unacknowledged and by implication deemed nonexistent or unimportant.

Another collection of analytical research on Atlantic Canada is brought together by Burrill and Mckay. This book seeks to explain why the working people of Atlantic Canada have received such a small portion of the wealth derived from the natural resources that surround them. There are stories of real working people here. Seeing these stories we can easily know and identify the characters for they are ourselves. But we can not see the homeless here; those who have fallen to a place that derives the very least. And by not seeing the homeless, we are prevented from recognizing ourselves among them and from recognizing them as part of our community.

Buckner and Frank; Beck; Fairly, Leys and Sacouman; Forbes; and Macgillivray and Tennyson represent five more samples of highly regarded Atlantic Canadian historiography. These works have much in common with those noted above. As a whole, these writers strive to explain our current reality by studying its roots. They follow the breadcrumbs back drawing us a map. Tosh explains the inherent value of the process:

*In the first place, the effort to recapture the essence of every epoch of the past alerts us to the sheer variety of human mentality and achievement - and thus to something of the range of possibilities at our disposal now...More important is the awareness it conveys of what is enduring and what is ephemeral in our present circumstances: this is what is meant essentially by 'historical perspective.'...One of the most valuable 'lessons' which history teaches, then, is the sense of what is durable and what is transient or contingent in our present condition. That sense will be helpful in estimating how easily particular changes can be accomplished - something that all radical reformers surly need to know (12-15.)*

Unfortunately, the process is incomplete. No map of homelessness is being drawn here. No historical perspective of homelessness is being developed. People seeking solutions to homelessness can see in these works the background in which homelessness is set. They can see methods of historical inquiry worthy of imitation. But, people seeking solutions to homelessness in Atlantic Canada must look outside the region for the tools

of radical deconstruction and a place to begin the fight. This should not be the case.

Two very recent works one by Harry Bruce the other put out by the Nova Scotia Archives And Record Management offer less academic more pictorial representations of our past. There is less depth of analysis but the pictures reveal a great deal about the everyday lives of average folks. Both surveys strive to be more complete by including the positive contributions of people formally left out of our historiography, most notably African Nova Scotians and women. Both span more than two hundred years of history ending in the present. Certainly, there was room here for depictions of homelessness. Certainly, there were images to capture. Since the 1960s men have lined up along Brunswick Street twice a day for meals at Hope Cottage, the city's main soup kitchen. They huddle together under November skies with hands deep in empty pockets, feet stamping against the cold. Their heart sad eyes bear witness to homelessness in Halifax. For decades, homeless men have sat outside the Salvation Army; broken parts left to the rust and weeds. Forgotten and unwanted they have only to wait in silence between the lines - the noon line for a meal, the 7 PM line for a bed, Tuesday's line for a change of clothes. Every day homeless men lug bags and push carts in search of recyclables, a purpose, and a little economic independence. So far, the lens of pictorial historiography has not focused on the vivid images of homelessness in Halifax.

During the past few years, Nova Scotia has gone through a process of restructuring its social services. In 1998, the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services (DCS) released a summary report of focus groups held around the province as well as a follow up discussion paper. Through direct social assistance payments and the funding of private agencies, DCS is primarily responsible for services to the homeless. Not one word about homelessness appears in either of these documents. In the new model, services to all clients have been cut. The homeless have been particularly hard hit by decreased shelter allowances, the closure of the North End Dental Clinic, increased pharmacare costs and the absence of a visiting public health nurse. In the face of neo-conservative governments bent on 'fiscal responsibility', a well-documented history of homelessness may not have been sufficient armor to ward off these attacks. However, in other Canadian cities, for example Toronto and Vancouver, where more research has been done more government attention is paid to issues of homelessness. Greater populations of homeless persons and relatively greater governmental resources are explanatory factors. Nevertheless, while other

cities make cuts too, there seems to be a connection between documented inquiry and the ability of the homeless in other places to politicize and resist. The potential and usefulness of directly examining homelessness in Atlantic Canada is unknown because it is virtually undone.

Reading through our history, I was looking exclusively for an historical analysis of male homelessness in the city of Halifax. My experience and my research interests, which focus specifically on homeless men in Halifax, determined the narrow parameters of my search. Other places in our region as well as the discrete cohorts of homeless women, families, children and youth are equally in need of study. As the capital of Nova Scotia and as a long time cultural and economic focal point, Halifax figures prominently within the historical literature. But, homelessness in Halifax receives almost no attention at all. Atlantic Canadian historiography has not yet begun to define homelessness or to develop an historical perspective of Halifax's homeless men, women or children.

## Section Two

Looking outside the region there is much to confirm the historical presence of conditions currently defined as homelessness. In *Homelessness in Global Perspective*, Glasser looks around the world from medieval times up to the 1990s. We see vagabonds in medieval England and Europe. We see the Furosha of Japan, Furosha literally means floating person. We see the rag pickers of Victorian Paris, India's pavement dwellers and the Gamino - homeless children in Bogota, Columbia. We find past terms like vagabond, tramp, and beggar applied to those at the very bottom of society. There are of course dangers in making direct comparisons or applying terms across time, place and culture. For example, the Victorian vagabond is separated from the contemporary homeless by historical context; the prevailing attitudes and accepted norms of those discrete places and moments in time. Yet, they are inextricably linked by their relative place in the societies in which they are set. The persons termed vagabond, pavement dweller and homeless are all without place, power or much protection. They share a common past in that together they form a continuing line along the base of urban society that does span time, place and culture.

Humphreys has thoroughly documented the legislative response to what he calls the roofless and rootless in England. This is a traditional piece of historiography in that it relies heavily on primary written documents - legislation, court records, agency reports, parliamentary papers, etc. The

focus is on institutional or structural responses over time, not on specific conditions or individual lives. However, there is an effort to link or draw parallels between the lives of the contemporary homeless and their historical counterparts:

*Many features of twentieth-century street homelessness are characteristic of vagrancy in the past. Sleeping rough, casual work, begging, petty crime, hostels, shelters, common lodging houses, reception centres, soup kitchens, imprisonment profiles, and mental instability remain all too common features in the lives of those using our streets as their home (8).*

*A London County Council (LCC) survey in the early 1960s emphasized that it had become conventional to use the term 'homelessness' to describe the condition of those who for centuries had been viewed by the law and many members of the public as 'vagrants' (146).*

Humphreys delineates the continuous enactment and often-vehement enforcement of very punitive legislation against the homeless dating back to 1280. The homeless have existed and lived like pariahs in England for centuries. Humphreys confirms that homelessness in England is not a modern contingency. It is as enduring as England itself.

Much work has been done on homelessness in the United States. *Old Men Drunk and Sober*, by Bahr and Caplow, is one of the earliest studies. Their work examines homeless men in the Bowery or 'skid row' area of New York City in the early 1970s. It is a sociological study examining the interactions among homeless men as well as their interactions with other segments of society. Bahr and Caplow gathered their data using questionnaire driven interviews. Unfortunately, the narratives of these interviews, which could have become primary sources for future use, do not seem to have been preserved. *Old Men Drunk and Sober* describes the daily lives and behaviors of the Bowermen. They are a mixed array whose members are to a greater or lesser extent alienated by, and disaffiliated from, the rest of society:

*Homeless men fall into many categories: single men in itinerant occupations, migratory laborers, vagrants and beggars, religious mendicants, outlaws and other fugitives, hobos and derelicts. Homelessness seems to be a matter of degree, ranging from temporary to permanent and from the loss of a single affiliation to the absence of all affiliation. Itinerant workers, sailors and peddlers, for example, retain many of their affiliations; they are only as homeless as their mobility forces them to be...at the end of the scale, the modern skid row man demonstrates the possibility of nearly total detachment from society.*

*The observable behavior of the homeless person consists largely of activities that furnish substance or enjoyment without incurring responsibilities: mendicancy, petty crime, scavenging, casual conversation and an incurious attention to spectacles. His social inertness renders him both innocuous and helpless. He is unlikely to engage in major crime or in a political movement or to protest forcefully on his own behalf...The combined effects of poor nutrition, exposure to the elements, neglect of injuries and illness, and insensitivity to emergencies lead to very high rates of morbidity and mortality in the homeless population compared to the settled population as a whole (5-6).*

Bahr and Caplow's intentions were not historical. Nevertheless, some of the men they interviewed had experienced constant or intermittent homelessness since the early 1920s thus confirming the historical presence of homeless men for nearly half a century. Their work also represents the changing context and characteristics of the homeless population. At the time Bahr and Caplow wrote, the Bowery appeared as an anachronistic 'Wild West' dominated by the homeless, a context that has since disappeared through gentrification. Examinations of the homeless now feature the mentally ill, women, children and families, many of them rendered homeless due to shifts in social policy, technological change and economic rationalization. The homeless have become more politically active. And subsequent writers have applied structural analysis to the problem and focused in on the psychosocial debilitation of homelessness. Further examples from the American literature will be presented in section four.

Jack Layton, Sheila Baxter, Jim Ward and Thomas O'Reilly-Flemming have all written about homelessness in Canada. Each speaks from direct involvement and work with the homeless. These works endeavor to put a face on the homeless, to let us know them and to identify with them. They also provide concrete examples of how societal structures operate to render people homeless and then to further marginalize and stigmatize them. Their work is also hopeful and instructive. Each author identifies programs, actions, strategies, and styles of interaction that have had lasting success. Two notable examples are Toronto's Homes First Society (Ward 96-97) and Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA) (Baxter 49-52). These works are historical in the sense that they are snapshots of homelessness and work done with the homeless in Canada during the past 30 years. Ward in particular, identifies the importance of making the homeless aware of their history. Ward quotes from Si Kahn's *A Guide for Grassroots Leaders*:

*Rediscovering our own true histories helps us restore the real values of our communities. It also helps rebuild the self-confidence and pride that both individuals and groups need - in themselves, their history, their culture.*

*A priority in our organizing work is to help the different members of our organizations to discover their own history (Ward 22).*

Ward goes on to say:

*This method of building a group history supports popular education methods and can be used in conjunction with building verbal communication and writing and reading skills (23).*

*People working with the powerless often believe that social research in something only the "experts" can do. It's not true. A group of homeless people, with some initial guidance can turn out a credible product. The pay offs in terms of confidence building and group building are enormous (34).*

Work done elsewhere confirms that recovering the history of the homeless is possible and worthwhile. Why is it not being done in Atlantic Canada? Part of the answer is revealed in the attitude reflected by a statement appearing in *Solutions* a report commissioned by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). "The Atlantic provinces, with higher rates of poverty and unemployment do not experience severe homelessness" (11). This statement is made in the context of asking the question of why high rates of poverty and unemployment are now resulting in higher incidents of homelessness than they did in the past. First, I am not sure that the assumption of the question is correct. There may have been just as many homeless in the past due to poverty and unemployment. We simply had not yet developed the modern conception of homelessness and gone about documenting its presence and causation. Second, by dismissing the region as having no severe homelessness, *Solutions* is then free to ignore Atlantic Canada, and it does. So does a series of other reports done by CMHC over the past 15 years. A notable exception is the March 1999 draft of *Best Practices Addressing Homelessness*. This report includes a section on homeless youth in Halifax submitted by Phoenix Youth Programs. Nevertheless as a leader in homelessness research, CMHC sets an example. Perhaps when other researchers turn to the literature they follow CMHC's lead and focus their attention elsewhere. The situation is less severe in Atlantic Canada in that there are fewer homeless persons relative to places like Toronto or Vancouver. But homeless people in Halifax or Saint John bare similar characteristics to those in larger centres.

Given their transient lifestyle, persons homeless in Halifax this week may be among the homeless of Toronto next week, a month later homeless in Vancouver. I see no reason why research done with the homeless in Atlantic Canada could not make a useful contribution - locally, nationally or internationally. Small numbers may simply make research more feasible and qualitative.

The efforts of Bruce Hicks represent an exception to the predominant trend. Hicks looked directly at issues of homelessness in Halifax. In 1980, he authored a working paper for the Social Planning Department of the city of Halifax, "Report On Services To Homeless Men." A year later he completed a Masters thesis, "An Exploration Into The Natural Social Support Networks Of Homeless Men." Hicks measures a moment rather than surveying events or change over time. In other words, his work is historical only in the same way that the work of Bahr and Caplow is historical. Hicks focused on individual circumstances and behaviours. Some comments are made about lack of services but homelessness is viewed primarily as a matter of personal choosing rather than a consequence of structural dynamics. Some useful descriptions and recommendations emerge. Most notably, Hicks maintained that any effort hoping to achieve lasting impact must provide homeless men with a meaningful role within both the development and implementation processes. Moreover, any programs or services aimed at helping the homeless must first respect the culture and codes of conduct endemic to street life:

*The basic premise of this project has been that for those who have chosen the homeless life style, and for whom basic life style change may have been less of an option, considerations of intervention which take seriously the natural social support systems, were seen as useful. (Hicks "An Exploration" 63)*

There is no detailed chronicle of homelessness in Halifax. But some of the historical literature does provide us with glimpses of those most destitute in the past. In *The Dark Side Of Life In Victorian Halifax* Judith Fingard follows 92 habitual offenders from the city's upper streets as they revolve in and about the penal system during the later part of the 19th century. The underclass, as Fingard calls them, are held at the bottom of society by lack of education, chronic unemployment, racism, addiction, mental illness and criminal behavior. Institutional (Victorian middle class) responses were typically superficial and reproachful. For example, social reformers "closed the barrooms and thereby attacked the subculture of the

upper streets but they had abandoned alcoholic rehabilitation as a strategy for helping the victims of drink" (195).

In 'Masters and Friends, Crimps and Abstainers: Agents of Control in 19th Century Sailortown' Fingard focuses on seafarers. She looks past romanticized notions of jack tar to find a group abused and exploited by both ship-owners and rooming house keepers (some contemporary rooming house keepers bare a frightening resemblance to those described by Fingard). In busy times, sailors represented necessary labour to the captains, as well as rent and crimping dividends to the rooming house keepers. In slack times or when resistant to control, the sailor was cast aside by both:

*When Benjamin Horton, a 29 year old Dane, deserted in 1874, he was unable to find a boarding house that would lodge him. It being January, his chances of finding employment were negligible, and he was forced to go to jail for shelter (31).*

Philanthropic middle class reformers established sailor's homes to meet the needs of the destitute. In 19th century Halifax, the term sailor is at times synonymous with vagrant and transient, terms Humphreys identified as synonymous with notions of homelessness in present-day England. Fingard does not zero in on the lives of destitute sailors or seek connections between them and the contemporary homeless. Fingard uses the example of sailors as the basis for a broader analysis of capital and labour relations and class structures in Victorian Halifax. Nevertheless, in telling us about characters such as James Potter, who operated a sailor's homes in late 19th century Halifax, Fingard reveals ongoing destitution and similarities between 19th century sailors and 21st century unemployed and under-employed workers who are often homeless:

*Since Potter's first venture in 1876 had been a refuge for the destitute homeless, regardless of occupation or sex, his subsequent concentration on sailors would tend to suggest that, in his experience, seamen formed the most numerous group of vagrants in the city. The sailor's home of 1879 retained, as a separate department, a night refuge for destitute seafaring men whose only alternatives were the jail or the poorhouse. Without immediate prospects of shipping engagements, unemployed sailors were unlikely to find places in sailor's boarding houses. Potter in fact claimed that the night refuge sheltered "friendless and moneyless sailors, who have been kicked from boarding houses because they have nothing to pay." (44-45).*

Through Fingard's work, we see that Halifax has always had slums and destitute residents. Her work could be used to support the notion that



contemporary homelessness is not ephemeral. It is endemic, much more a structural problem rather than the result of individual negligence. On the other hand, the Victorians were resolutely classist. Sailors and the underclass were seen as distinctly separate from the rest of "respectable" society. Nowadays the homeless come from all levels of society. The homeless can no longer be seen as "them." Few people have unlimited reserves to fall back on. Only the blessings of health, family and gainful employment keep the majority of us off the streets.

In "Confines, Wards, and Dungeons" R.E. Kroll traces prison reform in 18th and 19th century Halifax. The echoes we hear through Kroll's sounding of the past resonate with voices of contemporary homeless men. We see then as we do now structural unemployment ending in desperation and that desperate people have always done desperate things. Early Halifax was a rough place with more than its fair share of ne'er do wells. At the same time, we see petty crime born of necessity:

*Townsfolk blamed unemployment and the scarcity of hard coin as the causes of this preponderance of petty theft. The hundreds of jobless vagabonds and shiftless misfits who plodded through Halifax's miry streets with no means of sustenance were indeed candidates to become thieves, if they had not already turned their hand at cutting purses and pinching pockets (94).*

Debt was also a crime:

*All was well if a debtor was wealthy and could pay his way as some were, but what if he was poor, as were most. In 1751, Charles Donovan, imprisoned for a debt of 100 shillings, lay on his tick-ridden straw mattress, shivering in the October cold and choking on his own bloody sputum. He could pay for very little and received as much (96).*

Kroll clearly defines an underclass of people forced to endure unspeakable cruelty and the most abject living conditions. Their principal offence was poverty. Poorhouses, hostels and asylums eventually replaced the gaol as a means of housing the destitute. However, we know from the work of both Whalen and Greenhous that these places were little better. Certainly 18th and 19th century notions of criminality were different, as were notions of social justice and state responsibility. The apparatus of government was still rudimentary. It had its hands full trying to keep some semblance of order. That said, we see through Fingard, Kroll and others that in Halifax people have been forced into the streets for over two hundred years. What we do not see, anywhere in Atlantic Canadian historiography, is an attempt to define these people as an aggregate, as a whole. No attempt

is made to know them, to know the totality of their lives. No attempt is made to develop an historical perceptive of homelessness in Atlantic Canada.

My argument is a simple one; it is possible to recover and document a long history of homelessness in Halifax. When we look outside the region, we see a greater effort to define and examine homelessness, both in its past guise(s) and in its present form. Humphreys in particular shows us that a continuity or historical perspective of homelessness can be assembled. Our social, political and economic institutions have been structurally similar to those across Canada as well as those of England and the United States for centuries. Of course, those structures engendered homelessness here just as they did elsewhere. Of course, the records of our institutions can be used to document the history of homelessness just as similar records have been used to do so elsewhere. There may be fewer homeless men in the city of Halifax than in Toronto but the history of homelessness in Halifax is equally recoverable. Writers such as Fingard and Kroll give us glimpses of past destitution. They show us that the condition we now call homelessness has existed in Halifax for a very long time. The next section more carefully explains why I believe assembling the history of homelessness, as well as rediscovering their personal histories, is so important to the homeless men of Halifax.

### **Section Three**

Atlantic Canadian historiography does not allow us to hear the direct voice of the homeless. Yet, we see glimpses of destitute men which suggests there is available evidence from which to develop a history of Halifax's homeless men. Why is the development of that history important? Many reasons. I had a conversation not too long ago with a friend who referred to social work with the homeless as 'loser coddling'. Homeless men are often referred to as bums and scammers. Stereotypical visions permeate western society. Humphreys points out that "British governments during the closing decades of the twentieth century have been conformable in the knowledge that many members of the public are content to brand the homeless as social parasites" (164). Labeling alienates; prevents the homeless from regaining a homeful place in society. Stereotypes are one-dimensional views; often based on a single attribute disliked by the observer(s). No person, or group, is one-dimensional or is fairly judged from a single perspective. Some homeless men drink too much, or like

vagrants of the past, commit petty crimes of necessity. But at other times in their lives they may have ran successful businesses and sat on the PTA. One homeless man put it this way, "You know you're at rock bottom but you just can't shake it. You're homeless, a homeless person, that's your identity now, everything else just drops away. Its like the rest of your life never happened" (O'Reilly-Flemming 56). History, a multidimensional view, provides a balance. Seeing a more complete picture moves us away form pejorative statements like "get a job" toward cooperative inquiries such as "how can we help?" History can alter our perceptions.

The daily rejection, the struggle to keep clean, the powerlessness, the loneliness – they grind down the self-esteem. Halifax's homeless men urgently need a confidence builder. History holds restorative powers, particularly when it is a verb. Four years ago in Calgary a group of formerly homeless persons released *The Street Speaks*; an exploration of the psychology of homelessness based on interviews done with 15 homeless individuals. The Street Speaks helped prompt the City of Calgary to commit \$1.4 million to affordable housing and to form the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CMHC, *Best Practices*, Calgary 4). *Street Feat* is a small Halifax monthly newspaper dealing with issues of homelessness and poverty. Street people write many of its articles. In Toronto during the late 1980s a group of homeless persons calling themselves "The Balcony Bunch" proposed an alternative model of supportive housing they termed "StreetCity." A few years latter, with the continued evolvment of the homeless, StreetCity moved from vision to reality:

*While StreetCity has not removed the root causes of homelessness, the attention paid to this innovative solution has provided an audience for residents, staff and advocates to speak to a wide range of people about issues facing people who have experienced homelessness. StreetCity demonstrates the skills of chronically homeless people and their ability to participate in decision making and community development when an appropriate environment is provided (CMHC, Best Practices, Toronto 11).*

Ward suggests that "social theory [history] needs to be liberated from the college classrooms and textbooks and put to work on the streets" (110). Homeless people elsewhere have undertaken sound research activities, which examined their history. Their findings have been used to support successful programs. The homeless men of Halifax can conduct their own research. And their findings can be used to suggest and support programs here. In the process, Halifax's homeless men can begin to regain strength,

begin to reconceptualize themselves as proactive rather than passive, begin to take power back.

The Atlantic Canadian experience is unique within Canada. Atlantic Canadian historiography rose specifically both to explore and to celebrate our cultural uniqueness. Atlantic Canadian historiography eloquently and vehemently defends the ability of history to identify, educate, and politicize. With equal force, it asks us to think, and to think critically, about ourselves, how we came to be and what we might make possible in our corner of the world in the future. Burrill and McKay stressed the importance of critical research:

*We need critical perspectives and radical research in the Atlantic region, because without research which goes to the roots of economic and social power in the region, we can only be powerless to effect long-term, structural change...The media (much of it either Irving-controlled or dominated by other conservative interests) give us a steady drizzle of facts and opinions about the economy and society of the region but almost no tools to understand these facts and put them in historical perspective, and no way to form a critical perspective on self-serving editorial opinion (1-2).*

In analogous examples from the educational literature, Bishop along with Haig-Brown et al. explain why the teaching of their history and the celebration of their culture is so important for marginalized groups. Haig-Brown et al. quote Dr. Verna Kirkness:

*It is the challenge to today's people to correct the situation created over three hundred years of attempted assimilation. To achieve this, the First Nations children of today must know their past, their true history, in order to understand the present and plan for the future. First Nations cultures must once again be respected and the traditional values must again be held in high esteem (32).*

The history of homelessness needs to be recovered and written for similar reasons and purposes. It needs to be complete; examining the distant as well as the recent past. Men on our streets today are not going to suddenly find a roof over their heads simply because they learned a little bit about Victorian vagrants. Nevertheless, studying characters such as Victorian vagrants and drawing parallels between those persons and themselves, can create greater awareness of the breadth and origin of structural inequality and can create clearer arguments against it. With the strength and the will clear arguments engender, homeless men can move toward regaining a roof over their heads.

Having a known identifiable history in a place is a basis from which to claim ownership or entitlement. The longer the history the stronger or more persistent the claim. Take for example matters of land ownership or legal rights. The pursuit of Native rights is largely based on an historical presence long preceding European settlement and on historical records such as treaties. The maintenance of separate Catholic school boards in Ontario is based on a succession of rights inscribed in the historical record. History can defend or secure sovereignty:

*...old documents, particularly those relating to land ownership or legal rights, were [are] forms of power: producing an old (and therefore authoritative) document supporting one's case could help win an argument. This is, of course, still true, as when lawyers search for old documents concerning a house being bought by their clients (Arnold 58).*

Homelessness in Halifax has a long history. But that history is not available in a documented codified form. Absence in history leads to absence in law and government policy. Hicks pointed this out in 1980:

*The homeless population of Halifax has been an overlooked group of residents. Because they have been classified as transients no level of government has in the past acknowledged responsibility (Hicks, "Services" 113)*

This situation has persisted. For example, the absence of any discussion of homelessness in recent documents released by DCS. Hicks described the homeless as residents. The homeless have held residency (albeit floating) in Halifax for over two hundred years. Because it has not been acknowledged and well documented, the homeless have been unable to claim the rights and privileges usually attached to long term residency; for example, invitations to participate in local riding associations, ad hoc government committees or community events. Documenting their history gives the homeless a basis from which to claim entitlement. Pride in their history, pride in themselves, furnishes the confidence to demand inclusion.

A history of homeless men that allows us to see the positive contributions they have made as well as the structural forces acting against them can help erase negative public perceptions. An inclusive recovery process that highlights the successes of homeless people elsewhere can help provide the homeless men of Halifax with the confidence to make lasting personal as well as societal changes. We use history in our schools as a means of teaching critical thinking. We publish history in definition and defense of our regional identity(s). If we believe in the value and power it brings to us, there is no reason to disbelieve in the value and power history

can give to the homeless. Society grants rights and entitlements based on documented historical records. The homeless need their history documented in order to (re)assert their rights and entitlements as part of society, part of "us".

#### **Section Four**

The story of Halifax's homeless men could be told in a number of ways. We could follow the example of Humphreys and tell the story from statute books and institutional responses such as poorhouses. Primary as well as secondary sources are available for this. For distant periods, this choice is perhaps the only choice. The homeless of the past are mythic creatures floating in the dust of ancient ledgers. We must revive them, make them real again in order to draw the line of homelessness from one epoch to another. Moreover, an institutional focus prompts us to ask how contemporary structures are responding. Better to look in the palace window than out of it. Looking out lands our gaze on the individual. And in that spotlight, fused with idealistic notions of rugged individualism and the Protestant work ethic, it is all too easy to blame, to victimize, to accusingly ask: What's wrong with you? Where did you go wrong? Such questions are distracting and pejorative.

Another way to avoid overly blaming the victims is to get to know them. Oral history is an ideal means of fostering positive contact and of documenting and presenting the first person realities of contemporary homelessness. I have spent countless hours in conversation with Halifax's homeless men. At times, I was saddened by their inability to see or escape the path of self-destruction or hateful illness. However, I was also enlivened by their sardonic wit, pragmatism, endurance and ingenuity. Face to face, they become as they are, a group of people much like any other, a complexity of warts and splendor reflective of ourselves and for all that knowable and likeable. From this level it is impossible to miss the fact that many people did everything right, or much the same as we did or might have done, and still they wound up homeless. From this level, it is impossible to miss or deny that our socio-economic structures are a large part of the problem.

The contemporary homeless do not leave behind a host of personal documents for the use of future historians. However, they can speak for themselves. Using oral historiography, they can bare witness to events. They can share experiences. They can speak into existence – document –

the recent past from a perspective impossible to gain from any other vantagepoint. Such documents can be cataloged and preserved for contemporary study as well as future use. An archive of oral history narratives (most suitably placed at the Turning Point) can leave future historians a much clearer picture of homelessness in the 21st century than the homeless of the 19th century were able to leave for us.

Since the 1940s and the invention of magnetic-tape-recording archival collections of oral historiography have grown, particularly in England and the United States. In Nova Scotia, oral methodology is most well known through the work of folklorist Helen Creighton. While folklorists and oral historians both rely on tape-recorded interviews, each one produces something quite different from the other. In very simple terms the folklorist captures and preserves the various cultural and artistic expressions of a particular period in history. In contrast, historians try "to understand and analyze the varieties of historical thought and their cultural context, and thus oral history interviewing is simply an extension of that into the field" (Grele 45).

There is a very lively theoretical debate surrounding the merits and risks of oral history methodology. The substance of the debate is well displayed in two collections one by Perks and Thomson the other by Dunaway and Baum. For those wanting advice on interviewing, editing and project design, Howarth provides a more practical how-to guide. So does Baum. How can oral historians best judge the reliability of their data? How are oral sources different than other sources? What happens to memory over time? What is the role of the listener, particularly when dealing with victims of extreme trauma? What is to be made of silences, what the speaker does not say? What effects do differences in class, ideology or race have on the process? These are the sorts of questions raised in the debate. There are more emerging issues than definitive answers. Nevertheless, most historians recognize the value and potential of oral historiography. In telling their history subjects often see themselves and the events of their lives in a new light. They acquire new meanings and new insights. And sometimes they heal old wounds. Telling one's story for the first time, speaking it into existence, is often cathartic. There is great power in talk, in the exchange of ideas and interests that is communication:

*Oral history is a history built around people. It thrusts life into history itself and it widens its scope. It allows heroes not just from the leaders, but from the unknown majority of the people. It encourages teachers and students to become fellow-workers. It brings history into, and out of, the*

*community. It makes for contact - and thence understanding - between social classes, and between generations. And to individual historians and others, with shared meaning, it can give a sense of belonging in a place or in time. In short it makes for fuller human beings. Equally, oral history offers a challenge to the accepted myths of history, to the authoritarian judgement inherent in its tradition. It provides a means for radical transformation of the social meaning of history (Thompson 28).*

*Enslavement of a citizenry begins when its members are denied their memories and when they are deprived of an audience for these memories (White 181).*

Oral methods have been used successfully with the homeless. Some fine results can be found in the American literature. Artensten presents the stories of ten street youth in Hollywood. Bulman traveled from shelter to shelter in Florida collecting dozens of stories from men and women. VanderStaay moved back and forth across America for three summers collecting stories. Joe Homeless is a detailed autobiographical account of homelessness in New York City. Grand Central Winter is a collection of stories from the street written by Lee Stringer. Pugh and Tietjen have collected the stories of seven homeless women in Washington D.C. Finally Hubbard presents the words and pictures of four homeless youth, two in California, one in Minnesota and another in Virginia.

White uses the example of Holocaust victims in pointing out that sometimes language can not adequately describe intense trauma. Words can only take us so far in trying to image life in the camps because that reality is so far removed from our own. For many of us, the reality of homelessness is as far removed as a concentration camp. The works cited above are the best that language can do to bridge the gap. This is the language of the homeless. Read it. Afterward you still won't know exactly what it's like to be homeless. But you will have moved far beyond stereotypical notions of the homeless to see that they are proud, hard working, raw, tragic and in some cases incredibly cogent emotive writers.

These works begin to boldly write the homeless into the historical record in their own words. We hear the wounded pride of abused labour:

*Since we're homeless they think there's got to be something wrong with us, you know, stereotyping us. 'Cause you don't know how hard it is to find work when you don't have no place to live. Once you get in this situation you're lost in the souse without the season...I mean they can look at you like you a piece of shit; they treat you like you the scum of the earth. And see it hurts, it hurts you. I mean...man, I have a Congressional*



*Medal of Honor...you understand? A Congressional Medal of Honor! And it really hurts to have a person look at you as a subhuman. And then you look at yourself and go "why am I here? Why am I tolerating this garbage?" You understand what I'm sayin'? I'm still a man. I still have pride and dignity. Why are they doing this to me? (VanderStaay 47-48).*

We hear the raw realization and frustration of the addicted:

*I'm a junkie...mostly cocaine and heroine. I have a good education...a good skill - refrigeration...I had a dynamite job. I gave it all up to come to live under a fucking bridge...I gave it all up a whole life just to fucking come to be a pile of shit...I've gotta quite, got to quite. You're goina quit or die" (Bulman 12-128).*

We hear from a generation growing up homeless:

*Life in the shelter is pretty good and I usually have fun, but sometimes it is boring. I can't bring my friends home from school and it is sometimes hard to tell other people that I live in the Sunlight Mission Church. Other kids in school sometimes make fun of me (Hubbard 14).*

In addition to other benefits, these stories provide empowerment and hope, to the writers and to their readers. This is political action. Hundreds of homeless people have broken their silence. And by "articulating their thoughts and transferring them from the private to the public sphere - they're affirming themselves as full citizens" (Pugh and Tietjen 187). The homeless men of Halifax are equally capable of telling their stories and affirming their citizenship rights. Oral methodology is the most symbiotic and practical means of formally bringing the homeless back into the community.

An oral history project involving Halifax's homeless men could combine the best of English and American examples. There is no reason why a small group could not be trained in interviewing techniques and then set to the task of collecting histories from one another and then from wider circles of homeless men. The Turning Point is a logical focal point. Homeless men could also be responsible for transcribing and editing. With proper support, (here is a logical place for academics to get involved) homeless men could also participate in the process of researching homelessness in more distant periods. Perhaps *Street Feat* could be used to support and publish the results. With past and present added together; with oral as well as written sources compiled; the complete history of Halifax's homeless men can become known - by their own hand and in their own words. Along the way, homeless men could acquire skills, knowledge, and

unity. They could reconstitute a positive image of themselves, a strength and awareness that could help reattach them to a better life.

## Section Five

The following pages present the story of Robert Higgins in his own words. Robert has been homeless much of his life. His story is divided up into four sections - family, school, work and street life. Robert worked many hours telling me his story and later reviewing the transcript. In the process, I watched Robert think about himself and his life in new ways. And I watched him enjoy it. Robert has been more stable during the past two years. He has needed the Turning Point form time to time. The roots of his struggle become clearer as you read his story and get to know him. Robert tells his story in order to understand it and in the hope that others too can learn from it. I share his sentiments and I hope others are inspired to tell their stories and further our understanding.

## Robert Higgins

### Introduction

*Its hard to look back. These things are a little uncomfortable to talk about, emotional stuff. A lot of it was traumatic. There was a lot of hurt – reasons I can't remember certain things. All that traveling, everything I've done in my life, I didn't really want to do. It was just a way of passing the time. Like the song goes I still haven't found what I've been looking for. Its not like I was raised to follow my fathers footsteps. I never had no dreams, no goals really – just to live. I walk around finding joy in life, but on the other hand feeling there's no point to it all. And I'll be damned if I can figure out why I think or feel this way. Talking about your past, being on the streets, all the schools, being an orphan – I looked at it as not necessary unless its going to be useful information to somebody else. But, I can't see it.*

### Family

*I don't know much about my early family life. I was born in Truro, '49. I got my mom's last name. Father's last name was Thompson. I've never met him. I lived in Milbrook, close to the reserve. May Higgins, my grandmother, had a house there. My brother Cyril - a year older than me - my sister and my cousin Dawnetta and her brother Ralph - we all lived there with our grandmother in this little house. But, I don't*

*remember it. When we lived in Stewiacke we use to go into Truro to shop. We use to go by there practically every weekend. I remember that.*

*I can't remember leaving our parents. The story we had was that our mother and father weren't married. My mom was an alcoholic. I don't know if there was any abuse. I've never gotten any information about that. I guess I was quite a happy kid. But, I imagine I did block a lot out and was pretending a lot. Even at four or five years old there was a lot on my mind.*

*I don't know how [Rose and I] ended up at the orphanage. [Cyril] stayed with our grandmother. [We] spent about two years in the orphanage. I can remember the inside. It was dormitories. You were in one with your age group. I remember one worker, they called them matrons, her name was Mrs. Pat. I've walked by there sometimes, just to get the feel. You know, finding your roots. I remember the day we left. My worker put us in a little Volkswagen and drove us up to Stewiacke.*

*I remember arriving at the farmhouse, me and my sister. We were about six or seven years old. I can see us... I can only remember the happy times. I can't remember any bad times. It was typical country living - party lines, church, Sunday school. I learned how to work. In the early fifties farm life was more important than education. Harvesting took us out of school early. Work agrees with me. When I am out of work its very hard on me.*

*In '62 we went from the farm to Stewiacke town. Mr. Goodwin had a heart attack and they bought a house in town. They were our guardians. So, me and my sister went to Stewiacke town. A year later we moved back to the farm with their eldest son. After that I came to Dartmouth, Murray Hill Drive. I lived with a minister's widow. [Rose] went to live in Waverley. The next summer I moved to St. Margaret's Bay. That didn't work out. Before the school year ended I moved back to Dartmouth, around the K-Mart. I finished grade eight there, left and went to another place - by the Forum - on Cork and Dublin. That was the last foster home I lived in.*

*All of the foster homes I was in were great. I got no beefs against them. But, I wasn't their family. There was no inheritance. I was just being raised, guardians. I always knew that. When I was introduced it was always "this is our foster son" - a label, always there. I was getting tired of being the orphan. I wanted a family. I'm like that even today. But, I have a hard time relating, getting close. The moving around from foster homes was the beginning... brings me up into the street person I am. I can't settle down. I still feel it. Even in the room I have now I feel imprisoned. No, not imprisoned... its not a home. In a sense I have*

*always been homeless. Home is where your heart is, where your family is. Without that what feeling do you carry?*

*I was in Vancouver in '73. I got this letter. My sister said [Cyril] had been in a car accident in Truro. He was in a coma, in the VG I guess. Our mother had been down, taken our brother back to Toronto with her, Saint Michael's Hospital. My sister gave me the address for my mother's place. I was going to come back to Halifax, hitch-hiking. I wanted to see my sister. I wasn't going to stop. But, it just so happened I got a ride right into Toronto, right to the door. It was late, I knocked. She came to the door. I couldn't remember the last time I seen her, might have been four or five years old. She thought I was Cyril. It was a shock to her. I had mixed feelings. I stayed about a week.*

*Around Christmas time in 1980 I went [back] to Toronto to find my mom. I hadn't seen her in seven years. I went to the Salvation Army missing persons. They located her. She was in the hospital, dying of cancer. She was expected to live another nine months. I spent Christmas at her place. She was gone in January.*

*I was living in Dartmouth a few years ago, over ten years ago. A couple people from Truro were drinking with us one day. I mentioned my father's name. They said he hung around a legion in Truro. Me and my sister give them a call. They said he was working for Day and Ross. We phoned there. They said he had left six months earlier and hadn't left a forwarding address. They thought he went to Ontario. That's as close as we got.*

*I first met my brother [as an adult] when I was nineteen. He is still alive. He's a paraplegic, been in a wheelchair ever since [the accident]. He got a settlement. Forty thousand some dollars. He blew that. He's spent the past ten years or more in a nursing home. But, he's been out on the streets in a wheelchair too.*

*All my life my sister was my friend. From the time we were in the orphanage we had to take care of each other. There is still a bond there even though we gone our separate ways and don't see each other much. She's married, owns her own home. My lifestyle hasn't been up to par with her. But, she's still my sister.*

*In '73 I met Claire. [We] had a daughter, Tanya. We were living [on] South Bland Street, just across from where I am living now. I was drinking, we were behind in rent. We were going to get evicted. Claire and I split up. She took off with the baby. I was on my own again. I was working with Edmonds Brothers. They were helping best they could. They thought [Claire's] leaving was the best thing for me, thought she was my whole problem. But, [she] wasn't. It was the drinking. They thought they*

*could straighten me out. But, it didn't work out that way. I end up getting fired and taking off to Vancouver.*

*I never had much contact with Tanya over the years. Claire and I split at Christmas 1976. I saw [Tanya] a few times that winter. Claire left Halifax and went to Saint Stephen's New Brunswick and got [re]married. I saw Tanya a couple of times, but she didn't know me as her father. I never saw Tanya again until summer 1984 when she was nine. Then again at Christmas 1987, which is the last time I've seen her. I talked to her a few times two years ago. Claire had never told her until she was nine that I was her father. [Claire] told me [Tanya] always wondered why her last name was different than her mother's and stepfather's. Her stepfather would have had to adopt her and for whatever reason that never happened.*

## **School**

*The first school I went to was Richmond here in Halifax. That was when I was at the Protestant orphanage. Veith House, that use to be the orphanage. I remember being at the orphanage vaguely. I remember going to school. I remember coming back. Going to church and things like that, and a few little incidents that happened. I was about four or five years old when I went there. I started a year late. My birthday was on September 19, so they held me back a whole year. My sister, her birthday was in November. Both of us went to school together in the same grade. That's about it. That's my earliest recognition of school. Like I say I don't know much about my early family life.*

*Clearer memories of school? That would be in Stewiacke when I moved from the orphanage. I think it was '57 or '58, my sister and I moved up to Stewiacke on the farm. That was the first school after Richmond. I went to a one-room school in Stewiacke East. There may have been about...oh twenty kids from grade primary to grade six. An outhouse out back. We're talking years back. We walked a mile and a half to school along the Stewiacke river. I enjoyed... it was pretty good.*

*It was farm life in the country. Me and my sister were only kids. We had a hard time adjusting, being orphans. Most of the kids were related one way or another...the Mortons, the Millers, the Brentons. I remember me and my sister having a little hard time. You know, "How come you're living with the Goodwins? Are you related to them?" That type of thing. But, I wouldn't say abuse or bullying or nothing like that. But, not being related to the people you're living with and not being able to tell kids who your parents are, that was a main thing. In the country everybody knew one another. Even the teacher, Mrs. Miller, had two kids in school.*

*Most of her students were nephews or nieces. I had to walk home with the teacher's son, Robby. I wouldn't say he was a bully. He was bigger and liked to throw a featherweight in a snow bank, things like that. He never meant to hurt me. It was just a way of passing time on the way home. Like picking on a kid brother. We did become almost like family up there after awhile.*

*In '63 or '62, we left the farm. Mr. Goodwin was getting up in years, his late sixties. They bought a house in Stewiacke town. So, me and my sister went from Stewiacke east to Stewiacke town. I didn't finish up school in that one room school. I did grade six in Stewiacke Town. Then we moved back up to the farm to live with their eldest son. I started grade seven in Brookfield. I went to Brookfield Junior High by bus. They bussed us from Stewiacke to Brookfield. I finished grade seven in Brookfield. So, that's four schools up to the time I'm thirteen.*

*Brookfield? It was bigger, hallways, gym. Yeah, it was a lot bigger. It was a little better because I was sort of adopted at the one room school. Going to that one room school was like family life, even though we were orphaned. People whispered and gossiped. We were called orphan Bob or orphan Rose. That type of thing. But, I wasn't tied to a tree. There wasn't any big witch hunt. My sister and I made friends. Brookfield Junior High was a conglomeration of people coming as far away as Middle Musquodoboit. From Stewiacke past Brookfield almost to Truro. The average class was around thirty. That was a big step. Going through the one room school, in my class there were six. One class there was only one. Brookfield had different teachers for different classes, history teacher, science teacher. That was all new, a whole adjustment. Plus people were more into fashion. In the country fashion was nothing, you know plaid shirts. We were living on a limited budget. Foster parents weren't supposed to spoil us, give us too much. Or, get too attached because it was only temporary.*

*After Brookfield I came to Dartmouth, Murry Hill Drive. I went to Prince Arthur School. I was thirteen going on fourteen. I lived with a minister's widow. The house was always very quiet. She had a son. Dave was a year younger than me, but a year ahead of me in school. We got along pretty good. [Rose] went to live with some people in the navy - out in Waverley. I lost track of her for two or three years. The first time I met up with my sister again was when I came out of the army. I was eighteen then.*

*I remember a bald teacher, Mr. Smith. We use to give him a hard time. One time we give him a great big comb. It was a birthday or going away present for summer or something. I remember flattening his tires, things like that. Not me! But, I remember those things happening. Prince Arthur*

*School, he's the only teacher that stands out. I failed grade eight in Prince Arthur.*

*The next summer I was fifteen. I moved down to St. Margaret's Bay. I lived with an English couple from Lancashire England. They were strict old-fashioned people. That didn't work out too well. That was another one room school. I got sent home from that one room school. Couldn't wear my Cuban high-healed shoes. Before the school year ended I moved back to Dartmouth. Out around the K-mart. I finished grade eight at Caledonia School in Westfall. That's a big school, about the size of what Brookfield was.*

*I finished grade eight; sixteen years old. I left, went to another place - by the [Halifax] Forum, on Cork and Dublin Streets. That was the last foster home that I lived in. In '66 I started grade nine at Westmount School. No, it was Chebucto school. I passed my Christmas exams. But, they told me not to bother coming back if I didn't come back with a hair cut. I believe there was a letter in regard to my hair and clothes that were not appropriate. If I remember correctly it stated I was distracting and disturbing the school by my appearance and mannerism. So, I quit school.*

*From the time I left Prince Arthur, I was a couple of years ahead of everybody age wise. My attitude was changing. I was pretty cocky with teachers. I remember getting slapped across the face by a substitute. I was into rock - The Rolling Stones, Beatles, Led Zeppelin. I was into fashion - tight pants, Cuban high-healed alligator shoes. I was always pretty popular with the girls. I never hang around with the roughest guys. I don't like fighting, even to this day. But, I did lean towards the ones that were more rebellious.*

*Because of my background I was different than the other kids. I always knew it. I didn't want anybody knowing that I didn't have parents. I guess I felt envious [of] kids that had parents, had a family. Maybe wished I could be more like them and be a part and share what to me seemed quite normal. I met other kids in school along the way that were orphans too. We kind of stuck together; felt more comfortable with one another. I was missing my sister. I wanted a family. But, I was just being raised, guardians. I wanted my sister back. I wanted the animals back.*

*I turned seventeen and like I say I quit school. The foster people I was living with said "you can't stay here if you're not working." So, I got a job at Ben's Bakery, night shift on the ovens. I worked there for about three or four months. Then I decided to join the army. I had to do something with my life. That's what my Children's Aid worker was telling*

me. That's what my foster parents were telling me. That's what I was telling myself.

I figured I'd get my education in the army. That's what they were advertising. Get paid for learning. Sounded good to me. I got into the engineers. I liked the drills. I liked the hygiene they taught us. But, I didn't like being taught how to kill. I remember straw dummies standing in the field, the rifle, bayonet on the end. CHARGE! I was like charge...? I got shit for it. I wasn't violent, I wasn't tough enough. I was coming into the summer of love. I didn't want to be a killing machine. I didn't want the military life. Finally, I went AWOL.

I left Calgary with this buddy. We hitchhiked to Vancouver. Stayed at the Sally Ann. Then we split up. I decided to go back, turn myself in. There was a big storm, I got as far as Banff. I was looking for a job and wanting to turn myself in. Not that I was going to be strung to a post and shot. But, to me taking off from the army was big time. I went to the Voyageur Inn. This guy told me they were hiring. I got a job, plus a room. About a month [later] I got drunk one night and called the RCMP. Told them I was AWOL. They came and got me. Next day the military police took me back to Calgary. Got sixty days in Edmonton military prison. Only did thirty. Got a letter from Ottawa stating in so many words "He's not worth it. He wants a release, release him." I was getting home sick, even though I didn't have a home. I was home sick for the Maritimes.

I got out of the army, came back to the place I was at before I left to go in the army. Up on Cork and Dublin, Mrs. Clark. If I was in school, Children's Aid [would] take care of me. I couldn't go back to Chebucto School because I got booted out for having long hair. So, it was arranged for me to go to West Mount School, grade nine. After being in the army. After being all around.

I was eighteen in grade nine. Most of the kids were fifteen. A lot of them knew I was in the army, almost like I was in Vietnam or something. Before I went into the army I had friends at Chebucto [and] Westmount. I was still friends. Saint Agnes, Chebucto, Westmount School, Oxford School, Saint Catherine's and Halifax West - the old Eaton's that was our hangout, people from all them schools. We use to congregate down there every night, every day. The odd character wanted to challenge my being in the army. School yard bullying. "Oh you're tough now?" I could stand my ground. I never got beat up. Like a porcupine your quills stand up when you're confronted. I [soon] left school.

[In 1975] I decided to take an upgrading course at the church on Purcel's Cove Road. I did a year there. Metric was coming in. It was



*hard. I finished, a diploma. But, it didn't give me any more than I already had - an experience.*

## **Work**

*In '66 I quit school. The foster people I was living with said, "you can't stay here if you're not working." So, I got a job. Ben's Bakery was the first job I ever had, night shift on the ovens. I worked there for about three or four months. Then I decided to join the army.*

*[I lasted] about seven months. I wasn't tough enough. I got back graded twice. I didn't want the military life. I went AWOL, went to Vancouver. [Soon after] I decided to go back to Calgary, turn myself in. I hitchhiked as far as Banff. I went to this Voyageur Inn. I got a job dish washing. [I stayed] about a month. I got out of the army, came back to the place on Cork and Dublin.*

*The restaurant at Eaton's, I worked there dish washing after I got out of the army for a couple of months. After that I worked casual jobs out in Vancouver - tearing down buildings, stacking frozen food. You can only stay in a freezer so long before they have to haul you out.*

*In '73 I lived with my sister on Shirley Street and then John Street. I got a job at the Irving on Robie Street. I started in the car wash. Then I went to the pumps. I was there for a few months. Then I got a job at the old Moirs factory doing the weighing. That was the year they moved to Dartmouth. We all had the option of either moving with the company or go on our own. I decided to take an upgrading course at the church on Purcel's Cove Road.*

*I started in September, finished in May. The girlfriend and I were having troubles. If it wasn't for my daughter I was ready to hit the road again. But, I was hanging in there. Edmond Brothers offered me a job. They liked my friendly attitude. They liked me. I remember Roger [saying] "stick with us and you'll be set for life." They had an ornamental concrete plant. I worked in that for awhile. They had a carpenter shop. Working there - building forms, doing renovations, painting - I loved it. I loved the smell of lumber. It was from being on the farm, working in the woods. That was my favorite job.*

*In the spring of '79 I came back from Vancouver. I had unemployment. Over the years I always had unemployment to transfer from one place to another. I started work at Dominion Metal, the old scrap-yard. I was there for about four months - breaking batteries, taking lead out of them. Then Edmonds give me another chance. That winter I was on call for snow removal.*

[That] winter was rough, because I was living by myself. I got in a little bit more trouble drinking. I ended up in the Dartmouth hospital, suicide attempt. I was all screwed up over my daughter, hadn't seen her in over a year. I was drunk, wrestling, ripped my cartilage in my knee. I was supposed to be working at winter snow removal, which I didn't do. I was in bad shape. Out drinking all the time, fall down twist [my knee] again. Its a wonder I am not crippled

Spring was coming. Roger wanted me back to work. So, I worked that Summer. Back in good company. Starting to come back to life. Fall came and I got in a little bit more trouble.

[Over the years] I did a lot of work, hard work too. Cherry picking in the Okanagan, striker on a truck, dry cleaning, assembly line, food bank - being on the other side, handing out instead of taking. I was a good worker when I did work, when I was sober. I've been a work person. When I'm out of work it doesn't agree with me.

## Street Life

First time out on the street was in '68. They picked me [up] for sleeping in a laundry room in an apartment building, charged with vagrancy. Kind of stupid, lock a guy up for no money, no place to live. I was in Shelburne for about a month. I go out and started living with some old buddies in the St. Margaret's bay area. I lived in Hubbards with an old girlfriend for awhile. I was just drifting.

The summer of love 1969 I was on the streets. In the park doing acid, a little speed, smoking up, drinking. At the end of the summer I went out to Vancouver. From there on its hitchhiking back and forth up until 1978. Vietnam, the Cuban crisis, the FLQ thing it was all in our minds back then, in one way part of it. On the street between jobs, waiting for Unemployment. Going because I felt like it, free spirit. I lived in communes different times - Vancouver, North Bay. I ran into the Rainbow People in Colorado. I stayed at an old military base, we got run out of there. Hostels all across Canada. I stayed at the Salvation Army a couple of times. Just moved around all the time.

There's different types of street people. All kinds for different reasons. Some short term because they got cut off assistance, evicted. Long timers, drug addicts. Hermits, outcasts. There is always people wanting you to sell drugs for them, wanting you to get into prostitutions. I always try to stay away from that. I always ended up with the drinkers.

When you're on the street it doesn't take too long before you become strange, withdrawn, paranoid. You become kind of wild, very desperate.

*Mentally all kinds of things happen to you. You do things you normally wouldn't think of doing. All of the charges I've gotten stem from alcohol, things I wouldn't think about doing sober. When I look back - I had to been in some kind of mixed up frame of mind.*

*Typical dangers? Down town you can run into all kinds of things. Toronto there's a lot of dangers. You can get killed for forty five cents. In Toronto I've been robbed while panhandling by a couple of guys I considered buddies. People off the streets in Toronto are a lot different than in a small place like [Halifax]. You ask any of the guys when their sleeping out, kind of sleep with one eye open. People may take your clothes, your knapsack, or go through your pockets. I've slept on the sidewalk in Toronto, woken up with bills stuffed in my sleeping bag from people stopping. I've been woken up by dogs licking my face or growling at me. The [greatest] danger [is] those unsuspecting things that could occur. In the nighttime your bearings aren't so great. People know you're down and out, they take advantage of that.*

*I've been dry now for almost eight months. Its hard not drinking and having nothing to do. I got to do something about finding work. When I come to analyzing everything that's upsetting me, its not so much the drinking, its idleness. Every day seems to be the same. Go to the church have breakfast. 10 AM go to [Hope] Cottage. After that waste the day away. If I had no tobacco, go butt picking, collect a few bottles. Depending on the weather, I might go to the bus terminal, sit there. I always found that a pretty good spot. Watch people come and go. Nobody bothers you because you look so sad and alone. I can spend hours sitting in the park and have no company at all. Nobody talk to me, sit there eating their sandwiches, waiting for a bus or somebody else. To just sit in the park or wonder around has been a way of life. Nobody at home to talk to. Nothing to kill the pain, the loneliness. In regard to my drinking I said it was idleness and I've had a lot of people agree that I've got too much time on my hands. But, I think the real reason myself and most other people turn to drinking is from loneliness. I got nothing. Then again I got nothing if I drink, I'm worse off. I'm dammed if I do, damned if I don't. All day long I sort of just got to wait the day out.*

*Typical day in the life of a drunk on the street?... I can sum it by saying Shitty! Its no good. If you get into drinking and drugs on the street it becomes a nightmare - dangerous depending on who you're with. Guys that are drinking Lysol they're crazy! Not too many of the boys I drank with left. The feeling I get - they just can't wait for me to get back with them so they got an extra body to panhandle, get cans or steal from. Us boys, we don't sit in expensive bars drinking shots. Its cheap wine. Sunday I found about that much [indicates about four inches] Golden*

*Glow in a bottle somebody tossed away. To an alcoholic on the street, finds like that are like finding a gold nugget. Going out with friends, the clubs around town, I remember them days. I was young and naïve, couldn't see I had a disease. When I discovered I had a disease it took away all the fun. I've been really, really, really down and out. I don't wish to be like that. On the other hand I wasn't as depressed. Maybe I was, but I was numbing it.*

## Epilogue

I find the subtlety of Robert's memory quite remarkable. The details of his story show us the felt impact of broader social patterns. For example, the process of school consolidation is clearly evidenced in Robert's move to Brookfield Junior High. Being slapped by a substitute teacher and Robert's numerous foster placements are encounters with educational and child welfare practices of the recent past. The consistency of the details across several separate interviews attests to the reliability of Robert's memory. Because his story describes many places and events at particular moments in time and because of his ongoing involvement with social welfare agencies, cross-referencing other available sources could easily assess the validity of Robert's memory.

Ronald J. Grele talks about searching for the worldview or problematic of the interviewee. Grele defines worldview as an individual's interpretation of the dominant myths, events, and representations of the recent past. Worldview is worked and reworked through time and experience. A worldview is a past present fusion that informs present actions and visions of the future. Myths of work and family figure prominently in Robert's worldview. His drinking is both a cause and a reaction to the dichotomy between his interpretation of what work and family are supposed to be and his lived experience. Perhaps it is an inability to re-conceive his notion of family that prevents Robert from forming attachments and relationships. Robert clearly believes he is supposed to work and he is obviously proud of having worked. However, work does not seem to have ever been something Robert did for himself. An awareness of his interests and skills or an intentional pursuit of them through work does not ring through Robert's narrative. Robert absorbed society's prevailing work ethic but never seems to have derived a sense of identity or personal strength from work. Finally, Robert does not seem to look for answers outside of himself. On the one hand, this allows Robert to take responsibility for his own

actions. At the same time, it may be preventing him from gaining valuable advice and support from others.

Is Robert typical or unique? The truth is we don't know and we won't know until many more stories become visible, move from the private to the public sphere. Publication is essential for at least three reasons. First, the process provides healthy release and introspection. Second, it is only in the aggregate that we can begin to see and understand the patterns of homelessness endemic to particular places and the distinguishing characteristics of particular homeless populations. Without this information, policy responses are guesswork. Finally, an aggregate of stories helps to convince individual homeless persons that they are not alone and that while the causes of homelessness are largely beyond their control the solutions are not.

## Works Cited

- ARTENSTEIN, Jeffrey. *Runaways In Their Own Words: Kids Talk About Living on the Streets*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates Inc., 1990.
- BACHER, John C. and J. David HULCHANSKI. "Keeping Warm and Dry: The Policy Response to the Struggle for Shelter Among Canada's Homeless, 1900-1960." *Urban History Review* Oct. 1987: 147-163.
- BAHR, Howard M. and Theodore CAPLOW. *Old Men Drunk and Sober*. New York: New York University Press, 1973.
- BAXTER, Sheila. *Under the Viaduct: Homeless in Beautiful B.C.* Vancouver: New Star Books, 1991.
- BECK, Murray J. *Politics of Nova Scotia, Volume Two 1896-1988*. Tantallon: Four East Publications, 1988.
- BENNETT, Paul. "Turning Bad Boys Into Good Citizens: The Reforming Impulse of Toronto's Industrial Schools Movement, 1883 to the 1920s." *Ontario History* Sept. 1986: 209-232.
- BERGER, Peter L. *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*. New York: Random House, 1973.
- BRUCE, Harry. *An Illustrated History of Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Nimbus, 1997.
- BULMAN, Philip, Michael. *Caught In The Mix: An Oral Portrait of Homelessness*. Westport: Auburn House, 1993.
- BURRILL, Gary and Ian MCKAY, Eds. *People, Resources, and Power: Critical perspectives on underdevelopment and primary industries in the Atlantic region*. Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1987.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). *Best Practices Addressing Homelessness (Draft)*. Ottawa, 1999.
- - -. *Bibliography On Homelessness*. Ottawa, 1998.

- CHARLEBOIS, Carol et al. *A Study of Rooming House Conditions in Downtown and South End Halifax*. Halifax: Metro Non-Profit Housing Association, 1996.
- CHOYCE, Lesley. *Nova Scotia Shaped By The Sea: A Living History*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1996.
- City of Toronto. *Report of the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force: Taking Responsibility for Homeless (summary of recommendations)*. Toronto, 1999.
- DIAMOND, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: Norton, 1999.
- DALY, Gerald. *A Comparative Assessment Of Programs Dealing With The Homeless Population In The United States, Canada And Britain*. Ottawa: CMHC, 1988.
- . *Homeless: Policies, strategies, and lives on the street*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- FAIRLEY, Bryant, Colin LEYS and James SACOUMAN Eds. *Restructuring And Resistance: Perspectives from Atlantic Canada*. Toronto: Garamond Press, 1990.
- FINGARD, Judith. "Attitudes Toward the Education of the Poor in Colonial Halifax." *Acadiensis* Spring 1973: 15-42.
- . *The Dark Side Of Life In Victorian Halifax*. Porters Lake: Pottersfield Press, 1989.
- . "Masters and Friends, Crimps and Abstainers: Agents of Control in 19th Century Sailortown." *Acadiensis* Spring 1978: 22-46.
- . "The Relief of the Unemployed Poor in Saint John, Halifax, and St. John's, 1815-1860." *The Acadiensis Reader: Volume One Second Edition Atlantic Canada Before Confederation*. Eds. P.A. Buckner and David Frank. Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990. 198-219.
- FITZGERALD, Michael, D. *To Live To Learn: Homeless Youth, Literacy, Education, And Career*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Phoenix Youth Programs, 1998.
- FORBES, E.R. and D.A. MUISE. *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- FORBES, E.R. *Essays on the 20th Century Maritimes: Challenging the Regional Stereotype*. Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989.
- GILSON, C.H.J., Ed. *Strikes: Industrial Relations in Nova Scotia 1957-1887*. Hansport: Lancelot Press, 1987.
- GLASSER, Irene. *Homelessness In Global Perspective*. New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1994.
- GREENHOUS, Brereton. "Paupers and Poorhouses: The Development of Poor Relief in Early New Brunswick." *Social History*.
- GRELE, Ronald, J. "Movement without aim: methodological and theoretical problems in oral history." Perks, Robert and Alistair Eds. *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1998. 38-53.

- Halifax And Its People: 1749-1999. *Images From Nova Scotia Archives And Record Management*. Halifax: Nimbus, 1999.
- HICKS, W. Bruce. "An Exploration Into The Natural Social Support Networks Of Homeless Men." Unpublished Master's Thesis. Acadia Divinity College, 1981.
- . "Report On Services To Homeless Men." Working paper, Social Planning Department - City of Halifax, 1980.
- HOMELESS, Joe. *My Life on the Street: Memoirs Of A Faceless Man*. New Jersey: New Horizon Press, 1994.
- HOWARTH, Ken. *Oral History: A Handbook*. Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, 1998.
- HUBBARD, Jim. *Homeless Children In Their Own Words And Photographs: Lives Turned Upside Down*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.
- HULCHANSKI, J. David, et. al. *Estimating Homelessness: Towards A Methodology For Counting The Homeless In Canada*. Ottawa: CMHC, 1999.
- . *Solutions to Homelessness: Vancouver Case Studies*. Ottawa: CMHC, 1991.
- HUMPHREYS, Robert. *No Fixed Abode: A History of Responses to the Roofless and the Rootless in Britain*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Institute of Public Affairs Dalhousie University. *Poverty in Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Dalhousie University, 1969.
- INWOOD, Kris, Eds. *Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic History of the Maritime Provinces*. Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993.
- JOHNSON, Richard and Graham DAWSON (Popular Memory Group). "Popular memory: theory, politics, method." Perks, Robert and Alistair Eds. *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1998. 75-78.
- JONES, Burnley, A. ROCKY. "The HERO Collection as Community History." *Work, Ethnicity and Oral History*. Eds. Dorothy E. Moore and James H. Morrison. Baddeck: Proc. of a conference. 15-18 Oct. 1986. the Society for the Study of Ethnicity in Nova Scotia, the Atlantic Oral History Association, and the Canadian Oral History Association, 1988. 127-132.
- KIKUMURA, Akemi. "Family Life Histories: A Collaborative Venture." *The Oral History Reader*. Eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. New York: Routledge, 1998. 140-144.
- KNOLL, R.E. "Confines, Wards, and Dungeons." *Nova Scotia Historical Society Collections* Vol. 40 (1980): 93-107.
- LANCE, David. "Oral History Project Design." Dunaway, David K. and Willa K. Baum Eds. 2nd ed. *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. New York: AltaMira Press, 1996. 135-143.
- LAYTON, Jack. *Homelessness: The Making And Unmaking Of A Crisis*. Toronto: Penguin/McGILL Institute, 2000.
- MCGAHAN, Peter. *Killers, Thieves, Tramps and Sinners*. Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 1989.

- MCGILLIVARY, Don and Brian TENNYSON, Eds. *Cape Breton Historical Essays*. Sydney: College of Cape Breton Press, 1980.
- MOORE, Dorothy E. and James H. MORRISON Eds. *Work, Ethnicity and Oral History*. Proc. of a conference. 15-18 Oct. 1986. Baddeck: the Society for the Study of Ethnicity in Nova Scotia, the Atlantic Oral History Association, and the Canadian Oral History Association, 1988.
- MOSS, William. "Oral History: An Appreciation." Dunaway, David K. and Willa K. Baum Eds. 2nd ed. *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. New York: AltaMira Press, 1996. 107-121.
- MURPHY, P.J. and Loyd JOHNSEN. *Life 25: Interviews With Prisoners Serving Life Sentences*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1997.
- Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. *Social Assistance Restructuring Initiative: Summary Report of Focus Group Initiative*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia, 1998.
- - -. *Social Assistance Restructuring Initiative: Rebuilding the System a Discussion Paper*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia, 1998.
- O'REILLY-FLEMMING, Thomas. *Down And Out In Canada: Homeless Canadians*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1993.
- PARKER, Mike. *Woodchips and Beans: Life in Early Lumber Woods of Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Nimbus, 1992.
- PERKS, Robert and Alistair Eds. *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- POMEROY, Steve and Michael FROJMOVIC. *Inventory Of Projects And Programs Addressing Homelessness*. Ottawa: CMHC, 1995.
- Popular Memory Group. "Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method." *The Oral History Reader*. Eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. New York: Routledge, 1998. 75-86.
- PUGH, Deborah and Jeanie TIETJEN. *I Have Arrived Before My Words: Autobiographical Writings of Homeless Women*. Virginia: Charles River Press, 1997.
- ROACH, Thomas E. *Arn? Narn? Faces and Voices of Atlantic Inshore Fishermen*. Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1997.
- ROOKE, Patricia and R.L. SCHNELL. *Discarding The Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English-Canada (1800-1950)*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1983.
- ROSE, Albert. "Social Services" *The Canadians 1867-1967*. Eds. J.M.S. Careless and R. Craig Brown. Toronto, Ont.: Macmillan, 1967.
- RYAN, Judith Hoegg. *Coal in Our Blood*. Halifax: Formac Publishing Co., 1992.
- SANGSTER, Joan. "Telling our stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history." Perks, Robert and Alistair Eds. *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1998. 87-101.
- SLIM, Hugo, et. al. "Ways of listening." Perks, Robert and Alistair Eds. *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1998. 114-126.



- SMITHERAM, Verner. et. al. *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980*. Charlottetown : Ragweed Press, 1982.
- SOUCOUP, Dan. *Maritime Firsts: Historic Events, Inventions and Achievements*. Lawrencetown Beach: Pottersfield Press, 1996.
- Street Feat*. Vol. 1 Iss. 4,5,6 & 12, 1998 and Vol. 2 Iss. 1,3 & 7, 1999. Halifax: Hope Community Enterprises Ltd.
- STRINGER, Lee. *Grand Central Winter: Stories From The Street*. Toronto: Hushion House, 1998.
- THOMPSON, Paul. "The Voice of the Past." *The Oral History Reader*. Eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. New Youk: Routledge, 1998. 21-28.
- VANDERSTAAY, Steven. *Street Lives: An Oral History of Homeless Americans*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishing, 1992.
- Victoria Cool Aid Society, et. al. *Best Practices Addressing Homelessness (Draft)*. Ottawa: CMHC, 1999.
- WARD, Jim. *Organizing for the Homeless*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1989.
- WHALEN, James M. "The nineteenth-Century Almshouse System in Saint John County." *Social History*.
- WHITE, Naomi Rosh. "Marking Absences: Holocaust Testimony and History." *The Oral History Reader*. Eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. New Youk: Routledge, 1998. 172-182.