

“We **NEVER** thought we’d **GET A HOUSE.** My chest was bursting, I was **SO PROUD.**”

The lack of decent urban housing — a problem neither new nor unique to Newfoundland — was widely recognized during the twentieth century. After numerous piecemeal attempts to find a solution, a remarkable and successful government-supported “sweat equity” program was established in 1952, where homes were built cooperatively and, upon completion, became owner-occupied. This labor (about 2,000 hours per man) was accepted in lieu of a down payment.

Tracing public policy during the Commission of Government and the early days of the Smallwood administration, and sourced from archival material and interviews with surviving members of the cooperatives, *Sweat Equity* outlines how people in Newfoundland tried to solve the housing shortage themselves by building more than 500 houses in the 1950s and 1960s.

This critical monograph-length study — the first of its kind on the subject — is the story of how the Commission of Government and the then new provincial government recognized the desperate need for decent accommodation and what they did to provide it.

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SHARPE
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SWEAT EQUITY

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HOUSING SHORTAGES AND COOPERATIVE HOUSING
IN NEWFOUNDLAND, 1920–1974

C.A. Sharpe and A.J. Shawyer

