

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA)

Centre D'Études Franco-Terreneuviennes (CEFT) Fonds Description

Centre D'Études Franco-Terreneuviennes (CEFT) Fonds description written by Lisa Machin, November 2010, as part of a National Archival Development Program (NADP) project funded by the Government of Canada through Library and Archives Canada and administered by the Canadian Council of Archives. Reformatted by Renee Lawrence.

TITLE:

Centre D'Études Franco-Terreneuviennes (CEFT) Fonds

COLLECTION NUMBER:

Accession Number 2010-086

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

20 meters of textual records

1222 photographs

833 audio cassettes

DATES:

1975-1997

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

CEFT was founded in September 1975 within the Department of French and Spanish at Memorial University of Newfoundland by Dr. Gerald Thomas who served as the director throughout his career at Memorial University. Thomas was an assistant professor in the French and Spanish Department and a doctoral student in the Department of Folklore; CEFT was founded on his collection of fieldwork research collected for his doctoral dissertation and that of the students taking his courses in French folklore, language and dialect. The main function of CEFT was to provide a specialized archive of data concerned with the Francophone minority of Newfoundland as a resource generated by and for students of French NL language and culture, especially those of French Newfoundland heritage, and for students and researchers outside of the French and Folklore Departments, other institutions and the wider public.

Gerald Thomas was responsible for the administration, archiving and teaching functions of the centre. He was overseen by the Head of the French Department in the areas of funding and the allocation of space within the Department of French. CEFT was also associated with the Department of Folklore and MUNFLA through their mutual interest and methodology in the study and archiving of folklore. MUNFLA provided CEFT with archival materials such as audio cassette tapes and loans of equipment such as tape recorders for researchers and students, and CEFT made use of MUNFLA archival storage to house copies of all of the tape recorded material. CEFT adopted the MUNFLA archival system for the collection, organization, conservation and storage of archival materials, and other administrative procedures. CEFT was provided with space for the collection in the French Department until 1984 when it was relocated to the Department of Folklore where it remained until Gerald Thomas' retirement in 1997.

Gerald Thomas was born in Porthcawl, Wales, UK on December 29, 1940 of John Fredrick Vincent Rowland (Jack) Thomas and Peggy Nadolig David and was the eldest of two children. He attended Cowbridge Grammar School in Porthcawl from 1952 to 1959 and then completed a B.A. (Honours) in French and Romance Studies in 1963 at the University of Wales at Aberystwyth while also working as an English assistant at the Lycée National in Orange, France from 1961-1962. Thomas taught for a year at the Lycée Marcel Pagnol in Marseille from 1963-1964, before accepting a position as lecturer in the Department of French at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland in 1964. It was at Memorial University where Thomas met the founder of the Department of Folklore, Herbert Halpert, who engaged him to work on the translation of sixteenth century French narrative texts that included

a collection of tall tales, and was introduced to the study of folklore. Under Halpert's direction, Thomas went on complete both an M.A. and Ph.D. in Folklore and focused on the folklore, language and dialect of Newfoundland's French minority. Thomas credits Halpert's teaching as being integral to his own research and teaching, as stated in the acknowledgements of his book *The Two Traditions*, "My studies in Folklore were done under his direction, and I expect to carry the imprint of his thinking to my grave," (1992, 9). Thomas was granted a cross-appointment as associate professor in both the French and Folklore Departments, and in July of 1985, he took the position of Acting Head of Department in the Department of Folklore. In August of that year, he was appointed Head of Department until 1991.

Throughout his career, Thomas was involved in academic and professional committees and associations that were related to his study of French and Folklore, including the Folklore Studies Association of Canada, where he served as acting president from 1978 to 1979. He served as the editor and assistant editor of a number of academic journals such as *Canadian Folklore Canadien* (Assistant Editor 1983-1985; Editor 1985-1990), gave numerous guest lectures at other institutions, and taught additional courses at other institutions during semester breaks or when on leave from Memorial. Thomas' work appears in academic journals, encyclopedia entries, introductions and chapters of books, monographs, and other periodicals such as magazines, and newsletters. His first book, *The Tall Tale and Philippe D'Alcripe* was published in 1997. The following year he put forth a catalogue of holdings at MUNFLA titled *Songs Sung by French Newfoundlanders. Les Deux Traditions (The Two Traditions)* was published in 1983, and published in English in 1993. Thomas collaborated with JDA Widdowson in 1991 in editing *Studies in Newfoundland Folklore*, and a few years later with Widdowson and others in *Folk Literature: Voices in Time*. He also wrote articles for newsletters on topics related to the history and study of French Newfoundland language and culture, was a consultant for numerous films, and wrote several radio scripts about French Newfoundlanders. Thomas received numerous honours and awards during his career, as well as grants for his research, including Chevalier dans L'Order des Palmes académiques from the Government of France in 1995, La Médaille Jules Verne from the Association France-Canada in Nantes, France in December 1992, and Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1988 to name but a few. Thomas retired from teaching and his position as acting director of Centre D'Études Franco-Terreneuviennes in 1996, but continued his own research and writing into his retirement. On September 6, 2005, Gerald Thomas passed away at his home in Torbay, Newfoundland and Labrador, after a short battle with cancer.

Source of information: Curriculum vitae written by Dr. Gerald Thomas on file in MUNFLA; Herbert Halpert and Neil V. Rosenberg Folklore Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland: Two reports (1978), Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador Volume 5: 371; Gerald Thomas Quatre Siècles d'Identité Canadienne: Le Centre D'Études Franco-Terreneuviennes (CEFT) Memorial University of Newfoundland (1983); Martin Lovelace "Gerald Thomas (1940-2005)" Fabula 47 (2006): 131-32.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

Fonds consists mainly of folklore fieldwork concerned with the French Newfoundlanders undertaken by the director Dr. Gerald Thomas and the students taking his courses in French Folklore and Dialect, and those who worked in CEFT as archival or research assistants. Also included are the administrative files of both CEFT and FSAC including the official CEFT-MUNFLA forms for collection and retrieval of material, bibliographies and questionnaires used for teaching and research, and guides for the collection and classification of material by students and researchers. The fonds also includes research material related to the folklore and language of French Newfoundlanders used by Thomas in his teaching and writing and for use by other researchers (such as studies about French Newfoundland communities and the geographic area where they are found, their socio/cultural/economic history and other topics also generated by student research in other departments of the university).

The majority of the material is in manuscript format, as well as audio recordings of interviews and other fieldwork, transcriptions of the recordings, photographs taken during fieldwork, and maps of the area. Fonds also contain card indexes that include both finding and classification aids for materials related to or contained within CEFT, as well as bibliographies compiled by students as course assignments.

Fonds are arranged into the following series: 1. CEFT Administrative Files 2. Folklore Studies Association of Canada (FSAC) Files 3. CEFT Reference Materials 4. Student Course Assignments (further sub-divided into sub-series) 5. Articles – Published and Unpublished 6. Unidentified Materials.

CUSTODIAL HISTORY:

Materials in this portion of the CEFT fonds were donated to MUNFLA by Dr. Gerald Thomas in 1997 upon his retirement.

Accrual of material in 2008 deposited by Gerald Thomas' daughter, Jocelyne Thomas, under the MUNFLA Accession Number 2010-087

ARRANGMENT NOTE:

The materials are arranged by their function/use for students/researchers in CEFT.

RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS:

No restrictions on access; reference copies of audio recordings are available.

FINDING AID AVAILABLE:

Inventories and indexes available.

TERMS GOVERNING USE AND REPRODUCTION:

Material in MUNFLA is available primarily for research and has copyright protection. It may not be published in any form without first obtaining permission from the archivist and the copyright holders

LANGUAGE:

English

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Title based on contents of collection.

Materials catalogued in CEFT are assigned accession numbers according to the date of accession and their place serially within CEFT and MUNFLA, and are also identified by the abbreviation “CEFT” on the file and in their listing in the master accession register. A number of materials in the CEFT fonds were filed without MUNFLA accession numbers and are labeled with what appears to be an older system used by the director in CEFT before the MUNFLA system was adopted, and are not listed in the MUNFLA catalogue indexes.

Audiotape recordings: Originals are labeled as F cassette tapes and open reel tapes are stored in the vault in MUNFLA, while the copies were stored in CEFT, but since 1997 are now filed serially among all MUNFLA C (copy) tapes in the back room storage area. One exception is the set of original tapes belonging to the collection 74-195 which is a large collection comprised of materials compiled by the director Dr. Gerald Thomas that is stored at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies in the Queen Elizabeth II Library at Memorial University.