

Winter 2017



A photograph of a concrete poem titled "fog" by Drue MacPherson. The poem is mounted on a black metal structure at a waterfront. The poem's text is arranged in a visual format: "fog" is written vertically in large letters, with the words "I did not always know it's not in the fog, it's always on" written horizontally across it. The poem is flanked by two vertical bars of hyphens. At the bottom, there is a URL and a Twitter handle.

I did not always know it's not in the fog, it's always on

publicpoeticsiaifax.wordpress.com @poetics_iafx

Public Poetics.....	1
New Literary App.....	2
Alumni Profile.....	4
Sonnet contest winners.....	5
Spanish Civil War project.....	6
AAUEC.....	7
English Accomplishments.....	8

NEW APP ENABLES SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOURS OF “LITERARY” HALIFAX’S “BLUE AND GREEN” SPACES

In a 2012 article in Halifax’s *The Coast*, Laura Kenins spotlighted the richness of contemporary Halifax fiction. This article ran with the subheading, “Turning the page: Where once Nova Scotia fiction tended to ships and salty seas, a new breed of writer — and publisher — is telling contemporary, urban tales set in and around Halifax.” But Halifax has been home to writers since the British founded their settlement here in 1749. Are contemporary writers really such a new breed?

Kate Scarth is heading up a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and Nova Scotia Museum funded research project to tackle this question. The project, *Halifax’s Literary Landmarks*, draws on fiction and non-fiction set in Halifax and written between the city’s founding by the British in 1749 and the end of World War I in 1918. Combining writing from diary entries and newspaper articles to novels and poetry, the project presents a new picture of a very old tradition of urban Halifax writing, with a focus on the city’s many, and ever-changing, green and blue spaces (like Point Pleasant Park and the harbour).

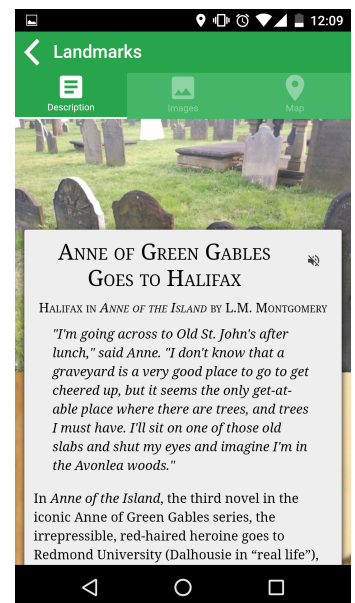
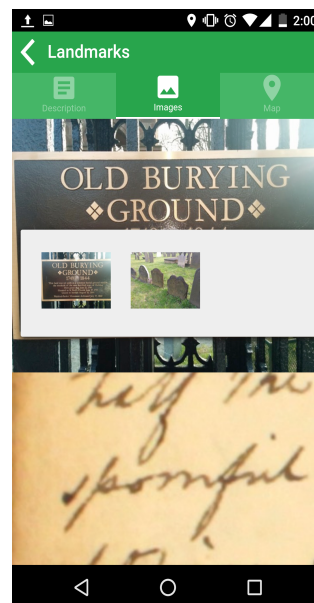
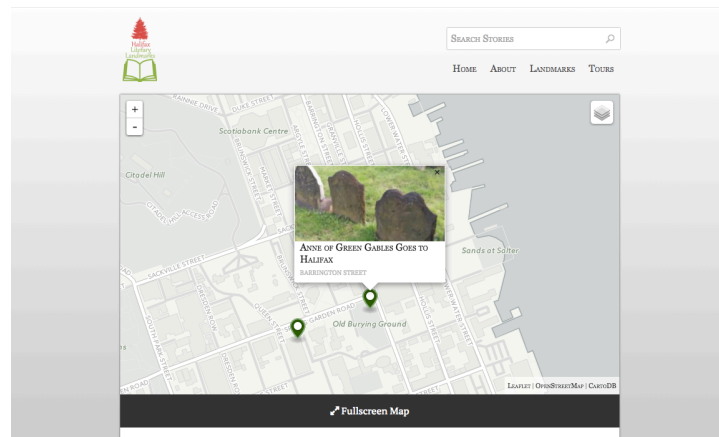
Alongside scholarly research and writing, Dr. Scarth and her team (Chris Geroux, Chris Shalom, Nayeema Lail, and David Walker) are producing a website and a mobile app that will be freely available to the public. These two platforms offer curious people a chance to encounter the literary history of Halifax with a variety of GPS-enabled guided tours. Each landmark features an excerpt of a literary work describing that site,

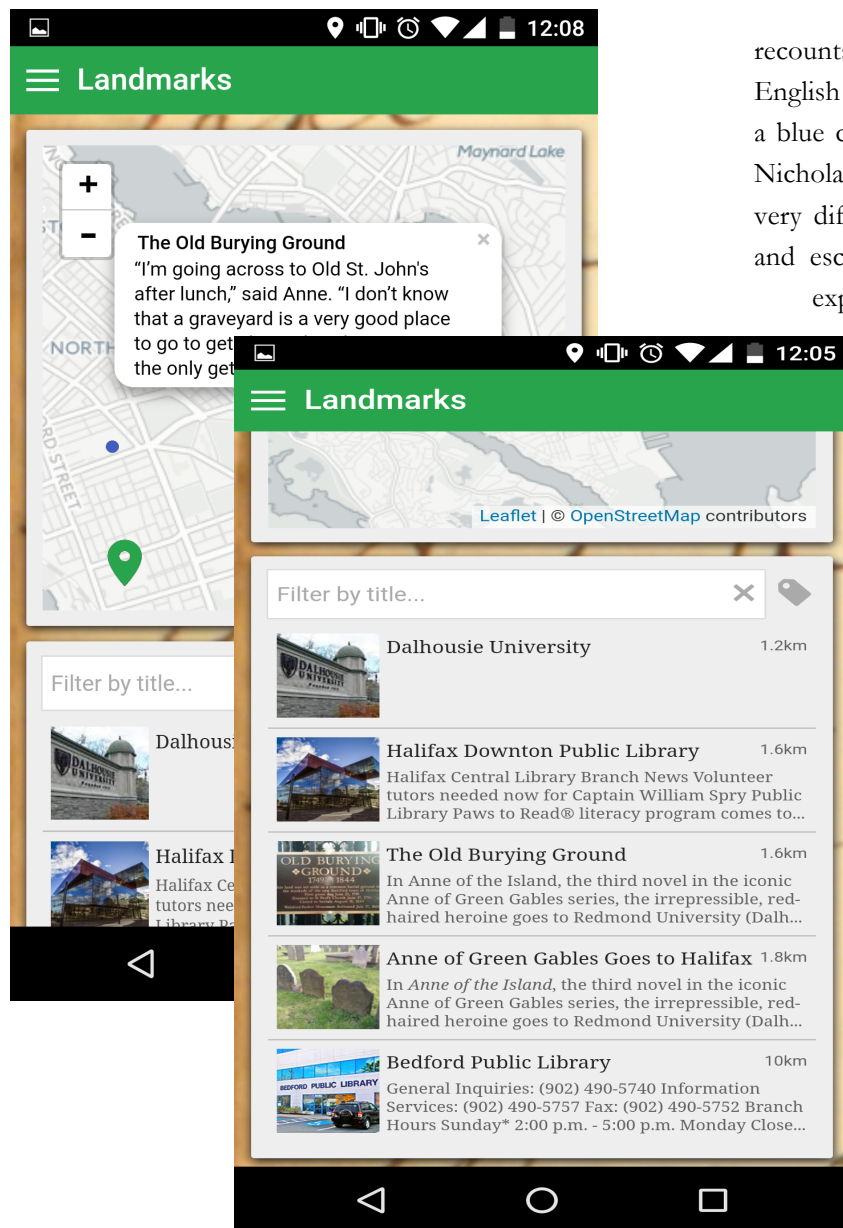
historical contexts for the author and text, and a selection of pertinent images.

Stopping at the Old Burying Ground, for example, you might hear about L.M. Montgomery’s *Anne of the Island*, which has Anne and her friends walking among

the “the queerest old tombstones, with the queerest and quaintest inscriptions.” Your device would indicate specific features, like the Crimean War Memorial or a particular old tombstone, which Montgomery’s characters talk about in

the novel. And the audio tour would offer interviews with experts to contextualize why Montgomery might have depicted the quiet green space of the cemetery as an escape, for Anne, from the busy, fast-changing world of then-modern Halifax.





But the project is also dedicated to uncovering forgotten voices to feature alongside well-known writers like Montgomery. Research for the project has covered multiple genres and mediums: poetry by eighteenth-century farmers, Mi'kmaq stories rewritten and printed by settlers, the diary of a nineteenth-century Halifax prisoner, tall tales of sea serpents and bear wrestling, and official reports on Maroon settlements.

So a tour down the wharf might feature Charles Dickens' account of his sea-sick arrival at Halifax and his brief stay there. However, our audience won't just get the famous writer's take on the city: the same tour would also include the voice of a Halifax writer, who

recounts his attempts to catch a glimpse of the great English writer over the heads of the crowd: "wrapt in a blue cloth cloak was he, (oh! ye Gods!)...author of Nicholas Nickleby!" Or a tour might present the two very different perspectives of tourist Isabella L. Bird and escaped slaves Ellen and William Craft on the experience of entering Halifax harbor in the mid-nineteenth century.

One goal of the project is to show that while green and blue spaces have always been important in Halifax writing – there are, certainly, many stories of "ships and salty seas" – such writing has always been urban. While writers frequently sent characters into the green wilderness surrounding the early British settlement of Halifax, or onto ships bound for New York or Haiti, writers have also always wanted to describe urban scenes: the view from Citadel Hill, or horse races in the Commons, or picnics and boat races along the shores of the peninsula. Since its founding, Halifax has been a literary home to murder plots, budding young poets, spy intrigues, high society picnics, inquisitive university students, and drunken riots.

Halifax's Literary Landmarks is in its relatively early stages, with the website and mobile app expected to launch in spring 2018. The project is made possible by a SSHRC Insight Development Grant and a Nova Scotia Museum Cultural History Research Grant. We look forward to input from individuals and organizations to inform and shape the project. If you're interested in or have expertise on Halifax green spaces and the city's history and literature more broadly, please get in touch with Kate Scarth (katescarth@gmail.com).

If anything is certain already, it's that the blue and green spaces of Halifax have always served as both inspiration and setting. From the start, Halifax has been full of stories.

-Chris Shalom

ALUMNI PROFILE: NAOMI METALLIC

Professor Naomi Metallic is ready to make an impact. As Dalhousie's first Chancellor Chair in Aboriginal Law and Policy, a position she earned in addition to becoming the first known person of aboriginal heritage to obtain a clerkship with the Supreme Court of Canada, Metallic's aim is to ensure a level of education and awareness that transcends the classroom.

"What I'm hoping is a sort of transformation, and that's what we're on a committee working on," said Metallic of the proposal to have mandatory classes on Aboriginal law.

"I don't want to just see one class by an indigenous professor, but rather multiple classes and professors aside from just the indigenous ones incorporating more into their classes and providing the supports that they need to do it well."

More than just meeting the demands of students who want more representation, Professor Metallic's long-term objective in this position is to better bridge the gap between communities in the maritimes and their relationship to the university.

"I want to see if there is a role for the law school in particular to assist them that provides services and enhance the existing relationship," said Metallic.

These would appear to be the initial steps in Dalhousie's initiative to incorporate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action into the curriculum and efforts towards becoming a far more inclusive environment. As faculty and a member of the Board of Governors at Dal,

Metallic feels President Richard Florizone is "genuinely committed to furthering along how the university promotes indigenous issues" and that there is a commitment from many facets of the university, including the Schulich School of Law.

A Dalhousie alumnus herself, Metallic says that her decision to attend this university was the right one. As she had also been admitted to Mount Allison at the

time, she said the experiences she had at during post-secondary education were "definitely really good for me."

One of the factors that appealed to her was the Indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq Initiative, an effort instated in 1989 by Dalhousie to increase representation of Indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq in the legal profession.

"I applied to that initiative," said Metallic. "I'm a big supporter of it and I think it is

an initiative that every other law school should emulate."

The decision to remain at Dal for her LLB was based on the part-time position she held at the school and wanting to maintain connections within Halifax.

"For me it's not just any place, it's a specific place of Dal and the connection I have to it" said Metallic.

As for her time spent studying English and Philosophy during her undergraduate degree, both provided a solid foundation for her future in law due to the analytical writing and research process, not to mention the "ton of reading" required.

Metallic hopes Dal's initiative will include intensive, upper year courses that focus on indigenous rights and



issues within Canada. As a professor, Metallic takes the educational approach seriously as a mode of communication in order to better develop understanding for those who might contest the relevancy of these matters due to misconceptions or lack of information circulating in the media.

“I think it’s best to tackle in a nonjudgmental way and try to address some of the underlying problems,” said Metallic of her teaching methods. “People can have different opinions but often I find that perhaps views expressing the contrary are rooted in not having more information on how things actually work.”

The presence of someone like Metallic in a position of such influence heralds a positive transition for the future of reconciliation in Nova Scotia, even Canada itself.

“I think there’s an interest and real commitment to do something on this perhaps more than ever before,” said Metallic.

“A lot of people are now more aware of these issues and I want to see some real, meaningful change. I hope it doesn’t lose momentum.”

-Drue MacPherson

Valentine's Day Sonnet Contest

First place: Shannon Payne , “Heart broken”

Second place: Carmel Mikol, untitled

Third place: Lysle Hood, “A Sun-shower”

Honourable mentions: Helen Pinsent, “Shakespeare Writes Through His Block” & Grailing Anthonisen, “Administrative Love”



VIRTUAL RESEARCH
ENVIRONMENT OF

CANADIAN CULTURAL HISTORY
ABOUT THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR



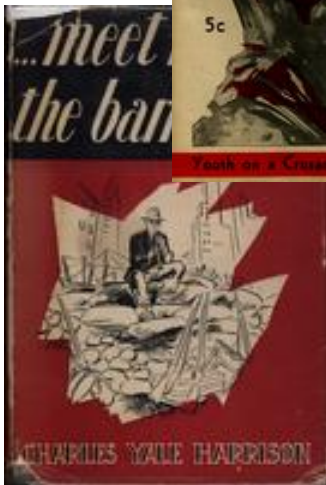
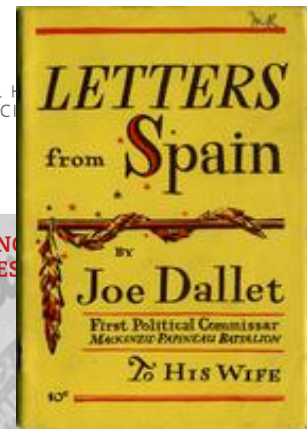
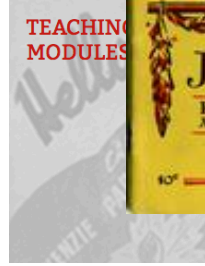
PRIMARY
SOURCES



CASE STUDIES &
INTERVIEWS



TEACHING
MODULES



CANADA AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: CULTURAL HISTORY IN DIGITAL SPACES

With the vague concept of 'knowledge mobilization' haunting the humanities, the SSHRC-funded research project Canada and the Spanish Civil War has been using digital and print media projects to circulate Canadian cultural texts about the Spanish Civil War. This research sits at the intersections of literature and history, national and transnational culture, and modernist and contemporary cultural production.

As such, we have used different platforms to reach different audiences: our twitter gives us access to an international community of Spanish Civil War scholars, archives, artists and publishers; our print series with the University of Ottawa Press circulates scholarly editions of modernist texts for pedagogical use and for a general readership; and our website serves us the hub for our digital activities and as the public face of our research. Our website, spanishcivilwar.ca, has been a successful form of outreach. In the past 15 months we have had 3,000 unique visitors. The visitors access a repository of digitized primary sources, bibliographies of thousands of Canadian texts about the Spanish Civil War, a series of case studies written by undergraduate and graduate students (including several Dalhousie students), teaching modules on our print and digital material, and a database of the approximately 1,700 Canadians who volunteered in the Spanish Civil War as combatants, medical and administrative staff, and journalists.

Our website is always being updated and expanded, which allows us to incorporate feedback and data from our engaged visitors, and to find new ways to serve their research interests. We are excited about building on this work; the next few years will see the publication of at least two more editions in our print series, and the addition of many more teaching modules to our website. Our work is supported by the open-source repository and tools built and maintained by the Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory (CWRC).



-Kaarina Mikalson, Project Manager

ANNUAL ATLANTIC UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH CONFERENCE



From left to right: Shannon Payne, Helen Pinsent, Kevin Bishop, Bruce Greenfield, Liam Compton, Beatrice Glickman, and Gabrielle Drolet.

For the 36th year, students from Atlantic universities gathered for the Annual Atlantic Undergraduate English Conference (AAUEC), this year March 3-5 at the University of Prince Edward Island.

This event is a strong tradition at this point, sustained by the interest and excitement of student participants, who pass along their experiences to the next cohort.

The conference is student-organized, with some faculty advice here and there, and it reflects the interests of the presenters themselves. For quite a few years now the program has included both critical analysis and creative writing, this year with various types of papers combined in the same session.

With up to six participants from each university the program requires multiple concurrent sessions over the course of a day and a half.

"This year was my first time participating in the AAUEC. As a student who is new to living in Atlantic Canada, the opportunity to travel to PEI and see more of the East Coast was amazing. Beyond travelling, though, the company was what made this trip incredible. Spending a weekend alongside other passionate English students reminded me of what I love most about literature and writing. I met so many inspiring people, and am grateful for what I learned about both academic and creative writing."

-Gabrielle Drolet

This year, UPEI organizers kicked things off Friday evening with poetry and drama readings in a pub venue – a great social gathering with some really interesting young writers. Saturday was a full day of sessions, with snacks and a lunch to keep people going, followed by an evening banquet at the Rodd Charlottetown Hotel.

The conference is an opportunity for students to get to know each other and share their interests in a more personal way, and to connect with people doing great work at other universities.

The travel is usually in a rented van, so there's a road trip as part of the experience.

This year's participants were Kevin Bishop, Liam Compton, Gabrielle Drolet, Beatrice Glickman, Shannon Payne, and Helen Pinsent; the faculty advisor and driver was Bruce Greenfield.

-Bruce Greenfield

"I [was struck by] how kind the audience was during my panel. The session included some very personal writing which, in my case, left me feeling a little vulnerable (I can only imagine the courage of the woman who presented a very candid autobiographical narrative about sexual abuse). The room was very welcoming and encouraging, and having my work received so enthusiastically gave me courage to open myself up and try writing more intimately. It was wonderful to have access to such a warm and receptive environment for sharing my work."

-Helen Pinsent

A BRIEF SELECTION OF ENGLISH ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Shannon Payne accepts FASS's Mushkat Memorial prize from Dean Frank Harvey. -photo: Genevieve MacIntyre

Erin Wunker has been hired to the tenure-track position in Canadian Literature. Welcome (back) Erin – this time for good!

John Baxter received the title of Professor Emeritus. As Carrie Dawson says, “John’s contributions to the collegial life of this department and the university are altogether exemplary ... John Baxter is an extraordinarily generous and gracious colleague who is deeply and universally respected by his peers.”

Shauntay Grant is Playwright-in-Residence at 2b theatre, which presented a work-in-progress showing of her stage play *The Bridge* on February 24. 2b theatre plans to premiere the work in 2018. As well, her poem “Tapestry,” was specially commissioned by Symphony Nova Scotia for its Canada 150 project *Tapestry* under the direction of its Composer-in-Residence Dinuk Wijeratne.

Julia Wright gave an invited lecture in Boston College's Thomas J. Flatley Irish Studies Lecture Series. She was also elected to a second term on the Board of Directors for the Canadian Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences. She is currently co-organizing a SSHRC-funded Canada 150 workshop on Social Sciences and Humanities' research on our interactions with oceans, which includes two public events at Dalhousie: an evening of short films on oceans (May 10th) and a public panel and discussion on the same theme (May 11th). Both public events are free, and all alumni are welcome (<https://sshoresite.wordpress.com/public-events/>).

Erin Wunker's book *Notes from a Feminist Killjoy: Essays on Everyday Life* (Bookthug) has been shortlisted by the Atlantic Book Awards in two different categories, “Scholarly Writing” and “First Book” award, and for the “Evelyn Richardson Non-Fiction Award” by the Writer’s Federation of Nova Scotia.

Shannon Payne's essay “A Space for Knowledge: Diversity, Education, and Accessibility in Binti” won the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Mushkat Memorial prize.

Christy Luckyj was quoted in the programme of Webster’s “White Devil” at the Wannamaker/Globe theatre in London.

Melissa Furrow's article on Queen Philippa’s mottoes was published in the February issue of *Modern Philology*.

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Cawsey

Contributors: Drue MacPherson, Chris Shalom, Kaarina Mikalson, Bruce Greenfield.

With thanks to: Mary Beth MacIsaac, Carrie Dawson, Bart Vautour, Kate Scarth, and Jason Haslam.



Department of English
Dalhousie University
6135 University Avenue
PO Box 15000
Halifax, NS B3H 4R2
902-494-3384

Email: englwww@dal.ca
On the web: english.dal.ca
Twitter: [@Dal_English](https://twitter.com/Dal_English)