

[Page 50 - The Cape Breton Shelf: A Review of The Last Stronghold: Scottish Gaelic Traditions in Newfoundland](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 56](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1991/1/1

century event, it is an English song with a Gaelic chorus, sung to a Gaelic air. Here it is transcribed from Allan's singing on a cassette tape edited from Margaret Bennett's field recordings, also called "The Last Stronghold." Unlike the book itself, we have changed the names in the song. The music notation is by Paul MacDonald, North Shore. The Dominion Mine Strike Song  
lice - men and sol - diers  
where - ev - er  
Chorus: Air faillirin illirin iillirin 6 Air fiillirin illirin iillirin 6 Air f&illirin illirin iillirin 6  
There's policemen and soldiers wherever you go. 1 Come all you young fellows who knew friends of mine. You'll always remember the year nineteen-nine. A dirtier crowd you could never find And those who were scabbing were down in the mine. 2 The strike it began in the morning so dark. To see those poor fellows would break a man's heart. Parading the streets in their badges so bright. And mind you those fellows they think they're all right. 3 That day at Dominion the strike it did start. The Mayor and the Council they thought they were smart, They called on the soldiers with cannons and lead. And doctors and nurses looked after the dead. 4 There's a cop from Loch Lomond who walks a big track. And if you go near him he'll leap on your back; There's old Martin H and Johnny MacL. And to see those poor fellows would make a man proud. 5 There's Mr. George D. I nearly forgot. He's neither an official nor is he a cop. From living life hard and from suffering from piles. He's now just as thin as a three-cornered file! 6 Success to John Luscombe, I wish him good luck He's the only town father that had any pluck. When the Mayor and the Council they thought us to kill. Well he fought and he fought, and he'll fight for us still. My problems with this book are very slight. Perhaps they simply suggest future work for others. I would have liked detailed discussion regarding evidence of continued connection with people of Inverness County--the shared survival of similar elements of the culture which is at the root of both communities. Before the migration to the Codroy Valley, were some of those people married into the resident population of Cape Breton and left behind, and was there travel back and forth? It would be nice to know, when Allan MacArthur worked in Industrial Cape Breton, was he considered a Newfoundlander or a Cape Bretoner coming home--and how, in either case, he might be differently treated. Possibly these matters were discussed in the Masters Thesis which was the foundation of this book. That said, in praise of this book the prospective reader should take note: The Last Stronghold is a very readable book. It is not simply a scholarly thesis in print. The tone is warm, the notes are kept to a minimum and the book is well-written. It is definitely a book for the caring, general reader. And it is, finally, part of the continuing warning to us all--to listen, learn and share. This is not a richly detailed collection from a tradition-bearer with a large repertoire. What is offered here is certainly substantial and valuable, perhaps especially given its limitations. It reminds us again that there is a world to be treasured--the bridges will probably not always be there--and it will likely



disappear. The Last Stronghold is published by Breakwater Books, 277 Duckworth St., P. O. Box 2188, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 6E6. It is available through your local bookstore, and it sells for \$14.95 in a good quality paperback. John Cunningham Limited DRAPERIES & HOME FURNISHINGS 602 George Street • Sydney, Nova Scotia B1P 1K9 564-6444 The oldest established Furniture and Drapery Store in Sydney OWEN FITZGERALD PHOTOGRAPHY Ltd. Since opening his studio in 1978, Owen has received wide acclaim with the publication of three books and awards in Portraiture, Industrial and Press Photography. 423 Charlotte St., Sydney, N. S., 562-2321 Midway Motors Ltd. Now with Two Locations: HEAD OFFICE " NEW OFFICE Middle River "rSf Port Hastings 295-2290 " 625-3641 We've Been CHRYSLER Since 1926