

Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal

Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal strives to build a comprehensive digital resource of material relating predominantly to Nova Scotias living Gaelic tradition. **Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal** is distinguished by its creative approach to blending visuals, sound and Gaelic language. We acknowledge the financial support of the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canadian Culture Online Program, Library and Archives Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives.

Nova Scotia is home to North America's last remaining Gaelic speaking region. The province's rich Gaelic tradition encompasses five generations, and more, of national cultural life as perceived through the medium of a lesser-used Canadian heritage language. The origins of Gaelic Nova Scotia's history begin in antiquity with the migration of Goidelic people to Scotland from fifth century Celtic Ireland.

In the nineteenth century, severe economic disruptions in the Scottish Highlands provoked a massive out-migration of its aboriginal population to the British Empire's colonies. Cape Breton Island received at least 30,000 Gaelic-speaking immigrants from the late 1700s to the mid-nineteenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Scottish Gaels' language and culture was entrenched as a Canadian identity and adapted in a North American context. Under duress from dominant social and economic circumstances exerting their forces of assimilation, the 1920s witnessed a spreading eclipse of Nova Scotia's Gaelic language communities to the present point of a declining number of Gaelic speakers edging the language towards extinction in Nova Scotia.

Gaelic Nova Scotia's main expression is through the oral tradition. Hence, very little information, in any medium, is available to the general public that informs on the Nova Scotia Gaels' history, culture and material life. As a minority linguistic group of Celtic origins long established outside Europe, Nova Scotia's Gaelic story is of international interest to the modern descendants of Highland people in North America, Europe and the Antipodes and people interested in topics Scottish/Celtic and representing minority cultures everywhere.

Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal is dedicated to preserving, salvaging, digitizing and making available material in all forms with a commitment to a high standard of sound quality and compliance with standards for digitization of audio, video, text and images.

Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal builds on the foundations of the work done by the folklorists and collectors of Nova Scotia Gaelic tradition. The Cape Breton Gaelic Folklore Collection, a core collection, is the result of the work of Dr. John Shaw and Sr. Margaret MacDonell, StFX Celtic Studies Department, funded by the Multiculturalism Directorate of the Government of Canada.

The digitization of this Gaelic collection first began in January 2005 with a grant received by Professor Jamie MacDonald, StFX Celtic Studies Department, from the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

Major funding for the **Digital Gaelic Folklore Project** came from a grant from the Library and Archives Canada / Canada Memory Fund received by Professor MacDonald in the Celtic Department and Kathleen MacKenzie, Archivist, StFX Library. This new project, initiated in Autumn 2005, was renamed **Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal**. This additional funding enabled the completion of the digitization process for all the Gaelic audio tapes in the StFX archives. In addition, it allowed for a multi-media website to be established to provide access to these digital Gaelic materials and create a framework for ongoing digitization of Gaelic material. Rita Campbell, StFX Library, coordinated the grant operation under the direction of a steering committee which included:

Angus L. Macdonald Library, St. Francis Xavier University
Gordon Bertrand, Rita Campbell, Paul MacDonald, Kathleen
MacKenzie, & Lynne Murphy
Celtic Studies Department, St. Francis Xavier University
Jamie MacDonald, Ken Nilsen
Nova Scotia Highland Village
Jim Watson

The work of Laurinda Matheson and Effie Rankin were central to completion of the project. Effie provided her expertise in Gaelic in the digitization of the tapes. **The Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal** website has a Gaelic interface only because Laurinda provided the translations.

The high quality of the audio files is due to the work of Paul MacDonald who converted the reel-to-reel tapes to digital and cleaned the files, removing background noise and improving sound quality.

Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal partners

Angus L. Macdonald Library & Archives, St. Francis Xavier University
Celtic Studies Department, St. Francis Xavier University
Nova Scotia Highland Village Museum

Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal support
<http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/>

*We welcome your comments and suggestions. If you discover an error on **Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal** please let us know.*
Thank you. scameron@stfx.ca

JOHANNES

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