

Jessie Beaumont Miffen

b. 1906, Bonavista, NL; d. Apr. 1, 1994, St. John's, NL

Education:

Memorial College (now Memorial University)
BA (Mount Allison)
1951, BLS (Toronto)

Positions:

Field Worker and Executive Secretary with the Newfoundland and Labrador (formerly Newfoundland) Department of Education , Adult Education Division
Royal Canadian Air Force. Women`s Division
1950-1972 Regional Director, Newfoundland Provincial Library Service

Publications:

Miffen, Jessie. (1978). "The development of public library services in Newfoundland 1934-1972: a report prepared for the Newfoundland Public Libraries Board." Halifax: School of Library Service, Dalhousie University.

Miffen, Jessie. (1981). Be you a library missionary, Miss? Illustrated by Margret Summers. St. John's: Harry Cuff Publications.

Miffen, Jessie. (1983). Journey to yesterday in the out-harbours of Newfoundland. Illustrated by Sylvia Quinto Ficken. St. John's: Harry Cuff Publications.

Miffen, Jessie. (1989). A collection of memories. St. John's: Harry Cuff Publications.

Accomplishments:

Atlantic Provinces Library Association (APLA), President
Canadian Library Association. Vice-President, Life member
1966, one of 5 Canadian librarians to view libraries in the USSR
"At the time there were few public libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially in the many outports and remote communities. Jessie Miffen was to visit and establish public libraries in various parts of the province. In the early days, her visits were made by dogteam, bush plane, small boat and coastal steamer. Many of her trips took days, and in some cases, weeks." However, by the time of her retirement in 1972 the number of libraries had grown from 25 to 78 and public library service had been established throughout the province."

Honours:

1973 Order of Canada

1962 Canada Council grant to visit libraries in the Scandinavian countries

1967 Canada Council Centennial Medal

1975 APLA Merit Award

1975 LLD from both Mount Allison and Memorial Universities

1980 CLA Outstanding Service to Librarianship Award Canadian Library Association Outstanding Service to Librarians prize

Comments:

"A great storyteller and raconteur, Jessie Miffen used her talks and articles as the basis for three books published after her retirement. She also wrote radio scripts and broadcasts for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation." In her own view of her contributions she said "Armed with goodly stores of tracts and library literature, I roamed the countryside at sundry times in diverse manners, in season and out of season, to propagate the gospel of library service to all the people with the hope that, time would not be too far distant, when every town and village from Joe Batt's Arm to Ilse-aux-Morte, from Come-By-Chance to Stepside, the lives of every man and woman, every boy and girl, would be enriched because a new world would be open to them, a world of books."

Sources:

"Jessie Miffen, a pioneer librarian who helped establish regional libraries throughout Newfoundland." Feliciter 40: 5, May, 1994. p. 47-48.

Penney, Pearce B. (1994). "Jessie Miffen: a tribute." Ex Libris News 16 (Autumn): 9-11.

Library and Archives Canada. Celebrating Women's Achievements. [Jessie Miffen](#) Accessed May 22, 2014.

[Jessie Miffen biography](#) at HLWIKI Canada. Accessed July 27, 2014.

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