Heritage Tourism in Raleigh, Newfoundland: Where the Road Less Traveled Ends

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In 1992, the small community of Raleigh, like hundreds of other outports on the Newfoundland coast, was threatened by the moratorium on cod fishing. Since then, its population has dwindled to less than 200 people, half of its pre-moratorium level, with three-quarters of them over the age of 65. This is not an uncommon situation in small, isolated communities, but efforts to preserve the heritage and traditions of the residents are. In 2003, community members formed the Raleigh Historical Corporation (RHC), a non-profit and volunteer organization, with a mission to investigate, preserve and promote historic resources in Raleigh for local, social, and economic development. A dozen years on, one might ask these questions: what has RHC created? have visitors been drawn to its heritage landscape? The answers to those questions are both uplifting and bleak, revealing the painful realities of life on the margins, where efforts to promote tourism are held hostage by isolation, lack of funding, and travelers’ indifference to heritage preservation.

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