



Old Trout Funnies: The Comic Origins of the Cape Breton Liberation Army

Ian Brodie

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Now iconic to Canadian, if not global culture, Cape Breton Island underwent a metamorphosis of sorts during the 1970s and 1980s. Long marginalized by geography, economics and predominant mainland political culture, a countercultural sea change brought the island's deeply rooted creative side—music, drama, literature and humour—to centre stage. One such stage was Old Trout Funnies, a homegrown satirical series of comic books created by artist Paul MacKinnon.

MacKinnon's Cape Breton comic book heroes, the Cape Breton Liberation Army, led the revolution, lampooning local and provincial politics, labour unions, environmental activism, government infrastructure projects and back-to-the-landers. Through the farcical exploits of the CBLA, Old Trout Funnies parodied and played with the caricature of Cape Bretoners as shiftless, happy-go-lucky rogues whose motivation emanated from the taverns.

In *The Comic Origins of the Cape Breton Liberation Army*, folklorist Ian Brodie explores the themes and the legacy of Old Trout Funnies, providing the cultural and historical context for a project that was intensely esoteric and in-the-moment. Included are the complete runs of the comics, the calendars and some rarely seen ancillary images of the CBLA, and of some unfinished and unpublished works.

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