

Material Cultures 2010: 16-18 July
Technology, Textuality, and Transmission

Material Culture, Memory, and the Rituals of Transmission

In October 1883, the centenary of the arrival of British loyalists was celebrated in style in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. The Saint John Typographical Union no.85 unfurled its new silk embroidered banner, marched in a combined trades parade, printed off a commemorative ode from a horse-drawn printing press, and planted several trees in the new town gardens. They also reported the events in the local newspaper, in a celebratory volume, and in the international typographic press. These rituals tell us as much about the specific occasion as about the ways in which the power, authority, values, and virtues of these aristocrats of artisans were transmitted and memorialised in an era of tremendous technological change. As instances of what Pierre Nora terms *lieux de mémoire* or sites of memory, they function as “a vehicle for collective memory, forging a community’s self-definition in relation to its past.” This illustrated talk explores the intersections between history and memory by examining the artifactual legacy from one notable event in order to broaden our conception of textuality and the socialisation of texts.

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