Annotated Bibliography
For Coady & Tompkins

This study enables adult educators to consider the relevance of Coady's ideas for our time and to contemplate present and future theory and practice. The general approach undertaken is that of a case study. The writings of Moses Coady were examined to discover the meaning of liberation in adult education from his point of view. The main sources of data used were his books, Masters of Their Own Destiny and The Man from Margaree, which was a collection of Coady's writings and speeches. Coady's meaning of liberation in adult education provides an important and useful basis for understanding the social movement dimension of adult education that is reflected in today’s society, and how the legacy of Coady’s work is continued through educational programs and community development.

This is the account of the author’s involvement in the community of the Reserve Mines. She had previous experience with the cooperatives in New York and stayed in the Maritimes to assist with the attempt to better the community, which was spearheaded by the extension program of St. Francis Xavier University. It includes an introduction written by Moses Coady which discusses the cooperative movement and more specifically how it happened in this case study. The book details the work and studies involved in planning and building the community for the miners.

In this book George Boyle seeks to provide a biographical account of Father Tompkins by discussing his role as a teacher and college builder. This considers his early teaching years, his links with the Acadians, his role in the federation of Maritime colleges, his exile to Canso, and his role in forming credit unions and study groups. This shows how his interest in adult education developed and how he managed to help people in rural areas through education. This source contains a number of quotes from Tompkins and makes reference to his writings throughout. It also provides a section at the end entitled ‘Selected writings of Father Tompkins’ which is useful in understanding his theories and perspectives on issues surrounding education, religion, and economics. This source is also useful in revealing Tompkins’ philosophies and ideas and their progression. For example, how his theory of adult education moved from pamphlet form in Knowledge for the People to reality and how he changed from theorising about reversing economic
decline with the grass roots at Canso. Boyle concludes that the life of Father Tompkins has helped Nova Scotians to gain knowledge on justice, charity, and human fellowship.

There is a section in this book which deals with the People’s School – the brainchild of Jimmy Tompkins. Its purpose was to offer education to the “average citizen”, and puts into action the arguments he first presented in *Knowledge for the People* which aimed to improve the lives of those living in rural communities. The university extension programs were the start of a larger program that aimed to create community centres, itinerant lecturers, and travelling libraries.

This book’s main goal was to serve as an economic guide and assist individuals in building their understanding of adult education and economic cooperation, and their development. St. Francis Xavier’s extension workers organized mass meetings and small classes enrolling farmers, miners, and factory workers in economically oriented adult education programs. The study clubs proved an adequate means for organizing labour, credit unions, and economic cooperatives. Eventually, the people owned their own lobster factories and marketing cooperatives; economic power of the masses was being achieved. The main philosophy of the extension program was the belief that the educational emphasis should empower regular folks to invest time and energy in strengthening the cultural and economic stability of their communities. This book also explores the economic factors of the adult education and economic cooperation programs, and was meant to serve as an economic tool to educate individuals on how to become “masters of their own destiny”.

This book is a family history/genealogy of the Irish families who originally populated the Margaree Valley. It traces the origins of the founding families, which included the Coadys and the Tompkins. It also includes the obituary from *The Casket* of Rev. Moses Coady which may be of use in understanding his role and how he was perceived locally in the community. There is another small part of the book which deals with the expulsion of Tompkins from Saint Francis Xavier and his move to Canso. It provides the view of Bishop Morrison, who was responsible for the order to move. Towards the end, there is a discussion of Coady’s involvement in the Extension Program and how he went and spoke with different people to try and create a framework that would ensure the success of the program.

This article argues that despite Tompkins being met with opposition at times, he had a significant impact on Nova Scotia. To explain this argument, the first half of the article discusses Tompkins ‘think, study, act’ plan and his efforts to help people in Eastern Nova Scotia at a time when economic decline, poverty, and low self-esteem was high. It also considers his work at St. Francis Xavier University and the establishment of the People’s School. The second half of the article explores the proposed federation of colleges in the Maritimes and reveals that not everyone viewed Tompkins as a visionary. There is also information surrounding the circumstances that led to the expulsion of Tompkins from Antigonish. The article includes a table which outlines Tompkins’ ‘think, study, act’ plan in which each area of the plan is considered. This reveals information on what each part of the plan consisted of, aimed to achieve and the methods employed. A chronology of Tompkins’ life is also provided at the end of the article which may be useful in identifying the major developments in his work and education.


Although not a scholarly work, this book provides a useful overview of his contributions to adult education and cooperative economics. He is characterized as an agitator, a ‘firebrand’, and was punished for being outspoken in his views. He was exiled to Canso as a parish priest in 1922. This book is more popular in nature and an attempt to bring attention to the issue of adult education.


Eastern Nova Scotia is home to two initiatives in community and economic development; the Antigonish Movement of co-operatives and a group of Cape Breton community development co-operatives known as “the family.” The two represent a tradition in the region that seeks to combat excessive external power and control by creating local community-controlled businesses. The article provides a critical assessment of the continuities of these traditions by emphasizing the activities and organizational forms adopted. The article’s main goal is to show how “the family’s” community development co-operations represent, the shadow of a promise for democratic community development contained in the “co-operative and adult education program of the Antigonish Movement”.


This book seeks to examine influential individuals in education to understand their contribution to educational institutions. The chapter on Moses Coady and James Tompkins is of particular interest. In this Stabler provides a brief biography of both men to outline their educational attainments growing up, their university education, and the positions they held in educational institutions.
Coady and Tompkins are then considered in terms of the Antigonish Movement and through their work at St. Francis Xavier University in an attempt to highlight their contribution in pioneering a new type of adult education in rural Nova Scotia. Stabler aims to show how Tompkins and Coady aspired to use education as a means to create change and progress within rural communities. The cooperatives, meetings, study clubs, and libraries that Tompkins and Coady set up are discussed as well as the influence of the Antigonish movement. This chapter is effective in considering these men as innovators and influential educationalists and highlights the changes they brought to rural communities.


Michael Welton presents a detailed and informative biography of Coady. This book details Coady’s family upbringing and considers the factors that may have led to his desire to see change within his communities. This book provides great insight into his life, actions, thoughts, and the overall vision that he developed for the Antigonish Movement. Welton also discusses a few of the issues and concerns that Coady had about the Antigonish Movement, specifically the pushback he received from some of the Acadian communities.

Welton, Michael, “‘Fraught with wonderful possibilities’: Father Jimmy Tompkins and the struggle for a Catholic progressivism”, *Studies in Continuing Education*, 27:2 (2005), 117-134

This essay probes beneath the ‘folk hero’ image of Father J. J. Tompkins, a key and influential presence behind the world-famous Antigonish Movement and argues that his project can be considered a model of early progressive adult education. This piece also includes a theological discussion relating to the liberation theologies of the 1960s and 1970s. It places Tompkins’ thoughts, struggles, and agonies in a larger struggle between integrationists and progressives within global Catholicism.


This article discusses Moses Coady in relation to Atlantic Canada in an attempt to celebrate the influence he had in the culture and development of the region. It makes links to Nova Scotia’s employment rates, literacy rates, and its current economic position to highlight the importance of education. The article provides a concise but valuable biography of Coady and highlights the factors that influenced his philosophies and how they connected with Tompkins. Coady is also discussed in terms of the Antigonish Movement to show his role in facilitating economic change by promoting adult education. This article is effective in highlighting the influence that Coady had and is helpful because it sheds light on some of the problems Atlantic Canada is facing today.