

Reel 156B

1. Harmonica; Juanita played by Mr. Bruce Stanley
2. Talk of Old Days: fishing, rum running, wrecks, and more fishing by Mr. Hartford Boynton, Castalia; this is a good informant and an interesting tape.

All from Grand Manan recorded by Helen Creighton in 1960

Q: How old were you, Mr. Boynton when you started fishing?

A: I started fishing when I were about thirteen year old and I've been at it every year since. I haven't missed a year. I'll be 81 in October.

Q: Do you still fish?

A: Yes. I haven't done very much this spring because there hasn't been much to do. The boys takes my place.

Q: How far from home did you ~~usually~~ go fishing?

A: We used to tend weirs down along Grand Harbour in boats, you know.

Q: Small boats?

A: They're small now. They'd be about what we'd call 60 tubs, 12 boxes(?). We used to get the herring and fix them up and ~~smk~~ smoke 'em. They were all herring. We never caught any big fish. Sometimes we gpt some mackerel in the weirs, but npt very often. They was some times.

Q: Don't cod and haddock come in your weirs?

A: No, oh no. A lot of pollock come from the weirs now, but they didn't none come then. Only one ~~weir~~ weir down by Bowes a little way, a grit weir used to get a few pollock.

Q: A grit weir? Was that named for the Liberal Party?

A: I don't know. It was a liberal party that took the weir out when they built it. I don't know what the name of it is. It's always had the name of Grit.

Q: The weirs have all sorts of names, haven't they?

A: Yes, they name everything.

Q: Did you ever get a whale in your weir?

A: Yes, we got whales and sharks. We had a whale down at Bed<sup>n</sup> Glass(?) Point. It was called The National. We had a whale in there and I don't know, we were a long time getting it out/. It stayed right in there. There was no way of getting it out. They harpooned it and had what they call a whale gun. It's a great big gun like that, one pf those guns, only it's a great big bore, took a big ball and when



he went out, he went out in the back of the weir and broke all - oh he made a hole ten feet wide.

Q: He did? He broke the weir in pieces.

A: Oh yes, he broke the hole out too. A weir ain't no object to him when they get ready to go.

Q: Have you ever been very close to a whale?

A: Very close? Oh as near as that stove. You want to keep away from them. A flap of that tail, you know, it'll stave everything all to pieces. We'd be on a dingy. We'd be sailing along and see them as far as from here to the road from us. There used to be quite a lot of whales come in from what we call The Bluff above Jenny's Passage in there in the nights when the herring was there. We didn't roll around much them nights. We stayed aboard of our boat.

Q: Haven't you ever tried to catch them? Isn't there a lot of money in whales?

A: Oh no. They'd be no good for that. I don't ~~think~~ think they was the right kind of a whale, are they? I think those whales they capture, they're more of a sperm whale, weren't they, or something that they get? For the amber.

Q: And the oil?

A: Yes, but you couldn't do anything with one of those whales here. You couldn't sell it and you couldn't manufacture it here.

Q: Did anybody ever have an exciting adventure with a whale?

A: No, no, no. They keep away from them very much. They don't bother them around here. They have some big sharks that gets here in the weir weirs. They're quite a job to get them out sometimes.

Q: Yes, I was looking at a shark's tooth this mornning. It's wonderfully made, isn't it. Like a little saw. All the little notches.

A: I see they killed one in the weir called the Sol Jacobs and he went ashore down on Ludic(?) Island Point. I forget how long he was. I think it was 49 feet. Oh a monster. As high as your head, his body was. He was four or five feet high. He laid there a long time and rotted. He made an awful mess. They get in there and they done everything to him. Dynamited him. I suppose they hurt him enough that he went out and died down the shore, down there, anyway.



Q: Well then, he wouldn't smell very sweet.

A: No sir, not down around there. Stayed there for a long time too. A long time before he was all rotted.

Q: Where does your family come from, Mr. Boynton?

A: Well, my father came from Pembroke, Maine, but he was born in Perry, Maine. That's where he came from. His father came from England. They was three brothers came out here. It might have been his grandfather, but there were three brothers of them, come out here. And that's where the Boyntons all came from. You'll find them all through the country, everwheres, and they were Catholics, but my father was a Protestant. Brought up as Protestant. But up through Boston and all up through the United States they're mostly all Catholics. Most of them. I went to Milwaukee to work one year whe~~en~~ it was in its infancy. That's in fifty-four, fifty-eight years ago and there were two or three families there. They were Catholics. My mother's father came from England and he came here in a warship and I gness to find out the rights of the story he jumped overboards somewhere up the shore. He was an English sailor. He jumped over the warship up there in Whale Cove and swum ashore, in Grand Manan. He stayed hid in the woods till the ship went away. They come back after him once or twice; they couldn't find him. His name was Elliston. That's what he called himself. I don't know what his priginal name was, when they left England. He called himself Elliston here. (or Ellison)

Q: They often changed their names when they jumped ship.

A: They all did. Mrs. Huntley's father, she lived here in this house. She brought up my wife. He jumped overboard there and swum ashore. His name was - he told it - but he called it Green when he come here. Changed his name to Green.

Q: Were there many settlers to the island who had come here in that way?

A: Well, there was Harry Waters. I don't know what his name was, but that's what he called it here and Rich Elliston and Mr. Green. That's the only three that I remember, but I know there was more than that. They come in here and hid. They'd go into Whale  ~~Cove~~ Cove. It's a short ~~distance~~ distance to the shore, and then into the woods, and they couldn't find them I heard my grandfather say it was a hard life aboard them ships at that



time. A man would almost commit suicide to get clear of them. Awful rough, and  
 the officers were awful cruel. Used to beat 'em. They used to beat 'em awfully,  
 but he stayed here. He lived here; he died here. He lived up <sup>He said</sup> ~~at~~ they ~~exist~~ call  
 it Elliston's Corner up there where Ashton Locke lives. He lived in that house  
 where Ashton Lobke lives. And my father lived right around, going up the hill,  
 the house up on the hill, that's where he settled. Father married Mrs. Elliston's  
 daughter.

Q: That makes you a real Grand Mananer?

A: Yes sir, a real Grand Mananer. Well father, he came over here in the sixties,  
 some time. He come over here from Penbrooke when he was a boy when they was going  
 to have that war, before he got big enough to be drafted. He come over here and  
 lived on <sup>High Duck</sup> ~~Marstonic(?)~~ Island. Worked on <sup>High Duck</sup> ~~Marstonic~~ Island for a fellow by the name of  
 Fisher. There was a fellow there by the name of John Fisher and he had a fish plant  
 there. He used to press herring. You've heard tell of the Prescription Weir, have  
 you? It's a big weir down there below Hard Duck Island. He owned that and he used  
 to press herring, and my father used to <sup>go</sup> in a boat and smuggled(?) it over to East-  
 port and one of them islands there. I can't remember the same as I used to, but  
 they used to smuggled it onto Treak's(?) Island and then they'd get it ashore at  
 Eastport when the time come right. To avoid the duty, they tore the buildings down  
 after a while. I can remember when they was on there. The oil business went out and  
 the business went down.

Q: The fishing business is prosperous now, isn't it?

A: Oh yes. He made pummery[?]. He pressed these herring to get the oil and the  
 pummery out of it. He had a smoke house and he smoked a few, but not very much.

Q: To-day there's no waste in the herring, is there?

A: Oh no. We used to put up herring. We'd have all of our fields covered with  
 waste, the herring was too small. We'd <sup>fetch</sup> ~~bring~~ them ~~ms~~ home and spread them on the  
 field for fertilizer. Everybody had their fields covered with them. It was a great  
 smell around here sometimes.

Q: You were speaking about smuggling. Was there any rum running <sup>done</sup> ~~down~~ around here



in prohibition days?

Q: Well, there was, yes, but it's npt publicly known.

A: It's all right to talk about it now. It's all over.

Q: Well, Frank Leightman, he used to go to French St. Pierre and Bill Johnston. Bill Johnston didn't go to French St. Pierre, he used to get it in other places. Campabello people used to land a lot of alcohol on the back pf this island. Oh yes, they used to get it out of vessels and fetch it here and hide it and then take it in on the 'Merican shore in the night. They was quite a few fellas round this part smuggled. I don't think Frank Lateman(?) made a very big success of it. He lost the most of his goods; they stole it, anybody who could find it. (laughter)

Q: Did they do it for the fun of it?

A: Oh for the money, for the money. I don't think there was very much fun in it . They had to take too much rough weather and bad weather, but there was a lot of it around here. We used to buy a can pf alcohol, most everybody. But the last of it <sup>got</sup> they ~~was~~ pretty sharp, so many patrols around.

Q: Did they take chances going right up in the American harbours?

A: Oh yes. Oh indeed yes. They was a fellow that I used to know very well by the name of Jack Howell. He went right in New York Harbour, right in daytime, loaded. They wasn't on to them then. He unloaded that night and got out.

Q: How did he get away with it?

A: Oh a syndicate, you know. They would buy it. You see there was no liquor in the United States and this Ingersoll<sup>up</sup> here, he was in a rum runner, a big three mast schooner and I don't know how many days they had him chained down in the pilot house. They went aboard off New York and stole the liquor, by the pirates. They went aboard and he was an engineer. They put him down in the engine room and chained him <sup>down</sup> ~~span~~ there till they got everything out of it/. He told me it wasn't very comfortable down there, some of them breezes. Nothin' they could do, you know. The crew was all chained, all handcuffed or somethin'. They had charge of the vessel. The crew kept comin' and taking this- They'd come nights with tugs and they unloaded her. When they got her unloaded, why they released the crew.



Q: Where did this happen?

A: Off New York. There was a time when the vessels would come between here and the mainland and the little boats would go aboard and they'd get it, but after a while they passed a law that they couldn't come in here. They had to stay outside.

? you'd see three or four vessels anchored up by her, go nights and get it. A great business. (laughter)

Q: Wasn't there a ship wrecked here that had a lot of liquor on board?

A: Oh yes, they was two. The Hestia (?), she went ashore on The Old Proprietor down here. That was 1809, no, 1909. Then there was the Warwick went ashore on Merle Ledges. I think it was 1998 (1898) or something like that. She was loaded with liquor. They had a lot of liquor in her. Oh there's been different vessels or ships went ashore that had liquor.

Q: What happened to the liquor?

A: Oh, people got it, sold it, drank it (laughter).

Q: It must have been quite a merry little island ~~at that time~~ for a while.

A: I remember there was one time the Warwick, there was tug ~~xxxxxxxx~~ from St. John ~~xxxxxxxx~~ came down and went by and unloaded. She went into North Head and laid at the wharf that night. A storm came and ??? and they had more people round her than there'd be flies around molasses. They had to turn the hose on the people to get them away from there. They didn't sell any. I guess they left some ~~xxxxxx~~ of the boys get a case or two. She went out the next morning. But that Warwick, she went ~~ex~~ out on the last day of December and it was perfectly smooth. The big schooners, the big vessels, went right alongside of her. Next day unloading was started, right alongside of her. It was just as smooth as the ocean is to-day. She laid there quite a long time. Joe Gaskell, Joe Gaskell's store has the bell off her. It's that store right abreast of where that fish plant is up there. You know, at North Head where Jack McCormick and Zatzman have that fish plant there - smoke house. Well, it's next door there, Joe Gaskell's store.

Q: Why would she go ashore on a calm day?

A: It was in the night in a ~~thick~~ thick fog, a thick fog. She run ashore in the night.



The Hestia when she went ashore we see her lights .We were tending weir below. We could see her lights going up by and hear her guns. About all of her crew was lost. I think it was about five or six was left. There was no room in the life boats and they had to stay aboard and they were saved. But the rest of them ~~were~~ <sup>was</sup> all drowned that went ashore in Nova Scotia, landed over there. She stayed there a long time ~~six months~~ on the Ledge.

Q: Where were you when you heard the signals from the Hestia?

A: Where was I? When I seen it down at Grand Harbour. I was down at Grand Harbour and we seen her lights going up by, going off out shore. She went ashore somewhere about twelve o'clock at night. We seen her lights going up and heard her after she struck. She struck on a submerged rock, you know. The Old Proprietary, ~~you know~~ they call it; just had a <sup>spindle</sup> ? about half flood and just a ~~spindle~~. No light or nothin'. An iron pipe up there with a basket on top of it and he struck that. If he'd been fifty feet <sup>further</sup> to the east'ard he'd a went right by, but it - Those ledges picked up a pile of them. Oh yes, I forget the vessel's name. It was on one of them ledges, the Merle Ledges, and my brother's wife's uncle had three aboard <sup>of</sup> her. That is, after she'd landed and they was trying to salvage the stuff, you see, and there was a tug there taking the stuff out .They knew there was going to be a storm. They coaxed the crew to go ashore .After you leave a ship and somebody else goes aboard, you see, you lose it. Somebody else takes it and gets it. So there two uncles and a couple more men ~~was~~ <sup>that</sup> were there, they all left but them four. They said they was going to stay. But that night there come a storm and she backed off, slid off the rock and they was drowned. I don't know her name. I think it was the Parkfield. I don't know for sure but I think that was her name. I can remember hearing them tell about her. I don't know as I can remember her but I can remember them ~~tel~~ about it.

Q: Did you use sails when you first went fishing?

A: Oh yes, there was no gasoline, it was oars and oars. You had to tow your boats wherever you wanted to go if there was no wind. There weren't much fun in it.

(laughed) But it was the only way we had and it was all we <sup>If</sup> knew. We didn't know any better. No, we didn't mind it. It was ? ? , do it. ~~xxx~~ there was no wind, it



was the only way to get there. Take the dingy and we had the boat in tow. You could make a little headway but you didn't make very much. They used to get there just the same. We used to tow from Ben Cross Point <sup>down</sup> to Long Bond Bay, I suppose its 5 or 6 miles. Of course you'd have to <sup>have</sup> ~~have~~ tide to help you. Couldn't do anything again the tide. You'd have to have a fair tide.

Q: Then the time that you left in the morning would depend upon the tides?

A: Oh we was out all night most all the time. There was no day ,no nights. When you was weir fishin' them times you was goin' all the time,all the time.

Q:Would you come home for Sundays?

A:Oh yes.

Q: Was Sunday always taken off?

A: Pretty much them times. Pretty much them times. They didn't fish weirs on a Sunday,but now there's no respect for the Sabbath at all.For a few people,but the country at large, they don't respect the Sabbath like they did them times. But now around these weirs,they got herring they go and take them out Sundays just the same as they would on Monday. We never done it. We never believed in it,not because we was too good,but we didn't believe in it. My father wasn't a Christian man at all,but he reserved the Sabbath. He never did anything on a Sunday that he didn't really have to do.I know one time that we was going to hay. He had a lot of hay down. There'd been a lot of bad weather. Sunday was a beautiful day. He says,"Oh boys, I guess we'll have to shake our hay up." We got our pitchforks and started down the field .I was only a small boy. He stopped and he said,"No,I ain't going to bother with it. If to-morrow ain't a <sup>good</sup> ~~fine~~ day ~~it will have to rot~~ if it rots it will have to rot. I ain't goin' to pitch that hay to-day," and he went back. Next day was a good day,but he didn't bother with the hay.

Told by Mr. Hartford Boynton, Grand Manan Island and recorded by Helen Creighton in 1960.