

Reel 163A

- 1-7 Donald Munro; sung by Mr. Charlie Weeks, Glace Bay; 9½ vs.
good tune and well sung; father, not recognizing
sons, murders them
- 7-8 The Mines of Avondale; sung by Mr. Weeks; small portion of
mining disaster song; he thinks Avondale is in
the western States or possibly Canada.
- 8-15 Billy Rennicks; sung by Mr. Weeks; 8 vs.; friends went swimming
and one drowned; tune sounds very old; well sung
in good rich voice.
- 15-18 I Would If I Could; sung by Mr. Weeks; amusing music hall
type of song; 6 vs. & cho. well sung.
- 18-20 While London Sleeps; sung by Mr. Weeks; 4 vs. & cho. sad
song in contrasts of city living, used to be
enjoyed by miners; sung tenderly; late
- 19-21 Talk On How Songs Were Learned; told by Mr. Weeks who tells
about singing in mine.
- 21-26 Story of Match-Making Song; told and sung by Mr. Wm.E.
MacDonald, Marion Bridge; interesting old custom;
words of song not written down. Song in Gaelic
- 26-end Milling Frolic Song; sung by Mr. Wm.E. MacDonald, Marion
Bridge with Mr. Alex Morrison joining in choruses;
this is a war song telling about man being
wounded; should go on to include his sister;
singers cannot write Gaelic, so this is not
written down. Sung in Gaelic.

Brave sons of North Britain where inclined for to roam
For to search foreign countries with strangers to roam,
And among this large number stand Daniel Munro
And into Americay being forced for to go.

2

He bade his two sons with their uncle to stay,
For he had not the money their passage to pay,
For the price of their passage sure you know 'twould be dear,
"So take my advice and stay home with him here."

3

The two boys being discontented and troubled in mind
For search for their father sure they were inclined,
They shipped with a captain for to sail o'er the main
In hopes they would meet their fond father again.

4

When the two boys had landed they took a boy for their guide
For to show them the spot where their dear father lied,
Together they rambled till they came to a grove
Where the leaves, buds, and branches did seem for to move.

5

When two highway ruffians the stranger did heed,
They pointed their pistols where the two brothers laid,
They lodged their two bullets in the snowy white breast
And they ran to their murderers like a ravening beast.

6

"Now you cruel hearted monsters, you blood-thirsty hounds,
You might not have shot us till one we had found,
We're in search of our father whom we love so dear,
And we have not seen him this seven long years,
He left us in Scotland seven twelve months ago,
Perhaps you might know him, the call him Munto."

7

The father gazed on them with sad sad surprise,
The father gazed on them with tears in his eyes,
Saying, "Cursed to my arms, have I murdered my sons?
I may curse my hard fortune for the deed I have done."

8

"Now who is that young man lay dead by your side,
Oh who is that young man?" the father he cried,
He's my only brother and your youngest son,
You may curse your hard fortune for the deed you have done.

9

"Do not tell my mother that we are both dead,
She will sink into sorrow, give away to her bed,
But we hope to meet her on some other shore
Where you won't be able for to shoot us no more."

Sung by Mr. Charlie Weeks, Glace Bay and recorded by
Helen Creighton, July 1956

Two Welshmen brave and undismayed
Whose courage never failed
Went down the shaft that dreadful day
In the mines of Avondale,
And when they got to the bottom
One died for the want of air,
The other made a sigh to hoist them up
To tell that dreadful tale
That all hands were lost forever
In the Mines of Avondale.

There was a feller in Sydney Mines by the name of Paddy Kane that knowed it. I don't know if anybody over there knows that song or not. It must have been in the western States or somewhere. There was never a sould ever come out of it. All they had to do was to put a headstone at the shaft.

Sung by Mr. Charlie Weeks, Glace Bay, and recorded by Helen Creighton, Aug. 1956.

'Tis a fine summer's morning Billy Rennicks arose,
 Straightway to his comrade's bedchamber did go,
 Saying, "Comrade, dearest comrade, let nobody know,
 'Tis a fine summer's morning and a-bathing we'll go."

2

Now they travelled on together till they came to Long Lane
 And the first man they met was the keeper of game,
 He tried to persuade them but it was all in vain
 For their lot was to die in that watery main.

3

Billy's comrade stripped off and he swum that loch round,
 He swum backwards and forwards till he came to dry ground,
 Saying, "Billy, dear Billy, don't you venture in
 For I seen a coffin in the loch of Shallin."

4

Now Billy stripped off and he swum that loch round,
 He swum backwards and forwards till at length he went down,
 Crying, "Alack and alas are there anyone nigh
 For to launch out a small boat for to save this poor boy?"

5

Now there were a old woman, she stood handy by,
 She ran to Billy's mother, with this she did reply,
 Saying, "Your youngest son Willie was bathing to-day,
 But now he is drowned I heard them all say."

6

Billy's father ran down like one in despair,
 A-wringing his hands and a-tearing his hair,
 Saying, "I reared up a family of clever young men
 But it's now to my sorrow the flower of them's gone."

7

"Now we'll go off to Jackson's, they live at Long Moor,
 We will get their big boat as we done before,
 We will get their big boat that will hold us all in,
 And we'll row down the valley of the loch of Shallin."

7

Now six weeks or better since Willie's one day,
 And poor Billy's wife she laments night and day
 For the loss of her husband that lies cold in the clay.

Sung by Mr. Charlie Weeks, Glace Bay, and recorded
 by Helen Creighton, July 1956

I Would If I Could

Reel 163A15-18

Now you called now upon me to sing you a song,
And if you pay attention it won't take me long,
You ask me to sing you something that's quite new
And just to oblige you I don't care if I do.

Cho.

I would if I could, if I couldn't how could I?
I wouldn't without I could, how could he could you?

2

Now I courted a girl and I felt rather shy,
I sat under the spout till I was nearly wet through, then old lass
Said Joe, "Come out to the kitchen," and be gobl ~~don't care if I do~~
I don't care if I do. Cho.

~~Cho~~ 3

I went into the kitchen and made it all right,
Nine pounds of fat bacon I shoved out of sight,
Says Joe, "Could you do with a dumplin' or two?"
And begob then old lass "I don't care if I do." Cho.

4

Now I cuddled and squeezed and wasn't it bliss
But she looked in my face and she asked for a kiss,
She says, "Why don't we get wed like lovers that's true?"
And begob then old lass I don't care if I do." Cho.

5

Now we went to the parson's for sure to get wed,
When he opened the good book the few words he said,
"For better for worse you must take her you know,"
"And begob then old parson I don't care if I do." Cho.

6

Oh then now we are married quite happy we'll be,
There is no little children to plague you and me,
we might have a few,
And begob then old lass I don't care if I do. Cho.

Sung by Mr. Charlie Weeks, Glace Bay, and recorded by
Helen Creighton, July 1956

cannot make these words out

Question: Where did you learn all your songs Mr. Weeks?

Answer: I couldn't tell you. I'll tell you where I learned all me songs. When I was young I was a hound to drink and we'd all get a bottle - two or three bottles- and we'd all get up in the bushes and set down there and everybody'd sing. It didn't make no difference ~~xxxxxx~~ who you was, we'd all sing. Well everybody sung his song and if it was good it was all right and if it wasn't it was just the same. You had to listen to it anyhow, so that's how I learned alot of my songs. No, not here at Glace Bay; at Sydney Mines.

Question: And did the miners sing a lot of songs?

Answer: Oh well when you're working in the coal mine you know and sometimes there'll be no trip, no boxes and you'll be sittin' down there and some feller will say, "Come on there, give us a song, give us a song." Well if you know a song you'd sit down and you'd sing ~~it~~ a song and somebody else'd sing a song and you'd pass away the time. So that's how we used to do it.

Told

~~Told~~ by Mr. Charlie Weeks, Glace Bay and recorded by Helen Creighton, July 1956

The largest city in this world is London,
That's what all the wealthy people say,
It's very nice for some that always gets the plum
But I only get what others throw away,
It's very nice in stormy nights of winter,
It's very nice when camping out at night,
With a doorstep for your bed and another for your head,
Because you haven't sold your bloom and lights.

Cho.

While London sleeps and all its lights a-gleaming,
Millions of her people now lay sweetly dreaming,
Some have no home, while others sorrows weep,
While others laugh and play their games while London's fast asleep.

There's lots of wealth and happiness in London,
There's lots of want and misery as well,
There's men that's good and true that can't get work to do
Who stole their bread and sought a prison cell,
There's some of them can't stand it any longer
Because they cannot earn an honest meal,
They'll seek the riverside and plunge into the tide
Because they're far too proud to beg or steal.

The cops they get a name of being bad ones,
I don't mean Brown, I mean the men in blue,
They're called a shady lot but some of them are not
Although I caught it hot from one or two,
There's one of them has being a pal to this child,
One night he found me sleeping in the street,
He did not use his club but shared with me his grub
And gave to me his lamp to warm my feet.

One night when it was freezing hard and snowing
I saw a woman staggering through it all,
She was thin and poorly dressed, had a baby at her breast
And nothing for to cover her but a ragged shawl,
I followed her, I felt as if I had to,
When suddenly she pulled the shawl aside,
And screamed My God no no, and sank into the snow,
From cold and want that little one had died. Cho.

Sung by Mr. Charlie Weeks, Glace Bay, and recorded
by Helen Creighton, July 1956

This girl and the boy they were going to school together, and he was a little further away than she was, but when she'd go to the gate she'd wait for him till he'd come, and if he'd be there ahead of her he'd wait till she'd come.

Finally enough when he was sixteen years of age he made up his mind that he was going to go, and so he did. When he came back after years he came home and there was nobody home and the rest were away but his mother. He asked about them, where they were. Of course the most of the things then over there was fishing. "Ah but there's one fellow," she says, "and he never wrote the girl and he never wrote home, I guess he's not living," she says. "But I was never as lonesome since he left as I am to-night. The girl he used to go with is match-making, to-night with another fellow." She didn't know him.

"Can I sleep?" he said.

"Oh yes."

"Well wake me up about this time," he made up his mind he was going to go there. I guess nobody'd know him. Finally enough he went in and the old man of the house met him, and he says, "Can I stay for the night?"

"Yes, but you won't get much sleep here to-night. There's match-making here to-night."

"I see," he says. "That won't bother me. I only want the shelter of the room for the night." And they were all singing songs and she (had) made him a shirt before she left and put a heart in the bosom of the shirt and he never put the shirt on until that night, and they were asking the stranger to sing a song, a Gaelic song, and oh I'll try' he says and he started the song.

(Sings Gaelic Song)

and she looked and knew her own work in the bosom of the shirt and she was sitting on the other fellow's lap and she jumped clear over and went right ~~into the~~ to his arms and there he was and in the next verse

(Sings another verse of song)
the other fellow had to leave and she stayed with him and they got married.

Story told and song sung by Mr. Wm. E. MacDonald, Marion Bridge, and recorded by Helen Creighton, July 1956.

Mr. MacDonald learned the song many years ago at East Bay, N.S.