

Reel 199A

1. First Miramichi Folk Song Festival; Opening Address by Hon. Lt. Governor Leonard O'Brien who stress fact that history now being made
- 2 Part of Introduction: Mr. Ken Homer, Master of Ceremonies; tells how Festival came about and what to expect
- 3 Lumberman's Alphabet: sung by Mr. Wilmot MacDonald, Glenwood; 7 vs. sung with great enjoyment, and slowly
- 4 The Jam On Gerry's Rock; sung by Mr. George Duplessis; eleven vs. well sung; lumberman's accident.
- 6 x The Winter of '73; sung by Mr. Nicholas Underhill, North West Bridge; lumberman's song, 14 vs.; this most interesting singer who makes use of holding high note for effect
- 7 x The Good Old State of Maine: lumberman's song, sung by Mrs. James Brown, South Branch, Kent Co.; everything is better in Maine; well sung; eleven vs.
- 8 x The Days of Duffy Gillis: recited by Mrs. Golloway, Newcastle, N.B.; this used to be popular when lumbermen met for entertainment; well done
- 9 x The Girl I Left Behind; sung by Mr. Nicholas Underhill; here, sensing approval of audience, he stresses high note even more; interesting; 8 vs.
- 10 x The Merner Song; composed and sung by Mr. Wilmot MacDonald; Glenwood about local event and people.

All songs recorded at Miramichi Folk Song Festival; words had seemed clear at the time, but in transcribing from tape found it impossible to make some out, and occasionally had to guess. Question mark indicates doubt.

Also some of these may be on B side of reel 199

5. The Death of Florella; sung in French by Mrs. Teresa Holmes, Beaver Brook Station; long sad song.

Miramichi Folk Song Festival
Opening Address by Hon. Leonard O'Brien, Lieutenant Governor
of New Brunswick

Reel 199A No. 1

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is a delightful experience for me to be here to-night - a pleasure of course to attend this gathering which is, I believe, the first of its sort to be held in the Maritimes. Therefore it is unique; therefore we are participating in history. I hope and believe and I know that it is but the beginning of many such to be held in the years ahead, and it has something of real worth, much more, may I say than just that of passing entertainment. I think perhaps I might illustrate that thought when I refer to a statement made by the most eminent Canadian, the Right Honorable Vincent Massey, the governor general of Canada, who in speaking along that sort of thing said that he much regretted the trend towards the erosion of tradition and this sort of entertainment or undertaking is primarily valuable because it seeks to maintain and keep flourishing the past which of course is the tradition, and which of course as the tradition moulds itself into the culture of any country. In that category of course I include matters of state, the respect shown to Her Majesty, and to government in its various phases, and of this festival here to-night - of course I include this festival to-night.

Now tradition is very often exemplified in singing. No matter what form it may take it's always been - it's always expressed the nationalistic flavour of the people, and is full of tradition over all the centuries. Canada being such a young nation has not a great history of that sort of tradition. Most of ours has been acquired from our forefathers who in other years brought it with them from their homeland, and in the absence of any song of any long traditional value, of Canadian origin, because of the primitive beginnings in Canada, which have taken place not so many years ago, even in more sophisticated times in other lands, our local people developed their own traditional songs. These are what I might describe as poetic prose, a form of song or rhyme, and as such they are of the greatest possible interest. Not because some critic might judge them of any great purity of song value good or bad, not according to those standards, but ~~xxxxxx~~ in my opinion they are worthy and valuable because they are native, they are original, and they are our very own. They tell many tales. It is true the composer used many human inventions and inaccuracies. He often used guile and a cunning way, perhaps too often, to embarrass others in the immediate community. No doubt some anguish resulted in those days, but time has removed much of the venom that might have been in the thought of the composer, that it was nothing more than that he might describe as good clean fun. And so these simple, crude verses have to a great extent become our traditions. As such they have great value for us and for succeeding generations. Because of that this festival here to-night is much more than a passing interest. Indeed it is part of our history we are making here to-night and strengthening at the same time. To those who participate all possible praise and thanks. It is unnecessary for me to tell you something so well established as to be known by all

time
 here at home and far afield. That is that we of this ~~kawa~~, more especially posterity owe a great debt to those who have accumulated, saved, and recorded these simple songs. To say that is simply to mention the name of one of our outstanding citizens, Miss Louise Manny, a woman of vast social attainments, and which attainments are only exceeded by her personal determination - yes indeed a determination that at times could be classified as almost fanaticism, but which basically and traditionally as of posterity should one day stand out in its true worth as its own memorial to this renowned woman. And it is my hope that this work of Miss Manny's may eventually, and I hope e'erlong, be suitably rewarded.

My friends I have spoken longer than I expected I might, but just before I came into the hall I was told of the importance of this gathering as being the first of its kind held in the Maritimes, and so I thought that the notes I had made might be more extensively used. In any event I have finished. I thank you for inviting me to be here to-night on this occasion which I cannot repeat too often I consider of real value and importance.

Speech delivered by Lt. Governor Leonard O'Brien at the opening of the first Miramichi Folk Song Festival, Sept. 1958, and recorded by Helen Creighton, Sept. 1958.

..... that time had brought about a great many changes on the Miramichi, then he added,
I will forgive the whims of fate
And turn to meet the blast,
If from thy bounty thou wilt spare
Some moments of the past.

and some of the moments he prized enough to celebrate in his verses were those when one from out the company would with lusty lungs and strong would give out a good come-all-ye about 90 verses long." Well we all know that time has been even more industrious since the turn of the century, changing still further our ways of life, and our ways of entertainment too, through radio and television and all the rest of it, and for that reason we have to work all the harder to keep the old traditions swept away on the ever-rolling stream. A festival of this kind can do just that, and I share the opinion of those who have already spoken that a great deal of credit is due to Miss Manny for inspiring it, to the Rotary Club of Newcastle for sponsoring it, and to the Travel Bureau for supporting it. I'd like to point out right here that the Festival is primarily dedicated to the singers themselves. It's a chance for them to get together, to listen to one another's versions of the old songs, and to realize from the applause of the rest of us that their talents are still considered an important part of northern New Brunswick life to-day, just as listeners of an earlier day considered the song makers an important, if not an almost indispensable way of life.

Now our program is apt to be along one. Some of the songs if not 90 verses run on to some length so I'll say here as the evening wears on, you who have baby-sitters at home are at liberty to slip away without censure because the real song addicts will be so lost in the past by that time that they will not even notice you leave. We will have perhaps a couple of intermissions which will give you a chance. And with that brief introduction we'll get on now with the business of the evening, the old songs. The first one, and I think it's a very appropriate one to begin the Festival, since it does give us a very graphic picture of the lumber woods and the life that the woodsmen lived. I don't have to introduce the singer. Any of you who have listened to Miss Manny's program, or who are familiar with the singers in the locality will know Wilmot McDonald when he comes out here to sing The Lumberman's Alphabet.

Introduction by Ken Homer recorded by Helen Creighton at
Newcastle, Sept. 1958.

A for the axes and that you use all know,
 B for the boys that can use them also,
 C for the chopping which now begun
 And D for the danger that we do stand in.

Cho.

How merry are we,
 No mortal on earth is as happy are we,
 To me hi derry, ho derry, hi derry down,
 Give the chanty byes whisky there's nothin' goes wrong.

2

E for the echo that rings through the woods,
 F for the foreman that bosses the job,
 G for the grindstone we grind our ax on,
 And H for the handles so smooth worn around. Cho.

3

I for the iron we mark out our pine,
 J for the joble that's always inclined,
 K for keen edges we all have to sleep,
 And D for the lice boys as o'er our shirts creep. Cho.

4

M for the moss we stog in our camps,
 N for the needle that we sew our pants,
 O for the owl that screeches by night
 And P for the tall pine that we do slay right. Cho.

5

Q for the quarrelling that we don't allow,,
 R for the river where we make our bow,
 S for the sledge built so stout and so strong,
 And T for the big team that hauls them along. Cho.

6

U for the uses we put ourselves to,
 V for the valleys we run our roads through,
 W is the wood we leave in the spring,
 And now I have sung all I'm going to sing.

7

There's three more letters I can't bring in rhyme,
 And if you can tell me please tell me in time. Cho.

Sung very slowly and keeping time with stick by Mr.
 Wilmot MacDonald, Greenwood, and recorded at the 1st Miramichi Folk
 Song Festival, Sept. 1958.

He sometimes begins the chorus with the word and and sometimes
 omits it. Miss Manny gives the word joble as the answer to the letter
 j, but I cannot find it in a dictionary. Is it a lumberman's term? He
 has varied it here slightly from when he sang it to her, as singers
 often do.

Come all you bold chanty boys and listen while I relate
 Concerning a young riverman and his untimely fate,
 Concerning a young river boy, so handsome, true, and brave,
 When the jam on Gerry's rock he met his watery grave.

2

Was on a Sunday morning as you will quickly hear
 Our logs were piled up mountains high, we could not keep them clear,
 Our foreman cried, "Turn out brave boys with hearts devoid of fear,
 We'll break the jam on Gerry's Rock and for Wellington town we'll steer."

3

Now some of them were willing, and more of them were not,
 To break the jam on Sunday for they didn't think they ought,
 While six of our brave Canadian youths who volunteered to go
 To break the jam on Gerry's rock with their foreman Young Munro.

4

Now when the rest of the shanty boys, long about ten o'clock
 I heard his young voice say,
 "I warn you boys, be on your guard, for the jam will soon give way,"
 Those words were scarcely spoken when the jam did break and go,
 And it carried off those six fine youths with their foreman young Munro.

5

Now when the rest of the shanty boys when the bad news they did hear
 In search of their brave comrades to the river they did steer,
 Meanwhile their mangled bodies on with the tide did flow
 While dead and bleeding near the bank was that of young Munro.

6

They took him from his watery grave, brushed back his raven hair,
 There was a fair girl amongst them whose sad cries filled the air,
 There was a fair girl amongst them who came from Saginaw town,
 Her cries and moans rose to the sky, her true love had gone down.

7

Fair Clara was a noble girl, the river man's true friend,
 Who with her widowed mother lived near the river's bend
 The wages of her own true love the boss to her did pay
 And the shanty boys made up for her generous purse next day.

8

They took him from his watery grave, brushed back his raven hair,
 There was a fair girl amongst them whose sad cries filled the air,
 There was a fair girl amongst them who came from Saginaw town,
 Her cries and mourn rose to the sky, her true loved had gone down.

9

(vs. 7 repeated)

10

They buried him in sorrow's depth, was on the first of May,
 On a green mound by the river side where grew a hemlock grey,
 Engraved upon the hemlock down by his grave did grow
 Was the name and date and the sad fate of her foreman young Munro.

11

Now Clara did not long survive, her heart broke with her grief,
 And about six weeks later death came to her relief,
 And when at last the time had come when she was called to go,
 Her last request was granted, to be laid by young Munro.

Sung by Mr. George Duplessis, Newcastle, N.B. xxx at the 1st
 Miramichi Folk Song Festival; recorded there by Helen Creighton, Sept. 1958