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Reel 209A

Opening Address at 3rd Miramichi Folk Song Festival by Lieutenant Governor Leonard O'Brien followed by either Mr. Lutes or Mr. Craighan, and then followed by Ken Homer, Master of Ceremonies.

Fiddle, Bow of Strings and Cotton-Eyed Joe played by Floren MacDonald; there is a vibration in the recording which spoils this item.

James McGee, sung by Mr. John Holland, aged 89; some words difficult to make out; he ends with a step-dance and the steps can be heard on the tape.

The Green Valley, sung by Mr. Harold Whitney; for words see Songs of Miramichi, p. 245; song of false love; words clear.

Pretty Little Shepherdess, or La Belle Jolie Bergere, is supposed to be next on this tape, sung by Allen Kelly, but there is no sound.

All items from 3rd Miramichi Folk Song Festival, August 1960.

Opening Address by Lieutenant Governor Leonard O'Brien

It is my privilege to be here in my attendance to-night bringing to this meeting as the representative of Her Most Gracious Majesty the ~~xxxxxx~~ reflected eminence of the Crown which is, of course, most fittingly brought to this meeting to-night. It is a genuine satisfaction to me personally to know how established the Festival has become, and I am very happy because of that. I am a firm believer in the preservation of the traditions and the folklore of our forefathers and realizing that much of that lore comes down to us in song and story, such cultural pursuits as this Festival is most heartening, and my hope is that in years to come, these early beginnings may have magnified, as I firmly believe they shall into something of real importance and magnitude.

Already that is happening, for this season I've learned that fiddling has been added to the Festival and that, of course, is of tremendous interest and worth. And a ~~xxx~~ children's concert is also another added feature. All that is progressive, and it is all good. This Festival is described as being unique; that is exceptional. I recall that so much of the popular expressions one gathers comes from such lore as, for instance, the Stephen Foster melodies and the now immortal music thereof. How delightfully these songs recall the otherwise forgotten days of the southern United States. And there were somewhat similar songs such as The Yellow Rose of Texas, Home On the Range, which became popular about a hundred years ago and have never lost their charm to entertain. And also during the Civil War, the well known song, Good-Night Irene was written, and The Grandfather's Clock, is of about one hundred years' vintage. These songs were full of ~~xxx~~ lilt and sentiment and much history of those times. Many were born of the desire of the author to entertain himself and, of course, others as these melodies became more popular. They were largely sad or ~~xxx~~ boisterous but always they had a spirit of contentment and enterprise. It has been said that a traveller has no trouble when he's got his song to sing and so endless miles over difficult roads through the forests, across the plains, became less difficult and more pleasant and the skies were not always cloudy ~~xxxxxx~~ all day. And so it was herabouts.

More than a hundred years ago, and since, right down to this very night, some-all yes were made up by some person so gifted to entertain himself and eventually to entertain in many instances crews in the lumber camps. And often other gatherings. The now so-renowned Larry Corran could never have imagined that because of his rhyming, posterity would so cherish his memory as to have him honored so recently in Oran when Miss Manny laid a wreath on his grave on behalf of the government of this province. Then the Hippy Parker poems, particularly The Days of Duffer (?) Gillis, The Man Behind the Photo, to name a few, and others became great local poetry. Miss Manny and her many enthusiastic and willing associates, the ~~xxx~~ Rotary (a really truly Civic Club it is) The ~~xxx~~ Miramichi Historical Society, the New Brunswick Travel Bureau, and of course Lord Beaverbrook. Then Ken Homer, and Mr. Alan Mills who come here with their talents ~~xxx~~ and their skills, and the performers and the people, all are making history, the while having fun. As of these days such is owed to them, ~~xxxxxx~~ and inestimable is the debt future audiences assume for having such traditions so preserved, for them. Folk Song Festivals are popular in many many places, but it of truly great importance to know that this Miramichi festival is unique in North America in that, while in other places the performers are professional singers, the performers are all of local and non-professional calibre. This adds tremendously to the rarity and interest of ~~xxxx~~ such a Festival. In this spirit of such community interest, I gladly bring to this gathering the prestige of my office and in opening this

Festival I express public gratitude to all who have made it possible.

Speech opening the Festival given by Lieutenant-Governor Leonard O'Brien at the 3rd Miramichi Folk Song Festival, and recorded by Helen Creighton, Aug. 1961.

Space on tape blank, and then reception faulty;

I think we can safely say that without Miss Manny there would be no Festival, and perhaps they say a native is never appreciated in his own country, perhaps that may be so. I think now time is going on. I will hand the gavel over to Ken Hoyer. Oh pardon me, I forgot Mr. Harry Brown. (applause) who is our third judge. It is a pretty warm night. We're not thinking much of Harry's ~~products~~ products to-night, but it won't be long before we'll have to get his woolies out, so we're delighted also to have Harry with us. Now without more ado I'll wish I'll ask ? wishing him the best of luck.

(This speaker may be Mr. Lutes).

Ken Hoyer: Mr. Chairman, Your Honour, Mr. Creighton, singers of the Miramichi, Ladies and gentlemen, it's very difficult for me to let you know exactly how pleased I am to be back here again in the capacity of Master of Ceremonies at the Miramichi Folk Song Festival. It's also very difficult for me to express to you the difference between the job last year and this year and the same part in 1958 when we first began. On that first night Miss Manny and I, and those others, Dr. Creighton and others connected with the Festival stood here in this hall in fear and in trembling. We had no idea whether the idea would work, whether the Festival would be a success. We knew that we liked the songs. We knew that the singers liked the songs and we had no idea how the general public was going to react to a Folk Song Festival. I can never accurately express our gratitude to His Honour on that occasion because his presence, his calm and quiet assurance that the conditions represented by the songs were important and deserving of saving, publicizing and sharing, did a very great deal to reassure all of us who were present at that first Festival. We are still very grateful for that night and for his continued support. I'm very glad too to have Dr. Creighton back with us after her one year hiatus in her trip international lands, and of course we're very pleased to have Mr. Brown and Mr. Mills once again on the judge's stand. I have here a telegram which arrived this afternoon, which will be of interest to the singers and I am sure to everyone who had any connection with our first two festivals.

"Best wishes to the third Miramichi Folk Song Festival. I wish I could be with you for these three nights because I know the singing will be as fine as ever. Good luck to all my old friends and I look forward to seeing you all at next year's festival." And that's signed Sandy Ives. We hope he's going to get up for at least one of the nights this year. Did any of our fiddlers arrive?

Introduction by Ken Hoyer, Master of Ceremonies at the 3rd Miramichi Folk Song Festival, Aug. 1960.

Ken Homer, M.C.: And he was singing songs long before the rest of us were ever thought of and the way he's going he'll probably be singing them for years and years to come. He was one of the stars of those who went to the television studio ~~shows~~ in Moncton after last year's festival and he's going to sing for us now James McGee, and that, of course, is Mr. Jack Holland.

(Cannot make out words of Mr. Holland's introduction).

I'm James McGee they do call me, for the same I will ne'er deny,
All for fine houses and rich lands from him I was forced to fly,
I was bound to sail to the New South Wales and leave sweet Minnie Moore
When my parents died and left me, I being their only heir,
Brought up by my old grandmother, of me she took great care,
Seven long years in Dublin in the old Academy
My learning then would serve a king or a lord of a high degree.

2

When my parents died and left me I had one aunt alone,
And she married an Englishman and together they did combine
All for to swear my life away so hanged I might be,
And she'd become the only heir of all my property.

3

Then I was taken prisoner and on a green table cot(?),
All for to swear my life away my aunt before me stood,
"There is the man that done the deed, on him you can ?
East Thursday night at ten o'clock my husband's watch he stole."
"God pardon you dear aunt," I said, "Your soul must danger be(?),
God pardon me for judging you, for judged you will be,
But wait for the tribunal day when Christ upon us calls,
There'll be no liars nor jurymen there while Judge judges all."

4

Oh the judge he read my sentence, those words I heard him say,
"Young man I cannot favour you, she has sworn so bitterly,
So you must leave your children small in sorrow to bewail,
But it's leave your houses and rich lands, you are bound for the New South Wales."
"Oh it's not by distant sailing or yet is it my long ?
For leaving of those children small for they're of a tender age,
May the curse of Minnie my dear wife and my three children small
Look down upon you Kate McGee for it's that you should be called."

Sung by Mr. John (Jack) Holland, and finished with a stepdance and shuffle off stage; recorded at 3rd Miramichi Folk Song Festival by Helen Creighton, Aug. 1960.

Ken Homer, M.C.: (Makes some remark about the step dance, then says Come on, and Mr. Holland's feet can be heard as he dances) That, ladies and gentlemen, is 89 years of rhythm. (The audience gives great applause. The dancing for a man of his age, especially after such a sad song, was a great surprise).