

The Songs That Nearly Got Away: An Examination of the Unpublished Portion of Kenneth Peacock's Newfoundland Field Collection¹

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Abstract: Kenneth Peacock's *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports* was and still is a landmark collection of Maritime music. But for several reasons, Peacock did not include in the publication all the songs he had collected. This article examines the reasons for non-inclusion and explores the hidden value of this unpublished music.

In the summer of 1951 at age 29, Kenneth Peacock, a classical musician and composer, went to Newfoundland to collect folksongs for the National Museum of Canada (Guigne 2000:289-294). He became so intrigued with the music and the singers that he returned five more times to do fieldwork, later releasing his findings in an impressive three-volume collection *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports* (1965) (hereafter referred to as *Outports*).¹ Peacock assembled his field material during the height of the Canadian folk revival. This work eventually launched him on a lifelong career collecting folksongs; and alongside such peers as Marius Barbeau, Edith Fowke, Helen Creighton, and Alan Mills, he was a pioneer in heightening awareness of Canadian musical traditions (Miller 1992:483).

Although Peacock's representation of Newfoundland's folk culture tended to be overly romanticized, reflecting his urban upbringing, his work has had a lasting impact. For almost forty years, *Outports* has served as a valuable resource for those involved in folk music research (Thomas 1978:1; Mercer 1979:16; Neilands 1992:45-74; Halpert and Widdowson 1996, 1: xxxii). Folklorists and folk music enthusiasts in general recognize *Outports* as a substantial ethnographic document, one made even more meaningful by its ongoing impact on the local popular music culture (Narváez 1982:11; Saugeres 1991:94). Many Newfoundland musicians consider it to be "the bible" of Newfoundland folksong.² The collection is deemed important enough that plans are currently underway for a CD-Rom version to be made available under the Singsong label.⁴

Outports is an impressive collection. To Peacock's credit, it is at least partially representative of the province's vibrant thriving musical tradition in that it includes several local compositions, British and American broadsides, Child ballads, lumber ballads, songs of the sea, children's songs, music from the Gaelic and French traditions, and a myriad of other lesser known songs. Peacock effectively expanded our view of the depth and breadth of the Newfoundland musical tradition, which had previously been documented in a limited manner (Doyle 1927, 1940 and 1955; Greenleaf and Mansfield 1933; Karpeles 1934).

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Folklore Studies Association of Canada Annual Meeting during the 2003 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 27 May–4 June.

² Author's interviews, Kelly Russell, 29 July 1996; Jim Payne, 22 Sept 1997.

³ Suzanne Woolridge, interview with Jim Payne, *Morning Show*, CBC Radio, Sept. 1997; Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), Tape 98-033/C16642.

Although it has been widely acclaimed by revivalists for its inclusiveness, researchers are often critical of Peacock's publishing approach. As they point out, he had a propensity to create composites, and he edited many songs to make them more singable (Mercer 1979:16; Carpenter 1979:415). Through his editing, Peacock attempted to "improve" the poetic and musical quality of certain songs, frequently combining tunes and texts from different versions. Despite such editing practices, Peacock's publication is undoubtedly a pioneering effort, and it is still considered a primary collection. As it was created through the sponsorship of the country's foremost cultural institution, the National Museum of Canada, researchers have understandably tended to place *Outports* within the arena of folklore scholarship. However, they have neglected to take into account the manner in which the material was collected, as dictated by Peacock's discriminating tastes, as well as those specific influences that shaped the publication. He was highly conscious of the folk revival, remarking in *Outports* that "the search by discerning professional folksingers for a more authentic approach comes at an opportune moment, for folk music has suddenly become big business in North America" (1965:xxiv).

As a musician and as a revivalist, Peacock endeavoured to make available through print as much of his collection as possible. Pointing out that research on Newfoundland folksong had been rather "limited and haphazard," he aspired to create a "comprehensive collection" to serve many uses (1967:4). He also noted that, as he planned to do a future work with "scholarly annotations," he reserved "all the available space for the songs themselves," with only occasional comments on their "origin, structure, or symbolic implications (1965:xx-xxi). In fact, he skilfully created a product that was well suited to the aims of the Canadian folk revival movement.⁵

As Peacock pointed out, "even a collection ten times as big would not be complete" adding, however, that "it is representative of Newfoundland's repertoire of traditional and native song as it exists in the mid-twentieth century" (1965:xxi). Musically, Peacock recognized that he had unearthed something special, noting that he had encountered many gifted singers who "represent the highest flowering of the tradition and set the standards by which all other performances are judged" (1965:xxiv). As I recently discovered while retracing Peacock's six Newfoundland field trips, *Outports* represents one aspect of this collector's Newfoundland work. Peacock's real contribution to the documentation of the province's musical tradition is a rich and varied field collection consisting of 766 songs and melodies; 638 items are on audio tape and an additional 128 songs are in manuscript.⁵ Peacock collected this material from 118 informants spread across 38 communities in nine distinct regions of the province.

Through comparison of the material in *Outports* with the original field tapes and songs in manuscript, I learned that although Peacock published 535 songs and variants under 411 titles, he excluded an additional 221 items. By moving beyond *Outports* to his original field collection,

⁴ I address Peacock's specific treatment of materials which he published in *Outports* in "An Operative Model for Analyzing Kenneth Peacock's Newfoundland Song Collection," *Canadian Journal for Folk Music* 37.2 (2003): 1-6.

⁵ The textual and musical transcriptions for Peacock's field tapes for 1951-1971, number Pea B-1 to Pea-B-554 are in boxes 277-302; and the textual and musical transcriptions of the songs he collected by hand are numbered pea C-1-128 and are contained in boxes 302-304 at the LAD-CMC. The actual recordings numbered by tapes Pea 1 to Pea 554 can be found in the Audio Visual Division. For this research, I used copies of Peacock's Newfoundland field recordings, which are at MUNFLA in the Kenneth Peacock Collection, accession 87-157.

particularly the unpublished portion, we can learn something new about Peacock's personal aesthetic as it relates to Newfoundland folksong, and also to the performers who provided these songs.

The unpublished portion of Peacock's field collection

Understandably, Peacock could not print everything; and his decision to eliminate an item was likely based on the following criteria pertaining to the song's content or subject matter, musical style and patterns of song groupings emerging across his collection.

A. Comparable variants of songs he published

Forty-one songs are unpublished variants of songs Peacock included in *Outports*. In some instances, he decided that the texts and music collected were close enough for only one example to be printed. For example, Peacock collected four variants of "The Dark-Eyed Sailor": one performance from Howard Morry (8-53), two separate renditions from Charlotte Decker (109-820 and 154-1000), and one which he collected in manuscript from James Heaney (MS-26).⁶ He eventually published the tune and one stanza of one of Charlotte Decker's performances (156-1000) combined with Howard Morry's text (8-53), commenting that "All the Newfoundland variants of this English broadside song are similar" (2:514).⁷

B. Songs with unappealing content

In 1951, Peacock recorded two variants of the song "H'emmer Jane" (1-1 and Pea 5-21).⁸ This performance piece is usually sung in an overly dramatized satirical manner, mimicking the outport Newfoundland dialect (Fowke 1973:216n). Peacock showed considerable distaste for this song, once commenting, "It was so outlandish that I refused to use it."⁹ It is likely that he excluded the song because he didn't want to demean his informants.

He also eliminated two World War II songs, "Our Boys Give Up Squidding" (1-6) and "Hitler's Song" (1-7), patterned on the text and melody for Newfoundlander Arthur Scammell's highly popular "Squid Jigging Ground" (Bulgin 1994:97-98).¹⁰ These examples are interesting because the popularity of Scammell's song was such that it proved to be highly versatile and adaptable to other local compositions, creating in effect a parodic song cycle. Peacock had

⁶ Peacock's original field tape numbers have been retained throughout.

⁷ Peacock's transcription of James Heaney's rendition of "Dark-Eyed Sailor," (MS-26) is contained in his manuscript collection, Pea-C, Textual and Musical Transcriptions-Manuscript, Box 302 F11, Peacock Collection, LAD-CMC. See also Charlotte Decker, "The Dark-Eyed Sailor" (109-820), MUNFLA Tape, 87-157/C11058A.

⁸ The performances were by Lloyd Soper and Harry Drover, MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11031A and C11033A.

⁹ Recorded telephone interview with Kenneth Peacock, 24 Mar. 1994.

¹⁰ The songs were performed by Ned Rice of Cape Broyle; see "Hitler's Song" and "Our boys give up squidding," MUNFLA Tape, 87-157/ C11031A.

great respect for Scammell's composition, but he also recognized its popularity, noting during a 1953 radio program that it has "become the best known Newfoundland song abroad."¹¹ As "the whims of fate" had given Scammell "a much wider audience," Peacock decided to devote space to lesser-known local composers, such as Chris Cobb of Barr'd Islands.⁵ Peacock did publish Scammell's "Squarin' Up Time" (MS-110), referring to it simply as "a native ditty" (1965, 1:99). It is likely that he did not know Scammell was its composer (Scammell 1990:233).

Peacock also excluded "The Kaiser's Dream" (106-802), and "Fritzy" (105-798) because he viewed these war songs as being "too new" and therefore inappropriate for publishing, especially when he had to choose between these songs and other older examples such as "Bold Wolfe" (1965, 3:986-87) or "Napoleon's Farewell to Paris" (3:1009-11).¹³ He also excluded such wartime songs as "The Boy that Wore the Blue" (86-716) and the "Soldier's Letter" (70-658) because they were overly sentimental.¹⁴ While these kinds of songs did not fit his publishing agenda, we should acknowledge that he did collect such songs when they were offered to him.

Since Peacock had collected several songs showing Irish influence, he selected for publication only those he perceived to be of a higher musical quality, leaving out those he considered closer to "Stage Irish," such as "Give An Honest Irish Lad A Chance" (3-19) and "The Mountains of Mourne" (6-36).¹⁵ For much the same reason, Peacock likely excluded the humorous music hall song "Good-bye John" (98-766).¹⁶

Peacock also had an aversion for songs with religious overtones. In *Outports* he refers to the song "The Forsaken Mother and Child" (105-800) as a "tear jerker" and a "half-baked hymn" where "various Christian sects have moved in to lure the 'natives' away from their wicked habits like dancing and singing folksongs" (1965, 2:448). Peacock published it because,

¹¹ Kenneth Peacock, *Folksongs from Newfoundland*. Transcript for Program 3, Canadian Broadcasting Corp., Dec. 1953, p. 5; Pea-E-12, Peacock Collection, LAD-CMC. The song was popular enough to make it to the Hit Parade, recorded by Hank Snow in 1957. Hank Snow, letter to Arthur Scammell (24 April 1957), Arthur Scammell Collection, Public Archives of Newfoundland, PANL Accession MG-969.

¹² *Ibid*, Peacock, *Folksongs from Newfoundland*, 1953, p. 5. Peacock had also expressed this view to Scammell in 1953. Kenneth Peacock, letter to Arthur Scammell (22 Dec. 1953), Scammell Collection, PANL.

¹³ Freeman Bennett, "Fritzy" and "The Kaiser's Dream," MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11056A and B; Recorded telephone interview with Kenneth Peacock, 24 March 1994.

¹⁴ Rebecca Bennett, "Boy that Wore the Blue," and Alvina Coles, "Soldier's Letter," MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11046B and C11038B.

¹⁵ The songs were performed by Mike Kent and Monica Rossiter of Cape Broyle; MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11032A and C11033B. For a discussion of the prominence of this kind of Irish music in Newfoundland, see Pat Byrne, "Stage Irish in Britain's Oldest Colony: Introductory Remarks Toward an Analysis of the Influence of the McNulty Family on Newfoundland Music," *Canadian Folklore canadien* 13 (1991): 59-68.

¹⁶ Everett Bennett, "Good-bye John," MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11052B; William Gooch, "The Good-Bye John Comic Song," J.L. Carncross and Co. Philadelphia, 1869, Duke University Rare Book Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Music B-491.

as he noted, "It appears to be quite rare." Conversely, he rejected Jim Bennett's performance of "S-A-V-E-D" (84-711), which appears to be an early Pentecostal revival number (Leach 1965:301).¹⁷ He also discarded two religious *treason* songs, "The Orangemen of Cadiz" (145-970) and "John the Baptist" (155-1007), simply because the content was prejudiced (Goldstein 1991:126-53). As George Decker informed Peacock after his performance of the latter song, "There was a lot of different denominations, you know, around here that time, and you wasn't allowed to sing it; [and] I had to get into hot water two – three times."¹⁸ It was not uncommon for such songs to be sung out of the public eye because the dominant merchant class was for the most part Protestant (128).

Peacock evidently rejected another of Decker's songs, "The Old Mushroom" (155-1005), because of the erotic content. As the lines of one stanza convey: "So cock your leg over to the bed in the moon, and show your bare ass and your Old Mushroom."¹⁹ Its presence in the collection is an anomaly. He presumably excluded the local song "Raymond Wade" (83-705), performed by Clarence Bennett of St. Paul's, for the same reasons.²⁰ In this instance, the subject matter focused on the activities of a schoolteacher in the community of Flowers Cove on the Great Northern Peninsula who started dating a female student from L'Anse au Clair across the Straits in Labrador, and who had a reputation for being a bit wild. This kind of behavior by a person of authority would have provided ample fodder for community gossip. As the song's composer notes, "the pupils shout[ed] and laughed at him for going against the rules."

C. Songs reflecting the influence of modernization

Peacock had a personal preference for older material, tending to discount anything perceived to be too contemporary, such as songs performed in a country and western style. He had collected "Feller From Burgeo" (4-26) from a "cowboy-type singer" to show that the material existed in Newfoundland commenting: "Unfortunately the guitar drowns out most of the words on the recording, so it cannot be reproduced here" (1:54). For this reason "Brave Engineer" (98-767) a variant of "The Wreck of the No. 9," and "Mine at Baie Vert" (178-1099), which the singer performed with guitar accompaniment, were eliminated.²¹ As Peacock observed shortly after returning from his first field trip, he viewed the influence of this kind of music, which he had heard coming from juke boxes in the outports, as detrimental to the older tradition (Thistle 1951:24).²²

¹⁷ Jim Bennett, "S-A-V-E-D," MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11045B.

¹⁸ James Decker, "John the Baptist," and George Decker, "Orangement of Cadiz," MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11075B and C11070B.

¹⁹ James Decker, "The Old Mushroom," MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11075B.

²⁰ Clarence Bennett, "Raymond Wade," MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11045A.

²¹ Jim Bennett, "The Brave Engineer" and Gordon Rice, "Mine at Baie Verte," MUNFLA, Tapes, 87-157/ C11052B and C11087A.

²² G. Malcom Laws notes in *Native American Balladry* that "The Wreck of the No. 9," (G 26) composed by Carson J. Robison, "appears on many phonograph records" (1964, 225). Singers in Newfoundland during this time period also acquired the song from print sources; see "Wreck of the No. 9" in *The Newfoundlander* 12 (1 July 1949): 8. For a discussion of the importance of country and western music in

Peacock was disinclined to include material reflecting the influence of modernization and especially songs that singers might have acquired from the radio. In his note to the song "Hush Little Baby Don't Say a Word" (131-909) published under the title "Lullaby," Peacock questioned whether this number had been acquired by "some quicker (and probably electronic) method," rather than "the tried and true process of traditional transmission" (Peacock 1965, 1:15). Since Peacock had found a corresponding variant in Sharp's *Folksongs of the Southern Appalachians*, he considered this variant worthy of being included. A second children's song, "David, David Where You Going to Go-e-o" (131-910), was probably left unpublished because he perceived it to be too contemporaneous.²³

D. Poems with no melody

Peacock acquired a number of poems without melodies from Chris Cobb of Barr'd Island, including "A Dance to Jim McBoys" (MS-25) and "A Grace" (MS-45).²⁴ Generally, Peacock did not seek out recitations or material of a poetical nature, but he had great admiration for Cobb's ability as a modern-day local composer, once remarking "[he] is one of the wittiest and most prolific of these latter-day bards [. . .] scores of songs have kept his neighbours amused and informed of the latest gossip at home and around Newfoundland" (Peacock 1956:6). Peacock later published much of this singer's repertoire in *Outports*, including two of Cobb's own compositions "Brown Flour" (MS-18) and "The Fisherman's Alphabet" (MS-36) (1965, 1:46-47; and 125-26). Like the items mentioned above, these had no melodies and therefore couldn't be sung. Hence Peacock saw no need to include them in the published collection.

E. Inferior melody and too esoteric a text

Peacock appreciated the value of locally composed material, adding these songs regularly to his collection and publishing an article on the subject (1963:213-239). However, since he intended the material in *Outports* to be performed, he eliminated those with little meaning outside the region in which they were collected and those he perceived to contain inferior texts and melodies. Examples include "The Trip to Cow Head" (106-804), a brief account of an outing on boat by local couples; "The Little *Twenty-Two*" (121-869), a song about a small freight-carrying vessel caught in a gale that was unable to transport rum; and "The Bellburns Tragedy" (159-1024), a composition about a two boys drowning after falling off a pan of ice in the harbour.²⁵ He also eliminated three songs about highway construction in the province: "The

Newfoundland for this time period, see Michael Taft, " 'That's Two More Dollars': Jimmy Linegar's Success with Country Music in Newfoundland," *Folklore Forum* 7 (1974): 99-120.

²³ Mrs. Frank Tompkins, "David, David Where You Going to Go," MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11069A.

²⁴ "A Dance to Jim McBoys's " (MS-25) and "A Grace" (MS-45), Pea-C-Textual and Musical Transcriptions-Manuscript, Box 302, F11 and F13; LAD-CMC.

²⁵ Marie Bennett, "Trip to Cow Head," Mrs. Wallace Kinslow, "The Little *Twenty-Two*," and Lynn Nora Stevens, "The Bellburns Tragedy," MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11069A, C11064A and C11077B.

Bridge At Robinson's River" (186-1128), "Highway Song" (131-907), and "Five Boss Highway" (130-906).²⁶

F. Songs previously given to Gerald S. Doyle

Shortly after his first field trip in 1951, Peacock passed at least thirty locally-composed songs to the well-known Newfoundland music enthusiast, Gerald S. Doyle.¹³ Doyle then printed approximately two-thirds of this material in the 1955 edition of his highly popular songbook *Old-Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland*. Although Peacock appreciated Doyle's efforts, he viewed him as an amateur popularizer of local songs who created a "biased view" that Newfoundland folksong was of a particular type (Peacock 1967:4). But Peacock learned when he returned to Newfoundland in 1958 that due to the wide circulation of Doyle's publication, these songs had worked their way into singers' repertoires. He later noted in *Outports* that he had to be careful "not to recollect them because of their popularity" (1965, 1:59). He saw no need to reproduce all of them, again saving space for less familiar material.

G. Excess French material

Between 1959 and 1960, Peacock collected seventy-four songs from eleven French singers on the west coast of the province, later publishing fifty. Each of the French singers who had provided songs was given some representation in *Outports*. Josephine Costard, from whom he collected thirty-seven songs, was given the fullest representation of all the French singers. Peacock published all but seven of her songs.

H. Song fragments

Peacock also collected a number of song fragments. As he liked publishing complete texts, he did not incorporate any of this material. Examples include "Archie Barrett" (90-731), and "Come All you Island People" (122-871).²⁸

I. Instrumental Music

In 1959, while visiting the Codroy Valley, Peacock collected several instrumentals from performers of Scottish and French descent. Alan MacArthur played him such tunes as "Road to the Isles" (129-899) and "Highland Laddie" on the bagpipes (129-901). He also collected several fiddle tunes from Joseph O'Quinn and John A. MacDonald (132-915 to 133-922).²⁹ As *Outports* was a folksong book, this material was also excluded.

²⁶ Leonard Hulan, "Bridge at Robinson's River"; Martin Deveau, "Highway Man"; and "Five Boss Highway"; MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11091A, C11069A and C11068B.

²⁷ He had made mention of passing Doyle this number of songs in an interview with reporter Loretta Thistle. See "Songs From the Outports," *The Evening Citizen* [Ottawa, Ont.] Thurs. 27 Sept. 1952, Sect. 3: 22. For a discussion of Doyle's influence, see Neil V. Rosenberg, "The Gerald S. Doyle Songsters and the Politics of Newfoundland Folksong," *Canadian Folklore canadien* 13.1 (1991): 45-57.

²⁸ Everett Bennett, "Archie Barrett," and Mrs. Wallace Kinslow, "Come All You Island People," MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11048B and C11064B.

²⁹ For the bagpipe tunes performed by Alan MacArthur and for the fiddle tunes by Joseph O'Quinn and John A. MacDonald, see MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11068A, C11069B and C16983A.

J. Material of a documentary nature

In two instances, Peacock spent time collecting historical information from informants: Howard Morry (Tapes 11 and 12) and Everett Bennett (part of Tape 96).³⁰ This kind of documentation was unusual for Peacock. None of this material was incorporated in *Outports* or published elsewhere.

K. Material from poor recordings

In 1958, Peacock was unable to transcribe at least seven songs because of recording problems with Tapes 72 and 73. In his report to the Museum for that year, he commented:

The sound reproduction was good, but the tape-transport mechanism was often unsteady, causing excessive “wowing” in the pitch of many songs. Many hours had to be spent regulating the clockwork motor before even passable recordings were attainable.³¹

For unknown reasons, the recorder shut off after Peacock announced the song “Pat O’Brien” on Tape 5.³² This was likely an accident; as I discovered when examining his collection, Peacock was meticulous about itemizing songs, recordings, photographs and manuscript transcriptions associated with his fieldwork. He also took great care to ensure that he properly recorded his informants’ performances. Songs from poorly recorded tapes were not included in the final publication.

Revisiting the songs that nearly got away

Considering the size of this field collection, we can appreciate that Peacock had to make choices of inclusion and exclusion, and this collector-musician is to be commended for the range of song material which he eventually did publish. Typical for many folksong collectors of this time period, though, Peacock was less interested in examining the lives of his informants or the links sustaining the broader singing traditions in their regions. Instead, he aimed to create a publication that would serve many purposes, including the interests of “professional folksingers” (1965, 1:xxiv).³³ As I recently discovered by revisiting his field collection, and in particular the

³⁰ MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11036A & B and C11051B.

³¹ Kenneth Peacock, “Folkmusic Research in Newfoundland: 1958 Report and List of Singers,” Internal Document, National Museum of Canada. Pea-A-1, Kenneth Peacock Papers, Library and Documentation Services, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1958.

³² Stewart Little, “Pat O’Brien,” MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11033A.

³³ Peacock’s approach was not unlike that of many collectors of this period. At that time, the guidelines for folklore collection were less than rigorous, and the discipline was still emerging. As Richard Dorson argued in “Standards for Collecting and Publishing American Folktales,” many folklore collectors treated their materials in such a way as to lead to romantic, quaint stereotypes, which he labelled “fakelore,” because such material was less than representative (1957:53-57). As Leonard Roberts also points out in his study “A Family’s Repertoire,” in the late 1940s and ’50s this kind of documentation was often perceived to be the role of anthropologists (1983:105).

materials he excluded from *Outports*, these kinds of explorations are still possible and worth the effort.

A case in point is the unpublished material collected in the Gros Morne Region of the Great Northern Peninsula. Peacock visited this area three times between 1958 and 1960, collecting 293 songs or 38 percent of his entire field collection from eighteen individuals living in Rocky Harbour, St. Paul's, Parson's Pond and Bellburns. As he told the National Museum following his first visit to the area, he was impressed with the "richness and variety of material."³⁴ In the 1920s, American collector Elisabeth Bristol Greenleaf had discovered in nearby Sally's Cove that the northern coast had an extensive musical tradition. She later published a number of songs from several performers in the area in *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland* (Greenleaf and Mansfield 1933).³⁵

As their repertoires indicate, most of the singers along this part of the northwest coast performed a range of songs for Peacock; numerous Child ballads, comic songs, broadsides, American and Canadian songs, local sea songs, Irish materials, and children's songs, as well as those learned from the Doyle songbooks or from newspapers.³⁶ Peacock eventually published 211 songs from these four communities, often selecting what he perceived to be the best "gems." The remaining 82 items from this collective repertoire are worthy of consideration because when combined with the material Peacock did publish, we get an expanded perspective of the singing tradition in this region.

Three examples are the local compositions "The Trip To Cow Head" (106-804), "Dance at Daniel's Harbour" (91-758), and "Timber for the Bridge at St. Paul's" (78-688). Peacock would have viewed these songs as being "hewn together" with "sentiments more spontaneous" and "unsophisticated" rather than "composed" (1963, 213). Although they probably lacked sufficient musical and textual detail for Peacock's publishing agenda, songs like these reveal much about life along the Great Northern Peninsula up to the 1950s, as I found through recent interviews with family members in the area. Felix Bennett of St. Paul's recently informed me that "The Trip To Cow Head," performed by Marie Bennett for Peacock in 1958, concerns people going off in a boat to a "Time"—a soup supper and dance in the next community.³⁷ Also known as "Gordon and Margaret," this song was composed in the early 1950s by Anna Payne just before the couple were married. Communal acknowledgment of this burgeoning relationship is revealed in the following stanza:

Here was one young girl amongst us all, who was handsome, tall and fair,
She was going with Gordon Bennett, a fella from St. Paul's;

³⁴ Kenneth Peacock, "Folkmusic in Newfoundland 1958 Report and List of Singers," Kenneth Peacock Collection. Library and Documentation Services, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Pea-A-1, p. 1.

³⁵ For a new appraisal of her fieldwork see Neil V. Rosenberg and Anna Kearney Guigné, Foreword, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*, 1933, by Elisabeth Greenleaf and Grace Mansfield (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2003). Forthcoming.

³⁶ Kenneth Peacock, "Newfoundland Folk Music 1959 Report," p. 3.

³⁷ Felix Bennett, personal communication by telephone (22 May, 2003), MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11056B.

Her name was Margaret Bennett, which I am glad to tell,
And it was, as we wish this loving couple well.³⁸

Compositions of this sort commemorate such important events for both family and community even today.

“Dance at Daniel’s Harbour,” is another account of a group of people going up the coast by boat to a community event, as the words of one stanza relate:

We got to Daniel’s Harbour, ‘twas just before dark;
We all went on shore, boys, I can tell you we looked smart;
Went straight to John Sampson’s, got on straight away,
And then got the fiddler Rufus to play.³⁹

Embedded in this song is a reference to the late Rufus Guinchard (1899-1990) of Daniel’s Harbour. Since entertainment along the coast was self-made, musicians such as Guinchard were frequently called upon to play for musical times in both houses and public places. He was the “fiddler of choice in communities along the Great Northern Peninsula,” later being embraced by Newfoundland folk revivalists for his musical talents (Payne, 2003).

Songs such as this one also reflect the general mode of getting around in this region up to the Confederation period when, of necessity, visiting was carried out either by foot or boat. Well into the 1950s, people tended to walk or take boats to socials, weddings and dances. It was simply a part of the normal rhythm of life along the coast. As Deborah Laing of Rocky Harbour recalls:

When we were young ones growing up, that’s what we used to do. If we lived in Parson’s Pond, and if there was a dance in Cow Head, or a concert or something, and that was about eight or ten miles away, and we wanted to get there bad enough, we walked...We often walked from Cow Head to St. Paul’s to a dance even after I was married. Usually in the nighttime. They might start a dance around 7:30 and usually till 2:00 in the morning, if it was in some public building where you didn’t have to get out. We had a lot of house dances too back in them days.⁴⁰

In his introductory comments to *Folksongs and Their Makers*, Ray Brown succinctly notes that as members of a community, the local composers discussed by Ives, Glassie and Szwed were “stimulated by it, responded to it, were voices of it, and created their songs of the very stuff of the community” (1971:viii). The customary act of composing provides the individual an opportunity to publicly give voice to situations affecting the entire neighbourhood. Everett Bennett’s “Timber for the Bridge at St. Paul’s,” composed in 1913, relays local concern about a foreman’s poor leadership in directing the construction of a bridge. In the song, Bennett remarks:

³⁸ MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11069A.

³⁹ Becky Bennett, “Dance at Daniel’s Harbour,” MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11049A.

⁴⁰ Deborah Laing, Rocky Harbour, personal communication by telephone, 1 Nov. 2000.

The first day we worked, there was something's gone wrong;
 For some cut the short, and some more cut the long;
 There was one man there, he said 'twas not right;
 For some to work hard, and some to work light.⁴¹

As Everett's nephew, Felix Bennett, advised me recently, "The bridge never lasted long."⁴²

In his discussion of such compositions, Paul West says it is no exaggeration to describe local songs in Newfoundland as "the pithiest, the most ingenious, and the most evocative of the island temper" (1960:34). These songs are not always jolly; rather, they also include "disaster, animosity and unlyrical candour" (35). Edward Ives, in his study of song maker, Larry Gorman, similarly characterizes a satirical song as one that "criticizes some person, concept, or institution in such a way as to make us laugh" (1993:167). He also notes that we should be interested in "the tradition of making these songs" (169). In 1959, Clara Stevens of Bellburns performed twenty-four songs for Peacock ranging from rare Child ballads to children's songs. He published all her material except three of her own compositions. A brief look at these examples reveals that Stevens voiced her opinions on many subjects and that the material she composed fits well within the satirical song tradition.⁴³

The "IWA Strike" (160-1027) concerns the 1958 uprising linked to the unionization of the logging industry in Newfoundland, which resulted in much turbulence across the island and stress and grief for the Smallwood government (Cadigan 1991:455-56).⁴⁴ The affair reverberated across the entire province. It was this kind of situation that provided a fertile ground for a number of local composers. As the last two stanzas of the song reveal, Clara Stevens expressed her pro-Smallwood sentiments:

When the IWA come in Bellburns, the people chased them round;
 Where some of them agreed with them, and others turned them down;
 They gave him lunch and gave him [?] before he went away;
 And chased him right to Cow Head on the very same day.
 Oh, now to conclude and finish, I hope I have said no wrong;
 But I like a few more others to mention in my song;
 I hope the Liberals they do gain and build their roads [?] around
 And Premier Joey Smallwood he will not be cast down.⁴⁵

Stevens directed another composition, "Skipper George Whiteley" (162-1036), at a local merchant-politician whom Stevens felt did her an injustice and added in a caution:

⁴¹ MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11042B.

⁴² Felix Bennett, St. Paul's, personal communication by telephone, 22 May, 2003.

⁴³ MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11078A.

⁴⁴ "The I.W.A. Strike" (160-1027), MUNFLA Tapes 87-157/C11079A. For a brief reference to the strike, see Sean T. Cadigan, "Unions," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* Vol. 5. St. John's: Harry Cuff Publications, 1991: 455-56.

⁴⁵ Clara Stevens "I.W.A. Strike" (160-1027), transcribed from MUNFLA Tape 87-157/ C11078A.

Come all you young girls and pay attention to what I'm going to say;
 Never work with Skipper Whiteley; if you do, you'll get half paid."
 (Bates 1994, 562)⁴⁶

Her third song, "The MacKays from Canada" (162-1037,) pertains to a Montreal couple who had come by boat to the small northern community in 1955 to teach. Stevens disapproved of their "uppity" sophisticated ways.

According to her sister, Eliza Haynes, Clara Stevens was a witty character with a knack for making up songs about local issues.⁴⁷ Stevens evidently felt she could forcefully express her convictions through lyric and song and still maintain some immunity. As she indicates in "The Mackays from Canada":

They're looking pretty hard on me, I have no friends at all,
 The Mackays they left in the spring, they'll come back in the fall,
 They'll summons me in September; when they do, come along,
 And the lickies will be after me to sing this song.

As this suggests, in the community of Bellburns, Clara Stevens saw a particular role for herself and her songs, and she evidently had an audience.

The unpublished Peacock collection also provides a practical means of looking at family singing traditions. On his first trip to the region in 1958, Peacock encountered the Bennetts of St. Paul's, a family with an extensive singing tradition. He advised the National Museum about them shortly after his first encounter:

[They] are a rare phenomenon, even in rural Newfoundland. Centred about two brothers, Everett and Freeman, the whole family eats, lives and breathes folksong.⁴⁸

Over the course of three years, Peacock recorded 140 songs from eight family members, later publishing 93 of them. In 1966, based on their reading of *Outports*, Herbert Halpert and John Widdowson also visited the Bennetts, collecting from them a variety of other folklore materials, mummering plays, riddles, and several folktales that were later included in *Folktales of Newfoundland* (1996). The Bennetts are quite unusual, and the existence of such a large home-based folklore repertoire reflected the key role these singers played as tradition bearers for their immediate family and the community at large.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Peacock Collection, MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11079A. See also Allison C. Bates, "Whiteley, George Carpenter (1874-1961)," *ENL*, 5: 562.

⁴⁷ Personal communication, Eliza Haynes, Cow Head, 11 November 2000.

⁴⁸ Kenneth Peacock, "Folkmusic Research in Newfoundland: 1958 Report and List of Singers," p. 2.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of a similar family tradition see Leonard Roberts, "A Family's Repertoire," *A Handbook of American Folklore* Ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983):105.

In 1998, I interviewed Rebecca (Becky) Bennett, then age ninety, to discuss her contribution to *Outports*; Peacock had collected twenty-three songs from her, publishing twelve.⁵⁰ Music has always been important to this singer. She came from a musical family and, in marrying Freeman Bennett, she was embraced by another musical family. As she advised me “Everybody knows a lot of songs here in St. Paul’s.” She gleaned “John Riley” (O’Reilly the Fisherman) from her grandmother, Granny Payne, originally of Rocky Harbour, and “The Forsaken Mother and Child” from her mother, Martha Jane, whom she describes as a “wonderful singer.” She talked about practicing her songs by singing them in the evening. There are also special ones she always loved to sing, such as the sad song “I’ve Been Lonely Since My Mother Died,” which she learned early on from her cousin, Arthur Bennett. She informed me that her husband Freeman had learned many of his songs from his mother, a Payne from Rocky Harbour. Others he had acquired while working in the woods. As Peacock’s tapes for the Bennetts reveal, the many recording sessions in this home were always well attended, and singing was taken seriously.

When I broached the subject of songs Peacock did not publish, Becky Bennett mentioned “The Kaiser’s Dream,” which Freeman used to perform. She laughingly commented that he and her nephew, Jim Bennett, “threatened me not to sing it.” Her son Felix later clarified this threat with the comment “What do women know about war?”⁵¹ I could appreciate his perspective further when I heard the last lines of the song: “All I hear is the cries of orphans—listen, listen I hear a woman scream; blood, death, and desolation is the outcry of my dream.”⁵² As this suggests, then men in St. Paul’s viewed some songs inappropriate for women to sing.

The unpublished material in Peacock’s Newfoundland collection provides researchers with a means of asking contemporary questions about singing traditions and songs. Since inquiring about the materials Peacock did not publish, I have begun to appreciate that, at least in the Gros Morne area, this resilient singing tradition was primarily maintained through community networks and kinship connections. The keys to unlocking this information are embedded in the songs Peacock collected from this area. Genealogical inquiries confirm that many singers along this part of the coast, such as the Bennetts and Deckers, are interconnected through marriage. Clara Stevens was also good friend of the Bennetts. Regular visiting along the shore provided a chance to reaffirm these connections while at the same time creating opportunities for sharing in the popular communal past time of singing. Several of the songs Peacock collected from this region were known by many of the same singers who regularly visited back and forth along the coast.

Conclusion

Kenneth Peacock’s efforts to document the Newfoundland singing tradition were shaped by the time in which he lived. Considerably influenced by the folk revival movement, he chose to publish music and texts that appealed to his personal senses, rejecting materials he thought too modern, common, religious or sentimental. In so doing, he aimed to produce a publication that would have the greatest possible use. Despite the editing in *Outports*, he accomplished this

⁵⁰ Interview with Becky Bennett, St. Paul’s, 22 July 1998.

⁵¹ Fieldnote, Felix Bennett, St. Paul’s, 22 May 2003.

⁵² MUNFLA Tape 87-157/C11056B.

goal, greatly expanding researchers' and revivalists' perception of the Newfoundland musical repertoire at mid-century.

We can also appreciate that the "Newfoundland" which Peacock saw between 1951 and 1961 has substantially changed through evolving modernization and urbanization. For this reason, Peacock is to be commended for diligently assembling the enormous field collection, which led to the creation of *Outports*. Revisited forty years later, Peacock's field tapes reveal themselves to be more than a conglomeration of Newfoundland folksongs; they also capture an appreciable amount of community information relative to a particular time and place. Future researchers can still learn more from Peacock's efforts, by placing this material within its proper context—bringing it back to the singers and their communities. The content of this material provides new information on singers' repertoires, personal tastes, and the means through which singing traditions have been maintained. It also contributes to a fuller understanding of life along the northwest coast. As all this suggests, the songs that collectors decide not to publish, and hence, nearly get away, can over time often turn out to be the jewels of a collection.

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