

ELISABETH GREENLEAF: AN APPRAISAL*

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Greenleaf and Mansfield's collection, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*, is acknowledged today the first scholarly work in the field of Newfoundland traditional song.¹ As such, it opened the way to the preservation of Newfoundland folk culture.² The present essay attempts to evaluate the contribution of Elisabeth Greenleaf, the author and editor of the collection, to the scholarship, and mainly draws from her manuscripts and recorded interviews deposited in the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA).³ These sources and some major scholarly reviews contemporaneous with the work's first publication in 1933, have shed some light on the creation, the shaping and the reception of this leading folksong collection.

Elisabeth Bristol Greenleaf was born in New York City in 1895. The daughter of a professor of biology, she grew up in her native city and Avondale, Rhode Island. In New York City Public Schools, she received her good musical training and learned to take music by dictation.⁴ She graduated from Vassar College with English and Biology as major subjects in 1917. Her select education, possibly tinted with the American protestant ideology of 'the self-made man' advocating the responsibility of the privileged, could have guided her commitment to the Grenfell Mission. It is to serve as a volunteer teacher of the Mission Summer School in Sally's Cove on the West Coast, that she first came to Newfoundland in 1920.

Prior to her impressive discovery of "a real folksong, one handed down by oral tradition," on the very evening of her arrival in the community, she had been acquainted with the printed texts of folksongs through courses and from public lectures; John Lomax probably sang, possibly played, a recording to his audience while visiting Vassar as a guest lecturer. But this enthralling experience of hearing the songs in the field soon led her to gather and transcribe the words and music of those she found around. This became a major activity in addition to her teaching and was greatly facilitated by her involvement in the life of the community.

Back to Vassar in the autumn of that year, she mentioned her discovery to H.N. MacCracken, President of the College. He recommended her to Martha W. Beckwith, a professor of the Vassar College Folk-Lore Foundation, and both of them encouraged Greenleaf to carry on her collecting in Newfoundland the following summer. From this second visit she brought back thirty songs. Shortly after, Miss Elisabeth Bristol married to become Mrs. Greenleaf; she retired from teaching and interrupted any collecting activity until 1929 when she decided to carry out her wish to visit Newfoundland again and make a more complete collection of ballads and songs. Sponsored by Vassar College, she then set up what she humorously called "the Vassar Folklore Expedition" with Miss Grace Yarrow, later to become Mrs. Mansfield. A Vassar-trained musicologist, she was hired on Greenleaf's request to be responsible for the musical transcription of songs, a task for which Greenleaf herself did not feel competent.⁵ Her personal choice of Grace Yarrow as her assistant, apart from sympathy, was

directed by the latter's proven willingness to disregard hardship.⁶ Together they covered a number of areas on the Island, and this fieldtrip with Greenleaf's two previous stays in Newfoundland produced their collection, published by Harvard in 1933.

Following this joint publication, Greenleaf still did some fragmentary collecting in the Appalachians but did not gather enough material, in her opinion, to publish anything else. She lost touch with Newfoundland as also with any folklore scholars, as she went to live in West Virginia, two hundred miles from any library. Her collection of Newfoundland songs, however, was republished in facsimile in 1968, and in 1979, she received an Eistedfod Award from Southeastern Massachusetts University, which marked her final recognition as a distinguished folklorist. She died in 1980 at Westerly, Rhode Island.

Elisabeth Bristol was twenty-four when she left her parents' comfortable home in New York State for some lone and obscure destination on the West Coast of Newfoundland. Her journey started with a long trip on the train from New York to North Sydney, and from Boston she wrote her first letter home. This reveals something of her feelings on setting out on her daring enterprise:

I never hated to leave home so much in my life before ... I think it must be not knowing where I'm going and not having a great deal of confidence left after struggling for three months with that dreadful class ... I never would be here now if it weren't for my pledged word, the remembrance of Charley P.'s enthusiasm for the work and your help ...⁷

Between the lines, her decision almost sounds like an escape from the drudgery of teaching, which she expresses rather pathetically. But writing from North Sydney two days later, she sounds much reassured, apparently from meeting other mission workers on the train and hearing of the remarkably gentle and responsive pupils of Newfoundland:

School is not held regularly year after year, but only by fits and starts, so the results are poor ... All the people who have taught up there say the children are so anxious to learn that there's no question of discipline, and if that is true, I am safe for I can teach (and with pleasure) when I am not plagued to death with disorder.⁸

But for all she gathered, her adventure remained very much an expedition to the unknown:

So I think the mystery of my destination will soon be cleared ... It is very strange how little the people of North Sydney seem to know about their neighbouring island of Newfoundland. No one ever heard of Sally's Cove, nor is it on any of their maps ... They have a very nebulous idea of what Dr. Grenfell and his staff are doing.⁹

Greenleaf's prolific correspondence to her parents on her way to Sally's Cove reports her friendship with some ornithologists met on the train. Breaking their journey in Sydney, they invited her to go bird-hunting" with them.¹⁰ She joined them gladly and recounts her interest and enthusiasm for what she heard:

The number and sweetness of the songs delights and excites me. While

you are seeking the water-thrush, whose poised melody allures you, some other little warbler starts up right in your ear apparently, and you don't know which way to turn.¹¹

From her own words, her excitement on this first "fieldtrip" was primarily aroused by the musical aspect of the experience. Foretelling her vocation as a folksong collector is a minute transcription of the few measures of the fox sparrow's song which she took down, fascinated by the beauty of the melody of a bird unknown to her:

I've been talking with Mr. Jodd about musical notation of bird songs and got him quite interested by taking down two songs I had never heard before, whistling them to him from the notes and getting him to name the birds.¹²

This also was the method she would apply in collecting folksongs. By her own admission, she could quite well carry a tune, so, hearing a song, she first learned the melody and found the notes on her ukulele. With no idea of collecting songs before her discovery of them in Sally's Cove, she had taken her instrument with her because rather than books, 'it would last her the whole summer.'¹³

Some fifty years after her first arrival in Newfoundland, Greenleaf explained that she got involved in the Grenfell Mission driven by a longing for adventure and the desire to devote her teaching to some worthy purpose. With the time, she had lost nothing apparently of her youthful enthusiasm and her admiration for Grenfell's personality and achievement. Dr. Wilfred Grenfell is remembered today as a Christian medical missionary, much like Albert Schweitzer. His involvement with Newfoundland and Labrador began in 1892 when he volunteered to go there and determine the need for the mission's services. Medical care was rare on the coast and the people suffered the hardest living conditions as a result of exploitation by the fishing merchants. Malnutrition, superstition, and the lack of education were responsible for various diseases leaving hardly any hope for healing. Reporting the situation in his own England, Grenfell soon convinced his people to raise funds for his developing project in the far-off colony. His growing reputation and the success of his appeals also in United States soon allowed the organization to extend its work from medical assistance solely to the improvement of economic conditions and social welfare.¹⁴

Eventually, Grenfell came to realize that an educated people would less easily be victimized by unscrupulous traders. The few existing schools on the coast were open only during the summer months; these were all church schools, unsubsidized by the government and each serving but a few children whose teachers were appointed for their church loyalties rather than their teaching qualifications. To the rivalry and bigotry of this denominational system, Grenfell substituted mission schools where all could attend.¹⁵ He therefore appealed to volunteer teachers to hold school in the isolated outports during the summer. In the mission's realistic and broad-minded spirit, their goals, beside the ordinary school curriculum, were directed towards the overall development of the children and included notions of hygiene as well as opportunity for sports and games, promoted for health reasons.

It is as one of these brave and intrepid volunteers that Greenleaf became involved with Newfoundland, and through this sizeable teaching task, she contributed the first scholarly work on the Island's folklife. A cutting from a local newspaper joined to one of her letters reports on her own party of Grenfell workers:

The party going down was on the whole a jolly one, brimful of youth and energy, going out to the, to them, unknown regions of the north, combining a mission of comfort and consolation with the pleasures brought by a new and strange experience. Representatives were present from many states, presenting types interesting and diverse, from the jolly girl to whom life is almost a lark to the staid and serious lady who has acquired a mannerism unmistakable in those who have had a certain period taken up with driving reluctant wee ones along the flowery but somewhat distasteful paths of knowledge.¹⁶

From Sydney, the party took the ferry to Port-aux-Basques. And, in spite of her feeling squeamish during the crossing and the inconvenience aboard, Greenleaf woke up to Newfoundland shores with undiminished optimism and good spirits. She describes Port-aux-Basques as "a little harbour of wonder," not knowing where a place has impressed her so; and, delighted at the sight of "snow on the peaks and wonderful trout streams," she writes of her "getting more enthusiastic every mile."¹⁷ From there, she took the railway to Curling where she had "a corking good time" exploring up the Humber River and "its dandy fish," trying her hand at cod-jigging and pursuing her "bird-hunting" for about ten days, waiting for the steamship to carry her to Bonne Bay.¹⁸ In her next letter including the narration of her trips, equipped with a camera and bird-book, she signs: "with much love from Elisabeth who is enjoying everything here."¹⁹ A keen admirer of the beauties of nature, she did not think less of the people:

We took a trip today up the Humber River in a motor boat owned and operated by Bill Le Moynes, a guide and trapper. It was my first experience with a trapper and guide and if he is a good sample, I am crazy about them.²⁰

Eventually, she was met by her host, Mr. Daniel Endacott, "Uncle Dan," who came to meet her in his motor boat. A pioneer in her own right, she mentions that she steered the boat herself to finally reach her destination, "the perfectly open strip of cobblestone beach and line of wooden buildings called Sally's Cove."²¹ Daniel Endacott's son, Thomas, recalled the day the foreign teacher arrived in the community. Asked what her impression was of the place, he gave a reply only further attesting the buoyant personality of their guest: "I guess she did not think much of it - not much of a place anyhow - but she enjoyed it there."²² The other salient memory of her, retained from his youth, is that of "a wonderful girl who gave them lots of enjoyment, played baseball, sang to them, joined them on their picnics," but who also took a real interest in their work. She would come down to the boat, enquire about their catches and the taste of every kind, extending her sympathy to the poorly named "dog fish", which she proposed to rename the "ocean grey fish."²³

Given her natural cheerful disposition, Greenleaf had been rightly

excited at her various sporting experiences in Curling. Her enthusiasm for her new environment, however, was but a prelude to Sally's Cove's overwhelming revelation:

We had a wash and then supper and then the people of the Cove came in to meet "the teacher," and so the evening passed, but the most striking thing happened after I dropped into bed, right glad to be "arrived." There floated in on the fragrant air, the most beautifully haunting melody I think I have ever heard, sung by three or four rough heavy boys' voices, swelling out on the climaxes and indistinguishable in between. I hopped up and peeped out in time to see them swaying along in rhythm clumping in their rubber boots. That is Sally's Cove, unless I am mistaken, wild, rough and untrained, but with a most moving melody...²⁴

Too excited to go to bed that same evening, she reported her find to Mrs. Endacott who then had her husband sing one of his songs to their rapturous guest:

I sat stunned as the meaning of it all came over me. This man could neither read nor write. He was recounting the history of an event in the only way he could be sure of remembering it, and I felt like a Saxon princess to whom her minstrel sang a new lay of Beowulf.²⁵

Like many collectors before and after her, Greenleaf fell for the quaint and romantic appeal of folksongs, but less probably than any of them did the Saxon princess remain aloof from the full reality of their context. Her commitment in Sally's Cove, it appears, extended beyond her task as a mere teacher, although her responsibility as such was considerable enough; she was conducting dayschool for pupils and a nightclass for adults. Yet only her sympathetic personality and her genuine interest in the whole life of the community could account for her popularity and her remarkable integration: "I may have a baby named after me! Be bridesmaid ... (I wonder was ever a Grenfellite one on such short notice?), have a name-sake, can you beat it for two months?"²⁶

The anecdote among others reveals her ideal position as a fieldworker for combining the assets of an analytical look with those of a quasi-total involvement in the community. As a matter of fact, Greenleaf's collection of ballads and sea songs stemmed essentially from her observation of this living tradition within her environment in Sally's Cove, as also her corpus of riddles which she started compiling as she found them to be a most popular pastime with her pupils.²⁷ Her attitude suggests a modern conception of folkloristic fieldwork in which one wants to have little or no preconceived intention of collecting any type of materials but rather allows for the natural "relief" of the particular local traditions. It thus appears to be her attention to the people themselves from her original dedication as a volunteer teacher that inspired her with a holistic and humanistic perspective on traditional culture.

The Introduction to *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland* is a remarkably vivid rendering of Greenleaf and Yarrow's visit to St. John's, Twillingate, Fogo, Fleur de Lys, and Fortune Harbour in 1929. Greenleaf's first intent in writing it was indeed to put the reader in the experience. The unquestionable effect of her minute impressionistic style has highlighted

not only the literary but the ethnographic quality of this ample essay, attesting the depth of her knowledge of the people's life, let alone her fishing expertise learned from them "on the boat":

First they catch a tubful of a little sardine-like fish, called "capelin," for bait. Then they tie up the motor boat to an anchor and take the dory to work the trawl. This is a long line of light rope to which are fastened, at intervals of four or five feet, three-foot lengths of twine, each with a codhook at the end.²⁸

To include such technical details in an introduction to a folksong collection reveals pioneering attention to the socio-cultural context of folklore, springing naturally from a profound interest in the people above all. The various accounts Greenleaf gave of the circumstances in which she collected songs indeed show her corpus as deriving altogether from her personal relation to the people: "Friends are always asking how we went about it to get people to sing for us. We found them generally ready for the asking."²⁹ However, also in 1929, Greenleaf collected her materials mostly by herself and in much the same way as previously, owing, as she explains, to Miss Yarrow's untrained ear to the Newfoundland speech. So, Greenleaf would hear and take down about fifteen songs a day at the end of which she met her musical expert for working sessions lasting from seven till eleven at night. She then had the musicologist sing the tunes from her draft musical transcriptions and correct these by comparing Yarrow's rendition with her memory of the singers' performance. Once asking her assistant how she liked the work, which Greenleaf herself admitted to be quite strenuous, she got a perfectly enthusiastic answer: "I'm just absolutely fascinated by every single evening ... it's just as interesting as the night before."³⁰

Greenleaf said that "she loved the songs and had loved them all her life."³¹ The statement as such sounds commonplace, and many other collectors who have devoted their life to folksong could probably have said as much. But, unlike her generation and for all her love of the songs, she never looked on these as the "precious literary gems" to be rescued from an ignorant and impersonal folk, and which once recorded would be treasured for themselves or passed on to art music composers as raw material. The following account once more reveals her real attention and respect for, if not her attachment to, the singer, whom she recognizes as a "singing person" rather than a "singer-object":

Another of the good singers of Fleur de Lys was Mr. John Noftall. He was an elderly man who lived with his wife on a hill back from the water. He no longer needed to work very hard for a living as their children were all grown, married and getting along well. ... Mr. Noftall was of the old school of ballad singers and put in a variety of slides, trills, grace notes, unexpected accents and other variations, all of which add greatly to the effectiveness of rendition but reduce the music writer to despair.³²

Greenleaf's humane attitude to the singers, whom she refers to by name, stands out the more by comparison with Maud Karpeles. A reading from the latter's field diaries of her own collecting trip in Newfoundland in the autumn of the same year reveals a rather possessive interest in the songs almost at the expense of the singers:

Made some enquiries but useless ... feel it is going to be very hard to get on to the songs. It is all so much a case of "have been." I am appalled by the difficulties of travel. Feeling terribly depressed and helpless, especially as I hear from Mr. Payne I've been forestalled by 2 American women who spent three months here this summer and took down hundreds of songs. One is a Mrs. Greenleaf from New York.³³

This feeling of disappointment runs almost like a leit-motive in her notes and even suggests a conception of the folk as game chased by a hungry collector:

Fortune Harbour is an unlucky spot. To start with, Mrs. Greenleaf and Miss Yarrow were here for five days and pumped all the singers and then my visit coincides with that of some Holy Fathers and the people are called upon to spend all their day in prayers, so that it will be very difficult to get hold of anyone.³⁴

Karpeles' exclusive interest in the "genuine" traditional songs, i.e. those that travelled to North America with the British settlers, makes her lament her scanty harvest:

Evidently a lot of songs about but they have got covered up by the new songs. Most people have to dig into their memories to recall them. I am creating a great impression by the no. of songs "I know," i.e. those I don't want ...³⁵

Feeling terribly depressed at my lack of success and realize it will now be most unlikely that I shall get anything wh. is at all worth while.³⁶

... the interest in the songs is much more widespread than on the east coast but not such fine songs about. There as everywhere the proportion of genuine songs is very small compared to the repertory of composed songs.³⁷

This bitter report of Karpeles' Newfoundland experience offers a sharp contrast to Greenleaf's and Mansfield's sweet memories of their stay. I have already cited the original and scholarly qualities of the evocative Introduction to their work, rendering the atmosphere of the place through a myriad of sensitive impressions. No less original is the personal touch of this scholarly essay, which at places, reads like the holiday diary of the two Vassar girls:

Gulls wheeled in clouds round their nests on the seaward cliffs, and Miss Yarrow sang to them from the bridge:

"All day long o'er the waters I fly
My white wings beating fast through the sky."

Seated there on the deck we partook of such fresh-cooked lobster as habitués of night-clubs have never tasted. From the boat-deck, as lay once at a wharf, Miss Yarrow made a perfect dive into the water twenty feet below, then struck out for the wharf with a stroke that clove the waters like a flash. "Fastest I ever saw anyone swim!" was Captain Butcher's tribute.³⁸

Greenleaf was only too glad to collect songs as they came to her within their natural context. From a trip aboard the S.S. *Sagona* along the west coast, she gathered fourteen songs from her captain, known as "a devil of a man for a song."³⁹ Here is a telling example of a collector interacting with

the people in the full sense of the word. She indeed described her collecting and her relation to the people who would sing for her as a process of "mutual sharing" for which she gave convincing evidence; she would offer to produce some of her own repertoire in response to the songs performed for her.⁴⁰ As well, her humanity and respect for the singers made her dislike the idea of paying her informants for their songs; instead, she promised to send some clothes according to their needs.⁴¹

Greenleaf's first steps in the field as an enthusiastic bird-watcher have already illustrated her particular attention to the music of folksongs. It is in this that she made a definite and most significant contribution to American folklore scholarship. With some concessions to function and performance, American folklorists until then were essentially textualists, putting the emphasis merely on the accurate record of the texts.⁴² This allowed Greenleaf to say that "she was not the first collector to go to Newfoundland but the first to record both the words and the music together."⁴³ One of the first to consider the importance of music, she said that nobody ever told her to do so or encouraged her in that direction, and certainly not her Vassar sponsors, who were Child's direct inheritors. She recalled that G.L. Kittredge, a dedicated and influential Syndic of Harvard University Press, had Roy Mackenzie put the music of his Nova Scotia ballad collection at the back of his volume. Hence, Malcolm Laws' comment on Mackenzie's *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*: "Its structure is deceptively simple, since it consists merely of headnotes and texts, with a few dozen tunes added by way of illustration."⁴⁴ Mackenzie's arrangement of his collection brought Greenleaf to ask him: "Tell me, Professor Mackenzie, can Kittredge carry a tune?" to which Mackenzie gave a telling reply: "If he has a very large basket!"⁴⁵ The case, anyway, inspired Greenleaf's firmness when it came to publishing her own collection. Telling H.N. MacCracken what she thought of Kittredge's publication of Mackenzie's book, she insisted, with Miss Yarrow's agreement, that unless he would let words and music appear on the same page, they would give their manuscript to Yale. And MacCracken, whom Greenleaf called "a personal friend," made it his condition to Kittredge.⁴⁶ As a result, Carole Henderson Carpenter notes: "... *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland* is notable as one of the first scholarly folksong books to be published with music on the same page as the text rather than relegated to an appendix."⁴⁷

That Greenleaf and Mansfield's collection was published in the "Child and other" format should be seen as a reflection of Kittredge's publishing authority, here as elsewhere, rather than Greenleaf's own choice. As for establishing the textual quality of songs, she had her own "avant-garde" criterion showing her closer to the folk than the analyst. Here is her impression on hearing "The Wreck of the S.S. *Ethie*", a fairly recent local song about a narrow escape from disaster:

Right in the cabin with us were the two real heroes of the struggle ... I doubt if I ever again shall have a chance to sing a song under such circumstances. I realized then that the precious "literary quality" which we collectors seek in ballads is a very secondary thing to the folk who compose and sing them to recall to mind the brave deeds of their heroes.⁴⁸

Greenleaf indeed did not discard any of the songs she heard owing to their text which, even obscene, she insisted on hearing as sung among the folk rather than smoothed for her sake.⁴⁹ She was much more fussy about their musical quality. For sympathetic and open-minded as she was, she had agreed with Yarrow to draw a straight line, only taking the songs down from those who were musical enough to be able to hold the pitch. Also, when Kittredge remarked, on receiving their manuscript, that some selection should be made owing to the cost of printing music, she said she was not sorry to discard what she did not consider a good tune.⁵⁰

Karpeles' review of Greenleaf and Yarrow's collection voices some expected criticism on behalf of the English collector. *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland* would contain "many popular songs which are not folksongs" and "no attempt was made to at least put them in a different category." While the reviewer allows for the delicate distinction between "folk" and "non-folk" material, she still points to the distinction to be made between the "traditional" or "genuine" imported compositions and the "other" modern and locally composed ones. To the "literary distinction" of the former, she opposes the "maudlin sentimentality" of the latter. In effect, Karpeles' review puts forward the clear contrast between her own theoretical preconception of folksongs on the basis of a literary-aesthetic appreciation of the artifact, and Greenleaf's greater tolerance and her intuitive perception of the songs from the dynamic process and the relevance of singing within the community. These diverging views will explain Greenleaf's wonder at finding folksongs preserved in their living tradition in Newfoundland and Karpeles' disappointment with the place "not as fruitful for research as the Appalachians" for not being "immune from the influence of modern composed music."⁵¹

Fanny Hardy Eckstorm assesses the collection as "the best book of ballads yet issued by the Harvard Press," remarking on the enthusiasm with which it was gathered, its editing with discrimination, the music of fully half of the songs printed on the same page as the text, and its illustrations accenting the vividness of its "excellent introduction." She sees the collection as consisting of "three natural but wholly informal sections: the Child Ballads, then the more recent ones, largely from broadside sources, and the still more recent songs, here printed for the first time." Noting the only sixteen and mostly fragmented versions of the Child Ballads, Eckstorm observes the paucity of this tradition in Newfoundland but well balanced by the group of native songs having as yet not been found elsewhere. She thus confirms their legitimate appearance in a collection of Newfoundland ballads and counters Karpeles in an oblique answer:

The beginner is apt to think nothing worth saving except the Child Ballads: the more experienced field-worker finds that he cannot afford to throw aside anything because good ballads are being made all the time, and the more recent popular ballads are likely to contribute much to solving the problems of the evolution of the ballad in the strict Child definition ... These ballads in the raw must go through the same evolution as their "literary" predecessors, for the Child Ballads themselves were the work of poets who wished to preserve the brave deeds of their heroes, and time and chance wore them down by continued repetition, to the rounded polished forms they bear today.⁵²

The very fact of the collection coming into consideration in the *Canadian Historical Review* beside the folklore journals, speaks for its interest and value acknowledged also by the historian.⁵³ The book is called "the finest body of regional folksong in English-speaking America" and is appreciated for the scholarly quality of its "full reference equipment," referring to the headnotes and the annotations. Acclaimed also for the variety of subject matter touching on historical events, the collection serves the proposition that the historian should reconsider the degree of unreliability in orally transmitted, as compared with documentary sources.

With reference to some popular literary review that "the editors (Greenleaf and Mansfield) in contrast to the writing of certain of the Appalachian collections, have failed to vivify and recreate their scene," that is, not romantically enough, MacEdward Leach's remark is of interest:

We perhaps give too much credit to Cecil Sharp and his Appalachian collection as the forces that directed the attention of scholars to living ballads and so added the missing dimension of Child. We seem to forget that in the 1900's and in the 1920's a number of very competent collectors were busy garnering living ballads. (There follows a list of collectors among them Greenleaf and Mansfield). In its range and variety and in its Introduction and Notes, the Greenleaf book is equal or superior to that of Sharp. But Sharp was a well-known musicologist widely known in England, and one whose authority and competence was generally accepted in America. ... Elisabeth Greenleaf and Grace Mansfield, on the other hand, were looked upon as amateurs.⁵⁴

Still reflecting the accepted views of the time, the *Times Literary Supplement*, however, makes some good points:

Many of the songs have no place in a collection of folksongs on even a loose interpretation of that elastic designation. At the same time, folk or not folk, their inclusion throws a flood of light on the way that an oral tradition works in a society that has not yet wholly abandoned it in favour of print ... But if these composed songs are not folksongs, they belong to the folksong tradition, for they reflect the life of the people who sing and listen to them.⁵⁵

This study of Elisabeth Greenleaf has shown how her humane and sympathetic personality and her original commitment as a Greenfell worker enhanced her qualities as a folksong collector: a genuine interest in the people's life, a warm-hearted and respectful attitude to them, and an appreciation of the value of their songs as considered from their relevance to the people themselves. Her lack of much theoretical training in the discipline prior to her field experience, rather than making her an "amateur collector," preserved her from the prevailing preconceptions of the scholarship of her time. Instead, she relied on her own intuition and experience of folksongs in their living human context. This holistic and non-discriminatory approach to songs was responsible for her significant contribution to the scholarship. Her pioneering attention to the musical dimension, until then neglected by the American textual tradition, led to the publication of a collection with the music appearing on the same page as the text. Besides, her consideration for the socio-cultural context of

folksongs, as recaptured in the Introduction, above any analytical preoccupations as to their “authenticity” and “literary distinction,” has contributed much to the modern ethnographic approach. Thus, it appears that Greenleaf’s musical sensitivity and open-mindedness have broadened the very conception of folksongs.

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NOTES

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1. K. Peacock, Introduction, *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports*, 3 vols. (Ottawa: National Museum, 1965), xxi.
2. MacEdward Leach, Foreword, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*, by E. B. Greenleaf and G. Y. Mansfield (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, 1968), vi.
3. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189; Tapes, 78-57/C3962, C3965, C6198, C3966.
4. MUNFLA, Tape, 78-57/C6198.
5. Greenleaf would not use Edison records for her collecting: she found them yielding poor results. MUNFLA, Tape, 78-57/C6198.
6. Born in Armenia, Grace Yarrow was also the daughter of the ex-employer of Greenleaf’s husband in the Near East. MUNFLA, Tape, 78-57/C6198.
7. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189, from her letter dated June 16, 1920. Charley P. could likely refer to Grenfell’s secretary whom she had met personally.
8. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189, from her letter dated June 18, 1920.
9. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189, from her letter dated June 19, 1920.
10. The context indicates that she really means ‘bird-watching’ as referred to nowadays.
11. Same as note 9.
12. Same as note 9.
13. MUNFLA, Tape, 78-57/C3966.
14. W. Thomason, *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, ed. Smallwood, vol. 2 (St. John’s: Newfoundland Book, 1967), 741.
15. J. L. Kerr, *Wilfred Grenfell. His Life and Work* (New York: Dodd, 1959), 156.
16. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189; the newspaper cutting is inserted in her letter dated June 19, 1920.
17. Same as note 9.
18. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189, from her letter dated June 20, 1920.
19. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189, from her letter dated June 22, 1920.
20. *Ibid.*
21. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189, from her letter dated July 7, 1920.
22. MUNFLA, Tape, 81-282.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Same as note 21.
25. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189, from the draft of her article *Newfoundland Days* sent to Scribner’s editor.
26. MUNFLA, Ms., 82-189, from her letters dated July 29, 1920 and August 13, 1920.
27. E. B. Greenleaf, “Riddles of Newfoundland,” *Marshall Review* 1:3 (1938), 5-20.
28. E. B. Greenleaf, Introduction, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland* (1933; Hatboro: Folklore Associates, 1968), xxx.
29. Greenleaf, xxxi.
30. MUNFLA, Tape, 78-57/C3962.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Greenleaf, xxxi-ii.
33. MUNFLA, Ms., 78-003, Manuscript Field Diary I, from Karpeles’ notes, dated September 13, 1929.
34. *Ibid.*, September 30, 1929.
35. *Ibid.*, September 18, 1929.
36. *Ibid.*, October 8, 1929.
37. MUNFLA, Ms., 78-003, Manuscript Field Diary II, from Karpeles’ notes dated July 10, 1930.
38. Greenleaf, xxix.
39. Greenleaf, xxxiii.
40. *Ibid.*

41. MUNFLA, Tape, 78-57/C6198.
42. D.K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship since 1898*, (Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1959), p.145
43. Greenleaf's own words reported by R. Booth, *Westerly Sun* 4 Oct. 1979, p.17.
44. Malcolm Laws, Foreword, *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*, by Roy Mackenzie (1928; Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, 1963), p.vi.
45. Same as note 4.
46. Same as note 4.
46. C.H. Carpenter, *Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and their role in Canadian Culture* (Ottawa: National Museum, 1979), p.5
48. Greenleaf, xxxiv.
49. Same as note 30 and 31.
50. M. Karpeles, rev. of *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*, *Journal of English Folk Song and Dance Society*, 1 (1933), 105-6.
52. F.H. Eckstorm, rev. of *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*, *Bulletin of the Folksong Society of the North East*, 8 (1934), 26-8.
53. J.D. Robins, rev. of *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*, *Canadian Historical Review* 14 (1933), 440.
54. MacEdward Leach, Foreword, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*, by E.B. Greenleaf and G.Y. Mansfield (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, 1968), iii.
55. "Newfoundland Songs," rev. of *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*, *Times Literary Supplement* 13 July 1933, p.475.

Résumé: La collection de chansons d'Elisabeth B. Greenleaf et de Grace Y. Mansfield, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*, publiée en 1933, a inauguré la recherche académique dans le domaine de la chanson populaire à Terre-Neuve. L'éclairante Introduction du volume, la correspondance et les interviews de son auteur témoignent de la personnalité affirmée et la sensibilité réceptive de Greenleaf, et qui plus que toute théorie en la matière, l'ont amenée à jeter un regard avant-coureur sur la chanson traditionnelle. Echappant au débat de ses origines et de la 'pureté' de la tradition, Greenleaf en a révélé la dimension musicale, négligée jusqu'alors par les folkloristes américains, autant que la réalité fondamentale au sein d'un contexte humain.

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10. I am indebted to Julia Bishop for the musical transcription and the following note: "This is merely a skeletal transcription intended to give some idea of the song's melodic and rhythmic outline. The transcription in no way does justice to the artistry and sensitivity of Clarence's rendition which, with quiet command, introduces subtle variations of rhythm, melody, phrasing, and dynamic intensity into every stanza. The delicacy of this stylistic shading suggests its importance to Clarence as a means of enhancing the words and underlining the meanings they embodied for him."
11. The song is a version of "The Tan-Yard Side." Laws M28. For a text in the "Slaney Side" form, see Kenneth Peacock, *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports* (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1965), li, 592-3.
12. Roger de V. Renwick, *English Folk Poetry: Structure and Meaning* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980).
13. This is an extended version of a paper presented at the Folklore Studies Association of Canada meeting in Guelph, June 1984. I would like to thank Mrs. Shirley MacPhee for introducing me to Clarence, and the Blois family for their kind hospitality.

Resumé: L'article de Martin J. Lovelace porte sur un fermier-chanteur de la Nouvelle-Ecosse, Clarence Blois. L'auteur discute de la relation qui existe entre la personnalité du chanteur et son répertoire. Il cite quelques-uns des commentaires que le chanteur fait sur les chansons qu'il chante démontrant leur influence civilisante sur les forestiers dans les chantiers, leur véracité et leur habileté à dépeindre les caractères.