FOLK SONGS OF NEWFOUNDLAND

SUNG BY ALAN MILLS ACC. BY GUITAR

KELLIGREWS SOIRÉE · TICKLE COVE POND · AS I ROVED OUT · THE BADGER DRIVE
TIME TO BE MADE A WIFE · I'S THE B'Y THAT BUILDS THE BOAT · TWO JINKERS
A GREAT BIG SEA HOVE · LUKEY'S BOAT · THE SQUID-JIGGIN' GROUND
JACK WAS EVERY INCH A SAILOR · ANTI-CONFEDERATION SONG

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ninety-eight percent of Newfoundland's population is of British stock -- mostly from the west of England and from Ireland. A number of these "inherited" ballads are still sung on occasion in remote fishing villages that dot the rugged coast of Newfoundland.

For the most part, however, these older gems have been forgotten and have been replaced by "home-made" songs which grew out of the minds and experiences of native bards; songs which record local happenings and mention the names and places dear to the hearts of Newfoundlanders. These are the "true" folk songs of Newfoundland, loved beyond all others, and little known to "outsiders".

In many cases the authors of the songs are known, and some of them are still very much alive. And if some of their tunes have a familiar ring to the listener, what matter? The song-makers of Newfoundland (no less than such illustrious bards as Robert Burns and Thomas Moore) cared little about "borrowing" a melody -- or a part thereof -- as long as it served to carry the words they created and the stories they had to tell. And these words and stories tell us much of the land that gave them birth, and of the character of its song-loving people.

Since fishing is the chief industry of the Island, it is only natural that most of these songs should be of fishermen and the sea. This album contains some of the favorite sea-songs of Newfoundland and a few of the best-loved "land" songs.

SIDE I

KELLOGREWS SOIREE. One of the most popular "land" songs of Newfoundland is "The Kelligrews Soiree", a sparkling ditty with a strong Irish flavor, which compares very favorably with such great comic songs as "Tim Finnegan's Wake" and "Lamian's Ball". Written by one of Newfoundland's favorite bards, the late John Burke, it has an irresistible swing and tells a good story.

Kelligrews is a small fishing village about 15 miles southwest of St. John's, Newfoundland's capital.

You may talk of Clara Nolan's Ball, or anything you choose, But it couldn't hold a snuff-box to the spray at Kelligrews, If you want your eye-balls straightened, just come out next week with me, And you'll have to wear your glasses at the Kelligrews Soiree.

Chorus: There was birch pine, tar twine, cherry wine and turpentine, Jowls and cavaleuses, ginger-beer and tea, Pig's feet, cat's meat, dumplings boiled in a sheet. Dandelion and crackle's teeth at the Kelligrews Soiree.
Oh, I borrowed Clukey's beaver, as I squared
my yard to sail,
And a swallow-tail from Hogan that was foxy
on the tail,
Billie Coddle's old working pants and Patsey
Nolan's shoes,
And an old white vest from Fogartey to sport
at Killigrews.

Chorus: There was Dan Milley, Joe Lilly,
Tantam and Mrs. Tilley,
Dancing like a little filly, 'twould
raise your heart to see.
Jim Brine, Din Ryan, Flipper Smith
and Caroline,
I tell you, boys, we had a time at the
Killigrews Soiree.

Now, when I arrived at Betsy Snaook's that
night at half past eight,
The place was blocked with carriages stood
waiting at the gate,
With Clukey's funnel on my pate, the first
words Betsy said:
"Here comes the local Preacher with the pul-
pit on his head!"

Chorus: There was Bill Mews, Dan Hughes,
Wilson, Taft and Teddy Roose,
While Bryant he sat in the blue
and looking bad at me;
Jim Fling, Tom King, Johnson,
champion of the ring,
And all the boxers I could bring at the
Killigrews Soiree.

"The Saratoga Lancers first," Miss Betsy
kindly said,
Sure I danced with Nancy Cronan and her
Granville on the "Head;
And Hogan danced with Betsy, oh, you should
have seen his shoes,
As he lashed old mouskets from the rack that
night at Killigrews.

Chorus: There was boiled guinea, cold
guinea, bullocks' heads and picnics
And everything to catch the pennies,
you'd break your sides to see;
Boiled duff, cold duff, apple jam was
in a cull,
I tell you, boys, we had enough at the
Killigrews Soiree.

Crooked Flavin struck the fiddler, and a hand
I then took in,
You should see George Clukey's beaver, and
it flattened to the rim,
And Hogan's coat was like a vest -- the tails
were gone, you see.
Oh, says I, "the devil haul ye and your Kelli-
grews Soiree!"}

TICKLE COVE POND. The hailing of firewood by
horse, dog or handcart, is a familiar sight in
Newfoundland during the winter. And in the spring,
when frozen ponds begin to melt, there is a mad
rush to get the wood across the ice while it's still
safe to take advantage of such short-cuts. However,
these short-cuts have their dangers, as is indicated
in this amusing account of a near-tragedy.
But there is more to the song than that. The line,
"the hard and the slay we take as it comes," reflects
the calm acceptance of hardship and danger
that is part of the Newfoundland's heritage.

"You can always rely on the Oldfords and Whites" is
true not only of them, but of all Newfoundlan-
ders who are ever willing to lend a hand to a neigh-
bор. And to call for a "shanty song" whenever
there's a job of work to be done is quite the natu-
ral thing to do in this land of song-loving people.

In cutting and haulin', in frost and in snow,
We're up against troubles that few people know,
And only by patience, with courage and grit.
And eatin' plain food, can we keep ourselves
fit.
The hard and the slay we take as it comes,
And when ponds freeze over we shorten our run.
To hurry us haulin', the spring is comin'on,
Near lost me my mare on Tickle Cove Pond.
Oh, lay hold William Oldford, Lay
Chorus: hold William White,
Lay hold of the cording and pull all
your might,
Lay hold of the bowline and pull all
ye can,
And give me a lift for poor Kit on the
pond.
I know that the ice became weaker each day,
But still took the risk and kept haulin' away.
One evening in April, bound home with a load.
The mare showed some hauling against the
ice road.
She knew more than I did, as matters turned
out,
And lucky for me had I joined in her doubt.
She turned round her head and, with tears in
her eyes,
As if she were saying: "You're risking our
lives."

Chorus: All this I ignored with a whip-handle blow,
For man is too stupid, dumb creatures to know,
The very next minute, the pond gave a sigh.
And down to our necks went poor Kitty and I.
Now if I had taken wise Kitty's advice
I never would take the short cut on the ice.
Poor creature, she's dead, and poor creature
she's gone.
I'll never get my wood off Tickle Cove Pond.

Chorus: I raised an alarm you could hear for a mile.
And neighbors turned up in a very short while.
You can always rely on the Oldfords and Whites
To render assistance in all your bad plights.
When the bowline was fastened around the
mare's breast,
William White for a shanty song made a re-
quest
There was no time for thinking, no time for
delay.
So straight from his head came this song
right away:

Chorus: "Lay hold William Oldford, lay hold
William White,
Lay hold of the hawser and pull all
your might,
Lay hold of the bowline and pull all
ye can!"
--And with that we brought Kit out of
Tickle Cove Pond.

AS I ROVED OUT. The influence of the "inherited"
songs of Newfoundland may be noted in this next
song, which is a shortened variant of an old
British folk song commonly known as "Tarry
Trumeter." Though the story told in the four
short verses seems to be complete enough as it is,
most versions of the song carry the story on
to a less cheerful climax in which the girl meets her
sailor and then is promptly abandoned as he
go's off to sea again.

As I roved out a fine summer's evening,
To view the flow'rs and to take the air,
Twas there I spied a tender mother
Talkin' to her daughter dear.

Saying: "Daughter, oh daughter, I'll have you
to marry,
No longer to lead a sweet single life."
"Oh mother, oh mother, I'd rather to tarry
To be some brave young sailor's wife."

"A sailor boy thinks all for to wander;
He will prove your overthrow.
Oh daughter, you'd better be wed with a
farmer.
For to the sea he never do go."

"Oh mother, I cannot wed with a farmer,
That'd deck me with diamonds bright.
I'll wait for my love with the tarry-tarry
troublers.
For his joy and my heart's delight.

TIME TO BE MADE A WIFE. A somewhat differ-
ent attitude to marriage is found in this song that
follows. It was collected by the noted English
musicologist, Maud Karpeles, at Conception Har-
bour, Newfoundland, from a fish-singer named
Thomas Chaney, who described it as "a very be-
coming song to sing in young company."

As I roved out one morning in the lovely moon-
ly month of May,
I met a pretty fair maid, these words I heard her
say.
"Oh father, I'm sixteen years of age, and I'm
weary of my life.
Oh father, I think it is almost time for me to
be made a wife."

"Oh hold your tongue, dear daughter, oh,
hold your tongue," said he.
"For men they are deceitful with flattering
tongues," said he.
"Oh, what care I for flattering tongues, for
flattering tongues," said she.
"At the time that you married my mamma,
she wasn't so old as me."

"I have a sister Mary, and that you well do
know,
She has not long been married, only nine
long months ago.
She has a baby for herself toaddle upon her
knee,
And I think it is time for me to have one, for
I'm nearly as old as she."

The bell-rap he went round the town to see
what he could find,
A soldier or a sailor to please this fair one's
mind.

"A soldier or a sailor, no matter who," she
said.
"I pray, young men, come marry me, and
don't let me die a maid!"
I'VE THE BOY THAT BUILDS THE BOAT. This is a popular nonsense ditty which is perfect accompaniment for a lively square dance. Fogo, Twillingate and Morton's Harbor, mentioned in the last line of each verse, are the names of three ports in the northern part of Newfoundland, near Notre Dame Bay.

P'r the boy that builds the boat, and P'r the boy that sails her, P'r the boy that catches the fish, and takes 'em home to Lister.
Hir yer partner, Sally Tibbot, Hir yer partner, Sally Brown.
Fogo, Twillingate, Morton's Harbor, all around the circle.

I took Lister to a dance, and faith! -- and she could travel! And every step that she would take was up to her knees in gravel.
Hir yer partner, Sally Tibbot, Hir yer partner, Sally Brown.
Fogo, Twillingate, Morton's Harbor, all around the circle.

So she rinds to cover yer flake, cake and tea for supper.
Codfish in the spring of the year, fried in maggoty batter.
Hir yer partner, Sally Tibbot, Hir yer partner, Sally Brown.
Fogo, Twillingate, Morton's Harbor, all around the circle.

Susan White, she's a cutie, her petticoat wants a border.
Old Sam Oliver, in the dark, he kissed her in the corner.
Hir yer partner, Sally Tibbot, Hir yer partner, Sally Brown.
Fogo, Twillingate, Morton's Harbor, all around the circle.

THE BADGER DRIVE. Second only to Newfoundland's fishing industry is the province's pulp and paper industry, with its two main centres at Cornerbrook and Grand Falls, the second and third largest towns, respectively. During the hard winter months, many Newfoundland fishermen leave their nets to work in the woods as loggers, and this song, written by a balladeer named John Devine, tells of the hardships of log-driving, one of the most hazardous jobs in the industry, as any woodman will confirm. Badger is about ten miles west of Grand Falls, headquarters of the "A.N.D. " (Anglo-Newfoundland Development) Company mentioned in the last verse of the song.

There is one class of men in this country that never is mentioned in song, And now, since their trade is advancing, They'll come out on top before long. They say that our sailors have danger, and likewise our woodsmen, But there's none know the life of a driver, what he suffers in hardships and cold.

Chorus: With their plumb-poles and peavies and bateaux and all, And they're sure to drive out in the spring, that's the time, With the cassias in their boots as they get on the logs, And it's hard to get over their time.

Billey Dorothea, he is the manager, and he's a good man at the trade; And when he's around seeking drivers, he's like a train going downgrade. But still he's a man that's kind-hearted, on his word you can always depend, And there's never a man that works with him, but likes to go with him again.

Chorus: I tell you today home in London, "The Times" It is read by each man, But little they think of the fellows that drove the wood on Mary Ann, F or paper is made out of pulp wood, and many things more you may know, And long may our men live to drive it upon Payne's and Tomatoes.

Chorus: So now, to conclude and to finish, I hope that we all will agree, In wishing success to all Badger and the A.N.D. Company, And long may they live for to flourish, and continue to chop, drive and roll, And long may the business be managed by Mr. Dorothy and Mr. Cole.

Chorus: A great big sea hove in the Harbor, Right-fol-lor, fa-diddle-diddle di do, A great big sea hove in the Harbor, And hove right up in Keogh's parlor, To-me-right-fol-diddle-fol-dee.

Oh, dear mother, I wanta a sack, Right-fol-lor, fa-diddle-diddle di do, Oh, dear mother, I want a sack, With heads and buttons all down the back, To-me-right-fol-diddle-fol-dee.

Me boot is broke, me foot is tore, Right-fol-lor, fa-diddle-diddle di do, Me boot is broke, me foot is tore, And Georgie Snooks I do adore, To-me-right-fol-diddle-fol-dee.

Oh, fish is low, and flour is high, Right-fol-lor, fa-diddle-diddle di do, Fish is low and flour is high, So Georgie Snooks, he can't have it, To-me-right-fol-diddle-fol-dee.

But he will have me in the fall, Right-fol-lor, fa-diddle-diddle di do, And if he won't I'll hold my sail, And say good-bye to old Canada, To-me-right-fol-diddle-fol-dee.

JACK WAS EVERY INCH A SAILOR. Another intrepid sailor of whom Newfoundlanders like to sing is a young fisherman identified only as "Jack," who once had the misfortune of being swallowed by a whale.

Now 'twas twenty-five or thirty years since Jack first saw the light. He came into this brief of woe one dark and stormy night. He was born on board his father's ship as she was lyin' to. About twenty-five or thirty miles southeast of Baccalieu.

Chorus: Jack was every inch a sailor, Five and twenty years a whaler, Jack was every inch a sailor, He was born upon the bright blue sea.

When Jack grew up to be a man, he went to the Labrador. He fished in Indian Harbor where his father fished before, On his returning in a fog he met a heavy gale, And Jack was swept into the sea and swallowed by a whale.

Chorus: The whale went straight for Baffin's Bay, 'Bout ninety knots an hour, And every time he'd blow a spray, he'd he send it in a shower. "Oh now," says Jack unto himself, "I must see what he's about," So he grabbed that whale all by the tail and turned him inside out.

Chorus: A GREAT BIG SEA BOYS IN LONG BEACH. The Newfoundlanders' characteristic sense of humor is not dulled even when hard times bring the price of fish -- their greatest commodity -- low, and send the cost of flour -- a basic import skyrocketing.

"Long Beach" is just that -- a long stretch of sandy beach in eastern Newfoundland.

A great big sea hove in Long Beach, Right-fol-lor, fa-diddle-diddle di do, A great big sea hove in Long Beach, And Georgie Snooks she lost her speech, To-me-right-fol-diddle-fol-dee.

LUKEY'S BOAT. "Lukey's Boat" is a popular nonsense-song known in Nova Scotia as well as in Newfoundland, and both provinces claim "Lukey" as their own, but whether or not an actual character by that name really existed has yet to be proven. The two provinces have different versions of the song. The verses recorded
THE SQUID-JIGGIN' GROUND. Perhaps the most popular of all Newfoundland songs (within recent years, at any rate) is this one written by a school teacher, Arthur R. Scammell. It describes the shenanigans that go on when the fishermen of Newfoundland go "squid-jiggin'" -- or fishing for squid, a torpedo-shaped cuttle-fish, about ten inches long, which is used for bait, and which has a nasty habit of squirting forth a dark, gooey liquid when disturbed or caught.

Oh, this is the place where the fishermen gather, With oil-cans and boots, and Cape-Ann ballasted down, All sizes of figures, with squid-lines and jiggers, They congregate here on the squid-jiggin' ground.

Some are workin' their jiggers while others are yarning, There's some standin' up, and there's more lyin' down, While all kinds of fun, jokes and tricks are begun, As they congregate here on the squid-jiggin' ground.

There's men from the Harbor, and men from the Tickle, In all kinds of weather boats, green, grey and brown, There's a red-headed Tory out there in a day, A-runnin' down Squires on the Squid-jiggin' ground.

God bless my soul, there's Skipper John Chaffey, He's the best man at squid-jiggin' here, I'll be bound, Hello! What's the row? Why, he's jiggin' one now, The very first squid on the squid-jiggin' ground.

Holy Smoke! -- What a scuffle! -- All hands are excited, It's a wonder to me that nobody is drowned. There's a bucket, confusion, a wonderful bussel, They're all jiggin' a squid on the squid-jiggin' ground.

There's poor Uncle Billy, his whiskers are sputtered With spots of the squid juice that's flyin' around, One poor little boy got it right in the eye, But they don't care a hang on the squid-jiggin' ground.

Says Bobby: "The squid are on top o' the water, "I just got me jiggin' 'bout one fathom down" -- When a squid hit the boat, a squid hit right down his throat, And he's swearin' like mad on the squid-jiggin' ground.

Now, if you ever feel inclined to go squidgin', Leave your white shirts and collars behind in the town, And, if you get cranky without a silk handkerchief, You'd better steer clear of the squid-jiggin' ground;

TWO JINKERS. The speech of some Newfoundlanders has been the butt of many a good-natured joke among strangers to the island, but the joke is usually on the "outsiders". There are words and phrases used by Newfoundland fisherfolk that are not heard anywhere else, and they usually have to be explained to anyone not familiar with the island and its people.

Examples of several typical Newfoundland terms are found in a very popular sea song called "Two Jinkers". A "jinker" is a person who brings bad luck, in other words a "jinxer". For "translations" of other terms in this song, see below.

Two jinkers in our harbour dwell, adventuresome and plucky, The plans they make all promise well, but always turn unlucky,
Men were hard to get that day, else sailed we would have sooner.
So, to our sorrow and despair, they shipped aboard our schooner.
Misfortune followed on their trail wherever they did venture,
And when bad luck did us assail, these two we'd always censure.
To the offer-ground you'd see them bound, look out for aquala that even;
Make for the land -- cries every man, here's Jimmie Walsh and Stephen.

When we landed on the Funk's Cove rubbish;
They went battin' Carey's chickas and said that they were puffins;
When we came to share their eggs, we thought all hands had won.
Then found that two had done none at all -- Poor Jimmie Walsh and Stephen.

In crossing Belle Isle Straits next night, the orders from the skipper
Were: "Keep your canvas all drawn tight, and on your lee the dipper;"
Before the dawn there came a crash, from stern to stern a shiver;
Then from our benks we made a dash, and heard a running river.

We found that Stephen was at the wheel, and
Jimmie was the scunner; That we still lived was good to feel when two such creatures run'er,
Our water line a growler river, and through the seam comes sevin',
The ocean roaring for the lives of Jimmie Walsh and Stephen!

Our Gardian Angels never knew of such an active season,
We kept our senses all alert, and knew we had good reason.
Such constant strain might crack the brain; the fishery game I'm leavein'.
And if I "raise", I give all the praise to Jimmie Walsh and Stephen!

1 --- "Offer-ground", off shore.
2 --- "Funks" - a group of small islands about 20 miles off the north-east coast of Newfoundland.
3 --- "Carey's chicka" (or chicken) - a species of very small bird of the Petrel family.
4 --- "Puffins" - a larger sea bird common to Newfoundland.

Would you barter the right that your fathers have won?
Your freedom transmitted from father to son?
For a few thousand dollars of Canadian gold, Don't let it be said that your birthright was sold.

So, hurray for our own native ink, Newfoundland,
Not a stranger shall hold one inch of its strand, Her face turns to Britain, her back to the Gulf.
Come near at your peril, Canadian Wolf.

PHOTO CREDITS:
Alan Mills by Annette & Basil Zarev
NATIONAL FILM BOARD PHOTO:
Loading pulpwood on trucks at Hampden, District of White Bay, Newfoundland.
Waterfront at Grand Bank, on the Burin Peninsula.
Henry Earl, fisherman of Portugal Cove.
Jim Collier of Cape St. George cuts lumber at Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper lumber camp on the Humber River.
Fishing settlement of Oderin, Placentia Bay.

ANTI-CONGRESSIONAL SONG. Although Newfoundland's "congressional vote" in 1948 was in favor of joining Canada, history records several earlier occasions, when Newfoundlanders turned down the proposal of union with Canada, refusing to part with their independence as the "oldest overseas colony of the British empire." Some of the strong feeling against these earlier attempts at confederation is voiced in this old anti-confederation song, the author of which is unknown.

Hurrah for our own native ink, Newfoundland,
Not a stranger shall hold one inch of its strand, Her face turns to Britain, her back to the Gulf.
Come near at your peril, Canadian Wolf.
Ye brave Newfoundlanders who plough the salt sea, With hearts like the eagle, so bold and so free, The time is at hand when you'll all have to say If confederation will carry the day.
Cheap tea and molasses they say they will give, All taxes take off that the poor man may live; Cheap nails and cheap lumber, our coffins to make, And homespun to mend our old clothes when they break.
If they take off the taxes, how then will they meet The heavy expense on the country's upkeep? Just give them the chance to get us in the scrape, And they'll chain us like slaves with pen, ink and red tape.