

Edith Fowke
5 Notley Place
Toronto, Ontario
M4B 2M7

May 10, 1975

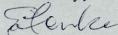
Dear Mr. Raddall:

I've been intending to write to you for some years--ever~~x~~ since I first read your story of "Blind McNair." I was impressed by your knowledge of Canadian folk songs, and particularly some rare ones that I had not come across elsewhere.

I should be interested to know where you got the songs you quoted: did you collect them yourself, and do you have tapes or manuscript copies of these and other Nova Scotia songs? One you quote, about the shipwreck on the banks of Newfoundland, is quite rare: I collected it in Ontario, but it has not been reported in any other North American collection. In fact, my only reference for it is an Irish collection from the Wexford coast.

Any information you can give me about the songs and tales you have come across would be most interesting to me.

Sincerely,



Edith Fowke

May 16, 1975

Miss Edith Powke,
5 Notley Place,
Toronto, Ontario
M4B 2M7

Dear Miss Powke:

I have never deliberately collected chanteys and other songs of sailors, but I was interested in them from the time I went to sea at fifteen in small steamships out of Halifax and Sydney, N.S. In the forecastles I found a number of veteran windjammer men who had "gone into steam". In convivial moments they sang their favourite chanties and ballads, and some I learned to sing along with them, usually in some small gathering place ashore.

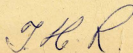
When I became a writer of short stories later on, I came across Roy Mackenzie's "Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia", and recognised some that I'd heard before. In talks with William Smith, the last of the windjammer veterans here in Liverpool, I heard him sing many more. I persuaded his son, T. Brenton Smith, to take down his father's memoirs on the typewriter. They include a collection of chanties, songs, and bits of songs, and they are now in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia at Halifax, N.S. Brenton Smith gave me a carbon copy of the chanties and songs, and it is now in the collection of my papers in Dalhousie University Library, with some pencilled annotations of my own.

From talks with William Smith and other old sailors I knew that in port from time to time there were singing contests between favourite chantymen, and eventually here in Liverpool I found a small treasure. In the 1880's a former sea captain named Fenwick Hatt founded a small ship-refitting business here, and of course it included a forge. Long after the captain was dead and the firm was out of business, his son George told me about such a contest in the forge, and showed me a notebook kept by his father in which the chanties and ballads were written down at the time. The handwriting showed that many of the songs were inscribed in the book by the singers themselves, some of them barely literate. Mr. Hatt would not part with it but he allowed me to make a typewritten copy, which is now among my papers in the Dalhousie Library.

The original notebook is now in the possession of a descendant of Fenwick Hatt who spends the summers here and the winters in Arizona. She is Mrs. G. Cecil Day, 10 Waterloo Street, Liverpool, N.S.

The accidental conjunction of some of the songs in the Smith and Hatt collections, notably "The Blind Sailor" and "The Bounty Jumper", suggested my story "Blind MacNair".

Sincerely,



~~Peter Narváez came to Memorial University of Newfoundland, where he is assistant professor and folklore archivist, from Maine, where he taught at Bliss College. A graduate of Drew University, he holds the M.A. in folklore from Indiana University and is currently completing his doctorate there. His dissertation deals with the creation and use of union songs during the 1973 miners' strike at Buchans, Newfoundland. He has produced an LP of these songs performed by the miners, which was recently released by Newfoundland's Breakwater Books (Breakwater Recordings 1001, *Come Hell or High Water*). The article here is based on his dissertation research.~~

~~Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland~~

~~Résumé: Neil Rosenberg offre un rapport de la session de musique folklorique qu'il a organisée à l'occasion de la Reunion annuelle de l'Association Canadienne pour les Etudes de Folklore à l'Université du Nouveau Brunswick, Fredericton, le 3 juin 1977, et présente une identification des différents collaborateurs.~~

W. ROY MacKENZIE AS A COLLECTOR OF FOLKSONG¹

MARTIN LOVELACE

(see page 9)

W. Roy Mackenzie was the first major collector of folksong in Nova Scotia and his work *The Quest of the Ballad* contains much information about himself in his relationships with singers.² My intention here is to review his works on folksong and explore his attitudes toward its collection and presentation in published form. Mackenzie, it seems, progressed, as a result of fieldwork experience, from a simple interest in texts to a fuller appreciation of context and performance.

Mackenzie was born into a middle-class family; his grandfather, an emigrant from Scotland, had established a ship-building business in River John, Pictou County, Nova Scotia, where Mackenzie was born in 1883. He graduated from Dalhousie University in 1902 and then studied at Harvard for an M.A. and a Ph.D. in English. While there, in addition to his interests in Shakespeare and Old English philology, he studied under G. L. Kittredge, the disciple and successor to Francis James Child. Kittredge encouraged him to return to River John to collect the songs which Mackenzie had heard there as a boy and which he now realized were, many of them, "English and Scottish Popular Ballads."³ He began collecting in Pictou County and continued over

¹The author wishes to thank Dr. Neil V. Rosenberg for his critical comments on this paper.

²W. Roy Mackenzie, *The Quest of the Ballad* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1919). For convenience in the remainder of this paper this title will be given as *Quest*, within the text following citations.

³For a discussion of G. L. Kittredge's influence in stimulating collection of ballads throughout North America see D. K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship since 1898* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1959), pp.145, 147, 174.

the course of several summers.⁴ His findings were published in part in three articles in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1909, 1912, and 1923; the earliest of these was a preliminary sketch of his fieldwork experiences and of the themes which he took up later in *The Quest of the Ballad*.⁵

Mackenzie's interest in folksong was never paramount in his life, however; in 1910 he began teaching English at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, and it may be that he looked upon his ballad collecting as a summer recreation from other academic work. After the publication of *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia* in 1928 he seems to have done no further work in folksong. Helen Creighton was surprised and dismayed when she visited him in 1952 to find that he had preserved no working manuscripts from his collecting days. Mackenzie's manner in his writing is drawn from his scholastic background and is often a humorous reference to it in its density of literary allusion. It might be possible to read an ambivalent feeling about the worth of studying the ballad, as opposed to more conventional forms of literature, in Mackenzie's choice of this tone which mingles bathos, affection, self-parody, and respect for his informants.

When Mackenzie began collecting ballads in his home town of River John two of his first singers, Ned Langille and Dick Hinds, were men he had heard sing as a boy. He did not extend his search beyond the north shore counties of Pictou and Colchester. In his findings he reconstructs a picture of the state of the ballad-singing tradition in these counties during the nineteenth century. Scots settlers brought collections of broadsides from Scotland and newly printed broadsides from the "old country" were sent by mail: "Mr. Henderson remembers that ballad sheets were continually arriving from Scotland, for people throughout the district, and that they were always hailed with joy."⁶ The first settlers, of the latter eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were "an active, roystering class of men, who cheerfully travelled miles to congregate for an evening's revelry, and drank gallons of Jamaica rum at a barn-raising."⁷ But the introduction of "fanatical" religion later in the nineteenth century wrought significant changes in this kind of social behaviour.

Mackenzie, who was careful to record any of his informants' terms that related to the ballad, quotes an informant's comment that his father knew some of those old songs but never sang them unless he was "feelin' guid"; Mackenzie observes: "The phrase, in fact, savors unmistakably of alcohol, and is about the strongest one employed by these people to denote a state of boisterous hilarity, a very rare condition with the self-respecting Scot."⁸ As a result of religious fanaticism the singing of ballads ceased to be seen as a respectable form of entertainment; they were frowned on as "rowdy songs."⁹

⁴For further biographical information see G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., "Foreword: W. Roy Mackenzie, 1883-1957," in *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*, collected by W. Roy Mackenzie (1928; rpt. Hatboro: Folklore Associates, 1963), pp.[i]-[ix], and Helen Creighton, "W. Roy Mackenzie, Pioneer," *Canadian Folk Music Society Newsletter*, 2 (1967), 15-22.

⁵W. Roy Mackenzie, "Ballad-Singing in Nova Scotia," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 22 (1909), 327-331; "Three Ballads from Nova Scotia," *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 23 (1910), 371-380; "Ballads from Nova Scotia," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 25 (1912), 182-187.

⁶I. Mackenzie, "Ballad-Singing in Nova Scotia," p.328.

⁷*Ibid.*, 329.

⁸*Ibid.*, 329.

⁹Mackenzie, "Three Ballads from Nova Scotia," p.380.

Mackenzie gives an interesting account of the process which followed in which French-Swiss Huguenot settlers adopted ballads that were becoming unfashionable and forbidden to respectable God-fearing Scots. The French-Swiss had come to Nova Scotia shortly after the initial Scottish settlement in the latter half of the eighteenth century. They took up land near the Scots at first but later joined in mixed communities along the coast.¹⁰ The children of the French settlers adopted English and, Mackenzie noted with some amusement, tended to become fervent British patriots. Acculturation seems to have occurred quickly:

... [they] immediately went to take over the traditions — folklore, patriotism and all — of the Scotch settlers with whom they were associated and from whom they learned the English language. Old Bob, Little Ned [two of his singers], and their fathers before them, received from their exiled ancestors of two or three generations back something of the French temperament, appearance, and manner of speech, but in the way of tradition and belief they had nothing which had not been borrowed from their neighbours in the adopted land. (*Quest*, 44-45).

The French-Swiss were regarded as "socially inferior" and Mackenzie found that the singers among them had often learned their songs from the Scots while working as servants in their farms and households. The adoption of ballads by the servant class set them even further beyond the pale to the Scots.¹¹

Mackenzie's analysis of this process seems a significant, and early approach to the loss of "old country" and the acquisition of new traditions by an immigrant ethnic group. Here Mackenzie's observation is original and ahead of his time for in 1973 Robert B. Klymasz could still point to lack of studies in Canadian folklore which considered an exchange between ethnic groups and M. Carole Henderson could also complain that only recently had the processes of assimilation, acculturation, and interchange between traditions begun to be studied.¹² It would be special pleading, however, to present Mackenzie as being thoroughly interested in such problems; his concern was primarily with the ballads themselves. His commentary on the phenomenon of transmission is rather the result of his usual careful observation and historical description of the ballad in what he considered to be its "last refuge."

The Quest of the Ballad is an extension of the preliminary notes on singers made in Mackenzie's article "Ballad Singing in Nova Scotia." Kittredge's headnote to the article commends it to all students of the popular ballad for the way that Mackenzie had been able to provide information on issues about which scholars had previously "been obliged to infer or to conjecture," from "the recollection of living persons."¹³ Mackenzie's achievement in the *Quest* lies in his careful observation and presentation of the views of his informants.

Among such issues are the singer's aesthetic, his attitude toward the songs, their social function, his role as a performer, and factors making for

¹⁰Mackenzie, "Ballad-Singing in Nova Scotia," p.329.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 330.

¹²Robert B. Klymasz, "From Immigrant to Ethnic Folklore: A Canadian View of Process and Transition," *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 10 (1973), 131-139; M. Carole Henderson, "Folklore Scholarship and the Sociopolitical Milieu in Canada," *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 10 (1973), 97-107.

¹³G. L. Kittredge, headnote to W. Roy Mackenzie, "Ballad-Singing in Nova Scotia," p.327.

change in tradition. Mackenzie elicited comments from singers on their songs and took note of their chance remarks as part of his general inquiry into the life of the ballad in tradition. He was always careful to distinguish his own tastes from those of his informants. At first glance this might be taken for a form of snobbery by a college professor taking vacations among, to use his own term, "low company." Indeed, Helen Creighton felt that "a certain damage was done" by Mackenzie's use of this term and by his references to the world beyond his fieldwork area as "civilisation."¹⁴ The recognition of cultural differences where they exist between collector and informants is essential, however, and Mackenzie scrupulously avoids distorting his findings about a singer's point of view by assuming that his tastes and theirs are identical.

He states categorically that the collector must not try to educate his informants: "His success will depend largely on his ability to regard every man's private opinions as his own sacred property" (*Quest*, 93), and he is aware that he, as an educated, sophisticated, person cannot respond to songs in the same way as his informants: "We are, to be sure, strongly influenced by our knowledge of the literature that has been produced in our more conventional world, and constantly apply to the poetry of the folk a sort of criticism that would never occur to the composers or singers themselves" (*Quest*, 13).

Thus he enquired for the singers' favourites; in the case of Dick Hinds, the ex-sailor, of River John, he describes his mixed repertory of traditional ballads current in Nova Scotia in the singer's youth, ballads and songs learned from other sailors, street and music-hall songs, and says: "This puzzling collection he himself regarded with great calmness and impartiality, and there were only two specimens that he marked out for special approval. These were 'Kelly the Pirate' and 'Jack Donahue'" (*Quest*, 66).

Mackenzie searches for links between a singer's taste in songs and other aspects of his life; here he compares the "fine resonance" and "rhetorical sweep" of Hinds's favourite two ballads with the same qualities in his speech which was similarly sententious (*Quest*, 69).

From his conversations with singers Mackenzie is able to show their general belief in the *truth* of ballads; thus Herbert Halpert could cite Mackenzie's work as one of very few investigations of the singer's aesthetic when Halpert's essay on "Truth in Folksongs" appeared in 1939.¹⁵ Mackenzie states: "Most of the singers whom I have presented in these pages were simple old men and women who not only loved and admired their ballads, but sang in the unquestioning belief that they were detailing faithful records of actual events" (*Quest*, 107). This observation had important consequences for the content of the ballad corpus, for, as he continues: "My firm belief, then, is that ballad-singers — who are of an entirely different race from other singers — perpetuate only those ballads which from their point of view are trustworthy records of actual and important happenings, couched in language that is fitting and effective" (*Quest*, 107).

He comments several times on the empathy shown by singers with characters in their ballads; a singer's remark on a missing stanza showed her imagina-

¹⁴Creighton, "W. Roy Mackenzie, Pioneer," p.17.

¹⁵Herbert Halpert, "Truth in Folk-Songs — Some Observations on the Folk-Singer's Attitude," Introductory Essay in John Harrington Cox, *Traditional Ballads and Folk-Songs mainly from West Virginia* (1939; rpt. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1964), p.xv.

tive involvement in the song: "Here a whole stanza was gone, as Ann freely admitted, piecing up the imperfection with an explanatory comment: 'She would fall down in a faintin' fit, not knowin' that it was her own true lover she was talkin' to in the dark'" (*Quest*, 31). Another singer took "vicarious part" in the song, saying, of a foul murder: "I git so mad an' sorry every time I think o' that sneak of a Glengyle that it's jist as much as I can do to go on singin'" (*Quest*, 237). Mackenzie's noting of his singer's chance comments was relatively original and became the basis of his most valuable insights into the nature of the ballad tradition.

The effect of this truth-centred aesthetic on the continuance of a ballad in tradition is shown in Mackenzie's account of a singer's reaction to "The Cruel Mother" (Child, No. 20). The singer had been reluctant to admit that she knew the song and performed it only after protesting that it was "foolish" and "indecent" and untrue: "At my expressed delight in its interest and mellow antiquity, however, Ellen was inclined to be sardonic. The story, she asserted, must be an out-and-out lie. There might be such things as ghosts, though she had her doubts even of that; but when it came to a game of ball and a long sermon from two babies who had been killed and buried, the person who made up the lie was going a little too far." The song's refrain "Down alone by the green-wood siding" was also interpreted in contemporary terms and found unacceptable: "And as to the song being an old one, it was well known that sidings were synchronous with railroads, and it was not so very long since railroads had been started."¹⁶ It is one of Mackenzie's strengths that he is not content to speak generally of the replacement of ballad singing by more "modern" amusements but enquires into some causes of the shift in popular taste.

Mackenzie drew a general theory of change in ballad texts from his observations and interviews with singers and found that unfamiliar words are replaced by familiar ones, and that rhyme is less important than sense. Yet unknown words might be retained, he felt, for the enjoyment of their sound or from the folk singer's general textual conservatism (*Quest*, 172-173).

Through his conversations with singers Mackenzie also achieved a sense of the social rewards and egoistic gratifications brought by being a recognised ballad singer. Possession of a broad repertoire was highly valued; one of his informants paid tribute to another singer in these terms: "He could sing steady all day an' never sing the same song twict" (*Quest*, 38).

Mackenzie reconstructs one of the most overtly aggressive social contexts for singing in his account of a "singing match." He describes a gathering of travellers, delayed by a storm, at an inn where one proposed a singing match: "This was to last all night if necessary, and if it did, so much the better." The singers sang alternately giving different songs until, long after midnight, only one had not exhausted his repertoire and was declared the winner. Mackenzie learned of the event from a man whose fervent recollection showed the importance of winning: "... the old man during the narration showed a fire of enthusiasm which made it quite clear to me that the supremacy thus gained was not one to be lightly esteemed. Indeed, I have more than once, in my conversations with old men and women throughout Pictou and Colchester, been assured that the man who, forty or fifty years ago, had the biggest stock of 'old songs' in his district was to be regarded with a good deal of veneration."¹⁷

¹⁶Mackenzie, "Ballads from Nova Scotia," p.186.

¹⁷Mackenzie, "Ballad-Singing in Nova Scotia," p.328.

Mackenzie was also dispassionate enough to record the discarding of the ballad tradition when it no longer provided the singer with social prestige. Mr. Henderson, the singer who had won the contest, had possessed "an unusual collection of broadsides" but they had been lost and the singer did not regret it; "Indeed, why should he?" says Mackenzie, with admirable detachment. The singer had dropped ballads from his repertoire when he moved from West River to Tatamagouche where musical taste was more influenced by mass entertainment styles; yet he remained active as a performer: "Possessed of a good voice and a fondness for performing at the little social entertainments and local concerts of the village, he soon outgrew such an antiquated practice as ballad-singing, and the few ballads that he can still sing are retained almost by accident."¹⁸ Mackenzie selects unromantic similes to depict this change in popular taste: "When the change came they treated their ballads, including broadside sheets when they happened to possess them, as we treat our worn-out hats and coats and the popular novels that we read with enthusiasm a year ago" (*Quest*, 234). That he does not lament the loss nor curse their poor judgement is commendable; a member of one group or class has no right to criticise the cultural property of another. Mackenzie takes his objective tone from his informant who showed no regret: "His tone, when he referred to them, was neither enthusiastic nor supercilious, and he repeated or described them, in so far as his memory would serve him, with the usual remark that they were 'very good old songs'" (*Quest*, 236). Mackenzie chooses to play the role of the detached chronicler of the end of a tradition which he has no power to resuscitate.

Mackenzie was selective in what he recorded and published. His definition of worthwhile material broadened, however, as a result of his collecting experience; he found it impossible to dismiss as mere doggerel songs that he had seen performed in full seriousness: "I, who have heard it delivered with conviction by one who was in his own way a severe enough critic, cannot regard it so lightly" (*Quest*, 51). While he had begun by seeking only for versions of the Child ballads he came to feel "that no popular version of any sort of ballad, ancient or modern, can be regarded as common or unclean" (*Quest*, 51). Nevertheless he presented his material in the "Child and other" format stigmatised by D. K. Wilgus.¹⁹

He did not find much interest or merit in local songs and these fall near the end in his published collections. Mackenzie observed that it was only the ballads brought from the British Isles that were worthy of our "gratulation" since "the art of ballad making . . . has never risen to any great heights in any part of this western continent."²⁰ In this attitude he is not alone; Helen Creighton has shown a greater interest but has not presented a proportionate quantity of the many local songs she has recorded in her published works. Thus the schools of both Kittredge, represented by Mackenzie, and Cecil Sharp, represented by Helen Creighton, have provided only a selective record of folksong tradition in Nova Scotia.

Mackenzie has also been recognised as a superb annotator of ballad variants; his headnotes in *Ballads and Sea Songs* have been acclaimed by G.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 330.

¹⁹Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship since 1898*, p.145.

²⁰Mackenzie, *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*, p.xxiii.

- Malcolm Laws as being extremely valuable for their annotation to traditional broadsides. *The Quest of the Ballad*, however, contains so much evidence of Mackenzie's understanding of singers and their relationships to their songs that we must regret that he wrote no more on the subject. His holistic sense of the ballad in performance was in advance of the thought of his time; consider the following passage:

This is one of the few occasions on which I have witnessed the satisfactory — I might say the ideal — rendition of a ballad, and my memory of the composite performance of old James and his wife is to me rather more valuable than is the somewhat debased and sentimentalized ballad which I carried away. It is only when a ballad is rendered by a singer of the old school in the presence of one or more listeners who have by chance survived with him that the full significance of ballad-singing can be realized. The total effect is infinitely greater than that suggested by the unaccompanied ballad which is transmitted to the printed page, or even by the words with the music. It is both of these plus the emotion of the singer and listeners, an emotion manifested by the latter, sometimes in ejaculatory comments, and sometimes in an unconscious or excited joining of forces with the singer in the rendition of a line or a refrain. In this harmony between the singer and his audience one may see, if one is as fortunate as I have been, a clear suggestion of that older and more complete harmony which the dust of many centuries has so obscured for us, and which we vaguely define as "the spirit of the throng" (*Quest*, 41).

Mackenzie's oblique reference to communalist ideas of ballad creation shows his theoretical background. His interest in the "total effect" of the ballad in performance, however, shows the broadening influence of fieldwork experience on the mind of a scholar who might otherwise have been simply an excellent annotator.

Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland

Résumé. *Martin Lovelace: "W. Roy Mackenzie comme collectionneur de chansons folkloriques."*

Cette communication rendra hommage aux résultats obtenus par W. Roy Mackenzie dans la cueillette et l'étude de ballades et de chansons en Nouvelle-Ecosse. Elle examinera les hypothèses critiques concernant la ballade telles qu'il les avait étudiées à l'école de Child et de Kittredge, et décrira ses modifications apportées à ces hypothèses à la suite de ses expériences personnelles d'enquêteur. L'intérêt qu'il portait à l'esthétique du chanteur, au contexte de l'exécution des chansons, au phénomène d'acculturation dans son effet sur le répertoire, permettent à Mackenzie de paraître bien en avance sur les connaissances de son époque.

TRUTH IN FOLKSONG: SOME DEVELOPMENTS AND APPLICATIONS

JOHN ASHTON

Cecil Sharp wrote in 1907 that the elaborate description of minor details in folksong narratives is:

... one of the arts by which the ballad maker imparts to his story a vivid sense of reality. 'Yes sir, and it is true,' is the reply that has often been made to me by a folk-singer at the conclusion of a long ballad which I have praised. Here again, the peasant singer is like the child and loves to think that the story which has moved him is not fictitious but true. To him, there is no tale like the true tale; and to heighten the sense of reality, he will often lay the scene of his story in his own locality.¹

These few lines were composed seventy years ago and represent Sharp's recognition, albeit brief, of an important if not crucial element in the esthetic, motivation and performance of the Anglo-American folksinger, the idea of truth.

I am afraid that the title of this paper may be somewhat misleading for, in the words of the late Francis Lee Utley, "My purpose is not theory, but the humbler one of classroom relevance."² What I wish to do is to discuss some ideas that are largely derived from the work of other scholars but that have, in my view, been sadly overlooked or at least underestimated by most folklorists; ideas that are valuable because they outline potentially fruitful areas of study.

That folksingers are conscious of the element of truth in their material there is no doubt. The existence of singers who consider truthfulness to be an important quality in their songs or at least differentiate between "true" songs and others in their repertoire has been well documented throughout English-speaking tradition.³ In 1939, Herbert Halpert devoted an article to this aspect of folksong with reference to material that he had collected in New Jersey and the Delaware River area of New York State.⁴ His main findings were that singers in that tradition had an intense belief in the factual basis of their songs and that they demonstrated a high degree of emotional participation in their narratives. In performance and conversation, these singers tried to strengthen

My thanks are extended to Martin Laba for his helpful comments and suggestions.

¹Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folksong: Some Conclusions* (London:1907), p.93.

²Francis Lee Utley, "Oral Genres as a Bridge to Written Literature," in *Folklore Genres*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1976), p.6.

³In addition to Sharp's work cited above see, for example, Roger D. Abrahams, "Creativity, Individuality and the Traditional Singer," *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 3 (1970), 5-36; G. J. Casey, N. V. Rosenberg, and W. W. Wareham, "Repertoire Categorisation and Performer-Audience Relationships: Some Newfoundland Examples," *Ethnomusicology*, 16 (1972), 397-403; A. E. Green, "McCaffery: A Study in the Variation and Function of a Ballad," *Lore and Language*, 3 (1970), 4-9; 4 (1970), 3-12; 5 (1971), 5-11; and Robin Norton, *Come Day, Go Day, God Send Sunday* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

⁴Herbert Halpert, "Truth in Folksong: Some Observations on the Folk-Singer's Attitude," in J. Harrington Cox, *Traditional Ballads from West Virginia*, ed. George Herzog and Herbert Halpert (New York: National Service Bureau, 1939), ix-xiv.

YORK UNIVERSITY
4700 KEELE STREET
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Department of English

January 28, 1978

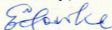
Dear Mr. Raddall:

A couple of years ago you very kindly gave me some information about the songs you had used in your story of "Blind MacNair."

I consider that story the best example of the direct use of folklore in Canadian literature, and I am thinking of preparing a paper on it for the spring meeting of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada. I should also like to publish a report on it in the Canadian Folk Music Journal, and would like your permission to print your letter to me.

I am also writing to the Dalhousie University Library to ask if they can make copies for me of the songs of William Smith and Fenwick Hatt. I hope you have no objection to this.

Sincerely,



Edith Fowke

P.S. I am sending you a copy of the last Journal for I think you would find the article about Roy Mackenzie of interest.

E.F.

February 3, 1978

Edith Fowke,
Dept. of English,
York University,
4700 Keele Street,
Downsview 463, Ontario.

Dear Edith Fowke:

Thank you for your letter of Jan. 28,
and for the copy of the Canadian Folk Music Journal
containing that interesting article on Roy Mackenzie.

You certainly may quote my story "Blind MacNair" in
your proposed paper for the Folklore Studies Assoc-
iation, and in your report on it for the Canadian
Folk Music Journal.

You may also print my letter to you dated May 16,
1975.

I have no objection to your obtaining copies of the
songs gathered by William Smith and by Fenwick Hatt,
which are in the Raddall collection at Dalhousie's
Killam Memorial Library.

I would appreciate copies of your paper and of your
report in the Canadian Folk Music Journal.

With my best wishes,

5 Notley Place
Toronto, Ontario M4B 2M7
April 14, 1978

Dear Mr. Raddall:

I have now received copies of the two song collections and am working on an article about them. I am delighted with this material: Mr. Smith's collection contains the largest group of shanties noted in Canada, and Captain Hatt's manuscript appears to be the earliest known collection of English-language ballads sung in Canada. I am most grateful to you for giving me access to them.

In cross-checking the titles mentioned in "Blind MacNair" with those in the two collections, I noted some that were not in either. For example, the shanties "Leave Her Johnny," "Stormalong," "Johnny Come to Hilo," and "Bound for Alabama" are not in Mr. Smith's texts. Also the ballads "Fair Margaret and Sweet William," "The Golden Vanitee," "The Tiger and the Lion," "High Barbaree," "Hame Dearie Hame," "The Chesapeake and the Shannon," "The Fighting Chance," "The Captain and the Maiden," "Young Johnson," and "Lord Bateman" are not in Captain Hatt's collection. Were these songs that you had heard sung yourself? Or perhaps some of them were ones you found in Mackenzie's collection: I note that he published several of them. Incidentally, is "The Captain and the Maiden" the one about the girl who sings the captain and sailors to sleep? (It's often listed as "The Maid on the Shore").

You mentioned that "Blind MacNair" was first published in the Saturday Evening Post, and subsequently in Tambour and Other Stories and in various anthologies. If it is not too much trouble for you, I should like the date of the first publication and a list of the other books in which it has appeared. If you do not have this information readily available don't bother about it--but I would like the date of the Post.

At a later date I may try to arrange to have these collections published. In the meantime, my article will call them to the attention of folklorists interested in Canadian songs.

Sincerely,


Edith Fowke

P.S. I am sending you a copy of Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario which includes versions of "The Banks of Newfoundland" and "The Rambling Irishman," along with some other old ballads that may interest you.

April 20, 1978

Edith Fowke,
5 Notley Place,
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Edith Fowke:

Thank you for your letter of April 14,
and for the inscribed copy of "Traditional Singers and
Songs from Ontario", which I'm very glad to have.

It is impossible to recall now where I found the chanties
and ballads that are not in the Smith or the Matt coll-
ections. As I mentioned before, in my seafaring days as
a youth I heard a lot of chanties and songs from veteran
seamen of the Windjammers who had "gone into steam",
and I recognised some of them years later when I read
Roy Mackenzie's "Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia."

My short story "Blind MacNair" was first published in
the Saturday Evening Post, Philadelphia, in the spring
or summer of 1940. I haven't the exact date here, but
a copy of the magazine is in the Raddall Collection at
Dalhousie. It appeared next in All Story Braille
Magazine, New York, in March 1941.

It was one of my "Tambour and other stories", casebound
and published by McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1945,
and in their paperback "At The Tide's Turn and other
stories" (New Canadian Library) 1959, which is still in
print.

In 1957 it was published in a textbook for U.S. schools
entitled "The World Around Us", by Prentice-Hall Inc.,
Englewood, New Jersey; and in a Japanese translation of
"The World Around Us" published in 1968 by Eishin Sha
Ltd., Tokyo. In 1960 it was one of "Canadian Short
Stories", selected by Robert Weaver, and published by
Oxford University Press, London, England.

Its most recent use was in a paperback collection called
"The Maritime Experience", published in 1975 by the
MacMillan Company of Canada, Toronto.

Getting back to the general subject of Nova Scotia in sea songs and ballads, you may like to note a couple of items in "The Minstrelsy of Maine" by Eckstorn and Smith, 1927.

On page 242 the song called "Isle o' Holt" refers to the Nova Scotian island properly called Ile Haut, which lies off the entrance to Minas Channel in the Bay of Fundy. Contrary to the humorous words, it is not inhabited.

On pages 328-330 the song "Root, Hog or Die" has a footnote explaining that "Port Latoun" means Port Latour, N.S. This is quite wrong. Carter's little shore farm was at Port Mouton (pronounced "Mateon" by the inhabitants, all of whom are ~~English-speaking~~ English-speaking.) The only safe anchorage in Port Mouton lies inside Spectacle Island, facing directly towards a small half-moon of fine sand on the mainland, an excellent landing place for the dories of the fishermen, still known as Carter's ~~Beach~~ Beach.

The song relates the adventures of a couple of American fishermen who land on the beach, walk up to the farm, and have a flirtation with Carter's daughters. The poor little farm has since been overrun by sand dunes, and only one or two scrubby apple trees mark the spot.

It was made originally by a Loyalist soldier named John Carter, whose regiment was allotted lands at Port Mouton in 1783.

With my regards,

EDITH FOWKE
5 NOTLEY PLACE
TORONTO, ONTARIO
M4B 2M7

May 15, 1978

Dear Thomas Raddall:

Here is a copy of my article about your story and the song collections you told me about. I hope you find it of interest.

I told you earlier that I planned to publish it in the Canadian Folk Music Journal, but then I was asked to submit an article for a Festschrift for Dr. Herbert Halpert, and it seemed to me that would be a better place for it. It is due for publication early next year.

I regret that I will not be at the Canadian Authors meeting in June as I should have liked to meet you and hear your speech. Unfortunately that weekend conflicts with the Mariposa Folk Festival.

At a later date I would like to consider arranging for the publication of the two song collections, with some discussion and notes. For that I suppose it would be necessary to get the permission of Mr. Brenton Smith and Mrs. Cecil Day.

Again, thank you very much for your prompt and generous sharing of information.

Sincerely,

Edith Fowke

P.S. If you notice any inaccuracies in the article please let me know as there may still be time to make corrections.

June 13,1978

Edith Fowke,
5 Notley Place,
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Edith Fowke:

Thank you for your letter and enclosure dated May 15.

I return the copy of your article. As you see, I have marked some typos that should be corrected on pages 1,2,3 and 12.

T. Brenton Smith gave me a copy of the William Smith collection, in case I wished to use these chanties and ballads in any way. He presented another copy to the Public Archives of Nova Scotia at Halifax, N.S. He died unmarried in 1955, and any relations living today could have no interest in the chanties and ballads whatever.

Similarly the Fenwick Hatt collection was shown to me by his only son George, who suggested that I make a typewritten copy for use in any way I chose.

After George's death the original notebook passed to his niece, Mrs. G. Cecil Day, who had no interest in it except as a family keepsake.

Mrs. Day sold her home here a month or two ago and removed to Ontario, where her son and daughter live. I had no chance to ask her about the disposition of the Fenwick Hatt notebook, and I don't know her new address, although I presume she left a forwarding address with the purchaser of her home. In any case I don't think she could (or would wish) to claim copy-right. She knew that George Hatt had given permission to me long ago.

Sincerely,

EDITH FOWKE
5 NOTLEY PLACE
TORONTO, ONTARIO
M4B 2M7

June 19, 1978

Dear Thomas Raddall:

Thank you for checking the errors in my article. I'll see that they're corrected before it is printed. I should have caught them myself but had to finish it in a great rush to meet a deadline.

Thank you also for the information on the rights to the manuscripts. It sounds as though I could go ahead and arrange for publication without being in danger of infringing copyright. At the moment I have several other projects underway, but I hope to do something with the chanties and ballads in the future. I'll let you know when there is any news about this.

If you should ever be in Toronto I hope you will let me know. I should like to meet you sometime.

Again, many thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Edith Fowke



YORK
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS

4700 KEELE STREET, DOWNSVIEW 463, ONTARIO, CANADA

5 Notley Place
Toronto, Ontario M4B 2M7
November 27, 1979

Dear Mr. Raddall:

It is over a year since I was in touch with you about the article I wrote about "Blind MacNair." I told you originally I planned to publish it in the Canadian Folk Music Journal, but when I was asked to contribute a piece to a festschrift for Herbert Halpert I thought that would be a suitable item. I was told then that the book would be published by January of this year, but as is usual with projects of this kind all the contributions did not come in on time and then there were delays with the printers, so it is not out yet.

As I mentioned to you earlier, I hope to publish the two small song collections, and am now working on them. I have tried to get in touch with Mrs. Day but have not been successful. One letter did reach her in September, 1978, and she said then she was going to Britain, and then to the States for the winter. She did not give me a new address, so I wrote again this fall to her Liverpool address, but have had no reply. I wonder if you have any more recent address for her. I would very much like to see the original manuscript before publishing the songs.

I would also appreciate any information you can give me about Mr. Smith and Captain Hatt. Is Mr. T. Brenton Smith still alive? If so, perhaps I could get in touch with him for details about his father's life. Any other leads you can give me would be most welcome.

One other small point: at the bottom of the text of "Arriving Back in Liverpool" you added a note beginning "Day's dock was behind the house which.." and the rest of the note is illegible on my xeroxed copy. Could you complete it? Incidentally, I have managed to relate that song to the chanty usually known as "Whip Jamboree" or "Jennie Get Your Outcake Done."

A few months ago I read your autobiography and was delighted with it. I'm sorry you have decided to stop writing: certainly that book showed no deterioration in writing skills. I was much amused by your encounters with the Toronto literary establishment.

I hope you will not mind me bothering you again. I have appreciated your generous help very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edith Fowke".

Edith Fowke

BOT 1KO

December 2, 1979

Dear Miss Powke:

Thank you for your letter of November 27th.

Mrs. Cecil Day seems to have become quite a wanderer since she sold her home here. Like you I am trying to locate her. Just recently I had the pleasure of turning the first sod for a new museum here, which will contain among other things a good nautical collection befitting this old shipbuilding and seafaring town.

I hope to persuade Mrs. Day to donate the original manuscript of Captain Hatt's collected sea songs and chanties. Captain Fenwick Hatt died more than fifty years ago. He had sailed in windjammers out of Liverpool for several years, and the front pages of the scribbler containing the songs have several diary or log entries pertaining to one of his voyages. He left the sea about 1885 to set up a firm to supply ironwork for sailing vessels, and his forge was the scene of the chantymen's contests. The site is occupied today by Mersey Sea Foods Ltd., a small fish-packing plant.

My friend T. Brenton Smith died in 1955, the same year as his father. William Smith (1867-1955) went to sea as a boy in fishing schooners out of Liverpool. At about eighteen he transferred to the brigantine Hyaline and other windjammers carrying lumber and fish to the Caribbean and to South America, and bringing back cargoes of hides, logwood, sugar, molasses and rum.

After his marriage he worked ashore as a carpenter and rigger in Liverpool shipyards, and when that work became scarce he learned the diver's job and ~~worked~~ worked for several years with a salvage steamer on the Nova Scotia coast.

Helen Creighton called at my house one day when Will Smith was in his 70s, and I took her to see him. She recorded two or three of his songs but no more. Some time after that, at my suggestion, T. Brenton Smith began to take down and type his father's reminiscences, including the chanties and songs, or fragments of songs. I got a copy of the chanties and songs, as you know, and of course you have a Xerox of them.

As my copy is in Dalhousie Library I cannot tell the rest of my pencilled note about "Day's dock".

Sincerely,

YORK UNIVERSITY

4700 KEELE STREET

DOWNVIEW AVE. ONTARIO

Department of English

5 Notley Place
Toronto, Ont. M4B 2M7
December 29, 1979

Dear Mr. Raddall:

Thank you for your recent letter with the useful information about Mr. Smith and Captain Hatt.

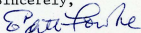
In case you have not caught up with Mrs. Day, I thought you would like to know that I have had a letter from her saying that she has sold the manuscript book and some other papers to Dalhousie University. I have just written to them to ask for a photocopy.

The prospects for publishing the two collections are good. A friend who has just started a "Folklorica Press" in New York" is willing to print them.

Did you know that three chanties sung by Mr. Smith are on Helen Creighton's Folkways record, FM 4006, Folk Music from Nova Scotia?

Again, thank you for all your help.

Sincerely,



Edith Fowke