



# CREIGHTON'S "FOLKLORE OF VICTORIA BEACH, NOVA SCOTIA"

FOLK 211 – Atlantic Canadian Folklore

2011-02-07



# Ethnography

- The process of communicating a sense of place to a reader
  - Begins with active participation in the community by the fieldworker
  - Turns experience into a text that is simultaneously informative and evocative
- Can be compared to an act of “creative non-fiction”

# Helen Creighton

- One of the foremost collectors in Atlantic Canada
- Began as self-taught, but sought training at IU's Summer Field School
- Worked freelance, for magazines, for CBC, for National Museum
- <http://www.youtube.com/embed/6gL5JOGQDaE>



# Major Works

- *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia* (1932)
- *Folklore of Lunenburg County* (1950)
- *Traditional Songs from Nova Scotia* (1950)
- *Bluenose Ghosts* (1957)
- *Maritime Folk Songs* (1962)
- *Gaelic Songs in Nova Scotia* (1964)
- *Bluenose Magic* (1968)
- *Folksongs from Southern New Brunswick* (1971)
- *A Life in Folklore* (autobiography) (1975)

# Victoria Beach

Helen Creighton NSARM Album 14 no. 143 [www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/) c 2011



Helen Creighton NSARM Album 14 no. 159 [www.gov.n](http://www.gov.n)





# Victoria Beach



# Folklore of Victoria Beach

- Transitional article
- In many ways, an inventory
  - note the cursory sections on “Tall Tales,” “Proverbs,” and – weirdest – “No Witchcraft”
- But an effort to put these items into some sort of context
- The presence (or absence) of forms attributed to work, geography, general interest of the community



# The article

- Begins with local dialect and slang in emergence: of the youth but not of their parent's, yet relating to traditional practices
- Emphasises the Fundy tides and Digby Gut
- <http://goo.gl/maps/ExgQ>
- Explains the ongoing prominence of the sea in both personal experience narratives and Märchen





# Occupational folklore

- In addition to the narratives explicitly about the sea, water life creeps in to most forms of lore
- With fishing the predominant *risk* occupation, fishing becomes a metaphor for the community even in non-fishing times
- See “Expressions” and many of the “Nicknames”

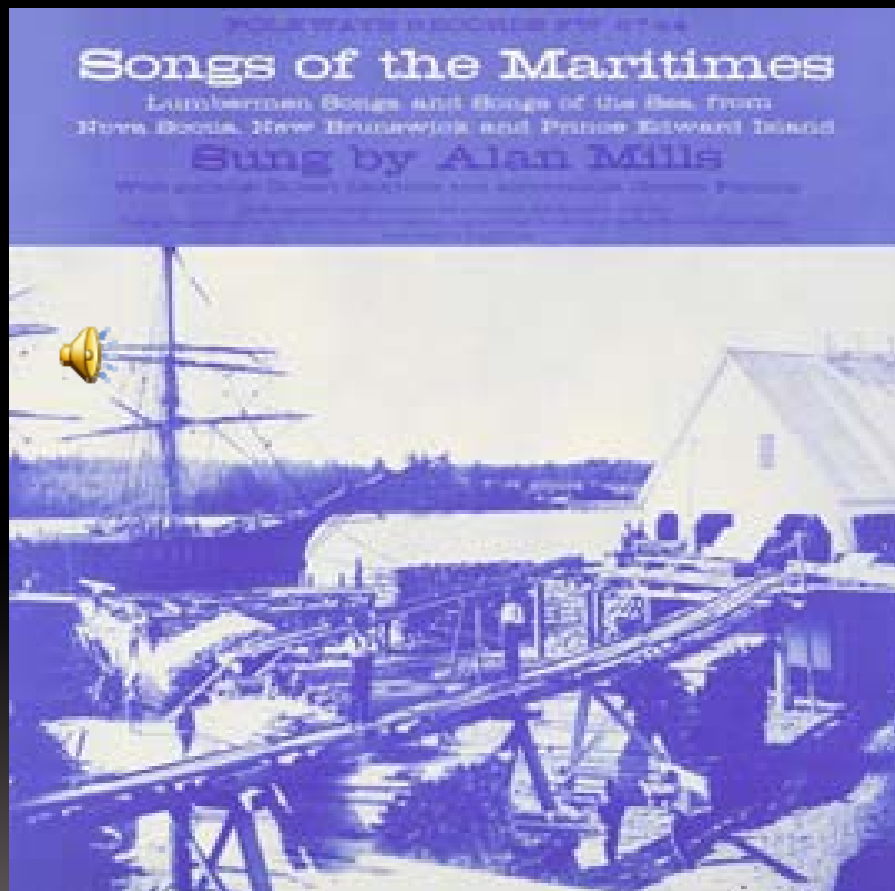


(more)

- Both “Superstitions” and “Weather” deal expressly with magic (as discussed last week)
  - High-risk occupations (risk in terms of both physical danger and the uncertainty of reward despite effort) often have a higher preponderance of belief on magic
- Effectively ends with one long song and one Märchen
  - Again, both having to do with the sea

# Corbitt's/Corbett's Barkentine (5:06)

Alan Mills'  
rendition from  
*Songs Of The  
Maritimes:  
Lumberman  
Songs And  
Songs Of The  
Sea*  
(Folkways,  
1959)





# Creighton

- Albeit lacking the rigour, perhaps, of those to come later, adapted a style that was sensitive to the ethnographic context in which these forms arose
- Was simultaneously an academic and a popular folklorist, serving a variety of audiences
- The last woman we study for a while...  
hmmmmm.....



# Go away now

- For next class, read the two articles by Ives: “Burning Ship,” and “Satirical Songs”