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Article abstract

In 1938-1939 Helen Creighton produced a series of folksong broadcasts for the CBC. This essay examines these programmes and argues that Creighton attempted to intervene in working class culture. In her selection of repertoire, musical arrangement, commentary, and the programme format she tried to reform folk culture to conform to elite aesthetic standards. Following the methodology of the English folksong collector Cecil Sharp, she used the CBC folksong broadcasts to form a folk basis for a new "national" music.

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CULTURAL INTERVENTION: HELEN CREIGHTON'S FOLKSONG BROADCASTS, 1938-1939

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One of Nova Scotia's best-known cultural figures is the folklore collector Helen Creighton. Over the span of her life she was a children's writer, folklore collector, and "folklorist". While not known for scholarly analysis, she became a folk culture preserver and popularizer of national stature. If one examines the first decade of her professional life one sees a much more interventionist attitude toward culture than she expressed later in her life. Her association with the Rockefeller Foundation in the 1940s, for example, brought her into contact with many of the leading academic folksong researchers of the time, and through her interaction with academically trained folklorists she endeavoured to remain current with professional theory and methodology of folksong research.¹ This essay examines some of her earlier activity, specifically the CBC folksong program that Creighton produced during 1938-1939. At this point in her career she remained a part of an earlier tradition of folk-culture research, one exemplified by people like John Murray Gibbon and Cecil Sharp. Concerned about the negative implications of the breakdown of traditional society in the face of modernism², urbanization, and economic crises she attempted to use these broadcasts to reform Canadian music culture. She hoped her work would form the basis of a new national culture, one that simultaneously reaffirmed British pre-industrial values and established elite aesthetic standards.

Helen Creighton grew up in a genteel Halifax family and was educated in a boarding school. She later reflected on the social expectations of women of her class:

In the days when I grew up, it was assumed a girl would marry and set up her own home, probably with a maid to wait on her. If

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1. Jane C. Beck, "Enough to charm the heart of a wheelbarrow and make a shovel dance: Helen Creighton, Pioneer Collector", *Canadian Folklore canadien* 7 (1985), p. 5-20. I would like to thank Rusty Bittermann, Sean Cadigan, Laurel Doucette, David Frank, Phil Hiscock and Ralph Pastore for their stimulating discussions.
 2. For an insightful discussion of anti-modernism and cultural intervention in Nova Scotia see Ian McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954", *Acadiensis*, Spring 1992, p. 5-47.

not, she would live with her parents and do volunteer work or enjoy the social round. The former hadn't happened, and the latter had never appealed to me as a way of life, so I looked now for a place where I could be useful. Social Service seemed the answer, and that meant training at the University of Toronto... Along with our university courses, we helped in the settlement's clubs and learned something of urban poverty.³

For someone of her class background to have sympathy with the poor and want to help through "service" was common in this period. This sentiment often expressed itself in cultural programs such as the Antigonish Movement, which tried to give the poor greater independence through education and co-operatives, and in political organizations such as the Social Democratic Party and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation.

Rather than continuing in educational or social work, however, Creighton turned to folk culture collection. Why did an upper middle-class woman with a desire to aid the poor devote her life to the collection and popularization of folklore? The answer, I believe, lies in her attitude to the culture of working people. While she valued some aspects of working-class culture, other trends in modern life were not so attractive to people like Creighton.

Throughout the early part of the twentieth century many North Americans became concerned that urbanization, industrialization, and modernity were undermining many positive aspects of "folk" culture. Others thought non-European immigration and especially African-American music threatened what they perceived as the "racial purity" of America. Many of these people engaged in projects to rescue and promote folk culture, a process that David Whisnant has called "systematic cultural intervention". In his study of the revival of Appalachian mountain culture he found

that someone (or some institution) consciously and programmatically takes action within a culture with the intent of affecting it in some specific way that the intervenor thinks desirable.⁴

Intervention could take many forms, ranging from the introduction of, or active preservation of, cultural elements on one hand, to attempts to eradicate cultural forms on the other.

The increased popularity of fascist and communist ideologies

3. Helen Creighton, *A Life in Folklore: Helen Creighton*, Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1975, p. 39.

4. David Whisnant, *All That Is Native And Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1983, p. 13.

exposed the weakening public commitment to liberal democracy and raised the stakes for cultural intervenors. Some people responded to these threats by selecting the “positive” aspects of folk culture, such as loyalty, deference to authority, and self-reliance. They tried to reinforce these elements among working people as a basis for a new culture which could then act as a line of defense against the “foreign” ideologies and the breakdown of the social order. In a sense, middle-class reformers tried to remake the working class in their own image, independent and responsible. Even that archetypal capitalist Henry Ford promoted “old-time” music to counter some of the effects of the urbanization and industrialization for which he was in part responsible. Simon J. Bronner reported that Ford:

went about reviving old-time music in the methodical fashion he made cars. To be sure, some of his philosophy of making cars came from his farm-rooted belief of keeping things simple and of working with an organized consistency, although the methods of mass production that resulted helped change the culture that farmers had once led. Ford’s promotion of old-time music was intended to affirm the preservation of virtuous rural values in an industrializing and urbanizing nation.⁵

Creighton worked as a children’s writer and broadcaster in the early 1920s, until Canadian Pacific Railway publicity director John Murray Gibbon encouraged her to begin collecting folksongs. Gibbon was an influential cultural figure in Canada as both an author and a sponsor of folk festivals. These festivals “were designed to help assimilate Canada’s many immigrant groups, promote interracial and inter-ethnic harmony, and demonstrate the cultural riches of a multicultural nation”.⁶ Gibbon had also put together a series of ten radio talks on the various (all European) ethnic groups that made up Canada; these were later published as *Canadian Mosaic*.⁷ That book won the Governor General’s Prize in 1938 and helped establish the idea of a “cultural mosaic” at the centre of many Canadian’s conception of their country. But Gibbon’s activities did not support the survival of non-British cultures; they channelled ethnic communities’ cultural expression into surface manifestations such as traditional costumes and folk-dance. Ethnic communities would be available for tourists to admire as they travelled the CPR, but these cultures would be robbed of relevance to mod-

5. Simon J. Bronner, *Old-Time Music Makers of New York State*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1987, p. 36-37.

6. Whisnant, p. 188.

7. John Murray Gibbon, *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Canadian Nation*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1938.

ern life. In the long run this would aid their assimilation into the dominant culture of Canada. When immigrants brought socialist ideologies with them, as was the case with many Eastern Europeans, the channelling of their culture into superficial elements was crucial to their incorporation into a capitalist society. It can be argued that the difference between the Canadian mosaic and the American melting pot was slight.

Creighton collected folksongs throughout the 1920s and 30s, and supplemented her income by, among other things, broadcasting folktales for the Nova Scotia Department of Education. In 1938 she convinced the Chairman of the CBC, Gladstone Murray, to hire her for a nationally broadcast program of folksongs to be produced in Halifax.⁸ These broadcasts had many admirable characteristics, such as Creighton's explanations of the historical context of folksongs and the methodology of folksong collection. But a critical reading of the scripts of these broadcasts can tell us a great deal about the kind of cultural project in which Creighton engaged.

The format of the CBC Folksong Broadcasts reveal their rhetorical purpose. During the first year each half hour of the program generally contained only two songs as well as lengthy commentaries that interpreted the meaning of the song and argued forcefully for the value of folk music. The show would open with a string quartet playing a folk tune arranged by Creighton's collaborator, Doreen Senior. This arrangement and presentation attempted to make the song appealing to an ear accustomed to elite music. Creighton hoped "to show you the full beauty of the melodies of these songs through the playing of the string quartet under Julius Silverman giving you the single melody all dressed up, as it were, in its sunday best".⁹ Though the tune might have been recovered from a plebeian source, Creighton transformed it into elite culture in a way similar to that of British composer Ralph Vaughn Williams, who used folk tunes as the basis of his own "serious music" compositions.

Creighton then discussed the origin and significance of the song in an effort, she said, "to point out the literary value of the popular ballads".¹⁰ She indicated the debt that many published authors owed to oral tradition and suggested that studying folk music could be of value to both the composer and the writer of fiction. The latter could benefit from the example of folksongs which "tell worthwhile stories with an economy of language".¹¹ Once Creighton thought that the listener had been convinced of the value of the

8. Creighton, *A Life in Folklore*, p. 109-110.

9. "First Broadcast", p. 4, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 8.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

11. "Sixth Broadcast", p. 1, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 9.

piece both as a musical composition and as a literary text, the song would then be repeated by a folksinger. In an effort to demonstrate that the music was authentic Canadian folk culture this last performance was often by the person from whom she had collected the song. On occasion a male choir would sing the song between the string quartet and the folksinger, a way of easing the listener into accepting the “untrained” singer. Creighton apologized for the qualities of the music which she claimed to value so highly:

I hope you understand why we have unaccompanied folk-singers on these programs. Please don't think I want to start a new cult in radio singing. It isn't that at all. I want to give you a chance to hear the art which is dying but which can still be found in a few corners of the world.¹²

A closer examination of one of the songs can illuminate some of the themes in Creighton's work. She began the first broadcast with “Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham” (Child 139), though she later remembered the first song as having been “The Bold Peddler and Robin Hood” (Child 132), a song that she said she chose for its “immediate impression of antiquity combined with a beautiful modal tune”.¹³ Creighton had collected both of these songs in Nova Scotia and published them in her *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia*.¹⁴

Robin Hood was a rough character who defied the law by living off of poached deer and who generally caused trouble for those in authority. He also robbed from the rich and gave to the poor. These actions, the very essence of his legend, are clearly of a class nature. It may be these elements which account for the long-lasting popularity of Robin Hood ballads and tales in English society. The symbolism of poaching remained current long after the incidents that gave birth to this story had ended, and robbing from the rich must be the wish of many plebeian would-be champions.¹⁵

Helen Creighton was undoubtedly aware of the class content in the story and in the first draft of her broadcast went to great pains to defuse any class antagonism. She talked of Robin Hood as “loyal”, an ironic description considering how he earned his living. She described him as a “yeoman”, a word that means either a servant to a royal or noble household or a common-

12. “Fourth Broadcast”, p. 3, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 8.

13. Creighton, *A Life in Folklore*, p. 111.

14. Helen Creighton, *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia*, New York, Dover Publications, 1966 (first published 1933), p. 12-16.

15. For an interesting discussion of poaching as a class act see E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*, New York, Pantheon, 1975, and Douglas Hay et. al., *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, New York, Pantheon, 1975.

er of respectable standing who cultivates his own land.¹⁶ She attributed to Robin Hood a “royal dignity”, a “princely grace”, and a “keen but gentlemanly sense of humour”. She portrayed him as respectful of women and suggested he loved the Virgin Mary. How did Creighton reconcile these attributes with a deer-poaching, thieving outlaw? She explained those misdeeds as boyish pranks that can be forgiven; after all, she said, we were all young once.¹⁷

She omitted this commentary on the character of Robin Hood from the broadcast on the recommendation of her friend John D. Robins of Victoria College, Toronto. Robins had introduced Creighton to the methods of folksong research in the early 1930s and now acted as an editor on her folksong broadcasts.¹⁸ He felt that she had overly romanticised Robin Hood and suggested other minor changes in places where Creighton strayed from the verifiable.¹⁹ Although this commentary was not aired, quite clearly her initial instinct was to sanitise Robin Hood to make the song appropriate for broadcast. It is worth remembering that in the context of European political events and the economic depression in Canada the possibility of revolution seemed real to many people in 1938.

The pattern established by the first program was that of making folksongs respectable through three methods. First, the musical arrangement of each song attempted to make it conform to elite aesthetic standards, so that the audience would be convinced that folk music had musical merit. Second, Creighton argued that these songs also had literary value. Third, she could use the text of her broadcast to undermine any oppositional potential in folk culture. Robin Hood, the outlaw who did not respect law and property, could be transformed into an establishment figure who had characteristics Creighton thought the working class should emulate.

By the last broadcast of the first season one notes a much less didactic attitude on Creighton’s part; the broadcasts became more a source of entertainment and less of education, as Creighton played more songs and spent less time arguing for the value of the music. She also repeated songs less often than had been the case earlier in the series. This may be indicative of her confidence that the program was being well received and that folk music no longer had to be constantly justified. With the second series of broadcasts, in May 1939, she also turned to a professional singer, Nina Bartly Finn. “Hers was the only trained voice that satisfied the folk singers”,

16. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

17. “Eighth Broadcast”, p. 4-5, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 8.

18. Creighton, *A Life in Folklore*, p. 62.

19. John D. Robins to Helen Creighton, 12 March 1938, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2817, File 60.

Creighton later commented; "When she was through there was no singing them over again 'right', for they could tell she loved them as much as they did".²⁰

Creighton now tended to organize her selection of material around kinds of songs: sea chanteys, children's songs, etc. One can examine her selection of material for one of these shows more closely. In the tenth broadcast she included six songs: "Lovely Nancy", "Carrion Crow", "Quakers Courtship", "The Farmers Curst Wife" (Child 278), "Peggy Gordon", and "Wife Wrapped in Wether's Skin" (Child 277).²¹ "Carrion Crow" is a nursery rhyme, while all the other songs of this broadcast deal with gender relations. "Quakers Courtship" and "Peggy Gordon" both deal with unrequited love. "Lovely Nancy" tells the story of a woman who remains faithful to the man she loves despite a long separation. "The Farmers Curst Wife" is a less optimistic song, in which a wife who scolds her husband is taken by the devil. The devil finds her too much to handle and returns her to her husband.

The song Creighton broadcast most often, "Wife Wrapped in Wether's Skin", has a violent nature. It is the story of a woman who considers herself "too fine" to work and whose husband is unable to beat her for fear of retribution by her two brothers. The husband slaughters a sheep, wraps his wife in the skin, and beats her (on the assumption that no one would prevent a man from "tanning" his own hides).²² On the first occasion that she broadcast this song sanctioning wife abuse Creighton offered a weak comment on the inappropriateness of beating one's wife: "It all sounds pretty drastic to me, but it worked", she said; "Still I wouldn't advise anyone listening to try it".²³

The first thing one might note is that all the songs were of English provenance; Creighton collected neither Acadian, Gaelic, nor African-American songs at this stage of her career. She said that Scottish songs were not represented in her broadcasts because they were in Gaelic and that she thought English songs would be more meaningful to listeners.²⁴ But I would argue that it was more than that. She was heavily influenced by Cecil Sharp, the British folksong collector who had collected in Britain and Appalachia. For Sharp and his followers like Maude Karpeles, who collected in

20. Creighton *A Life in Folklore*, p. 121-122.

21. "Tenth Broadcast", PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 9.

22. For the texts of these songs see Creighton, *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia*, and Helen Creighton and Doreen Senior, *Traditional Songs from Nova Scotia*, Toronto, Ryerson, 1950.

23. "Second Broadcast" (22 May 1938), p. 5-6, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 8.

24. "Sixth Broadcast", Second Series, p. 6, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 11.

Newfoundland in 1929-1930, the valued folksongs were those received from Britain and persisting in isolated areas. More specifically, these folksong collectors prized above all versions of the early British ballads that had been canonized by Francis J. Child. Carole Henderson Carpenter's description of Karpeles could equally well apply to Creighton:

She was "entranced with the beauty" of the first folksong she heard and, like her mentor [Sharp], she remained concerned primarily with the aesthetic, rather than the social or functional, values of folk music throughout her life.... her definition of folksong was a narrow one, excluding everything except old British ballads or lyrics and other related songs found in other Old World countries.²⁵

This meant that instrumental music, religious songs, songs of local composition, protest songs, or songs adopted from other traditions would not be collected.

Why did Helen Creighton want to transform folk culture into something which in both form and content would be acceptable to elite tastes? In part because she ascribed a greater importance to exposing children to the right music than to just imparting good taste. Creighton implicitly accepted the division between elite culture as art and folk culture as something valuable in its own way but less than art. She believed that folk culture could be used as the basis for a distinctive Canadian national culture, one which would be consistent with classical aesthetic models. Her intention was patriotic, as she explained to her audience:

Well, if you study art music — by art music I mean composed music which is the kind we usually play — you see at once that German music is quite different from Italian music... Each nation has built up a distinctive music because its been founded on the songs and dances of its folk... Nothing is so national in character as a folk song. And there's nothing that expresses quite so well the soul of each nation. Perhaps we've discovered our folk-music too late to develop a school that expresses the soul of our nation. It will take time to find out.²⁶

Creighton followed Cecil Sharp in believing that folk music could provide the basis for a "national music" in the schools that would encourage

25. Carole Henderson Carpenter, "Forty Years Later: Maud Karpeles in Newfoundland", in Kenneth S. Goldstein and Neil Rosenberg eds., *Folklore Studies in Honour of Herbert Halpert*, St. John's, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1980, p. 115.

26. "Eighth Broadcast", p. 5, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 8.

Canadian patriotism.²⁷ She argued that “good music purifies just as bad music vulgarizes”²⁸ and hoped that one day “folk songs will be carefully selected and taught in all our schools, because they’re the best possible background for a musical education”.²⁹ The key here may be the careful selection that she had in mind. Unfortunately she said nothing on the criteria of selection between good and bad music. Creighton’s description of Sharp’s work in Britain might be equally well applied to the project she envisioned for Canada.

For a long time in England foreign things were assumed to be more fashionable. [The English] ignored the folk tradition while importing music... but it wasn’t until Mr. Cecil Sharp saw a need for National music in the schools that the matter was properly approached. Then it came as a shock to discover that England not only had folk music, but it was probably the most lovely folk music in the world.³⁰

Under Creighton’s plan, schools would exclude foreign music, and children would “grow up with a taste for nothing but the finest music”. By the “finest music” she did not mean traditional songs, which though they might continue to provide fodder for the cultural producers were not the end product. The “finest music” would be “national music” that expressed the essence of the folk in an elite aesthetic form. Following Sharp, she expected that by the time children raised on folk music had reached the age of ten or twelve years they would be ready “to make a wider excursion into the realms of art, or composed music”.³¹

With her folksong collecting and broadcasting Creighton provided a bridge between her class and the working class, between elite culture and folk culture. She brought folk culture to the radio audience, which remained disproportionately middle class and urban. Through her programme working people’s lives and culture were interpreted in a way that made sense to a middle-class audience. This may explain why Creighton used elite music arrangements that appealed to an audience accustomed to valuing music according to the conventions of classical compositions. Furthermore she kept a social distance between herself and the folk. Creighton never accept-

27. “Eighth Broadcast”, p. 3, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol.2797, File 8, and Cecil Sharp, *English Folksongs from the Southern Appalachians*, London, Oxford University Press, 1932, 1952, p. xxxiv-xxxvi.

28. “Fourth Broadcast”, Second Series, p. 7, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 10.

29. “Tenth Broadcast”, Second Series, p. 4, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 11.

30. “Eighth Broadcast”, p. 1, 5, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 8.

31. “Ninth Broadcast”, p. 3, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2797, File 8.

ed alcohol from her informants, for example, keeping alive her genteel properties. Her relations with them were friendly, but paternalistic.³² When selecting people to have on her program she insured that they would be paid, at the rate of \$10 per song, something for which the singers were appreciative.

Creighton determined what aspects of folk culture would be included in the broadcasts and what would be omitted, instructing the singers on which songs they would sing and what vocal style to use.³³ As Neil Rosenberg has argued, the selection of folksongs, and the omission of other songs, can be a political act.³⁴ Songs can have a role to play in creating people's views of themselves. Creighton's world view, as expressed by her songs, harkened back to a pre-industrial social order. Industrial folksongs were not included, for example, denying the potential for class struggle at a cultural level.³⁵ Furthermore some of the conflict that did exist within the corpus of songs was expressed safely in past social formations.

What impact did the folksong broadcast have on the singers that Creighton selected? It provided some much needed cash to the informants Creighton chose to use on her show. It also had some positive social effects; for example, Walter Roast, who had a confidence problem associated with having a withered arm, became a celebrity. This new prestige, according to Creighton, increased his self-esteem.³⁶ Creighton's presentation of folk argued for their value as individuals and for the value of their culture. Her activities on the CBC folksong program were not that of preservation as much as popularization.

Popularization, however, is a two-sided sword, and her broadcasts had negative implications. As Richard Tallman has argued,

popularizing tends to misrepresent the folk culture to the general public. Inevitably, popularization focuses on the quaint, the romantic, and the curiously rustic. It draws upon the personal, elitist aesthetics of the collector and the popularizer without due concern for the aesthetic judgements of the folk from whom the

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32. For her relationship with her informants see Creighton, *A Life in Folklore*, esp. p. 122-124.
33. For example: Creighton to Mrs. Gallagher, 3 March 1938, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 2811, File 162.
34. Neil Rosenberg, "The Gerald S. Doyle Songsters and the Politics of Newfoundland Folksong", *Canadian Folklore canadien* 13 (1991), p. 45-58.
35. For a discussion of the kinds of songs which might have been represented if Creighton had different criteria see David Frank, "The Industrial Folk Song in Cape Breton", *Canadian Folklore canadien* 8 (1986), p. 21-42.
36. Creighton, *A Life in Folklore*, p. 111.

lore has come in the first place.³⁷

It took an activity which had been a part of a community and family social context and made it into a performance. Instead of people participating to a lesser or greater extent in making their own music, a division rose between the performer and the audience. The long-term effect was to change irrevocably the nature of folk music. As was the case with many other folksong collectors Creighton went "into the field" intending to collect *authentic* folksongs. Yet it is doubtful that her informants had criteria that distinguished between Child ballads and other songs; for them, songs from many sources could be a part of their cultural corpus. But once Creighton had collected, published, and broadcast certain songs she became the authority on what was and was not authentic Nova Scotia music. One scholar who has studied the cultural missions to the Appalachians has pointed out that the culture perceived by the outside intervenor is rarely congruent with the actual culture. "As an impulse", Whisnant argues, "cultural intervention arises from a marvellously tangled skein of assumptions, preconceptions, motives, and rationales".³⁸ In the case of Creighton, her preconceptions about the authentic culture of Nova Scotia caused her to ignore and discourage music other than Child ballads and similar forms. Neither labour union songs nor local compositions that dealt with social concerns were included. And, as Whisnant again points out,

An intervenor, by virtue of his or her status, power, and established credibility, is frequently able to define what the culture is, to normalise and legitimize that definition in the larger society, and even to feed it back into the culture itself, where it may be internalized as "real" or "traditional" or "authentic".³⁹

As we have seen, the cultural project that Creighton embarked upon not only performed just such a function but went further than that: she attempted to impose a elite aesthetic standard upon the music. But more fundamentally folk music became a self-conscious badge of belonging to a people with a past rather than a dynamic contemporary expression of people's lives.

Creighton fit into a distinct movement that had risen during the last few years of the nineteenth century and accelerated during the early twentieth century, that of middle-class reformers intervening in working-class culture. When trying to create a basis for a Canadian national music Helen Creighton turned her back on the urban and the industrial experience and

37. Richard S. Tallman, "Folklore Research in Atlantic Canada: An Overview", *Acadiensis*, Spring 1979, p. 122.

38. Whisnant, *All That Is Native And Fine*, p. 13.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

looked for the “authentic” expression of traditional music. The pre-industrial music that originated in the British Isles and persisted in marginal areas fit her conception of what the best basis for a national culture should be. While she may not have been as racially motivated as some of her peers, the modern world had many unattractive aspects for her. To Creighton Nova Scotia was “as serene and untroubled a part of the world as one can find in this restless age of ours”.⁴⁰ Consequently the music that she selected from the Halifax area would deny class and ethnic cleavages in Canada, and her elite aesthetic standards would further diminish the potential for the political and ideological struggles that were so common during the 1930s.

40. “Second Broadcast”, 22 May 1938, p. 4, PANS, Helen Creighton Collection, MG1 Vol. 297, File 8.