

## More On Loakie's (Lukey's) Boat

by Helen Creighton

In 1929 or 30 I collected Loakie's Boat in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia from singers who said it was made up about a man of that name who came from Lunenburg, N.S. Recently, in checking on the dates I found sons of my early singers who remember their fathers singing it to them as far back as 1926. The same situation must have occurred in Newfoundland. My conclusion is that it would have been in the public domain in both provinces and that the group from Twillingate knew the song and decided to put it in print. Can't you imagine them getting together and making little changes where they thought the song could be improved? And the fun they would have in doing it. There are many versions. The one I collected was put on song sheets for the schools, included in the Nova Scotia folk opera *The Broken Ring*, and in my musical biography, *The Collector*, and the Nova Scotia tune served us well. Singers like Alan Mills and Ed McCurdy devised composite versions, a common occurrence with songs in the public domain. It is unlikely that we will ever know in which province the song originated and after all, what difference does it make? It's a good song. Let us enjoy it, each province in our own way.

About the pronunciation, it was years after I had found it that I learned there was a Lukey's Boat sung in Newfoundland, and that the two were much alike. Had I made a mistake? No, because this March a man introduced himself and said he remembered when I went to his parents' home and his father sang for me. He mentioned the song in question and definitely said Loakie. The other son mentioned above calls it Lukey, which is not surprising because in pre-radio days when sea-faring men met it was their custom to exchange songs. Thus words and titles were often changed.

**Editor's Introduction:** This short article arrived just before going to press with Part II of Tony Stephenson's series on Lukey's Boat. It was written in response to Part I of the series which was published in the April CFMB. Dr. Creighton really needs no introduction, being one of Canada's most renowned folk song collectors and authors. She is also honorary president of the Canadian Folk Music Society.

