

Name of person Interviewed: Anita Best [AB]

Facts about this person:

Age (if known) born 1948

Sex Female

Occupation Singer

If a fisherman (if retired, list the ports used when fishing),

Home port

and Hail Port (port fished from, which can be the same)

Residence (Town where lives) St. John's, Newfoundland

Ethnic background (if known)

Interviewer: Millie Rahn [MR]

Transcriber: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel

Place interview took place: New Bedford Harbor Development Commission

Date and time of interview: Sept. 21, 2007

INDEX / KEYWORDS

KEYWORDS: Women; Canada; Newfoundland; St. John's; Merasheen Island; South East Bight; Tack's Beach; Placentia; Argentia; Harbour Buffett; Fishing; Fish processing; Cod; Squid; Lumbering; Portuguese; Singing; Dancing; Story telling; Traditional music; Figgy Duff; Pamela Morgan; Trad rock; Steeleye Span; Fairport Convention; Maritime Institute; Labrador Straits; Michael Crummey, *Hard Light*;

[Start of File WAV_0005_001]

- [00:00] Born Merasheen Island 1948; :Moved to St. John's when ten years old; Visited Merasheen at holidays until age 16/17 when Island resettled in 1966, people moved to places like Marystown, St. John's, Trepassey—most in Placentia area;
- [02:10] Father and brothers were fishermen, used cod traps; Seasonal aspects of fishing; Lumbering around Christmas time; Family-oriented aspects of fishing; Salt fishery in younger days;
- [03:50] Children helped with fish processing; Steps in fish processing; Fish were sold to big fish merchants—changes in how this took place; Wareham's (fish merchant);
- [05:30] Men only spent much time in the home when not fishing or lumbering; Some men signed on as crew members for others—called it “shipping to”; Some men slept in bunkhouses provided, others like her father's crowd had own premises; Did not perceive fishing as dangerous, because spent life on boats, swam in harbor in late August when not much fishing/uncles would be on bank watching out for them when taking a break from fixing nets, etc.; Spending time in twine loft after school, watching father/uncles repair nets, listen to them sing songs, tell stories; Interesting old things in twine loft from other places brought back from fishing trips; Picking berries in the fall, freezing them in water, chopping them out to use
- [11:59] Going squidging in teen years—form of teen courtship; Explanation of squidging; Portuguese and Spanish ate the squid, they used some as bait on hand lines; Women's roles—always involved in processing, now more women on trawlers since Canadian government recognized women as fishermen and they could draw unemployment; Married in 1977, noticed women starting to get in boats around that time; Vicky Silk's lawsuit in Newfoundland to get unemployment benefits along with husband—led to more women taking on traditionally male jobs in her community of South East Bight; Improvements in quality control of fish; Changes from selling fish salted to fresh/frozen;
- [18:00] Family always sang—father and his brothers, mother and her sisters; Mother from Tack's Beach; Singing, dancing, telling stories was form of entertainment on Merasheen/had no electricity; Started listening to radios more and more as became affordable—picked up U.S. station relayed from naval base in Argentia; Placentia and Argentia accents—story of Aunt always trying to correct for that; St. John's waterfront vibrant when moved there—vessels from all over world, fishermen would come in and shop for families; Father social person, in British Navy during war, would invite sailors home for dinner; Statue of Our Lady of Fatima in Cathedral of St. John, carried up the hill by Portuguese fishermen;
- [23:25] Foreign vessels in little ports, like Harbour Buffett—come in to purchase, sell; Liked seeing the names on the vessels, hear fishermen sing, play

concertinas/accordions; Very interested in history and oral history, culture today so pervaded by electronic media not spreading Newfoundland items for most part; Hopes young people will listen to old tunes and songs and make their own; Involvement with Figgy Duff; Pamela Morgan; English/Scottish roots of “Newfoundland” songs;

[29:35]Difference between “traditional singer” like her mother, and her who sings for audiences/pay; Women very strong in Newfoundland culture but song canon doesn’t really reflect that; Enjoys sing songs about women working; Women’s involvement in fishery at home though only men got paid/had name on books; Women’s involvement in Maritime Institute in St. John’s; Took a celestial navigation course at Maritime Institute; Women in Labrador Straits doing inshore fishing long before 1970s; Labrador Straits fishermen from Newfoundland—“floaters” who stored fish on boat and “stationarys” who had places on land to process fish; Michael Crummey’s book *Hard Light* about Labrador fishery;

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