

MAKKOVIK

While music has flourished in most of the communities of Newfoundland and Labrador, certain places are recognized for the intensity and innovation of their music scenes. In Labrador, one of them is Makkovik. A coastal community located about 210 kilometres north of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Makkovik is home to nearly 400 residents, most of Inuit descent or mixed European and Inuit descent. The name likely derives from “maggo,” the Inuktitut word for “two,” a reference to the two main inlets and two brooks that come together near Makkovik.

Permanent settlement began in the 1850s when Norwegian Torsten Kverna Andersen came to oversee a trading post at The Post (now Postville) for the Hudson Bay Company, a commercial enterprise chartered in 1670 to control the fur trade in what is now northern Canada. He married Mary Ann Thomas (whose ancestry was English and Inuit) and in 1860, they made their homestead at Flounder Bight, which

would become Makkovik after families whose camps were in the vicinity moved to the location in the course of the 20th century.

An important part of the cultural history of coastal Labrador was the missionary activity of the Moravian church, an evangelical Protestant denomination established in the 15th century by followers of reformer John Hus. They took their name from their home base in Bohemia and Moravia in what is now the Czech Republic. Although the Moravian missionary Johann Christian Erhardt attempted to establish a mission station in the Makkovik area as early as 1752, he was not successful. Moravian missionaries visited from Hopedale in the late 19th century, first teaching children in Torsten Kverna’s home in the 1870s. In 1896, the Moravian mission, which had established churches in more northerly coastal (Inuit) communities as early as the mid-18th century, built a mission house in Makkovik. The historian



Makkovik. Photo courtesy of the Town of Makkovik.

Hans Rollmann has described how the original mission buildings were prefabricated in Saxony and shipped to Flounder Bight where Moravian missionary Hermann Jannasch, his family and local residents collaborated to construct their church. A church bell was also imported and a boarding school was eventually created as well. Rollmann records that “today’s church was built in 1992 and replaces the second church building, which was transported from Ailik in 1948” (Rollmann, 2002).

The Moravian mission would play a major role in shaping the cultural life of the community, but many other developments were equally significant. Factors that affected social life and customs included interaction with Newfoundland fishermen, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when close friendships developed between Labrador residents and schooner fishermen who sailed north from the

island of Newfoundland to the Labrador coast every year, staying through the summer, often basing themselves near the Ironbound Islands where Fishery Products was located. Makkovik fisherman Ted Andersen explained in a memoir how “schooner boys” from Bonavista Bay and Bay Roberts brought food and other supplies that were otherwise unavailable; they were part of peoples’ lives, helping with local projects, sometimes marrying Labrador women, and welcoming Labradorians who travelled to St. John’s.

Other factors that affected the social life included a logging operation and the building of a sawmill in Makkovik in 1917; the establishment of American radar stations (especially the Tishialuk base at Cape Harrison) and the opening of the American military base in Goose Bay in 1941; the advent of radio broadcasting along the Labrador coast; the uranium mining company Brinex at Kitts Pond from the 1950s to



Torsten Kverna Andersen family. Mary Ann Thomas Andersen and Torsten Kverna Anderson are in the seated row, third and fourth from the left. Photo courtesy of Them Days magazine.



Schooners off the Labrador coast. Photo courtesy of the Memorial University Archives. Collection number: 137 24 02 022 600.

1980; and the relocation of Inuit who brought very different cultural knowledge and traditions from Nutak and Hebron but were, for many years, isolated in substandard homes at the ends of the community. More recently, the establishment of Nunatsiavut and self-government, along with progress on Inuit land claims, has brought new forms of prosperity and hope for a bright future. All of these elements affected the music culture of the community as well as its economy and social life.

Hunting, trapping and fishing continue to be important subsistence activities for Makkovik residents. Since 1972, a fish plant has been the main employer with over one hundred employees at peak season. It currently processes mostly crab and turbot. By the turn of the 21st century, the community had a community hall and gymnasium, an inn and several bed and breakfasts, and two annual festivals. A new school (Kindergarten to Grade 12) and nursing station serve the community. Travel is facilitated by two daily flights and, for up to six months a year, a coastal passenger ferry service. The “traffic” of people and goods along the coast

has clearly increased and with that, a growing self-consciousness of cultural heritage. The White Elephant Museum in one of the former Moravian mission buildings is now a centre where local history is preserved and memory is curated. In addition, as the musicologist Tom Gordon observes, one individual – James R. Andersen (1920-2011) – has played an important complementary role in this process.

A major factor in the cultural self-consciousness has been the unique form of community documentation which Uncle Jim (James R.) Andersen engaged in over the last sixty years. Within the community, Jim’s photos, audio recordings and videos were a continuous reminder of the community’s identity and ways of life. When [the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) in partnership with] The Rooms/Canadian Museum of Civilization purchased the collection, developed an exhibition and film, this sense of unique cultural heritage was heightened and broadly disseminated. [Tom Gordon, personal communication, 2011]

If there is a perception that remote communities such as those in coastal Labrador are relatively unchanging in the forms of expression that they create and enjoy, Makkovik’s history belies the notion. Since the mid-20th century, this community has experienced many changes which shifted the lifeways on the land and in the community. Makkovik’s art and music help keep memories of the past alive even as it reflects social change and helps people adapt to new circumstances.

MAKKOVIK'S MUSIC HISTORY

A question that guided the preparation of this booklet is how new economic and military ventures, changes relating to intercultural contact, new technologies for travel and cultural dissemination, and momentous community events (including social relocation) have affected the creation and performance of music. A second question is why music has been so especially vibrant in this community.

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

The Moravian church played an important role in encouraging music performance in coastal Labrador communities with substantial Inuit populations.

Its church music repertoire is described by some of the local residents as different from that of Nain or Hopedale or from the more northerly communities of Okak and Hebron

where German Baroque and classical period repertoire flourished from the mid-18th century. In Makkovik, where the Moravian mission was established only in the late-19th century, the revival hymns of the Methodist gospel composer Ira D. Sankey, who travelled together with the 19th-century missionary Dwight L. Moody, were preferred. While the impact of Sankey-style hymns affected other Labrador Inuit communities, Makkovik residents regard their love of this repertoire as a distinctive part of their musical identity. In addition to the music in the mission house, residents still remember “Sankey Sings” held in people’s homes, often on Sunday evening. Baroque and Classical period repertoires were introduced later, after the migration of Inuit from Hebron and Nutak in the late 1950s.

The basic structure of church festival days was established by Moravians in Europe, and used first in the more northerly communities



Moravian mission built in 1896-97.



Makkovik congregation and brass band members relaxing after the Easter service (probably 1930s). Photo courtesy of James R. Andersen.

of Labrador. The congregation has “choirs” or groups defined by age and marital status. Each has a festival day – Young People’s Day, Married People’s Day, and Children’s Day – each culminating in a Lovefeast where mugs of tea and sweet bread are consumed. When congregation members were scattered in various coves and bays in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they gathered in Makkovik for these three Moravian feast days as well as Christmas and Easter celebrations.

The Moravian mission in Makkovik had an organ (probably a harmonium) from the time it was first established in 1896, but got its first pipe organ in 1926 when, following a smallpox epidemic, the mission at Okak was closed and brass instruments as well as the pipe organ were moved. The brass band endured from the 1920s through the 1970s.

In addition to playing hymns inside the church and announcing feast days by means of outdoor performances, the brass instruments functioned in the secular life of the community. The band or smaller groups of brass players performed for civic occasions (such as flag raising) and personal events (such as birthdays). To some extent, these functions are maintained to the present day, as Annie Evans describes:

When someone turned 50, the band played. John Andersen played for me – “Jesus day by day” – when I turned 50 [not long ago]. Herb, Henry and John have done this for others as well, sometimes as a sort of joke about the old days. [Annie Evans, conversation with Joan Andersen and Beverley Diamond, 2011]



Torsten Andersen (grandson of Torsten Kverna), his wife Alice Voisey (back) and Torsten Kverna's daughter Bertha (Bertha) Andersen (front). Photo courtesy of *Them Days* magazine.

Many talented organists have since served the community; among the earliest was Torsten Kverna's daughter Bertha (1872-1950).

There are many stories that relate how important keyboard instruments were for the first three generations of settlers. In a letter written in 1901 to his family in Norway, Torsten Kverna Andersen suggests that keyboard music was an

important part of both the spiritual and cultural life of his family.

It is now a long time since I heard from you in our old Norway. I thank God that all of us are still alive and healthy, but I begin to feel my age. However, it is no wonder as I was born in the year 1834.

We receive letters each year from our relatives who live in the United States, and find there that they are all in good circumstances. I will now send you a photograph of me and my wife. She was born in the year 1837 of English parents, who lived here on the coast for many years. We were married in 1859, so that we naturally both seem old, but the time speaks to us all in Labrador as well as in Norway. We have had ten children, who are all still alive to this day, but there are only three of them who are not married. One, a girl named Berta Andria, plays the organ in our church, and the piano and the harmonica which we have in our house. My two unmarried sons are known as good hunters in the winter, and fishermen in the summer. ... [Letter reprinted in *Them Days* magazine 3/3, 17-18]

In an article for *Them Days* magazine commemorating his brother Edward, Torsten Kverna's grandson James R. Andersen describes their family's musical participation in the church.

Our family, including Mom and Dad [Susan Mitchell and John Andersen] loved

music. Each of us could play an instrument of some kind. Ed had a creative tenor voice and always sang in the church choir. He was a choir member and a chapel servant here at Makkovik and in the Happy Valley Moravian church. Mom playing the harmonium and a couple of fiddles accompanying her. In the '30s and '40s we had a good brass band of eight or nine instruments which we learned to play by lots of hard practise. Another thing Ed often talked about of years past was the New Year Watch Night service. The congregation would be standing and singing "Now thank we all our God" and the brass band would be playing together with the melodious sound of the big pipe organ. This organ was destroyed by fire in 1948 which destroyed the Mission building and the church. On occasions we would play together at church services, our sister [Inga] on the organ, Ed as lead on the violin and I played the cello. Strangely, it was on Harvest Thanksgiving this fall we got together for a rehearsal to perform in church. One we played was Handel's "Largo" which we had often played and enjoyed at home. At the end of the rehearsal Ed said to Inga, our sister, and I, "There's one hymn I would like us to play as the people are going out of church, one that Torsten often used in his churches, "Storms of trouble may assail us." The second Sunday night after that Ed passed peacefully away in his sleep." [*Them Days* 14/3: 6, 1988].

The love of pianos and pump organs was nur-

tured by the Moravian culture, but developed in people's homes. Keyboard accompaniment was a local adaptation, one that sets the music practices of coastal Labrador apart from those of the island of Newfoundland where keyboards were never used to accompany fiddle and accordion. Many stories attest to the ingenuity and energy that people exerted to acquire keyboard instruments for their homes.

James R. Andersen (Uncle Jim) recalls that his grandfather Edward Mitchell had a Heintzman piano, a Pianola and a library of books [Interview with Joan Andersen, 2009]. He also remembers a pipe organ on the second floor of the Samuel Thomas house. Samuel developed a local business selling pickled trout and salmon to an English firm that sent ships to Labrador to transport the fish. On one trip, the English merchants brought the organ for the Thomas family, as James R. recalled. It was about half the size of the one in the church (after 1926) and that it had a "wind-up handle" to generate wind for the bellows. "Uncle Jim" Andersen surmises that "it must have been put up there before the house was completely built because they would never have gotten it up the stairs" [Interview with Joan Andersen, 2009].

Inga Anderson (Bertha's niece and Uncle Jim's sister), who was one of the first organists to play the pipe organ brought from Okak to the Makkovik mission in 1926, described the organ in her own home in an interview for *Them Days* magazine:

That organ over there is over a hundred years old. My father got it from some of the first missionaries to come to Labra-

dor. When they were going back to England or Germany, wherever they were from, they'd sell off what people wanted to buy. I don't even know how old it is because it was so long ago, but my father bought the organ and it's probably well over 100. [*Them Days* 2009]

Her mother, however, wanted a piano in addition to the organ. Uncle Jim has often told the humorous story of "a piano or a sawmill," which illustrates the value of music set against economic needs.

Mom always wanted a piano. She was musical. They was all musical. Dad promised her a piano, sometime I 'spose when he seen the means. This particular time he went to St. John's. Stayed at the Crosby Hotel. The Stones and

the Framptons from Smith Sound (now called Monroe), they were there buying their winter supplies. Dad was telling them about the piano he was going to buy at Charles Hutton's. They said, oh no, don't buy a piano, get a sawmill. So the next morning he went down, cancelled the piano and bought a sawmill. He bought a sawmill in the fall, from the Acadia Gas Company on Water Street.... Our sawmill was so useful. If someone wanted komatik bars, komatik runners, p'raps something sawed for a house. Well they would cut logs on the half. Dad would keep half the lumber, and they would have their half. It was a wonderful system.... The year Dad died, in 1951, I had some papers come, something come, and there was some packings from Toronto, and there was this advertisement

in a newspaper, Federal Piano Company, selling second hand pianos for five hundred dollars, a big Heintzman piano, a big upright. So I wrote to them and asked if they would sell me a piano on installments. They wrote back, no, they wasn't interested in that. So about a year went by, I had a letter from this company asking me was I still interested in a piano. I jumped at it. I sent five hundred dollars up Toronto, got my piano. ... Now then, brought ashore the piano from the Kyle, from the old Kyle, there was no wharf. Kyle had to anchor off on the anchorage. Pretty moonlight night, in September. There was a frost that night, night frost. This great big piano about four hundred pound. 'Twas crated up with redwood. One inch redwood. Now how was we going to get that out of the boat? 'Twas only we here. Alright, we got the parbuckle and block and tackle and some boards and put down in the boat, and we got the piano up on the wharf, heavy! There was Inga, my sister, Susie, me and George Lyall. Oh my, got some short pipe. Got her on the pipe and we rolled her offa the wharf. All the way off of the wharf, by our store, and got her up to the house. About 2 o'clock in the night. Come in, awful proud of my piano.... 3 o'clock in the morning, Inga played my first tune on my Heintzman piano in the house. Now, isn't that something?! Oh, and what a sound, some piano. I had her for years and years. (What song did she play?) Probably some Moravian hymn. She could play anything at all. Classical or [anything].

In addition to concerts, house parties and mill house dances were important parts of community life. While one thinks of house parties as informal and spontaneous events, some of them were planned to coincide with special holidays, church festivals, or life cycle events such as marriages or birthdays. Songs were written especially for these events. This enabled people to address social issues and to create subtle commentaries about matters that concerned them. A trapper might hint (in a song) that someone was robbing his trap line; a father of a marriageable son might express concern about a neighbour who forbids his daughter to see local boys, and so on. Songs, then, were ways of expressing social values or negotiating social interactions at these informal events.

Gerald Mitchell recalls the square dances from his childhood on two of the church festival days, Young People's Day and Married People's Day.

The kitchen at our house was large enough for those dances. After supper was prepared the fire was let die out, the kitchen cooled down. The dances would begin about eight p.m. My father took the kitchen door off. He just had to remove the bolts from the hinges. Lots of fresh air came in through the porch door. The dancers still got warm enough. Jim Andersen (James R. Andersen or Uncle Jim) played the fiddle. The only accordion player there, John Broomfield, was dancing [Gerald Mitchell, *Personal memoir*, 2009]



Moving a harmonium in winter, ca 1950. Left to right: George Lyall (barely visible), Bob Andersen, Jim Andersen. Photo by James R. Andersen. Used by permission of James R. Andersen and courtesy of The Rooms.

Family celebrations were also occasions for a dance. Uncle Jim Andersen described the dance that followed his brother's wedding in 1936 in *Them Days* magazine:

It was a double wedding that took place on Easter Monday. A good crowd was in town and gathered at Albert Mitchell's (father of Gerald) house for the dance. For the occasion they had invited Bill Abel (from the Hopedale area). He had a beautiful double-keyed accordion. One that he had got in his travels to Northern Quebec. Bill Abel worked as an interpreter for the Hudson's Bay Company and would go up north on the *Nascopie* in the summer. Bill sat in a doorway between two fair-sized rooms, and played for two sets of dancers at the same time. One in the kitchen, and one in the dining room! Jim said even the minister's wife danced with the Ranger. And, Jim says, there was not a drop of beer then. Never even thought about it. [*Them Days* magazine 15/1, 27]

The only space bigger than the family kitchen was the mill house where dances were sometimes held when the coastal steamer, *The*



The Mill House in 2011. Photo by Beverley Diamond.

Kyle, docked in Makkovik.

James R. Andersen (Uncle Jim) describes one of these evenings:

Dad used to talk about in the fall when they was landing freight, and the crews on the boat, they liked dancing. . . . Once when he was going to come ashore, the people [from St. John's] said, John, what about if we come ashore and have a dance. . . . Well, Dad said, 'when I goes ashore now, I'm putting the boat on the collar and I'm not coming back anymore.' Alright, then, [he] went and told the captain they wanted to go ashore for a dance, and John said he won't be coming. So they made arrangements, paid Dad good, brought a boat load of men ashore. That's where they danced –



S.S. Kyle. Coastal steamer for Labrador. Photo courtesy of Brian DePiero. Used with permission.

in the mill house. They had a fellow from Brigus, a wonderful fiddler, well they had a wonderful time, b'y. [James R. Andersen-interview with Joan Andersen, 2010]

Uncle Jim notes that he played the fiddle for these dances. The mill house still stands in 2011, its faded sign a memory trace. Makkovik didn't have a community hall until the 1950s.

1940s TO 1960s

Radio was beginning to change the community by the mid-20th century. Wireless telegraphs were used early in the century to communicate local information. In the 2001 edition of the Heritage Day newsletter of the White Elephant Museum, the earliest such message was described: a report from the Dunn Island wireless station in 1912 to say that the ship, the *Harmony*, had arrived in Makkovik. Battery-operated short wave radios were already in Makkovik



Old radio and turntable, now in the White Elephant Museum. Photo by Beverley Diamond.

homes in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Gerald Mitchell remembers that at least five families had radios. Families would gather to listen to the King's message on Christmas Day. Older residents recall hearing country music broadcasts from Wheeling, West Virginia. Wilf Carter, Jimmy Rodgers, and Hank Snow became local favourites whose repertoire was rapidly learned by Makkovik's skilled



A musical event in 1950. Back row: Bill Andersen, Jim Andersen, Lavinia Andersen, Ted Andersen. Front row: Mary Andersen, Joy Flowers, Rupert McNeill (seated), Emma Broomfield, Chrissy Broomfield. Photo courtesy of *Them Days* magazine.

musicians.

The earliest radio broadcasts from the Labrador coast were likely from Nain, where Reverend Peacock (with the help of a resident engineer Mr. Ogletree) set up a transmitter in 1950. The *Moravian Missions* newsletter reported that:

Recordings of Eskimo Church music and the Hosanna Anthem have been made! We hope that it will bridge the gap between missionary and people when the latter are away from the Mission Stations. [*Moravian Missions* newsletter, March, 1950]

Uncle Jim Andersen recalls that Reverend Peacock's broadcasts were picked up on local short wave radios. He enjoyed the songs of Nain Singers Sid and Mary Dicker and others. Radio telephone became available around the same time.

A fire demolished the Moravian church and mission house in January 1948 and marked the end of an era for the Makkovik community. Only two weeks earlier, a concert had taken place in the church, one that is now etched in the memory of participants such as Gerald Mitchell, who was only eleven at the time.

Reverend Harp was there then. They moved the pulpit for the occasion. They had burgundy-colored curtains, velvet, with gold tassels around the edges, done up so that the curtains would open. School children sang first, I was among them. We probably sang "The Makkovik School Song." I sang a solo, "The Grandfa-

ther Clock," and a Wilf Carter song "The Little Shirt my Mother Made for Me." Uncle Jim Andersen accompanied me on the autoharp. Bill Andersen and a few others sang a Wilf Carter song, "Eventide Has Slowly Fallen," a pretty song that was popular at the time. Edward Jacque sang a sea shanty and Denny Broomfield, Joy Andersen Flowers and Lavinia Andersen performed "Shall We Gather at the River," and another Wilf Carter number, "My Old Canadian Home." It was a memorable concert. [Reconstructed from conversations with Joan Andersen, 2009, and with Joan Andersen and Beverley Diamond, 2011]

With a wry sense of humour, Gerald commented that maybe the church burned because they performed so many country songs in it.

In the 1950s, the provincial government decided to close several of the smaller Moravian missions. Inuit were moved from Nutak and Hebron to Makkovik, bringing with them a decidedly different set of cultural traditions from those of the mixed Inuit-European community that would become their new home. The transition was extremely difficult and after some years, many of the Inuit moved north again. After the relocation in the 1950s, the mission conducted separate services in English and Inuktitut and for a time maintained separate choirs and brass bands. On festival days, the settlers and resettled Inuit worshipped together, but music was still performed by the separate groups. A number of new traditions were introduced by the Hebron and Nutak

people, especially during the Christmas season. One example is Nalajuk Day on January 6, the night of Epiphany. Like mummering elsewhere in the province, this celebration features costumed participants, the "nalajuks," who are named "heathen"; in some oral histories they are said to come from the "east" like the Magi, but from the "north" in other narratives. They wear animal skin, oversized coats, masks, and carry a stick and a bag of candy. They are somewhat frightening for children, but teenagers enjoy chasing the nalajuks, hoping to be chased back. When they enter a home, the children are expected to sing a hymn or carol and to answer questions.

When Shmuel Ben-Dor studied adaptation in Makkovik in the 1960s, the cultures of "Settlers" (the older residents of European or mixed European / Inuit ancestry) and "Inuit" (the Inuit relocated from more northerly villages) were so separate that he wrote: "Their



Nalajuk.

two cultures coexist with very little interaction except for that caused by an over-arching administrative structure" ("Ben-Dor," 2). A decade later, John C. Kennedy wrote of inter-ethnic relations: "In my view, the unspoken agreement that 'as neighbours we will continue to live as strangers' remains an unusual and to

some extent incomplete one. Settlers and Inuit are able to perpetuate such a relationship largely because outside economic and political institutions control the essential conditions of their existence" (1982, 131).

One mechanism of "boundary maintenance," as Kennedy describes it, was the brass band. The demise of the Settlers' band during the 1950s and 60s had several causes, among them the departure of a number of band members for work on the American base in Goose Bay. In a personal memoir of that period, Toby Andersen (b. 1947) wrote that

when some members moved to Goose Bay for work and as others passed away, nobody taught the younger generation to play the instruments and we lost our sensational brass band. A small brass band was revived when the Inuit relocated to Makkovik from Hebron but it was not the same magnitude or dedication that the original Makkovik brass band had and it fell to the same fate because once more nobody came forward to teach the young uns. The Hebron band also included the cello and violins which accompanied the organ in church at all services ["Reflections on Music in Makkovik", ms. 2010].

In his 1982 monograph, *Holding the Line*, Kennedy writes, however, about a resignification of the band from a Settler institution to one that was regarded as Inuit:

They recall that although a few settlers continued playing in the band after the arrival of the Inuit, most 'lost interest'

shortly after. In my view, it is probable that the Makkovik missionary at the time of relocation encouraged Inuit rather than Settler involvement with the band. The missionary, who had previously served at Hebron, may have thought that the brass band would help ease the adjustment of Inuit to Makkovik. It would appear that since there could only be one brass band, the problem emerged as to who would play in it. In any event, it is clear that by the time of my research, the brass band was considered as appropriate only for Inuit. Older Settlers reminisce about their former participation in the band; younger Settlers smile or snicker when Inuit bandmen occasionally play a note incorrectly, and regard the band as an item of Inuit culture. [1982, 119]

Today, Makkovik residents are well aware of these issues and they offer thoughtful counterpoints from their own experience. Some note that a number of men from the Settler band – among them Bill Andersen, Torsten Andersen and James R. Andersen – played, on occasion, with the Inuit band. There were, then, occasional collaborative initiatives in which music-making served as a bridge between Settlers and Inuit. Inuktitut curriculum development teacher Sophia Tuglavina, who was a child at the time of relocation, commented that it was painful to read these depictions of the division within the community because it evoked memories of being teased for her different clothing, language and way of life. She says that Kennedy’s reference to “the band” is somewhat misleading, because there were separate Eng-



“Springdale, The Music Centre,” home of James R. Andersen and his wife Susie (holding binoculars). Photo by James R. Andersen and courtesy of him.

lish and Inuktitut services, and so there were always two bands; that is, the structure of the Moravian services predetermined that the Settlers and Inuit would each have their own band and choir.

Toby Andersen connects the demise of the brass band to an increase in music-making in Uncle John Andersen’s home, together with a new “tradition” inaugurated by Torsten Andersen (1905-1989).

I can barely remember but I recall that the brass band was awesome. Not only did they perform at special church occasions but every Sunday afternoon in the spring and early fall they gathered in the steeple of the church or outside and played for about an hour. Because the community was small and [there was] no noise from generators, etc. the music would resound off the hill and peel throughout the village. It was sensational enough to make the hair stand on your head!!!

The extended fallout from the Brass Band that I recall was Uncle Jim and Edward and Aunt Inga Andersen continuing to keep music alive at home. As you know Uncle John’s home was called Springdale, The Music Centre. People gathered there for singsongs and Jim, Edward and Inga provided the music (piano, organ, violin) along with, from time to time, Gerald Mitchell and Herman Winters, then later, Gary Mitchell with guitars. ...One other fallout that I will not forget was that after the brass band



Joas Onalik, ca 1960. Photo by Stan Beard.

became defunct, every Sunday morning we could listen to Uncle Torsten Andersen playing the trumpet which he would stick out through his upstairs bedroom window in his home. Everybody looked forward to hearing him play for the village on Sunday morning. [Toby Andersen. “Reflections on Music in Makkovik,” personal memoir. 2010]

Several of the organists in the post-resettlement period were also Inuit, among them Joas Onalik and more recently Simeon Nohasak, two of the longest serving, following Inga Andersen who was organist from 1948 to 1959.

Step dancing and set dancing to the accompaniment of accordion or fiddle continued through the 1960s but the repertoire began to change. New set dances were introduced by the Hebron residents; Annie Evans described one that was locally called the “Hebron Dance” and was a variant of Lancers. Gary Mitchell describes some of the changes, at first within the square dance repertoire itself:

Back in the early 1960s and before, square dances were the order of the day. There are different variations of square-dancing, and the old fashioned way of square dancing was what some people dubbed as “The Labrador Stomp.” This dance [was] comprised of various steps, and had step dancing involved as part of the steps, when people planked ‘er down. The one-man-band accordion player was used for this type of square dancing, and the traditional Newfoundland jigs were the best music to be played for these dances, as it had the right tempo for step-dancing.

Then, a new type of square dancing, known as “The Canadian Set” was introduced into the community, and this new

square dance was better danced to a different style of music with a different tempo. It wasn’t so much the jig type, like “T’se Da By,” or “Mussels in the Corner,” but more of a reel type like “Ragtime Annie,” “Soldier’s Joy,” “Boil them Cabbage Down,” etc.. These changes were symptomatic of more radical cultural developments. [Gerald Mitchell, personal memoir, 2010]

During World War II and in the cold war atmosphere that followed, both Canadian and American army bases were established in the Canadian north, including Labrador. The Goose Bay air base was established by Americans in 1941. Joan Andersen describes how her father, John Broomfield, walked with nine other men all the way from Makkovik to Goose Bay to find

work in 1941 and again in 1942, returning on the coastal steamer, the *Kyle*, in time for fishing season. En route, they stopped wherever people were living and swapped songs and stories. Until it closed in 1966, the American base at Goose Bay drew many men from coastal communities in search of work and effectively created a new community, initially in Happy Valley but expanding to become the present-day Happy Valley-Goose Bay. American bases and radar stations were established nearer Makkovik in the 1960s. One community, Tishialuk, near the base at Cape Harrison, was two hours away from Makkovik by dog team. The Makkovik school children nonetheless performed Christmas concerts and plays there. After a fire at Cape Harrison in 1962, the stored food and other supplies were given to the local people. Many new kinds of material goods became available.

The American bases hosted visiting performers who expanded the musical horizons of the local residents. Gordie Rendall, who worked at the American Forces radio station and later at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CFGB), describes the buzz in the new community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay:

When I started working at the radio station, the Americans were always bringing in people, from Buck Owens and Tammy Wynette to Sammy Davis Jr. and Bob Hope.... They were called the USO shows, United States Overseas, I guess it stood for. They go to Iraq now and Afghanistan and they put on big shows and [in Labrador in the 50s] they were all free and I used to go to all of them. [Interview with Beverley Diamond, 2009]

He was introduced to Broadway repertoire, tap dancing, and the glamorous women who were part of each visitor’s entourage. Many men from the outlying coastal communities moved, temporarily or permanently, to Happy Valley-Goose Bay to work on the bases. Accordion player John Broomfield was one and their most renowned singer/songwriter, Gerald Mitchell, was another. For Mitchell, a breakthrough came in 1964 when he was invited to fill in on Gordie’s CBC show *Rendall’s Roundup*, and then to have a regular 15-minute spot called “The Labrador Balladeer” for a two-year period on CFGB. Gerald remembers this unexpected opportunity:

They asked me if I would be interested in singing local songs. The song they had then was a song written by Mr. Byron Chaulk. It was called “A Broken Promise.” [Gerald Mitchell, personal memoir, 2010]

That was the start of the productive collaboration through which some of the most loved songs ever to emerge from Labrador were created. Eight years later (as described in the next section), Gord Rendall and Joe Goudie, the CBC producers who first recognized his talent, approached Gerald about making a vinyl recording, the first by a Labrador artist. He made two records with Marathon Music. More detail about Gerald’s career is contained in the biographical section below.

The new media brought many new types of musical repertoire to the community. Broadway hits and rock and roll became as accessible to Makkovik listeners as the square



Mildred and John Broomfield ca 1980, playing for a house party. Photo courtesy of Joan Andersen.

dances and country songs they loved. The impact on the creative production of the community began to show by the 60s and 70s. Gary Mitchell has preserved one record of his Uncle Gerald from this period: a cassette of Gerald performing with his friend Sonny some pop hits including the 1956 hit “Singing the Blues,” and “Party Doll,” a 1957 rockabilly number by Buddy Knox and Jimmy Bowen.

In the 1960s, many young men chose to perform a different type of music, particularly under the leadership of Jonas Karpik, an Inuk guitarist from Hopedale. Jonas combined the older fiddle and accordion ensemble with guitars and drums, but his band did not use a microphone or include vocalists. Their repertoire included the familiar jigs and reels but also waltzes, rock and roll covers and jazzy instrumentals. They were called the Bullbird Band, one of the first of many to play for the new-style dances. Band members, in addition to Jonas, were Gary Mitchell, Sam Metcalfe and Junior Andersen.

1970s TO 1990s

Initiatives started in the 1960s accelerated during the 1970s to bring the communities of coastal Labrador in closer contact with one another. Labradorians explain that there was a real consciousness of a musical identity distinct from that of Newfoundland by the 1970s, in contrast to the schooner days of the late 19th and early-20th centuries when there was more intermarriage and fluid movement between the Island and Labrador. Tim Borlase who travelled the coast for the Department of Education recalls that there was a sense of “here and away” as well as “insider and outsider” in the 70s. It was a dec-

ade when the cultural distinctions between the old days and the new, between more established and newer community groups, and between former and current places on the land inspired many songs. Partly inspired by the new folklore magazine *Them Days*, memories of lost lifeways (on the traplines, for instance), acquired new importance for Labradorians. *Them Days* made people more aware of Innu and Inuit cultures, and of the intense relationship that people had with the specific geography of their region. Many songs now had a nostalgic tinge. A lyricist such as Northwest River resident Byron Chaulk, who could capture the sadness of loss along with the joy of past life in now abandoned places, was bound to find favour with Labradorians.

The biggest cultural changes were arguably media-related. Although radio telephones had been used since the mid-20th century, some communities had only one in the early days, and anyone who wished to make a phone call had to visit the home where it was located. Prior to the establishment of northern satellite communications in 1980, there was already television in Makkovik. Video tapes – generally of two-week-old hockey games or soap operas – were played on these pre-network televisions and circulated locally with the use of a small transmitter dish.

Local radio broadcasts were initiated in Makkovik in 1975 when the CBC established CIML, which mostly aired health programs in its early days.

Tim Borlase recalls the community’s rapid adaptation of the new broadcast technology:

They immediately started to set up their own programming so they would have hours where they would invite people in



Sign on the radio station, 2011. Photo by Beverley Diamond.

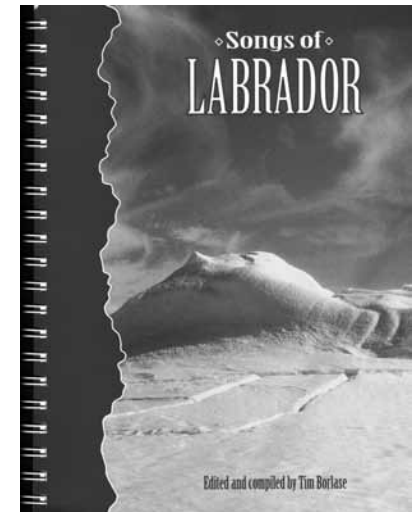
from the village to sing. So lots of people did that. They would take their guitars up to the radio station and there would be some familiar songs and also some songs they had written themselves. This seemed to me to be very popular and often times because the villages were quite small, they could say [on air] ‘we want so and so to come over’ and they will be there in 5 or 10 minutes. [The station personnel assumed] “we know you are listening,” that kind of thing, so [it was] really informal. [Borlase, interview with Beverley Diamond, 2009]

The radio station also broadcast local announcements. Borlase used this capacity to advertise that he was interested in collecting local songs. He offered to visit any homes where people wanted to record. He describes how people would invite him over but friends and families would be discreetly hidden in the back room, perhaps out of shyness or concern about the quiet surroundings necessary for a good recording. Tim recalls that it wasn’t “collecting” as much as it was recording a performance where

the audience was invisible. Many of the songs he recorded in this way were published in *The Labrador Songbook*, a landmark anthology that had a major impact on the coastal communities (as Borlase has described in an article for *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 2007).

Radio enabled people who were already recognized for their talent to be heard more often. Borlase recalls:

People would call in for a certain hymn, and what a great way to remind people of their musical inheritance. There were always solo singers that were also requested. Even in the church music – “so and so can sing that particular piece so we want that version of it.” Some of it would have been outdoors and some of it would have been in a church. [Interview with Beverley Diamond, 2009]



Tim Borlase, comp. *The Labrador Songbook*. 1993. Cover image used by permission of Tim Borlase.

The outdoor recordings were generally by the brass band. Borlase recalls, "I have some recordings of those; people walking and playing in minus 30°C temperatures and the instruments are ... you can hear the cold." To keep lips from sticking to the brass mouthpieces, musicians used seal oil on their lips, and duffle hand covers were cleverly invented to keep the musicians' fingers from freezing.

The Nain radio station run by the Moravian mission and later by the Okalakatiget Society, founded in 1985, became a production centre, broadcasting to the other coastal communities (as it still does) but every community had the opportunity to share their distinctive music in an unprecedented way.

The 1970s also saw the production of the first commercial audio recordings by a Labrador musician. These were two LPs by Gerald Mitchell and CBC. While distribution of such material was challenging and the monetary rewards were negligible at this time, Mitchell's recordings were enormously influential. The songs on those two albums became iconic and remain favourites in Labrador and beyond. Having a recording came to be viewed as being "professional." Acquiring such recognition is particularly difficult for musicians who live in remote rural regions.

Another initiative was the establishment of the Labrador Creative Arts Festival in 1975. Tim Borlase was the founding festival director.



The Bandits ca 1980: Lavern Broomfield, Gary Mitchell, Jimi Andersen, Bobby (Coon) Andersen. Photo courtesy of Gary Mitchell.

He recalls:

We had started the Labrador Creative Arts Festival in '75 but these communities were so distinct. Each community looked different. Its make-up was different (even though it would be adjacent) because of the denominational school system. In some cases the religion was different and it meant people really didn't know, outside their own community, they really didn't know what the next community's cultural forms were. That is why the Arts Festival was started – because each community had stories that we thought would be great to be shared and in the same way the songs were [shown to be] really unique to a community in some cases. [Interview with Beverley Diamond, 2009]

Both the local radio stations and the Creative Arts Festival served as technology training grounds for local people to apprentice and learn about audio recording and editing, broadcasting and studio production. A great deal of local expertise developed through informal apprenticeships in these venues.

As observed earlier, in the 1960s, the influence of American dance music began to displace the old square dance traditions. The Bullbird Band disbanded after a short period of time when some members left the community to study or train, but two of its musicians, Gary Mitchell and Jonas Karpik, joined forces with Eric Flynn to become The Bandits, a rock band that, with varying personnel, was a community mainstay for over twenty years.



Susie and Joas Onalik singing at the Centennial celebration in Makkovik, 1996. It was the 100th year since the start of the Moravian Church in Makkovik (1896-1996). Photo courtesy of Joan Andersen.



Moravian church in 2011, Photo by Beverley Diamond.

Initially, they had two guitars and an improvised drum kit: a snare drum attached to a stool, and a pair of wooden spoons for drum sticks. They played their first sold-out show in the newly completed Community Hall on Valentine's Day, 1970. Like most bands, the membership has varied over time. Among the contributors have been: Johnny Andersen (guitar/vocals), Anders Andersen (drums), Toby Andersen (drums), Fred Andersen (drums/vocals), Robert Andersen (drums), David Mitchell (drums), Jimi Andersen (became

permanent drummer), Henry Jacque (guitar), Brent Broomfield (guitar), Billy Edmunds (guitar/vocals), Laverne Broomfield (guitar), Ken Campbell (guitar), Rodney Vokey (guitar). Female vocalists joined them on occasion: Sheila Mitchell, Marjorie Andersen, Fiona Andersen, Pam Andersen, Irene Winters, Karen Andersen. Uncle Jim Andersen has also joined the band on fiddle or mandolin for special occasions. They played for nightly dances for local residents and tourists in the summer; fund raisers; weddings; and they created a dance for when the coastal boats arrived. While most of their performances were local, they travelled the coast by snowmobile, plane or boat. Their impact on the community extends from that first concert in 1970 well into the 1990s.

In the 1980s with an enlarged community hall fully operational and, in the 1990s, a new school with a gymnasium designed for multi-functionality, larger staged events began to be organized in Makkovik. In addition to English language and instrumental performances, Joas and Susie Onalik were among the first to write and perform songs in Inuktitut, basing their style on a fusion of Moravian hymnody, spirituals and the country style of the Carter Family.

The annual Trout Festival began in 1983. The Makkovik Music Jamboree began in 1994 with local artists but has since expanded to feature performers from other communities. The opening of a new school in Makkovik in 1993 enhanced music-making in other ways. Teacher Rebecca Pretty started a band and created a string trio that toured to St. John's and elsewhere. A new Moravian church (replacing a small one that had been transported

from Ailik in 1948) was built in 1992.

THE 21ST CENTURY

In the 2006 census, 89% of the population of Makkovik self-identify as having some Inuit ancestry (Statistics Canada website). This is, in itself, a shift from the days where the Settler and Inuit cultures were self-consciously distinct. The cultural traditions associated with Inuit culture elsewhere in the Canadian north were not historically practiced in coastal Labrador communities. A general resurgence of interest in what were becoming pan-Inuit traditions toward the end of the 20th century was felt in Makkovik, as in other Labrador Inuit communities, stimulated in part by visiting drum dancers and throat singers. In 2007 the teacher Natalie Fost Jacque, with the help of Amalia Tuglavina, started the Kaviguak drum dance group. In the photo below they proudly assert their regional identity by using drums clad in the green, blue and white colours of Labrador. Natalie describes their debut performance at the 2008 Makkovik Jamboree.

It was a very exciting time for the group as it was still a very new aspect to the community. The group performed a number of songs including "Kuviasulipunga" ["I feel happy"] and "Pangniapiusunga." Benigna Fox and Selma Semigak (once two very quiet and reserved students) proudly showed their throat singing talents at this performance and made many people proud that day. Since then, the Kaviguak Drum Dancers performed at many events and celebrations in Makk-



Interior of the new Moravian church at Christmas, with the Moravian Advent star, Advent wreaths and members of the Inuit choir. Photo courtesy of Joan Andersen

ovik and have expanded into a number of performances in Goose Bay. [Natalie Fost Jacque interview with Joan Andersen]

By 2011, there were several age-graded drum-dance groups.

The Mitchell family legacy continues through a new generation of musicians. Ac-

cordionist Jennifer Mitchell (Gerald's great niece) plays with her father Gary Mitchell, with whom she has produced two CDs. Gerald Mitchell's grand nephew Paul Mitchell is rapidly earning attention for his skilled guitar playing and song writing, while another grand nephew, Brandon Parady, also creates and performs Labrador songs.

While the musicians of Makkovik have reflected and participated in a great deal of social change since their community was established in the late 19th century, the continuities and adaptations are also noteworthy. Elders such as Aunt Inga Andersen (1913-2010), who played in church for over 60 years and who owned a pump organ that belonged to some of the first Moravian missionaries, was equally at home on an electronic keyboard in 2009. Her brother, Uncle Jim Andersen, adapted his accordion playing to youthful rock bands. Into



Kaviguak Drum Dance group. Back row (left to right): Natalie Jacque (teacher), Gavin Evans, Selma Semigak, Dasi Fox, Lorraine Onalik, James Jararuse. Front row (left to right): Cathy Semigak, Benigna Fox, Andrea Andersen, Amalia McNeill (Community Development Officer). Photo courtesy of the Town of Makkovik.



James R. (Uncle Jim) Anderson, accordion and Aunt Inga Andersen, keyboard in 2009.

the first decade of the 21st century, they continued to be important contributors to the cultural life of the community.

The old Moravian hymn and anthem repertoires have been revived, in part through an initiative by Tom Gordon, Director of the School of Music from 2000-2010, to bring brass players and singers from Memorial University School of Music to Labrador communities to teach and learn together.

SUMMING UP: A HISTORY OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The distinctive mixing of cultures in Makkovik led to an equally distinctive set of musical traditions. Families with the deepest community roots are often a mixture of Norwegian or British and Inuit ancestry. The resettling of Hebron residents in the late 20th century brought a new

group of Inuit to the village, families with different lifeways. Studies by Ben-Dor in the 1960s (1966) and Kennedy in the 1970s (1982) show that the Moravian church was more central to the lives of Inuit than those of the settlers. While the brass band was an institution through which social divisions were articulated (as Kennedy has written), music also served to bridge the Settler/Inuit division that has frequently been described as rigid and stark.

Major social and economic change has marked the course of the community. Social relationships affecting the community have included those with Newfoundlanders, ranging from the cordial friendships of the days when the schooner fishermen were part of their lives to the late-20th century when there is more consciousness of Labrador's distinctness; with American and Canadian servicemen; with Inuit



Brandon Parly. Photo courtesy of Jill Mitchell.



Paul Mitchell. Photos courtesy of Jill Mitchell.



Jennifer Mitchell (accordion) and Gary Mitchell. Photo courtesy of Gary Mitchell.

Canada-wide (in the post-Nunatsiavut period) who share the challenge of sustaining language and revitalizing cultural traditions; and with visitors. Economic enterprise associated with the resources of the sea and the land has also brought new people to the community.

Media also shaped cultural change in Labrador. As Tim Borlase explained, radio on the coast became a form of "social media" uniquely adapted to community needs. It brought country music to Labrador, and at the American base in Goose Bay it began to reshape tastes in popular music by its broadcast material and by bringing acclaimed visiting artists. American pop culture was eagerly embraced just as the piano and pump organ had been in earlier decades.

With such change, however, were inevitable losses. For some, the loss of their homes through the closing of Nutak and Hebron was traumatic. For others, the disruption of community cohesiveness and the stretching of local resources by large numbers of new residents was stressful. When those who had lived around the bays or on the islands moved to the larger settlement of Makkovik, they lamented the happy times they had in fishing places such as their summer homes on Dunn's Island where they had fished or trapped, enjoyed family outings and Sunday night singsongs. Music of the 1970s often reflected the need to remember such places. Certain writers, such as Mitchell and Byron Chaulk, were particularly adept at filling that need. Songs changed from descriptions of land used and experienced to nostalgic descriptions of places remembered. Music helped, at that juncture, to cope with social change and to maintain the meaning of place in people's lives.

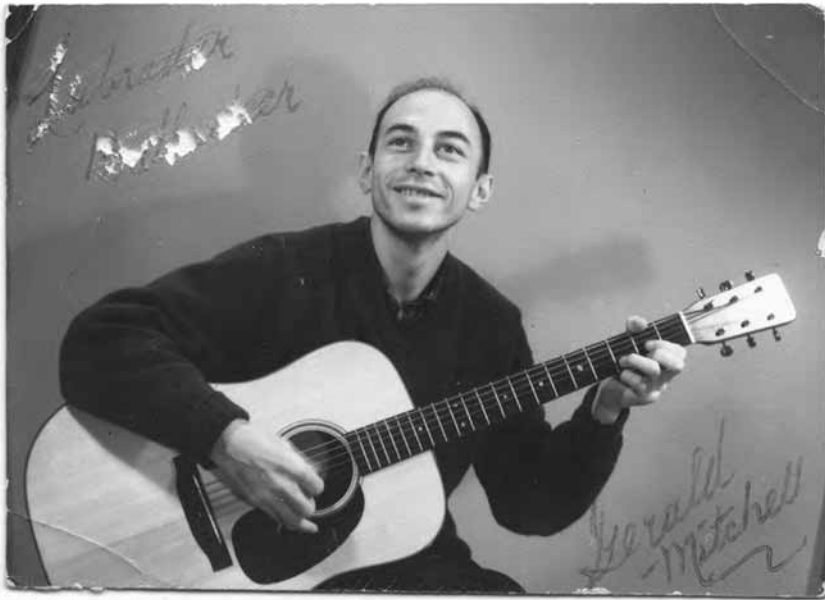
GERALD MITCHELL'S LIFE STORY

This CD project pays tribute to and features a legendary musician and visual artist from Makkovik. Gerald Mitchell was born January 17, 1937, to Albert and Lillian Mitchell of Makkovik. He had one sister and four brothers. The Moravian mission built a boarding school in 1916, which Gerald attended.

I was one of a few who attended day school here in Makkovik in the nineteen forties. There were others there who boarded. They were from the outside, from the north and south. Classes were held at the Mission house, run by the Moravian Mission, and a large church at the north end was connected to it by a passageway.

Gerald vividly remembers the fire of January, 1948, that burned the mission to the ground and affecting his life since "school was over for the rest of the winter."

The Mitchell family has produced distinguished musicians for several generations. Gerald recalls that both his paternal grandparents played the pump organ in their home. His grandfather Robert Mitchell was church organist and his father a trumpeter in the church's brass band. His aunt Susan (who was married to John Andersen) also played. He recalls family songs, often made up about their fishing place on Dunn's Island. Two of his brothers, Robert and David, shared a guitar (an SS Stewart with a black arch top) and



Gerald Mitchell in 1970.



"Sliding on the hill" from the Gerald Mitchell colouring book.

when they were out of the house, Gerald tried to play it. He was fond of the "cowboy songs" he heard on shortwave radio stations from the US. When he was eleven years old, one of his brothers showed him some basic chords and this marked the beginning of his musical career. "It must have been one of those stormy days in late February," he recalls. "I learned three or four [chords] in a couple of different keys. I found I could play a song in about a week."

The American base opened in 1941. Seventeen-year-old Gerald moved in 1954 to Happy Valley-Goose Bay in search of work. His first job was as cook's helper in the Mess Hall on the American base. Later he worked as a house painter and in 1965, as sign painter



Drawing by Gerald Mitchell. Cover image for the 1977 calendar published by Them Days magazine. Used with permission.



Byron "Fiddler" Chaulk, Northwest River. Photo courtesy of Them Days magazine.

for the Canadian base. It was around this time that he began to draw and take a serious interest in visual art, although he recalls his first lesson was much earlier:

One time when I was at the Andersen's place – I was nine or ten... – John Grieve, a Scotsman who married Andrea Andersen, asked me to come outside. We kneeled down on the board walkway. He said, "See how the house looks smaller on the south end, the lines of the top and bottom?" That was my first lesson in drawing in Makkovik. I guess it was later I learned it was a lesson in perspective. [Gerald Mitchell, interview with Joan Andersen, 2009]

He acquired some training as a visual artist, taking a two-year course at Sheridan College in Ontario and working with artists at St. Michael's Print Shop in St. John's. He did drawings for *Them Days* magazine in the 1970s and 80s, (often reproduced on the in-

side front cover of various issues) and created mock-ups of the magazine itself. His artwork was featured in several calendars around this time. His line drawings accurately depict Labrador landscapes and ways of life with detail and nuance.

He was often invited to perform in local schools or at concerts. He got a lucky break in 1964 when a tape shipped from the mainland for broadcast at the new CBC station failed to arrive, and announcer/operator Gordie Rendall asked Gerald to step in to fill in the air space. This performance was so well received that Rendall and his co-worker Joe Goudie convinced CBC to give Gerald a regular radio spot, fifteen minutes a week as "The Labrador Balladeer." They encouraged him to do local songs, including several of his own compositions and others by Makkovik citizens including John Broomfield with Max Jacque, Selby and Eldred Mesher from Cartwright, and a Northwest River songwriter named Byron Chaulk. He also did a hymn on every show for the two years that it was on air.

A fortuitous moment again occurred in 1972 when Chaulk phoned Gerald and asked him to put tunes to some songs he had written. They have both described the momentous afternoon during which they created more than a dozen of the best loved songs of Labrador. Gerald writes:

At his [Byron Chaulk's] house he handed me a pad ...which was filled with his writings. He had a little cassette recorder with which he kept a record of what tunes I would be able to do. The first poem he had written was "Old

Mokami." I found a chord on the guitar and tried something, slowly feeling my way as I played, as to how the tune would go. I got through the three verses. I looked at him and said "How's that? Is that all right?" He just laughed which I figured was "yes" as he looked pleased with the tune...I would put a tune to the words and move to the next one. Other songs were "My Mulligan Home," "Sons of Labrador," "Pearl River," "My Buddy Sam," "I'll Never Go Jigging for Cod Anymore," "The Mighty Churchill Falls," and a few others. I was there that afternoon for around three hours.

Byron Chaulk told an interviewer that he wrote over twenty song lyrics all together for Gerald Mitchell [Cassette tape, Personal collection of Tim Borlase].

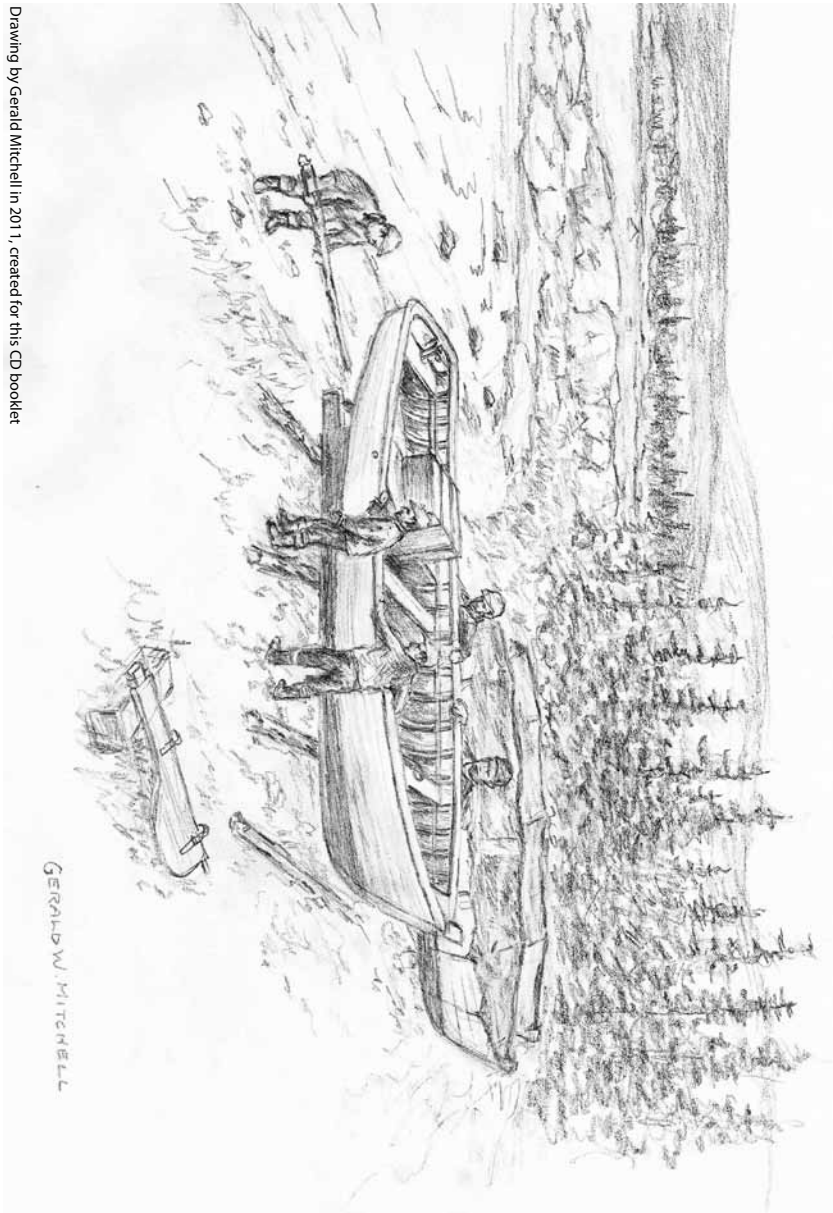
Coincidentally, a Toronto-based company that specialized in country music, Marathon Records, had contacted the CBC in the summer of 1972 in search of local musicians who might wish to record an album. They had just issued an LP recording of the Nain Choir



Harry Martin and Gerald Mitchell performing together at the Labrador Winter Games in 2003. Photo courtesy of Gary Mitchell.

(1971) and wanted to find more Labrador material. Joe Goudie suggested Gerald and became the producer of two historic Mitchell recordings, *Songs of Labrador* and *The Hunt*, both released within a two-year period. After his solo radio spot ended, Gerald continued the association with the CBC, performing with the Mokami Mountaineers, another Joe Goudie production that aired from 1966-1974. Gerald also played for a "kitchen party" TV program.

Between 1987 and 1994, Gerald returned to Makkovik every summer to work in the fish plant. He moved back permanently to Makkovik in 1994, where he lives alone. He often creates artwork when the community needs him to do so. For instance, he created a children's colouring book with pictures of life in a Labrador community. The White Elephant Museum commissioned him to create a mural for their entrance space. He has also painted local portraits (see photo below in the "Song Notes" section). His live musical performances have been infrequent in the past decade but are always well received, as at the Labrador Winter Games in 2003 where he performed with another Labrador celebrity, Harry Martin, and in 2010 where he opened the winter games and performed at the new Lawrence O'Brien Arts Centre. He received the Stompin' Tom Connors Award in 1997 from the East Coast Music Awards, and the Unsung Hero Award of MusicNL at their annual industry celebration in 2010. He was featured on the CBC Radio's *Weekend Arts Magazine* in 1984 and *The Performance Hour* in 1992. Gerald was also celebrated in an article for *Downhome* magazine in May 2010.



SONG NOTES

TRACK 01

Lay That Bucksaw Down

Composed by Newfoundlander Jack Parsons and Makkovik residents Max Jacque and John Broomfield, this song was created in the 1940s to describe life in the pulpwood camp. Specific individuals, including two of the song-writers are named and parodied in the “moniker” song genre. The hard life of the camps is a clear target here; the camp diet contrasts with the generous gifts of three partridges and a head of cabbage given to the women that they wanted to impress. The good times at the depot on Saturday night when you “lay that bucksaw down” are also part of the life style. The song is reminiscent of the descriptions of the dances at the mill house in the early decades of the 20th century. The tune was likely borrowed from “Lay that Pistol Down.” This track is taken from

Gerald Mitchell’s recording of this song on his first LP, *Songs of Labrador* (Horizon 1973). The sound quality of this track and others recorded in the 1970s has deteriorated inconsistently, creating changes in timbre and volume. Text and music were published in *Songs of Labrador* (p. 157) compiled by Tim Borlase.

TRACK 02

Pearly White City

Composed by Arthur F. Ingler (1875-1935) and published in in 1902, this gospel hymn is familiar to Makkovik residents from performances by Torsten Andersen (Torsten Kverna’s grandson). Torsten (1905-1989) and his wife Alice (née Voisey) (1907-1989) were long-time chapel servants of the Moravian church in Makkovik. Torsten often led services in



Dunn’s Island, Photo courtesy of James R. Andersen

the absence of a minister. He performed this gospel hymn unaccompanied at the Lovefeast on Easter Monday and at funerals. Some describe how he sat on a chair at the front of the church on the men's side. Toby Andersen describes the most poignant performances for deceased members of his own family. "The last time he sang it was at the funeral for his son Hayward and grandson Perry Lee who drowned at Dunn's Island. Uncle Jim referred to that performance as being done by an unbelievably strong-willed man. He also sang it at our grandmother Harriet's funeral" (Toby Andersen, personal memoir). When Gerald recorded weekly for CBC radio in the 1970s, he included a hymn in each radio show. He wished to do the same on this CD.

TRACK 03

One Part of My Life

Gerald Mitchell composed only three song texts himself, all of which are about Dunn's Island where his family had a fishing place that he remembers from his youth. The compositions were all created within about a month in 1972 when the CBC, with producer Joe Goudie, was searching for local compositions for Gerald to present as "The Labrador Balladeer." In its heyday, Dunn's Island was a summer home to over 100 people, many of whom worked at a Fishery Products operation there. By the time of the photo above, many of the wooden houses and fishing stages no longer existed, burned by a devastating fire in 1925 or swept away by wind and water. This performance was created as a tribute to "Uncle Ger-

ald" by his nephew Gary Mitchell (voice and guitar) and Gary's daughter Jennifer (accordion). It was arranged and recorded by Tunker Campbell at Mukluk Studios in Happy Valley. This song and many others that emerged in the 1970s convey nostalgia for lost places and ways of the past.

TRACK 04

Captain John Grieve

Another moniker song (like Track 1) was created by Max Jacque and John Broomfield when they worked in the logging camp at Kaipokak Bay where the Scotsman Captain John Grieve was situated. "Captain John Grieve" names people of the community and notable visitors. Scottish cultural influences, including bagpipe music, were introduced to the Makkovik people by



Gerald Mitchell's portrait of Captain John Grieve and his wife Andrea, painted as a wedding present.

Grieve and his associates. A portrait painted by Gerald Mitchell was a wedding gift to John Grieve and his bride Andrea. Gerald recorded this song in 2010 in St. John's, specifically for this project.

TRACK 05 and TRACK 06

Broken Promise

This song, the first one Byron Chaulk wrote, was also the first local song Gerald Mitchell performed on CBC Radio as The Labrador Balladeer. He included it on his second LP, *The Hunt*. On Track 5 is a rare interview with Chaulk in which he describes the events that prompted the composition. Jilted lovers are hardly unique to Labrador, but the experience of a local girl who fell in love with a US serviceman whose tour of duty was of limited duration probably resonated with many Labrador women of the same generation. On Track 6, Gerald Mitchell performs this song. Mitchell borrows the tune of "A Mother's Love is a Blessing," an Irish emigration song of the late 19th century that was well known in Newfoundland and Labrador. A text/music transcription was published in *The Labrador Songbook* (p. 200).

TRACK 07

Grand River

Several songs, including this one with lyrics by Byron Chaulk, have been made about the Grand River, as it was called by trappers

of earlier generations. The river, which was subsequently named the Hamilton River and then the Churchill River after the illustrious British Prime Minister, flows into Lake Melville at Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Gerald never recorded this song at the peak of his career but made this recording when he was in his 70s, during a visit to the MMaP Research Centre in St. John's.

TRACK 08

High on the Mountain of Old Mokami

Mokami Mountain east of Northwest River is a landmark that is hard to miss. It is one of the 14 songs for which Byron Chaulk wrote the words and Gerald Mitchell created a tune in the course of one afternoon in 1972. Chaulk describes the significance of the place for local people: "It's a place where people from Northwest River – teachers, students, what have you – go on weekends. They go on top of Mokami and it's a real good lookout. You can actually see just about all of Lake Melville and the surrounding area." Gerald sometimes borrowed or adapted tunes he knew to fit Chaulk's lyrics. He explained that he used motifs from Tom Collins' "High on a Mountain Overlooking the City," itself based on "Green Grow the Lilacs," a song that was a favourite of early country singers. The song was the first track on Gerald Mitchell's LP *The Hunt* and it has subsequently been recorded by many other Labradorians. A text/music transcription was published in *The Labrador Songbook* (p. 30).

TRACK 09

Young Billie

Composed by Gerald Mitchell, this song was the first that he wrote in response to Joe Goudie's request for original songs. Gerald explains: "As a boy, I had heard of someone from some settlement along the coast that went missing or was lost in snowstorms while travelling by dog team. I used that theme for the song I called 'Young Billie,' as it is not an uncommon name. He had set his traps on an island twelve miles from shore. I was thinking of Dunn's Island where we had our fishing station." The song is written from the perspective of a grieving mother.

TRACK 10

The Lost Hunters

Unlike the tragic "Young Billie," "The Lost Hunters" presents a heroic tale of survival. Gerald's grand-nephew Paul Mitchell wrote the song about an ordeal experienced by his father, Gerald Mitchell Jr., Reg Andersen and Reg's father Harry Andersen. In a tribute to his father who lead the three to safety, Reg Andersen described the event that inspired Paul's song: "In the late spring of 1973, Gerald [Mitchell Jr, age 16], Dad and I became lost while caribou hunting approximately 70 miles west of Nain. In bad weather, we got separated from our skidoos and komatiks with the tent and all our grub. We then decided to try and walk out of the country to Nain. Gerald and I don't know for sure how many brooks the old man carried us across, one by one, on his back with thigh rubbers on. It took us thirteen days to get out but the old man

led us out safe and sound. It might have been a different story if not for him" [Funeral bulletin for Harry Andersen].

Paul conveys the feeling of endless walking through repetition in the song lyrics. The song form departs from the four-line stanzaic structures preferred by earlier Makkovik song writers.

Told since he was a boy that he sounded like Uncle Gerald, Paul has been inspired to develop his musical talents. When he recorded this in 2010, he had already composed thirty songs. He plays with a band playfully named "Search Parly" after his good friend Brandon Parly. Paul's self-taught guitar technique sets him apart from other youth in his community. Paul says, "Without music, I would just be a little paper airplane in hurricane winds. I wouldn't be able to function" [Interview with Joan Andersen, 2010].

TRACK 11

Pearl River

Byron Chaulk remembered the places of his own childhood in several songs, one of them "Pearl River" in the area called Mulligan where he was born. Gerald recorded Pearl River on his first LP and that track is replicated here.

TRACK 12

Grand River Song

Northwest River resident Stewart Michelin composed this song about the trappers who worked along the Grand River that flowed

into Lake Melville. This song is a reissue from Gerald Mitchell's second LP, *The Hunt*. A text/music transcription was published in *The Labrador Songbook* (p. 29).

TRACK 13

Jesusip Pairiallamanga

Performed by the Inuit duo Susie and Joas Onalik at the 1986 Sound Symposium in St. John's, this Inuktitut hymn was one of their favourites. With guitar accompaniment, their adaptation reveals their love of early country music performers such as Wilf Carter.

TRACK 14

North Country

This song by Leslie Parly of Cartwright describes the Mealy Mountains and the ways that community life there has changed. A version named "Our Own North Country" recorded on *Labrador Black Spruce* differs substantially from this performance by Gerald, who adds a verse and alters some of the imagery, demonstrating how a composition gradually transforms in the oral tradition.

TRACK 15

Land Called Labrador

This well known song by Harry Martin, a recording artist and conservation officer from Cartwright, is performed by Brandon Parly. Harry recorded it on his CD *Broken Wings*

(2000). It is an anthem-like celebration of the distinctive geography and lifeways of the territory.

TRACK 16

Big Land Shore

Performed by Brandon Parly, a friend of Paul Mitchell and fellow band member in "Search Parly," this song was written by Richard Neville about his home town of Black Tickle. It describes a rock band that Neville formed there. The band played along the south coast of Labrador for ten years, frequently entertaining transient fishermen during the summer. Neville says, "I have had so much respect for Uncle Gerald over the years and his contribution to music here in Labrador" [email 2010].

TRACK 17

We Sons of Labrador

Chaulk and Mitchell's "We Sons of Labrador" has become something of an anthem. On Gerald Mitchell's original vinyl recording (*The Hunt*, 1970) where it was the closing track, Joe Goudie described it as "Byron Chaulk's song of dedication to his father and all the other fathers who hunted and trapped along the shores of Lake Melville, the Grand River, the Kenamu River, the Naskopi River and all the other trapping and fishing grounds. 'The heritage we proudly claim, WE SONS OF LABRADOR'." A music and text transcription was published in *The Labrador Songbook* (p. 56).

REFERENCES CITED

- Andersen, Joan. 1996. *Makkovik 100Years Plus*. Makkovik: Joan Andersen in collaboration with R-B Books.
- Ben-Dor, Shmuel. 1966. *Makkovik: Eskimos and Settlers in a Labrador Community. A Contrastive Study in Adaptation*. St. John's: ISER.
- Borlase, Tim. 2007. "The Life and Afterlife of a Folksong Collection: The Labrador Songbook Experience." *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 22/1: 361-6.
- _____. 1993. *The Labrador Songbook*. Labrador East Integrated School Board. Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions.
- Brice-Bennett, Carol. 1977. *Our Footprints are Everywhere: Inuit Land Use and Occupancy in Labrador*. N.p.: Labrador Inuit Association.
- Gordon, Tom. 2007. "Found in Translation: The Inuit Voice in Moravian Music." *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 22/1: 287-314.
- Hutchings, Thomas. 1988. "Inspiring Artist is Under-rated." *The Labradorian*. May 4, 1988.
- Kennedy, John C. 1982. *Holding the Line. Ethnic Boundaries in a Northern Labrador Community*. St. John's: ISER.
- Kennedy, John C. 2000. "People of the bays and headlands." *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 16/1: 78-81.
- Moravian Mission. Newsletters. 1949, 1950.
- Paddon, Harry and Ron Romkey. 2003. *The Labrador Memoir of Dr. Harry Paddon, 1912-1938*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Peacock, Frederick William. 1986. *Reflections from a Snowhouse*. St. John's: Breakwater Books. *Them Days Magazine*. Issues 3/1, 3/3, 3/4, 4/4, 5/3, 5/4, 8/4, 9/2, 13/4, 14/3, 15/1, 16/3, 18/3, 19/1, 20/1, 20/4, 21/2, 31/1, 31/2.
- Rollmann, Hans. 2002. *Through Moravian Eyes: 250Years of Art, Photographs & Records*. St. John's: Special Celebrations Corporation, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, 2002.
- White Elephant Museum. 2000. Newsletter.

The Project Team

This CD project has been a team effort. Joan Andersen brought the idea for a CD to the MMAp Research Centre and she has spear-headed the local research, conducting many interviews and gathering photos and information. Joan and MMAp Director, Beverley Diamond, drafted the text for the booklet. Gerald Mitchell has been part of the dialogue from the beginning of the project; he created an original drawing for the booklet, wrote down some of his memories and shared others with us in conversation. His nephew Gary Mitchell has also contributed information, photos, and corrections to early drafts of the text. Martha MacDonald hosted our initial team meeting at the Labrador Institute and Tim Borlase served as a consultant while also contributing audio material from his personal collection. Many other Labradorians contributed personal memoirs or interviews (see Acknowledgements).

FOUR PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED SONGS BY GERALD MITCHELL

One Part of My Life

Gerald Mitchell

On an is- land where we spend our sum- mers, The rock-y shore, the
6 har - bour I see. Five fami - lies we were, sur - vi - ving year by year, From
13 God's fine boun- of the sea. Yet some-times I look back to
19 when I was a boy, The sum- mers that I can't quite for - get, When
25 we were all to - ge-ther all the peo-ple that I knew, It's
29 one part of my life I pic - ture yet.

I could see the waters driven in the fall,
And old northern driving rain around the door,
When the floaters left their schooners and came
ashore to Uncle John's,
They had to see the wind along the shore.

I listen to the old man tell his stories,
Stretched out upon a hard old wooden bench,
The romance of the sailing days, the peace of ancient men,
The old man told all the people he knew back then.

Chorus:
Yet sometimes I looks back to when I was a boy,
The summers that I can't quite forget,
When we were all together all the people that I knew,
It's one part of my life I picture yet.

Then late evening, all are out together,
We're piling the harvest on the bawn,
With the breezes quiet, the sea is shining pearl,
In the glow of the lamps that now are gone.

Yes sometimes I look back to when I was a boy,
The summers that I can't quite forget,
When we were all together, all the people that I knew,
It's one part of my life I picture yet.

Broken Promise

Gerald Mitchell and Byron Chaulk

9 Come list - en to my stor - y. Hear what I have to say A -
 9 bout an A - me - ri - can Air Force boy Who was sta - tioned in Goose Bay. His
 17 name I will not men - tion, For he was not a - lone. Like
 25 ma - ny o - ther ser - vice men When far a - way from home.

He courted here a maiden,
 A native of this land,
 And though this girl was young in years,
 She said she loved this man.
 And so the two they courted
 For seven months or more,
 And then this bold young soldier boy
 He journeyed from our shore.

Before the two had parted,
 Before the tears were shed,
 He promised to return again
 And to this young girl wed.
 The years are passing slowly
 And still she waits in vain,
 For her gay young soldier boy
 Way down in southern Maine.

This young girl's love was stronger
 Than any ever seen.
 It was a true unbending love
 And she was just sixteen.
 Come back, come back young soldier,
 For you are far away
 Come back and mend a breaking heart
 That is waiting in Goose Bay.

Then one day a letter
 She opened with trembling hand.
 The return address she saw at once
 Was a far off distant land.
 It read "My darling sweetheart
 I cannot live alone.
 I must return and marry you.
 I must have you for my own."

And so the two were married,
 Blessed by the Lord above.
 The broken promise kept at last,
 By the faith of their true love.

Young Billie

Gerald Mitchell

Ossia

5 In a qui - et nor - thern vil - lage oh not so long a - go, a
 5 dark haired mo - ther stood and watched the win - ter sun - rise go. Look - ing from her ca - bin
 10 win - dow, out a - cross the fro - zen bay, On a cold day in the
 14 month of March for her boy who'd gone a - way.

Young Billie left three days before with his team of dogs so strong.
 He'd gone to see his fox traps but now he'd been gone too long.
 On a rocky island 12 miles from shore with his tent and stove and gun,
 He had set his traps to try and catch the white fox on the run.

Yesterday the strong winds of March had gripped the frozen land,
 The snows had drifted oh so high. She hoped Billie was safe and warm.
 Raised to know the winter winds, to know their great demands,
 She knew that he would take great care not to travel in the storm.

He was due back yesterday evening, but because of the sudden storm.
 He must have stayed at this trapping grounds to keep himself from harm.
 But uneasiness still lined her face for she was all alone.
 Her husband had died three years before. "Dear God help young Billie home!"

About ten o'clock that morning, a search party was formed.
 They were hoping he had not become a victim of the storm.
 Two dog teams with four hardy men set out to find the trail
 Of Billie the young trapper. They were hoping all was well.

The next hour passed by slowly, the going rough offshore,
 Travelling over snow-covered ice on the coast of Labrador.
 Then the lead dogs caught the scent of trapper Billie's trail
 And pushed onward more surely now. They must find him without fail.

They found him there beside his sleigh all frozen in the wind,
 The struggle still marked upon his face. A struggle it must have been.
 He had left his island trapping ground. Then the storm came on.
 He was blinded by the driven snow. Billie could not go home.

So in a quiet northern village, not so long ago,
 A dark-haired mother stood and watched a golden sunset glow,
 Looking from her cabin window, out across the frozen bay,
 She was thinking of young Billie who had now gone away.

Broken Promise

Gerald Mitchell and Byron Chaulk

Nest-ing there be-neath the pines, Where the bubb-ling wa-ter whines, Danc-ing gai-ly
 6 by its gol-den shore. That's where Pearl Ri-ver makes its way, Out in-to Mul-li-gan
 12 Bay, And no-bo-dy lives there a-ny more. No-bo-dy lives there. No-bo-dy
 19 lives there. No-bo-dy lives there an-y - more. It was once a trap-pers
 25 home. As Pearl Ri-ver it was known. But no-bo-dy lives there a-ny more.

Proudly stand the mighty trees,
 Swaying gently in the breeze,
 As they stood so many years before.
 When children skipped there to and fro,
 Oh so many years ago,
 But nobody lives there any more.

Where the old homes used to stand
 Proudly on that virgin land,
 Now flowers bloom and beautify the shore.
 You can hear a summer breeze,
 Singing softly in the trees.
 But nobody lives there any more.