



*“The photograph was made on Change Islands as part of a project I have been photographing for some time. The project deals with various aspects of small islands and island life and spans, so far, two countries and two provinces.” Bojan Furst, [www.bojanfurst.com](http://www.bojanfurst.com)*

## ICH Program Awarded Grant to Document Root Cellar Traditions

*By Crystal Braye*

The Helen Creighton Folklore Society (HCFS) has awarded a grant valued at \$750 to help support our 3rd annual Folklife Festival. Named for folklorist Helen Creighton (1899-1989) who conducted work on traditional music and lore of Maritime Canada, the HCFS promotes projects that reflect the diversity of the region as revealed in the work started by Dr. Creighton. The Society encourages and supports the work of scholars, researchers, museums, and archives in the research, collection and publication of folklore and folklife, primarily related to the Atlantic Canada Region.

The funding provided by the HCFS will help to support this year’s annual Folklife Festival *Seeds to Supper*, which will focus on agriculture, farming traditions, food production, and animal husbandry. Agriculture traditions have been identified an area of Newfoundland and Labrador folklife that is currently undergoing rapid transformation. The festival will explore the historical significance of agricultural, contemporary traditions, food security and self-sufficiency movements that are active in the Northern Avalon Region. As part of this project, interviews with famers and food producers will be conducted on local farming practices and will be made available online. Local tradition bearers will be identified and interviewed so that their knowledge and skills can be recorded and showcased as part of the 2011 Folklife Festival.



Traditional root cellars will be an area of particular interest. These underground or partially underground structures are used to protect food such as vegetables, berries and preservatives from frost in the winter and heat in the summer. They were constructed by digging a hole in the earth, reinforcing with wood, rock, and mortar, and then covering with sod leaving small door for access. Once commonplace throughout Newfoundland, root cellars provide consistent humidity and temperature levels essential for food security prior to the introduction of electricity and refrigeration.

In addition to being a source of folklore in children's games, fairy legends and other local lore, root cellars found throughout the province have become a prominent symbol of Newfoundland's agricultural heritage and also represent current potential for food

conscious practices. *Seeds to Supper* will document the importance of root cellars to early farming and gardening practices in Newfoundland and reveal the ways in which this revived interest is taking shape in food security and self-sufficiency movements within our province.

*If you have a root cellar you currently use, or memories of root cellars in your family's past that you would like to share, contact Crystal Braye at 1-888-739-1892 ext 5, or email her at [folklore.coop@gmail.com](mailto:folklore.coop@gmail.com).*

***Photo above: Double door construction on a restored root cellar along the Bay Roberts Heritage Trail. Photo courtesy Barbara Jarvis.***

***Photos below: Various styles and sizes of root cellars from Elliston and Maberly, Bonavista Peninsula. Photos courtesy Barbara Jarvis and HFNL.***

