Singers and Songs from the Big Land
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Singers and Songs from the Big Land is a research project and CD production associated with the “Back on Track” archival CD series produced by the MMaP Research Centre. The current project seeks to build on a long history of audio recording initiatives, many by Labradorians themselves. With a view to producing one or more CDs, we propose to digitize and study several substantial Labrador audio collections, to gather relevant interviews and biographical material from Labrador institutions as well as private collections, and to mobilize an interdisciplinary and interlocal research and production team consisting of Beverley Diamond (MMaP Research Centre), Martha MacDonald (Labrador Institute), Tim Borlase (Past-Director, Labrador Institute), Joan Anderson (White Elephant Museum), and Joe Goudie (broadcaster, politician). Our research will focus on singers who were widely known as song carriers but were either not active in the production of commercial material (such as Edna Campbell, John Hodder, Leo O’Brien, Ned O’Dell, Leander Roberts, Jerry Judge, Selby Mesher, and many others) or who, like Gerald Mitchell, created songs that have become part of the oral memory of Labrador. The songs generate questions about social issues that the team will study: how songs articulate memories of place; how nostalgia functions in social settings where settlements have been relocated; how musical genres are invested with social meaning; how cultural knowledge is embodied in song texts.