

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA)

Elizabeth Greenleaf Fonds Description

Fonds description written by Anita Best under the co-sponsorship of the Canadian Council of Archives and the Association of Newfoundland & Labrador Archives. Reformatted by Renee Lawrence.

TITLE:

Elisabeth Greenleaf Fonds

COLLECTION NUMBER:

Special Collection Number SCI.2
Accession Number 82-189

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

14 cm of textual records

DATES:

1920-1929

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Elisabeth Bristol (1895-1980), the daughter of a biology professor, was born in New York in 1895, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Vassar College in 1917. In 1920 she volunteered to teach for the Grenfell Mission summer school at Sally's Cove, near Bonne Bay on the west coast of Newfoundland. There she heard traditional singing for the first time and began to write down the songs she heard. When she reported this, she was encouraged by Vassar College to continue her collecting.

In 1921 she returned to Newfoundland to teach for a summer, and again in 1929 with a musicologist, Grace Yarrow (Mansfield) as part of the Vassar College Folk-lore Expedition to Newfoundland. They

travelled to a few communities on the east and west coasts of the island and made an extensive collection of folksongs and tunes.

In 1933 the Harvard University Press published this collection as *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*. This was the first scholarly publication of a collection of Newfoundland folksongs and one of the first North American collections to give the tunes equal emphasis with the texts. It also has an introduction containing Greenleaf's description of Newfoundland outport life in the 1920s.

Greenleaf also gathered and published a collection of traditional riddles, reprinted by Edith Fowke in 1976 in her *Folklore of Canada*. She taught school from Maine to Mississippi with sojourns in West Virginia and New York. She died in Avondale, Rhode Island in 1980.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

Fonds consists of materials collected during trips to Newfoundland In 1920, 1921 and 1929. It includes music composition books containing field notes, musical transcriptions and textual transcriptions; correspondence to and from her family; drafts of Newfoundland Days, an unpublished article written for Scribner's magazine; book reviews pertaining to *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*.

RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS:

Access with permission of archivist; reference copies available

TERMS GOVERNING USE AND REPRODUCTION:

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CONDITION:

Original material somewhat fragile

LANGUAGE:

English

ACCOMPANYING MATERIAL:

A photocopy of Robert D. Madison's booklet *Newfoundland Summers: The Ballad Collecting of Elisabeth Bristol Greenleaf*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Title based on creator and contents of fonds