Newfoundland Studies

The Bard of Prescott Street Meets Tin Pan Alley: The Vanity Press Sheet Music Publications of John Burke

Michael Taft

Volume 6, numéro 1, spring 1990

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/nflds6_1art03

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)

Faculty of Arts, Memorial University

ISSN

1198-8614 (imprimé)
1715-1430 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article

Taft, M. (1990). The Bard of Prescott Street Meets Tin Pan Alley: The Vanity Press Sheet Music Publications of John Burke. *Newfoundland Studies*, *6*(1), 56–73.

The Bard of Prescott Street Meets Tin Pan Alley: The Vanity Press Sheet Music Publications of John Burke

MICHAEL TAFT

JOHN BURKE, THE "BARD OF PRESCOTT STREET," IS almost as well-known a figure in Newfoundland studies as he was in turn-of-the-century St. John's. Song-maker, broadside-printer, songbook-publisher, and producer of musicals, Burke was perhaps the most important figure of his day in Newfoundland popular music. Most of his songs were topical ballads based on events of greater or lesser importance in Newfoundland — and more specifically in St. John's. His ballads, written in the tradition of Irish popular song, were often gossipy and satirical in nature, making fun of local dignitaries or finding the humour in otherwise humourless situations; yet he could also write serious ballads about events which demanded thoughtful, commemorative treatment, such as shipwrecks and deaths.[1]

The purpose of this small contribution to Burkeiana is to bring to light some songs hitherto unnoticed in the study of this man, and perhaps more importantly, to reveal a medium for Burke's songs unrecognized in previous research. Although Burke's major sources of dissemination for his songs were self-produced broadsides and songbooks, newspapers, stage productions, and oral tradition, he was aware of a larger market for his material which could not easily be reached by these media — a market which extended well beyond St. John's, the outports or even the expatriate enclaves of Newfoundlanders in mainland cities.

Like many others in North America, Burke made use of vanity press sheet music publishers to disseminate his songs beyond his immediate

NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES 6, 1 (1990)
0823-1737

audience. From the turn of the century to at least the early 1920s, establishments and individuals in American east coast cities advertised for song lyrics; they would set these lyrics to piano music (if, as in most cases, no music accompanied the lyrics), copyright them in the name of the lyricist, and then send stacks of the printed sheet music back to the copyright-holder — all, of course, for a fee from the lyricist. The United States copyright records list thousands of such songs: lyrics written by people from Newfoundland to California, and usually with the music supplied by the Madden Music Company, the Metropolitan Music Company, or such individual tune-smiths as Vivian Brooks, Raymond A. Browne, L.A. Clarke, E.S.S. Huntington, Charles J.W. Jerreld, Don Loring, Genevieve Scott, and Jack Stanley. The names of these tune-smiths will not be found in the standard reference books on American music, yet the output of any one of them rivals the likes of Irving Berlin, and their influence on twentieth-century popular music was considerable.

The fact that these tune-smiths cranked out their music in a rather mechanical way, perhaps reproducing variations on the same tune hundreds of times to satisfy their clientele, and the fact that the operation was a form of vanity press, has made this entire enterprise distasteful to music historians, who have avoided this phenomenon rather than study it.[2] Yet without these composers, hundreds of local songwriters (perhaps, like Burke, the balladeers and poets for their communities) would have remained undocumented.

Moreover, the benefit of these tune-smiths to their customers did not lie in bringing "fame and fortune" to local artists — no matter what the individual songwriters might have expected; by copyrighting their songs and sending them printed sheet music of their compositions, the tune-smiths gave these songwriters "official" recognition in the world of popular music. Vanity presses have always been in the business of boosting the egos of writers and giving them seeming, if not actual, status. When local composers displayed their printed music before their families or communities — and thereby gained local recognition for their talents — they had already received benefit from the tune-smiths.

If these same songwriters hoped that the printed versions of their songs would lead to recognition beyond their communities, however, their hopes were in almost every case dashed.[3] All the tune-smiths could offer was what one of them claimed on the front and back of their sheet music:

> [front]: This copy to be used solely for professional demonstrating and exploiting purposes and is not to be exhibited for sale. Anyone violating this command will be prosecuted under the copyright law by the copyright owner.
>
> To the musical and singing members of the theatrical profession: the performing rights of this song are unconditionally released to those who are selected to have copies submitted to for consideration for professional use. For all other rights apply to the owner of the copyright (name and P.O. address appearing on page 2 of this copy). Publishers: please note statement on back page.

[back]: To all reputable music publishers

This copy is issued and submitted to you, for the purpose of having you consider its merits, and pass upon its availability for publication and admission to your catalogue.

The owner of the copyright, whose name and address appears [sic] on page two of this copy, will be glad to consider any offer you may see fit to make for the publication rights, either by outright purchase, or under a royalty contract.

Copies are also being submitted to a carefully selected number of professional singers, for consideration as to its adaptability for use in their repertoire with a view to affording you a public demonstration, and to further its popularity. Your kind consideration is earnestly requested.[4]

This last promise — to submit the songs to professional singers — probably amounted to displaying a stack of such music in the tune-smiths' offices for the perusal of any performer who might happen by. Protecting songs from copyright infringement, as well as the further printing, performing and other forms of dissemination, were entirely the responsibility of the local songwriters.

Burke's motives and expectations in using the services of a vanity press can now be no more than a matter of speculation, yet it is reasonable to assume that his local reputation for songwriting led him to chance wider fame; and that a professionally-printed piece of sheet music would, if nothing else, enhance his local reputation more than would the cheap two-penny broadsides and songbooks to which his St. John's public were accustomed. Furthermore, by the time Burke availed himself of these services, his local fame was assured and he may well have had visions of greater acclaim off the island.

Thus it was that in 1912 Burke risked a few dollars by sending the words and music of his "Kelligrew's Soiree" to the Washington music publisher, H. Kirkus Dugdale. This song, which Burke first published in 1904, was his most popular, and perhaps for this reason he chose this comic ballad rather than any of his other compositions to send to the publishers. Indeed, "Kelligrew's Soiree" became Burke's only off-island hit, but this occurred only some years after his death in 1930.[5]

The title page of the published sheet music reads as follows:

The Kelligrew's Soiree
By John Burke
5
Published and sold by the H. Kirkus Dugdale Co. Inc.
(The Big Music Publishers)
Washington D C

The meaning of the numeral 5 is a mystery, as this was not one of five pieces by Burke, nor does the sheet music seem to be part of any series. According to the United States Copyright Office records, the song was published December 12, 1912, and was deposited for copyright on February 1, 1913. Its copyright number is E306216.[6] The text takes up the next four pages of the sheet music:

"The Kelligrew's Soiree"
by John Burke

You may talk of Clara Nowlin's ball,
Or anything you choose,
But it couldn't hold a snuff box,
To the spree at Kelligrew's,
If you want your eyeballs straightened,
Just come out next week with me,
And you'll have to wear your glasses,
At the Kelligrew's soiree.
CHORUS: There was birch rhine, tar twine,
Sherry wine and turpentine,
Joints and calavances,
Ginger beer and tea;
There was pig's feet, cow's meat,
Dumplin's boiled in a sheet,
Dandelion and crackies feet,
At the Kelligrew's soiree.
Oh, I borrowed Clumey's beaver,
As I squared my yards to sail,
And a swallow-tail from Hogan,
That was foxy on the tail,
Billy Cudihy's old working pants,
And Patsy Nowlin's shoes,
And an old white vest from Fogarty,
To sport in Kelligrew's.
CHORUS: There was Tom King, Jim Flynn,
Jack Johnson, champion of the ring,
All the boxers I could bring,
They came along with me,
Joe Payne, Dan Lane,
Jim Jeffries and Jake Kilrain,
Corbett from the State of Maine,
At the Kelligrew's soiree.
Oh, when I arrived at Betsy Snook's,
That night at half past eight,
The place was black with carriages,
Stood waiting at the gate,
With Clumey's funnel on my pate,
The first words Betsy said:
"Here, comes a local preacher,
And the pulpit on his head."
CHORUS: There was Judge Milley, Joe Lily,
Tantuaw and Misses Tilley,
Dancing like a filly it would do you good to see,
Bill Hughes, Sam Mews,
Wilson, Taft and Teddy Roose,
Bryant sitting in the blues,
At the Kelligrew's soiree.
"The Saratoga Lancers first,"
Miss Betsy kindly said,

Sure, I danced with Nancy Cronon,
And her grannie on the head,
And Hogan danced with Betsy,
Why, you should have seen his shoes!
As he lashed old muskets from the wall,
That night at Kelligrew's.
CHORUS: There was boiled guineas, cold guineas,
Bullock's hearts and piccanninies,
Ev'rything to catch the pennies,
'Twould raise your heart to see,
Boiled duff, cold duff, apple jam was in a cuff.
I tell you, boys, we had enough,
At the Kelligrew's soiree.

No two printings of this song are exactly the same, yet the variations between this printing and others extend beyond simple misprints or other unsubstantive differences. This sheet music version is certainly similar to the one printed in the several editions of the Doyle songbook — which established the canon of Newfoundland popular songs for most other printed collections[7] — and is different enough from the *Old Home Week Songster* version to indicate that Burke quite consciously reworked the song between the years 1904 and 1912.

Paul Mercer has claimed that one reason for the popularity of "The Kelligrew's Soiree" is that, unlike most of Burke's other songs, it avoids topical references and thus avoids becoming dated (1974:[40]). While this is true of the 1904 version, Burke added certain topical references in the 1912 version — the version which has achieved widespread popularity. In fact, these changes may very well have been Burke's attempt to make the song more popular, not among his traditional audience in St. John's, but among the greater, off-island population which he was trying to reach through the publication of the sheet music.

The 1904 version is almost entirely local in its references to people and in its use of Newfoundland dialect. George Cluney, Hogan, Bill Cuddihy, Martin Casey, Fogarty, Betsy Snook, Mr. Binks, Mrs. Tilley, and Crooked Flavin would all seem to be local personalities, undoubtedly well-known to Burke and his St. John's audience (for the 1904 version, see Kirwin, ed. 1982: 34-5). Foods such as "calavances," "crackies' meat," "brewse," and "duff," and terms such as "foxy" (meaning reddish in colour) and "head" (meaning the seaward end of a fishing wharf) would echo in the ears of anyone familiar with Newfoundland dialect (see Story, Kirwin and Widdowson). Burke's only allusions to off-island culture (beyond various, universally-recognized foods) are to the dance, Saratoga lancers, and to Clara Nolan's ball — a reference to a nineteenth-century American vaudeville song of the same name (Fowke 202).

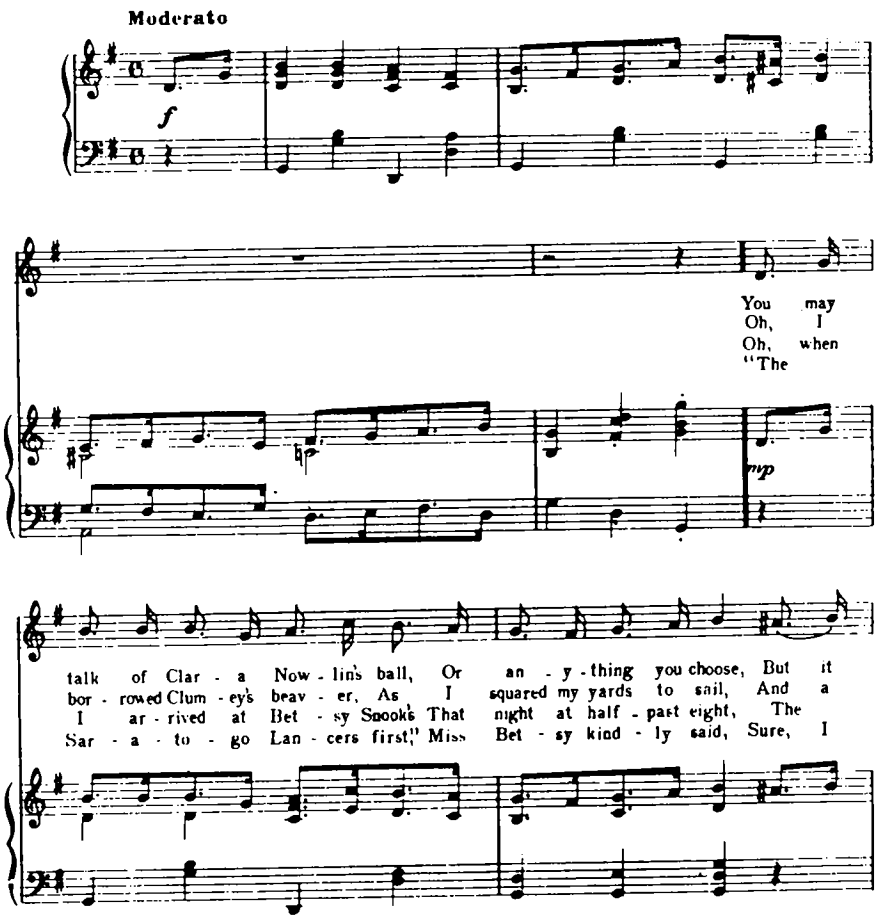
The Kelligrew's Soiree

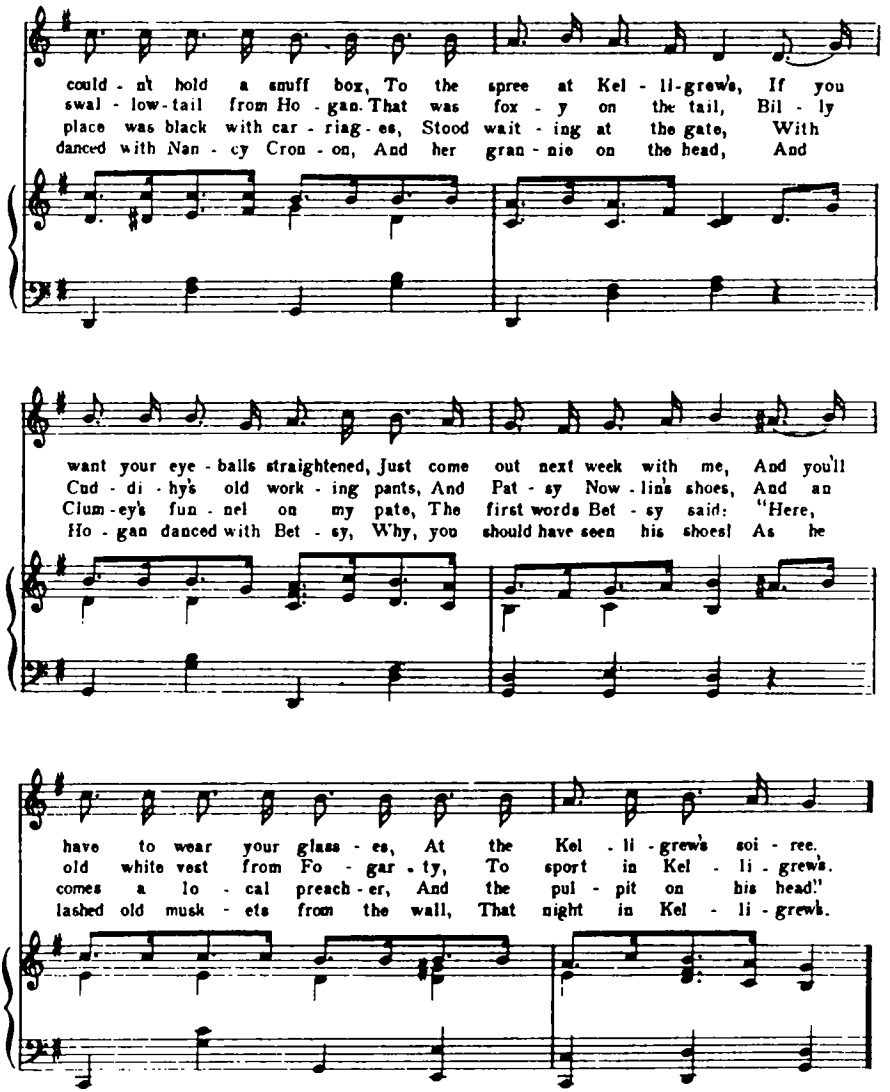
By JOHN BURKE

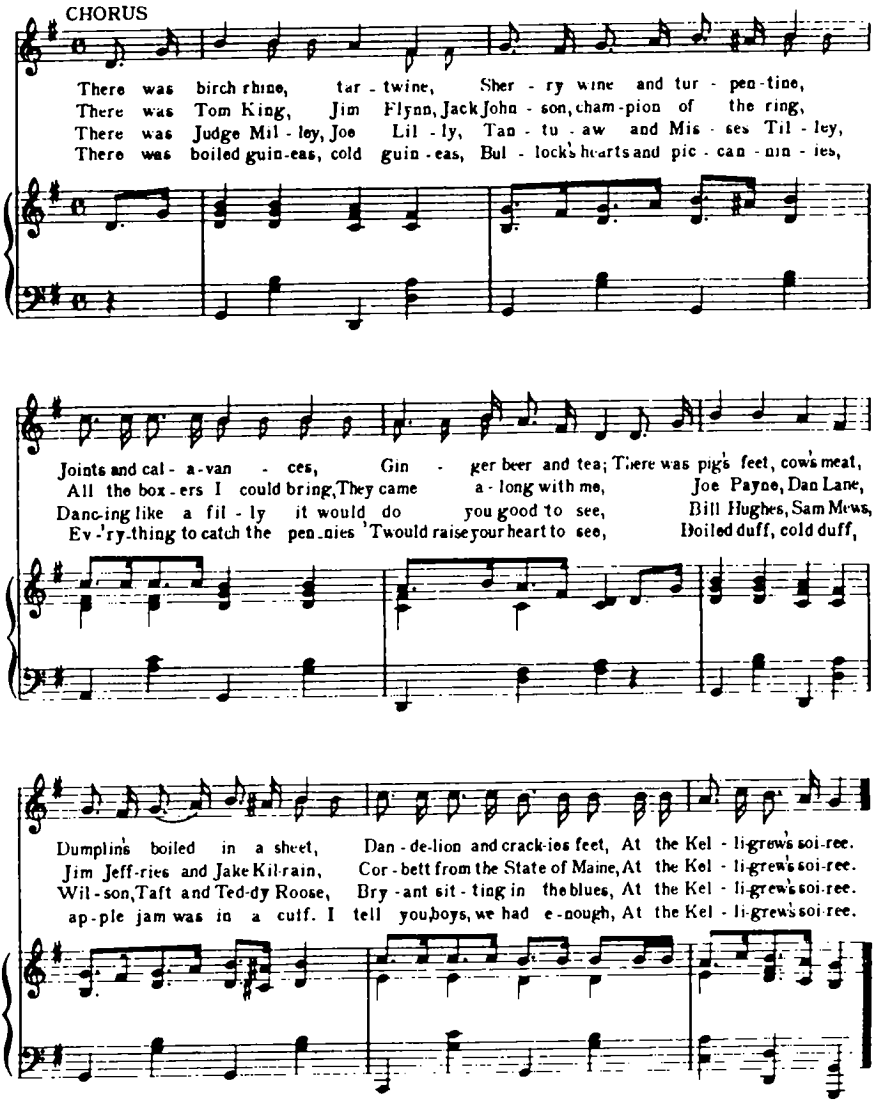
5

"The Kelligrew's Soiree"

By JOHN BURKE




could - n't hold a snuff box, To the spree at Kel - li-grew's, If you
swal - low-tail from Ho - gan. That was fox - y on the tail, Bil - ly
place was black with car - riag - es, Stood wait - ing at the gate, With
danced with Nan - cy Cron - on, And her gran - nie on the head, And
want your eye - balls straightened, Just come out next week with me, And you'll
Cud - di - hy's old work - ing pants, And Pat - sy Now - lin's shoes, And an
Clum - ey's fun - nel on my pate, The first words Bet - sy said: "Here,
Ho - gan danced with Bet - sy, Why, you should have seen his shoes! As he
have to wear your glass - es, At the Kel - li - grew's soi - ree.
old white vest from Fo - gar - ty, To sport in Kel - li - grew's.
comes a lo - cal preach - er, And the pul - pit on his head!"
lashed old musk - ets from the wall, That night in Kel - li - grew's.


CHORUS
There was birch rhine, tar - twine, Sher - ry wine and tur - pen - tine,
There was Tom King, Jim Flynn, Jack John - son, cham - pion of the ring,
There was Judge Mil - ley, Joe Lil - ly, Tan - tu - aw and Mis - ses Til - ley,
There was boiled guin-eas, cold guin - eas, Bul - lock's hearts and pic - can - nin - ies,
Joints and cal - a-van - ces, Gin - ger beer and tea; There was pig's feet, cow's meat,
All the box - ers I could bring, They came a - long with me, Joe Payne, Dan Lane,
Danc-ing like a fil - ly it would do you good to see, Bill Hughes, Sam Mews,
Ev - 'ry-thing to catch the pen-nies 'Twould raise your heart to see, Boiled duff, cold duff,
Dumplins boiled in a sheet, Dan - de-lion and crack-ies feet, At the Kel - li-grew's soi-ree.
Jim Jeff-ries and Jake Kil-rain, Cor - bett from the State of Maine, At the Kel - li-grew's soi-ree.
Wil - son, Taft and Ted-dy Roose, Bry - ant sit - ting in the blues, At the Kel - li-grew's soi-ree.
ap - ple jam was in a cuff. I tell you boys, we had e - nough, At the Kel - li-grew's soi-ree.

Burke's 1912 sheet music version retains much of the Newfoundland dialect, and it still includes as many local personalities, although not all the same ones: George Cluney remains (transformed to Clumey) as does Bill Cudihy (having lost a *d*), Betsy Snook, Mrs. Tilley and Hogan. Patsy Nowlin replaces Martin Casey as the shoe-lender, and Nancy Cronon becomes the narrator's dancing-partner, replacing Mrs. Tilley; perhaps these replacements reflect the changing scene of local characters in St. John's between 1904 and 1912. But the 1912 version is no longer entirely dependent on knowledge of the local scene; it is no longer entirely an in-joke for Burke's neighbours.

In changing the second and third choruses of the 1912 version, Burke addresses the concerns of the outside world, and in the process makes the song more understandable and comfortable for non-Newfoundlanders than was the 1904 version. While a turn-of-the-century North American audience might be used to dialect songs, and might even find strange Newfoundland words and phrases comical and quaint,[8] they might tire of too many allusions to personalities who would have no significance to them. Thus, Burke includes as guests at the soiree the names of well-known prize fighters in the second chorus and contemporary American political figures in the third chorus. The resulting unlikely guest-list retains all the comic features of the 1904 version, while including the North American audience in an assumed knowledge of contemporary celebrities.

The second chorus lists fighters who, for the most part, would have been familiar to a late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century audience. Tom King held the British Crown in 1862 and was the World Champion in bare-knuckle prize fighting in 1863 (Fleischer and Andre 52). "Fireman" Jim Flynn was beaten in a match in 1907 by Jack Johnson who was, as the song says, "champion of the ring" from 1908 to 1915. I cannot track down Joe Payne or Dan Lane,[9] but the three other fighters mentioned were all well-known figures: Jim Jeffries held the heavyweight title from 1899 to 1905; Jake Kilrain was the loser to champion John L. Sullivan in a marathon 75-round, bare-knuckle fight in Richburg, Mississippi, in 1889; and James J. "Gentleman Jim" Corbett beat Sullivan and was champion from 1892 to 1897 (see Fleischer and Andre, Larner, and Sammons).

If some of these fighters were obscure to a 1912 audience, the political figures in the third chorus were very much in the news at the time this sheet music was published. In the November 1912 American presidential election, Woodrow Wilson of the Democrats defeated the incumbent Republican president, William Howard Taft. Taft's defeat may well have been caused by Theodore Roosevelt, who ran for the National Progressive Party — known popularly as the Bull Moose Party — effectively drawing away some of Taft's Republican support (see Gable).

"Bryant sitting in the blues" refers to William Jennings Bryan, the great American populist, orator and three-time Democratic candidate. He had been

defeated by McKinley in 1896 and 1900 and again in 1908 by Taft; his blue mood at the soiree would have been well-understood by an American audience (see Ashby).

This version of "The Kelligrew's Soiree" is Burke's most cosmopolitan, and his choice of sports and politics to extend the popularity of the song beyond the island was wise. The universal appeal of these two themes is obvious. As well, both topics were ones with which Burke was quite familiar. Many of his satirical songs show his keen understanding of local politics and, as a sophisticated, urban man of his times, he was probably well aware of off-island political events. His songs about the Quidi Vidi Regatta and other boat races ("The Eleven Brave Irish Boys," "The Race Boat *Iris*," "Brush Up Your Beaver," and "The Terra Nova Regatta"), his commemoration of two foot races ("The Twenty Mile Walking Match" and "How Tapper Lost the Race"), and his membership on the St. John's Regatta Committee all speak to his interest in sports. In fact, one of the very few songs Burke penned which celebrated an event totally unconnected to Newfoundland commemorated the March 17, 1897, fight between Bob Fitzsimmons and Jim Corbett ("Fitzsimmons Beat Corbett").[10]

The music for "The Kelligrew's Soiree" would not have hurt its popularity, either on the island or on the mainland. As Mercer has noted, Burke was not a composer of music; rather, he borrowed well-known traditional and popular tunes, or employed others to set his songs to music (1974: [7]). "The Kelligrew's Soiree" was no exception. Burke took the tune from the Irish music hall songs, "The Irish Jubilee" and "Lanigan's Ball," thus giving his song a familiar association for Irish-American listeners, among others (Fowke 202).

The tune remained unchanged in subsequent printings of this song, but the most popular version of "The Kelligrew's Soiree" seems to be a synthesis of the 1904 and 1912 versions. The song, as published in the Doyle songbooks and as commonly sung both on and off the island, retains some of the allusions to mainland sports and politics, but relegates all these mentions to a single chorus:

> There was Bill Mews, Dan Hughes,
> Wilson, Taft and Teddy Roose,
> While Bryant he sat in the blues
> And looking hard at me;
> Jim Fling, Tom King,
> And Johnson, champion of the ring,
> And all the boxers I could bring,
> At the Kelligrew's Soiree. (Doyle 31)

"Flynn" has become "Fling," while four of the other boxers have been dropped from the song. The second chorus in this latter version includes some of the local characters associated with the American political figures of the

1912 version, albeit in altered form, and extends this list to include other local notables:

> There was Dan Milley, Joe Lilly,
> Tantan and Mrs. Tilley,
> Dancing like a little filly;
> 'Twould raise your heart to see.
> Jim Brine, Din Ryan, Flipper Smith and Caroline;
> I tell you boys, we had a time
> At the Kelligrew's Soiree.[11] (Doyle 31)

The final stanza, entirely missing from the sheet music version, is also the final stanza of the 1904 song:

> Crooked Flavin struck the fiddler
> And a hand I then took in;
> You should see George Cluney's beaver,
> And it flattened to the rim!
> And Hogan's coat was like a vest —
> The tails were gone you see.
> Oh, says I "the devil haul ye
> And your Kelligrew's Soiree." (Doyle 32)

By re-incorporating this stanza into his final version of the song, Burke re-emphasized the local, in-joke nature of the comic ballad. "The Kelligrew's Soiree" had come home to Newfoundland.

To what extent the sheet music version of "The Kelligrew's Soiree" fostered the popularity of this song is impossible to ascertain. If Burke refashioned his 1904 version for the express purpose of attracting an off-island market for the song, then the sheet music version certainly had an indirect influence on the subsequent popularity of the version of the song as it appeared in the Doyle songbooks. Did the sheet music itself, however, circulate around St. John's or did it reach the outports of Newfoundland? Again, there is no way of knowing for sure.

But if another song has been found in circulation on the island, then there would be strong evidence for the direct influence of the Kirkus Dugdale sheet music on local tradition. The final page of "The Kelligrew's Soiree" is an advertisement for another song published by the Washington company: "A Joke on Jack the Gambler." This song is another vanity press effort, this time by Mrs. V. Winters of Spokane, Washington, with music by the tune-smith M.C. Hanford. The advertisement consists of the first page of the music for this song, thus giving a sample of the lyrics and tune. The fragmentary lyrics are as follows:

> Oh, a young man was sitting in a gambling hall one night,
> When a boy came with a message, that gave him such a fright;
> "Why, . . .
> . . . . . .
> His comrades went to the depot, their eyes were wet with tears,

They were thinking of their mothers, they had not seen for years;
"Go . . .

At the bottom of the page is the following information:

Copyright 1912 by Mrs. V. Winters.
Send 15¢ for a complete copy of this popular number
The Kirkus Dugdale Co., Publishers,
Washington, D.C.

Mercer lists no such song in his index, but if a Newfoundlander knows this song, it can only be the result of the advertisement on the back of Burke's sheet music; the possibility of anyone on the island knowing this song from another source — given the vanity press nature of the sheet music — would be remote in the extreme.

Burke sent two more songs off the island for publication, but in neither case were these songs popular local ditties. Rather than reworking an old tried-and-true song, Burke seems to have written these songs as a reaction to contemporary events and sought to publish them immediately off the island. At any rate, neither of these topical songs has surfaced in any form other than their vanity press editions. Both are patriotic war songs commemorating specific events in the First World War, and both were written contemporaraneously with these events.

The first of these songs celebrates the first decorations for bravery awarded to Newfoundlanders in the war, and more specifically the song lauds the feats of Lieutenant Jim Donnelly. Although listed as "unpublished" in the copyright records, it was printed by the Knickerbocker Harmony Studios of New York, and was deposited for copyright on June 15, 1916. E. S. S. Huntington was one of the more prolific tune-smiths of that period. The song's copyright number is E386614.

Lieutenant Jim Donnelly
The Hero of Caribou Hill

Words by John Burke — Music by E.S.S. Huntington

Shout loud the praise of Newfoundland,
In evry town and bay
That held the hill of Caribou,
and nobly gained the day
And brave Lieutenant Donnelly,
And his bold little band.
The eight young gallant Volunteers
Belong to Newfoundland.
CHORUS: Three cheers for Terra Nova,
And the plucky little band
Hurrah! for Terra Nova,
And the boys from Newfoundland,
You may talk of Mike O'Leary,
And of his achievements too.

But he couldn't beat brave Jim Donnelly,
On the hill of Caribou.
All day and night they held the hill,
The battle nobly won
Altho' the Turks outnumbered,
Our heroes ten to one.
With Bulldog grip they fought the Turks,
And boldly took their stand.
And proved themselves a credit to
Their home in Newfoundland.

They proved the heroes of the hour,
Our native volunteers
We shout Hurrah! for Donnely,
In loud and hearty cheers
They showed the stuff that makes the man,
And proved their metal well.
And seventy Turks did defeat
In spite of shot and shell.

Long live Lieutenant Donnelly,
Our gallant native son
And may he live to wear for years,
The medal nobly won
And likewise Mansfield Hagus,
Greene Mike Downey and Young Snow.
Who held the hill of Caribou
And beat the Turkish foe.

The song is an account of a battle between the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and the Turks in Gallipoli in November 1915. A small knoll dubbed "Caribou Hill" by the Newfoundlanders was home to some Turkish snipers. Lieutenant James J. Donnelly led a patrol to capture this hill; they killed two of the three snipers, Donnelly getting a slight wound in the neck. Donnelly called for reinforcements who advanced on the hill, only to meet a Turkish patrol

> which challenged with an English "Who's there?" The reply, "Newfoundlanders," provoked an outburst of shouting in which the words "Newfoundlanders" and "Allah" were prominently associated. Firing broke out on both sides and continued until the enemy, who it must be assumed had been trying to encircle the position held by Donnelly, fell back towards their own lines.[13]

Donnelly held the hill until the next morning and thereafter the Newfoundlanders retained control of Caribou Hill.

Donnelly won the Military Cross for his efforts and three other members of his patrol also received medals: Sergeant William Martin Greene and Private R.E. Hynes won Distinguished Conduct Medals and Lance-Corporal Fred Snow received the Military Medal. The last stanza of the song refers

to these men, although in a garbled form — probably the result of the New York copier misunderstanding Burke's hand-written lyrics. "Hagus" (if this is the word, since the hand-written lyrics on the printed sheet music are none too clear themselves) is probably Hynes; Mansfield and Downey may be other members of the patrol.

Mike O'Leary, mentioned in the chorus, was an Irish-Canadian of the First Battalion Irish Guards, British Army, who won the Victoria Cross on February 1, 1915, in the Battle of Cuinchy in France (Swettenham 28-9). Misspelling "St. John's" and affixing "Canada" to Newfoundland thirty-three years before the fact were common errors in the sheet music business.

There is nothing surprising in the song itself. Burke was a topical songwriter and the First World War was certainly grist for his mill. Donnelly's medal was the first bit of good news to come out of the war for Newfoundlanders and was a fitting event for a commemorative ballad. Nor was Burke the only one to celebrate Caribou Hill: the local poet and artist, Dan Carroll, wrote a poem entitled "Caribou Hill" for the *Newfoundland Quarterly* in 1916.

In 1918 Burke was to celebrate the heroics of another Newfoundlander in his broadside ballad, "Winner of the Victoria Cross: T.R. Ricketts, Middle Arm, White Bay, Of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment" (Kirwin, ed. 142). On October 14 of that year, Private Ricketts won the Victoria Cross during the advance from Ledeghem (for details, see McGrath 318). And his broadside, "In Memory of 25 Newfoundland Heroes," written in 1915, is probably also a war ballad, although I have not seen this song.[14]

Burke was certainly aware that a market existed for war songs, as his 1917 songbook, *The Allies Patriotic War Songster*, indicates. Most of the songs in this book are uplifting, cheery and patriotic, such as "Fly the Flag," "We're All for Johnny Bull," and "We'll Eat Our Eggs at Home on Easter Morning"; but two of the songs in particular may have spurred Burke to write his own war ballad. One, entitled "Michael O'Leary," celebrates the aforementioned Victoria Cross winner; the other, entitled "Remember Nurse Cavell" — a song about the British nurse who was arrested by the Germans for helping allied soldiers to escape from Belgium and who was eventually tried by military court and executed on October 12, 1915 — was a rallying cry for the Empire throughout the war.[15]

The First World War inspired hundreds of songwriters to publish patriotic pieces. A perusal of the copyright records shows that shortly after the outbreak of war, Canadian songwriters seemed "mobilized" for the war effort; love songs and comic pieces vanished, as songwriters all over the country set their talents to creating war songs. The result is a wealth of vanity press sheet music (as well as many commercial publications) devoted to the war. Burke, then, was a member of this "army" of songwriters, and his motivations for publishing "Lieutenant Jim Donnelly: The Hero of Caribou

Hill" were probably no different from those of the other songwriters in the Alliance.

When the Americans entered the fray in 1917, these songwriters (as well as their counterparts in the United States) had a further topic for their patriotic pieces. Songs celebrating the entry of the Yanks into the war proliferated, as the following vanity press publications indicate:

> "Yankee Boys Marching Through Belgium." Words and music by Albert Dehoey of Chatham, Ontario. Deposited for copyright on January 28, 1918. Copyright no. E420073.
>
> "It Didn't Take the Yankee Long." Words by Gustav Detberner of Watrous, Saskatchewan. Music by the tune-smith Leo Friedman. Published April 17, 1918. Copyright no. E419928.
>
> "Our Brave Old Yankee Soldiers." Words by John R. Packard of Alberni, British Columbia. Music by Leo Friedman. Published July 31, 1918. Copyright no. E430437.
>
> "We Made the Band Play Yankee Doodle in Berlin." Words by J.A. Gatzke of Wallaceburg, Ontario. Music by William A. Collins of Canada. Deposited for copyright on February 4, 1919. Copyright no. E435730.

Burke was among the songwriters who celebrated this development in the war. Unfortunately, the song he wrote no longer exists in the United States copyright collection; all that is left is its copyright record and entry card.[16] The song is entitled "We'll Take Off Our Hats to the Yankees." Burke wrote the lyrics and the tune-smith, Raymond A. Browne, supplied the tune. Like "Lieutenant Jim Donnelly," the piece is listed as unpublished, although the Knickerbocker Harmony Studios of New York is the printer of the sheet music. It was deposited for copyright on October 1, 1918, and has the copyright number E432751.

Without the lyrics and music, little can be said about this song. If it was indeed a general celebratory song about the entry of the Americans into the war, then it marked a slight departure for Burke. Although, as noted earlier, he had written at least one topical song which bore no direct relation to Newfoundland ("Fitzsimmons Beat Corbett"), almost all of his songs contained some Newfoundland content. This lost piece, however, might be one of the rare exceptions in Burke's repertoire. But it was certainly no exception in the greater repertoire of North American songs about the First World War.

These three pieces were — as far as is known — Burke's only forays into the off-island music publishing world. That "The Kelligrew's Soiree" became popular despite its American publication, and his two war songs never seemed to have entered the popular song tradition either in Newfoundland or on the mainland, might be the most reasonable explanations as to why he published none of his other songs in this fashion.

Like most local poets and songwriters who invested a bit of money in the vanity press market, Burke allowed his ego to be lifted and his expectations denied only a few times. After 1918, he continued to use the media which

had proved useful to him in the past: broadsides, self-published songbooks, newspapers, the stage, and oral tradition. While none of these media gave Burke the off-island recognition which he seems to have sought through the medium of the vanity press, they kept him very much in the limelight of local culture in Newfoundland.

Notes

[1]I gleaned much of the information for this paper while working under Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant no. 91-88-1081. I should like to thank the Council, the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress of the United States, the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, and especially the director of the research project, Dr. Patrick O'Neill of Mount Saint Vincent University. I should also like to thank David Taylor of the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Wayne Shirley of the Music Division, Library of Congress and Paul Mercer of the State Library of New York in Albany for their help.

[2]Personal communications on several occasions with Wayne Shirley of the Music Division, Library of Congress, who seems to be one of the few music historians to acknowledge these tune-smiths (whom he calls "tune-sharks").

[3]For a fictional account of the hopes and disappointments of a vanity press songwriter, see the story of Hugh's experiences with a British tune-smith in Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (212-14). Lowry, himself, was such a songwriter.

[4]Statement on the front and back of sheet music printed by the Knickerbocker Harmony Studios of New York.

[5]According to Gerald S. Doyle, the song was "sung by a local man at a dinner in New York in the Winter of 1938 and made such a great hit that practically all who attended requested a copy" (Doyle 31). This same song has been reprinted more than any other Newfoundland song (see Mercer 1979: 141), and has been recorded extensively by Newfoundlanders and non-Newfoundlanders (see Taft 86).

[6]Perhaps the only copy extant is in storage at the Library of Congress and may be retrieved through the Music Division.

[7]For a discussion of the Doyle songbooks as "key texts," see Rosenberg 45-52.

[8]Irish and stage-Irish dialect was certainly familiar to this audience, and "The Kelligrew's Soiree" would fit well into this tradition (see Kirwin 1977).

[9]The only Payne of note in the boxing world was Emery Payne, who was United States amateur champion in 1902-03, 1905 and 1907 (see Menke 296). The only Lane I can discover was an English fighter named Hammer Lane who lost to Yankee Sullivan in a fight in England in 1841 (see Johnson 24-5).

[10]For the texts of these songs, see Kirwin, ed. 36-7, 89, 108-10, 112-13 and 115. A photograph of Burke as part of the 1903 Regatta Committee may be found on p. 111.

[11]Mercer has identified two of these characters:

> Flipper Smith was a local character, considered to be slightly unsound mentally. He married Caroline Bowden, who was said to be similarly afflicted, and whose main claim to fame was her penchant for wearing long black dresses to which she would attach multi-coloured ribbons.(1974: [44])

[12]A copy of this song is in storage at the Library of Congress and may be retrieved through the Music Division.

[13]This quote and all information on the battle is taken from Nicholson 179-81.

[14]This song is mentioned in the bibliography to Kirwin, "The Influence of Ireland" 144.

[15]For information on Cavell, see *The Times History of the War*, 428-40. The song in

in the Burke songster is likely from the sheet music by Thompson and Brazil.

[16]The loss of sheet music is a common occurrence in the Library of Congress storage facilities. There are millions of pieces of sheet music in their warehouses, and any piece misfiled is, in effect, a piece lost to the rather primitive retrieval system the Library employs. I have asked the Library to search for this item three times with no success.

References

Anon. *Old Home Week Songster. Terra Nova's Kind Welcome to Her Sons and Daughters.* [St. John's]: Herald Job Print, 1904.

Ashby, LeRoy. *William Jennings Bryan: Champion of Democracy.* Boston: Twayne, 1987.

Carroll, Dan. "Caribou Hill." *Newfoundland Quarterly* 15, 4 (1916): 8.

Doyle, Gerald S. *Old-Time Songs of Newfoundland,* 3rd ed. St. John's: Gerald S. Doyle Ltd., 1955.

Fleischer, Nat, and Sam Andre. *A Pictorial History of Boxing,* rev. ed. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1975.

Fowke, Edith, comp. and ed., *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973.

Gable, John Allen. *The Bull Moose Years: Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party.* Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1978.

Johnson, Alexander. *Ten — and Out! The Complete Story of the Prize Ring in America,* 3rd rev. ed. New York: Ives Washburn, 1927.

Kirwin, William. "The Influence of Ireland on the Printed Newfoundland Ballad." In *Literature and Folk Culture: Ireland and Newfoundland.* Eds. Alison Feder and Bernice Schrank. St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977, 130-45.

————, ed. *John White's Collection of the Songs of Johnny Burke.* St. John's: Harry Cuff Publications, 1982.

Larner, Rex. *The Legendary Champions.* New York: American Heritage Press, 1972.

Lowry, Malcolm. *Under the Volcano.* 1947; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962.

McGrath, P.T. "Newfoundland." In *The Empire at War,* Volume II. Ed. Charles Lucas. London, Oxford University Press, 1923.

Menke, Frank G. *The Encyclopedia of Sports,* 2nd rev. ed. New York: A.S. Barnes, 1944.

Mercer, Paul. *The Ballads of Johnny Burke: A Short Anthology.* [St. John's]: Newfoundland Historical Society, 1974.

————. *Newfoundland Songs and Ballads in Print, 1842-1974: A Title and First-Line Index.* St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979.

Nicholson, G.W.L. *The Fighting Newfoundlander.* [St. John's]: Government of Newfoundland, 1964.

Rosenberg, Neil V. "Folksong in Newfoundland: A Research History." In *Ballades et chansons folklorique.* Ed. Conrade Laforte. Quebec: CÉLAT, 1989.

Sammons, Jeffrey J. *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Story, G.M., W.J. Kirwin and J.D.A. Widdowson, eds. *Dictionary of Newfoundland English.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

Swettenham, John, ed. *Valient Men: Canada's Victoria Cross and George Cross Winners.* Toronto: Hakkert, 1973.

Taft, Michael. *A Regional Discography of Newfoundland and Labrador 1904-1972.* St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive, 1975.

Thompson, Gordon V., words, and Jules Brazil, music. *Remember Nurse Cavell!* Toronto: Thompson Publishing Co., 1915.

The Times History of the War. Volume VI. London: *The Times,* 1916.