

# GEORGIE'S BANKS

*Performed by:* Henry & Gerald Campbell

Ye roving sons of Newfoundland, I hope ye will draw near,  
To hear my doubtful story from me will quickly hear;  
Being in the year of sixty-two by Shea we were drewpenned,<sup>1</sup>  
To leave our homes and friends so dear from the shores of Newfoundland.

We first set sail for Canada, left Newfoundland behind,  
To work upon a railway there, sure we were well inclined;  
All night to lie on a damp cold ground, which niggers could not stand,  
We cursed the hour and the day we left the shores of Newfoundland.

They were fifty-five made up their minds to leave and run away,  
Being under close confinement there, no longer could we stay.  
We next set sail for Halifax, from there to Boston town,  
And seeking for employment there we wandered up and down.

The work it being a kind of scarce for Gloucester we did appear;  
We shipped on board of the *Morning Bloom* for Georgie's Banks did steer.  
We anchored on those Georgie's Banks, November the twenty-two,  
And it's my sad fate for to relate the hardships that we went through.

The wind being up from the east-northeast, most violent it did blow,  
It increased unto our horror it came most bitter frost and snow;  
The hardships of those Georgie's Banks no penman can pen down,  
There is nothing there but shifting sands and breakers all around.

At night when I lie down to sleep I think I see them yet,  
The horrors of those Georgie's Banks I never will forget;  
Sure I fished east and west, my boys, through stormy winter time,  
But there's none compare with Georgie's Banks, with all the force combined.

And early in the morning the sight would pass your eyes,  
To see those half-froze fishermen, sure they would pass you by.  
To remark their looks in deep despair and hear their feeble cry;  
The vessels of a number of boats were singing all around,  
And a human crew of twenty-two on Georgie's that day went down.

And Providence then proved kind to us we had a change of wind,  
We cut our cables from the bow, left Georgie's Banks behind,  
And by our captain's orders we quickly flew the sails;  
For three long days and nights, my boys, we ran before the gale.

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: In *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports* (1965, vol. 3), Kenneth Peacock transcribes George Decker of Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland singing 'trepanned' (rather than drewpenned)—that is, he was employed to drill holes for the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Indeed, in the next verse Henry and Gerald Campbell reference time spent working on the railway. Sir Ambrose Shea was a pro-Confederation politician who was active during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a cause that was closely related to the building of the railway.

The log it plainly told us that land was drawing nigh,  
And at four o'clock in the morning, a light we chanced to espy,  
Revolving like two flashes white, as you may understand,  
That southerly point we call Cape Race on the shores of Newfoundland.

Our captain then gave orders to round the vessel to;  
We tried her under double reefs but nothing would she do;  
'Shake out all reefs,' our captain cried, 'the land we must keep clear.'  
For four long hours on a bowline stretch on the water she did tear.

Our captain then gave orders to round our vessel to,  
And out of eighteen seamen bold, remained but five and two;  
The rest they were washed overboard, as you may understand,  
They met a cold and watery grave on the shores of Newfoundland.

And early in the morning we sighted the Cape Spear,  
And into the port of St. John's town our shipwreck we did steer,  
Where we met friends kind-hearted, to listen to our sad tale,  
Till we relate the tidings of that last November gale.

Ye roving sons of Newfoundland, who have got a mind to roam,  
If ye will be advised by me, I will give you to understand,  
To stay at home and do not roam from your own sweet Newfoundland.