

MUSIC

Cape Breton's Diversity in Unity

When I First Went To Caledonia

Collected by Ron MacEachern from the singing of Amby Thomas
Tune: "Mo Ruin Gael Dileas"
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1. I wish I were but I wish in vain
I wish I were a young maid again.
A young maid again I will never be
'Til an orange grows on an apple tree.

2. When I first went to Caledonia
I got loading at number three
And I got boarding at Donald Norman's
He had a daughter could make good tea.

3. It was I and my brother Charlie
The biggest shavers you ever did see
Were spearing eels in the month of April
And starving slaves out on Scaterie.

4. I went to Norman's for a pair of brochans
A cake of soap and a pound of tea
But Norman told me he wouldn't give them
Till fish got plenty in Scaterie.

5. I went over to their Big Harbour
Just on purpose to see the spray
I spied a maiden from Boularderie over
I surely thought her the Queen of May.

6. I wish I were on the deepest ocean
As far from land that once I could see
A-sailing over the deepest ocean
Where woman's love would not trouble me.

7. I'd lay my head on a cask of brandy
And it's dandy I do declare
For when I'm drinking I'm always thinking
How can I gain that young lady fair.

8. If I had pen from Pennsylvania
If I had paper of truly white
If I had ink of the rosy morning
A true love's promise to you I'd write.

Recording:

[When I First Went to Caledonia](#), 1978. Amby Thomas. T-1066. Beaton Institute, Cape Breton University.