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Art Severance: A Tale from Truthful Paul Arthur Severance, Fourchu: When I was storm-stayed Down North for 3 days, around 1928, we were over at the lobster factory. There was an old fellow lived handy there, known locally as Truthful Paul. And he could tell tall tales to no end. Well, I would say, just pure figments of the imagination. But very entertaining. That's all they were intended for. There was absolute? ly...there couldn't be any truth in them, I remember one story he told there that really stuck with me. When he was a young fellow--a lot of men, of course, used to go to Maine in the winter, work in the lumber woods. And in the spring, they'd come back home. Well of course, Down North there in the spring, there still can be quite a bit of snow. So it was on one of these return trips coming home, I think he was supposed to be--this was himself, now, this Truthful Paul--this story was supposed to be something that happened to himself. They'd be coming back to get ready for fishing in the spring. He had got down to Ingonish on a boat. He had to walk from there, going home. Going north. So anyway, somewhere down between Ingonish and Neil's Harbour, I think it would be, what they call the Broad Cove Mountain--it was getting kind of late. And he said the traveling, the walking was bad. He had got into the heavy snow. He was getting pretty tired, and he was wishing that he could find a house somewhere along the way to call in and spend the night. Anyway, he said he was tramping along, and he was getting weary, and his steps were getting shorter and harder and slower. Suddenly he heard singing--Gaelic songs, of course. Well, he said that put a little bit more life into him. He knew there was something. So he just tried to get along faster. And sure enough, he said, he caught up with this bunch of young people, and they were heading for a house. There was to be a milling frolic at this house. So they got to the house. And of course he wasn't there very long when he had a cup of tea and something to eat, and felt a lot better, he said, and was sitting there. The milling got under way. By and by, there was some noise at the door, and the man of the house went to the door, "Ah well, Rory," he said, "you're not very early tonight, but you're early enough." He said, "They're still milling," This great big man with a big long white beard right down to his waist, carrying a bundle. It was just wrapped up in a shawl, and he had that under his arm. He came in, and this old lady came in behind him. And she had a spinning wheel on her shoulder, and a pair of wool cards hung on a cord at her waist. So they came in and sat down. Oh, they got a cup of tea for the old couple right quickly. Anyway, after they had the tea, the milling was pretty nearly finished. The old man turned to the old lady, said, "Morag, it's time to-get to work," Well, the old lady got up and left. By golly, when she went out, when she took the wool cards off the cord, there was a pair of wool shears there, too. She went out and she took the shears. After a little while she came back in, and she had this handful of wool. She sat down with the wool cards, and she started carding the wool and making rolls. She got the rolls made. She started the spinning wheel going. The old man said to her, "Well now, Morag, do the fine ones first," Well, he said, she spun threads that were just like spider webs, they were that



thin. And she spun them, and they'd be about that long, and she'd hang them over the back of the chair, till at last she had a bunch there, he said, was just about hardly as big a- round as your little finger. After these little ones were all spun, the old man told one of the young fellows to go out--I don't know what kind of a wood it was, he didn't name it--to cut a switch. And he'd have to cut it so long, he told him. So the young fellow went out, anyway, and he got this switch and he brought it in. And while he was getting the switch, Rory told her, told the old lady, "Now, Morag," he said, "do the E string first." So, she spun the four strings for the fiddle that he had. But, he said, he'd never seen a fiddle like it. When the old man unwrapped this parcel that was done up with the plaid blanket, it looked more

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Our cover photograph is taken from a Clark family album, part of the Rossetti Collection in the Beaton Institute archives. University College of Cape Breton. We would appreciate our readers' help identifying the people in the picture.