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Searching for Cape Breton Folk Songs Cape Breton's Magazine is carrying out a search for Cape Breton Folk Songs. By "folk songs" we mean the kind of songs people sang for one another when the main form of entertainment came from family and visitors in the homes--what Theresa Curtis MacDonald of Aspy Bay referred to as "the time we had for one another." Helen Curtis, Bay St. Lawrence

Helen Curtis: One song (my mother) used to sing was "Johnny Nicholson," about a fellow who was drowned coming from White Point to Aspy across the Aspy Bay. It was an old Dunphy man, Andrew Dunphy, made that song for Dannie Gwinn ("The Fate of Daniel Gwinn"--see song below)--he was the composer of that song. And he made this one for this Johnny Nicholson, because they were right handy where the boat was--they heard the cry. And those two men, two Dunphy men, Andrew and Bill, and the sister--they went to the rescue. And of course John was drowned and the other two were hanging on for their dear lives--so they saved them. (Helen's daughter, Rose Burton: There were two more with him.) MacRae and Frank Rambeau were the two. (Rose: Who was that Johnny Nicholson?) Johnny Nicholson was old John Nicholson's son. He worked for Chandler at White Point where they took fish and he kept a big store down there. He belonged up the Lake somewhere, him and the wife moved down there to White Point. (Try to reach back for that song.)

Johnny Nicholson' As Sung by Helen Curtis Written by Andrew Dunphy 'Twas on the fifth of August oh lov-ing friends draw near A sad ac-ci-dent did oc-cur which cast a gloom 'round here When three of our brave com-r-ades they left their na-tive shore But sad to say one of the three he'll nev-er re-turn no more. (16)