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George MacKay's Ross Ferry Song It was on a Thursday morning In the year of '46
Captain Arsenault gave his orders Pushed his boat from Burchell's slip. It was by
their faithful soundings That they followed that rugged shore And when they ran on
Urquhart's lobster crates They knew it was North Shore, Boston had her engines
running smoothly The captain says, "It is a pity As they headed out for sea That
Buchanan is not on board All the boys were on the lookout For he'd know this
northern country Henry Matheson at the wheel. It was here where he was born," As
they rounded Point Aconi And the fog it did increase And the bouys they were
following In the fog they disappeared. So they set her chart and compass On a
course they thought for sure That would take them to safety In the waters near Bras
D'Or, After many hours of sailing Farther from their port of call "Holy Gripes," says
Murdoch "That's the foghorn at St. Paul." So they set a course to westward As her
mighty engines roared And how they missed Cape Smokey No one else will ever
know. Boston was so hungry And in tones so loud and sure "I'll arrest you Captain
Arsenault If we ever reach the shore," Henry said, "You need not worry We have
food enough and more When I'll cook up the herring That we bought down at
LeMoine's." Murdoch says, "It's time to swap her Beach her somewhere near Big
Bill's Give her back to Angus Louie In remembrance of her thrills," It was some time
in the morning That they finally reached the dock It'll go down in naval history Of
the trip they took up north. It was only 5/8ths of a mile but as Tina Morrison told us,
it was the doorway to all of North America, It was the road through to Sydney and
North Sydney (and from there to the rest of the world) for the people of Margaree
and Baddeck, The people down north usually came via Englishtown and over the
old rough road on Kelly's Mountain and crossed on the sister ferry from New
Campbellton to Big Bras D'Or, Both ferries ended with the opening of the Seal Island
Bridge, Roddy MacMillan told us: "I don't know how long they've been ferrying there
• as long as anyone living can remember, I remember Angus Ross on the
Boulardarie side. They called him The Admiral, Philip Fraser was another one on this
side who ferried. He was doing that when I was a child. The last ferry just before the
motor ferries was run by Mr, Matheson, He had a scow that carried horses and
passengers, operated by a sail and oars. Not a regular schedule • just when
people came along, any hour of the day and night. Then the government decided
they wanted to ferry some cars there and they got him to put a device on the scow
that a car could drive aboard • sort of troughs, you know, over the stern • it was a
square-stern boat," (Jess Matheson told us that up to that time his mother and
father ran the ferry together, the both of them at the oars. The device used to
ferry cars was troughs made of logs, burnt and then dug hollow. According to the
Post-Record the first car officially to cross was owned and operated by Charles E,
Coleman, Queen Street, North Sydney • the last Sunday in August, 1917, But Jess
told us the first car ever to cross was ferried on August 17, 1910; it was driven by a
MacDonald fellow running away with his bride,) Roddy MacMillan: "Mr, Traditional
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