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George Alfred Beckett: Story & Song "George Beckett's Lament" 'r > l]' As Sung by Blandford Wells Written by Phil Penney f' ij~' George Al - fred Beck - ett is my name As you may un-der-s tand Brought ' J r r r r ' ' up by hon - est par-ents And be-lonq to New-found-land From a pleas-ant lit-tle vil-lage So i JPr n ' 3E ' • # beau - ti - ful and grand Near the At - lan - tic O - cean A place called Old Perl - i - can. George Alfred Beckett is my name. As you may understand. Brought up by honest parents And belong to Newfoundland, From a pleasant little village. So beautiful and grand. Near the Atlantic Ocean, A place called Old Perlican. My parents reared me tenderly. The truth I will make known. And good advice they gave to me When I was leaving home; My mother prayed for my return As she had done before. As I left home that day to roam Far from rny native shore. To the coal fields of Cape Breton My course I then did stray. And for to get employment I landed in Glace Bay; It's little that my parents thought When they bid me good bye. That awful crime I would commit And be condemned to die. One evening last autumn. As you may understand. To drive me out the Tower Road I engaged this taxi man. He little thought as we rode on, I had an iron bar. These dreadful wounds for to inflict And rob him in his car. From the scene I made a quick escape. To get home was my plan, I left Glace Bay and sailed away Back home to Newfoundland; It was a few weeks after The police were on my trail; Arrested for this murder And brought to St. Johns jail. From there back to Cape Breton, My trial for to stand. And neyer more to see again My own dear native land. The jury found me guilty. The judge made this reply-- "On the 30th day of April For this murder you must die." Blandford Wells, the Singer Here's to my aged parents I now must bid adieu. My sisters and my brothers. Likewise my children too; And not forgetting my dear wife. Wherever she may be. So loving, kind and gentle. The fault was all with me. I wish to thank all my dear friends Who were so kind to me. My clergymen and lawyers Who tried to get me free; Likewise the warden of the jail. Who courage to me gave. Long may they live to enjoy their When I am in my grave. /health. My life is almost to an end. My days are just a few. Take my advice and happy live And avoid all trouble too; And neyer murder any one. Whatever you may do. Or like me you'll die on the gal- At the age of forty-two. /lows high Now to conclude and finish. From this world I must depart. For the murder of Nick Marthos, I'm sorry to the heart; And let all men take warning. Now remember what I say. And may God have mercy on my soul When I will pass away. The Story: The story is leaden, as is the murder it? self. George Alfred Beckett killed Glace Bay taxi driver Nicholas Marthos for money and a watch. And there is perhaps little reason to remember the story. Despite that, we look for reasons. It is said that Beck? ett was the last man publicly hanged in Cape Breton, April 30, 1931--but his execu? tion was not publico Carl Anderson's hang? ing a year earlier led to Beckett's gal? lows being boarded in. Perhaps the story reveals something of desperate times, lack of work, early on in the Depression--but, in fact, Beckett had been finding some days of work, had a place to live. Maybe he was just



wild and crazy--the "fearless daredevil" he was called when he worked as an "expert rigger" on Marconi Towers--and in the end acted without thought for others, let alone for himself. And then STORY CONTINUED NEXT PAGE (53)