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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1990/8/1

station, the main island. And when he was going back, the thing broke, and he went. So, they took that away altogether. Rose: He wasn't a local guy. Helen: Oh, no, he was from the mainland--assistant of the light and the fog alarm. (What happened to him?) He was killed.... Rose wrote in the Curtis Family Songbook: "Dad tells an interesting story of a rescue that he made himself. One of the fishermen, Dan MacNeil from Bay St. Lawrence, left lobster traps out there and had asked the Super to take them in. Sandy MacNeil, Donald MacAskill, the Super and Dad went out in the motor boat to get them. It was after a heavy nor'western; a calm day but still a heavy swell on the rocks. They encountered some difficulty when they went to haul the traps and the boat was smashed on the rocks in heavy sea. Daddy managed to get himself and Peter Sandy ashore after many attempts. It was a desperate struggle in trying to grasp the slippery rocks, only to be washed out again by the sea. "With Peter safe on shore. Dad rested a short time, seeing the other two men were safe on a ledge for the present. Fortunately, an oar and a piece of rope washed near enough to the rock where the Super was able to reach them. Under Dad's direction, the Super tied the rope to the oar. After a period of time, Dad was able to haul the two men to safety on the end of the rope." (And you met Jimmy Curtis. How did you find out that he was a singer, that he liked to sing?) Well, he was singing all the time. He'd be always singing around his work. Whatever he'd be doing, he'd be singing or whistling a tune of a song. I used to catch them too because I'd stop and.... Rose: And he heard you singing. Helen: No, he asked me. He asked me if I could sing, and I said, "Oh, yes, I can sing a bit." We used to sit out on the verandah and sing. He was a sweetheart. (What do you think was one of the first songs that he sang for you?) "Jimmie Jed." (What kind of a song is that, "Jimmie Jed"?) Men that work on a drive on a river, and this guy got drowned. I liked that song. And "The Bonny Young Irish Boy"--he used to sing that for me, I really liked that one. Those two songs. It would melt your heart with pity for to see him in his gore; To see his beautiful features with the rocks all bruised and tore. To see so fine a young man cut down in all his bloom, 'Twas on the Bunshai River where he met his early doom.

- from "Jimmie Jed" (He courted you by singing a song of a boy who drowned on a lumber drive!) Helen: It's getting into my love life now. (It's not much of a love life--they sat on the verandah and sang.) Well, that was pretty nice. He could put his arms around you and hug you. Give you a nice kiss on the cheek. (Do you think it was the singing more than anything else that brought the two of you together?) There weren't too many on the island could sing.... (You learned most of your songs when you were young, and then--you were still young, but you were learning songs from Jimmy Curtis.) Yeah, I learned some from him, but I learned a lot, too, from (others). I learned quite a few songs from Bob Fitzgerald's father and mother, too. George Fitzgerald and Mary. He taught me "Howard Currie." (George) was in the lumber woods working. When he'd come home, he'd have this song. (He) said, "I've got this ballad of a song." I said, "What's the good, if you haven't got the air for



it?" "Well," he said, "I'll learn it." Sure enough, he picked it up, and I got it fbrafe  
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