

FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

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American Folklife Center • The Library of Congress



The American Folklife Center was created in 1976 by the U.S. Congress to "preserve and present American folklife" through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, publication, and training. The Center incorporates the Archive of Folk Culture, which was established in the Music Division of the Library of Congress in 1928 and is now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world.

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Folklife Center News publishes articles on the programs and activities of the American Folklife Center, as well as other articles on traditional expressive culture. It is available free of charge from the Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540-4610. *Folklife Center News* does not publish announcements from other institutions or reviews of books from publishers other than the Library of Congress. Readers who would like to comment on Center activities or newsletter articles may address their remarks to the editor.

ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES

The American Folklife Center's Web site provides full texts of many publications, information about AFC projects, multimedia presentations of selected collections, links to Web resources on ethnography, and announcements of upcoming events. The address for the home page is <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/> An index of the site contents is available at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/afcindex.html>

The Web site for **The Veterans History Project** provides an overview of the project, an online "kit" for participants recording oral histories of veterans, and a brief presentation of some examples of video- and audio-recordings of veterans' stories. The address is <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets>

The Folklife Information Service is now a cooperative announcement program of the American Folklore Society and the American Folklife Center. It is available only on the American Folklore Society's server: www.afsnet.org. The service provides timely information on the field of folklore and folklife, including training and professional opportunities, and news items of national interest.

EDITOR'S NOTES

New Archive Head Appointed

The American Folklife Center and the Archive of Folk Culture have undergone significant changes over the past several years, and not the least of these is the reinstatement of the position of head of the Folk Archive. The position dates to 1928, when the Archive of American Folk-Song was established in the Music Division. During the 1990s the Center suffered a
(Continued on page 15)

Cover: Three members of the Celli-cion Traditional Zuni Dancers, a group that performed traditional music and dance from Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico, in the Library's Coolidge Auditorium, November 13, 2002, the final concert in the Folklife Center's series "Home-grown 2002: The Music of America." Photo by James Hardin

Of Those Who Served: The Veterans History Project Collection at the Library of Congress



Veterans History Project processing technicians (left to right) Sandra Savage, Judy Ng, and Rachael Mears examine materials submitted by World War II veteran Clifton Davis, from Paris, Ohio. Photo by James Hardin

By Amanda M. Brown

Eighty-four years have passed since Frank Woodruff Buckles served with the First Fort Riley [Kansas] Casual Detachment in France and Germany, yet the World War I veteran speaks lucidly of his experiences as a medic in the Army. Of his time in France, Buckles recalls listening to boisterous French soldiers sing the French national anthem “La Marseillaise” in local wine shops. Buckles explains in an interview, “I inquired, what is the occasion? They were going back to the front. Can you imagine that?”

Indeed, no. Few today (and perhaps not many in 1918) can imagine celebrating one’s imminent return to the front lines or to the gruesome realities of trench warfare. However, one can gain a better understanding of the multidimensional and changing character of twentieth-century warfare by investigating the personal narratives of those who served in the military and in homefront efforts during wartime.

The Veterans History Project, under the umbrella of the American Folklife Center, is providing an opportunity for veterans of the two world wars and of the

Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars to share their recollections of wartime experiences. James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress, has stressed that “the American story can be told through a thousand different voices, a thousand different pictures, a thousand different memories.” Even a casual study of the collections already donated to the project reveals an amazing diversity of experiences that spans eight decades and chronicles thousands of lives forever changed by their participation in those wars.

Therein lies the heart of the Veterans History Project, for no

two of the more than four thousand personal testimonies that have already been donated to the project are identical. Some veterans share their stories with friends and family through carefully crafted memoirs; others give interviews to nieces and nephews, grandchildren, and students of younger generations, who have no personal remembrances of those times and events. Still others dust off their attic trunks and revisit their own war years (or those of deceased family members) through personal correspondence and photographs, compiling the mementos first collected when they were young and sometimes held in sacred silence for decades.

Ronnie Sobbe chose to record his story of Vietnam through the lens of a camera, rather than in the more traditional diary, mem-

oir, or interview. Two hundred sixty-nine candid snapshots, most of which are uncaptioned, comprise the bulk of Sobbe's collection. Vietnamese villages, Army operations, and social gatherings are among the subjects captured in the photographs. From casual shots of overseas living quarters to prints depicting brief, happy-go-lucky interludes of leave at home, Sobbe's collection presents a fascinating picture of his life in Vietnam in all its tedium, intensity, hilarity, and horror.

In contrast to Sobbe's visual display, Vietnam veteran Rhona Marie Knox Prescott offered a sobering narrative account of her service in the Army Nurse Corps. In her interview, Prescott recalls encountering Vietnam in its lush, green beauty for the first time; she then explains how that first impression of a paradise-like world faded once she alighted from the helicopter

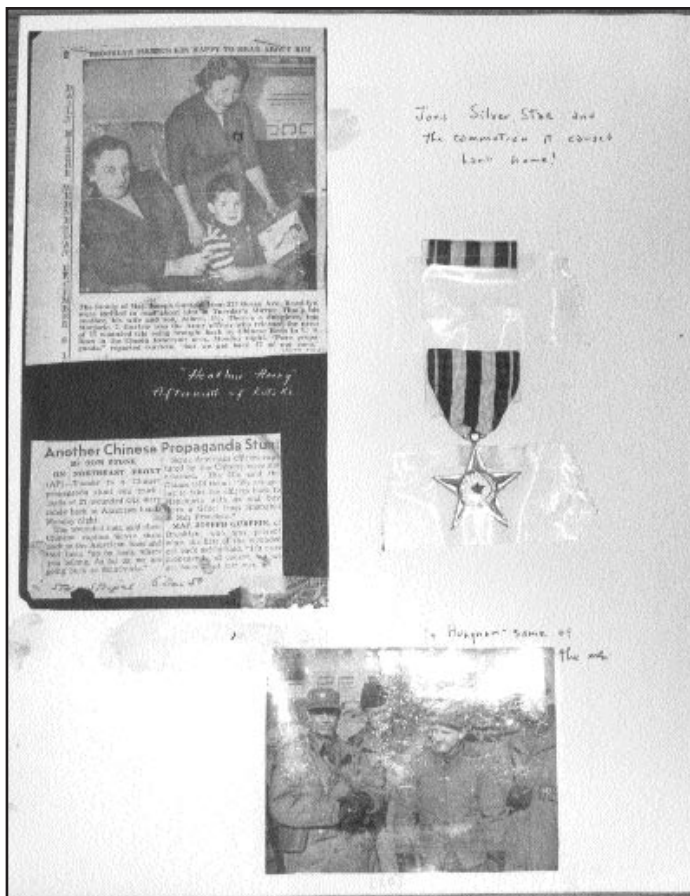
and went to work. "When we were busy," Prescott tearfully recounts, we had to "somehow block out the smells and the sounds because the smells were of dirty, putrefied flesh and blood... the sounds were of people crying and screaming and praying... the sounds were a s t o u n d - i n g." Prescott's gripping account effectively captures the emotional and physical turmoil

she and others experienced in America's longest twentieth-century war.

A quarter century earlier, Helen C. Hurst served in a similar capacity in a war far different from Vietnam. Compelled by pleas for help from the Red Cross and encouraged by the patriotic fervor of a nation in the throes of a heroic world war, Hurst joined tens of thousands of other young people in the war effort and served her country in the Army Nurse Corps. After training in Sebring, Florida, the Indiana native was shipped to North Africa and then to Italy. In an emotional interview, Hurst tells of traveling in convoy with Army G.I.s through the African desert shortly after the Allies had soundly defeated the Desert Fox, Nazi General Erwin Rommel.

Hurst continues her narrative with memories of spending the holidays in charge of a hospital ward on the island of Sardinia. Defying orders from her commanding officer that restricted decorations in her hospital unit, Hurst procured a "Christmas tree," recruited her healthier patients to set it up in a prominent place in the ward, and crowned the top with a bedpan "star." For Hurst, this act of kindness and Christmas cheer merely reflected the spirit that she believes accompanies service in the armed forces. "I thought, 'Well, this is my country. I've got a duty.' So I joined." She became one of sixteen million men and women who answered the call to military service in World War II.

Many World War II veterans found themselves serving their country again five years later in what would become known as the "forgotten war." Col. Joseph Gurfein, a West Point graduate and career Army officer, served in the Korean War and fastidiously saved photographs, ration cards, letters, telegrams, and news clippings, which his wife Marion compiled in a scrapbook titled simply "Korea '50-'51." Mrs. Gurfein included in the scrapbook literature and photographs of Colonel Gurfein's participation in the Inchon inva-



A page from Colonel Gurfein's scrapbook, with newspaper clippings, a photograph, and Colonel Gurfein's Silver Star. Veterans History Project Collection

sion, North Korean propaganda against the United Nations, copies of Gurfein's military orders, and a Western Union telegram sent by Marion in response to the announcement of her husband's return from Korea: "Living for January 25 Love you deeply Marion."

Other Korean veterans, however, share their memories by reflecting, in writing, on the profound impact that the brief war had on their lives and those of their families. Their stories are found in memoirs with titles such as "Memories of a Non-Hero During the Korean War" and "A G.I. Machine Gunner: From the Seminary to Korea's Front Line: 1951-1952" and "Korea: Frozen Hell on Earth, A Platoon Sergeant's Diary, Korean War 1951-1952."

Only eleven years removed from war in the Middle East and now on the verge of another, Persian Gulf War veterans like Air Force Maj. James Jeffrey Webb and Navy Boatswain's Mate Third Class Laura E. Dwyer speak passionately about their time spent in the Middle East. Webb's collection includes an audio interview and accompanying transcript, a photograph of himself in that timeless military pose in uniform in front of his aircraft, and a map called



Amanda Brown sorts through the pages of a scrapbook compiled by Marion Gurfein, the wife of Col. Joseph Gurfein, a veteran of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The individual pages have been housed in mylar sleeves for preservation. Photo by James Hardin

an "evasion chart" that was distributed to those serving in the Persian Gulf. The waterproof, flame-resistant map of areas of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates features crucial desert-survival material such as celestial-navigation charts, lists and pictures of edible and inedible plants indigenous to the region, and helpful secondary uses for the map.

For Laura E. Dwyer, deployment to the Persian Gulf evoked mixed emotions. Aboard the USS *Cape Cod*, a photograph of which she donated with her collection, Dwyer "felt part of the force that was going to war, bound for it, destined for it like a

river that runs into the sea. My emotions oscillated between fear and pride." Many Persian Gulf War veterans who have participated in the Veterans History Project reflect upon their respective roles in that war while contemplating the current unrest in the Middle East and the possibility of future service there.

One is left with a sense of awe at the eloquence with which each of these collections speaks. In a formal interview between a World War II veteran and his granddaughter. In the letters of an eighteen-year-old boy writing to his mother from the

trenches of World War I. In the stark black-and-white photographs of Korea in wintertime. In the descriptions of the Saudi Arabian desert's suffocating heat. Veterans' voices are being heard and their stories are emerging at the prompting of student interviewers, in the pages of diaries and logbooks, in the texts of their own writing.

Amanda Brown, a recent graduate of Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, is a former Library of Congress Junior Fellow who has had a temporary appointment at the Veterans History Project. Rachel Mears, processing technician at the Veterans History Project, also contributed to this article.

Their Spirits Have Found a Home: New Collection Documents Jewish Life in Eastern Europe



Engagement party for Sol Milshtein and his American fiancée, Rose, Luboml, Poland, 1937. Aaron Ziegelman is seated lower left. Photo by Lillian Ziegelman Chanales

By David A. Taylor

On October 30, 2002, at a ceremony in his office, Librarian of Congress James H. Billington announced the acquisition of the Aaron Ziegelman Foundation Collection. The collection includes over two thousand rare photographs, photographic negatives, motion pictures, letters, maps, oral histories, and other materials that richly document everyday life in the Jewish community of Luboml, Poland, prior to its obliteration during World War II. The collection was donated to the Library by its creator, Aaron Ziegelman, of New York

City, the executive director of the foundation.

"The Jews of Luboml had dreamed of coming to America, a place they referred to as the golden land," said Aaron Ziegelman. "Even though they never reached our shores, their spirits have now found a home at the Library of Congress." Ziegelman said he and his wife were overwhelmed by the symbolism. "When I saw the official [instrument of gift] document signed by a boy from Luboml and Dr. Billington, who signed on behalf of the United States of America, so many emotions enveloped me," he said.

According to Fred Wasserman, associate curator at The Jewish Museum in New York City (and curator of the exhibition *Remembering Luboml: Images of a Jewish Community*), the materials in the Ziegelman collection came from approximately one hundred families scattered over three continents. Typical of Jews who left many little towns in Poland between 1918 and the mid-1920s to seek better lives for themselves, these people emigrated from Luboml to the United States, Canada, and Latin American; others settled in Palestine before the state of Israel was created in 1948.



In the office of the Librarian of Congress, Aaron Ziegelman and his wife Marjorie present a copy of the book *Luboml: The Memorial Book of a Vanished Shtetl* to Librarian James H. Billington (left). Photo by Paul Hogroian

The materials in the Ziegelman collection provide a unique and detailed view of the traditions and other aspects of Jewish life in the market town or *shtetl* of Luboml (*Libivne* in Yiddish). Luboml, established in the fourteenth century, had one of the oldest Jewish communities in Poland, and is representative of other Eastern European *shtetls*. Located two hundred miles southeast of Warsaw, it is now part of Ukraine. Materials in the collection document, for example, local schools, businesses, recreational activities, religious life, holidays, and weddings.

Aaron Ziegelman was born in Luboml in 1928. When he was ten years old, he left Luboml with his mother and sister and came to the United States, settling in New York City. Ziegelman attended college and became a successful real estate entrepreneur. Desiring to enrich his memories of the vibrant community of his childhood, and also to share the story of Luboml's Jewish community, Ziegelman organized a research project in 1994 that would engage archivists, anthropolo-

gists, and historians in the collection, preservation, and analysis of information about Jewish life in Luboml, obtained from survivors and other sources.

The creation of this documentary collection led, in turn, to the development of a major traveling exhibition, *Remembering Luboml: Images of a Jewish Community*; a book, *Luboml: The Memorial Book of a Vanished Shtetl*; and the documentary film, *Luboml: My Heart Remembers*.

According to Michael Grunberger, head of the Library of Congress's Hebraic Section, the Ziegelman collection "adds a remarkable dimension to the already rich Judaic collections in the Library of Congress. The collection is about how Jews lived before the Second World War, not how they died; it depicts Libivners not as victims but as human beings fully engaged in the business of living; and it serves as a window looking out onto a vanished world, providing us with a clear view of a time and place that is no more."

Among those attending the acquisition ceremony on September 30 were Aaron Ziegel-

man and his wife Marjorie; the honorable Premyslaw Grudzin-ski, ambassador of the Republic of Poland; Jill Vexler and Fred Wasserman, director and curator, respectively, of the exhibition *Remembering Luboml: Images of a Jewish Community*; Eileen Douglas and Ron Steinman, producers of the film *Luboml: My Heart Remembers*; Peggy A. Bulger, director of the American Folklife Center; Michael Grunberger, head of the Library's Hebraic Section; and David Taylor, coordinator of acquisitions for the American Folklife Center. During the ceremony, James Billington commended Aaron Ziegelman and his associates for having "kept alive a memory that others sought to destroy."

That evening, the new, fifty-six-minute-long documentary film *Luboml: My Heart Remembers* was screened in the Library's Mary Pickford Theater. After the screening, Aaron Ziegelman, whose foundation supported the film's production, offered comments, and the film's producers, Eileen Douglas and Ron Steinman, talked about the creation of the film.

Peggy Bulger praised Ziegelman and his colleagues for the outstanding work they have done on the Luboml project. She quoted New York congressman Jerrold Nadler, who described their work as "a project of passion and nobility, a project dedicated to the preservation of a world lost to us. It was a world of happiness and light. A world of families and children, of community and spirituality. It was the world of the Polish town of Luboml."

The Aaron Ziegelman Foundation Collection will reside at the Archive of Folk Culture. "We are thrilled that Aaron Ziegelman has donated this wonderful collection to the Library," said Peggy Bulger. "It is an incredibly rich collection that will permit researchers to better understand myriad aspects of a Jewish community's culture as they existed before World War II."

Gail Fineberg, editor of the Library of Congress Gazette, contributed to this article.

Folklorists Attend International Conference on Traditional Culture



Michael Taft and Peggy Bulger at the WIPO conference in Geneva, Switzerland, December 2002. Photo by Burt Feintuch

By Michael Taft

For more than twenty years the international community has been concerned with defending traditional cultural expressions against commercial exploitation or inappropriate use. How can indigenous cultures and traditional communities maintain control over their own traditions and, if they desire, profit from the commercialization of their culture? Folklore is not like other forms of “property.” It may be owned by an individual,

as in the case of a particular arrangement of a ballad; by a group, as in the case of specialized knowledge of a medical treatment held by a family or clan; or by a culture as a whole, as in the case of a myth. It is usually impossible to pinpoint the origins of traditional forms of expression—nor can there be any expiration date on the ownership of folklore.

In effect, traditional expressive culture is perpetually under the custodianship of one or more members of a community, while

at the same time containing aspects of “public domain” material in its everyday performance. For these reasons, the intellectual property rights related to folklore present problems that cannot be easily solved by current patent and copyright legislation. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)—like the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Trade Organization, and the Convention on Biological Diversity—is

an international organization that has been struggling with these issues for many years.

WIPO is a special agency of the United Nations “dedicated to promoting the use and protection of works of the human spirit” (<http://www.wipo.org/about-wipo/en/>). In the early 1980s, in coordination with UNESCO, WIPO formulated the “Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions,” but these provisions were never meant to be anything more than guidelines for nations who wished to formulate their own laws protecting folklore. Two years ago, WIPO revisited this issue when it formed the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore. The purpose of this committee is to find common ground among its 179 member nations on how to define and assure the intellectual property rights associated with traditional cultural expression.

The committee has divided cultural expression into the three categories outlined in its title: genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and folklore. Genetic resources refer to plant and animal matter used in traditional medicine, agriculture, or manufacturing, and is probably the area of greatest concern for the committee, since the whole question of industrial ownership of genetic material is a current economic-political battleground. The other categories are less contentious but no less difficult to deal with as intellectual property. Traditional knowledge includes folk medical practices and treatments, methods of work, and other areas often associated with the term *folklife*. Folklore refers to song, narrative, music, dance, and other forms of artistic expression. In the context of WIPO, the forms of expression that most especially need intellectual property protection are traditional medicine, song and music, designs, and trademarks.

Ethnographers have been involved in these issues since the Model Provisions policy was created, but the present Intergovernmental Committee has few folklorists or ethnomusicologists among its delegates. In 2002, however, the United States began including folklorists on its official delegation to the meetings in Geneva, Switzerland. Peggy Bulger, director of the American Folklife Center, and Michael Taft, head of the Archive of Folk Culture, are part of the U.S. delegation, and have been adding their special knowledge of folklore to a team that is otherwise made up of copyright and patent lawyers, geneticists, and federal bureaucrats. In their role as specialists, Bulger and Taft have been able to supply case studies on the use and misuse of traditions, and have also had input on the wording of U.S. positions. As virtually the only folklorists attached to any national delegation, Bulger and Taft have also been in a position to advise the secretariate of WIPO on the finer points of professional ethics among folklorists, explain archival policies on collections of traditional materials, and supply WIPO with bibliographical references on folklore and intellectual property issues.

The Intergovernmental Committee has set itself a number of initiatives, including:

- ◆ Compiling definitions of *traditional knowledge* and *folklore* supplied by member countries.
- ◆ Surveying member countries on their existing laws protecting the property rights of indigenous cultures and traditional communities.
- ◆ Establishing guidelines for laws that are specific to the problems inherent in protecting traditional knowledge and folklore; so called *sui generis* legislation that applies laws over and above the usual patent and copyright protection given to other kinds of art.
- ◆ Establishing databases and bibliographic sources of information on traditional knowledge and folklore.

◆ Supplying technical assistance to governments that wish to establish or change their present intellectual property rights legislation.

◆ Creating an “intellectual property tool kit” to provide practical information on intellectual property aspects of documenting traditional knowledge.

◆ Acting to include representation of more local and indigenous communities in the workings of the Intergovernmental Committee.

These initiatives have been extensively discussed at the Intergovernmental Committee meetings with the result that four “possible tasks” have been proposed by the WIPO secretariate as means to protect traditional knowledge and folklore:

Possible Task 1: Enhanced legal-technical assistance for the establishment, strengthening, and effective implementation of existing systems and measures for the legal protection of expressions of folklore at the national level. This task would be carried out by WIPO and by member states and organizations.

Possible Task 2: Updating the Model Provisions. This task would revisit the Model Provisions and see how they might continue to apply as a superstructure for international legislation.

Possible Task 3: Extraterritorial protection. This task gets at the heart of international legislation with the aim being a cross-border *sui generis* system of regulations that would go beyond international patent and copyright laws.

Possible Task 4: Practical case study on the relationship between customary laws and protocols and the formal intellectual property system. This task would sharpen the understanding of how traditional knowledge and folklore might be accommodated in national legislation.

There was general agreement among member states on possible tasks 1 and 4. Possible tasks 2 and 3, however, were more contentious, with the United States and several other industrialized states objecting to any sui generis international law for traditional knowledge and folklore; these two tasks have been held over for further debate.

In the meantime, possible tasks 1 and 4 have already been implemented. At the most recent meeting in Geneva (December 9–17, 2002), New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Russia, and Tunisia provided case studies of how they protect their indigenous folklore. Of special interest was a report by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, *Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture*. Aided by the WIPO secretariat, this consortium of small nations in the Pacific has drafted cross-border sui generis regulations for the protection of folklore, which may well be the first concrete steps towards achieving possible task 3, while also being an example of possible tasks 1 and 4.

The American Folklife Center will remain involved with this important work, which will continue through at least two more meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee. But its involvement goes further. Peggy Bulger, Michael Taft, and David Taylor have participated in a number of other national and international fora on intellectual property, including the 2002 annual meeting of the American Folklore Society (AFS). In addition, largely through the urging of Peggy Bulger, as past president of the American Folklore Society (AFS), that group was represented as a nongovernmental organization at the most recent WIPO session. Burt Feintuch and Timothy Lloyd sat as official Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representatives, and presented the position paper of the AFS. It should also be noted that Valdimar Hafstein of Iceland, a Ph.D. student in folklore at Berkeley, represented the Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore at the most recent session.

Having other folklorists at the session, even if sitting as representatives of NGOs and not national delegations, is an important step in the involvement of our discipline in these matters. The NGOs and intergovernmental organizations that attend these WIPO sessions have the same right to make presentations as do government representatives, although they do not have a vote. They are, however, often freer to express controversial opinions than are their national counterparts, and more often than not, act as the conscience of the Intergovernmental Committee.

Future meetings promise to include more representation from indigenous groups, who have been especially encouraged to attend by the WIPO secretariat. Whether future meetings will also resolve the question of international, sui generis legislation is another question. But it is safe to say that the American Folklife Center will continue to make its contribution to the process, both within and without WIPO.

Parsons Fund Award Available for 2003

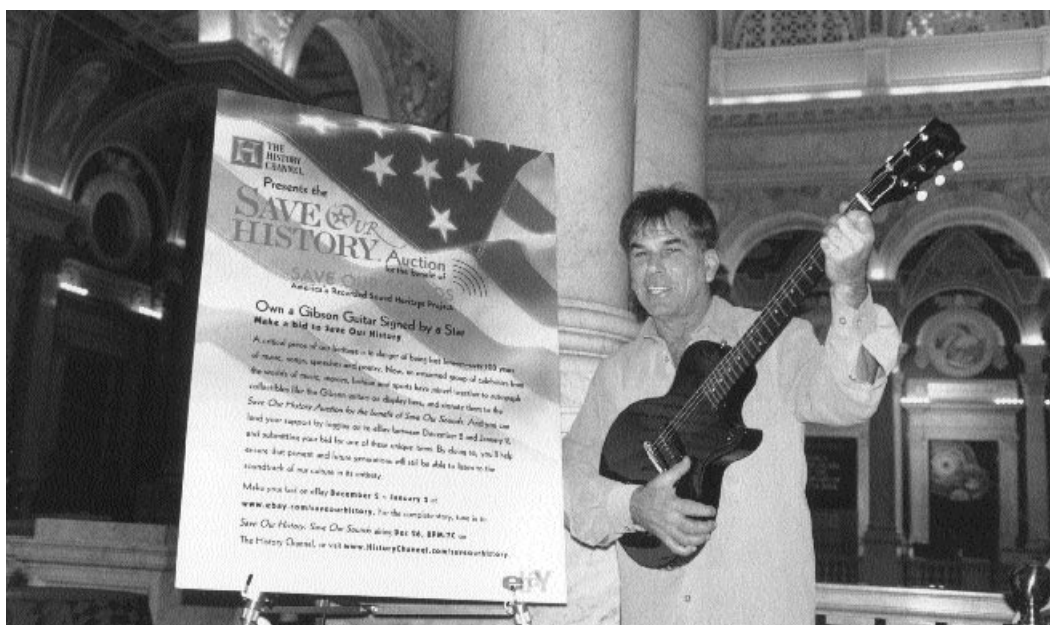
The Gerald E. and Corinne L. Parsons Fund for Ethnography was created in 1994 to make the collections of primary ethnographic materials housed anywhere at the Library of Congress, and especially the collections in the Archive of Folk Culture, available to the needs and uses of those in the private sector. Research projects using the collections may, for example, lead to publications in media of all types, underwrite new works of art or academic research, or contribute to theoretical development of archival science. For further information, see the American Folklife Center Web site (www.loc.gov/folklife), and select Internships and Awards; or call the Folklife Reading Room 202 707-5510.

This year, the American Folklife Center is pleased to offer an award (or awards) of up to \$1,500. This award is made possible through generous donations from Peggy Parsons and Judith Gray.

Applicants should submit a two- to three-page narrative describing their proposed project and its potential products and audiences, and should provide a budget and time frame. Applications should include a resume or statement of previous experience and the names, addresses, and phone numbers of three references who are qualified to speak about the applicant's professional work.

Applicants are urged to use email (folklife@loc.gov) or Fax 202 707-2076 (regular mail delivery to the Library Congress is slow). Applications may also be mailed to the chair of the Parsons Fund Committee: Ann Hoog, 532 9th Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002. Applications are due at the Library of Congress by April 21, and the Parsons Fund Committee will announce an award by May 5.

Save Our Sounds Project Featured on the History Channel



Grateful Dead musician Mickey Hart at the Library of Congress program celebrating the History Channel broadcast of a documentary on the Save Our Sounds project. Hart is a member of the American Folklife Center's Board of Trustees and head of the Leadership Committee for the Save Our Sounds project. The Gibson guitar company donated seventy guitars, signed by celebrities, for an eBay auction. Proceeds from the sale will be used to support the Save Our Sounds project. Photo by David A. Taylor

By James Hardin and Michael Taft

The day-to-day work of librarians and archivists is not the usual stuff of TV drama or documentary. But on December 26, 2002, the History Channel broadcast "Save Our History: Save Our Sounds," a one-hour film documenting the extraordinary efforts being undertaken at the Library's American Folklife Center and the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage to preserve America's recorded sound heritage. Ethnomusicologists, archivists, recording engineers, and folklorists played themselves in this engaging portrait of the two-year-old project to

identify and preserve audio treasures by migrating them to digital files (see Michael Taft, "Saves Our Sounds Audio-preservation Project Receives Major Support," *Folklife Center News*, summer 2002).

Of the nationwide broadcast Folklife Center director Peggy Bulger said, "The Save Our Sounds program brought our message to a viewing public we have never reached before. We are determined to get the word out to as many people as possible concerning the need to preserve our aural legacy. The History Channel is a perfect partner for this effort."

On December 3, a reception was held in the Great Hall of the Library of Congress, hosted by

the Librarian of Congress James H. Billington in cooperation with the Center for Arts and Culture and the History Channel, to preview the film and honor the project. "No sound recording lasts forever," said Dr. Billington. "It is our goal to preserve eight thousand of our most historic recordings as digital files, so that future listeners will be able to hear the testimonies of former slaves, the first recording of Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land," the epic tales of Zuni elders, religious services from Appalachia, man-on-the-street reactions to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the ballads and songs of our finest traditional singers among many other sound documents."

Speaking for the History Channel, Libby H. O'Connell, vice-president, Historical Alliances, explained that the History Channel's Save Our History series began in 1998, with a commitment to bring the past alive for the American people with a series of ten documentary films. She called the Save Our Sounds project a "natural for us," and was further motivated to proceed with the idea when she received a phone call supporting the project from musician and American Folklife Center board member Mickey Hart.

"Sound is ephemeral, and it disappears fast," said Richard Kurin, director of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage at the Smithsonian Institution. "We have no idea what people living before the late 1800s sounded like." The Save Our Sounds Project originated with a challenge grant, administered by the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, through "Save America's Treasures," a special project of the White House under the Clinton administration.

For over a century now, we have used recordings to document the sounds of great events and great performances; the sounds found in nature, in the workplace, and on the playground; the sounds of ordinary people telling their stories, singing their songs, and explaining their traditions. Starting in late 1880s (the Edison wax-cylinder recording machine was invented in 1877), we have been preserving these sounds: first on cylinder, then on disk, wire, tape, and now as digital files. Today the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution contain the largest and most significant collections of recorded sound in the United States, and they have the joint responsibility of preserving and making accessible this rich cultural storehouse.

This responsibility requires more than safe storage of the recordings. None of these recordings, whether cylinders

or CDs, will last forever, and many are already in an advanced stage of deterioration. Temperature, air quality, humidity, and sunlight affect all recordings and eventually degrade the sounds they contain. Acidic containers and over-playing on antiquated machinery have added to the deterioration of many of our most valuable recordings.

The goal of the Save Our Sounds Project is to make sure that we retain the sounds from our most historic and endangered sound recordings and that these sounds will always be available. The Save Our Sounds Project is currently digitizing eight thousand sound recordings—only a small portion of all the recordings in the two institutions. Yet the importance of this project goes beyond the saving of a selection of sound recordings. Save Our Sounds will help the Library of Congress to set the standards that other institutions will follow for the digital preservation of sound.

Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart is the head of the Leadership Committee for the Save Our Sounds Project, a group of supporters that includes Joan Baez, Ry Cooder, David Cosby, Yo-Yo Ma, Steve Miller, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Carlos Santana, Pete Seeger, Michael Tilson Thomas, and other notable musicians who have benefitted from the art and work of their predecessors. "When an artist starts off he bases his knowledge on what goes before him," said Hart.

Hart announced that the American Folklife Center has been awarded a \$10,000 Ralph J. Gleason Award from the Rex Foundation for its work in preserving the oral tradition and history of the Zuni tribe in the American Southwest. The award was presented to Center director Peggy Bulger at the December 3 reception. The Rex Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization established in 1983 by friends and members of the Grateful Dead. Mickey Hart is a board member of the

foundation. The Ralph J. Gleason Award was established in 1986 to recognize outstanding contributions to culture in memory of the pioneering jazz and pop music journalist Ralph J. Gleason (1917–1975).

The Zuni Storytelling Collection consists of 222 audio recordings that document the oral tradition and history of the Zuni tribe in the American Southwest. The Zuni people laid the foundation for the Zuni Storytelling Collection in 1965 when they sought and received funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity to record their oral literature. Nineteen community elders were selected by the project to relate traditional Zuni folktales in the tribal language for the purpose of documentation. A generation now deceased, these respected tribal members contributed over eight hundred stories, more than four hundred hours of recorded cultural/linguistic documentation, and approximately eight *telapna:we*, a traditional form of Zuni folktale.

The collection remained in the possession of the Pueblo until 1990, when the tribe realized that the original master reels, an irreplaceable cultural resource, were old, brittle, and in danger of becoming unstable and unusable. Working in concert with Andrew Wiget of the New Mexico Heritage Center, the Zuni Tribal Council determined that the recordings should be transferred to the American Folklife Center so that these important cultural resources could be preserved. The transaction was given the blessing of the Zuni Tribe in the form of a Council Resolution (M70-90-L094), and the American Folklife Center received the master tapes for the Zuni Collection in 1996. Through the Save Our Sounds program, the Folklife Center will process, document, and digitize the collection for research use. The Center will then store the Zuni Collection master reels in a controlled environment to ensure their longevity.

Michael Taft Named Head of Archive of Folk Culture

Michael Taft has been named to the position of head of the Archive of Folk Culture at the American Folklife Center, the eighth in a line of distinguished folklorists to hold the position since it was first created in the Library of Congress in 1928. Previous heads (holding different titles) include Robert W. Gordon (1928-32), John A. Lomax (who held the position of honorary curator from 1933 until the end of his life in 1948), Alan Lomax (1937-42), Benjamin Botkin (1942-45), Duncan Emrich (1945-56), Rae Korson (1956-69), Alan Jabbour (1969-74), and Joseph C. Hickerson (1974 until the position was discontinued in 1990 as part of a Center reorganization). The Folk Archive, which now holds more than 3 million items of ethnographic material, is one of the great centers for the study of folk music and other forms of folklore.



Michael Taft in one of the storage areas of the Archive of Folk Culture. Photo by James Hardin

Of the new appointment, American Folklife Center director Peggy Bulger said: "We are very pleased to have Dr. Taft in this position, with his outstanding scholarly credentials, his far-ranging archival expertise, and his extensive administrative experience. With the significant growth of the Archive of Folk Culture in the past several years, Dr. Taft will be heading up one of the largest and most important ethnographic archives in the world." Michael Taft said he was honored to fill this position and that he will

work "to keep the Archive of Folk Culture relevant and accessible to its wide community of users."

A native of New York City, Michael Taft holds a Ph.D. in folklore from Memorial University of Newfoundland and an M.A. in library and information science from the University of Alberta. Since 2001, he has been a folklife specialist at the American Folklife Center and project director for the Center's "Save Our Sounds" audio preservation program. He is also a member of the official U.S. delegation

to the committee on "Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge, and Folklore" of the World Intellectual Property Organization, which meets semiannually in Geneva, Switzerland.

Before coming to the Library, Taft served as university archivist and head of Special Collections, University of Northern British Columbia; archivist for the Vermont Folklife Center, Middlebury, Vermont; and sound and image librarian and archivist, Southern Folklife Collection, Manuscripts Department, Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In addition, Taft has been adjunct professor of anthropology and archaeology, University of Saskatchewan; Laura Bolton senior research fellow, Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University; research associate,

Department of Speech and Drama, Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax; visiting scholar, The Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton, Sydney, Nova Scotia; and visiting associate professor of English, University of Regina, Saskatchewan.

Michael Taft is the author of many works of scholarship and reference, including *The Bard of Edam: Walter Farewell, Homesteader Poet* (1992); *The Centennial Index: One Hundred Years of the Journal of American Folklore*, editor and compiler, with Bruce Jackson and Harvey S. Axlerod

(1988); *Blues Lyric Poetry: A Concordance* (1984); *Blues Lyric Poetry: An Anthology* (1983); *Discovering Saskatchewan Folklore: Three Case Studies* (1983); and *Tall Tales of British Columbia* (1983). He is also the author of numerous articles and reviews on folksong, narrative, drama,

and reference. He is a longtime member of the American Folklore Society and the Folklore Studies Association of Canada, and serves as indexer for the *Journal of American Folklore*. In 1996 Michael Taft began work on an ethnographic thesaurus in order to help define terminolo-

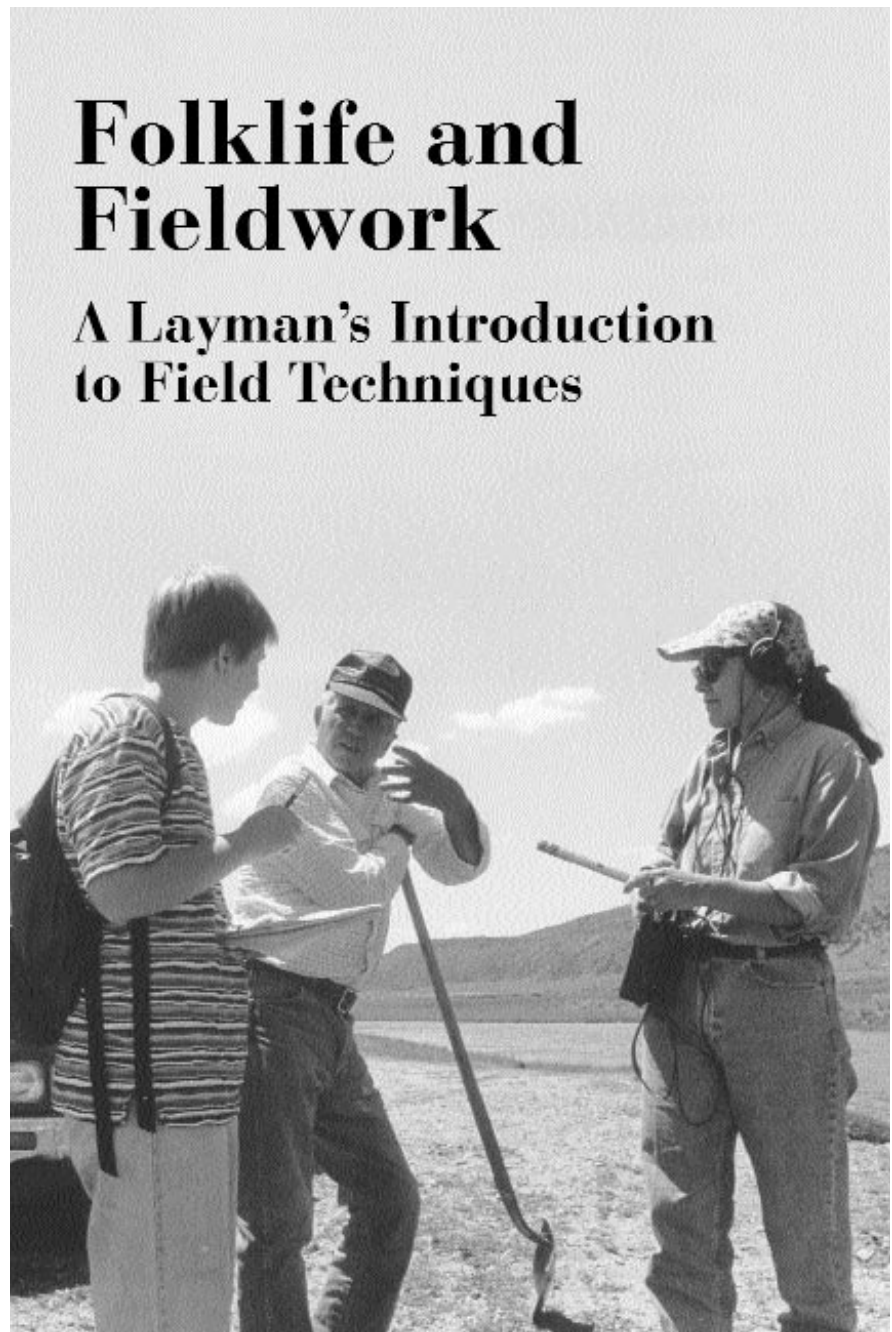
gy for librarians and archivists working with folklore materials. This project has since been adopted by the American Folklife Center and the American Folklore Society, and Taft is a member of the Ethnographic Thesaurus Working Group, an oversight committee.

New Edition of Folklife and Fieldwork Published

Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques, originally prepared in 1979 by folklife specialist Peter Bartis, and revised in 1990, has once again been revised and updated (2002) and is available free of charge from the American Folklife Center.

The popular thirty-eight page pamphlet includes a definition of folklife, a list of traditional activities and expressions that are frequently the subject of folklife research, and step-by-step recommendations for planning and executing a fieldwork project. There are sections on making audio and video recordings, and on taking still photographs. A final section offers advice on what to do with documentary materials, from preparing them for deposit in an archive to using them for public events and publications. The pamphlet also includes sample forms to use for making field notes and securing permission from people who have been documented to use their performances in publications and for public programs. There are also sample audio-recording, video-recording, and photography logs.

Copies of *Folklife and Fieldwork* are available to individuals, or for use in workshops and classrooms (up to 50 copies). Special requests for more than 50 copies will be considered. Please contact Doris Craig at the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 101 Independence Avenue, SE, Washington, DC, 20540-4610. Dcra@loc.gov, (202) 707-1736.



EDITOR'S NOTES *from page 2*

number of budget cuts and was in danger of losing its funding altogether, but its board of trustees worked hard to assert the importance of America's grassroots cultural heritage, and the Center is now enjoying the full support of both Congress and the Library.

The Veterans History Project and the Save Our Sounds audio preservation project have resulted in national publicity for the documentary work of the Center and the collections in the Archive. Special arrangements with the National Council for the Traditional Arts and the International Storytelling Foundation have led to large acquisitions. In addition, the Center continues to receive or negotiate for important documentary materials in private collections. In this issue, for example, David Taylor describes a new collection documenting the Jewish village of Luboml, Poland, which was destroyed at the time of the Second World War.

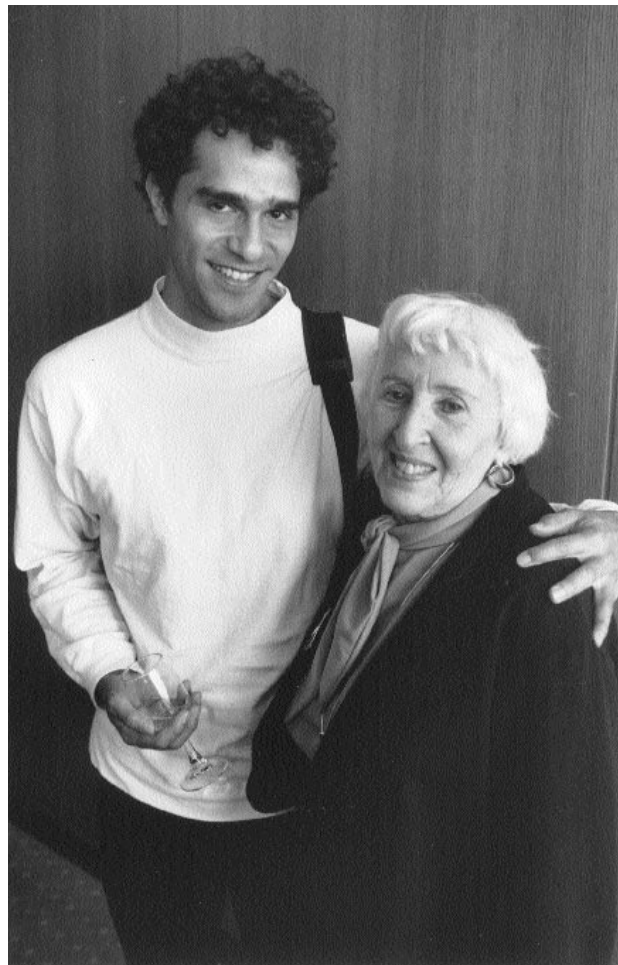
New partners and new project proposals present themselves regularly, and the Archive collections have increased by about 25 percent over the past several years. Thus, it is significant, both symbolically and in practical terms, that a new head has been named to take charge of all the complex activities of acquisition, processing, preservation, and reference. Michael Taft is eminently qualified for this position, and a short biography of his career and activities appears in this issue.

Henrietta Yurchenco Autobiography Published

Over the years, Henrietta Yurchenco has donated ethnographic documentation representing a lifetime of fieldwork to the American Folklife Center. She has recently published her own life story, *Around the World in 80 Years: A Memoir—A Musical Odyssey* (Point Richmond, California: MRI Press, 2003).

Now eighty-seven, Henrietta Yurchenco spent sixty years tracking down people in remote

corners of the world, recording songs and stories that otherwise would have disappeared. Her career as an ethnographer began in 1941, under the sponsorship of the Library of Congress, when she and her husband, Basil Yurchenco, traveled to Mexico. She spent the next five years recording ancient pre-Hispanic music among fourteen remote mountain and desert tribes of Mexico and Guatemala. She continued her work in other Spanish-speaking countries, particularly Spain, Puerto Rico, Columbia, Ecuador, and Morocco, among the Sephardic Jews resident there since expulsion from Spain in 1492. Her memoirs also include experiences elsewhere in the world, particularly behind the Iron Curtain, both before and after the demise of the Soviet empire, where she observed first hand the dire consequences of Soviet-style repression and the manipulation of culture.



Henrietta Yurchenco at a reception following her talk at the Library of Congress April 22, 1993, with then University of Maryland graduate student Sergio Navarrete Pellicer. For his master's thesis in ethnomusicology, Navarrete worked on Guatemalan ritual dramas, using Yurchenco's recordings in the Archive of Folk Culture as a major source. He also compiled an index to her Mexican and Guatemalan recordings that has assisted other researchers. Photograph by David A. Taylor

Spring Public Events

April 10: Illustrated lecture by John Michael Vlach in celebration of his new book *Barns*. James Madison Hall, Madison Building, 6:00 p.m.

April 21: Illustrated lecture on the rural North Carolina community Sodom Laurel, by photographer Rob Amberg, with storyteller Sheila Kay Adams. Mumford Room, Madison Building, 6:00 p.m.

April 23: Concert by Joe Derane, Irish button accordion player from Randolph, Massachusetts, with John McCann and Bridget Fitzgerald. Neptune Plaza, Jefferson Building, 12 noon.

For further information, including notices of other spring and summer events, see the American Folklife Center's Web site at www.loc.gov/folklife/events.



Northwest view of Luboml's Great Synagogue, with shtiblkh (prayer houses) at right, 1930. Collection Polish Academy of Sciences. The American Folklife Center has received a new collection documenting Jewish life in Eastern Europe before the Second World War. Story on page 6.

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