

Folklife Center News

Volume 28
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Fall 2006
Seegers
Bascom
Lunsford
Ken Burns'
The War

American Folklife Center
The Library of Congress





FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER



THE SEEGER FAMILY: A TRIBUTE AT AFC



3 James Hardin reports on "How can I Keep from Singing?" the Seeger family symposium, concert and celebration held at the Library of Congress, March 15-16, 2007.

KEN BURNS' *THE WAR*: A PARTNERSHIP WITH VHP



11 AFC's Veterans History Project, the Public Broadcasting Service, and filmmaker Ken Burns are working together to promote Veterans History through Burns' new film, *The War*.

BASCOM LAMAR LUNSFORD: NEW COLLECTIONS



13 Michael Taft describes two new collections containing recordings, photos and film footage relating to the "Minstrel of the Appalachians," Bascom Lamar Lunsford.

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FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

VOLUME 28, No. 4 ISSUE: FALL 2006

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Cover: Mike Seeger plays rattle and "quills," more commonly known as panpipes, at the Library of Congress, March 16, 2007. Seeger was at the Library as part of a tribute to his family hosted by AFC and the Music Division. See the full story on page 3. *Photo by Robert Corwin, AFC Robert Corwin Collection.*

AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER

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.

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 Website provides full texts of many AFC 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's contents is available at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/az-index.html>.

The Website 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/vets>.

The Folklife Information Service is 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.

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The Seegers in Rock Creek Park, May 23, 1921. L-r: Charles III, Constance, Pete, and Charles. Courtesy Pete and Toshi Seeger.

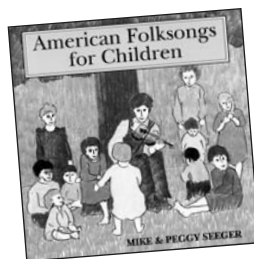
“How Can I Keep From Singing”:

A Seeger Family Tribute at the Library of Congress.

Editor’s Note: This issue of Folklife Center News is the first of two that will contain coverage of the historic Seeger Family tribute hosted by AFC and the Library’s Music Division in March 2007. We thank our retired colleague, and former editor of this publication, James Hardin, for returning to the Library to write the following article.

By James Hardin

Think of classic songs like “We Shall Overcome,” “If I Had a Hammer,” “I Want to Be an Engineer” and “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” Add to them other enduring achievements in folk music: books such as *American Folk Songs for Children*; the popularization of the long-necked, five-string banjo; a lifetime of being old-time music’s tireless champion; the founding of ethnomusicology as an academic discipline; countless hours of recordings and films...and three generations deeply devoted to folk music. Only



American Folksongs for Children album by Mike and Peggy Seeger

one family can claim such an impressive legacy in American music: the Seegers.

The American Folklife Center and the Library’s Music Division recently joined forces to honor this remarkable family. Composer-musicologist Charles Seeger (1886-1979), his first wife, Constance, his second wife, Ruth Crawford, several of his children (e.g., Pete, Peggy and Mike) and a number of his grandchildren (e.g., Tony and Kate), have been in the forefront of American musical creativity and social activism for nearly a century. In recognition of the ways the Library’s holdings have been enriched by collections documenting this



American family's extraordinary accomplishments, the two divisions sponsored a two-day event that featured a film screening, a concert and a symposium. Three generations of Seegers participated in the event, along with scholars, artists, students and friends.

The Seeger family tribute began on March 15, 2007, with a screening of film footage from the AFC's Pete and Toshi Seeger Film Collection, made by the legendary folk singer and his wife from 1955 to 1965. The footage was taken in the United States and abroad, when the young couple were traveling around the world with their three children to document traditional music and dance. The film screened at the Library included rare footage of many musical traditions, including an Indonesian gamelan orchestra playing for dancers, Indian sitar master Imrat Khan playing and discussing his music, Ghanaian fishermen singing while rowing their boats, Irish traveler and fiddler Sean Doherty playing with Pete in his caravan, blues musician Sonny Terry blowing the harmonica while his nephew, J.C. Burris,

Top: The Seegers set out on their 1921 "trailer trip." The trailer itself could be converted to a stage for presenting concerts, and also served as a mobile home for the family. L-r: Constance, Pete, Charles III, John, and Charles. Above, right: Ruth Crawford Seeger. Courtesy Peggy Seeger. Left, Pete Seeger promotional brochure, courtesy Pete and Toshi Seeger.



Pete Seeger and family. L-r: Mika, Toshi, Tinya, Danny, and Pete. Courtesy Pete and Toshi Seeger.



At the Seeger concert on March 16, 2007, Dr. James Billington, Librarian of Congress, presented the Seegers with special gifts on behalf of the Library: framed reproductions of the exhibit panels created by AFC. L-r: Tony Seeger, Kate Seeger, Peggy Seeger, Dr. Billington, Mike Seeger, and Pete Seeger. Photo by Robert Corwin, AFC Robert Corwin Collection.

performs “hambone” rhythms, American folk icons Bob Gibson and Odetta, and Pete himself, singing the ballad “The Devil and the Farmer’s Wife” with simultaneous translation by a Russian interpreter. One finished film was screened as well, the 1956 Folkways release *Music From Oil Drums*, in which Pete Seeger presents the history and theory of steel drum music and then shows the audience how to make their own instruments. All the entertaining and informative footage was carefully selected by AFC staff members Todd Harvey and Guha Shankar, with Shankar acting as the evening’s master of ceremonies.

On the evening of March 16, the Library’s Coolidge Auditorium was the site of a Seeger-style singalong when Pete Seeger, his half-sister Peggy and half-brother Mike, and a number of Seeger relatives and friends (notably niece Kate Seeger and her trio, the Short Sisters) sang, played musical instruments, told stories and encouraged the audience to participate. The concert, organized by the staff of the Music Division, was a historic occasion, since only very rarely over the years have the three best-known Seegers shared a stage. (It sold out within minutes of tickets being made available to the public.) The overflow crowd included Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and his wife, who are folk music enthusiasts.

At the start of the concert, Librarian of Congress James H. Billington, AFC Director Peggy Bulger, and Music Division Chief Susan Vita presented the participating Seegers with special awards in the form of framed collage prints depicting moments in Seeger family history. The collages were designed by Library staff as exhibit panels, then reproduced to a smaller scale and framed as keepsakes for the Seegers. During the presentation of the mementos, the three Library officials praised the Seeger

family. “The Library’s Seeger family collections represent an important and lasting aspect of the remarkable American creativity the Library seeks to preserve,” said Billington. Bulger added, “The American Folklife Center’s Archive and the Music Division owe a huge debt to the Seeger family.” Comparing them to the Lomax family, which has also had a long and important connection to the Library’s American Folklife Center, Bulger said, “the Seegers all have made enormous contributions to the fields of folklore, musicology and ethnomusicology.” Music Division Chief Sue Vita agreed that Charles Seeger was a pioneer musicologist whose papers and music manuscripts, as well as those of other Seeger family members, have enriched the Library’s collections.

The concert itself was very special. Many audience members had come from great distances to hear the family members perform, and they played separately and in various combinations. Musically, the most impressive Seeger was Mike; his instruments made up a veritable folk orchestra of several banjos, guitar, fiddle, pan-pipes, jew’s harp, harmonica and autoharp.



Folklorist Stephen Winick, AFC’s writer and editor, addresses the audience at the Seeger symposium on March 16, 2007. Winick was the overall coordinator of the Seeger events for AFC. Photo by Robert Corwin, AFC Robert Corwin Collection.



SEEGERS

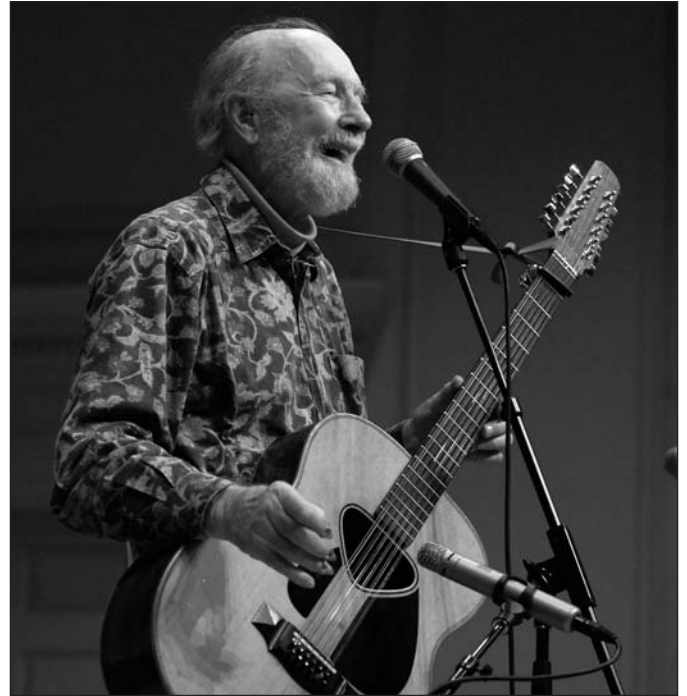
He also sang several old songs unaccompanied, in exactly the style in which he heard them in the field. Peggy Seeger impressed the audience with her charisma and charm; when she stopped between songs to read humorous newspaper clippings from one of her scrapbooks, people were ready to laugh. When she sang her tender love song “Love Call Me Home,” many wept. As for Pete Seeger, he provoked a different reaction: at his instigation, everybody sang. Now in his eighties, Seeger no longer has a strong singing voice, so he turns every concert into a singalong. This time, he led the audience in everything from political songs such as “Take it From Dr. King” to children’s

ditties like “Skip to My Lou.” He even sang the pop standard “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” rewriting the Yip Harburg lyric so it ends inclusively: “Why, oh why, can’t we?” The Short Sisters, a trio that includes Kate Seeger, performed several of their own songs, and also provided strong harmonies for the other featured Seegers.

In between the film screening and the concert, AFC hosted



Mike Seeger thrilled the audience by playing fiddle and harmonica together during the concert.



Pete Seeger, with his long-necked banjo and his mighty twelve-string guitar, presided beautifully over the March 16 concert, leading his family and the whole audience in song.



John Seeger, who is Charles Seeger’s son, Pete Seeger’s brother and Anthony and Kate Seeger’s father, recalled the Charles Seeger family’s famous “trailer trip,” in which they attempted to bring classical music to people in rural areas.



Peggy Seeger was outspoken but gracious at both the symposium and the concert.

Photos by Robert Corwin, AFC Robert Corwin Collection.



The Seeger siblings on stage at the Library's Coolidge Auditorium, March 16, 2007. I-R: Peggy, Mike, and their half-brother, Pete. Photo by Robert Corwin, AFC Robert Corwin Collection.

a daylong symposium focusing on the Seegers' work. Entitled "How Can I Keep from Singing," the symposium took its name from a biography of Pete Seeger written by scholar David Dunaway, who was a featured speaker at the event, and who donated a collection of interviews with Pete Seeger during his presentation. According to Bulger, the purpose of the symposium was "to showcase the Seegers' lifelong work, and advertise the availability of Seeger collection materials to scholars and researchers." Organized by a committee of AFC staff members, the symposium brought together prominent scholars, archivists, performers, activists and Seeger family members for a long and fascinating discussion about the family's impact on American music.

The atmosphere in the Library's Mumford room was electric as Neil Rosenberg, professor emeritus at Memorial University of Newfoundland, delivered the keynote address, "Family Values Seeger Style." He began by describing his own encounters with members of the family while he was a student at Oberlin College. He then explained how they came to occupy such an important place in American musical life and culture. A composer and professor of music at Berkeley, Juilliard and other leading universities and conservatories, Charles Seeger had a compelling need "to know the relationship of music and society," said Rosenberg, and "to find a way to reconcile aesthetic and social values." Although he was reared in a Victorian middle-class household and trained in the European classical tradition, Seeger's desire to investigate those relationships led him to research that would come to be known as ethnomusicology.

Following in the footsteps of their ancestor, succeeding Seegers "contributed to the intellectual and musical culture of their generation and its zeitgeist. They have spoken clearly and frankly to their contemporaries, striving not to talk as authorities but as facilitators," Rosenberg concluded. "Theirs is a populist rhetoric."

The excitement continued throughout the event. Many participants who had admired the Seegers for their entire lives now sat face to face with the family that had so inspired them. Indeed, many of the folklorists, ethnomusicologists, musicians and aficionados of folk music who attended the symposium simply wanted to say "thank you" for the way the Seeger family's music had touched their lives. For example, folklorist Millie Rahn's presentation, "The 'It Changed My Life' Syndrome: The Folk Revival," described "the transformative effect the music of the folk revival had upon well-to-do middle class students and young people in Cambridge, Massachusetts." This transformation occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, in cities and town across the United States, with the Seeger family out front and center stage. Representing a different generation, the symposium's organizer, AFC folklorist, writer and editor Stephen Winick, explained that many of the folklorists who pursued training in the discipline in the 1980s and 1990s had been attracted to the field by both the scholarly work and the musical activities of the Seegers.

Attending the symposium was ninety-three-year-old John Seeger (second of three sons from Charles's first marriage, and Pete's older brother) who shared the story of a pivotal moment for Charles and his young family. After seven years teaching music at Berkeley, Charles lost his job. Returning to New York, he built a trailer for



SEEGERS

his car, and in 1921, with wife Constance (a noted classical violinist) and his three sons, launched a performance tour of southern states to bring European classical music to people in rural areas. While the family had little success in their endeavor, they discovered that nearly every home they visited included talented musicians. John Seeger portrayed with compassion and humor his father's somewhat deflating realization that the American people "didn't need his music," because they had a vital music of their own. Not one to be deflated for long, Charles Seeger later became instrumental not only in encouraging the collection and dissemination of American folk music, but also in establishing ethnomusicology as an academic field of study.

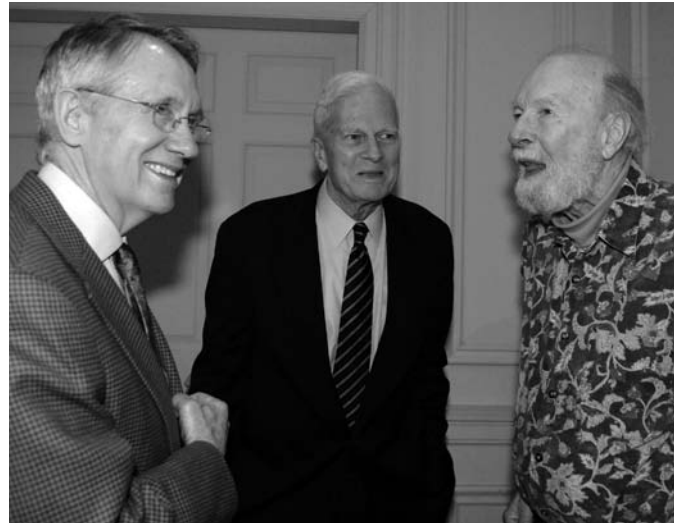
Other influences that shaped Seeger family values included the stock market crash of 1929, the Great Depression and the resulting plight of vast numbers of Americans. This period of social crisis, and subsequent events, such as the civil rights and anti-war movements, inspired various family members to social activism, which became inextricably linked to their music and message.

Judith Tick, professor of music at Northeastern University and author of a biography of Ruth Crawford Seeger, said that Charles and his family eventually came to embrace the values of Roosevelt's New Deal administration, which included collective action; folk music as an expression of the democratic ideal; the importance of local culture in building national identity;



Peggy Seeger was an excellent moderator for a panel dedicated to her parents' work.

Right: David Dunaway (l.) donated Seeger-related materials from his collections to AFC; Michael Taft, head of the AFC Archive, accepted on behalf of the Center. Photos by Robert Corwin, AFC Robert Corwin Collection.

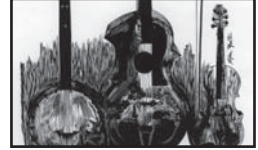


Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid attended the Seeger concert, and met with Dr. Billington and Pete Seeger.



Ethnomusicologist Tony Seeger, Singer-Songwriter James Durst, and Musician and Collector Mike Seeger were among the panelists at the Seeger symposium.





the need to learn by doing; and the documentary impulse, as represented by the various projects supported by the Work Projects Administration.

Charles and Constance divorced in 1927. In 1932, Charles married classical musician and composer Ruth Crawford (1901-1953), whom he met in the context of New York City's intellectual community. She is considered by many to be the most significant female American composer of the 20th

century. Together they had several children, including Mike and Peggy, and Ruth became stepmother to Pete, then a teenager.

In 1935, the Seegers moved to Washington, D.C., where Charles worked in the New Deal Administration. Taylor Aitken Greer, professor of music at Pennsylvania State University, explained that Charles "lived at the junction of two worlds": he had an artistic instinct and a rational intellect; he was a political activist and enlightened administrator.

Seeger Family Collections in the Library of Congress

The Seeger family collections reflect the family's long association with the Library of Congress, beginning in the 1930s and continuing today.

American Folklife Center

Seeger family members have contributed or are documented in 58 collections in the American Folklife Center's (AFC) Archive. These collections contain thousands of pages of manuscripts, and nearly 1,100 sound recordings, photographs and videos. The majority of the sound recordings represent the Seeger family as collectors and documentarians of other musical traditions while approximately 30 percent of the recordings feature the Seegers as performers or lecturers.

In 2003, the AFC acquired the film collection of Pete and Toshi Seeger – hundreds of reels of film footage shot between 1955 and 1965 in the United States and abroad. The collection includes Pete's demonstration of how to play the five-string banjo; performances by Odetta (also named a "Living Legend" by the Librarian of Congress), Ralph Rinzler, Elizabeth Cotton, Bill Broonzy, Sonny Terry and others; and documentary footage from Pete and Toshi's 1963-64 world tour to Australia, Indonesia, Japan, India, Ghana, Nigeria, Ukraine, England and Ireland. The films are being transferred to preservation format by the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, and eventually will be available to the public on DVD for research in the Folklife Reading Room. — *Todd Harvey, American Folklife Center*

Music Division

The Seeger Collection in the Music Division contains a rich mix of papers and music manuscripts that document the lives and careers of Charles Seeger and Ruth Crawford Seeger and their family. For both Charles and Ruth, the collection holds correspondence and other papers from family members, friends and professional colleagues. Each is represented by holograph music manuscripts.

Papers relating to Charles's musicological research include his melographs and transcriptions of the folksong "Barbara Allen," among other topics. Diaries, journals and literary manuscripts offer wonderful glimpses into Ruth's girlhood, while her mature compositions, along with clippings, programs, and materials relating to her book *American Folksongs for Children*, provide documentation of her professional career.

The Music Division's Seeger Collection also holds materials relating to Pete, Mike and especially, Peggy Seeger, who has donated a wide range of papers, music manuscripts and memorabilia relating to her life as a singer, songwriter and activist. — *Elizabeth Auman, Music Division*



Above, top: Handbill for a Pete Seeger concert in Los Angeles. The handbill is undated, and came to Library as a gift from Michael Cooney, in November 1982. AFC Pete Seeger Corporate Subject file. Below: Kate Seeger plays at a campfire at camp Killooleet in Hancock, Vermont, ca. 2000. Photo: Jo Sittenfeld. Courtesy Kate Seeger.



Tony Seeger dances with residents of Matto Grosso, Brazil, during his fieldwork there. Courtesy of Tony Seeger.



SEEGERS

Ruth, meanwhile, joined the effort underway at the Library of Congress and other institutions to document American folk music, and made brilliant transcriptions of field recordings collected by Alan Lomax, in particular those for his book *Our Singing Country*. In 1948, she published her own book, *American Folk Songs for Children*, which has become an enduring classic.

John Seeger's son Tony also participated in the symposium. He is an internationally renowned ethnomusicologist, former head of Folkways Records at the Smithsonian Institution, and professor at the University of California at Los Angeles. Tony's presentation at the symposium explored the ways his family's music contributed to his fieldwork experiences among the Suyá Indians, in Mato Grosso, Brazil. He explained that Seeger children were "exposed to music from a very young age," both to the music of their parents and siblings, but also to that of friends and visitors. They attended concerts and listened regularly to recorded music. A number of Seegers worked at summer camps, where they taught folksongs to several generations of children. "With such a name and heritage," asked Tony Seeger, "how does one establish an identity of one's own?" For him the answer was to go abroad and forge a career as a practicing ethnomusicologist. Of course, while appreciation for the music of other cultures puts him squarely in the Seeger family camp, his in-depth studies of Brazilian indigenous cultures, and his firm grasp of ethnomusicological theory, set him apart from his famous grandparents, uncles and aunt.

Singer-songwriter Peggy Seeger has a unique perspective on the family, partly because she spent thirty-five years living in England with her life-partner, the late Scottish songwriter Ewan MacColl. She and MacColl performed together and recorded many albums, worked on education and media projects and collected folk music from traditional singers in Britain. They also raised three children. Peggy continues to tour extensively and has made 21 solo recordings and many others with a range of artists. At age 70, her voice and political activism are still strong. Peggy has always been a great champion of the work of her mother, Ruth Crawford Seeger, and she moderated the symposium panel devoted to Ruth and Charles with great insight and wit.

Mike Seeger has devoted his life to singing and playing folk music of the American South, on banjo, fiddle, guitar, mouth harp, quills (panpipes), dulcimer, mandolin and autoharp. As a founding member of the old-time string band New Lost City Ramblers, Mike helped revive interest in traditional American music. He has recorded some 40 albums, both solo and with others. It may surprise our readers to hear that Mike Seeger learned many of the songs he performs from Library of Congress field recordings (as did his older brother, Pete). Mike has also been an important fieldworker himself, and the AFC archive contains many of the field recordings he has made of American old-time musicians. During the symposium, Mike spoke about this fieldwork and how he has incorporated it into

his performing life.

Pete Seeger was born in New York City in 1919, the third son of Charles and Constance Seeger. On a 1936 visit to the Folk Song and Dance Festival in Asheville, N.C., Pete heard the five-string banjo for the first time and it changed his life forever. He got his first job in 1939, when he was hired by folklorist Alan Lomax to listen to field recordings at the Library of Congress and make recommendations about which to include on the Library's legendary series of published recordings titled *Folk Music of the United States*. Because of this long-ago assignment, for which he recalls being paid a pittance out of Lomax's pocket, Pete Seeger is proudly (if unofficially) claimed by AFC as the Archive's first intern.

Pete Seeger is an American classic, and an American original. His credits are legion: folksinger, author, composer; founding member of the Almanac Singers (which also included his friend Woody Guthrie) and the Weavers; founder of the environmental organization Hudson River Sloop Clearwater; winner of the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award (1993), the NEA's National Medal of Arts (1994), the Kennedy Center's Lifetime Achievement Honor (1994) and Harvard's Medal of Arts (1996). In 2000, on the occasion of the Library's bicentennial, the Librarian of Congress presented Seeger with a Living Legend award, which honors Americans who have made significant contributions to the diverse cultural, scientific and social heritage of the United States. At the symposium, in addition to speaking up several times from his seat in the audience, Pete took the podium for brief remarks and then led all the participants in a rousing singalong.

Throughout the Seeger family tribute, audience members were able to enjoy the exhibit panels, which presented a history of the Seeger family in pictures. A wide range of sources, including the Seeger family members, contributed images for the panels. Initially set outside the Mumford Room on easels, they were then moved to display cases outside the Coolidge Auditorium, so that the concert audience could enjoy them as well.

For Robert Cantwell, professor of English and American Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Pete Seeger's career embodies the effort "to live his life to the level of his conscience." The entire Seeger family, said Cantwell, "lived out the ideal of social justice, holding the faith that it is possible to create a better world."

Pete Seeger confirmed Cantwell's observation in his closing remarks. "I am more political now than ever before," he said. To illustrate the point, he held up bumper stickers with political and social messages, including one that read "Gravity is Only a Theory." "We must learn to talk with people we strongly disagree with," he said. "The world will have to get together some way, and music will help." ○

James Hardin, former editor and public information coordinator at the American Folklife Center, retired from the Library of Congress in 2004.

VHP and PBS Promote Vets' Oral History Project with Film

Reprinted from The Library of Congress Gazette.



*Filmmaker Ken Burns addresses an audience at the Library of Congress. Among those seated in the front row are, from the far right, Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., Rep. Ron Kind, D-Wis., Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., Erik Olsen, president of AARP, retired Brig. Gen. Donald Scott, former deputy librarian of Congress and current member of the AFC board of trustees, retired Lt. Gen. Julius Becton, Deanna Marcum, associate librarian for library services, Patricia Harrison, CEO for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Peggy Bulger, director of AFC, and Lynn Novick, co-producer and co-director of Burns's film, *The War*. Stephen Winick, American Folklife Center.*

American Folklife Center's Veterans History Project and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) have joined in an initiative to engage the broadest possible community in gathering first-hand recollections of the diverse men and women who served the United States during wartime.

Launched at the Library on April 17, the public-outreach campaign will capitalize on the PBS broadcast of Ken Burns's new film, *The War*, to promote nationwide interest in collecting the stories of war veterans and contributing them to the Veterans History Project (VHP) for preservation at the Library. PBS will begin showing the seven-part

series on Sept. 23.

"The staff of the Library of Congress and I are excited to launch this comprehensive community-awareness campaign with PBS and Ken Burns," said Librarian of Congress James H. Billington. "We stand at the ready to continue our tradition of honoring America's war veterans by preserving their stories for future generations. The Veterans History Project collects and archives the one-of-a-kind stories that represent the diversity of the veterans who served our country—veterans from all conflicts, all branches of the military, all ranks, all races and ethnicities."

The War, directed and produced by

Burns and Lynn Novick, provides a partial snapshot of the World War II experience through the personal accounts of a handful of men and women from four geographically distributed American towns: Waterbury, Connecticut; Mobile, Alabama; Sacramento, California; and the tiny farming town of Luverne, Minnesota. The series explores the most intimate human dimensions of one of the greatest cataclysms in history—a worldwide catastrophe that touched the lives of people throughout the country—and demonstrates that in extraordinary times, there are no ordinary lives.

Addressing a Library audience that included members of Congress who have



In the Librarian's ceremonial office, Ken Burns met with Library officials and members of Congress. L-r: Ken Burns, Librarian of Congress James H. Billington, Associate Librarian for Library Services Deanna Marcum, VHP Director Bob Patrick, AFC Director Peggy Bulger, and Rep. Ron Kind, D-Wis. Stephen Winick, American Folklife Center.

supported the VHP project, Burns said: "As [we] heard these stories of individual veterans telling what happened to them ... we suddenly realized that this extraordinarily and admirably reticent generation [of World War II veterans], now at the end of their lives, with the intimation of their own mortality facing them day by day, were beginning to say, 'I want to tell my story.'"

He added that a "grateful republic needs to be there" to listen to these stories and preserve them for all time. "Our idea is to collect this wonderful body of testimony that will help us retain this memory that is hemorrhaging out and will be gone forever unless we capture it [and add it to] this extraordinary repository," Burns said.

"PBS is proud to partner with the Library of Congress on this extraordinary effort to involve the entire country in a national discussion about World War II and the contributions of this generation," said Paula Kerger, president and chief executive officer of PBS.

She said *The War* "is a magnificent piece of filmmaking that looks at the Second World War in the most intimate of ways, allowing a handful of individuals

to tell their stories. We hope that the film will build interest in the broader, important work of the Veterans History Project and encourage thousands of people from coast to coast to share their stories with friends, loved ones and, ultimately, the country through the collection at the Library of Congress," she said.

"There have been countless books and films about the Second World War," Burns said. "In *The War*, we try to allow a small group of individuals to tell their bottom-up stories. This film is as much about storytelling, about sharing unique experiences, as it is about World War II, and as such we hope that it touches on the universal human experience of battle. Of course, the film only provides a small window into the much larger experience of the hundreds of thousands who have served during times of war. We hope that by providing the tools to people around the country, especially young people, we can work together to capture many more of these stories before the generation that fought in World War II has passed."

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is funding this enormous community-engagement campaign for *The War*, involving more than one hundred public

television stations nationwide that will reach out to a broad range of veterans and their families to capture the stories that make up the rich mosaic of America.

Public television stations will target thousands of individual stories to be shared locally on-air, online and through community events and activities. For more information, visit www.pbs.org/thewar.

WETA, Washington, D.C., and the Veterans History Project have developed a field guide with a "how-to" on conducting oral history interviews, which includes pointers from Burns on lighting and shooting the video. Additional information provides instructions on how to send recorded interviews to the Veterans History Project.

The Veterans History Project, a major program of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center, is an oral history program created by Congress in 2000. Legislation for the Project was introduced by Rep. Ron Kind, D-Wis., in the U.S. House of Representatives and sponsored by Rep. Amo Houghton, R-N.Y., and Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md. In the U.S. Senate, principal sponsors were Sen. Max Cleland, D-Ga., and Sen. Chuck



Photos used in the Ken Burns film The War, reprinted courtesy of PBS. Clockwise from Top Left: Gilbert Islands, Makin Atoll, ca. November 1943. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, February 1, 1943. Source: AP Images. Saipan, 1944. Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. Saipan, 1944. Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

Hagel, R-Neb. The Project unites diverse communities around a common purpose: to collect and preserve the personal recollections of U.S. wartime veterans, as well as homefront civilians who worked in support of the armed forces, to honor their service and share their stories with current and future generations. These one-of-a-kind interviews are housed in

the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. To date, the Veterans History Project has collected more than fifty thousand individual stories. For more information, visit www.loc.gov/vets.

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is a private, nonprofit media enterprise that serves the nation's 355 public noncommercial television stations, reaching

nearly 90 million people each week through on-air and online content. WETA is the third-largest producing station in the public television system and the flagship public broadcaster in the nation's capital. ○

For more information on WETA and its programs, visit www.weta.org. For more information on PBS, visit www.pbs.org.

The Appalachian Dynamo: AFC Adds to Its Bascom Lamar Lunsford Collection

By Michael Taft

The AFC has recently acquired two important collections that document the life and work of Bascom Lamar Lunsford. Lunsford was born in 1882 in Mars Hill, North Carolina, and over a span of ninety-one years was a dedicated proponent of Appalachian traditional music, song, and dance. Teacher, itinerant tree-salesman, political organizer, and lawyer, Lunsford not only had a storehouse of his own Appalachian lore, but also enjoyed enhancing his repertoire of traditional material through a wide network of contacts among mountain people.

Lunsford's stock of traditional songs and ballads was prodigious. He also promoted mountain folklore through his commercial recordings, and more especially through the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival in Asheville, North Carolina, which he managed for many years. The AFC has extensive holdings of Lunsford recordings. From the 1920s, the Center holds field recordings of Lunsford made by Frank C. Brown, as well as by the first director of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Robert W. Gordon. (Please visit *Folk-Songs of America: The Robert Winslow Gordon Collection, 1922-1932*, <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/Gordon/index.html>, for three of Lunsford's songs.) From the 1930s, the Center holds Lunsford recordings made by Sydney Robertson Cowell and Laura Boulton, among others, while the 1940s yielded recordings of him made by Benjamin Botkin and Duncan Emrich. In the 1950s, Kenneth S. Goldstein and Anne Grimes were among those who contributed further Lunsford recordings to the archive.

The Center has had less material from Lunsford's final years. Recently, however, the Center acquired an important collection from David Hoffman of film, audiotape, photographs, and other material that documents Lunsford in the 1960s. David Hoffman is a



Bascom Lamar Lunsford dances while Obay Ramsey plays the banjo. American Folklife Center, Hoffman Collection.

cinematographer who has won multiple Emmys, a Peabody award, and the Cannes Film Festival Critic's Prize, among other distinctions. At the very beginning of his career in 1964, he created a documentary about Lunsford for the National Educational Television Network (the forerunner of PBS). Entitled *Music Makers of the Blue Ridge*, Hoffman's documentary is especially important for its footage illustrating Lunsford's rapport with mountain people. Whether asking directions from young boys on a mountain road, or visiting with performers who played or

danced at the Festival, Hoffman's documentary shows Lunsford in the role of itinerant folklore collector.

Lunsford was in his eighties at the time of the filming, and his thorough familiarity with mountain culture, nurtured by a long life in the region, is evident. At the same time, Hoffman's youthful exuberance (he was in his early twenties) gives the documentary the vibrant feel of yet another generation discovering this Appalachian dynamo. Hoffman's film was one of the first music documentaries aired on educational television, and serves as

a fine example of the enthusiasm for folksong that was characteristic of the 1960s.

David Hoffman's collection also includes audiotaped interviews conducted with Lunsford, as well as with others, such as Alan Lomax, Roger Sprung, and Jim Kesterson, who knew or performed with Lunsford. In addition, the collection includes copies of Hoffman's 1992 remake of his original documentary, *Ballad of a Mountain Man*, which was shown as part of the PBS series *American Experience*, and over one hundred photographs of Lunsford and other Festival performers. In total, the David Hoffman collection is a major contribution to our understanding of Bascom Lamar Lunsford.

However, it is not the final contribution. Cassie Robinson, coordinator of the Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies at Mars Hill College, in Lunsford's birthplace of Mars Hill, North Carolina, discovered a number of 78 rpm record albums that had been a neglected and unaccessioned collection, hidden from notice for many years at Mars Hill College. Robinson immediately recognized these recordings—seventy-four home-recorded acetate discs and twelve audiocassette dubs of earlier recordings—as an important cache of Lunsford material. She inventoried the discs and cassettes, as well as a handful of Lunsford's commercial recordings that were part of the collection.

In September 2005, Robinson visited the AFC and left the collection with the Center, on loan, so that the discs and cassettes could be digitized. The AFC will return the originals and a digital copy to Mars Hill College, while retaining a digital copy of the collection that will find its place beside the other Lunsford material at the Center.

Although the entire contents of this collection have not been determined, an initial survey indicates that it contains recordings of hundreds of songs sung by Lunsford, as well as many performances by other Appalachian singers. With the exception of two discs dated 1946 and 1949, and two cassettes marked "1935," there is no external evidence that dates this collection, but it seems to be composed of 1930s and 1940s recordings of Lunsford and his contemporaries. The collection also includes three 1928 commercial Brunswick recordings of Lunsford, and a 1930 Columbia issue of two of Lunsford's political speeches.



Bascom Lamar Lunsford and unidentified performers at the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival. American Folklife Center, Hoffman Collection.



Cassie Robinson of Mars Hill College donates a significant trove of Lunsford recordings to the AFC archive; Michael Taft accepts on behalf of the center. Reference Specialist Todd Harvey observes. Stephen Winick, American Folklife Center.

These two collections may not be the final Lunsford accession. There are probably other home recordings of this prolific entertainer that may yet find their way to the Center. It is

unlikely, however, that future finds will be as important as the Hoffman and Mars Hill collections in telling the story of Bascom Lamar Lunsford. ○



On April 24, 2007, AFC Director Peggy Bulger received a beautifully illustrated two volume publication from Prof. Wang Wenzhang, President of the Chinese Academy of Arts and Director of the Conservation Center of Intangible Cultural Heritage of China. Wang visited AFC on April 23 and 24, and gave a lecture, "Our Shared Responsibility: Protection of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in China." During his visit, Bulger presented Wang with a certificate of appreciation, and Nora Yeh interviewed him for the AFC archive. Photo: Li Bing.



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