

Volume 29
Nos. 1-2

Folklife Center News

Northern
Ireland

Seegers

Paul
Simon

VHP
Calendar

Ragtime



Winter/Spring
2007

American Folklife Center
The Library of Congress





FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER



FAMILY VALUES SEEGER STYLE:



3 In the keynote address of AFC's historic Seeger Family Tribute in March 2007, Neil V. Rosenberg examines the legacy of a family crucial to American music and folklore.

FROM SCARBOROUGH FAIR TO CAPITOL HILL:



12 Since his youth, Paul Simon has been fascinated with folklore. In April 2007, in preparation for winning the Library of Congress's Gershwin Award for Popular Song, he visited AFC.

ALL THROUGH THE NORTH, AS I WALKED FORTH:



18 A recap of the fascinating and entertaining series of lectures, concerts and symposia celebrating the culture of Northern Ireland, held at AFC in May, 2007.

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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.

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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>.

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Cover: Highland piper Robert Watt performed in the Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress on May 23, 2007 as part of the Rediscover Northern Ireland Programme, sponsored by AFC, The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure of Northern Ireland, and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Photo: Stephen Winick, AFC.

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Left: Charles Seeger and family, 1940. L-r: Charles, Peggy, Ruth Crawford, Barbara, and Mike Seeger. Courtesy Peggy Seeger. Below: Charles Seeger family's New Year greeting card photo, 1949. Clockwise from top: Charles, Ruth Crawford, Peggy, Barbara, Mike, and Penny Seeger. AFC Ruth Crawford Seeger correspondence file. Bottom: Mountain Music Bluegrass Style was recorded, edited and annotated by Mike Seeger, and originally released by Folkways Records in 1959. It influenced the first generation of musicians to call the genre "Bluegrass," including Neil Rosenberg. This image is from the 1991 CD reissue on Smithsonian/Folkways Records.



Family Values Seeger Style

A Seeger Family Tribute
at the Library of Congress. *By Neil V. Rosenberg*

Editor's Note: In this issue, we are honored to publish the following article by Neil V. Rosenberg. Rosenberg is a distinguished scholar who taught at the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland from 1968 until his retirement in 2004. A Fellow of the American Folklore Society and 2001 recipient of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada's Marius Barbeau Award, he has published extensively on Canadian and American folk music topics, and is a leading authority on Bluegrass music. He has also been a musician most of his life—even performing on several occasions as a member of Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys—and today performs with the bluegrass band Crooked Stovepipe. On March 16, 2007, Rosenberg gave the keynote address at AFC's Seeger Family Tribute. That address is reproduced here, largely as he delivered it.

It's a daunting task for me to speak first today about the Seegers. This room is filled with experts, including a bunch of *them*. But I know that I'm not the only one here who, in looking back on life's musical journey, has realized that the Seegers were an important part of it. Looking for a way of speaking about what the Seeger family means to me, I thought of "family values." I've been living in Newfoundland for nearly four decades, so it took me a little while to discover that this phrase, now part of the rhetorical baggage of the American far



right, came to prominence in a 1992 speech by Vice-President Quayle. To me these two words do not automatically evoke a single, partisan vision; they suggest many possibilities. Today, we celebrate a family whose prominent members' actions, statements, art and lives convey important values. One Seeger value is a willingness to confront politicized social issues. So my title begins by rescuing "family values" from solitary confinement, then combining it with "Seeger" and "Style" as used in the titles of Mike's first two Folkways albums, documentary works that changed my life.



Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie, ca. 1940. This image was likely taken in Oklahoma City during a trip Pete and Woody made from Washington, D.C. to Pampa, Oklahoma. Courtesy of Guy Logsdon.

Meeting The Seegers

I must have heard Pete Seeger's voice first back in 1950 when "Goodnight, Irene" was a big pop hit. But I didn't hear his name to remember until 1953, when I met Mayne Smith, another fourteen-year-old. He had just arrived in my hometown



Neil V. Rosenberg, appearing with the Redwood Canyon Ramblers at the Northgate club in Berkeley, California, in August 1959. Photo by Phil Olivier. Courtesy Neil Rosenberg.

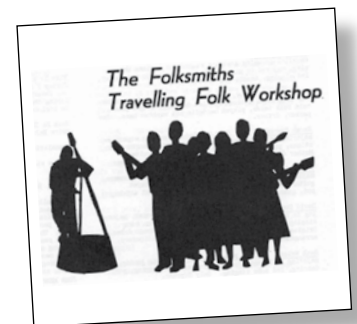
of Berkeley, California. Like me, he was learning folk guitar. He owned a little Folkways Pete Seeger album, *Darlin' Corey*. That song became a favorite in our crowd. In 1955, when Pete Seeger gave a concert in Berkeley at the Community Theater on our high school campus, we were there.

The following year The Weavers, who'd had that hit with "Goodnight, Irene" and then mysteriously vanished, reunited for

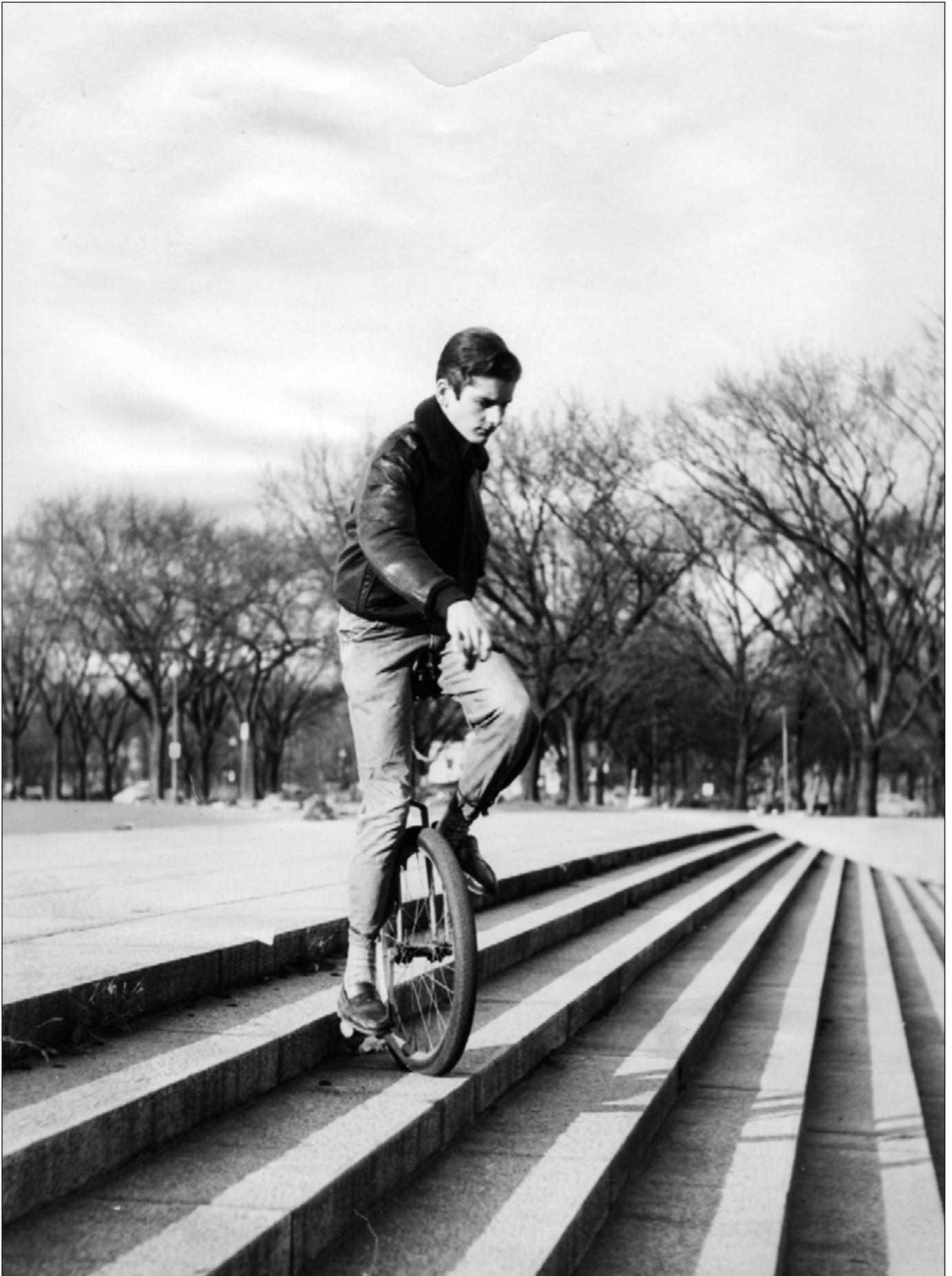
He taught us to sing with each other in harmony and counterpoint. He talked about folk music not as a kind of pop music, but as something at once old and new, growing in and out of everyday life. He opened a musical and intellectual door and we walked right in.

During my high school years I hung out at Art Music, a Telegraph Avenue record store with a big folk section and listening booths. Around the time of the Weavers concert, I found a Folkways album there by the Seeger Family—my first realization that there was more than one musical Seeger.

In the fall of 1957, I began my four years as an undergraduate at Oberlin College. I'd read in *Sing Out!* about a group there called The Folksmiths. Along with Mayne, still my musical partner, and now playing banjo, I ventured "back east" to northern Ohio. There we immersed ourselves in a vibrant extracurricular folk music scene, centered at Grey Gables co-op, a dorm frequented by the campus's arts and literature crowd. We learned that a Folk Song Club had been established recently and that it had already laid plans for that fall's concerts. Among



*The Folksmiths used this logo on their 1958 Folkways album *We've Got Some Singing to Do*.*



Mike Seeger rides his unicycle on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., ca. 1950. Courtesy Mike Seeger.



Above: Peggy Seeger in Moscow, 1957. Courtesy Peggy Seeger. Right: Peggy and Mike Seeger at Swarthmore College in 1955. Courtesy Peggy Seeger.



Peggy Seeger on her scooter, in London, 1957. Photo by Ewan MacColl. Courtesy Peggy Seeger.



those coming were two of the most popular performers: Odetta and Pete Seeger. Now I began to hear from fellow students about the other, younger, Seegers: Mike and Peggy.

A freshman classmate from New York City spoke of going regularly to Sunday folk sessions in Washington Square. Some of his friends would play there, doing bluegrass. I didn't know what that was, so he loaned me the Folkways *American Banjo Scruggs Style* album on which his friend Eric Weissberg played. Later that fall, senior Folksmith Joe Hickerson returned to Oberlin for a concert. When I mentioned this album to him, he said "that's Mike Seeger and his buddies from down around Washington."

The Oberlin folk music community was still talking about its first folk festival the previous spring, which had drawn like-minded folk enthusiasts from colleges and universities in the region. Around the same time, an enthusiastic sophomore witness told me, Peggy Seeger had come through en route to a gig at a new club in Chicago, the Gate of Horn. Traveling on a Vespa motor scooter with her banjo, she'd stopped off for a day or two at Grey Gables. What a romantic figure! Not only was she an appealing singer and a great instru-

mentalist, but she also had an admirable spirit of adventure.

I also heard, from others who seemed to know her better, about her experience of going to Moscow for the 1957 Youth Congress, and the subsequent political turmoil it caused in her life. I heard nothing then about Ewan MacColl, so to me this conflict over visiting Moscow became the reason for her decision to remain in Europe. It was my first experience of the impact of



SEEGERS

cold-war power politics on my generation. Here was one of our musical stars being punished by our government for her beliefs. Now I know from reading Peggy's Songbook and her website that the full story had other political dimensions as well.

I soon learned of the new Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl partnership, through Sing Out! and heard the new albums that were coming out on folk music labels like Folkways and Riverside. Their recordings had fantastic vocal duets, new and new old songs, a transatlantic marriage of new and old-world instruments like the banjo and the concertina. The Oberlin Folk Song Club wanted to book them, but the State Department wouldn't let them in until 1961. As president of the Folk Song Club that year, I finally heard them in person and got the opportunity to meet and talk with Peggy backstage.

Meanwhile, I saw Pete yearly in concert at Oberlin. Each year I heard some of the old favorites. But there would be something new, too: Leadbelly's "Follow Me Down" demonstrated expertly on the 12-string, the tuning on Pete Steele's "Cold Creek March" explained, the steel drum introduced. Once he did a southern black convict song, "Didn't Old John," to the rhythm of his ax chopping on a log, right there on stage at Oberlin's Finney Chapel.

Pete explained how this music was made and used. He urged us to listen to his sources for these performances. This we did. We were Folkways junkies. Another Folksmith, Rickie Sherover, ran a folk record dealership out of her room at Grey Gables. I bought documentaries--Sam Charters on Blind Willie Johnson, Ralph Rinzler on the Stoneman Family.

The Folkways documentary that affected me the most was Mike Seeger's *Mountain Music Bluegrass Style*. Filled with exciting performances, it also included the voices of the performers introducing the songs as they might at a show or broadcast. The repertoire itself was iconic. And the notes were wonderful. Taking advantage of the Folkways album format with its separate space for a brochure with detailed notes, Mike created a master document--another door opener for me. In addition to the usual song texts with biographical and song notes, it included lists of bands and record companies, a section on instruments, photos, and so on. Today it looks to me like the printout of a website.

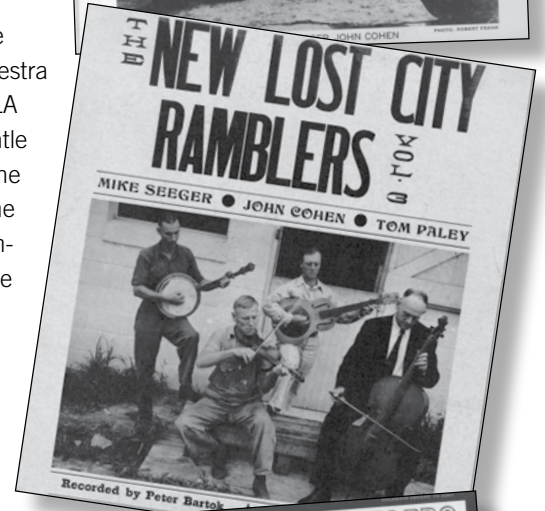
Mike was on that record, playing some nice bluegrass banjo with Bob Baker and the Pike County Boys. Today such a band would have its own CD, but by that time Mike was moving into old-time music with the New Lost City Ramblers. The Ramblers recreated performances from three- or four-decade-old recordings by musicians from the American south. Those recordings came from a time and place that marketed music in segregated categories: rural whites made "hillbilly" records, blacks made "race" records. The Ramblers turned to native rather than commercial categories and called their music "old-time." Their imprint is still with the word today.

In the early 1960s, Journal of American Folklore record

review editor D.K. Wilgus praised the group for its stylistic authenticity, describing it as the revival equivalent of ethnomusicological performance groups like the Gamelan orchestra led by his UCLA colleague Mantle Hood. When the Ramblers came to town or campus, there were jam sessions with us young bluegrass musicians.

We saw the Ramblers as living musical ancestors and they, particularly Mike, gave us informed viewpoints about this new music we were learning.

In the years after we met, I learned that Mike was highly regarded as a musician in this world. Opening for the Osborne Brothers at the first bluegrass concert on a college campus, at Antioch in 1960, gave our band a chance to hang out with polished southern



Original New Lost City Ramblers album covers, as issued by Folkways in the 1950s.

pros. Wondering about their roots in old-time music, I asked West Virginian Benny Birchfield, who played bass and second banjo with the Osbornes, if he knew how to play in the old frailing style. “No,” he said, “but there’s a guy around Washington that’s really good--his name is Mike Seegler or something like that.”

In 1963, when I was working at the Brown County Jamboree in Bean Blossom, Indiana, Mike’s name came up in a conversation with Bill Monroe. I mentioned how I admired the work Mike was doing with Newport and Folkways to document and preserve old-time music. Bill nodded and said, “He’s a good mandolin player, too.”

By then I was doing graduate work at Indiana University, studying ethnomusicology as part of my folklore program. When I arrived there in 1961, the ethnomusicology program was in flux. The famous scholar George Herzog had just retired. His courses were being taught by George List, Director of what was then called the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music (“Folk and Primitive” became “Traditional” in 1964). Students were looking for advisors and, as often happens at graduate programs in small disciplines, the diversity of their interests challenged their professors.

One such student was Jerome Wenker. A recent MIT grad, he was the first person I’d ever met who actually worked with computers. His goal was to develop methods of using them to analyze folk tunes. In those days, folklore chairman Richard Dorson routinely acted as every folklore student’s supervisor. Jerome told me his guru, his real supervisor, was Charles Seeger at UCLA. He fought long and hard with Dorson to get permission to have Seeger as his official supervisor.

Charles Seeger was, at that time, well known to us because of his work on the melograph, a musical transcribing machine. He had also written a startling variety of theoretical papers, which, though not easy reads, were provocative and, ultimately, instructive. He explored paths others neglected.

Beyond this, I knew he was father of Pete and Mike and Peggy, but little else. Then I met another folklore graduate student, Dick Reuss, was researching the political history of the folksong revival. Dick told me about “Charlie” Seeger and how, in the 1930s, he had written about music in the communist newspaper *The Daily Worker* using the pen name “Carl Sands.”

Part of my academic apprenticeship during those years involved attending academic meetings. It was here that I first saw Charles Seeger in person. By then deafness had made him pretty much totally dependent upon a hearing aid. Tall and lanky, he sat in the front row and didn’t hesitate to ask questions or speak out in discussions. He was a fascinating figure, but his imposing combination of intellectual reputation and aural distance was daunting to a lowly grad student who had no idea how an informal discussion with him might unfold. I saw him, heard him; but we did not talk.

But later, when I began teaching graduate students, his



Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl at Newport Folk Festival, 1960. Courtesy Peggy Seeger.

articles, like “Singing Style” and “Prescriptive and Descriptive,” were welcome partners in the enterprise of stimulating young minds. In 1990, when I became sound recording reviews editor for the *Journal of American Folklore*, I began my work by reviewing his seminal essays written in 1948 and 1949. I learned he was my original predecessor, the first record review editor for *JAF*. His work on this topic shaped that of all those who followed.

By then I’d been teaching folklore at a Canadian university for many years. Here my awareness of the British folk revival and research scenes had grown. Canadian popular and academic culture looked frequently to English models. Inevitably, I heard more of Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger. In *The Electric Muse*, a 1975 history subtitled “The Story of Folk into Rock,” Dave Laing suggested that the musical ancestors of Fairport Convention were The Ramblers, a 1956 group led by Alan Lomax and Ewan MacColl that included Peggy Seeger. Around the same time, a graduate student working on English folk clubs told me of MacColl’s influential “Singers’ Club,” with its “dictum that all singers must perform repertoire only from their own culture.”¹ I gained the impression that Seeger played a significant role in this club.

I also learned about Seeger and MacColl’s work as composers, folklorists, and documentarians. Exactly how Peggy Seeger fits in the history of her work with MacColl is, for me, obscured by the closeness of their partnership. My sense is that, like her mother, she contributed much to the dyadic enterprise. We need a good biography of her.

In the 1970s, I became aware of another Seeger--Tony. We



SEEGERS

first met when he was director of the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana, and became better acquainted when he moved to Smithsonian/Folkways. When he came to St. John's several years ago to speak in the lecture series sponsored by our Centre for the Study of Music, Media and Place, I loaned him a five-string banjo and we had a nice visit. Tony's recent Charles Seeger Address to the Society of Ethnomusicology addresses many of the topics touched on at today's symposium, and articulates his position in the family constellation.²

Values

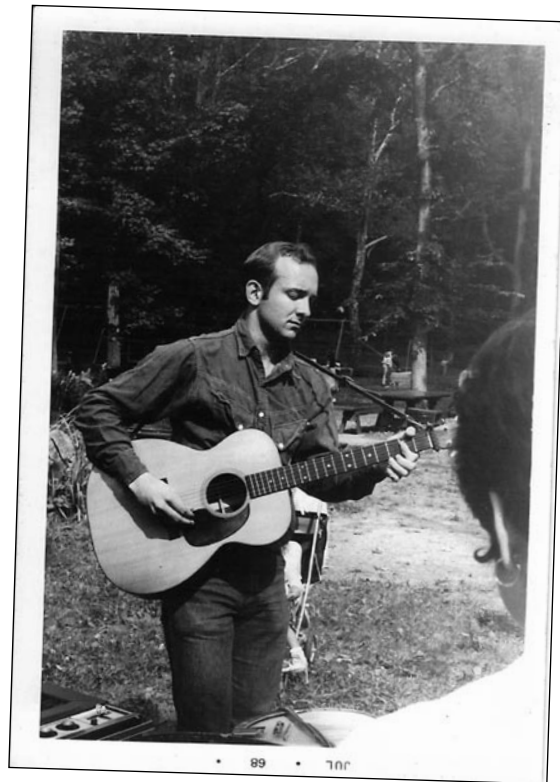
In my life in folk music, first as enthusiast and performer and later as scholar and academic, the Seegers have played an important part. Pete opened doors and pointed out paths; Peggy and Mike were role models; and Charles helped build the philosophical foundations that informed my teaching, writing, and research. Yet, when I agreed to give this address, I realized that there was much about these people I didn't know. Luckily, I am not the first to wonder about the Seegers and how they came to occupy such a prominent place in American music and letters. We are fortunate good biographies of Pete and Charles and Ruth Crawford have been written, that Peggy and Mike have written about their own activities, and that Tony has written about the family.

Only recently have I learned about Ruth Crawford Seeger, through Judith Tick's fine biography. This filled many gaps in my knowledge. It helped me to start focusing on the question I raised at the beginning of this talk: what are the Seeger Family values?

It seems logical to begin with Charles since, as father, husband and teacher, he was there at the start for the others. His journey from classical musician to musicologist was an unlikely one in some ways, and yet if we look at his life with its many facets it appears that at every turn he was in the vanguard of a movement. Intense engagement in an intellectual community was part of his life; indeed for him it could be an extension of the family.

If Charles were here today I would probably not venture to speak of "values," since one of his early philosophical pursuits centered on the concept of "value." Robert R. Grimes's conclusion was that while Charles's thought about musical values evolved throughout his lifetime, at its core was his "need to

know the relationship of his music to society."³ He approached values, typically, in terms of dialectic between ideas and facts. That which was worthwhile because it had value to life and society should be examined constantly. For Charles and his family, musical values have priority. From them emerge the values that govern decisions about life. His intellectual work was to reconcile these esthetic and social levels of value,⁴ or, to put it perhaps more simply, to figure out how words could represent music. As Yung and Rees put it, "while he [wrote] with a philosopher's logic and a scientist's rigor, he [was] also a poet at heart."⁵



Anthony Seeger playing his guitar, 1968. Courtesy Anthony Seeger.

In his life, Charles moved in stages from performer to composer to musicologist; from critic to bureaucrat, collector to transcriber to theoretician. Each stage reflected a value that flowed from this primary commitment to the social value of music: fearless reinvention. Musically speaking, I'd call this systematic improvisation.

These stages did not occur in a vacuum; they reflected his response to changing personal and historical situations. So, for example, the shock of the Depression moved him from the avant-garde music scene into the study of folk music.

His reinvention was never capricious or impulsive. It reflected rigorous intellectual self-examination that was wide-ranging, partaking of many sources and disciplines. This is, in retrospect, why much of what Seeger has written remains of value to scholars today: it flows in its own bed, rather than in the narrow banks

of various disciplines or schools of thought. As Seeger said: "if anybody or group run long beside me, I give them loyalty in proportion to whatever of my goal they share with me."⁶ Here then is another value: intellectual independence.

One of his first conclusions seems to have been that either all music is art, or that it can be seen as such. Charles Seeger is often said to be difficult to read or maddeningly abstract. I think he wrote for the ages—that he followed the models of his schooling in philosophy by distancing himself from his own esthetic when theorizing.⁷ His perspectives toward particular kinds of music changed as he experienced sound recordings of music he'd never been able to study. He was very picky about what he liked and what he didn't like; from the records he left behind, he apparently didn't like old-time music in Asheville in 1921, but definitely did like it in Asheville in 1936.



Seeger family reunion, date unknown. Photo by John Cohen. Courtesy Pete and Toshi Seeger.

The constant change of Charles's life was quickened by his close intellectual and musical partnership with composer Ruth Crawford. Their meeting as teacher and pupil took place in the context of New York's flourishing intellectual and artistic community. Their shared interest in fine-art music was focused on developing a national music. In their avant-garde modernism, they sought to develop strong and different images that conveyed their values.

New York had many such scenes in the late 1920s. It drew the brightest and the best in the arts and business from all over the continent to a city already vibrant: the Harlem renaissance in bloom, Tin Pan Alley embracing jazz, Greenwich Village, Broadway theater, Wall Street pumping out the bucks. It was a conduit to the centers of Europe--London, Paris and Berlin.

They came together to work on avant-garde counterpoint, and by the time they finished, he had a book, she had a husband and kids, and they were both involved in the artistic politics of the Communist party. Radicalization was their response to the great depression that grew in the years fol-

lowing the Wall Street crash.

Charles dated the beginning of his radical transformation back to 1916, when he visited a migrant camp in California. He was vexed about the value of his music. Fifteen years later he and his new wife, experiencing the Depression and sharing this concern about musical values, embraced the idea of including music in the political struggle for social justice and equality.

Charles now found his métier in criticism, exploring the issues and values he cared about in *The Daily Worker*. Meanwhile, New York's avant-garde scenes continued and evolved. Politics drew together people from previously separate scenes. During the early 1930s in New York, Charles and Ruth heard music that was new and different to them. They heard fine-art works that were designed to be proletarian. They heard concerts by proletarian singers like Aunt Molly Jackson and Huddie Ledbetter. They went to Thomas Hart Benton's parties, where artists and writers played and listened to hillbilly music on records. They met John and Alan Lomax (both of them had attended Harvard and both, like Charles, had known Kittredge).



SEEGERS

Like many at that time, they already knew of the Lomaxes' ongoing work to record American traditional music.

In 1935, Charles was hired as an administrator in the Roosevelt government's New Deal. He worked first in the Resettlement Administration, then in the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In these positions, he was one of the first public folklorists, and also an applied folklorist in Botkin's original sense of the term: his projects were designed to utilize cultural resources in battling the economic crisis. Soon after moving to Washington, he and Ruth became involved in the Lomax project. The Lomaxes had recorded thousands of songs. Unlike many folksong collectors at that time, the Lomaxes were firmly convinced that recording was the proper medium of collection. But if that captured the art in dimensions never before imagined, how then was it to be represented? At that time, documentary recordings and broadcasts weren't yet considered a convenient way of getting out the news about this art. It was the Lomaxes' books that were making American folksongs fashionable; they were part of a strong new interest in American literature and art. In 1936, the Seegers were hired to transcribe the music for the Lomaxes' next big book.

Charles, preoccupied to some extent with his administrative duties and challenges, and facing the personal challenge of growing deafness, left most of the detail work to Ruth. One of America's best composers, she heard and wrote things others missed. Along with her skills, she brought personal esthetic values to what she heard. She and Charles conferred frequently, and his critical and theoretical writing began to reflect that experience.

During their years in Washington, which ended with Ruth's death in 1953, the Seegers were leaders in the musical side of the new avant-garde enterprise of recording of American folk music. Though there was considerable overlap, each did what they did best, I think; Ruth heard with the musical vision of a composer. As with Bartok, it was easy for her to write what she heard using the limited tools of European art music. Her contribution to *Our Singing Country*, even without the suppressed pages eventually published as *The Music of American Folksong*, was monumental and put her at the top of the heap in folksong transcription, a hard art, just as she'd been at the top as a composer. The book was a prototype for the radio documentaries Alan Lomax would soon be producing for the Government, especially in its use of the voices of Aunt Molly Jackson and Woody Guthrie to frame the collection. It had many firsts, among them the transcriptions of commercial recordings as folksongs; and presented a repertoire that became popular in later years.

Charles continued to write and take important arts-leadership roles during these years. As before, he was excited by his wife's work; these years were a time of intense musical activity. They heard thousands of recordings and live performances.

After 1953, and Ruth's death, many things changed. Charles

continued to write, and to revise his earlier work, to reinvent and explore new things. But, as Helen Rees has argued, his folk music research experience would shape his work henceforth.⁸ By this time, the musical children whom we honor as well today--Pete and Mike and Peggy--were following their own paths.

These paths were shaped by the values I've mentioned earlier--worthwhile life activities, like involvement in intellectual communities; the dialectic of ideas and facts; the centrality of musical values; reinvention as systematic improvisation; the need for intellectual independence; and willingness to confront politicized social issues. At the heart of these values lies the dialectic and counterpoint that enchanted Charles: music and words about music.

Not surprisingly, the younger Seegers grew up imbued with these values. Teenage stepson Peter was there as the relationship that blossomed into marriage began. His political interests and musical aptitudes were still forming. Later he would date the beginnings of his odyssey into folk music with the family's 1936 trip to Asheville. The details of his subsequent career--apprenticeship with Alan Lomax, the beginnings of a performance career, travel with Woody Guthrie--are familiar to most of us.

The contributions of Pete, Mike, Peggy, and Tony are amazing; we will hear much today about them. Even today, as Pete is in his ninth decade, the systematic improvisation continues. And the same can be said for the life and work of Mike and Peggy. Tony, coming a generation later, has already made unique and solid contributions on several fronts. Each Seeger has 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. Theirs is a populist rhetoric. They translate the previous generation's values into their terms.

Time does not permit me to touch on all of the contributions of the Seegers. We would not be gathered here today if we didn't believe they were worth talking of and honoring. Today I look forward to hearing much that is new to me, particularly because the Seegers are here to help us learn and understand about their substantial roles in our musical lives. So let us begin! ○

Notes

¹ Karl Dallas, "The Roots of Tradition," in Dave Laing, Karl Dallas, Robin Denslow and Robert Shelton, *The Electric Music: The Story of Folk into Rock* (London: Methuen, 1975): 90.

² Anthony Seeger, "Lost Lineages and Neglected Peers: Ethnomusicologists outside Academia." *Ethnomusicology* 50 (2006): 214-235.

³ Robert R. Grimes, "Form, Content, and Value: Seeger and Criticism to 1940," in *Understanding Charles Seeger, Pioneer in American Musicology*, ed. Bell Yung and Helen Rees (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999): 80.

⁴ See Taylor Aitken Greer, *A Question of Balance: Charles Seeger's Philosophy of Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): 69.

⁵ Bell Yung and Helen Rees, eds, "Introduction," in *Understanding Charles Seeger, Pioneer in American Musicology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999): 3.

⁶ Ann M. Pescatello, *Charles Seeger: A Life in American Music* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992): 116.

⁷ Those who have studied him mention his underlying interest in Marxism. This appears most clearly in his concerns about the commodification of art. I don't have space to address the riddle created when success and popularity lead to commercialism, which seems to me to be an ongoing problem for the charismatic Seegers.

⁸ Helen Rees, "'Temporary Bypaths'? Seeger and Folk Music Research," in *Understanding Charles Seeger, Pioneer in American Musicology*, ed. Bell Yung and Helen Rees (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999): 84-108.

From Scarborough Fair to Capitol Hill: Paul Simon Visits AFC

By Michael Taft and Stephen Winick

Paul Simon has twelve Grammy awards, including a 2003 Lifetime Achievement Award. He is in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twice: once as a member of the duo Simon and Garfunkel, and once as a solo performer. He received the Kennedy Center Honors in 2003, and in 2006 was named by *Time* Magazine as “one of 100 people who shape our world.” And when he visits the Library of Congress, Paul Simon makes sure to stop by the American Folklife Center.

On April 5, 2007, Simon, accompanied by his son Adrian, producer Peter Kaminsky, and Kaminsky’s daughter, visited the Library to meet with Librarian of Congress James H. Billington. During their visit, they also stopped in at the AFC, where they were shown a number of the Center’s archival treasures.

Simon’s visit to AFC was only natural, given his pronounced and enduring interest in folklore. Indeed, Simon’s particular blend of musical traditions owes much to the kinds of material found at the Center, and it was a pleasure to share these connections with him. In the 1960s, Simon was known not only as a songwriter, but also for renditions of British and American folksongs and ballads, including “Barbara Allen” and “Rose of Aberdeen.” One of his biggest hits of the era combined a British version of the traditional ballad “The Elfin Knight” with an anti-war song that



Paul Simon (l.) and his son Adrian look over manuscripts in the Library’s Music Division. Guha Shankar. American Folklife Center.

Simon composed. The resulting piece, “Scarborough Fair/Canticle,” was the title track of the 1966 album *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme*, widely considered the first great LP from the duo of Simon and Garfunkel. From the 1960s through the 1980s, Simon’s songwriting was influenced by artists such as Robert Johnson, Woody Guthrie, and Leadbelly. Since the 1980s, Simon has been increasingly influenced by musical styles far from his American roots, including the African and Brazilian traditions he incorporated into his recordings *Graceland* and *Rhythm of the Saints*. All these aspects of traditional music are represented in AFC collections.

Keeping in mind Simon’s wide-ranging interests, AFC staff prepared a display that included Brazilian chap-

books, known as *literatura de cordel* and traditionally sold in marketplaces; a wax cylinder field recording from the James Madison Carpenter Collection; a wire recording from the Don Yoder Collection; a lacquer disc field recording from the Herbert Halpert collection; a Robert Johnson test pressing from the Tom Jacobson Collection of Blues and Western Swing Test Pressings; correspondence from Woody Guthrie and from Leadbelly; and a large field disc recorder of the type that John and Alan Lomax, among others, would have used in the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, the visitors were shown film clips from the Pete and Toshi Seeger Film Collection. Simon was interested in all the items, but he was especially struck by Leadbelly’s

clear and careful handwriting. The letters from Leadbelly to John Lomax include the singer’s printed letterhead and publicity photograph, and indicated that Leadbelly, like Simon himself, was a sophisticated and self-aware performer. Simon was also particularly pleased to see an example of an instantaneous disc (one of thousands in the AFC’s archive), since it reminded him of his own beginnings as a recording artist; he and his musical partner Art Garfunkel were first recorded using his uncle’s instantaneous record-cutting machine.

While at the Library, Simon also visited the Music Division, which provided more memories of his early career. The first song Simon and Garfunkel composed together, “The Girl For Me” was



Simon looked at the first song he sent in for copyright, in 1956: “The Girl For Me,” co-written with Art Garfunkel and transcribed by Simon’s father. Guha Shankar. American Folklife Center.

transcribed by Simon’s father and sent to the Library’s Copyright Division in 1956. During his visit, Simon saw the manuscript again for the first time since submitting it fifty-one years ago.

Simon’s meeting with Dr. Billington was held in order to prepare him for his role as the first recipient of the Library’s new Gershwin Prize for Popular Song. On May 22, Simon returned to the Library for an official reception and ceremony to celebrate his award.

AFC had a display table at the event, and reference librarian Todd Harvey answered questions from attendees. During the award ceremony, Dr. Billington announced that Simon was donating his works-in-progress manuscript in which he worked out the lyrics for the song “Graceland.” “We appreciate Paul Simon’s act of generosity and know it will inspire future prize winners and their contributions to America’s storehouse of creativity and knowledge. The Library has been collecting Paul Simon’s music for more than 50 years, from the song ‘The Girl For Me’ by Simon and Garfunkel, which was submitted for copyright in 1956, to his most recent album, Surprise,” Billington said. Billington also noted that Simon’s 1986 album *Graceland* was recently named to the 2006

National Recording Registry, which was established to preserve recordings “that are culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant.”

Simon’s comments on the award have been equally gracious. On being notified of his award in March, Simon said, “I am grateful to be the recipient of the Gershwin Prize and doubly honored to be the first. I look forward to spending an eve-

ning in the company of artists I admire at the awards ceremony in May. I can think of a few who have expressed my words and music far better than I. I’m excited at the prospect of that happening again. It’s a songwriter’s dream come true.”

That dream come true occurred on May 23, at a concert in Simon’s honor at the Warner Theater in Washington. The concert featured a number of singers and musicians, including Garfunkel, the Dixie Hummingbirds, Philip Glass, Alison Krauss, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Lyle Lovett, James Taylor, Stevie Wonder and Buckwheat Zydeco. The production team for the reception and concert was assisted by AFC staff members, who selected and reproduced photographs and film clips from the Archive as part of the backdrop to the presentation of the prize.

The selection of Paul Simon as the first recipient of the Gershwin Prize highlights the fact that the history of American popular song is replete with connections to American folklife. The American Folklife Center was glad to contribute to this important Library effort, and looks forward to helping with future Gershwin Award presentations. ○



Simon (r.) and Garfunkel perform at the Warner Theater, May 23, 2007. Scott Suchmen.

About the Gershwin Award

Named in honor of the legendary George and Ira Gershwin, the newly created Gershwin Prize for Popular Song recognizes the profound and positive effect of popular music on the world's culture. The prize will be given annually to a composer or performer whose lifetime contributions exemplify the standard of excellence associated with the Gershwins. "The Gershwin Prize is a milestone in the Library's mission to recognize and celebrate creativity in order to spark imagination in this and future generations," said Librarian of Congress James H. Billington.

In the same manner that the Librarian consults with the wider cultural community to select the Poet Laureate and the John W. Kluge Prize for the Study of Humanity, he turned to leading members of the music community and to the expertise of the Library's Music Division to develop an award that recognizes musical achievement in popular culture all over the world. Given the Library's long association with the Gershwin family and the profound effect the brothers had in the evolution of American music, it is fitting that the Library memorialize this relationship in the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song.

The Library is home to the George and Ira Gershwin Collection, the world's preeminent resource for the documentary legacy of the

Gershwin brothers. It contains a wealth of materials that provide insight into their careers and personalities,



including manuscripts and printed music, photographs, correspondence, business papers, scrapbooks and iconography. A permanent tribute to the Gershwins and their work, the Gershwin Room (temporarily closed due to construction in the

Jefferson Building) features George's piano and desk, Ira's typing table and typewriter, self-portraits of both brothers, and a selection of musical manuscripts from Gershwin stage and screen shows such as "Lady Be Good," "Funny Face," "Girl Crazy" and "Of Thee I Sing."

The Library's unparalleled music holdings also include manuscripts, scores, sound recordings, books, libretti, music-related periodicals and microforms, copyright deposits and musical instruments. Manuscripts of note include those of European masters such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms and those of American masters such as Aaron Copland, Samuel

Barber, Leonard Bernstein and Charles Mingus. The Alan Lomax collection of field recordings of American roots music, Woody Guthrie's original recordings and manuscripts, and one-of-a-kind recordings of bluesman Robert Johnson from the 1930s, all parts of the American Folklife Center archive, are also among the Library's musical treasures.

Given the longstanding devotion to music in all its forms shared by both the Library and Paul Simon, the Librarian and his advisers decided on Simon to receive the first award. "Because of the depth, range and sheer beauty of his music, as well as its ability to bridge peoples and cultures," said Dr. Billington, "he is the perfect first recipient of this prestigious award." ○



Paul Simon embraces his friend of twenty years, Joseph Shabalala of the group Ladysmith Black Mambazo. The South African vocal group appeared with Simon at the tribute concert on May 23, 2007. Scott Suchmen.

“Sit Down, Shut Up, and Listen to Ragtime”:

*Bob Milne and the
Occupational Folklore
of the Traveling
Piano Player*

*by Jennifer Cutting and
Stephen Winick*

Editor’s Note: The American Folklife center is proud to have been part of an interdisciplinary effort at the Library of Congress to create a Web presentation devoted to ragtime. A uniquely American, syncopated musical phenomenon, ragtime has been a strong presence in musical composition, entertainment, and scholarship for over a century. The Library’s Web presentation, celebrating this great form of American creativity, is online at <http://memory.loc.gov/cocoon/ihas/html/ragtime/index.html>

The curatorship of the Web presentation was performed by a group from three Library divisions: David Sager and Larry Appelbaum of the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division; Denise Gallo, Karen Moses, and Loras Schissel of the Music Division; and Jennifer Cutting of the American Folklife Center. The following essay, written by Cutting with her colleague Stephen Winick (also the editor of Folklife Center News) appears on the site at <http://memory.loc.gov/cocoon/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.200035814/default.html>

Minute and second markers refer to the companion oral history interview Cutting recorded with ragtime pianist Bob Milne at the Library of Congress. The interview appears on the site at <http://>



Ted Mize

Bob Milne in 1967, at the Dakota Inn Rathskeller in Detroit. In 1964, Milne was hired at the Dakota for his first night as a professional piano player.

memory.loc.gov/cocoon/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.200035769/default.html

* * *

Every group, from the smallest family to the largest ethnicity, has a repertoire of informally learned stories, sayings, customs, techniques, and other expressive traditions. This material is called folklore. Folklore allows group members to recognize one another as members of a specialized community, to express group solidarity, and to interact in ways that they find especially useful, satisfying, or meaningful. Occupational groups are no exception, and all such communities, from firefighters to film directors, and from meat-cutters to medical doctors, have their own occupational folklore.

Professional musicians are just such an occupational community, and have an extremely rich and creative body of lore based on the realities of their lives. Generally, people’s work helps define the conditions of their daily lives. In the case of full-time traveling musicians, these conditions include driving long distances from gig to gig, playing several different kinds of gigs in the same day, not finishing a typical “day’s work” until 2:00 a.m., and getting to bed at 3:00 a.m. or 4:00 a.m. These situations set musicians apart from the mainstream world and make them “outsiders” to others who work during the daytime.

Ragtime pianist Bob Milne embodies the independent spirit necessary for

this lifestyle. Milne visited the Library of Congress in October 2004, where he performed a concert and gave several oral history interviews. At the time, Milne had logged forty years of work as a professional piano player in saloons, nightclubs, bars, restaurants, private parties, and concert halls, starting out in Detroit, Michigan, and branching out to perform all over the country. He describes his choice of a musical career as “my way of not having to get a job.... As long as I could keep playing piano, I didn’t have to buy a suit and tie and go sit in an office...doing what they wanted me to do, which I was totally unprepared to do anyway.”

The stories and expressions voiced by Milne during a one-hour oral history interview are excellent illustrations of the creativity exhibited by musicians who travel and work in a wide range of venues. Milne’s very definition of what he does is expressed as folklore. He calls himself a “journeyman piano player,” which he defines as “anyone who will drive any place today, to play any piano tonight, so they can eat some place tomorrow.” The three-part structure of this definition, its repetition of verbal elements (“any place” and “any piano”, “any place” and “some place”), and its conceptual progression through time, marked with alliterative and structurally similar words (today, tonight, tomorrow) mark it as a folk saying, similar to familiar proverbs and proverbial expressions such as “here today, gone tomorrow” or “another day, another dollar.”

Milne’s self-definition also expresses the tough realities of life for a musician:

drive all day and play all night, just so you can eat for another day. Driving and eating are the subjects of another expression invented by Milne. The “five-



Milne behind the bar in the Dakota Inn Rathskeller, August 1973.

mile lunch” is a meal eaten hastily at the wheel between jobs, during the few minutes it takes to drive five miles. Workers often create such specialized terms and vocabularies to describe their work and the realities of their lives on the job.

Another frequent topic of occupational folklore is the relationship of workers to their tools. In the case of musicians, this often means their instruments. Among musicians who carry their own instruments from place to place and thus play the same ones every night, nostalgic stories about finding, buying, or building a first or favorite instrument are com-

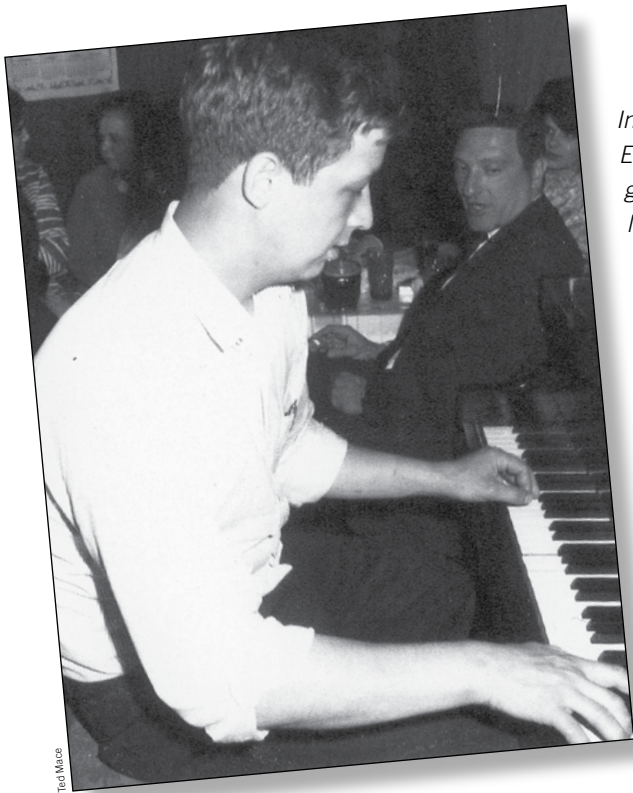
mon. So too are affectionate names for favorite instruments. Among professional piano players, who must use whatever piano a venue provides, this operates differently—stories and names revolve around instruments they encounter on their circuit.

One term that Milne and other piano players use is “PSO,” a folk acronym for “piano-shaped object.” This humorous put-down is used to show disdain for the dilapidated and semi-functional instruments musicians like Milne are sometimes forced to work with.

Musicians have also created a rich vein of stories about difficult conditions in the performance venue, including hecklers and other troublesome audience members. Called “war stories” or “gig from Hell stories,” these help create feelings of solidarity with other “survivors” of such jobs, and elicit empathy or sympathy from fellow musicians. These stories also allow performers to exhibit pride in the ways that they rose to the occasion, handled the situation, and performed successfully despite the obstacles.

The funniest or most compelling of these tales are even retold by other performers with the introduction: “this really happened to a friend of mine.” Sometimes such a tale is recounted when the musician who created it comes up in conversation. Thus, a process that begins with a personal experience creates a body of stories that folklorists call legends, and builds a kind of immortality for the performers about whom such legends are told.

Milne relates another musician’s story of the sad consequences of an inebriated audience member who lost his footing



In this photo from the 1960s, Ed Wracan is in the background looking at Milne. A lifelong fan of Milne's playing, Wracan came to the Library of Congress about forty years later, when Milne performed here in 2004. Also in attendance at the 2004 concert was Ted Mace, who shot this photo.



Tired out from playing, Milne rests at the Dakota's piano.



The Dakota Inn Rathskeller, Milne's first venue, is a Michigan landmark famous for German food and piano music.

[49:15]. He also tells his own stories about the following sticky situations: a noisy little girl in the concert hall [54:30]; a mother who insists on changing her baby's diaper on the edge of the stage in the middle of his concert [55:45]; a ham in the audience who overestimates his singing abilities [57:38]; and a pair of very talkative women [59:50].

One story [51:38] stands out from the rest, in which Milne relates how he dealt with some oblivious and inconsiderate audience members at a formal occasion. With particular pride he notes:

I recently — well, three years ago or something — played in Billings, Montana for the installation of the Shriners' Grand Potentate. And the Shriners were all out there sitting at round tables; it was all black tie and tuxedo and gowns, and I'm up on the stage playing. Well, there's this one table of Shriners that must have stopped somewhere else on their way to the dinner, because they were a little bit out of control; they were laughing and joking and slapping each other on the back...and I'm playing the piano, and these guys are a distraction.

So...I could see the Grand Potentate sitting there, and he was obviously concerned with these guys, so I decided,

well.... See, something in the piano business is that, whenever someone like this appears on the scene, all the customers want...they want to see someone handle the situation. They don't want to themselves; they're too timid. So I realized a long time ago, it's the job of the piano player — deal with it! So I have never been afraid to deal with these people on any level.

So what I did was, I was up on a stage, and they were over there, and I had a cordless mic. So, I stood up after playing this tune, and they're all over here, "Wah-ha-ha, Ha haw haw...," going on like this; they're standing up.

So I took the mike, and I said, "Ladies and gentlemen, the next tune that I'm going to play for you is the "St. Louis Rag." It was written by Tom Turpin, who owned the Rosebud Bar in St. Louis; from 1900 to 1908, Scott Joplin hung out in the bar."

And as I was saying this, I was walking over to this corner of the stage — there are little stairs going down — and I said, "The Rosebud Bar was an institution in St. Louis, because people would come up the rivers, down the rivers... people would all go to the Rosebud" — and by now I was standing next to these guys — and I said, "They would go to the Rosebud, where they would all [getting louder on each word until he is shouting] SIT DOWN, SHUT UP, AND LISTEN TO RAGTIME!"

They sat down and shut up. The Potentate almost fell over backward in his chair laughing, and I just went back up on the stage and continued. But to me, that's just business as normal! ○

For more information on Ragtime, please visit the full presentation at <http://memory.loc.gov/cocoon/ihis/html/rag-time/index.html>

All through the North, As I Walked Forth... AFC Hosts Northern Ireland Events.

By Stephen Winick and Maggie Kruesi



The McPeake Family performs in the Coolidge Auditorium, May 16, 2007. L-r: Francis McPeake III, Francis McPeake IV, Mairéad Forde, Sean O'Kane. The screen behind them shows the family as filmed by Pete and Toshi Seeger in 1964. Francis III is at the far right of the 1964 shot; his grandfather Francis Sr. is far left and his father Francis Jr. second from left. Stephen Winick. American Folklife Center.

Ballads, stories, and even bagpipes enlivened afternoons at the Library of Congress during May 2007, when the American Folklife Center hosted six events featuring performers, scholars, and lecturers from Northern Ireland. The events formed part of the “Rediscover Northern Ireland Programme,” a larger initiative of the Northern Ireland Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. This program placed Northern Ireland’s culture in the Washington, D.C. spotlight all summer, with concerts, plays, exhibits, and a featured place at the Smithsonian’s annual Folklife Festival. AFC director Peggy Bulger commented, “It’s especially gratifying to be celebrating the traditional culture of Northern Ireland at such a momentous time in the country’s political history.” Bulger was referring to the historic formation of a Sinn Fein/DUP power-sharing government in Northern Ireland, considered by many to be the definitive and long-awaited fruition of the Northern Ireland peace process, which also occurred in May 2007.

The American Folklife Center opened its series of Northern Ireland events on May 2, with a lecture by John Moulden, one of Ireland’s leading authorities on traditional song. Moulden’s talk served to highlight one of the Library’s most important collections relating to the traditional music of Northern Ireland. In 1942, collector Sam Henry donated a complete copy of his manuscript *Songs of the People: The Ancient Music of Ireland*, containing 836 folksongs that Henry had published in newspaper columns in Coleraine, Northern Ireland—then, as now, the largest collection of Irish songs ever to be published. The manuscript contains words and notation in tonic sol-fa, a form of music notation that uses the characters on an ordinary typewriter keyboard. The acquisition was negotiated by Alan Lomax, then the assistant-in-charge of the Archive of Folk Song in the Library’s Music Division. (The Archive was incorporated into the American Folklife Center in 1977, but the manuscript remained behind, and still belongs to the Music Division.) Moulden’s entertaining talk explained Henry’s background, his field methods, and his approach to collecting. Moulden also touched on the politics involved in

Continued on page 20

Place Names of Northern Ireland

By James Hardin

“Naming is one of the most interesting things that people do with landscape.”

So said Kay Muhr, author and senior research fellow of the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project in Irish and Celtic Studies, Queen’s University, Belfast, Ireland.

Muhr was guest speaker at a May 16 symposium held at the Library of Congress and sponsored jointly with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure/Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the American Folklife Center and the Library’s Music Division. The symposium, titled “All Through the North, as I Walked Forth” (after an Irish folksong), was part of a larger program of concerts and lectures, “Rediscover Northern Ireland Programme: Music at the Library of Congress,” May 2 to 29, 2007.

“Places get names for different reasons,” explained Muhr. A place is given a name “for something important about it in the past,” and the name later becomes a “window into intimate history.” Places are named, for example, for people, natural features of the landscape, trees, animals, or ancient buildings. Muhr’s talk focused on the work of a little-known, 17th-century mapmaker Richard Bartlett, and demonstrated how rich a source of cultural history a map can be, supplying information on political inauguration sites, settlements, churches, hills, rivers and passes.

The symposium also featured a lecture by Henry Glassie, author and profes-



Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution. Above, right: Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

sor of folklore at Indiana University, Bloomington. Glassie talked about several of the people he recorded for his book “*Passing the Time in Ballymenone*” (Indiana University Press, 1982), which was based on his fieldwork over a decade in a rural community in Northern Ireland’s County Fermanagh,

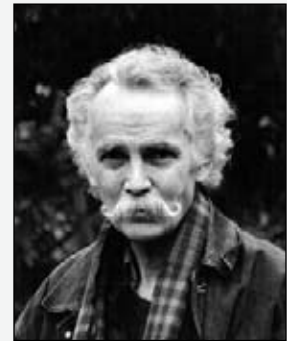
Glassie went to the region in 1972 to learn how “country people endured hard times.” During his research, he learned that many of the people he met ordered their history less chronologically than spatially. Places on the familiar, hilly landscape carried names, the names evoked events, and the events were cast into narratives that the local historians arranged into three classes: saints, battles and the neighbors. Thus did the local people accommodate themselves to the struggles of their daily existence, and learn to prevail “by adhering to the virtues of faith, courage and wit.”

Both speakers acknowledged the pleasure and importance of walking and

careful observation of the process of community formation. They addressed the cultural importance of names and the way community is established and maintained by sharing knowledge of the natural and cultural landscape.

Also on the program was Edward Redmond, a senior reference librarian in the Library’s Geography and Maps Division, which holds 5 million maps, including many Irish maps dating from 1528 to the present. Redmond gave an overview of the division’s holdings and described its cartobibliographic resources on Northern Ireland, showing a sample of historic maps from the collection. He gave a brief introduction to the resources available for doing research in the division and announced an Irish cartobibliography, compiled by Patrick Dempsey and members of the Geography and Maps Division staff, which will soon be published as an online finding aid.

The Northern Ireland Place-Name Project was



Henry Glassie, Courtesy Henry Glassie



Kay Muhr speaks in the Mumford Room, May 16, 2007. Stephen Winick, American Folklife Center

founded in 1987 as a cultural initiative to study the origins, history, and meaning of the place-names in Northern Ireland. While most of the names are of Irish Gaelic language origin, some derive from Norse, Norman French, Ulster Scots and English. The project has produced seven volumes of in-depth scholarship on the subject and plans are underway to produce two more volumes, as well as an interactive electronic database. ○

Continued from page 18

donating a manuscript to the Library in those days, especially since Sam Henry was worried about the consequences of such a donation upon his own rights to publish the material in a book. Luckily, Henry and Lomax were able to settle the deal, resulting in a treasure trove of Irish songs being available here at Library thirty-five years before they were finally published in book form, in 1978. Moulden also surprised the audience with his a cappella renditions of two songs from the collection.

More unaccompanied singing graced the series the following week, when Rosie Stewart gave a concert in the Coolidge Auditorium on May 9. Stewart is from Belcoo, Co. Fermanagh, and is among the most distinguished of Irish traditional singers. In her concert, Stewart sang several local songs that served as a tribute to her father, Packie McKeaney; McKeaney had passed away only two months before Stewart's visit to Washington. Stewart, whose concert consisted entirely of unaccompanied singing, thrilled listeners with a combination of fascinating historical songs and lighter, more amusing fare. The former included ballads that derive from the Napoleonic wars, such as "The King's Shilling" and "Banks of the Nile," as well as others that detail the struggles that Irish people had integrating into British and American society, including "Do Me Justice." Her humorous songs, including older pieces such as "The Rollicking Boys Around Tanderagee" and modern compositions such as "The Errant Apprentice," kept the audience entertained, as did the stories of her life in Ireland that she told between songs.

May 16 was the busiest day of the series, featuring both a concert in the Coolidge Auditorium and an afternoon symposium in the Mumford Room of the Library's Madison building. The concert featured the McPeake Family, a family band that has been well known in Irish music circles for over eighty years.

During the British and Irish folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s, the McPeake Family was an important part of the scene, and their song "Will Ye Go, Lassie, Go," adapted by family patriarch Francis McPeake I from a traditional song of Scottish origin, was a mainstay of the revival. These days, the family is involved primarily in teaching Irish music at the Francis McPeake School of Music in Belfast. The group that performed at the Library included Francis McPeake III

Francis McPeake III plays the banjo in the Coolidge Auditorium, May 16, 2007.



Robert Watt plays the highland pipes in the Coolidge Auditorium, May 23, 2007. (Both by Stephen Winick. American Folklife Center.)

and his son Francis McPeake IV, along with fiddler Mairéad Forde and accordion player Sean O'Kane, faculty members at the school. Both McPeakes sang and played uilleann pipes, the very complex bagpipe used in Irish traditional music. In addition, Francis III played tenor banjo and Francis IV played tin whistle. They entertained the large Coolidge Auditorium audience with a set of traditional tunes ranging from jigs, reels and hornpipes to laments such as "The Battle of Aghrim," and to several songs such as "Fair and Tender Ladies" and, of course, "Will Ye Go, Lassie, Go." During the concert, AFC also treated the McPeakes and the audience to a special film screening: two songs, performed by the McPeakes at their home in Belfast in 1964, and captured on film by Pete and Toshi Seeger. The footage is now part of the Pete and Toshi Seeger Film Collection, acquired by AFC in 2003.

"All through the North as I walked forth" was the title for the May 16 afternoon symposium on Northern Ireland's place-names, folklife and landscape. The event opened with a presentation by Edward Redmond of the Library's Geography and Map Division on the *Maps of Ireland* cartobibliography. In addition, Redmond displayed some rare maps of Ireland from the Library's collections, which the public was invited to view close up. The two featured speakers for the symposium were Kay Muhr, senior research fellow of the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project in Irish and Celtic Studies, Queen's University, Belfast, and Henry Glassie, College Professor of Folklore at Indiana University, who has published five books based on field research in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. Kay Muhr's talk focused on the evidence for place names and social and military history that can be found on the maps drawn by Richard Bartlett in southeast Ulster in 1603. (A few years later, Muhr explained, Bartlett evidently lost his head at the hands of local inhabitants in north Ulster who "would not have their



L: Dáithí Sproule performing the Coolidge Auditorium, May 23, 2007.

country discovered.”) Henry Glassie spoke about the local historians who were “stars” in the community where he settled in the 1970s at the height of the Troubles. Their histories were narratives of historical events on the landscape they knew intimately, tales that outlined moral responsibilities of neighbors, and tales of wit and courage that were a resource for the community in difficult times. The Northern Ireland Place-Name Project continues to rely on oral tradition and local knowledge as work continues on a comprehensive series of volumes on the Place Names of Northern Ireland.

Wednesday, May 23 was a special day for Dáithí Sproule, a singer and guitarist from Derry city, who has been living in the U.S. for many years. It was, in fact, Sproule’s birthday, and his concert at the Coolidge Auditorium marked the first time he had ever been asked to perform anywhere specifically because he is from Northern Ireland. Even before he left Ireland for America, Sproule had mainly played in bands associated with Donegal and with Dublin, both parts of the Republic of Ireland. Once here, he continued to play with many important groups, including Trian and, most famously, Altan, with whom he still performs. For the Library, however, Sproule played a solo set, in which his sweet singing voice and delicate guitar playing were applied to traditional songs in both Irish and English. Joining Sproule on the bill was highland bagpipe player Robert Watt, one of the best young pipers in the world, who comes from the Northern Ireland town of Maghera, Co. Derry. Dressed in full highland regalia, including kilt and sporran (but without the *sgian dubh*, or ceremonial dagger, which would have been deemed a security risk on Capitol Hill!), Watt took the stage for a rousing series of marches, jigs, reels and strathspeys. Since the pipes are primarily used in military bands and for dance tunes, this is the typical music of the pipes. But Watt also played some of the less typical and more difficult music associated with the instrument, known as Piobaireachd, a form of classical pipe music, providing the audience a glimpse of one of the more unusual traditions in Celtic music. The combination of gentle ballads and martial bagpipes proved very popular



Rosie Stewart performing in the Coolidge Auditorium, May 9, 2007.

with the audience, who were delighted with the concert.

The final event of the series was a dual lecture and performance by two scholars and musicians who are also longtime friends. The fact that Brian Mullen is a Catholic from Derry, and that Gary Hastings is a Protestant from Belfast (and indeed an Anglican priest), has not prevented them from maintain-

ing their friendship, or from speaking about the culture that unites both sides of the well-known Catholic/Protestant divide in Northern Ireland. Hastings discussed the tradition of the “lambeg drum,” a very large bass drum typically used by Protestant groups to march through Catholic neighborhoods, intimidating the local residents with the sheer volume of their sound. Hastings showed that the drum has precedents in both Catholic and Protestant communities, and that it developed out of fife-and-drum bands that played folk tunes without denominational associations. Mullen spoke about the tradition of “Orange songs,” songs that express the Protestant point of view, extolling Protestant heroes and ridiculing Catholic belief and practice. Despite their divisive subject matter, Mullen showed that they used characteristically Irish verse forms and music—the same types shared by Catholic rebel songs and other Irish folksongs. The point being made by both speakers was that underneath the divisions in Northern Ireland, the population, whether Protestant or Catholic, has always shared a rich common stock of cultural practices. While these practices have been used to divide communities, they can just as easily, perhaps more easily, be used to unite them. It was an excellent message with which to end the series.



John Moulden speaks in the Mumford Room, May 2, 2007. (All by Stephen Winick. American Folklife Center.)

All the performances and lectures in the series were captured on video, and have become a permanent collection in the AFC archive; AFC also plans to feature them as webcasts. In addition, most of the performers and speakers were interviewed extensively by AFC staff members, and the interviews are also part of the collection. This will provide a valuable resource for future generations wishing to enjoy and study the culture of Northern Ireland. ○

Recording Veterans' Stories Day by Day: The *Forever A Soldier* 2008 Wall Calendar.

By Stephen Winick

If you believe in honoring American wartime veterans every day of the year, or if you're looking for an unusual gift with an oral history theme, the Veterans History Project has a new publication that might fit the bill. Already the creators of two award-winning books of veterans' stories, *Forever a Soldier* and *Voices of War*, the VHP staff has devised another way to spread veterans' extraordinary oral histories: through a deluxe, illustrated wall calendar. With more than fifty images and informative, engaging text from VHP, the *Forever A Soldier* 2008 Wall Calendar explores the stories of veterans of World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War. Each month includes quotations and excerpts from letters by veterans and their families, a spotlight story, and an essay. Important dates in U.S. military history are noted throughout the calendar.

"Our goal is the same as we had for our books," explained VHP historian Tom Wiener, the calendar's editor. "To promote the need for recording veterans' stories of service and to pay tribute to those who have shared their memories of service with us. Also, it's an opportunity to show off the breadth of our collections. Sometimes we're thought of as a World War II archive, but this calendar vividly illustrates that we have taken accounts from as far back as World War I and all the way through to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. We touch on every branch of service, women as well as men, and supporting civilians (October's theme) such as war-industry workers, and Red Cross and USO workers."

According to Wiener, each month is



dedicated to a different theme, including the five major wars covered by the calendar. Months were chosen for each theme based on important dates related to that theme. Thus, the month of April is focused on Vietnam, marking the end of U.S. involvement there on April 30, 1975, while June covers Korea, marking the opening of that war on June 25, 1950. August covers the Persian Gulf conflict, which began on August 2, 1990, and November highlights World War I, which officially ended on November 11, 1918. December is reserved for World War II, marking the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Some themes are topical in

nature: "Survivors" takes a close look at survivors of prison camps and of tough combat situations, while "Groundbreakers," commemorates veterans who broke racial barriers. The calendar also features the themes of "Families at War," "Women at War," and "Wartime Romance."

Wiener selected stories from VHP collections to support these monthly themes. They appear in the calendar alongside a wide range of appealing photographs and artwork, which researcher and photo editor Alexa Potter drew mainly from VHP collections, but with some coming from elsewhere in the Library of Congress. "My favorite part of creating



Clockwise from top left: Meda Hallyburton (center), whose story is featured in the calendar, worked as a welder during World War II. Jose Mares, Korean War veteran; his story is featured in the calendar and in this article. Civilian Mimi Korach created this watercolor of World War II Germany, along with hundreds of portraits of American GIs, as an artist for the USO. Jose Mares (front) with a group of his friends, including Wally Walker (far left), who died in Korea as a POW.

the calendar is revisiting favorite stories and uncovering new ones to share," Wiener said. "It's really the favorite part of my day-to-day job, too." Wiener drew on VHP's large collection of oral histories to create the short, calendar-ready stories, including this one, about veteran Jose Mares:

In trouble with the law at 17, Jose Mares was given two choices by a judge: Army or jail. He chose the first and trained to be a field wire foreman, stringing communications lines. In June

1950, when the U.S. joined the fight against invading North Korean forces, Mares was primed and ready to serve. "We heard there was a country in trouble," he recalled, "and they asked for volunteers, and I volunteered because there was a problem." Five months later, he was captured and began 33 months of brutal imprisonment. Mares' rebellious streak as a teen soon resurfaced. He torched a prison library and helped smuggle out information on his whereabouts in the hollowed-out wooden leg of a fellow prisoner.

His mantra—"There's got to be something better"—helped him endure torture, a near-execution, and the death of his best friend, Wally Walker, also a POW.

Like many of the Library's calendars and card sets, the *Forever a Soldier* 2008 Wall Calendar will be published by Pomegranate communications. It will be available at the Library's sales shop, in person or online (<http://www.loc.gov/shop>), at the Pomegranate web site, (<http://www.pomegranate.com>), and at bookshops everywhere. ○



Mary Louise Defender Wilson, a Dakota/Hidatsa elder and storyteller from North Dakota, shared her stories as part of AFC's Homegrown concert series on August 16, 2006. Photo: Stephen Winick, AFC.



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