

FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

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American Folklife Center • The Library of Congress



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

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TELEPHONE AND ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES

American Folklife Center publications (including *Folklife Center News*), a calendar of events, collection guides, general information, and connections to a selection of other Internet services related to folklife are available on the Internet via the LC MARVEL Gopher Server and the LC Web World Wide Web Server. LC MARVEL is available through your local Gopher server. Or use your Gopher Client Software to connect to marvel.loc.gov. From the main menu, choose "Research and Reference," then "Reading Rooms," then "American Folklife Center." LC Web is available through your local World Wide Web service. The Center's home page can be accessed from the Library's main menu. The direct URL for the Center's home page is: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/folklife>

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EDITOR'S NOTES

In the previous issue of *Folklife Center News*, Alan Jabbour offered the first of a two-part retrospective on the American Folklife Center. He reviewed the history of the legislation creating the Center and
continued on page 23

Cover: Marilyn Bañuelos (right) photographs Connie Romero as she interviews Corpus Gallegos on the *vega*, a publicly owned piece of grazing land in San Luis, Colorado, during a field documentation training school jointly sponsored by the American Folklife Center, Colorado College, and the Center for Regional Studies of the University of New Mexico. Photo by James Hardin, July 1994

The American Folklife Center: A Twenty-Year Retrospective (Part 2)



W. H. Sajewski in front of his store in 1911. Founded in 1897 as an "urban general store," Sajewski's establishment dealt almost exclusively in music by 1910, supplying phonographs, records, and printed music to the Polish community in Chicago. From *Ethnic Recordings in America*. Photo courtesy of Alvin Sajewski

By Alan Jabbour

Other Research Projects

To many observers of the American Folklife Center's first twenty years, the field projects described in the first installment of this essay comprised the dominating form of research project for the Center. But the Center undertook other kinds of projects as

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well. Its first "project" had been the conference on "Ethnic Recordings in America" (1977) and its resultant book *Ethnic Recordings in America: A Neglected Heritage* (1982). Soon after that conference, Center folklife specialist Elena Bradunas and researcher Theodore Grame devised a plan for a national survey of ethnic broadcasting. Ethnic radio programs were then (and remain today) a

widespread and long-standing cultural medium for ethnic communities, and ethnic television programs were already becoming common.

Like commercial recordings, these broadcast evidences of ethnic cultural maintenance were not an unknown phenomenon. Most Americans were aware of the African American and Spanish-language stations dotting the aural

map of the United States, and many had had cultural encounters with, say, Cajun music on the radio in southwestern Louisiana, or Polish news, music, and community announcements in Chicago. But what the national survey and report, *Ethnic Broadcasting in the United States* (1980), brought home was the ubiquity of ethnic broadcasting on the airwaves—except, interestingly, on public radio and television—and its importance as a tool for cultural maintenance among ethnic communities throughout America.

As it happened, the Center's survey of ethnic broadcasting coincided with concern at the Federal Communications Commission with monitoring certain practices in commercial broadcasting. In particular, "time-sharing" by stations—the practice of renting broadcast slots to a programmer from an ethnic community, who manages the entire planning and presentation of the final broadcast—had received some criticism for being amateur, unpredictable, and difficult to monitor. Language barriers heightened this sense of official anxiety. Who knew what was being broadcast during the weekly Maltese radio program in Detroit or the Basque program in Elko, Nevada? Such policy issues arise regularly in official Washington, and they point to the need for research efforts with a national scope and a focus on policy applications.

In this case, discouragement of time-sharing by the FCC would have had the effect of depriving many ethnic communities of a voice on the local broadcast media. But when the FCC promulgated a request for public comment on the virtues and defects of time-sharing, the Center was able to submit a national survey and a set of recommendations that seem to have had a genuine impact on the ultimate FCC decision: to continue permitting, or even to encourage, time-sharing in the future.

Ethnic recordings and ethnic broadcasting were followed by another project with an ethnic orientation. In 1982 the Center launched a new national study, the Ethnic Heritage and Language Schools Project. Like ethnic broadcasting, ethnic schools represented a relatively familiar phenomenon in many parts of the country, yet few Americans were aware of the scope and diversity of ethnic education. Indeed, the study revealed that most ethnic communities that supported after-school, weekend, or other kinds of ethnic "schools" were unaware of similar educational programs in other ethnic communities. Nor, with the exception of some pioneering work by sociologist Joshua A. Fishman, had ethnic schools been the subject of previous research—despite the avowed interest of educators in supporting ethnic diversity and community involvement in public-school education.

Tackling ethnic schools proved conceptually challenging, for the Center had to begin by defining a universe. Should the project include or exclude ethnic programs within public schools? Parochial schools? Should it concentrate on heritage programs? Language training? Religious education? How about special ethnic schools like American Indian schools? Center staff resolved some questions of focus, then solicited fur-

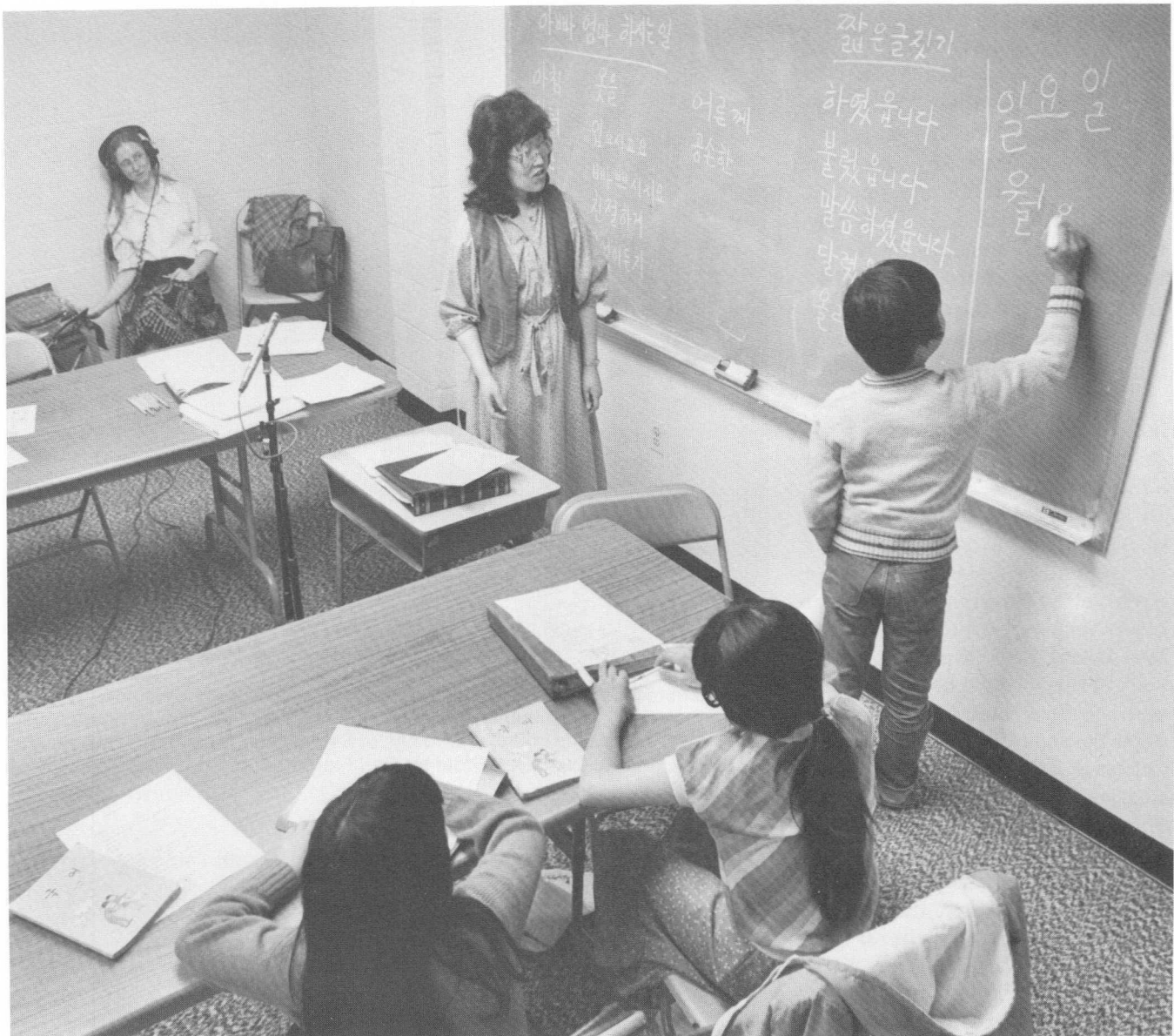
ther definition from colleagues around the country through a request for proposals to study specific ethnic school programs.

The ethnic schools study differed in design and strategy from other Center studies, in that it was conducted by independent researchers at sites they had proposed to the Center. The final tally of sites included a variety of educational and cultural programs representing a variety of ethnic groups. Most of the sites were urban, though a few were rural. Most involved after-school programs outside the purview of professional educators or state and municipal curriculum standards. Many involved instruction in religious traditions, and most entailed language instruction. Formal introduction to arts associated with the cultural group was a common denominator. And all the programs could be said to be controlled wholly by the ethnic community itself, and thus to represent community values in the cultural education of young community members.

Having wondered initially whether ethnic schools amounted to "folklife," in the sense of maintaining cultural traditions by informal rather than formal means, Center staff concluded that the firm anchoring of these programs in community values fully justified the Center's exploration of

The experiences I gained at the Archive of Folk Culture were formative. They still play an active role in my professional life today as a Curator of Asian and Middle Eastern Collections at the Museum of International Folk Art in Sante Fe, New Mexico. I hope that the Archive and Center continue to thrive and flourish over the next few decades, for they provide an invaluable service to the American public.

Frank J. Korom
Museum of International Folk Art
Sante Fe, New Mexico
February 5, 1996



Folklorist Lucy Long (left), at the Korean School in Silver Spring, Maryland, records a lesson with teacher Boon-Yi Kwak, 1982. (ES82-195616-2-13a) Photo by Carl Fleischhauer

them as a cultural phenomenon. The resultant publication, *Ethnic Heritage and Language Schools in America* (1988), offers portraits of thirteen of the twenty schools studied in the project. It remains a seminal exploration of a neglected facet of American cultural education.

The Center began a third research project in 1979 that proved one of the most ambitious and challenging it has undertaken. Though all Center projects have increased the collections of the Archive of Folk Culture, the Federal Cylinder Project was the first

to be based on existing Archive collections. The Archive over the decades had received many wax cylinder recordings of ethnographic material documented in the field from 1890 through the early 1940s. Indeed, it had received so many that the Library's Recording Laboratory had developed a special expertise in the engineering challenge of copying them. Some had been copied onto disc in the 1930s and 1940s, and more were copied in the magnetic-tape era beginning in the 1950s.

But many of the over ten thousand wax cylinders and cylinder-

based recordings in the Archive had never been copied for preservation and access. As the decades passed, it became apparent that the survival of the cylinders was imperiled. Not only were they extremely fragile, but they were made of emulsions that, in the fullness of time, tended to separate. Oils exuded into a film on the surface, where they attracted molds and other external perils. What was needed was an intensive and comprehensive effort to preserve them.

The time-consuming engineering required for preserving cylin-

ders was going to be expensive. But equally time-consuming and expensive would be the cost of organizing and cataloging the collections to make them useful for research. In an extreme example of the cataloging challenge, one box of cylinders in the Archive contained absolutely no information except the large letters "ESKIMO" scrawled on the box; it turned out to contain the earliest field recordings made in central Africa.

The solution to the twin challenges of finding resources for preservation and cataloging lay in a third challenge. Sometime in the 1970s there was a sudden increase in American Indian visitors and correspondents attracted by the Archive's reputation as a national repository for American Indian music and lore. Most inquirers were of the younger generation; all were seeking their cultural heritage. Perhaps three-fourths of the cylinder recordings contained American Indian music and lore. Since they were recorded between 1890 (Jesse Walter Fewkes's cylinders of the Passamaquoddy Indians in Calais, Maine, the earliest field recordings anywhere) and the early 1940s, they represented the earliest recorded information about Indian tribal culture available from any source. More than that—they represented, for young Indian researchers, somebody's grandfather or great grandmother. The third challenge, then, was to return copies of these unique cultural resources to the tribal communities whence they came.

The Center devised a three-pronged plan for preserving, cataloging, and disseminating the cylinders; then it began to seek funding. Support came initially from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation. Then, as the project gained momentum and attention, the Ford Foundation weighed in with a generous grant of over \$100,000. Project staff changed over a multi-year period, but Erika



Annie Jimmie, Betty Mae Jumper, and Nancy McInturf of the Seminole Tribe (left to right) working with ethnomusicologist Dorothy Sara Lee of the Federal Cylinder Project annotating sound recordings of Seminole music made between 1931 and 1933. (FCP-2-29487-2) Photo by Carl Fleischhauer



Northern Cheyenne tribal member and cultural leader William Tallbull accepting tape duplicates of Cheyenne wax cylinder recordings and other materials from Senator John Melcher of Montana on behalf of the Federal Cylinder Project and the American Folklife Center during a ceremony at the Library of Congress on September 29, 1986. Photo by Reid Baker

At a time when few professional collections existed, I was able to build on experiences with you as an intern to help launch the Archives of Acadian and Creole Folklore and Oral History at the University of Southwestern Louisiana—an institution that played a significant role in the ongoing “Cajun Renaissance.” My work in Washington also led to a lifelong commitment to sound archives . . . However, let me turn to a brief mention of [the Archive’s] more easily overlooked economic impact. Tourism is now recognized as the world’s second largest industry and one of the few areas in which the United States maintains a trade surplus—some twenty billion dollars annually. American folk cultures play an increasingly important role drawing visitors from across this great nation and around the world. Without the singular and nurturing efforts of the Center and Library of Congress how much of this incomparable heritage and economic potential could have survived? When few others had the foresight, the Archive and Center were preserving and laying the groundwork for what is now a national financial windfall. Thanks for all the good work and keep it up through the coming millennium.

*Frederick J. Stielow
Annapolis, Maryland
February 7, 1996*

Brady, Judith A. Gray, Maria La Vigna, Dorothy Sara Lee, Edwin J. Schupman, and Ronald Walcott can be named as key contributors to the effort. Thomas Vennum of the Smithsonian Institution directed the project in its earlier stage, followed by Dorothy Sara Lee and Judith Gray. The early participation of the Smithsonian in planning and administering the project only partially accounts for the embracing title of the Federal Cylinder Project. Just as important in determining the title was the resolution to preserve and disseminate not only the Library’s ethnographic cylinders but other smaller collections at the Smithsonian’s National Anthropological Archives, the National Archives, and certain installations within the National Park Service.

The Federal Cylinder Project may have been the Center’s most expensive project, and it was certainly among its most successful. Yet it is not finished. Though all the wax cylinders were preserved by duplicating them onto tape, only about three-fourths were cataloged, and copies of perhaps two-thirds were returned to Indian communities. Paradoxically, the interest generated by the project

led to new batches of cylinder recordings being sent to the Library for copying. Thus it became a paradigm for those preservation projects for which the work is never done. Yet it can fairly claim to have been a trail-blazing effort. A few other institutions with wax cylinder collections, notably the Lowie Museum of Anthropology (subsequently renamed the Hearst Museum) at the University of California-Berkeley and Indiana University’s Archives of Traditional Music, emulated the design of the project in their own initiatives. The idea of sharing copies of collections with the originating communities led to many special successes.

It is noteworthy that the Center’s experiment in sharing collections preceded by several years the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which has focused on museum collections. Whether because documents, unlike artifacts, can reside in more than one place through duplication, or because the Federal Cylinder Project embraced from the start the idea of cultural consultation with Indian communities, the Federal Cylinder Project was remarkably free of the

controversy and turmoil that were to haunt some museums over the years.

The Documentary Cycle

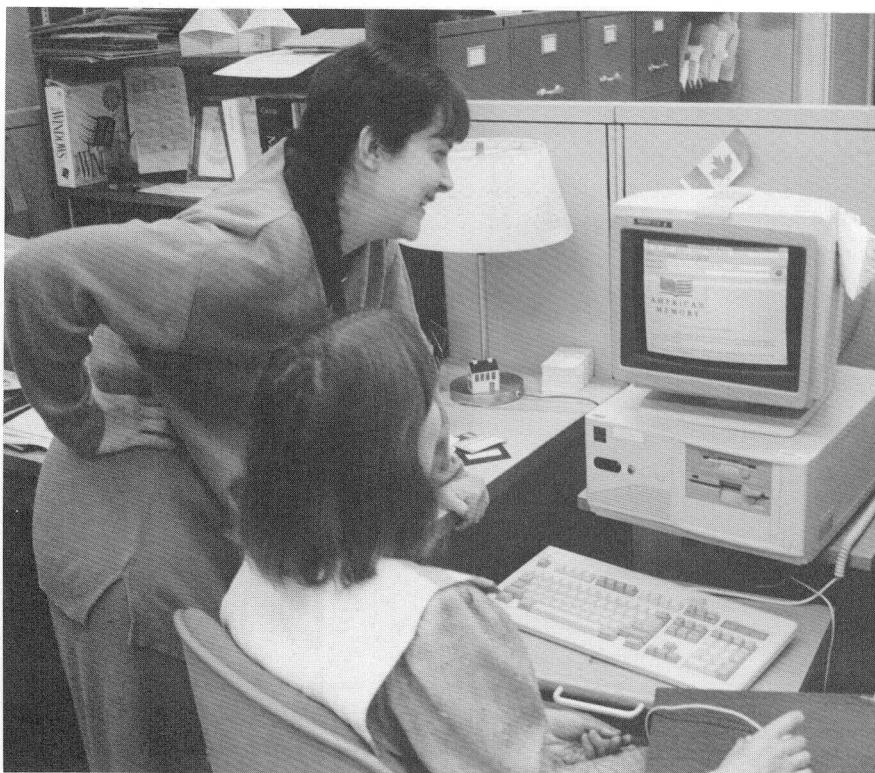
The return of the wax cylinder recordings to the communities whence they came dramatizes a process that underpins much of the Center’s work with cultural documentation. Among the important cultural developments of the twentieth century has been the emergence of documentation, not only as a method of recording the cultural process, but as an actual part of the cultural process itself. We see this on every hand: photograph albums in the home, video documentation of weddings, recordings of baby’s first word, the firefly effect of flashbulbs from the stadium during cultural events like the Olympics. The documentary process is a affirmation of the importance of the event, which calls forth the impulse to capture it for re-evocation later.

An important attendant feature of the documentary process is the emergence of the archive, not simply as a repository, but as a critical link in the *documentary cycle*. That cycle begins with documen-

tation, continues with preservation of the documentation, and concludes by recycling documents back into cultural use. The archive may function simply in the second stage—preserving the documents—but may also participate in the initial creation and again in the third-stage recycling. When it does this, the archive is not simply a way-station but a kind of cultural engine that can drive the documentary cycle through all its stages.

An event in the course of the Federal Cylinder Project illustrates the documentary cycle nicely. I traveled to Macy, Nebraska, to make a proposal to the Omaha Tribal Council. The Center had copied onto tape a large collection of wax cylinders recorded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, and wished to give a copy to the Omaha community. Since the acoustic quality of the cylinders was particularly good for the era, the Center also proposed to produce a published recording selected from the collection—the resulting publication was called *Omaha Indian Music: Historic Recordings from the Fletcher/La Flesche Collection* (1985).

The council was supportive but concerned that nothing regarded as secret or sacred be published. They referred me to an Omaha elder, John Turner, a singer familiar with the older traditions. We set up in the Tribal Administration Building, and I began playing cassette copies of the cylinder recordings, while recording his comments on another tape recorder. As he listened, explicated, cautioned, and offered a few of his own renditions, a crowd of young people quietly gathered to listen. Years later, as I listen to the tape we made, I hear Omaha singers from the turn of the century; John Turner, who was born about the time they sang, listening, talking, and singing in response; the younger generation of Omaha oc-



Folklife Center archivists Stephanie Hall (top) and Catherine Kerst view Library of Congress offerings on the World Wide Web. The Center has its own home page and is actively involved in digitizing its collections for inclusion in the Library's National Digital Library Program, which makes them available on the Internet. Photo by James Hardin

asionally commenting or laughing in response to their elder guide; and myself—all speaking side by side on the same tape.

Talking about the documentary cycle may sound high-flown, but thinking about it at the practical level led to an innovation in Center field projects that has now become a standard operating procedure and has been borrowed or imitated by other institutions around the country. Center field projects of the late 1970s and early 1980s, being the creation of many professionals working intensely in extended field situations, generated huge documentary collections that, despite all normal efforts by the fieldworkers, seemed well-nigh indigestible upon their return to the Center. Normal archival systems were devised and applied, grouping the materials by medium and according to the fieldworkers who created them.

But how, in a massive field collection, could one compare

materials on the same subject in different media by different fieldworkers? Or trace materials on, say, a Blue Ridge man who was interviewed on different days by different fieldworkers, who appeared again as the preacher in a Primitive Baptist church service and yet again in his pickup truck for a local foxhunt, and whose homesite was documented architecturally by the photographer and yet another fieldworker?

The answer lay in the personal computers that were appearing on America's technological horizon in the early 1980s. The Center had begun using computers on the Federal Cylinder Project, but its first use of computers in the field was for the Pinelands Folklife Project (1983) in South Jersey. They were not quite "in the field" in the modern sense; these were not the laptops of the later 1980s. But a bank of them occupied the field office, and the fieldworkers gave them a workout every evening

producing fieldnotes and tape and photo logs. After the field phase was over, project director Mary Hufford and media specialist Carl Fleischhauer teamed up to devise a searchable database for the entire project.

In the Lowell Folklife Project (1987-88), the Center carried the use of computers in the field a step farther. Field coordinator Douglas DeNatale, a skilled computer programmer, devised an automated program for fieldworkers that gave additional coherence and structure to the documentary output of the fieldwork. Since then, the computer program has become a standard feature of Center field projects, and the model has been borrowed or imitated by other projects around the country.

What the computers allowed the Center to do could be de-

scribed as "archiving in the field." That overstates it: plenty still had to be done after the field phase to process the collection, and more to make a fully searchable archival database. But the effect of the new technology was to shift into the field phase some work previously done in the archival phase of the project, providing the creators of the documents with tools for organizing them coherently for future use. Since archivists regularly receive unorganized masses of materials and are forced to provide organizational structures to make a collection accessible, this development represented what might be called an archivist's dream.

For collections not created by Center field projects, Center archivist Stephanie A. Hall devised a publication, *Ethnographic Collec-*

tions in the Archive of Folk Culture: A Contributor's Guide (1995), which, we hope, will encourage creators of ethnographic collections to organize their materials more systematically before submitting them to archival institutions. The *Contributor's Guide* points to a longstanding program goal for the Center. Doing a project well, or in a new way, may provide a model for others, but why not move beyond models to helping others directly in various phases of the documentary cycle? One of the Center's earlier publications, *Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques* (1979; revised edition, 1990), by Peter T. Bartis, has proved of enduring value and popularity by addressing the desire of local cultural organizations, schools, and enthusiastic individuals to undertake cultural documentation more effectively. A later publication by David Taylor, *Documenting Maritime Folklife: An Introductory Guide* (1992), addresses the same broad need but provides more guidance for the specific challenges of documenting maritime community culture. In addition to producing manuals and guides, the Center has managed an Equipment Loan Program that makes high-quality documentary equipment (and, on occasion, accompanying guidance) available to independent researchers when the Center is not using the equipment for its own purposes.

In 1994 the Center added a new dimension to helping others document culture. In collaboration with Colorado College and the University of New Mexico's Center for Regional Studies, it organized a field school to train university students, school teachers, and cultural professionals in the techniques of cultural documentation. The school included a week at Colorado College and another in Colorado's San Luis Valley. A year later the school was repeated, this time for three weeks, with a field



Center folklorist Peter Bartis, who manages the Equipment Loan Program, packs recording equipment for shipping. Photo by James Hardin



Henrietta Yurchenco (right) with one of her informants in front of a Methodist church that has served as a focus for some of her work, John's Island, South Carolina. Over the years, Yurchenco has made major contributions to the Archive of Folk Culture, including audio-recordings, manuscripts, and photographs documenting the folklife of African American Gullah-speakers. Photo by David Lewiston

focus on farmers' markets in Colorado Springs.

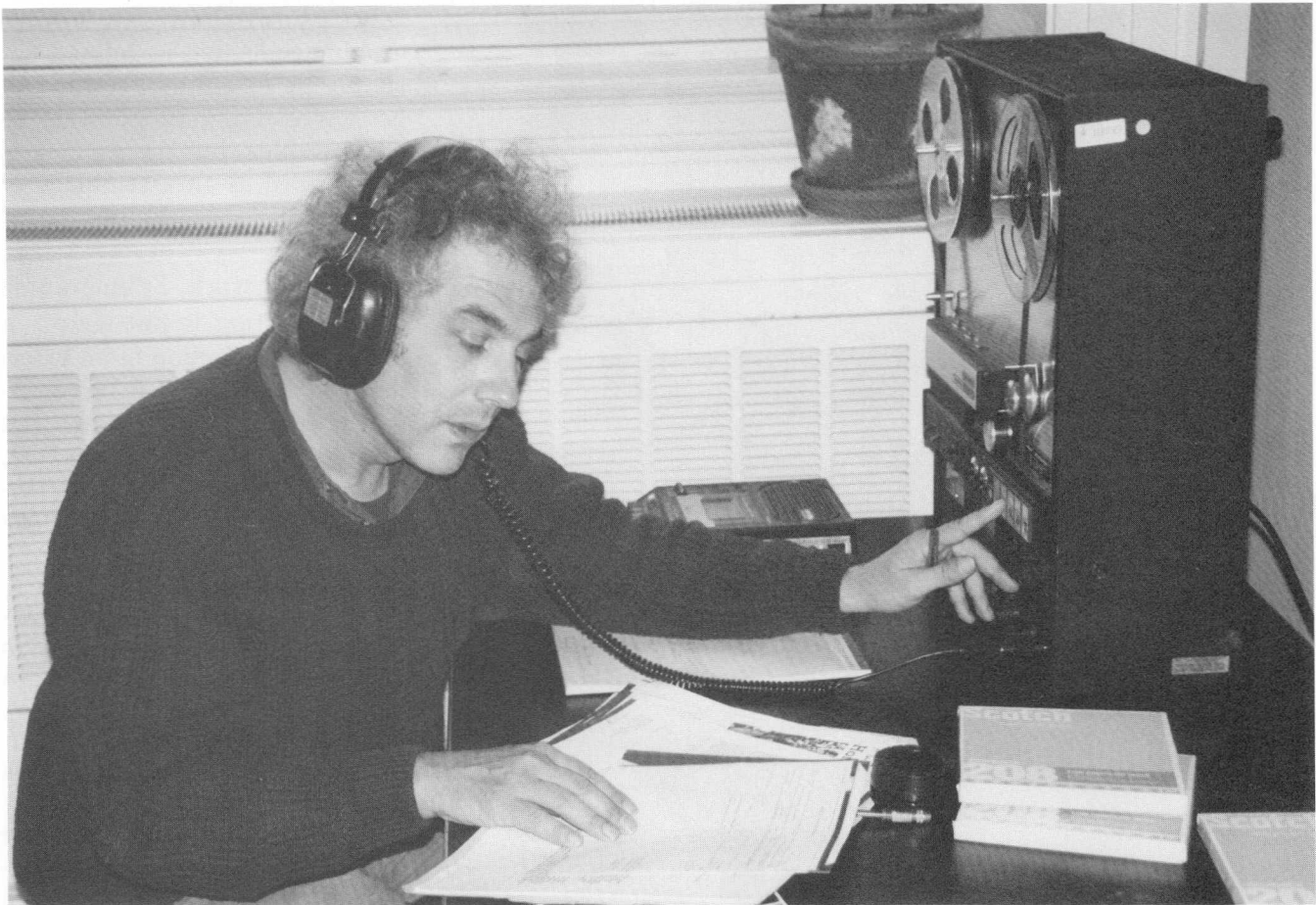
Within the Center, staff sometimes debated whether the mission was better fulfilled by doing projects—pushing out the envelope of knowledge and technique and publishing the results for others—or by focusing efforts on helping others directly. Doing fieldwork has an obvious benefit in acquisitions for the Archive, and it affords opportunities to highlight new issues, like cultural conservation, or new techniques, like the automated program for field documentation. Fieldworkers on contract with the Center for particular projects carry over what they learn in their own work. On the other hand, relying on model-creation and dissemination is a kind of “trickle-down” approach that works well with other professionals but may never reach a local teacher—or a professional in another field. Which to choose? In the end, the Center did both.

Preservation and Access: The Organic Archive

The Center's Archive of Folk Culture has an illustrious history in the twentieth-century documentation and preservation of folklife. Although its compass has often been broader than music, its first half-century was associated most prominently with American folk music. Indeed, till it was made part of the Center, its name was the Archive of American Folk-Song,

[Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques] *What a wonderful book! . . . In preparation for the State Bicentennial, we are running a summer reading program this year called "Celebrate Vermont!", and as part of that, are encouraging libraries to explore their communities with the kids through collecting oral histories, exploring folk art, digging up folktales, etc.! Your booklet would be a perfect impetus to get them started.*

*Grace W. Green
Children's Services Consultant
Vermont Department of Libraries
January 17, 1990*



Musician Stephen Wade, long-time user of the Archive of Folk Culture, listens to early recordings he is considering for inclusion in a book-CD project and a National Public Radio series. Photo by James Hardin

then (to account for its holdings from abroad) the Archive of Folk Song. Once integrated into the Center, it gradually evolved with it but also became, as archives should, the anchor of the enterprise.

It is instructive to review profiles of the Archive today in comparison with 1977, just before it became part of the Center. The figures are rough estimates, but in the aggregate they point unerringly to the changes that reconstituted the Archive over the years. It should be noted that in 1978, after the Archive joined the Center, a large assemblage (about 180,000 pages) of WPA manuscript materials pertaining to folklore and oral history was transferred to the Library's Manuscript Division, as part of a consolidation of WPA collections into one division's custody where they could be pro-

cessed and serviced together. Thus the figures for manuscript materials in 1996 would be higher but for that transfer.

1977	
Manuscripts	360,000
Sound recordings	19,000
Photographs	2,000
Moving image materials	10
Printed material	20,000
Microfilm	40
<hr/>	
TOTAL	401,000
1996	
Manuscripts	1,250,000
Sound recordings	53,000
Photographs	220,000
Moving image materials	450
Printed material	26,000
Microfilm	57
Computer disks	400
<hr/>	
TOTAL	1,550,000

Surveying the figures, it is clear that the Archive has grown exponentially over the past twenty years. That growth has been in part because of acquisition of major collections, such as the Fahnestock South Sea Collection or the Henrietta Yurchenco Collection. But the greatest cause of the statistical surge has unquestionably been the field initiatives undertaken by the Center itself.

The second striking facet of the statistics is the jump in visual documentation from a negligible supplementary role to a place of honor alongside the manuscripts and sound recordings. This shift in the contents of the Archive is primarily a consequence of the use of still photography and, to a limited extent, moving image documentation in Center field projects. There are many contributors here, but the individual most responsible



Nora Guthrie, on a visit to the Center, February 14, 1996, reviews letters and other manuscript materials written by her father, Woodie Guthrie. Photo by James Hardin

for the transformation is Carl Fleischhauer, the Center's media specialist from 1977 to 1989 and a professional photographer and filmmaker in his own right. Finally, the appearance of computer disks in the statistics for 1996 signals the onset of a generation in which computers became part of the process of cultural documentation.

The change in the Archive was not just quantitative. The Center's broad mandate for "folklife," and the comprehensive documentary sweep of Center field projects, forced the staff to reconceptualize what the Archive is. It is, in fact, not just an archive of music and other cultural materials, but an archive of ethnographic collections. Gerald E. Parsons, former head of the Center's reference unit, first formulated what became

a mantra for Center staff: an ethnographic collection is a *multiformat, unpublished, created work* documenting aspects of human culture in field situations. Embedded in the definition are several significant elements:

(1) **Multiformat.** Ethnographic collections typically consist of multiple formats documenting the same cultural event. A collection might contain manuscript fieldnotes and logs, still photographs, sound recordings, perhaps moving image material, and (nowadays) computer disks. Even a tape recording accompanied by a log and descriptive fieldnotes should be considered multiformat, in that all the formats must be considered together to understand the nature and meaning of the ethnographic event they document.

(2) **Unpublished.** An ethnographic collection is defined not simply by its cultural content. A book or television program can be ethnographic, but the Archive is not defined as an assemblage of such published works.

(3) **Created work.** Ethnographic documentation is not simply a mirror-like reflection of an external reality. Rather, it is the product of interaction between the documenter and the documented, both of whom contribute their creativity to the final documentary product.

(4) **Human culture in field situations.** These qualifiers distinguish ethnographic collections from other kinds of documentation.

The concept of the Archive as an archive of ethnographic collections seems clear, in retrospect, but it took time to see all the implications of the concept. Changes in the way the Archive developed and was managed occurred step by step. The finding aids that once described "recordings" in the Archive now describe "collections." The numbering system for accessioning now is structured by whole collections (AFC 1990/004) rather than by cumulative counting of physical items (AFS 13,273). Organizing, preserving, and cataloging is now done collection by collection.

Other changes came to the Archive as well. For years "the Archive" had been not only a collection but an administrative section within the Library. But a few years after it became a part of the Center, the section was reorganized into acquisitions, processing (organizing, preserving, and cataloging), and reference units of the Center. The Archive was, in a sense, freed to become collections again. The public face of the old Archive also changed. As the renovation of the Library's Jefferson Building progressed, the Center

Jack Delano showed me a copy of Folklife Center News, that I found most interesting, and I wish to compliment you for this publication and for the excellent programs and activities that you carry out.

*Teodoro Vidal
San Juan, Puerto Rico
March 16, 1990*

was moved to new quarters. Under the watchful eye of Gerry Parsons, who was in charge of the move, the new quarters included a more inviting Folklife Reading Room with improved facilities.

Reference services of the Center in recent years are at a much higher level than in earlier years. There are more visitors, more telephone calls, more letters—and, nowadays, faxes and e-mail queries—to respond to. The collections receive heavy use, despite the lingering public image of “the dusty archives.” The photographs

from Center field projects have been discovered by photo researchers hunting for illustrations for a variety of public or published products. In addition to the Center’s own publishing efforts, the Archive has yielded hundreds of published recordings by the private sector over the years; more and more books and articles have drawn on Archive holdings; and film, television, and radio programs regularly use Archive materials.

The digital age promises to increase this pattern of heavy use.

The Center already has a Gopher site and a World Wide Web page for sharing information about its collections, and the next stage of the digital revolution is making it possible to share not just information but the collections themselves. The Library of Congress is mounting a major effort, the National Digital Library Program, to digitize collections and put them online, and the Center is actively participating in the effort. One major collection from the 1930s—the WPA California Folk Music Project Collection (1938-40), made by Sidney Robertson Cowell—has already been prepared for complete online presentation, and several others are in early stages of preparation.

Public Presentation

The legislation that created the American Folklife Center provided a mandate “to preserve and



Susanne Ziegler, cylinder collection specialist for the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (right), visited the Folklife Reading Room to discuss the care and handling of cylinder collections with Folklife Specialist Judith Gray of the Center’s Federal Cylinder Project. Photo by James Hardin, February 1996



The Inspirational Singers, a gospel group from the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church of Washington, D.C., performing at the Library of Congress as part of the Center's Neptune Plaza Concert Series, August 17, 1995. Photo by James Glover

present American folklife." "Presentation" should be construed broadly, and one of its facets is public events. The first installment of this essay described the origin of the Center's concert series on the Library's Neptune Plaza. Its first full year as a series was 1977, and it ran continuously (in warm weather months) for nineteen years, ending with the 1995 series. A typical season included six or seven concerts, and the series over the years (counting the stand-

alone 1976 program) presented a total of 130 programs. The audience included all sorts of people, but it was dominated by Library and Capitol Hill staffers, making it for years the Center's public face on the Hill. Budget constrictions forced cancellation of the Neptune Plaza programs in 1996. The series (along with other public presentations) were managed by Brett Topping (1977-83), Magdalena Gilinsky (1983-90), and Thea Austen (1990-95).

The Neptune Plaza series evolved over the years. It began as a two-hour lunchtime program with a break in the middle, during which there was an interview of the artists. In time it was shortened to an hour and a half, then to an hour. But compensating for the loss of the interview was the evolution of the program flyer by 1986 into an educational tool containing a background essay on the artistic tradition and a list of further reading and listening options. Beginning in 1989, the audience was substantially expanded when the concerts were broadcast on Washington's WAMU-FM—live for two years as part of the Lee Michael Dempsey Show, then delayed as part of the Dick Spottswood Show.

The program fare also evolved. The emphasis in the early years was on blues, oldtime and bluegrass, gospel, and Hispanic and Caribbean traditions. In time, more ethnic traditions were highlighted; then groups from abroad began appearing. (I still remember a song composed to address America by Kubata, an Afro-Cuban group who had just arrived as part of the Mariel migration.) Washington-area groups predominated in the early years, but as time passed there was a growing admixture of groups from elsewhere. Dance and drama increased over time and moved from incidental billing to a central focus in some later programs.

The series showed a regular tendency to probe the boundaries of what was considered "folk"—an intangible boundary that itself shifted over the span of the series. In 1977 some purists still looked a bit askance at bluegrass; in the 1980s electrified polka music may have seemed a stretch; in the 1990s the Lindy Hop and tango occupied the margin. But it was important that the series test definitional boundaries, searching out grassroots energies without too fine a regard for preconceived

ideas of what comprised "American," "world," or "folklife."

Neptune Plaza has not been the Center's only venue. In the cool weather months the Center sponsored a variety of workshops, lectures, and other programs. Many workshops featured crafts, spoken-word traditions, foodways, and other aspects of folklife that do not lend themselves so well to outdoor summer audiences. The crafts workshops featured interviews with the crafts people and hands-on demonstrations. Several were accompanied by informative brochures on the subject (rag rugs, paper-cutting, or the like) that became useful reference handouts in the months and years after the workshop was held. The lectures were similarly varied, sometimes standing alone and sometimes accompanying a workshop-demon-

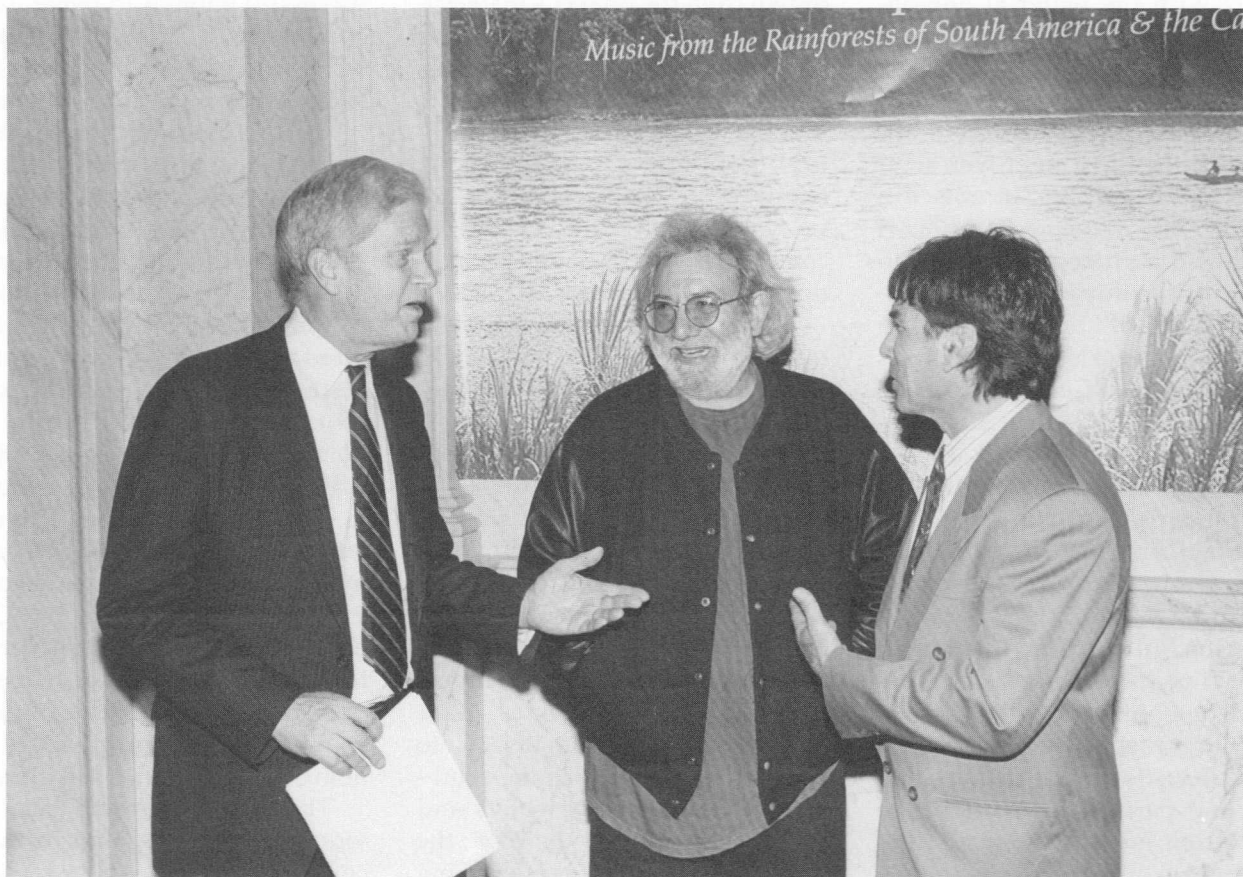
stration. Several lectures featured folklorists from abroad and served as a tool to keep the Center connected with international folkloristic developments. In 1996 the Center began a new series of lectures by staff and guests, "Notes from the Field," featuring the collections in the Archive of Folk Culture.

In addition to the workshops and lectures, certain hybrid events were shaped organically by the possibilities presenting themselves rather than by a sense of presentation genre or series. Thus the Center teamed up with the Library's Poetry and Literature Center to sponsor a Cowboy Poetry Day in 1994, including a symposium in the afternoon and a reading by three cowboy poets in the evening. Similarly, release of the compact disc *The Spirit Cries:*

Music of the Rainforests of South America and the Caribbean (1993)—the first in the Endangered Music Series co-produced on the Rykodisc label by Mickey Hart and me—was heralded by an afternoon symposium followed by an evening reception in the Library's Great Hall with the Grateful Dead in attendance. In a memorable moment, two Aluku singers from the rainforest of French Guiana sang an invocation, their voices echoing around the marbled walls of the Great Hall, while Jerry Garcia smiled down beatifically from the mezzanine.

Exhibitions

Live events are not the only mode of cultural presentation. Throughout its first twenty years the Center used exhibitions to present and



Librarian of Congress James H. Billington (left) chats with Jerry Garcia and Mickey Hart of the Grateful Dead, at a reception in the Library's Great Hall celebrating publication of *The Spirit Cries: Music from the Rainforests of South American & the Caribbean*, a CD coproduced by Hart and the Center, based on collections in the Archive of Folk Culture. Photo by Yusef El-Amin, March 15, 1993

We extend to you our most heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the tremendous amount of work you all did in putting together [the exhibition] Old Ties, New Attachments: Italian-American Folklife in the West. . . . It was absolutely amazing how you brought it all together, covering so many people and families in such a large geographical area. . . . Thank you all again and again, for bringing such fulfillment and pride to our family, by honoring [my father] Achille Reali (Jumbo Archie Royal), his life and contribution to the labor movement.

*John J. Royal
San Pedro, California
September 11, 1993*

reflect on aspects of folklife in public venues. Center staff did not concentrate on exhibits at first; somehow the Bicentennial era that gave rise to the Center seemed a more celebratory era conducive to live performance as a medium of public engagement. But the post-Bicentennial years were—in the cultural realm, at least—touched by a quieter mood. Exhibitions, which permitted the viewer to interact with the material one-on-one at the viewer's own pace, were an effective medium for the new mood.

The first major exhibition undertaken by the Center was actually two exhibitions in one. Entitled *Folk Art and Folklife*, it combined a photographic exhibition (with sound stations)—“Sketches of South Georgia Folklife,” drawn from the Center's South-Central Georgia Folklife Project—and “Missing Pieces,” an exhibition of Georgia folk art, assembled in Georgia and brought to the Library by Exhibits Officer Michael Carrigan. The exhibition as a whole occupied the entire ground floor of the Library's Jefferson Building and functioned as part of Librarian of Congress Daniel J. Boorstin's effort to make the Library feel more accessible to general visitors. The overarching title and parallel structure of the exhibition suggest a tension between two ways of looking at a subject, and in truth there was; in 1983 the Center further explored that tension in a conference on folk art, from which the volume *Folk*

Art and Art Worlds (UMI Press, 1986) is drawn.

A few years after the Georgia exhibition, the Paradise Valley [Nevada] Folklife Project led to two exhibitions. The first arose directly from the project itself. One of the fieldworkers, Richard Ahlborn from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, proposed using that museum as the site for an exhibit drawn from the project's material-culture encounters relating to Great Basin ranching traditions. The Center was enthusiastic and, in an unusual collaborative venture, produced the book-catalog *Buckaroos in Paradise: Cowboy Life in Northern Nevada* (1980) to complement the museum's exhibition of the same name.

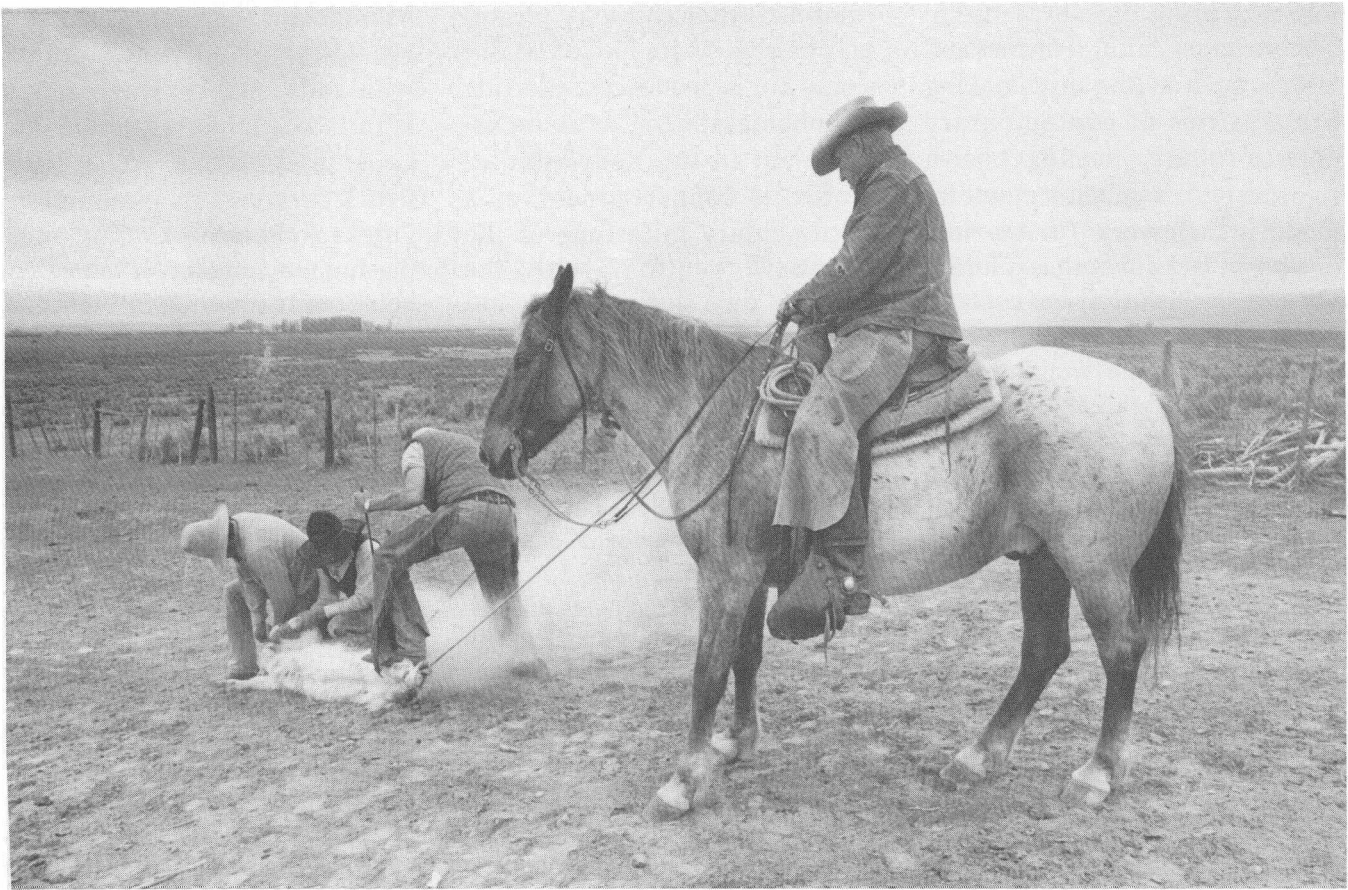
That success suggested, to Center Deputy Director Ray Dockstader, an idea for something bigger and bolder. Soon the Center was planning, with guidance from Ingrid Maar of the Library's Exhibits Office and guest curator Lonn Taylor, a major exhibition on the American cowboy. The exhibition and the complementary book, *The American Cowboy* (1983), were made possible by major support from United Technologies. Maar and Taylor divided the subject into three sections: the late nineteenth-century reality of cowboys and open-range cattle in the West; the rise and diffusion of mythmaking about cowboys, which began burgeoning through American culture as the early trail drives dissolved into history; and the contemporary

reality of cowboys and cattle management in the Western states.

The exhibition was an extraordinary success in the Library's recently opened Madison Building, and it toured to several sites after closing at the Library. It was an excuse for a variety of associated activities and products, from touring seminars to T-shirts (for which the demand in the Library's sales shop has never abated). In fact, it was successful enough to generate an opponent who tried to capitalize on its success by mailing press releases around the country attacking it—a phenomenon that seemed harmless enough at the time, but foreshadowed a number of troubling media campaigns against exhibitions a decade later.

The section of the exhibition on contemporary cowboy life featured the Center's documentation in the Paradise Valley Folklife Project. It was thus the second important use of that field project, which had already been featured in *Buckaroos in Paradise*. The centerpiece of the Paradise Valley area in the exhibition was an interactive videodisc fashioned by Carl Fleischhauer, enabling viewers to follow a motion-picture sequence documenting a trail drive from the summer high country back to the home ranch in Paradise Valley.

The Center later published the videodisc, in expanded form accompanied by a lengthy booklet, as an experiment in new technology. *The Ninety-Six: A Cattle Ranch in Northern Nevada*, as the third important use of the project's collec-



Rancher Les Stewart (right) and three of his buckaroos brand a calf on the Ninety-six Ranch, Paradise Valley, Nevada, 1978. Stewart's ranch figured prominently in two exhibits and a videodisc on the American cowboy. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer

tion, was also an experiment in sharing with the world what amounts to a selective published archive of a Center collection. A decade later, that experiment is being carried out Library-wide as the National Digital Library Program, an effort to share Library collections with the world online. Now the Center is laying plans—which will constitute the fourth important use of the collection—for placing the contents of the videodisc, and perhaps more, in the online offerings (through World

Wide Web) of the National Digital Library.

In retrospect, it is satisfying to see how fruitful the Paradise Valley Folklife Project has been. Contrary to conventional wisdom both then and now about the efficient administration of cultural projects, it was originally devised without cost-sharing partners and without a clear sense of what its final products might be. It was, one might say, pure research.

The American Cowboy was a Center-organized initiative, but

under the deft guidance of Ray Dockstader it ultimately enveloped the entire Library as an institution. The Georgia exhibition had enlisted other Library offices, but the collections it featured were drawn primarily from the Center's fieldwork. The cowboy exhibition, on the other hand, involved collections from many of the Library's divisions; thus it felt more like a Library-wide effort and is still remembered by many within the institution as one of the highlights of the 1980s.

Paradoxically, some from the folklore and folklife network fretted that the themes and collections content of *The American Cowboy* were not exclusively "folklife" in scope. Indeed, its "myth and reality" theme inevitably and appropriately involved not simply folklife but American history and popular culture. Though some folklorists of this generation, such as Alan Dundes, have urged folk-

I am currently in training to become a Peace Corps volunteer here in the heart of Africa and one of the magazines that came across our "English" reading table was the Fall 1994 edition of your Folklife Center News. . . . I just had to write to let you know how widely read the Folklife Center News is!

*Lisa Habermusch
Central African Republic
September 20, 1995*

lorists to bring their expertise to bear on larger cultural themes and issues, such as the mythmaking propensities of contemporary popular culture, others have hewn rigorously to a small-community model in their work. *The American Cowboy* in fact did both, exploring not only the historical and contemporary reality of ranching and cowboy life but the twentieth-century popular mythmaking process that was spun out of it. Whatever the boundaries of folklife may be, a national center representing folklife should both test those boundaries and reach across them, making common cause with other networks and disciplines to explore larger national goals and issues.

Similar intellectual and institutional bridging occurred, on a smaller scale, with another Center exhibit in the 1980s. *Documenting America, 1935-1943* was a fresh look at the work of the famed photographic office for the Farm Security Administration (and, later, the Office of War Information) in the Depression and War years. The collection, which resides in the Library's Prints and Photographs Division, is widely noted as a sustained effort to document American life in the 1930s, and its work is historically and conceptually related to the Center's documentary and ethnographic interests. The project was a joint effort of the Center and three other Library offices: Prints and Photographs Division, the Publishing Office, and the Exhibits Office. It was jointly curated by Carl Fleischhauer from the Center and Beverly W. Brannan from Prints and Photographs.

In an interesting twist, it was conceived as a book complemented by a photographic exhibit, not the other way around; the book was published by an outside partner, the University of California Press (1988). Like *The American Cowboy*, it was not exclusively about folklife. Yet its central

premise—that the FSA photographs should be looked at not singly but in sequences reflecting the photographers' work on assignment in the field—underscores its connectedness, as a documentary milestone of the twentieth century, with the Center's own documentary and ethnographic history and principles.

One other exhibition from the 1990s warrants consideration here. The year 1992 was the Quincentenary of the first voyage of Columbus to the New World. Several years in advance, the Library, along with other agencies and institutions, began to prepare for its proper celebration. Asked by Congress what its plans were, the Library responded with a proposal for a major exhibition focusing on the early encounter of European civilization with the geography and cultures of the Americas. The congressional response was supportive, but with a further suggestion. Why not do something else, too—something that featured contemporary culture as well as early history?

The Folklife Center, having encountered a strong Italian-American component in the ranching life and architecture of Paradise Valley, responded with a project focusing on Italian-American cultural contributions to the West. Italian immigrants arrived in the West beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, early in its European settlement, but the contributions of Italian-Americans to the culture of the West were little known nationally. What is more, Italian-Americans—beginning in the West—had adopted Columbus as a sort of culture hero.

The geographic scope of the project presented an interesting challenge: How could the entire West be covered? Project director David Taylor settled on a "representative-community" strategy, electing finally to focus field research on San Pedro (commercial

fishing) and the Santa Clara Valley (farming and wine culture), with additional coverage of San Francisco, Monterrey, and Santa Cruz, in California; Walla Walla (truck farming) in Washington; Eureka and Lincoln County (mining and ranching) in Nevada; Carbon County (mining) in Utah; and Pueblo (agriculture and iron-working) in Colorado. Within the larger regional and ethnic context, areas were chosen because they highlighted certain occupations in which Italian immigrants and their descendants contributed significantly to the life and work of the West. In addition to the occupational theme, fieldwork devoted considerable energy to home life and religious practices.

Fundraising for the exhibition was not easy; unlike the cowboy exhibition, there was not a single donor—though a major gift from Henry Salvatori of Los Angeles helped launch the effort. But the exhibition opened on time—around Columbus Day of the Quincentenary year—at the de Saisset Museum of the University of Santa Clara, traveling from there to Las Vegas, then to the Gene Autry Museum of Western Heritage in Los Angeles. After it had been presented to Western audiences, it traveled to the Library of Congress, then to the Museums of Stony Brook on Long Island and finally to Providence, Rhode Island. As a useful complement to the exhibition, the Center published a book of essays by project fieldworkers, edited by David A. Taylor and John Alexander Williams; the book and the exhibition shared the title *Old Ties, New Attachments: Italian-American Folklife in the West*.

Publications

Publications seemed, in 1976, a logical and central function of a national folklife center. At the federal level, neither the Archive at the Library nor the Folk Arts Pro-



Publications of the American Folklife Center

gram at the National Endowment for the Arts had generated many publications, except for the Library's series of documentary recorded publications, and the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife had yielded primarily a series of handsome program booklets to accompany their annual festival.

But publications do not come first; they follow and reflect other activities. Thus one of the Center's first undertakings was a canvass of folklife activities in federal agencies, undertaken by Linda Coe; the result was the first Center publication, *Folklife and the Federal Government* (1977). It was number 1 in Publications of the American Folklife Center, a series of varied publications that continues to this day (the latest is number 20). A few years later, at the

suggestion of the eminent folklorist and founding chairman of the Center's board of trustees Wayland D. Hand, a second series to include scholarly publications was begun, *Studies in American Folklife*.

The two series have provided a great variety of publications addressing specific subjects and audiences. But the Center needed something to address its constituency and share its activities more broadly. Accordingly, a quarterly newsletter, *Folklife Center News*, was inaugurated in January 1978. Over the years it has had two editors: Brett Topping in the early years and James Hardin from 1988 to the present. The first issue appeared on buff paper and was eight pages long. In time it expanded and switched to white paper, and the appearance of its title

page was recast. Short news features made way for longer essays. But it has always maintained its focus on Center programs and activities, resisting (despite occasional stirrings to the contrary) the temptation to expand into a publication on folklife in general.

To complement *Folklife Center News*, the Center, in collaboration with the Library's Publishing Office, launched a series of annual volumes, with color as well as black-and-white illustrations, containing general essays on folklife. The first *Folklife Annual*, edited by James Hardin (then an editor in the Publishing Office), appeared in 1985. The series ran through a fifth volume, *Folklife Annual 1990*, before Publishing Office funds for its production ran out and it had to be discontinued. Within the Center there is lingering regret that the annual could not be continued. There is nothing else like it representing the folklife field, and such a publication provided an important long-range vehicle for sharing the insights and energies of the field with a broader public. But if the niche is to be filled in the future, it will require funding from the private sector.

From the beginning, the Center entered into public-private partnership arrangements to accomplish some of its purposes. But by the 1990s the production of publications through partnership arrangements shifted from an option to a central strategy. The dwindling of appropriated budgets was certainly a factor; but so was the Center's growing sense that private-sector partners were more likely than the Center itself to achieve the kind of national distribution the Center desired.

Such partnership arrangements in publishing appeared first with books accompanying exhibitions. *Buckaroos in Paradise: Cowboy Life in Northern Nevada* (1980) was first published by the Center in an edition for sale during the exhibition at the Smithsonian. Subsequently,

the Center entered into an arrangement with University of Nebraska Press to reissue it. *The American Cowboy* (1983) was initially published using funds from United Technologies to coincide with the opening of the exhibition. A trade edition of the book published by Harper and Row appeared the following year. Similarly, *Documenting America 1935-1943* was published by University of California Press.

What worked for exhibition-related books could also work for publications derived from Center conferences, and for research volumes generated by Center staff. A symposium "The Washington Meeting on Folk Art" (1983) led to an arrangement with UMI Press to publish a collection of essays, *Folk Art and Art Worlds* (1986), edited by John Michael Vlach and Simon J. Bronner. *Quilt Collections: A Directory for the United States and Canada* (1987), produced by staffer Lisa Turner Oshins, was published by Acropolis Books; it is the first attempt to locate and guide researchers to quilts and quilting resources in museums and archives around the continent.

The Center's 1990 conference on "Cultural Conservation" followed suit. Made possible by a grant from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, together with funds from the Center's own Raye Virginia Allen Fund, the conference was designed to bring together professionals from the fields of folklife, historic preservation, natural resource conservation, and planning to seek common ground under the banner of

"cultural conservation"—a term and concept the Center had promulgated with its policy study *Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heeritage in the United States* in the 1980s. Center folklife specialist Mary Hufford set to work after the conference to draw together a selection of essays by conference participants. The resultant book, *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*, was published by the University of Illinois Press in 1994.

Another tier of books reflects the energies of Center staff and projects but was not authored or produced directly by the Center. Here the list is too long to cite comprehensively; good examples are *Pinelands Folklife* (Rutgers University Press, 1987), drawing heavily from the work of the Pinelands Folklife Project; and *Listening to Old Voices: Folklore, Life Stories, and the Elderly* (University of Illinois Press, 1992), which presents and analyzes many interviews by author Patrick B. Mullen as a fieldworker for the Blue Ridge Parkway Folklife Project. A number of such books, taken together with articles, essays, photographic essays, and other contributions by Center staff in a variety of books, magazines, and journals, make the total printed record of the Center over the last twenty years even more substantial than its own publications suggest.

The most famous series of publications from the Archive is doubtless the series of documentary folk music recordings issued from its collections. The series began with a special 78-rpm album

in 1941, which was incorporated into a larger album in 1942. By 1976, when the Center was created, the Archive series had produced sixty-seven recordings in long-playing record (LP) form. In addition, a special fifteen-album Bicentennial series, *Folk Music in America*, edited by Richard K. Spottswood, was released over a period of several years overlapping into the early years of the Center. Thus a total of eighty-two releases dated from the pre-Center era.

The Center began adding to this total in 1978 by issuing an LP album, *The Folk Music of America* (AFS L68), featuring the field recordings created by Robert W. Gordon, the first head of the Archive, in the 1920s and early 1930s. A year later, the Blue Ridge Parkway Folklife Project yielded a double-LP set, *Children of the Heav'nly King* (L69-70). And a few years later *Omaha Indian Music* (L71) appeared. All had very extensive booklets accompanying the recording, in the educational tradition already established by the Archive series. They were in fact multi-media publications, but that term had not yet gained currency, so reviewers persisted in regarding them as recordings with swollen liner notes. In addition to these new recorded publications, the Center rectified an old gap in the Archive series. The Willard Rhodes series of American Indian music (AFS L34-L43) largely lacked accompanying booklets, so the Center, working with Dr. Rhodes, produced a new edition of the series, adding new booklets to

I so enjoy your publication, Folklife Center News, and it has helped me immensely in my teaching and research. I first became interested in folklife while an undergraduate and have followed the field closely since. Your newsletter keeps me abreast of the work done in this area and has influenced my research in language, mythology and history. Thanks for the wonderful work you do at the Center.

*Joseph Newkirk
Quincy, Illinois
October 3, 1995*

I am a Senior Citizen on your free Folklife Center News list. I am unable to tell you how much I enjoy it.

*Mrs. Orin R. Stevens
Kaysville, Utah
October 7, 1989*

the boxed package and making the ten recordings available in either LP or cassette format.

In 1982 the Center organized a meeting with the private-sector record companies responsible for production and distribution of folk recordings. How, the Center wondered, could it help the private-sector companies in their mission? One answer came through loud and clear: the companies wanted help in placing their records in libraries. Libraries, on the other hand, told the Center that they wanted to purchase such recordings, but did not know what to choose. Out of this discussion grew a ten-year effort on the part of the Center, the *American Folk Music and Folklore Recordings: A Selected List*. The list, issued each year, 1983-92, contained thirty to thirty-five recordings selected by a panel of experts out of the year's crop of folk records. Each year's edition was widely distributed—not only to libraries but to a host of other individuals and organizations. The *Selected List* must have been useful, for record companies continued submitting their candidates each year. But it is a source of no little regret to Center staff that the program had to be ended in 1992, after ten successful years, because of budgetary constraints.

By the late 1980s, the Center's production of recorded publications ceased. It was a period of transition between the old LP format and the new digital compact disc. In addition, the Center was refocusing its publications strategy on working with private-sector partners rather than publishing and distributing directly. Government, the Center had con-

cluded, could be fine at production, but it would not be so fine at distribution. The same argument applied to recordings, which are publications every bit as much as books are.

The first recorded fruits of the partnership strategy came out of the Endangered Music Project. It was proposed by Mickey Hart, a percussionist for the Grateful Dead and a longtime documentarian and advocate for grassroots music, American and worldwide. He proposed a series featuring the collections in the Archive representing music of the world's cultures, in collaboration with the record company Rykodisc. The first in the series presented musical traditions from rainforest cultures of the tropical Americas. Entitled *The Spirit Cries*, it was released in early 1993. The second in the series, *Music for the Gods* (1994), presents music from Bali and nearby islands in Indonesia, drawn from the Fahnestock South Sea Collection, which was donated to the Center in 1986. At present the project is preparing four additional releases from West Africa and the African American traditions of Brazil and the Caribbean.

The Center has also recently entered into a private-public partnership with Rounder Records for reissue in a CD format of records from the LP series for which the Archive is famous. The initiative is in cooperation with the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, which includes the Recording Laboratory that originally issued the LP recordings. About ten reissues are now in production, and ten more will follow.

One final series of publications deserves mention. In 1983 the Center, tapping a long Archive tradition of providing bibliographies, directories, and finding aids for researchers, launched a new (or newly reformatted) series, LC Folk Archive Finding Aids, edited by Joseph C. Hickerson. The series provides detailed surveys of Archive holdings on particular subjects or from particular geographical regions. Notable have been the state-by-state finding aids, prepared by interns and other volunteers who are a regular and welcome feature of life in the Center. These finding aids now provide coverage for holdings from twenty-seven states and territories. The finding aids are published both in print editions and on the Center's Gopher and Web pages.

Funds and Funding

Partnerships with the private sector have been successful and productive for the Center, and there is every reason to suppose there will be more in the years to come. To support them, as well as to receive private donations, the Center established three private funds early in its history. The American Folklife Center Fund was established in 1976 to receive gifts from various donors for the general purposes of the Center. The Friends of the Folk Archive Fund (1978) is a similar gift fund, designated specifically to benefit the Archive and activities associated with it. And the Elizabeth Hamer Kegan Fund (1979), created to honor the Assistant Librarian of Congress who helped create the Center after the enabling legislation was passed in 1976, is a "revolving fund" used to finance publications and other items and to receive the revenue from their sale.

Gift and revolving funds are not simply "more money"; they are financial mechanisms for fos-

tering a variety of activities that do not lend themselves to the mechanism of public appropriations. Funds from a gift fund may, for example, be used to finance a reception, for which the use of appropriated funds is prohibited; and funds may be received into a revolving fund for sale of copies of a book, for which, had it been paid for by appropriated funds, the receipts must go to the U.S. Treasury. But in the longer term the Center's prosperity may depend on the support of another type of fund: what in the federal context is called a "trust fund" and is known in most cultural institutions as "an endowment." Endowing certain kinds of activities, given the pressures on appropriated funds within the U.S. government in the 1990s, may be the best

way to ensure that the activities will continue for generations.

The Center established two trust funds during its first twenty years. The first is the Raye Virginia Allen Fund (1984), named for a founding member and former chairman of the Center's Board of Trustees. Her mother, Vivian McCreary, created it in her honor on the occasion of her retirement from the board. The Raye Virginia Allen Fund has been used once so far, to support the conference on cultural conservation in 1990. Otherwise, the Center has been using its annual revenues, as well as additional donations by the family and others, to build it as a programming tool for the future.

The second trust fund is the Gerald E. and Corinne L. Parsons Fund for Ethnography, which was

established by Gerald E. Parsons in 1994 to honor his parents. Parsons was the Center's reference coordinator until his death in 1995 and may have been the first Library employee to establish such a fund. The Parsons Fund is dedicated to fostering use of the Archive and other ethnographic collections of the Library of Congress by individuals and organizations in the private sector. It thus underscores the crucial role of the Archive as a public resource, available not only for the Center's uses but to researchers, publishers, record companies, and others *for their own purposes*. In 1996 the Parsons Fund made its first award, to Julia Bishop from the University of Sheffield, England, for research in the James Madison Carpenter Collection. The Center hopes that,



American Folklife Center Board of Trustees founding member Raye Virginia Allen (second from right) at a reception following the February 1984 meeting of the board, with (left to right) her son Mac, her mother, Mrs. Irvin McCreary, and her husband, H.K. Allen. Mrs. McCreary established the Center's first trust fund in honor of her daughter. Library of Congress photo

with continuing contributions from many individuals, the Parsons Fund will grow into a robust tool for making the incomparable collections of the Archive of Folk Culture more available to the world.

Reviewing this two-part essay, it strikes me in retrospect that the Center's twenty-year history divides rather neatly into two ten-year phases. The first decade was characterized by an expanding budget and an emphasis on fieldwork and public programming. The second decade was characterized by a flat budget—actually, a shrinking budget in constant dollar terms—which has gradually shifted the Center toward fundraising and partnerships for its programming. Concomitant with that shift has been an increasing emphasis on the collections-based functions of the Center. The

turning point was 1986, when the Gramm-Rudman budget reductions signaled the beginning of an era of dearth and constriction in the federal government. That era has extended into the 1990s and promises to continue to the turn of the century. In such an era, the shift to a greater reliance on fundraising and partnerships represents the logical strategy for maintaining and extending the reach and creative energy of the Center.

But what the future holds for the Center will depend, not only on fundraising and partnerships that the Center can undertake, but on larger developments in the field of folklife and in the feelings of the nation about its relationship to its cultural heritage. Those were the key factors in the Center's creation, and they are likely to be the key factors in its future.

By the early 1980s some voices were wondering aloud whether the nation, having strengthened its interest in its cultural roots during the Bicentennial era, was entering into a new phase when the emphasis would shift to reinforcing national coherence. But the grassroots inquiries keep rolling in at the Center, its publications command continuing interest, and its Archive continues to attract attention from all quarters of the nation. So long as Americans hold dear their grassroots heritage, the support is not likely to diminish for a small but energetic center, capable of dynamic change to suit the needs of the times but permanently committed to the preservation and presentation of that grassroots heritage and its creative recycling to build a better future.

EDITOR'S NOTES *from page 2*

described the major accomplishments of the field documentation projects the Center has carried out over the past twenty years. In this issue, he looks at the growth and development of the Archive of Folk Culture and a number of the Center's programmatic activities, concluding that experimentation and imagination have resulted in new products and new ways of doing things—for the Center and, perhaps, for the field of folklore as well.

Senate Proposes Two Year Authorization

As readers of *Folklife Center News* who have followed the story know, the Center's attempts last year to gain congressional reauthorization for fiscal year 1996 were unsuccessful. On July 10 of this year, during the Senate Legislative Branch Appropriations Sub-

committee hearings on the Library of Congress, Sen. Mark Hatfield, chairman of both the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Joint Committee on the Library, expressed strong support for the Center and endorsed maintaining its legislative authority. During the Senate Appropriations Committee markup of the fiscal year 1997 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill (H.R. 3754) on July 19, he introduced provisions for permanent authorization of the Center and for funding the Center fully at the level requested for fiscal year 1997. His accompanying comments strongly supported the work of the Center, and the Senate committee indicated that it did not agree with House proposals to downsize the Center, eliminate its legislative authority, and relocate it to the Smithsonian Institution. On July 29, when the bill reached the floor of the Senate, Senator Hatfield amended the provision on permanent authorization, substituting a

provision for authorization for fiscal years 1997 and 1998. He once again stated his support for the Center and expressed the hope that the Library (the best home for the Center), the Center's Board of Trustees, and the folklife community would work to increase fundraising for the Center and to enact permanent authorization in the next Congress. The bill passed the Senate on July 30. The House agreed with the Senate, and the president signed the Legislative Branch appropriations bill on September 16.

An Affiliation Correction

My apologies to Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz for noting her academic affiliation incorrectly in the remembrance she wrote for the last issue of *Folklife Center News*. Ms. Leeds-Hurwitz is professor of communication at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.



Carl Fleischhauer photographs Carlton Lupo and one of his blue tick coon hounds, Irwin County, Georgia, 1977. As Alan Jabbour points out in the second part of his retrospective essay on the American Folklife Center, which begins on page 3, photographic documentation has been a key element in the development of the Archive of Folk Culture in the past twenty years. (GA7-3-17617-35) Photo by Howard W. Marshall

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