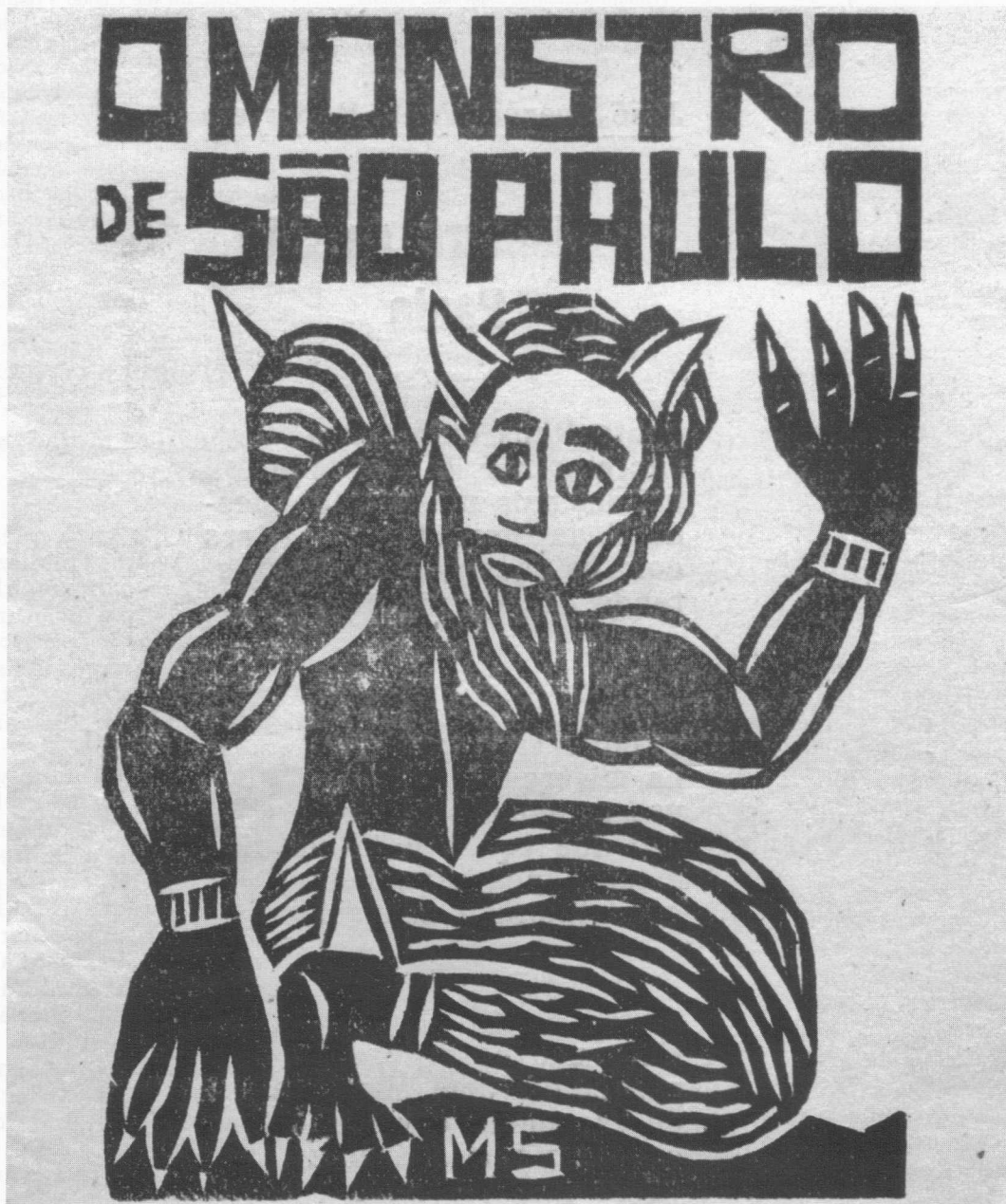


# FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

FALL 2000 • VOLUME XXII, NUMBER 4



American Folklife Center • The Library of Congress



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

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

#### 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.

LC Web is available through the World Wide Web service (<http://lcweb.loc.gov/>). 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/>

**Folklife**, an information service providing timely information on the field of folklore and folklife, including training and professional opportunities and news items of national interest, is available through the above Internet server. For telephone service, call the Folklife Reading Room: 202 707-5510.

#### EDITOR'S NOTES

##### Pioneering Folk Music Collectors

One of the great pleasures of working at the Folklife Center is hearing from the families of the collectors and performers represented in the Folk Archive collections. It reminds us that our seemingly remote "treasures" of American traditional culture are for many people a vital part of a personal family history. Sometimes, for example, a family group of several generations will visit the Folklife Reading Room to ask about a recording that legendary folklorist John Lomax (or some other collector from the Library of Congress) made of their grandfather back in the 1930s. Preparing the online presentation "Voices from the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection" resulted in fresh contacts  
*(Continued on page 23)*

Cover: José Soares, *O Monstro de São Paulo*. The Monster of São Paulo. Detail. See page 11.

## A Florida Treasure Hunt



Fishermen, Key West, Florida, January 1938. (LC-USF34-026291-D) Photo by Arthur Rothstein, FSA-OWI Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

By Stetson Kennedy

Whenever anyone asks me what it was like, working with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and recording Florida folksongs back in the 1930s for the Library of Congress, I tell them we were as excited as a bunch of kids on a treasure hunt.<sup>1</sup>

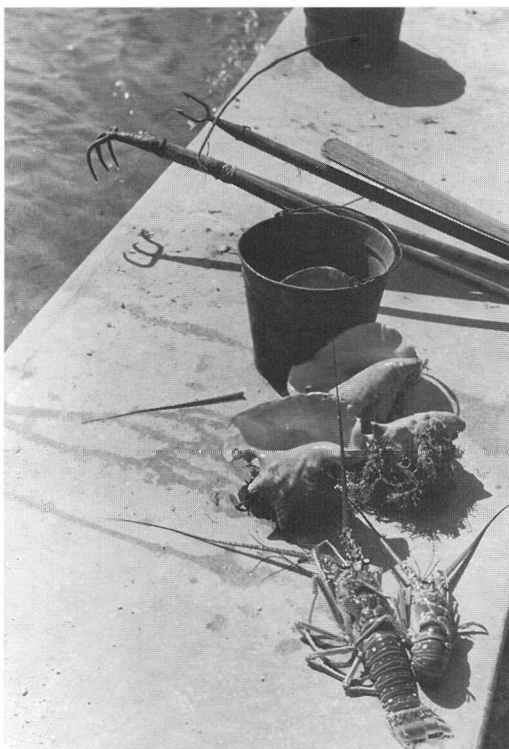
None of us had ever gone hunting for folksongs before, but we were soon able to recognize one the moment we heard it, and to realize that it was truly a bit of cultural treasure that we

were discovering and preserving for future generations to enjoy.

And sure enough, here we are, more than a half century later, able to pick and choose in a split second, on our computer screens, from among thousands of items it took us five years to collect (see "New Online Presentation," page 7). In the 1930s, we traveled back roads the length and breadth of the Florida peninsula, toting a coffee-table-sized recording machine into turpentine camps, sawmills, citrus groves, the Ever-

glades, out onto railroad tracks, and aboard shrimp trawlers—wherever Florida folks were working, living, and singing.

"The Thing," as we called the machine, looked like a phonograph, and cut with a sapphire needle directly onto a 12-inch acetate disc. Every time we shipped off another batch of discs to the Archive of American Folk-Song (now the American Folklife Center) at the Library of Congress, the newspapers would report, "Canned Florida Folksongs Sent to Washington."



Conch shells and crawfish, Key West, Florida, January 1938. (LC-USF33-002702-M5) Photo by Arthur Rothstein, FSA-OWI Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

And now all you have to do is select a can from the Web site shelf, open it up, and enjoy!

The voices you hear singing, talking, laughing, joking, and

telling tall tales are those of Floridians who have almost all gone to Beluthahatchee (an Afro-Seminole name for Happy Hunting Ground). As for the songs they sang and tales they told, many are still to be heard, having been passed along as hand-me-downs from one generation to the next, while others survive in the "cans" we put them in—and now on the World Wide Web!

Happily, many of the folksongs recorded by the WPA have also been preserved in books such as *A Treasury of American Folklore*, as well as Southern, Western, and other regional "Treasures," all edited by the man who served as national director of the WPA's folklore collecting, Dr. Benjamin Botkin.<sup>2</sup>

We are all indebted to Ben Botkin for teaching us, in his seminal treatise entitled "Bread and Song,"

about the inter-relationship between life and culture.<sup>3</sup> A bit later on, another outstanding folklorist, Zora Neale Hurston, gave us a definition that will

stand for all time: "Folklore is the boiled-down juice, or potlikker, of human living."

### "Root-Hog-Or-Die" Days

Those were hard times back then, during the Great Depression of the 1930s. People sometimes referred to them as the "root-hog-or-die" days, meaning that if you didn't keep grubbing you were a goner. Lots of folks were "hollerin' hongry," and longing for a little gravy on their grits. A black preacher on the Sea Islands prayed, "Hear us, Oh Lord, we're down here gnawin' on dry bones!" And on New Year's Eve, Florida Latins intoned, "Go bad year, so we can see if the coming one is better!"

All of us working on the WPA (except administrators) had to sign a Pauper's Oath—that we had no job, no money, no property, and no prospect of getting any of those things. I was still a student at the University of Florida when I applied, and, being eminently qualified in all of the above respects, I got the job.

My job title was "Junior Interviewer," and the pay was \$37.50 every two weeks. When that first check arrived, my wife and I

Pulling out the railroad tracks that lead to the closed sawmill, Careyville, Florida, July 1937. (LC-USF34-017727-C) Photo by Dorothea Lange, FSA-OWI Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress





Inspecting sponges, Key West, Florida, January 1938. (LC-USF34-026299-D) Photo by Arthur Rothstein, FSA-OWI Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

went window-shopping, wondering, "What in the world are we going to do with all this money?"

I had taken a fancy to folk stuff while still in my teens, and had struck out on my own to collect folklore in Key West while I was in college. Ben Botkin was sufficiently impressed by my collection of Key West lore that he recommended I be put in charge of the Florida folklore collecting, although I was only twenty-one at the time.

The Florida Writers' Project had a staff of about two hundred, and most of the "field workers" were housewives. The Congressional mandate to the Writers' Project was to write state guidebooks that collectively would "hold up a mirror to America."

Over at our sister New Deal agency, the Farm Security Administration (FSA), when Roy Stryker's team of "on the

road" photographers asked him what they should photograph, his answer was "Everything!" No nation in history had ever tried to capture itself in word and picture, and we at the WPA and FSA knew that ours was an important mission.

Not one among us had any formal training as folklorists (there wasn't any to be had). And it was just as well—or even better. Since our interviewers were just as folksy as the interviewees, they could knock on almost any door, and the rapport was there.

I did suggest to our field workers that their first step upon entering a community should be to seek out the most respected individual—whether preacher, teacher, midwife, or voodoo doctor—and get his or her endorsement. Thereafter, just dropping that person's name was enough to open doors wide.

Another helpful hint for our folk treasure hunters was to seek and find what I dubbed "ambulatory repositories," by which I meant some individual who has made it his or her business to soak up virtually all the oral tradition floating around and about. Almost every community had one.

There was "no such a thing" as a tape recorder, and disc-cutting equipment was expensive and hard to come by, so I had to constantly insist that the field workers "write it down, not up" in order to capture the true voices of the people in writing. Novelist Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings of Cross Creek was busy immortalizing Cracker lore, Zora Neale Hurston of Eatonville was doing the same for African Americans, and some of our

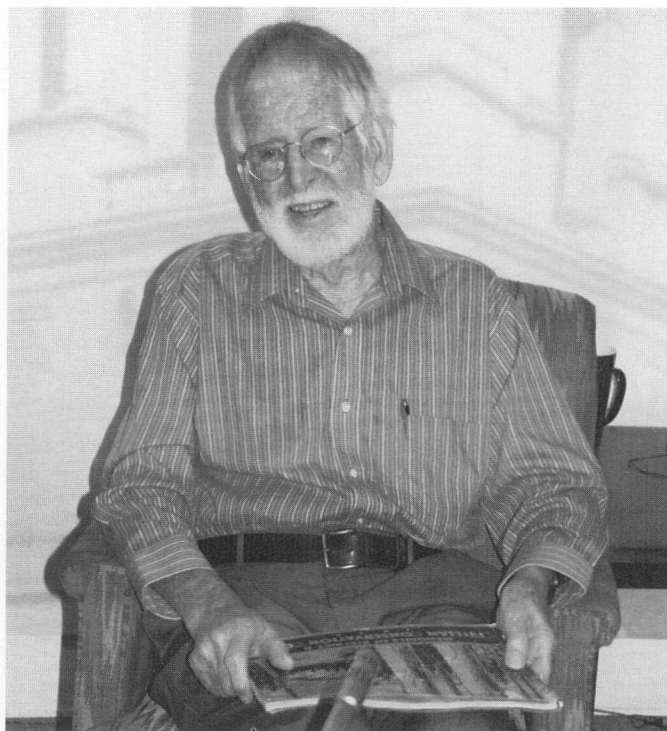
staffers had visions of following in their footsteps.

### Our Patchwork Peninsula

Even before being "discovered" by Europeans, the Florida peninsula was inhabited by a wide variety of native American peoples, of differing ethnicity, language, and culture. In colonial times, the Spanish, French, and English (not to mention polyglot pirates) put down sparse roots, but when the new-fangled "Americans" took over in 1821 they found no more than eight thousand "non-Indians," a majority of whom were Spanish.

When in 1935—a century later—the Florida Writers' Project launched its folklore hunt, the ethnic population consisted in the main of white "Crackers" and African American "Negroes," most of whose ancestors had moved in from Georgia and Alabama.<sup>4</sup> (At the

Charles Foster, artist and alumnus of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Public Works of Art Project, and the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, on a visit to the Library of Congress, September 20, 2000. Digital conversion specialist Rachel Howard consulted with Foster and used his book, *Conchtown USA: Bahamian Fisherfolk in Riviera Beach, Florida* (Boca Raton: Florida Atlantic University Press, 1991), in gathering information for the online presentation "Florida Folklife from the WPA Collections." During the visit, Howard interviewed Foster on his New Deal experiences photographing the Conch community of Riviera, Florida. Photo by James Hardin



outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 there were actually more blacks than whites in Florida.)

One of the first "hunts" conducted by the Florida project was to seek and write down the oral histories of "ex-slaves," as we called them. There were rather many still alive, in their seventies and eighties, who for the most part had known slavery as children or young adults.

When possible, the Florida project employed members of each ethnic group to research their own people. As a result of our black-on-black policy, the Florida ex-slave interviews are said to be superior to those obtained in other states where white interviewers were used.

Some ex-slaves, however, were not at all reticent about "telling it like it was," regardless of the color of the caller. One such was "Mama Duck," who lived in an abandoned "courtin' shack" on the outskirts of Tampa. She told her white interviewer, "I done prayed and got all the malice out of my soul, and I ain't gonna tell no lies for 'em or on 'em!"

When I assumed leadership of the folklore hunt in 1937, I followed this same "do-it-yourself" policy in assigning researchers to work with their own people—which in Florida meant Latins, Greeks, and a few other "odd pockets," as we called them then. So, when a Yankee Indian (Oswego, with a Ph.D. from Harvard) applied for one of those \$37.50 fortnightly jobs, I sent him into the Everglades, with the thought that "our Seminoles" might tell him some secrets they would not tell us Anglos. Alas, we never

heard from him again.

### Mark of Zora

In 1896, the Supreme Court upheld a policy of strict racial segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which was not overturned until *Brown v. the Board of Education* in 1954. Blacks and whites could not even drink out of the same water fountain in the South of the 1930s while the "Jim Crow" laws were in effect. It was, therefore, a rare and exciting event when one day in 1938 the director of the Florida project, Dr. Carita Doggett Corse, called the editorial staff into her office and announced:

"Zora Neale Hurston, the Florida Negro novelist, has signed onto the project and will soon be paying us a visit. Zora has been fêted by New York literary circles, and is given to putting on certain airs, including the smoking of cigarettes in the presence of white people. So we must all make allowances for Zora."

So Zora came, and Zora smoked, and we made "allowances" . . . .

Although she already had two books to her credit, Zora had taken the Pauper's Oath with alacrity, and—like me—she had been assigned the title of "Junior Interviewer," but with pay of only \$35.50 every two weeks, since according to the WPA wage scale it cost \$4 per month less to live in Zora's all-black hometown of Eatonville than it did in Jacksonville, where

our headquarters was located.

Three years earlier (in 1935), Zora had taken folk musicologist Alan Lomax, the son of pioneer folksong collector John Lomax, on a Florida recording expedition which began in Eatonville.<sup>5</sup> The 1930s was a time of strict segregation in the American South. It would have been extremely dangerous for a black woman and a white man to be seen traveling together. To avoid complications with drive-through whites, Zora painted Alan's face and hands black. "In the field Zora was absolutely magnificent!" Alan recalled in a chat with me a half century later.

Although I was nominally Zora's boss, I didn't see much of her except on field trips. Like rather many of our rural field workers, she worked out of her home and submitted material by mail. Sometimes weeks went by without a word from her.

"Anybody heard from Zora?" Dr. Corse would ask her editors. When no one replied, she would look at me and say, "Better write her a letter, and jog her up!"

I would do as directed, and by return mail we would receive a thick manila envelope postmarked "Eatonville"—the "mark of Zora," I called it—

## New Online Presentation: Florida Folklife

*Florida Folklife from the WPA Collections, 1937–1942* presents African American, Arabic, Bahamian, British American, Cuban, Greek, Italian, Minorcan, Seminole, and Slavic cultures throughout Florida. Recorded by Robert Cook, Herbert Halpert, Zora Neale Hurston, Stetson Kennedy, Alton Morris, and others in conjunction with the Florida Federal Writer' Project, the Florida Music Project, and the Joint Committee on Folk Arts of the Work Projects Administration, it features folksongs and folktales in many languages, including blues and work songs from menhaden fishing boats, railroad gangs, and turpentine camps; children's songs, dance music, and religious music of many cultures; and interviews, also known as "life histories." The online presentation provides access to 376 sound recordings and 106 accompanying items, including recording logs, transcriptions, correspondence between Florida WPA workers and Library of Congress personnel, and an essay on Florida folklife by Zora Neale Hurston. This online collection was made possible by the generous support of the Texaco Foundation.

stuffed with the most fabulous folk treasure imaginable. We took her "potlikker" and sprinkled it liberally for seasoning all through the Florida Guide.<sup>6</sup>

Zora's track record enabled her to wangle the Library of Congress recording machine as a loan to the Florida project. Our first stop with the machine was the Clara White Mission, a soup kitchen in Jacksonville's black ghetto, where the "Negro Unit" of our project was housed.

The singing of spirituals was a prerequisite to being served; the chorus of the first one we recorded was:

*"Lord, I'm runnin'.  
Tryin' to make a hundred;  
Ninety-nine and a half won't  
do!"*

When I pushed the playback button after the first stanza (to make sure the recorder was recording, but also as an infallible means of turning the most shy into ham actors), Eartha White, founder of the mission named for her mother, commanded: "Hold it right there! I want to offer up a little prayer."

What she prayed was: "Dear Lord, this is Eartha White talkin' to you again . . . I just want to thank you for giving mankind the intelligence to make such a marvelous machine, and a President like Franklin D. Roosevelt who cares about preserving the songs people sing."

It being unthinkable in those days for white and black (much less if they were also male/female) to travel together, Dr. Corse hit upon the scheme of sending Zora ahead as an advance scout to seek and find people with folksong repertoires; I would follow with the machine and staff photographer Robert Cook. There being virtually no overnight accommodations for blacks, Zora frequently had to sleep in her Chevy.

One such recording expedition took us to a large turpentine camp near Cross City, to which we had gained access by telling the (heavily armed) owners we were looking for songs. We set up a night-time recording session around a campfire. In between songs, I said to the "hands," "Don't you know they can't make you work against your will?"

"They do do it," was the answer.

"Then why don't you leave and get out of it?"

"The onliest way out is to die out. If you tries to leave, they will kill you, and you will have to die, because they got peoples to bury you out in them woods."

At this point several young men jumped up and disappeared into the underbrush—to serve as sentries in case one of the white woodsriders were to show up.

Sure enough, after a while one of the sentries rushed into the firelight urgently whispering, "Here come the Man! Sing some-thin', quick!"

### Songbag Miscellany

Our Florida treasure hunt lasted five years, and all during that time I urged our hunters not to overlook any of the geography, climate, flora, fauna, peoples, and occupations to be found in Florida.

Ethnically speaking, this meant documenting the predominant Cracker and African American cultures, as well as major Latin (Cuban, Spanish, Italian), Jewish, Bahamian, Greek, and Arabic communities, and smaller pockets of Seminole, Czechs, Slovaks, and others.

Florida occupations that strongly affected folk culture and found expression in folksong included lumbering, turpentine, ranching, fishing, agriculture, citrus growing, railroading, phosphate mining, and tourism.

Besides all the peoples and places, many a "happening" made its way into the Florida songbag, including big "blows" (hurricanes), floating islands, disappearing lakes, shipwrecks, lost boys, lynchings, and so on.

At the time we were recording, Florida folk were still

singing ballads commemorating two big blows—the “Miami Hairycane” of 1926, and the “West Palm Beach Storm” of 1928. No one had gotten around to writing a ballad about the “monster” 1935 hurricane which wiped out the Florida Keys.

With reference to the first of the above, folks said, “Blowed so hard, blowed a well up out of the ground, blowed a crooked road straight, and scattered the days of the week so bad Sunday didn’t get around ‘til late Tuesday morning.”

According to the “Hairycane” ballad (which was said to have been composed by a black preacher in the Everglades):

*“Ships swam down that ocean,  
It was most too sad to tell—  
Ten thousand peoples got drown-  
ed  
And they all went to Hell but  
twelve!”*

Two years later, a gale-force tropical storm and a full-scale hurricane hit the lower Florida east coast at the same time. The ballad we recorded immortalized the event as follows:

*“The storm met the hairycane in  
West Palm Beach,  
and they sat down and had  
breakfast together.  
Then the storm said to the  
hairycane,  
‘What say we breeze on down to  
Miami  
and shake that thing?’”*

### The Two-Way Street

This has been just a sampling of the folk stuff we found on our Florida treasure hunt. Our recordings are accessible at the American Memory Web site (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/flwpahtml/flwpahome.html>) and at the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Some of the manuscripts, from the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, can be found online. The rest are housed in other archives across the country. The online bibliography lists other published sources of WPA Federal Writers’ Project manuscripts.

Alan Lomax has always insisted that we not just take from the folk, but give back; that collections not be re-buried in archives, but used as seedbeds for the propagation of folk culture. I am delighted to know that the Library of Congress is putting so much of its folk material into that ultimate seedbed, a Web site!

*Biddy, biddy bend  
My story is end;  
Turn loose the rooster  
And hold the hen!*

### Notes

1. The Works Progress Administration (renamed Work Projects Administration in 1939, identified by the acronym WPA from 1935–1943), was created by executive order by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and authorized by Congress in 1935. Taking up where the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) left off, the WPA employed 8.5 million people on 1.4 million public projects in its eight years of existence. The WPA provided work (and pay) to those hard hit by the Great Depression; their labors resulted in the construction of bridges, dams, and highways, and in the creation of murals, state guidebooks, and folklife surveys, among other accomplishments.

2. B. A. Botkin, ed., *A Treasury of American Folklore* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1944). Dr. Benjamin A. Botkin became folklore editor of the Federal Writers’ Project in 1938. Later that year, he represented the Federal Writers’ Project, and served as chair, of the Joint Committee on the Folk Arts, which included representatives from the Federal Music Project, the Federal Theater Project, the Federal Art Project, the WPA education division, the Historical Records Survey, and the WPA recreation division. Botkin was named head of the Archive of American Folk-Song (now the Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center) of the Library of Congress in 1942.

3. B. A. Botkin, “WPA and Folklore Research: ‘Bread and Song.’” *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 3 (March 1939): 7–14.

4. The term “Cracker,” while now more widely known as a derogatory term for rural whites, has a more specific—and less insulting—definition in Florida. The Florida “Crackers” are whites of Celtic descent who first settled South Florida around the mid-eighteenth century. “Crackers” usually migrated to the Florida Everglades from Alabama, Georgia, and the Carolinas, drawn to the fertile land for ranching and farming, and the peninsula’s plentiful resources for fishing. The name’s origins have been disputed, but the Celtic nature of Cracker culture—from musical styles to occupational choices—is indisputable.

5. John A. Lomax (1867–1948) served as honorary consultant and curator of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Library of Congress, from 1934 to 1942. He served as advisor on folklore collecting for both the Historical Records Survey and the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936–38. His son Alan Lomax became the Archive’s first paid employee, as Assistant in Charge, in 1937. Alan Lomax left the Library of Congress for the Office of War Information (OWI) in 1942.

6. Federal Writers’ Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of Florida, *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State*, American Guide Series. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939).

*Stetson Kennedy was the state director, WPA Writers’ Project, Folklore, Oral History, and Ethnic Studies, 1937–42. Folklorist, political activist, champion of human rights, and friend of Woody Guthrie, Kennedy is the author of Palmetto Country (1942), praised as the best book on Florida folklife, as well as Southern Exposure (1946), Jim Crow Guide to the U.S.A. (1954), and I Rode with the Ku Klux Klan (1959), based on his experiences in the 1940s infiltrating and exposing the Ku Klux Klan.*



## Brazilian Chapbooks: The Original Books Online



Paulo Teixeira de Souza, *O Milagre da Medicina Através da Caridade*. The Miracle of Healing Through Compassion (AFC 1970/002: M 02555).

by Iêda Siqueira Wiarda

Brazilian chapbooks, known as "*literatura de cordel*," offer a window on Brazilian popular culture at the same time that they serve as a little-explored source for a greater understanding of Brazil's history and society, as perceived at the

grassroots level.

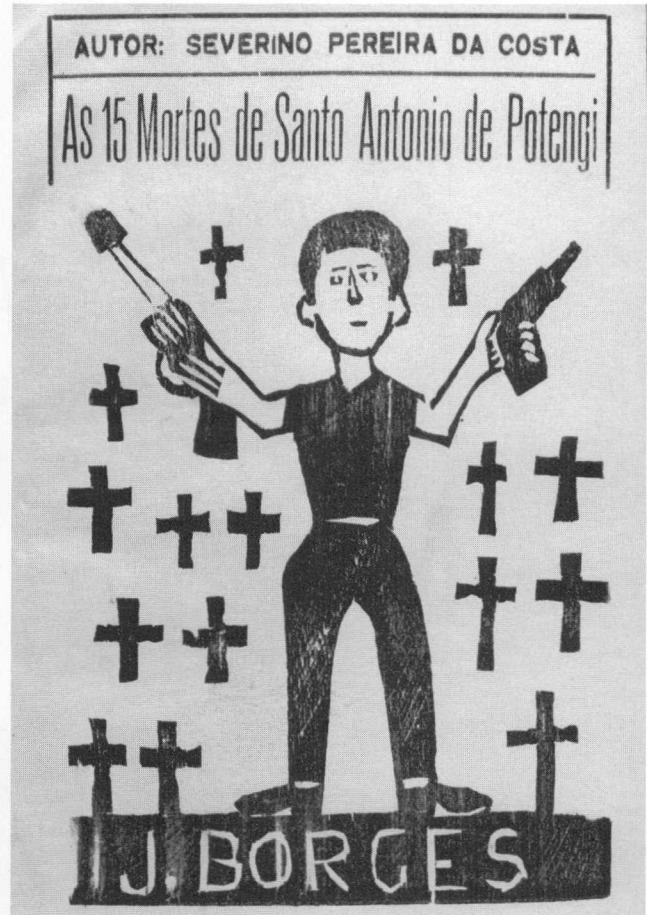
The origins of chapbooks can be traced to the medieval poetry of Europe, which was transmitted orally throughout the continent by troubadours and minstrels. Gradually, as written communications spread, this oral tradition was set to music and came to be reproduced in

handwritten chapbooks, often featuring a cover illustrated with woodblock prints.

Brought to Brazil by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, this type of folk poetry and song pamphlet took root particularly in the Northeast, where African and indigenous influences came to be incorporated. Soon the



Marechal Sabóia, *Lampíões*. Lampião is a historical/mythical figure in the Northeast, whose exploits are reminiscent of Robin Hood (AFC 1970/002: M 00156).



Severino Pereira da Costa, *As 15 Mortes de Santo Antônio de Potengi*. The Fifteen Murders in Santo Antônio de Potengi (uncataloged).

chapbooks took on the function of a popular journal on which people relied for getting the news. These grassroots newspapers conveyed the people's perceptions of the world—including political and historical events—as well as a presentation of religious concepts, kinship, and bizarre happenings.

Included were stories that portrayed bandits as folk heroes defending the people; valiant mothers defending their children; poor but patriotic people standing up for Brazil. The writings were put together as small pamphlets that were displayed hanging from a string (*cordel*), hence the name "*literatura de cordel*." They were sold at weekly fairs, alongside stands that offered fruits, vegetables, and live chickens.

Today these chapbooks continue to serve as a conduit for popular opinion, particularly

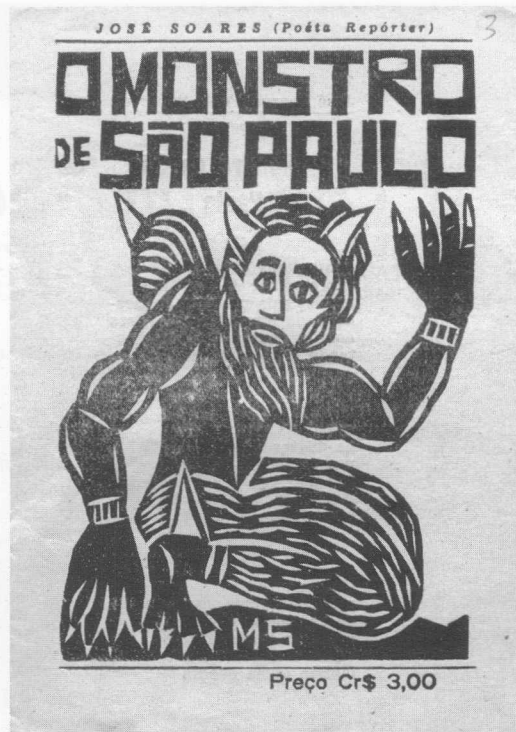
for the *sertanejo* (the backwoodsman of the Northeast). Governmental institutions and community groups learned that the chapbook format could be used cleverly as a means of education, dispensing advice on matters such as the benefits of vaccines, the nursing of babies, herbal medicines, and even the proper care of farm machinery and the rules of safe driving. As in its early days, the pamphlets rake over corrupt politicians and repressive institutions. Indeed, during a harsh dictatorial period, from the late 1960s through the early 1970s, they denounced malfeasance by having animals deprecate the sad state of affairs (see illustration, "The Mysterious Cow"). Somehow the animal figures managed to escape the censors. Nevertheless, the original function of this literature—to present the people's culture and daily life

through words and images—has been maintained.

The Library's chapbook holdings, first known as the Sol Biderman Collection, are the largest in the world and include more than five thousand items, most of them dating from the 1930s to today. The bulk of the collection came during the 1970s, and, while the curatorial location is the American Folklife Center, its steady growth has reflected the ongoing collaboration of several units within the Library, principally the Center, the Hispanic Division, and the Library of Congress's Rio de Janeiro office. Indeed that office has been a prime mover in assembling this collection, and it continues to obtain and send Brazilian chapbooks. A recent addition to the collection came as one of the Library of Congress Bicentennial's "Gifts to the Nation." One hundred eighty



José Costa Leite, *A Vaca Misteriosa que Falou Profetizando*. The Mysterious Cow That Made Prophecies (AFC 1970/002: M 00921).

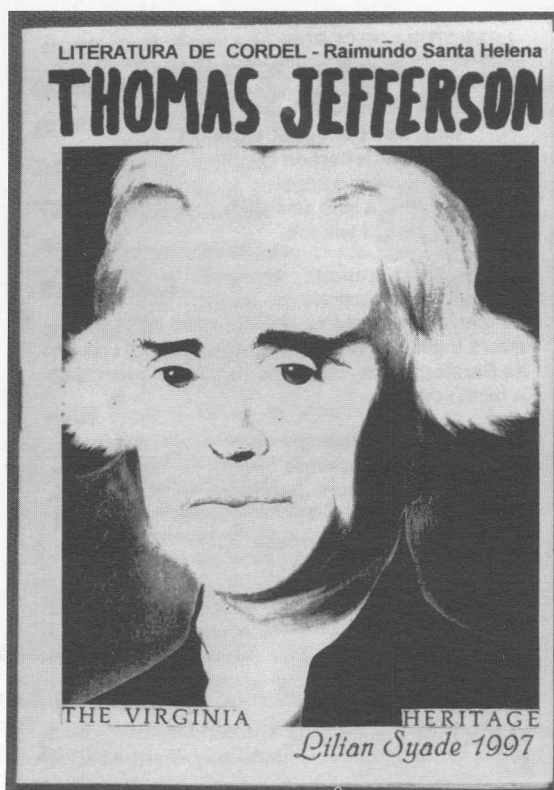


José Soares, *O Monstro de São Paulo*. The Monster of São Paulo (AFC 1970/002: M 03428).

chapbooks, along with ten posters, the majority of them written and/or illustrated by Brazil's major *cordelista* J. Borges, were donated November 16, 1999, in a ceremony that included the ambassador of Brazil, Rubens Barbosa. Joaquim Falcão, general secretary of the Fundação Roberto Marinho (Rio de Janeiro) presented the chapbooks and posters as part of the "Gifts to the Nation" initiative.

A project to catalog the Brazilian chapbook collection in the simplest form is now underway, and we hope that more scholars and folklorists will avail themselves of this rich source for the study of Brazilian popular culture. A recent pamphlet (right), a crude mix of English and Portuguese, is truly a love poem to the Library, complete with pictures of the Jefferson Building and a verse that celebrates the United States and Brazil as "two stars in freedom's firmament."

*Iêda Siqueira Wiarda is specialist in Luso-Brazilian culture, Hispanic Division, Library of Congress.*



Raimundo Santa Helena, *Thomas Jefferson* (uncataloged). Santa Helena created this chapbook to honor Thomas Jefferson and the Library of Congress, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Library's field office in Rio de Janeiro. "I send to Uncle Sam a *cultura popular*," notes one verse in the pamphlet.

*All chapbooks from the Brazilian Chapbook Collection, American Folklife Center. Covers photographed by David A. Taylor*

# "A Choice Selection": Robert W. Gordon's American Songster Collection

By Norm Cohen

The American Folklife Center is home to Robert W. Gordon's important collection of nineteenth-century American popular songsters, more than seven hundred in all. Robert Gordon was the first head of the Archive of American Folk Song, in 1928, and an indefatigable collector, both on his own and in his position at the Library of Congress.

## What Is a Songster?

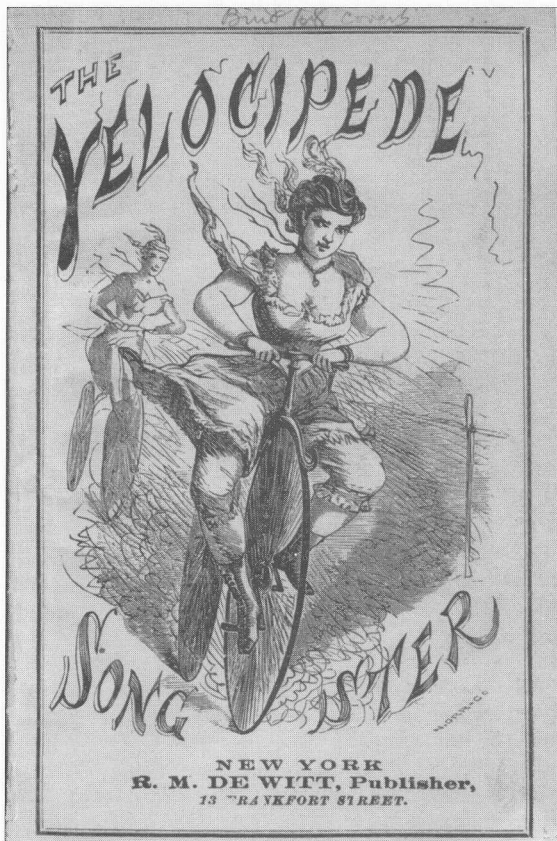
Though bibliographers and scholars do not agree entirely, a songster, roughly speaking, is a pocket-sized collection of texts (not music) of vaudeville, minstrel-stage, patriotic, religious, and sometimes traditional songs. Songsters were particularly popular in the United States in the nineteenth century, though they were not confined to that era. Some collectors limit the identification to books that actually use the word *songster* in the title—a definition that greatly facilitates any computerized search in library online catalogs for songster materials.

There is no precise limitation in dimensions, but a great many songsters were only 3 to 5 inches (8 to 13 cm) in height. Songsters were cheaply printed and distributed in large quantities, often by manufacturers of medicines, tonics, or elixirs; by dis-

*(Continued on p. 15)*



The Naughty, Naughty Girls Songster: Containing Choice Sentimental And Humorous Songs And Ballads, Adapted To Very Popular Tunes. New York, 1867. All songsters from the Robert W. Gordon Collection. Covers photographed by David A. Taylor



The Velocipede Songster: Containing Nearly All The Dashing, Spirited, And Go-Ahead Songs Of The Day. New York, 1869.

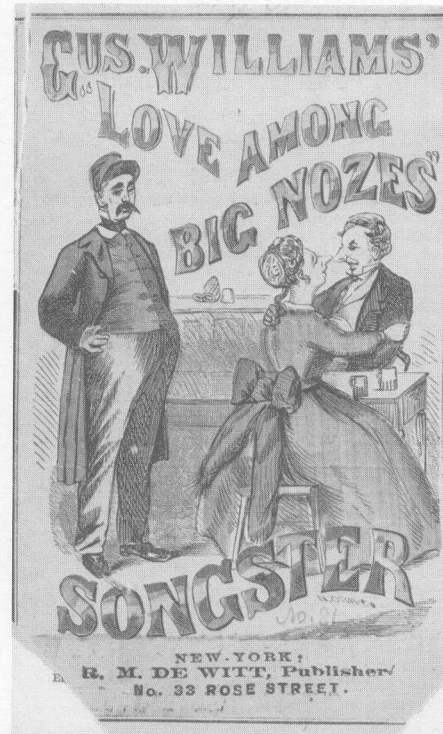


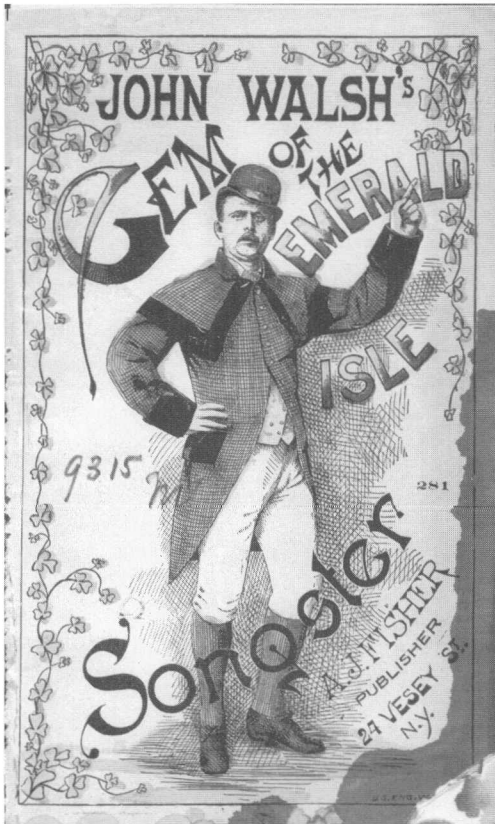
The Bryant's "Put Me In My Little Bed" Songster: Containing an unusually attractive selection of Beautiful Songs . . . New York, 1870.



The Jolly Dutchman Songster: Containing A Variety Of Comic, Dutch Comic And Serio Comic Songs As Sung By Charlie Kimic And The Most Popular Vocalists Of New York. New York, 1870.

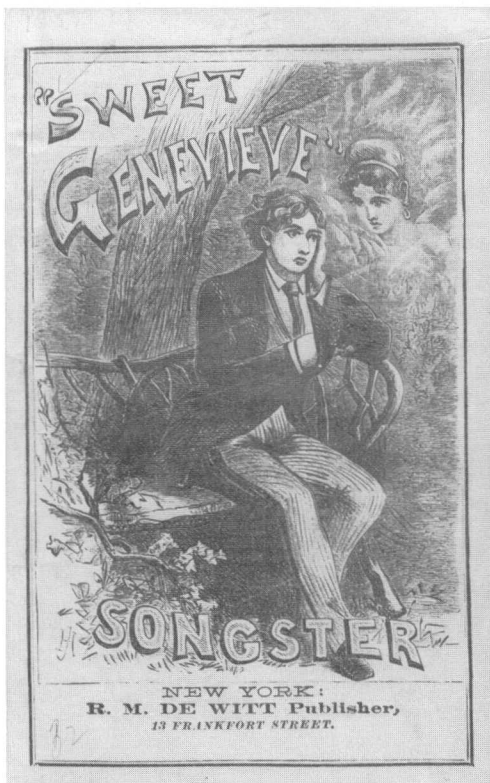
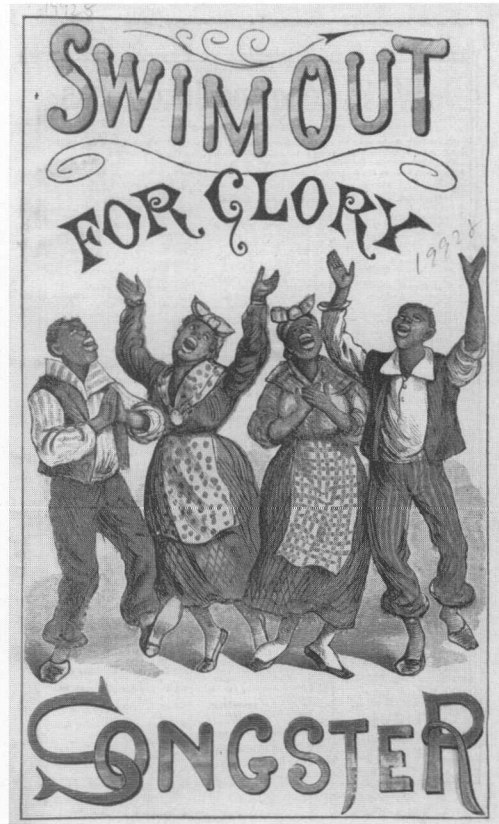
Gus Williams' "Love Among Big Nozes" Songster: containing a Choice Selection of all the new Comic, Serio-Comic, Local Eccentric, Original and Characteristic Songs, As Sung, with Immense Applause, by the Inimitable Comic-Character-Vocalist and Mimic, Gus Williams The Great American Star Comique. New York, 1870.





John Walsh's Gem of the Emerald Isle Songster: Containing A Beautiful Selected Assortment Of Irish, Sentimental And Topical Popular Songs, As Sung By Mr. John Walsh, "The Gem Of The Emerald Isle" In Song And Dance, . . . New York, 1881.

"Swim Out for Glory" Songster: Containing A Vast Collection Of All The Latest Negro Songs, As Sung By All The Leading Minstrels Troupes Of The Present Day, As Well As A Fine Collection Of Sentimental, Comic, And Serio-Comic Songs. New York, 1882.



The Sweet Genevieve Songster: Containing a Choice Selection of the Most Pleasing Sentimental, Burlesque And Operatic Songs And Ballads. New York, 1869

"The Old Man's Drunk Again" Songster: The unusually popular Song entitled "The Old Man's Drunk Again," Composed and Written by Will S. Hays. New York, 1873.



tributors of other consumable goods; or by popular stage entertainers. They often contained advertisements, testimonials, and short homilies in support of their company's wares. Sometimes they were produced by music publishers who used them more or less as samplers of their other products. Only rarely did publishers go to the expense of including musical notation: generally, instructions of "[sung] to the tune of . . ." had to suffice. Songsters printed in the nineteenth century generally had wraparound paper covers, sometimes tinted, and ranged from a few dozen pages to more than one hundred. Some were considerably larger, with a few hundred pages and cloth covers.

### Why the Interest in Songsters?

Musicologists, folklorists, and social historians have not been ignorant of the vast treasures contained in these ephemeral pamphlets, many so cheaply printed that they fall apart today in the reader's hands. George Ewing drew extensively on songsters in his study of the temperance movement.<sup>1</sup> George Jackson based a survey of American popular music of 1825 to 1850 largely on songsters of the period.<sup>2</sup> Ed Cray used songsters to examine the role of cheap print in the dissemination of traditional folksongs in his study of the ballad "Barbara Allen."<sup>3</sup> Richard Lingenfelter mined songsters in his collection of Gold Rush songs.<sup>4</sup> Ray Browne relied heavily on nineteenth-century songsters as sources of poems/songs of popular writers—in particular, works that rarely appeared in other formats.<sup>5</sup> The importance of songsters to research in various fields is thus easily defended.

There are some other valuable aspects to this body of popular literature that deserve mention. Of the various sources for popular music of the nineteenth century, songsters are the pre-eminent source for genuinely popular or vernacular musical material. Songs from the min-

strel stage in particular were exceedingly well represented in songster collections, and the minstrel stage constituted our first major black-white musical interchange.

Secondly, during this period many songs were not copyrighted individually, but only as part of songster or booklet collections. These songs are virtually impossible to find by the usual search methods through the files of the Copyright Office, since they do not appear under their own titles.

Thirdly, because of their vigorous role in popular literature, songsters and the songs in them can provide etymologists with valuable data for the early appearance of Americanisms, nonce words, slang, and neologisms in print.

Fourthly, because songsters often represent a "second time around" for many of the pieces they include, they may offer an additional service as song popularity indicators.

And finally, while songsters are clearly of use to popular music historians, their value to folksong historians must not be overlooked. Many songs that, in the twentieth century, found their way into the recorded repertoires of hillbilly entertainers or into the published field collections of traditional folksongs and ballads can be found in songsters, and may in fact have first seen the light of day there.

### Notes

1. George W. Ewing, *The Well-Tempered Lyre* (Dallas: SMU Press, 1977).

2. George Stuyvesant Jackson, *Early Songs of Uncle Sam* (Boston: Bruce Humphries, 1933).

3. Ed Cray, "'Barbara Allen': Cheap Print and Reprint," in *Folklore International: Essays in Traditional Literature, Belief and Custom in Honor of Wayland Debs Hand*, D. K. Wilgus, ed. (Hartboro: Folklore Associates, 1967), pp. 41–50.

4. Richard A. Dwyer and Richard E. Lingenfelter, *The*

*Songs of the Gold Rush* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964).

5. Ray B. Browne, "American Poets in the Nineteenth-Century 'Popular' Songbooks," *American Literature* 30:4 (January 1959), 503–22.

### Selected Studies

Bonin, J. M. "Music from 'The Splendidest Sight': The American Circus Songster," *Notes* (20 June 1989), 699.

Charosh, Paul. "Studying Nineteenth-Century Popular Song," *American Music* 15:4 (Winter 1997), 459–92.

Honea, Sion M. "Nineteenth-Century American Masonic Songbooks: A Preliminary Checklist," in *Music Reference Services Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (1995), 17–32.

Johannsen, Albert. *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels; the Story of a Vanished Literature*, 3 vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950–52).

Miles, William. *Songs, Odes, Glee and Ballads: A Bibliography of American Presidential Campaign Songsters*. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1990).

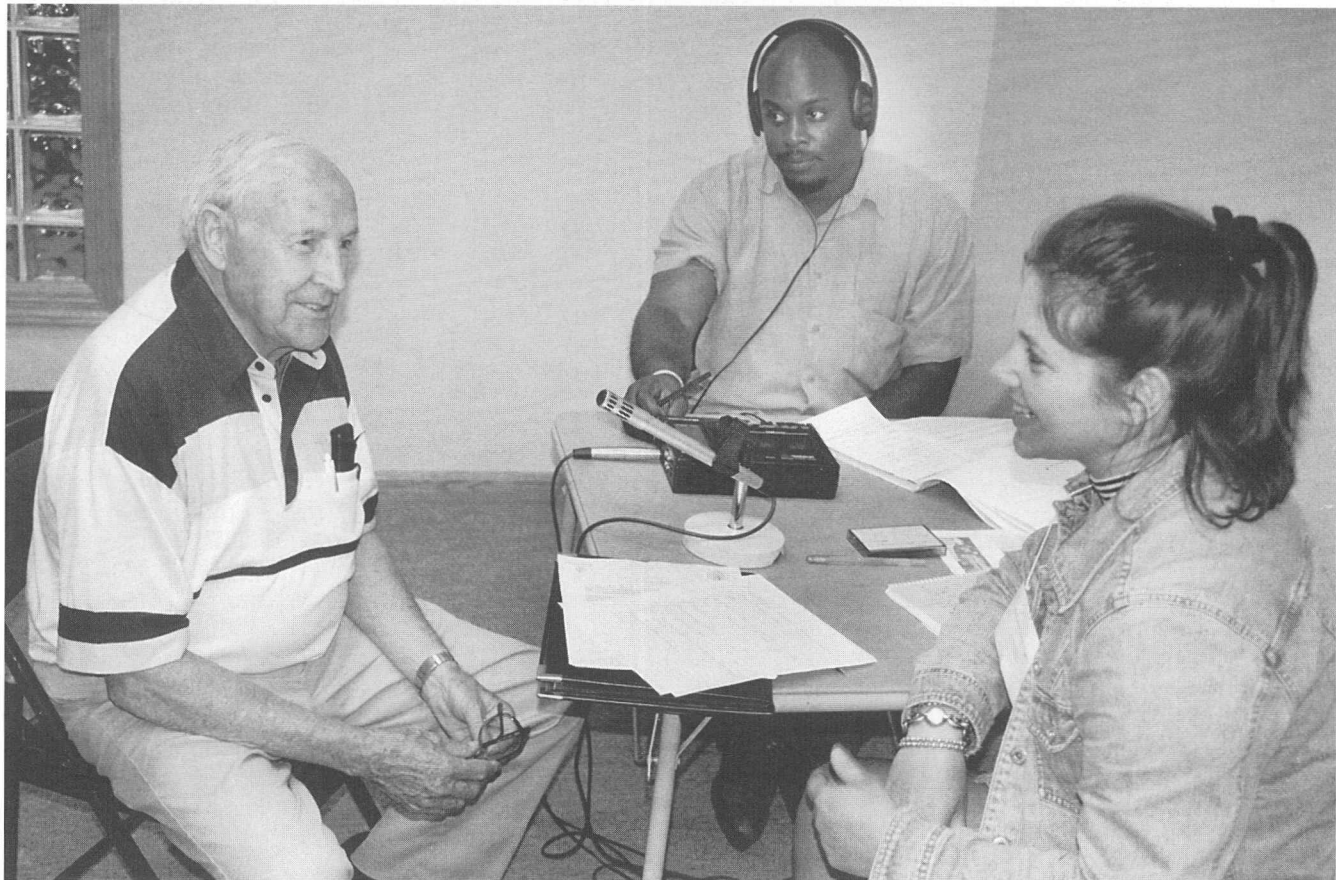
Parkinson, R. L. "Circus Songsters," in *Circus World Museum Inc. Newsletter* No. 20 (July 1989).

Pfening, Jr., F. D. "Circus Songsters," *The Bandwagon* (Nov.–Dec. 1963), 10–12.

Smith, A. M. "Circus Songsters," *Hobbies* (Jan. 1947), 26.

*Norm Cohen is a retired chemist who lives in Portland, Oregon, and teaches courses in chemistry and folk music part time. Cohen has been compiling a bibliography of American pocket-sized songsters published between 1860 and 1899 that identifies libraries where copies of the items are housed. A revised edition of his book Long Steel Rail: the Railroad in American Folksong has just been published by University of Illinois Press.*

## *Indiana Field School Explores Life "On the Square"*



Bloomingtonian Claude Rice is interviewed about his experiences associated with the courthouse square by field school participants Chris Tobar-Dupres (right) and Ronald J. Stephens. Photo by David A. Taylor

By David A. Taylor

For three weeks this summer, Bloomington, Indiana's, courthouse square was probably the most closely examined town square in the nation.

From June 11 through July 1, fifteen people enrolled in the Folklife Center's field school for cultural documentation explored the history, uses, and meanings of Bloomington's square. Conducted in partnership with Indiana University's Folklore Institute and the Evergreen Institute on Elder Envi-

ronments, the field school was the fourth field school sponsored by the Folklife Center since 1995, and the first held in Bloomington.

Like the Center's previous field schools, the Bloomington field school was an intensive course in the basic techniques for ethnographic field research, designed for adults with little or no previous experience in this area but with excellent potential for applying the training to their current and future work. The first half of the course included classroom lectures and dis-

cussions on such topics as fieldwork and responsibility, folkloristic perspectives, ethnographic observation, fieldnotes, project planning, documentary photography, interviewing, sound recording, organizing and archiving field data, and analyzing and presenting field data. Hands-on workshops covered equipment and techniques for interviewing, photography, and sound recording. An open-to-the-public roundtable discussion called "Remembering the Square," that involved a number of long-time Blooming-





Field school team members Delia Alexander (left) and Tamara Hemmerlein examine slides they took during their field research that have just come in from the photo lab. Photo by David A. Taylor

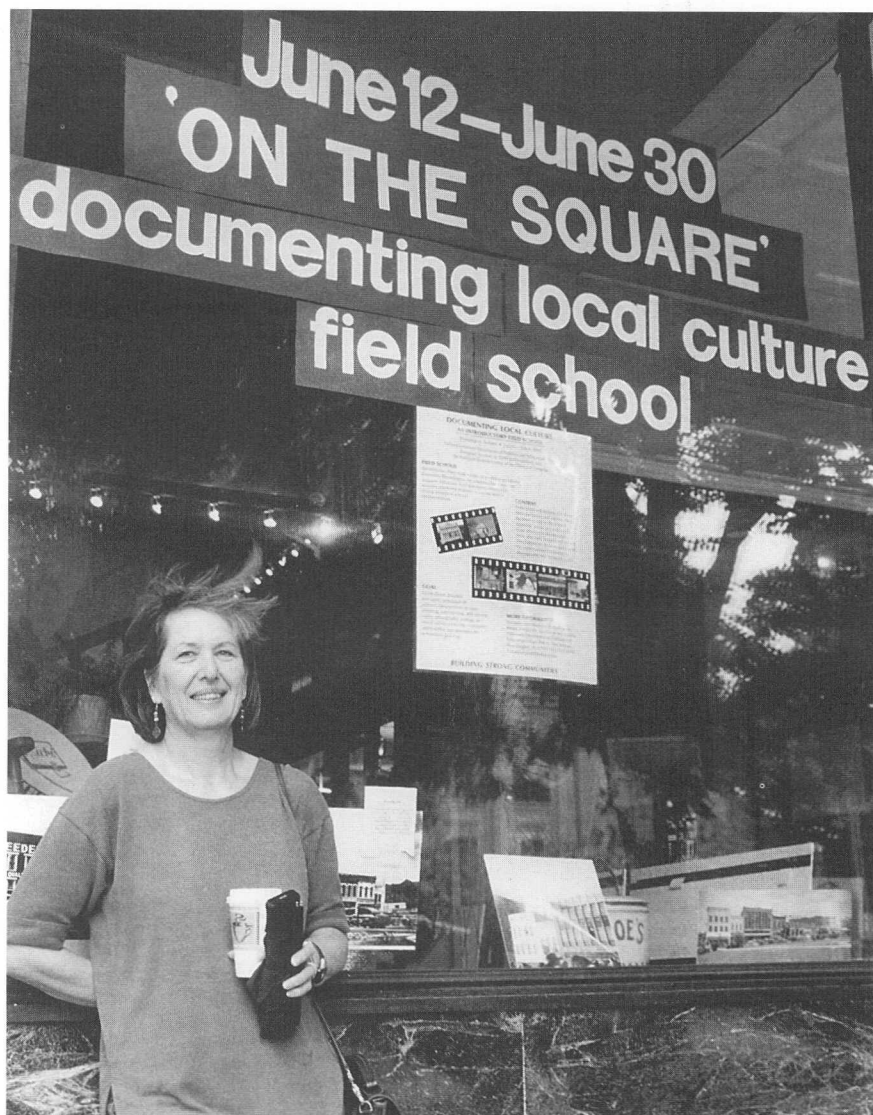
ton residents and was moderated by John MacDowell, the chairman of Indiana University's Department of Folklore & Ethnomusicology, provided field school participants with an introduction to various local perspectives on the town square.

During the second half of the course, each of the fifteen participants was assigned to one of five three-person teams. Then, calling upon lessons learned in the classroom, each team planned and carried out field research that addressed a different aspect of the history and culture of the town square. For example, teams explored meanings of the square and the role of arts, foodways, youth, and narratives. On the last day of the course, each of the research teams made twenty-minute public presentations about their research findings.

This year's course participants were: Delia Alexander, a graduate student in ethnomusicology at Indiana University; Chris Tobar-Dupres, a graduate student in folklore and folklife at the University of Pennsylvania; Jillian Gould, a museum educator at the Eldridge Street Project, New York City; Tamara Hemmerlein, director of the Old Jail Museum, Crawfordsville, Indiana; Colette Lemmon, an independent consultant from Preston Hollow, New York; Samantha May, an oral history project coordinator at the Port Moody Station Museum, Port Moody, British Columbia; Maria del Pilar Muriel, an undergraduate folklore student at Indiana University; Jennifer Neely, an undergraduate folklore student at Ohio State University; Ginger Nickerson, a graduate student in the School of Natural

Resources and Environment at the University of Michigan; Michael G. Spinks, a graduate student in English at Indiana State University; Ronald J. Stephens, a professor in the Department of Communications at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Trina Nelson Thomas, director of education and public programing at the Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis; Rea Trotter, an oral historian from Windsor, Colorado; William Wilder, a professional storyteller from Greenville, South Carolina; and Kyoim Yun, a graduate student in folklore at Indiana University.

David A. Taylor, folklife specialist at the Folklife Center; Inta Carpenter, associate research scholar and associate director (special projects) at the Folklore Institute, and Phil Stafford, director of the Center on Aging and Community, Indiana Insti-



Ina Carpenter, one of the field school's three co-directors, stands in front of the school's storefront headquarters on the town square. The office space, which was donated to the project by a Bloomington business enterprise, was used by the field school as a venue for holding public events and conducting interviews, and as an all-purpose office for the research teams and faculty. Photo by David A. Taylor

tute on Disability and Community, directed the course and served as the principal faculty members. Other faculty members included Folklife Center specialist Catherine Kerst and Bloomington photographer Pat Glushko. Teaching assistance and administrative support were also provided by John MacDowell, Sandy Dolby, Velma Carmichael, Hallie Stone, and Andy Kolovos, all of the Folklife Institute, and Erin Roth of Traditional Arts Indiana.

Funding and in-kind support for the course were provided by the American Folklife Center, the Evergreen Institute on Elder

Environments, the Folklife Institute, the Indiana Arts Commission (through its Traditional Arts Indiana initiative), an anonymous alumnus of Indiana University's Department of Folklife & Ethnomusicology, and the department's Richard M. Dorson Endowment Fund. CFC, Inc., of Bloomington, provided a storefront office space on the square that became the field school's highly visible headquarters during the second half of the course.

Course faculty and participants were buoyed by the enthusiastic response they received from Bloomington residents.

Many Bloomingtonians gladly consented to be interviewed about the town square by field school participants. The local daily newspaper, *The Herald-Times*, ran three stories about the course. Bloomington's public-access radio station, WFHB Community Radio, broadcast two programs about the town square that were developed by the field school. The Monroe County Historical Society Museum, in Bloomington, hosted a public event that featured the field school teams' slide-illustrated presentations of their research findings. Many members of the community, including a large number of people interviewed by field school participants, attended the event at the museum. Bloomingtonians JoAnn Campbell and Denise and Barry Lessow served as community evaluators and provided insightful feedback to field school participants and faculty at the conclusion of the course.

**F**ield school participants, all of whom devoted much time and energy to their team's research and final presentation, were enthusiastic about what they learned during the course. Contacted a few weeks after the end of the course, they were happy to share their observations about the experience. "I think fieldwork is stupendous," said Korean folklorist Kyun Yun, a graduate student at Indiana University. "The greatest advantage of the field school was that it allowed me to systematically experience the entire process of a fieldwork project, from planning to presenting, with handy instructions and on-going feedback from the staff throughout," she added. For museum project manager Samantha May, the greatest benefit of the field school was that it validated work she had previously conducted for her institution and made her aware of alternative research methodologies as well as a broader range of options for public programming. For consultant Colette Lemmon, one of the primary benefits of the field school was that it enabled her to

*Folklife Center News*



Weary but happy, field school participants and faculty stand in the courthouse square at the end of the course. Front row, left to right: Michael Spinks, Trina Nelson Thomas, Jillian Gould, Delia Alexander; second row: Ronald J. Stephens, Lynne Scheutz (observer), Tamara Hemmerlein, Samantha May, Chris Tobar-Dupres; third row: Rea Trotter, William Wilder, Jennifer Neely, Inta Carpenter, Kyoim Yun, Pat Glushko, Phil Stafford; back row: David A. Taylor, Maria del Pilar Muriel, Colette Lemmon. Absent when the photo was taken: Ginger Nickerson. Photo by Erin Roth, Traditional Arts Indiana

look at her own work in terms of its value beyond collecting materials for short-term projects (such as exhibitions, publications, and grant proposals) and begin to think in terms of recording information as a detailed resource for future researchers or members of the community of

study. Furthermore, she said, "As an independent consultant who has selected my own areas of focus (based on heart and gut) and not a salaried folklorist, it legitimized my independent work and fueled a new pride in my goals, reinforcing the idea that there is great value in

projects at her museum with the aid of a planning template used in the field school, considering types of public programs discussed during the field school, and sharing information with colleagues about newly learned photographic techniques. Trina Nelson Thomas saw a number of

recording and interpreting, through a personal perspective, the human experience."

A number of participants commented on the value of the course's team-based research approach. For example, Chris Tobar-Dupres said, "It was wonderful and challenging to conduct fieldwork and analyze data in a group. The parts became greater than the whole. In our group, when one member tired, there were two others to help out. Tasks could be shared and ideas built upon. I found it incredibly intellectually and emotionally stimulating."

All the participants had definite ideas about how they will apply the training they received during the field school. Some applied the training almost immediately. For example, Samantha May began applying what she learned in the field school the day after she returned home by reevaluating



Members of one of the field school's five research teams react to an amusing comment from the audience during their final presentation at the Monroe County Historical Society Museum. Left to right: Jillian Gould, Ginger Nickerson, Kyoim Yun. Photo by David A. Taylor

potential applications in her work at the Indiana Historical Society. She remarked: "I see the field school model you have developed for documenting local culture as a foundation for how we might train and ultimately mobilize people around the state to more actively document their communities. At a minimum, I want to investigate how to incorporate this model into educators' professional development." Ronald J. Stephens said the field school will serve as a model for a project he is developing that seeks to extensively document a historically significant African American community in Michigan. For Colette Lemmon, "the field school laid some important groundwork in terms of what I'll be able to bring to the table to help plan a collaboration between two tribal museums and a state-funded institution," and the instruction in interviewing techniques

will be used to better present the stories of Native American veterans in an exhibition at the New York State Vietnam Veterans Memorial Gallery.

In Bloomington, the work of field school participants is still reverberating. According to co-director Phil Stafford, "On the Square" provided a wonderful vehicle for accomplishing several ends: training future fieldworkers, building community awareness about the value of collaborative research and building community, period." Co-director Inta Carpenter observes that, "for Indiana University students who participated, the field school experience turned Bloomington into more of a home, giving them a sense of place and people and history where before there had been mainly a blank slate. As they draw on the skills and perspectives they learned last summer, the benefits are spilling over into class work, dissertation

plans, and community activities."

Although the amount of time field school participants spent in the field was brief—only seven days—the amount of documentary material they collected was impressive. The five fieldwork teams amassed many hours of tape-recorded interviews, hundreds of color slides, and hundreds of pages of fieldnotes and tape and photo logs (printed on paper and also stored on computer disks). The "On the Square" archival collection was donated to the Monroe County Historical Society Museum, where it will be preserved and made available to the public.

The Folklife Center is considering potential sites and research topics for a 2001 summer field school. To receive more information when it is available, contact David A. Taylor by writing to him at the Center or sending an email message to [dtay@loc.gov](mailto:dtay@loc.gov).

## *American Folklife Center Creates National Heritage Fellows Collection*



At the Library of Congress reception and dinner honoring the Heritage Fellows 2000 (left to right), Bess Lomax Hawes, former head of the NEA Folk Arts Program; Dan Sheehy, current NEA heritage and preservation program head; Bill Ivey, NEA chairman; Peggy Bulger, American Folklife Center director; and Alan Govenar, founder and president of Documentary Arts. This year the NEA created the Bess Lomax Hawes National Heritage Fellowship, an award honoring the efforts of "organizers, educators, producers, cultural advocates or caretakers of skills and repertoires" who have had a "major beneficial effect in keeping the traditional arts of the United States vigorous." The first award winner is Chris Strachwitz, record producer and label founder, El Cerrito, California. Photo by David A. Taylor

By Craig D'Ooge and  
David A. Taylor

The American Folklife Center plans to create a continuing archival collection of documentation relating to the American folk artists who have been named National Heritage Fellows by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Plans for the initiation of the collection have been made in cooperation with the NEA and Alan Govenar, a folklorist from Dal-

las, Texas, and founder and president of Documentary Arts, Incorporated. Govenar has been interviewing and photographing National Heritage Fellows since 1987 and has singlehandedly documented over 125 of them.

The National Heritage Fellowship is the nation's highest honor in the area of folk and traditional arts. Since 1982, the NEA has awarded 246 Fellowships. Recipients are nominated, often by members of their

own communities, in recognition of their continuing artistic accomplishments in such areas as traditional music, dance, crafts, and narrative, as well as their contributions as practitioners and teachers. National Heritage Fellows have come from every region of the country and a broad range of cultural groups. They have included internationally famous artists such as tap dancer Jimmy "Slide" Godbolt, cowboy poet Wally McRae, and acclaimed



NEA chairman Bill Ivey with 2000 National Heritage Fellow Dorothy Thompson, a weaver from Davis, West Virginia. Photos by James Hardin

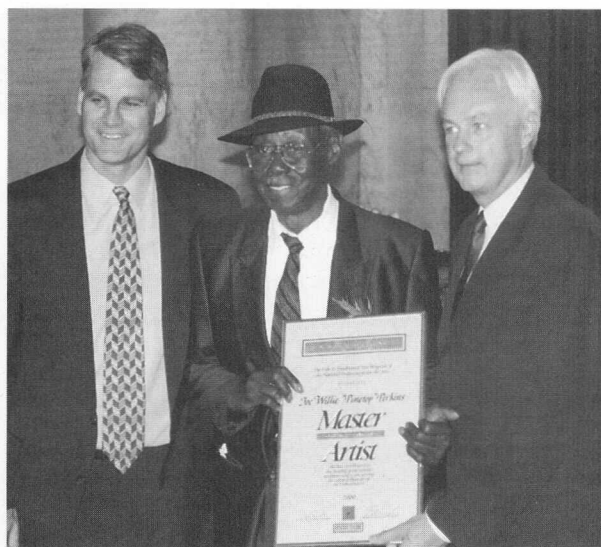
musicians Zakir Hussain, Shirley Caesar, Bill Monroe, and Ralph Stanley.

"The National Heritage Fellows represent the country's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and they are the living embodiment of the grassroots creativity of the American people," said Peggy Bulger, director of the American Folklife Center. "Because of this, we are gathering sound recordings, videos, photographs, publications, and other information on their lives and work. We will preserve this collection so that future generations can share in this treasury of American folk artistry."

Newly donated items will complement a modest quantity of information about the Fellows already at the Folklife Center, including files from the NEA, field recordings, photographs, and manuscript materials.

*Craig D'Ooge is a public affairs specialist for the Library of Congress; David A. Taylor is a folklife specialist at the American Folklife Center.*

Congressman Tim Roemer, Indiana's Third District; blues piano player and 2000 National Heritage Fellow Joe Willie "Pine-top" Perkins, originally from Mississippi, now living in La Porte, Indiana; and Bill Ivey.



Congresswoman Patsy Mink, Hawaii's Second District; 2000 National Heritage Fellow Genoa "Auntie Genoa" Keawe, native Hawaiian falsetto singer/ukelele player, Honolulu; and Bill Ivey.



Lindy Hop dancer/choreographer/teacher Frankie Manning, Corona, New York, with American Folklife Center public events coordinator Thea Austen, who nominated Manning for a 2000 National Heritage Fellowship. Austen arranged for Manning to perform at the Library of Congress in 1995 as part of the Center's "Neptune Plaza Concert Series."



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## The Blanton Owen Fund and Parsons Fund Offer Awards

The American Folklife Center will make the first award from the Blanton Owen Fund, for up to \$1,000, in the spring of 2001. At the same time, the Center will also make its sixth award from the Parsons Fund.

The Blanton Owen Fund for Fieldwork at the Library of Congress was created in 1999 by Ted Owen, other members of the Owen family, and friends and colleagues, in honor of the late Blanton Owen. Blanton Owen was "the quintessential ethnographic fieldworker," and documentation from several of his projects is housed in the Archive of Folk Culture at the American Folklife Center.

The purpose of the fund is to support ethnographic field research and documentation, especially but not exclusively by young researchers in the United States, and to encourage the addition of the results of such research and documentation to the collec-

tions of the Library of Congress. Recipients of awards may be either individuals or organizations. Graduate students, public folklorists, dedicated amateurs, and members of cultural groups are encouraged to apply. Agencies of the federal government of the United States and individuals on official duty with such agencies are not eligible. Examples of the way the award might be used include, but are not limited to, the rental or purchase of equipment or supplies, cost of travel, and the cost of creating copies of field documentation.

Guidelines for submitting applications for the Owen Fund are similar to those for the Parsons Fund for Ethnography. See "Internships and Awards" on the Center's Web site <http://lcweb.loc.gov/folklife/>. The two funds are complementary in that the Owen Fund supports documentary fieldwork and the Parsons Fund supports re-

search using the ethnographic collections of the Library of Congress.

Applicants for either award should submit a two-to-three-page narrative describing their proposed project and its potential products and audiences, and should provide a budget and time frame. Applications should include a resume or statement of previous experience and the names, addresses, and phone numbers of three references. For further information, contact Jim Hardin, public information coordinator, (202) 707-1744, email [jhar@loc.gov](mailto:jhar@loc.gov).

Send applications to the Blanton Owen Fund Committee or the Parsons Fund Committee, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 101 Independence Avenue, SE, Washington, D.C. 20540-4610, by March 1, 2001. The awards will be announced in early April.

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### EDITOR'S NOTES *from page 2*

between staff and Charles Todd himself, who was happy to discover that his documentary work was having a new life.

And recently, in response to Christa Maher's article "Three Pioneering Folk Music Collectors," *Folklife Center News*, summer 2000, we received letters from family members of two of the collectors, who wanted to share with us their own personal memories.

#### **On Willis Laurence James**

I was delighted to read not only about my Dad [Willis Laurence James] but also about the other participants in the Fort Valley Festival as well. Because my brother and I were children during those years, we knew the broad outlines of my father's work, but not very much about the roles of the people who worked with him. On some of his weekends home, I remember

being made keenly aware of the importance he attached to the Festival, and could see his very real enthusiasm and excitement when he described the Festival in some detail.

We missed having him home during those summers, but "forgave" him when he would drive back to Atlanta to spend some weekends with us because in addition to bringing us small gifts, we could always look forward to the arrival of a huge basket of "Blue Goose Peaches," (the best peaches on this earth grow in Fort Valley, Georgia!) What a trip down memory lane your article inspired!

Minnie-Rose J. Richardson  
West Hartford, Connecticut

#### **On John W. Work**

Though but a child in the very early 1940s, I remember well my father's preparation for those trips to Fort Valley, dinnertime

conversations, that bulky and very heavy portable wire recorder, and the hours of listening, transcribing, and writing. Even more vividly, I remember my mother going to answer the front door bell one day, with me in tow, only to be met by a delivery truck delivering a crate containing two live pigs—a gift from Dr. Bond! How we dealt with that moment is another story unto itself.

I consider "Three Pioneering Folk Music Collectors" to be an important addition to the literature on American folklore. From a personal viewpoint, and in all candor, I do not believe that my father received deserved credit in those years for his work nor for other important work done in the Delta. However, your current research, along with that of some others, is finally beginning to give him his due.

John W. Work IV, Ph.D.  
Riverdale, New York



Trina Nelson Thomas (center), a participant in the American Folklife Center's Bloomington, Indiana, field school, interviews teenagers Charles Pearce and Cameron Thibus about Bloomington's town square, as part of her field school team's research on young people's use and perceptions of the square. At Thomas's request, the boys had taken photographs of places in the downtown area that are important to them and their peers. For more on the field school, see page 16. Photo by David A. Taylor

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