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Editorial Note

If this slim and much belated volume of the journal contains any unifying factor, it is simply that the articles in it cluster around collections from urban and modern cultures. Folklorists have recently begun to shift their interest from rural to urban cultures, and from old time-honored folklore forms to more modern types of oral utterance such as the joke, the sham riddle, and the shaggy dog story. Moreover, there appears to be an ever increasing desire on the part of some scholars to evaluate what happens to the older more traditional forms of folklore when they do move into the city—to wit: Ellen Steckert's fine article on folk belief in the most recent issue of the Journal of American Folklore, LXXXIII (April-June, 1970), 115-147.

In a modest and modified way, this issue of the journal touches on these matters. With my brief comments on modern legendry I try not only to give some examples of contemporary legends, but also to suggest possible reasons for their emergence and persistence. In my short note on "Altered Ads" I attempt to draw attention to a relatively new form of the shaggy dog story which has come to my attention, and again I proffer what are doubtless some mad comments on its origin and nature. Mike Quitt's sampling of three tales gathered from a black Baltimore narrator, reveals both the rewards and difficulties of collecting from in-migrants.

For those of you unfamiliar with Mike Quitt, he is a senior English major at Maryland who has exhausted the list of University folklore courses. He has done field work in Baltimore, College Park, and on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He is also talented on both banjo and concertina and bent, so he tells me, on advanced degrees in folklore at either Indiana or Pennsylvania.

In preparing this issue I am grateful to Joe Hickerson for his helpful suggestions and editorial assistance. Also Dorothy Garrett, Secretary at the University of Maryland English Department, has not only typed the entire manuscript, but also lent accuracy and imagination to the final copy. Without her help there would be no Volume II, Number I.

George Carey
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"Legends," writes Richard M. Dorson, "deal with persons, places, and events." A good start, and hard to take issue with. He goes on to flesh out his remark:

Because they purport to be historical and factual, they must be associated in the mind of the community with some known individual, geographic landmark, or particular episode. Many or all the members of a given social group will have heard of the tradition and can recall it in brief or elaborated form. This is indeed one of the main tests of a legend, that it be known to a number of people united by their area or residence or occupation or nationality or faith. These groups keep alive and pass along legends of heroes and badmen, of local visitations from demons and goblins, and of miraculous interpositions in battles and plagues.¹

Surely the description is succinct and highly accurate. Yet it seems to me, there still remain some generally misconceived notions about folk legends that can be easily cleared up. A good many people believe that legends must stem, if not from a hoary antiquity, then at least from some remote rural area where "the folk" are most likely to hang out. Admittedly, the firm establishment of such widely known migratory legends as the Wandering Jew and the Flying Dutchmen lead one to think of these stories as archetypal legendary forms. And, God knows, isolated communities throughout this country have provided the folklore collector with a great deal of legendary fodder in the form of narratives about witches, haunted graveyards, and headless specters. But for a moment let us move to the present and to the city, to Washington, D.C., in fact, and see exactly what we find.

Two couples stopped one night at a notable carry-out for a fried chicken snack. The husband returned to the car with the chicken. While sitting there in the car eating their chicken his wife said, "My chicken tastes funny." She continued to eat and continued to complain.

After a while the husband said, "Let me see it." The driver of the car decided to cut the light on and then it was discovered that the woman was eating a rodent, nicely floured and fried crisp. The woman went into shock and was rushed to the hospital. It was reported that the husband was approached by lawyers representing the carry-out and offered the sum of $35,000. The woman remained on the critical list for several days. Spokesmen from the hospital would not divulge the facts about the case and nurses were instructed to keep their mouths shut. And it is also reported that a second offer was made for $75,000, and this too was refused. The woman died and presumably the case will come to court.
Clearly, this story collected by Joseph Hickerson from a resident of the Washington area in October, 1970, possesses all the earmarks of a legend. It is told about a specific place, and as subsequent conversation with the informant revealed, the "notable carry-out" place was none other than Gino's, the dispenser of Colonel Sanders' Kentucky Fried Chicken. Like all legends, it was related as fact, and as further collecting disclosed, the tale was known to a fairly large group of people, united in this case by their suburban culture and associations. (Anyone who lives in the Greater Washington area and is not familiar with the Colonel's finger-licking-good chicken, either has cataracts or else lives in a dungeon.) Interestingly enough, the informant who gave Mr. Hickerson his version of the tale claimed validity for her story on the grounds that her brother-in-law was a friend of the nurse in the hospital where the woman was taken. This is the usual pattern with many of these modern legends; the narrator attempts to gain credence by stating that he knows a friend of a friend who was somehow directly involved in the incident, but no one ever knows the actual people it happened to, or in this case the exact hospital where the woman was taken.

Geraldine and Jim Johnson recently sought to collect versions of the Gino's tale among members of the Capitol police force where Jim had worked during the past summer. Their collecting also disclosed a general knowledge of the story and acceptance of it as fact. "I don't know if this is true, but..." was often the reaction as if the informant was reluctant to admit gullibility, but at the same time really wanted to believe the tale. According to most informants the event took place sometime during the past summer (1970) and the place in every instance is Gino's. Variation occurred in the accounts of several of the informants as to exactly what caused the woman's death. Two felt that it was due to the rat's having been poisoned, while two others thought the woman had died from shock. One man insisted that she had suffered a coronary thrombosis. In one particularly interesting version, the informant explained why the rat had been in the chicken in the first place. Gino's, he affirmed, had been having trouble with rats and had recently been fumigated. One victim of the poison had gone astray and fallen into the batter and later been cooked and served up to the unlucky client. Still another informant added further details to the story when he asserted that the woman knew she had taken a bite out of a rodent when she spied a tail hanging down from her piece of "fried chicken."

One senses in a legend such as this the desire on the part of the suburban folk to strike out at a large, affluent, and seemingly impersonal concern such as Gino's. Gino's has struck it rich, or so the folk might surmise, and they deserve a bad turn or two. Likewise the Colonel has got financially fat off his own fried chicken and he might well do with an economic shake up. This speculation seems plausible when we observe that two informants were apparently pleased to note that when the rat story was at the height of its circulation last summer, business was so bad at Gino's that the company failed to make its payroll. And one informant claimed that because of the incident, Colonel Sanders had actually retired.

If we examine several other modern legend types we find much the same pattern in evidence. In this version of a well known migratory legend usually entitled "The Death Car" a Silver Spring informant employs the traditional story to draw unfavorable attention to a little respected car dealer in the area:
You know that car dealer out on University Boulevard? Its specialty is repossessed cars. Well, they say they repossessed this red Corvette a few years ago. The owner had been murdered and hidden in the trunk. Well, this car dealer cleaned up the car, repainted it and re-carpeted the trunk, and about a week later they sold that car to some guy. But he returned the car after a week, said there was a bad smell in it that he couldn't get rid of. This happened a couple of more times with other people who bought the car, and now that dealer is stuck with the car. It think its going price is something like $100. But it serves them right. That place is a big clip joint anyway. I hope they never sell the car.

Equally debilitating in its castigation of a huge department store chain is this legend that was in wide circulation two years ago.

This happened to my girl friend's sister-in-law. One day she was shopping at Klein's Department Store in Greenbelt. She saw some sweaters that were on sale and tried some on. She felt this prick on her arm but thought it was just the tag. Anyway, she continued shopping. Later in the day her arm started itching. It swelled up and got real red. By evening she felt faint. Her husband took her to the hospital where she was listed in serious or critical condition. They completely retraced her steps that day to try and find out what happened to her. Come to find out it was from that prick from the sweaters. The sweaters had been imported from Japan. Somehow a snake got into them and started a nest. The eggs had hatched and there were little tiny snakes in some of the sweaters.

Of the seven versions of the account in the Maryland Folklore Archive, only one has the event occurring any place but Klein's (at Garfinckel's), yet when I mentioned the story in class as a fine example of an urban legend, I was pronounced a liar by a coed from New York City. Not only was the story true, she argued, but it had happened to a friend of a friend of her mother's in Macy's Department Store.

Like the episode at Gino's the accounts on Klein's were in every case attested to as true, and in each instance the cycle of stories spawned a quick response from the business in question. Both concerns made statements to the local papers that the stories were utter fabrications. In their article on the Klein's story, the Washington Star4 alluded to a similar story told about the Glen Echo amusement park. On checking into the matter a student collector at the University of Maryland discovered this interesting item:

The first time I heard about the snakes was on a trip to Glen Echo to go swimming. I was about twelve [this would make it about 1957] and some of my friends and I were going to Glen Echo. We
walked by the old fun house and saw that it was abandoned—just a stone shell of a building. There was a stream that flowed through the building. This started a discussion as to why Glen Echo no longer had a fun house and somebody said—I forget who it was—the reason for the closing was that at one time a girl and her date were riding in one of the boats through the fun house and she was trailing her hand in the water. Shortly after the ride began, the girl was bitten on the wrist by a water moccasin. Since the boat was just starting its trip through the fun house there was no way to get any help or medical attention. The couple had to continue the ride through the dark fun house. By the time the ride was finished the girl had died of the snake bite. The fun house was closed at that time and they found a leak from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal into the stream that went into the fun house. The snakes came into the fun house to get into the warmer water. The fun house was closed down permanently because they could never stop the leak.6

This story, thoroughly modern in context, provides yet another characteristic common to folk legends. Built into the tale is the narrator's attempt to explain something seemingly mysterious and, in the usual folk process, he frames his rationale in narrative form. To be sure, most folk legends attempt to explain away more mystifying things than the demise of the fun house at the local amusement park. More often it is the appearance of an unaccountable light or an unearthly apparition that generates a hidden treasure legend or yields the yarn of a foul murder. But it is the same basic motive at work: the collective qualities of mind in the human being that prod him to give a reason for everything.

Scare stories also can work themselves into recognized legends. Recounted in the dormitory late at night, or in the various haunts that teenagers frequent, these tales provide ample proof that the younger generation has a rich supply of legends and belief tales and that these young people, in their own way, are as prone to superstition as anyone. Unquestionably the bull session, so common to college campuses, has done much to inject new life into these tales, though the Maryland coed who gathered this well-known legend heard it at a slumber party in 1968.

These two girls were staying alone in a college dorm over a vacation and they heard that an axe murderer was on the loose. One of the girls was afraid to stay alone in her room, but she couldn't talk her friend into staying with her because her friend thought it was stupid. Her friend told her to lock the door and then she left. A little while after that the girl heard a scratching on her door. She was scared to death so she didn't open the door. At dawn the noise stopped and she opened the door. There was her friend with an axe sticking out of her head. She had met the murderer halfway down the hall and had crawled back and had been scratching for help.6

In Hood and Frostburg State Colleges' versions, the girl's throat is slit and it is a strange gurgling sound that terrifies the roommate and hastens her to lock the door. In a rendition from Rockville, Maryland, the two girls are on their way
home from school and decide to stay the night at one of their homes. During the course of the night, one of the girls wakes up and sees a strange man sitting in a rocking chair dangling something in his hand. She whispers to her friend that on the count of three they must get up and dash out to the other's home. She does so, only to find that she is alone, and when she arrives at her home her mother fails to recognize her because her hair has turned completely white. Later she learns that the object the man was dangling while he rocked in the rocking chair was her girl friend's head.

Another very common tale also employs the motif of the hair turning white. Here the story, often told as a sorority initiation prank, is duly hung on people in the medical profession:

There was a doctor who worked in a Baltimore hospital and he was always playing practical jokes. His girl friend was a nurse in the hospital and she had a roommate. The doctor and the nurse decided to play a practical joke on the roommate who was also a nurse on the opposite shift. They took an arm that the doctor had amputated and hung it on a string hanging from a light in the ceiling, so that when the roommate grabbed the light cord she would grab the arm instead. Well, when it came time for the roommate to come on duty she didn't show up. This kind of bothered the nurse who had helped with the joke, so she called the apartment but no one answered. The nurse and the doctor went to the apartment and found the nurse sitting in a corner, her hair turned completely white, chewing on this arm. The girl had gone stark-raving mad and had to be put in an institution. The doctor lost his license and the nurse was fired. Exactly one year later, at two different locations, the doctor and the nurse were both involved in accidents in which they lost an arm.

Teenagers similarly fashion their legendary account on macabre events, though their tales do not necessarily turn on practical jokes that miscarry. A spate of stories told on "the hook man" puritanically suggests that "parking" on lonely roads is an unwise venture. A Baltimore girl provided this evidence:

This story happened on Clyburn Lane in Baltimore near the mental institution there. One night a couple was out on a date. The girl was arguing with her date because he wanted to "park" and she refused to. He drove to Clyburn Lane and parked the car. She kept telling him that it wasn't safe. She wanted to go home. Her boyfriend said that all the car doors were locked. While listening to the radio they heard a news flash that a patient had escaped from the institution near there. He was a dangerous rapist and could be identified by a hook on his left arm in place of the hand. The girl was frightened and started crying. The boy floored the gas pedal and zoomed away. They didn't talk the whole way home. When the boy got to the girl's house, he went around to the other side of the car to let her out and there was a hook hanging on the door handle.
Other young storytellers have the event occurring in Burtonsville, Maryland (where "all the teenagers have sworn off parking in those dark deserted places that everyone knows about"), Salisbury, Sligo Creek Park, Adelphi, Towson, and Gunpowder Road, north of Baltimore. An interesting version from Leonardtown, Maryland, combines the "hook man" with another widely told teenage legend:

There was a couple who were parked out on a lonely road down near the river. The girl and the boy had run out of gas or something had happened to their car. The boy left to go and get some help. The girl fell asleep on the seat and one time she woke up during the night and she thought she heard a scratching on the roof of the car but she didn't think anything of it. She thought it was just some twigs and since she didn't have a watch she didn't have any idea what time it was. She thought maybe he had just left.

The next thing she knows, it's morning and there's a police car near her car. The policeman woke her up and said, "Miss, please get out of the car and walk to the police car with us, but don't look back." But as she was walking to the car, her curiosity got the best of her and she turned around and looked back, and hanging from a tree by his feet over the car was her boyfriend and he looked like he'd been slit. His clothes were all in rags and he was bleeding. He was dead. What she had heard during the night were his fingernails scratching on the roof of the car.

I also heard in connection with this that there was supposedly a "Hook Man" running around in the area. Several people had told stories about this in reference to the "Hook Man". Everyone supposed it was the "Hook Man" who had done this.

Clearly at work here though on a different level, is the same epic folk process that made legendary heroes out of Robin Hood and Jesse James: give a dog a bad name and he kills every sheep in the land.

From this very modest sampling of legends one begins to sense the fluidity of oral storytelling. The tales move from lip to lip shifting and altering as the narrator adapts his account to his particular audience or draws on local associations to make his story more believable. And in his attempt to furnish further elaboration to his tale, the storyteller often employs motifs that have been in oral circulation for centuries, such as the hair turning gray from fright.

It also seems apparent that the fluidity of these modern legends springs as much from the ease and rapidity of travel as it does from the mass media. It is not difficult to see how a story like the one told on Gino's might quickly be transported across the country and get pinned on a comparable establishment in, say, San Francisco or Denver. A student collector at the University of Maryland provided a splendid example of the ubiquity of a legend with this rendition of another broadly disseminated account.

When I was fifteen or sixteen years old bouffant hair styles were very much the rage. It was almost as if it
were a contest to see which girl could rat her hair the highest and pour the most hair spray on it. One day I went to the beauty shop to have my hair done. My hairdresser told me this story, and she swore that it really happened to a friend of her niece's.

There was this girl who had ratted her hair so high, and put so much hair spray on it, that she never took it down and combed it out or washed it. One day a spider fell into her hair. When the baby black widow spiders hatched, they bit her scalp and she died. I heard this story all over northern and southern California. When I moved to Baltimore, I met people who had heard the same story. They said it happened to a girl who had been a dancer on the Buddy Dean Show, on Baltimore television. These people said that a bee had gotten into the girl's head and stung her and she died from the bee sting because the doctors couldn't get to her head in time due to her hair.

It seems undeniable that all these tales have about them the flavor of modern existence. Even the most cursory glance reveals that they deal with appurtenances of everyday suburban existence: hairdressers, car dealers, department stores, parking grottoes, carry-out places. And the tales themselves, like most rumor laden material moves from a high vogue of popularity to a much diminished oral circulation, though seldom are the stories completely forgotten. It is the sensation of the account that first catches the imagination and the small possibility that the story might be true that makes it persist for a time in oral tradition. Let's face it, if the story about the deep-fried rodent were hung on the Jockey Club, I rather doubt that it would ever catch on.


2 This account can be found in the Maryland Folklore Archive at College Park under accession number (69-133). Hereafter only the accession numbers will be listed.


4 February 23, 1969.

5 See collection (69-71).

FOLKLORE IN THE NEWS
A Legend in the Making?

A 76-year-old Falls Church man was awarded $20,000 in damages yesterday on his claim that he was "permanently sickened" by drinking a bottle of Coca-Cola that contained part of a mouse.

George Petalas was awarded the settlement by a Fairfax County Circuit Court jury, which debated two hours.

In his suit, Petalas claimed that he bought a 10-cent bottle of Coca-Cola on March 20, 1969, from a vending machine in a Safeway store at 3109 Graham Rd., Falls Church.

He took two swallows in the presence of a store employee, William Wheeler, Petalas said, when he noticed "a strange taste." He and Wheeler then went outside the store and poured out the rest of the bottle on a driveway, Petalas testified. At the bottom, Petalas contended, was the back legs and tail of a mouse.

Petalas was hospitalized for three days at Arlington Hospital following the incident, he testified. He alleged through his attorney, Robert J. Arthur, that he has since been unable to eat meat, and has lived on a diet of grilled cheese, toast and noodles.

Petalas, who lives at 4418 Duncan Dr., Falls Church, asked $100,000 in damages from the two defendants, Safeway Stores, Inc., and the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Alexandria. According to Arthur, the money represented medical expenses and "past and future mental anguish."

According to the presiding judge, Albert V. Bryan Jr., the bottling company's defense was that the mouse could only have gotten in the bottle through tampering.

Safeway's defense, the judge said, was that it buys soft drinks for its machine directly from the bottling company without opening them. Both companies are appealing the verdict.

Washington Post
February 3, 1971
A NOTE ON SOME ALTERED ADS
by George Carey

If we can have "perverted proverbs," it seems to me that we can also have "altered ads." In his seminal study and classification of the shaggy dog story, Jan Brunvand lumps the perverted proverbs under Section C as stories in which "the listener is tricked not by a lapse of normal human responses, but by a means of verbal double cross—an outrageous pun, usually resulting in a perversion of a proverb or other popular saying which is used as the punch line." Under motif listing C1400–C1599 he provides a category labelled "Punch Line from Advertising," then lists only two examples, reserving room for others to fill in with related motifs.¹

Brunvand's study was done almost eight years ago, and assuredly in that time a good number of additional motif numbers have been filled in though I have not recently come across any published collection of shaggy dog stories which hinge solely on advertising slogans. But for the record, here are four such tales recently submitted to the Maryland Folklore Archive at College Park, Maryland.

Milt Famey

Back about 1930 there was this famous baseball pitcher named Milt Famey. He had an 0.00 earned run average and for the season he had won thirty-five games and lost none. He only had one hangup. He would only pitch on the days he wanted to. Anyway, he led his team, the St. Louis Blues to the pennant. He didn't want to pitch the opening game of the world series. His team valiantly won. He didn't pitch the second game of the series and the team struggled to a loss. He didn't pitch the next four games either. The team pitchers won half those games. The series was tied 3–3. Milt Famey decided to pitch the last game. It was a good thing 'cause all the other pitchers were worn out.

That day Milt Famey went drinking beer. He drank about three cases of beer before the game and when he went out on the mound he could barely hold onto the ball, let alone pitch. All he could do was walk the batters. At the end of the first inning he'd walked seventeen batters and the score was 19–0. He kept walking batters and at the end of the game, he had walked one hundred and four batters and yielded ninety-eight runs. The final score was 98–0. After the game he went out to his station wagon and drank some more beer. As the other team loaded onto the bus, the players looked over at him and said, "There's the beer that made Milt Famey walk us."
The Yellow Fingers

Long time ago in merry old England there was a king who wasn't too merry. His castle was being besieged by a bunch of barbarians. He knew his people couldn't ward off the attack by themselves. If only he could get help from a neighboring king. The kings in those days would help each other out like that. The king sent out one of his messengers to take a message to the other king. The only problem was the knight had to cross a bridge that was guarded by two huge yellow hands. These hands would grab anyone who tried to cross that bridge. The knight never made it across the bridge. The king sent out two more knights, but the yellow hands got them too. Then one of the king's page boys came up and pleaded to go. At first the king said no, but then he relented because he was desperate. They had to have help. When the page came to the bridge, he walked right across. The yellow fingers tried to get him but couldn't because he was too small. Now the moral of the story is: "Let your pages do the walking through the yellow fingers."

The Salem Tree

Now this man went to Salem, Massachusetts (you know, the place where they had all the witch trials) and he went to a hotel and asked for a room, a bottle of whiskey, and some ice and a woman. The manager said he would send the first three things, but not the woman because all the women in Salem had been burned during the witch trials. So the man said, "What the hell do you do for sex around here?" and the manager said that all the men in town use an old tree in the center of town.

So this guy went to his room and had a few drinks and then he decided he needed some sex. So he went to the tree and lined up with all the men. When his turn came he had the best experience he'd ever had. He went back to his room and a few hours later he decided he was going to go back to that tree and cut it down and take it home with him. So he cut down the tree and put it in the back of his car. But all the town men came after him and stopped him and said, "Hey, man, don't you know you can't take the country out of Salem?"

Bad Taste

This guy and this girl were dating a lot and they got to like each other an awful lot. But there was one problem: the girl always used words like "ain't", and bad speech like "he done it" and "I'm gonna git me some" and stuff like that. And so this guy he'd always be correcting her. So anyway, they fell in love after a while and got married.
So it was on their wedding night and they got all settled in their motel room and the girl slipped into the bathroom saying she'd be out in a few minutes. So this guy lay back for a while but after about fifteen minutes he couldn't stand it any more so he yells, "Whatever are you doing in there."

She shouted back, "I'm cleaning my cunt!"

And he said, "I've told you a thousand times not to use talk like that!"

So she screamed back at him, "What do you want, good grammar or good taste?"

All four stories were collected by University coeds within the last year. The first tale was related by a student bus boy in the collector's sorority, the second by a twenty-four year old male from New York City whose forte was perverted proverb type tales. "The Salem Tree," interestingly enough, came from a religious education director at a nearby Unitarian church. The last story came from the collector's fiancé, a young Baltimore man of twenty-three who remembered hearing the story from a photographer friend. The couple plan to be married in the spring.

Brunvand believes that this kind of narrative gains popularity because it is easily made up, and he recalls having an informant make one up for him right on the spot. Moreover, he argues, such tales produce more of a groan from listeners than they do a laugh, and surely this is the case with the first two examples given here. But the third tale, employing as it does a scata logical pun, evokes more mirth than head shaking as one tends to forget the idiotic construction of the fanciful town of Salem and its odd inhabitants in the clever word play which castigates one of the better known of those recent singing commercials. The story, "Bad Taste," moves us closest to conventional humor. Here the raconteur creates a credible situation and lures the listener into thinking he will be fed the typical "honeymoon joke" when the tale is curtailed by a punch line which borrows the exact words of the Winston cigarette ad. Neither of the latter two narratives employs the spooneristic gimmick which humorously deflates the first two accounts, and the perversion, if one cares to call it that, generates from the totally altered context in which the commercial slogan is found. The ad is not only perverted, it is debased through overt sexual associations.

It seems to me that these tales which turn on the alteration of an advertisement not only indirectly ridicule the corporate society with its money lords on Madison Avenue, but they also make fun of the very art of oral storytelling. As Charles Reich has recently pointed out in The Greening of America, it is this corporate society which produces the products, both good and terrible, and then foist them upon the American consumer, who, deluged with advertisements, has little control over what he gets, or even over what he really wants. The absurdity of the spoonerism in the first two tales by association leads us to think of the ads themselves as absurd. (Can fingers walk? Can beer produce fame?) The obvious sexual pun in the third story, if we think about it at all, renders a picture that is quite derogatory towards the attractive, clean
living young woman, in the television ad, who runs through the green fields befouling her lungs. The "country" has become a surrogate for her. And certainly both Madison Avenue and the tobacco industry fare poorly when coupled in the last story with cunnilingual imagery.

Moreover, for the student of folk narrative, there may be something instructive in this type of tale, in fact in most of the tales that hang on proverbial perversions. Like the recent rash of sham riddles that mock the riddling process by deriding logic (e.g. What's green, weighs 5,000 pounds and lives in the ocean? Ans. Moby Pickle.) or the Mother Goose vice verse ("Little Jack Horner/ Sat in the corner / Eating his sister.") which defiles revered children's rhymes, the perverted proverb runs stylistically counter to the modern current of oral narration. As recent research has made clear, due to the telescoping of time in our modern society the oral narrative has become short and anecdotal and the long winded raconteur invariably loses his audience when he fails to conform to the norm. Yet as one can see by the nature of the shaggy dog genre, the tale at the hands of a splendid tale teller could be drawn out to inordinate lengths, and unquestionably, the longer and more ramified the story, the greater the groan at the end. The listener groans not just because of the utter dearth of logic, but also because he has been foolish enough to waste his time in attendance on a narrator who has rewarded his indulgence with nonsense.

Finally, it could be speculated that an audience is attentive to these permutations in part because of the opening formula they often employ. Instead of being tripped with the usual "Did you hear the one about..." the listener is frequently caught up by "Once upon a time in a far off kingdom..." or as in the second story given here, "Long ago in merry old England..." which, in their obvious parody of the stereotyped openings of Märchen, suggest that a long tale is about to follow. It usually does if the narrator is any good, and the listener, diverted by a different beginning hangs on to the bitter end. And in certain instances the ending itself likewise parodies the older fable form of narrative, delivering the final pun or spoonerism as a moralistic addenda. ("Now the moral of this story is: 'Let your pages do the walking through the yellow fingers'")

Though it is too early to say, further collection and study of these altered ads as a modern narrative form may prove them to be covert protest tales on the one hand, and the depiction of the current age's disenchantment with tradition and traditional genres on the other.  


2 Since this article was completed another tale of this sort has come to my attention. Again the collector is a Maryland coed who heard it very recently from her fiance.

A long time ago in the dark woods of the Middle Ages, two knights and their pages were lost. It started to rain and they needed a place to stay for the night. So they wandered on and on and became more lost than ever when all of a sudden in the distance they saw a castle and they turned in that direction. Even though it was raining and dark, they could
see that the castle was weird looking, all ornate and curvy. But pretty soon they came to the castle door and knocked. It was answered by a man who talked in a very effeminate voice: "Say, won't you come in fellas?"

The knights said, "Look, we're lost and we need a place to stay until we can find our way back to our kingdom. Can we stay here?"

So the queer says, "Sure fellas, anytime. Now just let me help you off with your heavy, cold, wet armor."

So by this time the two knights were getting a bit suspicious and one of them looked at the other and he says, "Promise him anything, but give him our page."

AN INSTANCE OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION
by George Carey

As we know, most forms of folklore adapt themselves to fit the group that employs them. The modern joke is no exception. In April, 1968, I was at a gun club luncheon in Princeton, New Jersey, and after the meal various members of the gathering, most of them businessmen who commuted by train to New York City, rose and delivered the latest rash of jokes overheard at the office. One narrator told the amusing account of a commuter who, while racing to catch his train home, was accosted by a newspaper reporter. The reporter fired three quick questions at the man who returned three non-sequitur answers, all pointing to the obvious communications breakdown in the nation.

Three months later a student at the University of Maryland collected the exact same tale from a woman who came originally from the hills of North Carolina. Though the joke was identical, the situation and the reason for the misunderstood questions had altered noticeably:

There was this reporter who went up into the mountains of North Carolina to find out the people's views on current issues. He found this old fellow in a country store around there and he asked him: "What do you think of marijuana?"

He said, "Yeah, that's a real nice place; my wife and I went there last year and had a real good time."

Then the reporter said, "Well, what do you think of LSD?"

The man said, "Well, I don't think he should have been elected vice-president, much less president."

So the reporter said, "What do you think of the Vietnam position?"

And he said, "Well I like it, but my wife says it hurts her back."
SOME TRADITIONAL NEGRO TALES IN THE CITY
by Michael Quitt

This sampling of two tales comes from the repertoire of Leman Jones, a black storyteller who has lived in Baltimore City for the last twenty years. Born in 1916 in North Carolina, Leman worked doing odd jobs until the age of eighteen, when he left home to see the world. For five years he chose to live the life of a hobo and toured the states of Georgia, North and South Carolina by means of the freight-car. When not on the "freights", he and twenty or so other hobos lived communally in caves and hobo camps; and around campfires, the group would sit, "drinkin' and tellin' lies." It was at these folk gatherings, Leman maintained, that he learned all his stories.

When he gave up this free and easy life, he moved to Virginia for a time and then to Baltimore. Much of his stay in the city has been in a white residential neighborhood which, in recent years, has become predominantly black. He has earned his living as the custodian of an apartment building and a motion picture studio. Throughout his stay in Baltimore, however, he has always kept in contact with other blacks.

Though I had known Leman for seven years, collecting tales from him did not come easily. In the first place, he never trusted my sincerity in wanting to hear his tales, and secondly, he obviously felt himself open to ridicule when he told them. For instance, if anyone entered the room during a collecting session, Leman immediately said that he just couldn't remember anymore of the tale in progress; but as soon as the intruder departed, his memory miraculously improved and he finished the tale in tact.

Entertainment is the sole purpose for Leman's storytelling. These tales do not spring to life in the course of conversation, but rather each narrative becomes a kind of art form in and for itself, a singular performance. Each tale is brought to life by Leman's use of hand gestures, facial contortions, and voice modulations. He imitates dogs and hunting horns, as well as characters in his narratives. To watch him is to witness a raconteur who acts out and virtually lives his tales.

How active are these more traditional Negro tales found in Leman's repertoire? His original milieu removed, Leman no longer recounts his tales in the city as he once did in the hobo camp. Further, as Roger Abrahams points out in his study, Positively Black, Negroses in the urban setting who render the older animal tales are invariably considered "Uncle Toms" by their peers. Whether this is the actual case with Leman, I was not able to determine because of our somewhat limited sessions. If he knew any of the more modern "Shine" tales, familiar to urban blacks, he did not tell them to me.

Since his stories do not originally spring from the streets of Baltimore, one is inclined to dismiss Leman as a product of urban folk culture. Yet Ellen Steckert contends that any folklore found in the city can be called urban, and should be studied for what effects the urban environment might have had on it. But these borderline judgments as to what is urban and what is rural in oral
folklore tradition seems irrelevant. I see Leman Jones as a storyteller who at times performs a traditional art form in a new surrounding, and only further research will reveal what effects, if any, the urban culture works, or has worked, on his repertoire.

"The Tar Baby"

Ol' Brer Rabbit loved cabbage. Cabbage, yeah, and carrots too, ya know. Be in that woman's garden every night eating more of that cabbage up. Brer Rabbit be there every night. Couldn't catch Brer Rabbit. Old woman couldn't catch Brer Rabbit. Every night when she got home all the cabbage be gone. She put out more cabbage. That went on about a month. 'Til that ol' colored lady said, "I'm gonna catch that Brer Rabbit. I know what Brer Rabbit done."

Brer Rabbit said, "Oh, no, it ain't me."

Said, "Brer Rabbit, you been eatin' my cabbage."

Brer Rabbit said, "no, no."

So she made her a tar baby. You know like a rabbit. Tar baby. Ol' Brer Rabbit got out there that night, eatin' cabbage, eatin' cabbage, stuck his foot on that tar baby. Couldn't get his feet off. Stuck. Glued to it. That mornin' everybody rise.

"You been eatin' my cabbage."

"No, he eatin' your cabbage. Tar baby."

"No, you were rabbit. I'm gonna kill you."

"Yeah, kill me. Eat me. Please don't throw me, don't throw me in the bushes."

Said, "What do ya mean Brer Rabbit. You want me to eat you."

"Yeah, eat me, please eat me." Brer Rabbit was bullshittin'. He didn't want her to eat him, he was bullshittin'. He wanted to get away. "Please eat me."

Said, "Brer Rabbit, I'm gonna eat you."

"Please eat me. I don't want to go nowhere. Don't throw me over there. Don't throw me in the briar patch. Don't throw me in the briar patch. Don't throw me over there, now eat me."

Said, "No, goddamn it, I'm gonna throw you in the briar patch." She throwed him all the way over there.

Brer Rabbit said, "Hell, I been born out here. I'm free."
Laughter

"I been born out here. I'm a free rabbit now." Brer Rabbit went.

(Type 175, "The Tarbaby and the Rabbit." Type 1310, "Briar-patch Punishment for Rabbit.")

"Fox and Rabbit in the Well"

The ol' Brer Rabbit, ol' Brer Rabbit was slick, ya know. Old Brer Rabbit was way down in the well. Down in the well, so the sun shine bright. He came out early one morning. Ol' Brer Rabbit was down in the well eatin' that, eatin' that cheese. Ol' Brer Rabbit couldn't get out the well. He figured how he got in the well. He looked up, old Brer Fox come by there, had two bucket on the well, ya know. One bucket - old Brer Fox come by there.

"Hey Brer Fox, come down here. We have a good time down here."

Brother Fox said, "I don't know Brer Rabbit." Brer Rabbit got in that damn well.

"Hop in that bucket Brer Fox, come on down."

Old Brer Fox said, "I don't know."

"Please come down here, we got plenty of cheese down here." Eatin'. "We have a feast down here." Had a good time by hisself.

Old Brer Fox said, "I don't know." After a while Brer Fox said, "Yeah, be I come I'm comin' down." Brer Fox jumped in that bucket, he went down, Brer Rabbit come up.

Said, "That's the way the world goes, some comin' and some goin'."

He said, "Some comin' and some goin'." Left Brer Fox in the bottom of the well. Left Brer Fox down there. Brer Rabbit got up, went about his business.

Brer Rabbit was a bitch.

(Motif K 651, "Wolf descends into well in one bucket and rescues fox in the other.")
BOOK REVIEWS


For four years, the bi-monthly Folklore Forum has been an outspoken vehicle for young folkloristic research and commentary. It is issued by graduate students at the Indiana University Folklore Institute for a subscription cost of only $2.00 per year. They also issue a semi-annual Bibliographic and Special Series, available for $1.00 per year, of which this preliminary survey of Folklore archives is Number One.

The compilers are to be lauded for publishing this listing of archives, related institutions, and private collections, for there are few such surveys currently available, the most accessible exceptions being A Preliminary Directory of Sound Recordings Collections in the United States and Canada, prepared by a Committee of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (New York Public Library, 1967, $3.00), and a listing of North American folklore and folk music archives compiled by this reviewer and available on request from the Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

Other surveys are in progress: Professor Ellen J. Stekert of the Wayne State University Folklore Archive has been conducting a survey of American collections; Mrs. Ann Briegleb, Archivist of the U.C.L.A. Institute of Ethnomusicology is compiling for the Society for Ethnomusicology a Directory of Sound Archives in the United States Containing Ethnomusicological Recordings; and Peter Kennedy of the Dartington Institute of Traditional Arts, Totnes, Devon, England, is preparing The International Traditions Research Archive Directory in association with S.I.E.F. (Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore) and I.F.M.C. (International Folk Music Council). Meanwhile, it is useful to have the Folklore Forum listing.

Joseph C. Hickerson
Library of Congress

Perspectives on Folklore and Education. Bloomington, Ind.: Folklore Forum, Bibliographic and Special Series No. 2, May 1969. 53 pp. Paperbound. $1.00 per year (two issues).

This Folklore Forum publication on folklore and education is a collection of 7 articles providing brief glimpses into preparation for contemporary scholarship and into the role of folklore in contemporary education.
In two articles university instructors describe how they encourage college students to investigate folklore in its living context. Collecting projects serve in one university as vehicles by which students can develop both their cultural awareness and their capacity for objective analysis. In the other instance such projects involve each student in investigating the functional relationship between a given folklore item and the carrier or performer of that item.

One article introduces the program of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture at Bowling Green University in Ohio, while another describes folklore education at universities in selected European countries. On a less sophisticated level, a writer describes his experiences with television as the medium by which folklore was presented in programs for pre-school and primary youngsters.

Most folklorists are educators, and Jan Harold Brunvand notes that most folklorists on college faculties serve as members of English departments. He describes in amusing fashion the advantages and opportunities of such arrangements.

Thomas A. Green suggests that to be most effective instructors should figuratively "walk one mile in the moccasins of their students," promoting pride and motivation through their folklore. Instructors may discover that folklore can be just the means needed for connecting the world of the classroom to the world of the street, for bringing relevancy and interest into school work for members of minority groups.

Each writer presents brief glimpses of topics seldom considered away from the university campus. Though fragmentary and disconnected, these flashes of insight will be of genuine interest to persons considering or involved in folklore scholarship.

John F. Putnam
Lanham, Maryland


In this book, it seems, the American Folklore Society has another good seller. This "dictionary," if that's the word for it, would be valuable to any serious student of folklore, particularly of children's folklore. For the collector of jump rope rhymes -- and the ranks are swelling as what Brian Sutton-Smith has called the "triviality barrier" disappears -- analogous documentation has been long hard to come by. But now, as many as 63 occurrences can be cited for a single rhyme (Abrahams 214, "Ice Cream Soda, Delaware Punch.")
The book contains a significant eight-page bibliography of works cited, including recordings, a list of names of jump rope games and of non-verbal characteristics of jumping rope, and a list of proper names and their explanations. The brief introduction includes a survey of recent research and conjectural explanations of changes in rope skipping activity. The rhymes themselves are listed alphabetically.

There are a few minor difficulties. For one, it seems unusual to list occurrences of each rhyme in chronological order rather than in alphabetical order by authors, editors, or compilers. Also, there seems to be a loose, implied criterion that allows the inclusion of such a rhyme as number 357 ("Mother, mother, where's the key?"/"Go ask father./"Father, father, where's the key?"/"Have you washed the dishes?" "Yes./"Have you swept the floor?" "Yes./""Turn the key in the lock and run out to play."). One doubts whether this rhyme from a book of play activities for elementary schools was ever used by children.

Using this work to annotate a collection of seventy-two rhymes submitted by children in a Washington, D.C., school, I find about half the items included. However, a few were not easy to find. "Miss Potta had a baby/ And she called it Tiny Tim" is number 224, "I had a little brother and we called it Tiny Tim." "Blueberry, cockacherry" is number 41, "Bluebells, cocklebells."

On a broader level, this book raises other questions. Of its 613 rhymes, more than 400 occur but once in the sources cited. This could indicate the lack of collecting activity in this area or it could indicate that rope-skippers often create their own rhymes or borrow from other sources (a number of counting-out rhymes and so forth are included) and that the set of such fixed figures as number 353, "Mother, mother, I am ill," is relatively small.

The true test of this book will come only after it has been used for a while. One would presume that its exclusion of the non-verbal aspects of jumping rope will not tend to create an overemphasis on the purely literary aspects. For as Dorothy Howard, Maryland's expatriate authority on children's folklore, has written: "The dictionary of playground language is gestural behavior -- subtle and whimsical. Playground rhetoric, if thoroughly explored, might reveal bilingualism as a requirement for survival in child peer-groups which develop into adult peer-groups which rule the world willy-nilly" (Maryland English Journal, Vol. 7, no. 1, Fall 1968, p. 18).

George A. Simpson
Bethesda, Maryland

When manumission came to Kentucky a group of slaves owned by the white Coe family in Cumberland County moved onto a nearby ridge -- taking their former owner's last name as their own and giving it, eventually, to the ridge on which they lived. Over the years social and economic pressures caused many of the inhabitants of Coe Ridge to leave and turned most who remained into moonshiners, thieves, and murderers.

Today Coe Ridge is deserted but its history lives on in the form of legends, anecdotes, songs, and sayings on the lips of the local inhabitants around Coe Ridge and the descendants of the Coe Ridge Negroes. Montell has captured this history and recounts it in vivid, compelling, and accurate form -- using the techniques of the Oral Historian and Folklorist and demonstrating the validity of this combined approach to history.

The book is enriched by the addition of bibliography, photographs, sketches, genealogical charts, and index.

One could (and I will) quarrel with the layout of the book and the way in which footnotes are used. The pages are approximately 8 inches square with half of each page reserved for text and the other half reserved for footnotes. When the footnote half is fully used there is a feeling of reading two texts at the same time; when it is not used there is a lot of wasted space and I find it very distracting.

Montell occasionally overreaches in trying to assign a Motif number to some of the narratives he uses (e.g., see p. 38, note 33 and p. 59, note 57), and his attempt to connect the desire to be buried in one's home territory with an African origin (see p. 75, note 41) is a bit ludicrous. But these are, perhaps, trifling criticisms of an otherwise fine book.

Chuck Perdue
Woodville, Va., and
Univ. of Pennsylvania


Jones Tracy was born and died on the coast of Maine. Between 1856 and 1939 he took up space there -- mostly on Mount Desert Island. He tilled her soil, helped feed her people and summer visitors, killed off her game (more or less), and had a time doing it, or so his reputation as a wag and raconteur would suggest. Richard Lunt has set out to assess and define that reputation in this volume. He traces Tracy's life in a brief biography, describes his storytelling prowess, presents both a primary and secondary canon of Jones Tracy tales as told and remembered by his relatives, neighbors and cohorts, and concludes by assessing Tracy's status as a Tall-Tale Hero. Almost as an afterthought in an epilogue, Lunt offers a brief comparison between the Tracy "style" and the current status of the art on Mt. Desert Island.
As a "summer person" on Mt. Desert Island, I was delighted with the insight into her history and people provided by this collection of Jones Tracy tales. Richard Lunt has a good eye for the place and an infectious though not sentimentalized enthusiasm for his subject. As a New Englander and amateur tale teller, I enjoyed this addition to Yankee lore as a further example of both its continuity and its variousness. But as a folklorist I was disappointed. I think Lunt has missed his topic.

The ostensible subject of this study is Tracy himself; his life, his style, and his "canon" as Lunt calls it. Jones Tracy is dead. Attempting to assess the style and performance of a dead man for whom the only available record of either is the more or less accurate memory of his audience (however conscious they may have been of "style" and "performance") is a tricky business. It's especially difficult if the investigator does not have a firm notion of style and performance as they apply to narrative art, or if he has not established a workable definition of the concepts as they are used (or not) by his informants. Lunt is aware of these difficulties (p. 21), but he hasn't really coped with them. He tells us that Tracy deserves a "high performance rating" because "His audience liked his stories and how he told them" (p. 22). Even though Lunt has made a cursory definition of what the audience liked (he was a "caster of spells, a mystifier", he could "get them to suspend disbelief" [my italics]), the reader is not confident that anyone has a clear sense of the Tracy style. A more detailed account of what people think of Tracy and his tales, of the ones they remember and their function or current status, of the variations in "style" of contemporary versions, would to my mind have been a more manageable topic, a more realistic and useful approach.

Folklore as a fruitful intellectual activity in this country is albatrossed by too many studies manque. It's a tradition, and one that sooner or later someone will have to reckon with. Even so, I'm glad to have Richard Lunt's account of Jones Tracy. It's a genuine contribution to New England traditions; an example of the stuff of folklore.

Charles S. Adams
Univ. of Massachusetts
Amherst, Mass.


Alas, more forests ravaged, more pulp mills spewing their icky gunk into already badly clogged rivers so that people at the Singing Tree can bring out more unwanted reprints. Unwanted at least so far as the folklorist is concerned. In drawing together a book of legends from all over the country (though the "Tales of Puritan Land" outweigh all the others by about three to one), Skinner was working with what is undeniably America's most representative narrative form: the legendary account. Yet his approach, seen from the cold and clear vision that twenty-twenty hindsight provides, is romantically ill-starred.
Set on pointing out that our country is "not devoid of myth and folklore," Skinner finds legends at their most fascinating where they combine myth and history, though we never do learn exactly what he means by "myth." And, he goes on, "it is not too early for us to begin the collation of those quaint happenings and those spoken reports that gain in picturesque-ness with each transmission" (p. 6).

With such tonal qualities fixed for us in the introduction, it is not hard to imagine the kind of book this is. Dredging up everything from Cotton Mather's *Magnalia* to Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," Skinner feeds his reader all the sweet and terrifying old stories in a style that would gag a present day literary maggot. Not much folk idiom is to be found here. No individualities of narrative style are to be uncovered in the tales of the Rockies and those of the Delaware. And, of course, no distinction is made as to which legends are active (or were in the 1890's) and which ones simply hauled out of other books. Once more, as is their wont, the Singing Tree has taken a great step backwards in helping to advance folklore studies.

George G. Carey
Univ. of Maryland


The Broadman Press has wisely chosen to reprint not the first edition of the Sacred Harp (1844), but the third edition of 1859, the last edition to preserve the original repertory, with its own additions as well as those of the second edition tucked into the back. They have also wisely chosen to reprint by way of introduction George Pullen Jackson's excellent *The Story of the Sacred Harp, 1844–1944*, backed up by a postscript commenting on the current state of Sacred Harping - complete with a number-by-number account of the 1966 Denson Memorial Singing, and a brief preface by a member of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. They have also provided -- wonder, wonder, wonder -- a first-line index for those who have trouble matching tunes, subjects and lines with geographic locations (the shepherds are in Sherburne; Windham is the way that leads to death; and Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone from three separate locations while being done with the world).

Those wishing a single Sacred Harp to sing from will do better to buy the 1966 edition of the Denson Revision -- unless they particularly dislike altos -- as it is the version currently most sung from, it contains favorites such as "Wayfarer Stranger" not in the 1859 version, and, at $3.00 a copy (plus 25¢ postage), it is considerably cheaper. [The Denson Revision is available from Mr. Hugh McGraw, Treasurer, Sacred Harp Publishing Co., Box 185, Bremen, Georgia 20110. The Cooper Revision (1950 printing) is also still used somewhat and is available for $3.50 from Sacred Harp Book Co., P. O. Box 46, Troy, Alabama 36081. J.C.H.]
All those with a deep interest in Sacred Harp singing, however, will be thankful for the Broadman reprint, which sheds much light on the early history of the book. (It is remarkable, for instance, how many "reform" tunes -- "Missionary Hymn," "Duke Street" -- made the original collection.) It also contains many bonuses, even three extra verses of "Northfield" (though not the pre-supper one about idle maids).

Wayne D. Shirley
Library of Congress


If the reader wishes to verify the old adage, "You can't tell a book by its cover," your search is over. "The Story of Indian Music," by Frances Densmore, is based upon her research of many tribes. The Introduction provides a capsulated history of the use of recording machines in the field study of the American Indian, and highlights of the events leading Miss Densmore to devote her life to this study. It reveals her respect for Indian culture, and her awareness of the effects of acculturation. Without her monumental work, thousands of traditional melodies would have been lost forever.

Additionally, Miss Densmore provides details of her recording equipment and procedures, recording conditions, attempts at scientific standardization, and delicate dealings with the Indians. In these pages we find a clear statement of her professional credo: "Indian songs are of little value unless correlated with the life of the people. Indian music should be recognized as an important branch of ethnology" (p. 541). And, "My work has been to preserve the past, record observations of the present, and open the way for the work of others in the future" (p. 550).

Now, unfortunately, these gems are reproduced upon extremely poor quality paper, and Miss Densmore's detailed plates are rendered almost unintelligible. Since the edition is the third of the 1966 Shorey Reprint, one might humbly suggest that there is a continuing market -- one which would gladly pay a higher tariff for publication considerations more appropriate to the value of the contents.

T. Temple Tuttle
Univ. of Maryland


The publisher's catalog designates this book for "Grades 5-12 (high interest -- low vocabulary)." It consists of a section titled "What are the Blues," followed by seventeen biographical sketches covering, among others, Ma Rainey, Leadbelly, and Billie Holiday. The information is interesting, but dead. The overall impression is that Mr. Surge, knowing nothing about the blues or blues singers, began collecting what pictures and information he
could find on the subject and stopped when he had enough to fill his sixty-three pages. There is no continuity or selection apparent in the organization of the book. For example, page two (which is between the first and second title pages) is a picture of Victoria Spivey, with a six-line capsule biography as a caption. The reader's interest having been stirred, she is dropped except for a mention in Lonnie Johnson's biography that they performed together.

Physically the book is well put together and attractive. It would make a nice gift for some young person you owe a gift to and don't know well enough to choose for, but don't expect to arouse a lifelong interest in blues singers with it.

Frank Daspit
Washington, D.C.


Although it presents nothing really new about Irish folk culture and is in some instances—the description of storytelling, for example—highly derivative, Messenger's case study of Inis Beag, an unidentified Aran island off the coast of Eire, has the virtue of being an immensely appealing book that reflects sensitivity, sanity, and humor. Further, it argues for the anthropological study of Americans of west-European extraction, the neglect of which is both arrogant and unendurably foolish.

Score a double-plus for Messenger's unmerciful exposure of romantic neo-Rousseauvian twaddle in both artistic and social-scientific portrayals of the Irish folk. But there are many ways to not-study man in society. One can litter the page with no-deposit no-return terms such as "Oedipus complex," "puritanism," "Masoehism," and "cause," which throwaway words seem to have ostensive and linguistic definitions as well as explanatory power—but usually don't. Messenger's book could have omitted such lexical magic, for the data are better than good enough to speak for themselves. The space devoted to invocation of the Marchentypen and reconstruction of storytelling practices now extinct might better have been devoted to contemporary data on the sociology of speech genres and nonlexical communication in the four villages of the Little Isle.

These objections aside, Messenger steps firmly toward a knowledge of western man based upon sound fieldwork. Perhaps someday more folklorists will cease caressing their cardioids, chop their Mylar-coated umbilical cords to Ma Academe, expose disciplined sensing selves to the reality of human social communication, and follow Messenger's lead. Did you ever ruminate upon why folklorists write so little about fieldwork and why most of what is written is so superlatively inane? But that is too far off the subject.

Kay L. Cothran
Univ. of Pennsylvania

These volumes represent a lifelong collection by Dr. Petrie. Originally published in 1855 under the auspices of "The Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland," Volume I consists of approximately 150 pieces of Irish music. Volume II is an incomplete sequel to the first -- a 48 page volume published posthumously.

Petrie's lengthy introduction relates adventures as a young collector, personal views about Irish music, and justification for the selection and arrangement of the airs in the book. He also finds fault with a previous collector, Edward Bunting, whose work is also entitled Ancient Music of Ireland.

The major flaw in the collection of Irish music as seen by Petrie, is the use of instrumental musicians for the sources of airs. This strong belief is evident in his claim that Bunting's rendition of the tune, "St. Patrick's Day," would have been better taken from Playford's Dancing Master, rather than the harper, Patrick Quinn. Petrie felt that instrumentalists destroyed the natural rhythms of many tunes in order to display their own virtuosity. He cited them only reluctantly when he used them for a source, as he believed "it was only from the chanting of vocalists ... that settings could be made which would have any stamp of purity and authenticity" (p. xvi).

Petrie introduces each selection with background material about the tune, including where he obtained it and the setting in which it existed. In addition, he has also arranged these traditional airs for the pianoforte. As traditional Irish Gaelic singing is homophonic and not conducive to four part arrangements on the piano, this effort is neither "pure" nor "authentic." His attempt to harmonize these airs on an instrument incapable of producing the Irish modes is surely an abberation as great as produced by an uileann piper or harper. He freely admits selecting the settings he felt most accurate. It follows that he may have amended them to conform to existing manuscripts, as did O'Neill later on.

Despite these objections, Petrie made an attempt to record and preserve the traditional airs of Ireland. Most of the tunes were collected prior to the famine making the collection a valuable record of a vibrant period for Irish music. It is an interesting, if imperfect, picture of early 19th century Irish music.

John J. Curry, Jr.
Hyattsville, Maryland

Detroit's Singing Tree Press has recently reissued T. F. Henderson's 1902 edition of Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Originally published in 1802-3, this edition was the first since the finally-corrected edition of 1833, which contained additional notes by Lockhart.

In the light of 19th-century ballad scholarship, Henderson retains only those of Lockhart's notes which he feels are not obsolete, and adds his own introduction and footnotes to each of the ballads. Also included are Lockhart's "Advertisement," Scott's "Introduction," "Dedication," and "Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry," and Henderson's preface. The latter two essays, especially, provide the student of ballad scholarship with a picture, from two points in time seventy years apart, of the various arguments on ballad origin and collection.

The ballad texts are categorized as either historical, romantic, or "imitations of the ancient ballad" (this last with accompanying explanatory essay by Scott). They are, it is now generally agreed, composite texts, doctored "improvements," or copies of forgeries, and not versions as collected from oral tradition. This most influential collection, however, served as a corpus on which later scholars based their collecting activities.

Henderson's introductions to each ballad are themselves almost a history of the Scottish border region. Although often wordy, these notes are by far the most noteworthy feature of the four-volume set. They cite historical, literary, and folkloristic sources, and should prove an indispensable reference to the scholar of the Scottish ballad and Scottish history.

Sara Grey
Philadelphia, Penna.


There's a growing interest, these days, in songs from the British Isles among young city singers of traditional folksongs. When I first saw this book in a library I was somewhat excited by the wealth of variants of songs that I had heard being sung around. For instance there are nice and occasionally very different versions of "Fathom The Bowl," "Butter and Cheese and All," "Will The Weaver," "The Carrion Crow," "When Joan's (Jones') Ale Was New," "The Husbandman and the Servingman," "Rosin the Beau," a very nice hard times (à la "Rigs of The Time") song, hunting songs, Child Ballads, and songs we associate with the Copper family of Sussex, like "Spencer the Rover," "Old Brown Ale" ("Good Ale"), "Twanky Dillo," "Dame Durden," and others.

The author was not a folklorist. He operated a steam-hammer in a railway-works for 25 years during which time he studied languages (Latin, Greek, French) and poetry, published several books of poems, and took
rambles in the country that resulted in a couple of books about local country life, and eventually in the collection of about 800 songs, of which this book contains approximately 260.

The book has a few shortcomings of which the primary one is, aside from price, the lack of tunes, which all but prevents us from learning more than a few songs (if that is our interest). Another drawback is that Mr. Williams engaged in the practice of re-writing (sometimes considerably) some songs in order to "improve" grammar and poetry. This prevents us, in some cases, from using them for any serious academic study.

The collection has more than a handful of flowery-language, 18th-century art songs and Victorian drawing-room ballads and few, if any, of us will be tempted to sing them in the near future. However, as was pointed out by Frank Purslow in the E.F.D.S.S. 1969 Folk Music Journal (see below), this collection gives a much clearer picture than usual of the entire range of songs a certain section of the population were singing at a certain point in history (1914-1916). Most collections show only what folksongs were being sung.

The author included a 20-page "Essay On Folk-Song Activity In The Upper Thames Valley" by way of an introduction, which is a very nice account of the cultural environment from which these songs were collected and the aims and ideas of the author in collecting them.

On the whole, the book has some nice versions of songs that many of us will recognize, some lovely-looking songs which will be new to most of us, and a number of songs which aren't likely to be of interest to more than a very few. I'm glad this book is available again, but at $14.00 it's not likely to be a hot seller.

I would like to call your attention to three articles in the 1969 Folk Music Journal of the English Folk Dance & Song Society which concern themselves with Alfred Williams, his life, his work, and his collections. The third article deals with songs collected in the upper Thames valley between 1966 and 1969. This, too, has some nice songs, all with tunes, some of which were collected from descendants or neighbors of some of Mr. Williams' informants.

Michael Cooney
Falls Church, Va.


This is not exactly the type of book you'll find impossible to set aside once you've started reading. It's much better taken a few pages at a time. The original collection was formed around the 1840's, taken mostly from broadsides in the possession of one Mr. Maidment, who was at the time the chief Peerage Lawyer of Scotland. The volume was originally intended for
presentation to the Abbotsford Club of Edinburgh. But that Club having dis-
banded before the work was completed, it was presented for the acceptance
of the more enlightened of the general public.

The text contains bits of history it would be difficult to find elsewhere.
For example, in reference to the ballad "Rosey Anderson," Mr. Logan notes,
"The Nobleman mentioned in the ballad [Lord Elgin], who, it was admitted,
had been in the habit of meeting her on Kinnoul Hill, was afterwards Ambas-
sador to Constantinople. His first wife was Miss Nisbet of Dirlton, whom
he divorced in consequence of adultery with Mr. Ferguson of Raith. By his
second wife, Miss Oswald of Dunnekier, he was father of the late Earl, who,
need hardly be mentioned, was the first native of this country who opened
up a trade with Japan" (p. 393).

It would have been nice if the Singing Tree Press could have aided the
reader without hurting the charm of the book. The songs and ballads are
under various subject headings in the table of contents, but without chapter
breaks it is difficult to tell when you've moved from the Matrimonial into
the Miscellaneous section, etc.

Roni Bowie
Arlington, Va.

Modern Street Ballads, with Fifty-Six Illustrations. By John Ashton.

"Over Street Ballads may be raised by the wail of 'Ichabod
Ichabod, their glory is departed.' They held their own for
many centuries, bravely and well, but have succumbed to a
changed order of things, and a new generation has arise', who
will not stop in the streets to listen to these ballads being sung,
but prefer to have their music served up to them 'piping hot',
with the accompaniment of warmth, light, beer and tobacco
(for which they duly have to pay) at the Music Halls; but whether
the change be for the better, or not, may be a moot point.

"These Street Ballads were produced within a very few
hours of the publication of any event of the slightest public
interest... They owe a great deal of their charm to the fact
that they were absolutely contemporary with the events they
describe... Their literary merit is not great - but what can
you expect for half-a-crown? which was the price which
Jemmy Catnach... used to pay for their production.

"I have taken the first fifty years of this century, when
this style of Street Ballad was at its best... and I have selected
those that bear on most, and elucidate best, the social manners
and customs of that period

John Ashton" (from the Introduction,
1888 edition).
John Ashton compiled books in the fields of social history and folklore from his research at the British Museum, London. This current printing of *Modern Street Ballads* contains an introduction to John Ashton and a bibliography of his some thirty works published in London from 1882 to 1904.

There are 138 street ballads (or "broadside ballads") without melodies grouped in this book under the following headings: Social, Humorous, Country, Sea, The Queen, Historical, Political, Miscellaneous. The titles include "Villiken and His Dinah," "Miss Bailey's Ghost," "The Greenland Whale Fishery," "Jim Crow," "Botany Bay," "Van Dieman's Land" and "The Three Butchers".

John R. Dildine  
Accokeek, Maryland


Laura Alexandrine Smith published one of the earliest popular books to deal with sea chanties. It was assembled from a number of sources, including a bit of direct collecting on her own part and a good deal of second-hand information from more easily accessible consuls, captains, and enthusiasts. Setting the pace for later books about sea songs, she devoted much of her book to description of the life of a sailor and the working situations that encouraged chanties. In pursuit of the idea that people of the same class around the world sing the same sort of songs, she presented chantries from many foreign countries in addition to the core collection from the English-speaking world. The book is now reprinted by Singing Tree Press without prefatory comment.

Alan Jabbour  
Library of Congress


For Gomme folklore "consists of beliefs, customs, and traditions which are far behind civilisation in their intrinsic value to man, though they exist under the cover of a civilised nationality" (p. 2). These meaningless, functionless survivals, retained through inertia, are the remains of pre-Aryan cultures arrested at the savage level by overlaid strata of progressively more advanced Aryan cultures. The task of folklore science is to peel back these strata and, using a comparative method, to demonstrate the prehistoric non-Aryan provenience of the rude, irrational, and senseless customs of the peasantry. In this way the previously formless study of folklore is to be brought into line with developments in historical geology, philology, anthropology, and archaeology, but with a domain of scientific reality all its own: the stratigraphy of Aryan tradition.
Through Gomme's pages ripple the evolution--and--empire excitement and excess of Victorian Britain. The history of earth and man quivers on the brink of intelligibility. Unbeset by the intricacies that functionalist method would later reveal--one doesn't interview a peasant on the functional meaning of a practice when the practice has none by definition and when the peasant wouldn't know it in any event--the gentlemen folklorists go at their subject and at one another with a mannerly yet enthusiastic sharpness largely missing from latter-day interchange.

Of course one will not criticize modern folklore scholarship for making the Victorian folklorists out to be wrong, but one has to fault it for making them appear to be dull. The reappearance of books such as Gomme's will surely help to rectify the misimpressions fostered by the modern literature.

Kay L. Cothran
Univ. of Pennsylvania


Here is another ancient set of books, systematically researched and ably written before the science of folklore was born, now resuscitated by photoprinting. The first volume is devoted to yearly festivals. These are chronologically arranged through the year, beginning with New Year's Eve and ending with the Quaaltagh. Volume Two treats sundry other customs, games and celebrations such as "country wakes," "hunt-the-slipper," "foot-ball," and "popular notions concerning the apparition of the devil." The concluding volume deals with popular beliefs: sorcery, witchcraft, ghosts, omens and charms among similar faiths. Both for reading and for reference, the books are well worth owning. The index is thorough.

Frank Goodwyn
Univ. of Maryland


It is always nice to be asked to review a book with a title like Folk-Lore of Women. The editor, by his asking, implies that the reviewer is to some degree an authority, and who could fail to be flattered? As it turns out, one who had no knowledge of women, folkloristic or otherwise, could read Thiselton-Dyer's book and come away with quite the same impression as the expert, namely, that here is a volume of extremely limited usefulness. A short passage, selected at random, will illustrate.
Although a well-known proverb tells us that "a silent woman is always more admired than a noisy one," the Chinese have a favourite saying to the effect that "a woman's tongue is her sword, and she does not let it rust;" with which may be compared the Hindustani proverb, "For talk I'm best, for work my elder brother-in-law's wife;" which has its counterpart in this country, where it is said, "A woman's strength is in her tongue," and in Wales the adage runs...etc...

(p. 63)

Indeed so it runs--prattling through 27 chapters of women's eyebrows, women's secrets, women's blushes as remarked upon throughout the ages and around the world. In assembling this potpourri of witty sayings, the author did not think to separate formal literature from oral tradition, nor did he often stop to give sources for his gems. Nevertheless, taken a few pages at a time, Folk-Lore of Women reads pleasantly, and it does provide a particularly good example of an approach to oral tradition that has now fallen out of fashion: the uncritical accumulation of disembodied items for the sake of "a big collection."

In his other book, The Folk-Lore of Plants, Thiselton-Dyer strikes nearer the mark of modern folk culture studies. Although it suffers from the criticisms leveled above, Plants has more the feel of the treatise than the display case. It is better footnoted, and there are at least two chapters, "Doctrine of Signatures" and "Plants and the Calendar," that appear to contain authoritative information.

Still the question arises, What purpose might a book like this serve? I have turned to The Folk-Lore of Plants myself in the course of investigating traditional uses of wild plants in New York State and found it to be helpful in some respects, but not in others. It did not provide even a jot of information useful in the researching of beliefs and practices I uncovered in the fieldwork, but it did render a number of worthwhile leads in forming my questions.

"Can you use marigold somehow to fix things up between a boy and girl?" I would ask.

"Nope," the informant would say and then after a long pause, "but they's some say yarrow will do it."

In the age of moon rocks, a book that will help wring that kind of admission out of a man must be worth something.

Gerald E. Parsons
Univ. of Pennsylvania
RECORD NOTICES AND REVIEWS

The Smithsonian Institution with its Festival of American Folklife going into its fifth year has produced an lp drawn from performances during the festival's first three years. The record, similar to the Institution's brief film "Festival in Washington, D.C.," presents an overview. But where the film was brash (one suspects the publicist's influence), the record is calm, deliberate, and tastefully put together.

The job of selecting and editing seems staggering, considering the variety of material available. But the set is fairly well balanced. There is something to please almost everyone and nothing that should displease anyone.

Superb are Antonio Mosquero with his Galician bagpipes and Birch, Bill, and Charlie Monroe singing and playing a religious song -- on separate cuts. During the festival's bagpipe workshop in 1970, when asked to talk about his instrument, Mosquero played a tune, then shrugged his shoulders and excused himself, saying he wanted just to play. His tone is clear and his tunes filled with subtle changes in rhythm and melody. The festival performance was the Monroe brothers' first public reunion in over forty years, and this recording, according to Ralph Rinzler's jacket notes, is the first ever issued of the three brothers singing together. Bill Monroe, the father of bluegrass music who in 1970 was belatedly honored by country and western music's officialdom by being named to the Country Music Hall of Fame, is also represented on this record as he leads his group, the Blue Grass Boys, in his composition "Uncle Pen."

Others represented include Grandpa Jones, Chet Parker with his hammered dulcimer, Muddy Waters, Bernice Reagon, Ed Young and family, and the late Skip James.

One wishes that the excellent northeastern fiddling of the Riendeau family would have been balanced by including, say, a selection by the Texan Solomon brothers or North Carolinian J. E. Mainer. And some of the best music at the festival is not included. It came from the blacksmith's anvil, and though there seem to be a number of apprentice blacksmiths around, the musical smithy is rare.

Copies of the record (it's called "Festival of American Folklife") may be obtained at $3.50 apiece from the Division of Performing Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560. (Specify Stereo or Mono.)

After more than ten years of practice on stage and in living rooms any moment of which Joe Hickerson could have successfully recorded, he finally has produced an lp. It is "Folk Songs and Ballads sung by Joe Hickerson with a Gathering of Friends" (Folk-Legacy FSI-39) and is one of the best available recordings of revival singers.
The performer, Reference Librarian at the Archive of Folk Song, U. S. Library of Congress, has long been active not only in the scholarly discipline of folklore but in encouraging the enjoyment of applied folklore -- in singing, dance, and (not the least) cookery.

As the jacket notes observe, there is no gimmickry in the singing. The material is treated with respect -- be it a humorous ditty or tragic song. And there are both on the record.

Among the humorous, but by no means tawdry songs are "Lather and Shave" ("The Love of God Shave"), "The Thinnest Man" (he fell through a hole in the seat of his pants and choked himself to death), and "Woad" (the pigment used by Picts to cover their nakedness). There is a tragic "The Blind Fiddler." And there are such other good songs as "Good Fish Chowder" ("makes you hear the oceans roar") and "Going Down the Valley," the final song of the set. The latter song, concerning death and Christ, could be successfully sung only by very few revival singers. John Dildine's banjo and Barry O'Neill's concertina add significantly to some cuts.

Folk-Legacy's usual complete notes were not ready, but a postcard in the album requesting the notes when printed has been dispatched, and the notes are daily awaited in the mail. The record, at $5.98 may be obtained from Folk-Legacy Records, Sharon, Connecticut 06069.

George Simpson

PHILADELPHIA FOLK FESTIVAL 1970
A Report

Although this year's Philadelphia Folk Festival began with apparent emphasis on local surplus songwriters, it managed to have truly great moments. The latter included Bruce Phillips' workshop on Labor Songs, the Ceilidh, and the concept (though not the performances) of the Bawdy Song Workshop.

Some performers deserve special mention. Ola Belle Reed proved herself the only truly free spirit at the festival. Englishman Dave Cooper and the better known Roberts and Barand were outstanding newcomers to this festival.

Dave Van Ronk was among the performers, and for the benefit of those who, like myself, may not have seen him in the last few years, we duly report that he has not mellowed. Tom Paxton has too much intensity and too much band around him. His poignancy has suffered as a result.

Mike Cooney made a point of singing folk songs; an effort not generally made by other non-British Isle performers. Doc Watson and Paul Cadwell again proved that anyone with thirty-five fingers on their left hand can master a stringed instrument.

Philadelphia seems to have two very serious hangups, a devotion to John Hartford and a sadistic desire to deafen all those who pay for seats near the front. On the latter point, the sound crew's idea of good sound is to turn up all mikes to maximum (so they're heard better in the parking lot) and to hell with balance. One point of congratulations, though, this year they didn't drown out the voice mikes with the electric piano.

Richard Rodgers