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Note: Ave atque Vale! This is the final issue of Volume Two of the JOURNAL. Upcoming: Volume Three.
SOME AMERICAN URBAN FOLKLORE STUDIES IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By Esther K. Birdsall, University of Maryland

Urban folklore, contrary to popular opinion, is thriving in the United States. This fact has been substantiated in a number of articles, such as that of George Carey in the Winter issue of the Journal of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington. As he pointed out, urban folklore flourishes especially in the form of the urban belief tale, such as that of the rodent consumed by a woman at Gino's or the snakes in the imported sweaters at Klein's. Also, a number of articles in a recent issue of the Journal of American Folklore indicate that urban folklore exists in other forms, such as voodoo, superstitious concerning pregnancy and childbirth, and various ethnic customs and traditions. Furthermore, the drug subculture has generated another interesting type of urban folklore. For example, student collections at the University of Maryland indicate that drug-lore runs the gamut of traditional lore. This culture not only has its superstitions (only the most intelligent students use drugs), its own jargon such as "roach," but also some tall tales in the best tradition of the genre. Some of these tall tales pit the ineptness or stupidity of the officers of the law against the cleverness of those transporting or using drugs.

Another misconception about urban folklore is that it has interested few if any collectors or scholars until recently. Actually, urban folklore has been collected consciously or otherwise apparently since the beginning of the city. Broadside ballads composed in urban areas attracted the attention of scholars before William Thoms coined the term "folk-lore" in 1846. This brief paper will not attempt to trace the history of either collecting or studying urban folklore; it will focus on the interest in American urban folklore during the late nineteenth century as reflected in the first few volumes of the Journal of American Folklore.

William W. Newell, the first editor of the Journal, did not solicit urban folklore; instead he asked the readers to submit "relics of Old English Folk-Lore...lore of the Negroes in the Southern States...lore of the Indian Tribes of North America...lore of French Canada, Mexico, etc." Later in the article he did concede that "the belief in witchcraft lingers, not only in remote valleys of Virginia and Tennessee, but in the neighborhood of Eastern cities" (p. 4). Not only could he not quite bring himself to accept the fact that these beliefs lingered in the cities themselves; he was seemingly unaware of the urban folklore that flourished among immigrants in many American cities.

Fortunately, Newell and other members of the fledgling Society of American Folklore encouraged the formation of regional chapters. As early as 1890, there was an energetic Philadelphia chapter which aspired "to devote itself to the study of the 'Folk-Lore' of Philadelphia and the region for about a hundred miles around the city" (JAF, 3 (1890), 79). Apparently, some members of this chapter understood the sources and nature of urban folklore. For example, they wished to collect dialectical peculiarities of English speaking people, many facets of the Afro-American folk culture, and they singled out three immigrant cultures: Chinese, Italian, and German. It should be noted that for each group they suggested specific items, such as imported or adopted rites, games, and customs among the Chi-
nese. In addition to collecting folklore, the chapter wished to establish a library devoted to the folklore of Philadelphia and its vicinity. Finally, according to an abstract from the Public Ledger of Philadelphia there were also plans for a folklore museum in Philadelphia (JAF, 3 (1890), 312).

How much did the Philadelphia chapter actually contribute to our knowledge of urban folklore? According to a note in the JAF, Henry Phillipps, Jr., published the article "First Contributions to the Folk-Lore of Philadelphia and its Vicinity" in Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society in 1888 (JAF, 2 (1889), 231). Stewart Culín contributed a small item on the survival of voodooism in Philadelphia to the JAF. His informant was a physician who had written a death certificate for a Negro man who had died of consumption. However, some member of the deceased man's family did not believe the doctor's diagnosis and insisted that he had been bewitched. The physician also told Culín that the voodoo cult was fairly extensive among Philadelphia Negroes (JAF, 2 (1889), 233).

Immigrant urban folklore also received some attention from members of the Philadelphia chapter. For example, at its February meeting, Culín read a paper on "Chinese American Folk-Lore" which was highly praised by Daniel G. Brinton who encouraged further studies in Chinese folklore. Another member read a paper entitled, "Sketch of a Moravian Divine on a pleasure tour in Philadelphia and Bethlehem in the year 1839." Another member asked chapter members to help him locate a volume of Philadelphia street cries supposedly published early in the nineteenth century. At the April meeting, T.F. Crane from Cornell University read a paper on "The Field of Italian Folk-Lore." A member of the chapter read a paper based on a visit to an Italian Marionette Theater in Brooklyn (JAF, 3 (1890), 164).

An account of this visit was published in the Journal (JAF, 3 (1890), 156). The account is interesting to the modern folklore student because the lore was reported in context. The collector described the Italian neighborhood of Brooklyn; he discussed the difficulty in finding someone who would introduce him to the proprietor of the puppet theater, and finally he gave a detailed explanation of the intricacies of the production of a puppet show about Saracens and Christians, which according to him the audience enjoyed very much.

Culin also understood the need for fieldwork and documentation of urban lore. Having become interested in Chinese secret societies in New York and Philadelphia, he researched his topic in various books and newspapers before undertaking actual fieldwork. His descriptions of meeting halls of Chinese secret societies were sensitive and objective. In addition, he tried to analyze some of the rituals of these societies and also speculated on reasons for the poor reputation of some of these meeting halls (JAF, 3 (1890), 39-43).

Perhaps the author of "Notes on the Chinese in Boston" (JAF, 5 (1892), 321-324) also intended to give a sensitive and objective report, but she did not succeed; she supplied too little information about her sources. She tried to discuss some of the customs of the Chinese in Boston in their cultural context by describing their neighborhood, their foods, and their shops. However, being affiliated with a Chinese missionary society evidently caused her to focus on such problems as whether or not some Chinese scoffed at Christianity after their conversion. Furthermore, except for mentioning some boys at the mission as informants, she failed to document sufficiently a potentially useful article.
Although the American Folklore Society recognized the existence of lore in the cities, especially that of immigrants, in the following statement:

Our great cities, bringing together, as they do, a various population recruited from every part of the globe, give occasion for studies in which information is to be obtained not only on the printed page but at first hand and from living persons; and examination of the ideas and customs imported by such immigrants will continue to furnish material for the pages of the Journal (JAF, 4 (1891), 4),

not too much urban folklore appeared in the Journal during the 1890's. There is evidence, however, that the collecting of urban folklore was encouraged. For example, the Baltimore chapter was advised by one of its guest speakers to collect the folklore of Baltimore city (JAF, 8 (1895), 90).

How then does one account for the paucity of urban folklore submitted to the Journal? First, one must bear in mind that many members of the American Folklore Society were anthropologists who were primarily, and rightly so, interested in collecting the lore of American Indians. Second, although all the regional chapters were urban based, not every chapter had a Stewart Culin who was both interested in and competent to collect urban folklore in a systematic fashion. Perhaps one of the best urban collections to appear in the Journal during the 1890's was Culin's "Street Games of Boys in Brooklyn, N.Y." (JAF, 4 (1891), 221-237). The opening paragraph attests to his ability:

The games of which I shall give an account are all boys' games or games in which both boys and girls participate, and were described to me by a lad of ten years residing in the city of Brooklyn, N.Y., as games in which he himself had taken part. They are all games played in the streets, and some of them may be recognized as having been modified to suit the circumstances of city life, where paved streets and iron lamp-posts and telegraph poles take the place of the village common, fringed with forest trees, and Nature, trampled on and suppressed, most vividly reasserts herself in the shouts of the children whose games I shall attempt to describe.

The main thrust of the article is a description of thirty-six games and their variants. His intense interest in urban folklore asserted itself in the conclusion of the article. He asked his Brooklyn informant about street gangs and received practically no information. However, upon his return to Philadelphia, he continued to pursue street gangs and with the help of local boys and adults he managed to compile a considerable list of Philadelphia street gangs and their locales. If only Culin had collected some of their lore!

However, Culin also had his lapses as "Concerning Negro Sorcery in the United States" (JAF, 3 (1890), 281-287) indicates. It is a curious conglomeration of rural and urban lore, most of it gleaned rather uncritically from newspapers. For example, from the Philadelphia Evening Telegram of August 7, 1884, he reprinted the following item: "The left hind foot of
a graveyard rabbit, which has a potent influence among the Southern negroes (sic), has been presented to Governor Cleveland as a talisman in the campaign. The rabbit from which the foot was taken was shot on the grave of Jesse James." Although the item certainly is interesting in that it fuses two traditions, voodoo and the esteem accorded to the outlaw hero Jesse James, it is, like many items in the collection, unsatisfactory in that it does not identify the group or individual who made the presentation.

One item in the collection of Negro socery submitted by Mrs. Fanny D. Bergen was collected from an informant, albeit a white one. According to his account, a Charleston, S.C., Negro domestic was hospitalized for hysteria and insanity. Although her employers were most solicitous about her health and tried to provide the best medical care available, the girl did not respond. Finally, a voodoo doctor was allowed to administer some of his medicine, and the girl recovered promptly. Of more interest to the modern reader is Mrs. Bergen's comment on her informant: "My informant in regard to this case is a man of ample education and much culture, of marked scientific tastes, and personally acquainted with most of the parties concerned. He saw the girl while in the hospital, and had the account of her case from attending physicians, as well as from her employers." Evidently, Mrs. Bergen, like many people today, could not bring herself to admit that superstitions are found among educated and uneducated alike.

Was any urban folklore collected in Washington, D.C.? Although Washington did not have a chapter of the American Folklore Society, some of the members of the national organization were interested in the lore of their area. Although brief, W.H. Babcock's "Notes on Local Names near Washington" (JAF, 1 (1888), 146) discussed such place-names as Lincoln Banks which according to old-timers was originally Lickin' Banks. His speculations on the reason for the change are more interesting than informative. As for the change of Tee Bee to T.B. he did what many others have done, namely blamed the post office. In the same volume, he published some superstitions collected in Washington, such as, "A stallion 'draws lightning' more readily than any other animal of the horse kind" (164). However, he was especially interested in charms given to him by "native American white people, and which charms have been practised by young women within a few years." The charms dealt with prognostications of future spouses: "Wind a ball of yarn. Throw it out of an upstairs window, saying, 'I draw, who pulls? I draw, who pulls?' It will be thrown back by the man you will marry."

In a later issue, (JAF, 4 (1891), 172) Babcock described two ghosts or "ghosses" who supposedly were settled near his house in Georgetown. One was a yellow dog, reputedly the specter of a Negress who had fallen to her death from an apple tree. He found no explanation for her appearance in dog form. Nor was he able to find an explanation for the seemingly harmless "Vanishing Bundle" ghost. However, in his search for explanations, he received some information about "ghossy" etiquette. For example, if one wishes to communicate with a ghost, one must do so in one breath, and one must not say anything displeasing to a ghost lest he vanish. His informant on these matters illustrated the latter thus: When she encountered the ghost of a man who had been very bloated in life and even more so after death, she mentioned the physical defect to him. Naturally, he vanished.

Like others, Babcock found it difficult to accept the fact that a girl who "is sane enough in matters of the moment, so far as tested, fair-dealing and truthful" could be acquainted with superstitions. He even wondered
whether her "ghossy" lore had actually been transmitted to her or whether she had fabricated it. Perhaps a modern study of urban folklore such as Ellen Stekert's "Focus for Conflict: Southern Mountain Medical Beliefs in Detroit" (JAF, 83 (1970), 115-147) would convince him that his "sane" informant's introduction to "ghossy" etiquette was in all probability genuine folklore.

There were, of course, other articles pertaining to urban folklore in the early issues of the Journal of American Folklore, but this brief sampling should be sufficient to dispel the notion that the collecting and studying of urban folklore is a recent phenomenon.

Footnotes:
1 For more on "Snakes in Sweaters," see Newsletter of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington (Sup.) V:10, 3. Ed.
2 Anyone interested in the many manifestations and implications of contemporary folklore should read the articles and discussions in the Journal of American Folklore, 83 (1970), iii-ix, 115-270.
4 H. Carrington Bolton, "The Black String," JAF, 8 (1895), 259, is an interesting presentation of the importance of love charms. The information was collected from an inhabitant of a former Gaelic speaking section of New York.

ON THE MALL AND AT WOLF TRAP

At this year's Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian Institution, Utah Phillips apparently found his style -- no punny patter, no rambling jokes, just straight songs and the reasons behind them. Perhaps he was spurred by the emphasis on labor, conceived and arranged with the help of Archie Green. Jim Garland, Sarah Gunning, Florence Reece, Hazel Dickens, and Joe Glazer put flesh and blood on the songs and stories of labor. On the other hand, there was a gaily costumed contingent from Puerto Rico performing native dances and songs, their trip apparently financed at least in part by the government of Puerto Rico. But the life they portrayed was light years from the life of the Rios family as documented by Oscar Lewis in La Vida. It's hard to show the whole truth -- the folklife of the streets, bars, and jails, of the pimps, whores, poor, and children of the poor -- of the unreal city. This year's National Folk Festival was part of the opening season of the nation's first park for the performing arts, Wolf Trap Farm Park in Vienna, Virginia. The park was ideal for daytime workshops. An evening concert, hosted by Rev. F.D. Kirkpatrick, was all black (with the exception, if I recall of one or two members of J.B. Hutto's group). But despite this welcome attention to the music, not one black was credited with any planning or managing of the festival. I assume none were involved at that level. Freedom is a constant struggle! Also it is odd that Edna Ritchie, John Jacob Niles, Asa Martin, and Pierce Van Hoy's group who performed during the day did not appear at all on the evening concerts.

-Sol Pugida, Bethesda, Maryland

By George A. Simpson, Study Commission on Maryland Folklife

In Charles Haywood's A Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong, where adjacent states Pennsylvania and Virginia are represented by six pages of items, Maryland has a scant page and a half -- and the only book on the list solely devoted to folklore is Whitney and Bullock's Folk-Lore of Maryland published by the American Folklore Society in 1925.

It is a fact that Maryland, which shares many characteristics with Pennsylvania and Virginia, has received little attention from folklorists. Yet the state is abundant in those conditions which have proved most rewarding to field workers in folklore, including, for instance, geographical isolation and ethnic and occupational homogeneity.

These conditions are, to some extent, portrayed in this set of reprints. Though there is little legend, less lore, and much conventional history in these books, they do give a composite picture, however much out-of-date, of the state.

The outstanding work in this set is Scharf's history. Scharf himself was outstanding -- a native of Baltimore, a Roman Catholic, a Southern sympathizer, and a prolific writer. His biases are obvious, but they never prevent him from quoting differing authorities. In the history, he quotes extensively from contemporary sources, which were readily accessible to him, and he writes with a grace and elan peculiarly Victorian, but like a breath of fresh air after the work of modern scribes. His history is broad, embracing the social, economic, and cultural background. There are sections on dress and custom (including folk medicine), and a smattering of place-name legends.

To my mind, this is the definitive (to 1879) history of Maryland. The only major criticism is that it is uneven, the colonial period receiving by far the major treatment. It seems, too, that there is much peripheral detail. Most of the major battles of the various wars are recorded on the basis that Marylanders played prominent roles in them. There is one obvious error: the stamp act was repealed in 1766 not 1765 (vol. 1, p. 551). And to update things: in 1780 Congress ordered a monument raised to the fallen Baron de Kalb; though still not built in 1879 (vol. 2, p. 366), this statue now stands on the south lawn of the state house grounds in Annapolis. There is a new index to this edition, which is particularly good on proper names. However, the Labadists (vol. 1, p. 431) seem to have been missed.

Marine's history also is exceptional. He, too, quotes many differing sources, but unlike Scharf he eschews editorial comment and hews close to the Maryland line (although Towson, a native of Maryland, did command troops invading Canada, his story is not part of the War of 1812 in Maryland). The list of names which comprises half this book seems a waste to all but genealogists. Andrews' history, though in a fashion bringing the state's history up to 1929, still emphasizes the colonial period. Also, it is written in a listless, imposing style. However, unlike the other histories in this set, it is fairly well documented. As pseudo-history, Princess Mary of Maryland is based on chronicles of early exploration. It was written expressly for children and is a good example of this genre.
Perhaps the firmer we are entrenched in our myths the easier it is to identify and begin to demolish those of other peoples and other times. But it seems gross that Beirne, as late as 1951, can write that "Jewish banking firms maintain the ancient tradition of the Jew's peculiar genius in finance" (p. 213). This is little comfort to Jews who are not rich or well-off, for they are twice cursed -- not only are they poor but they are poor in frustration of their "peculiar genius." Regardless, Beirne's book is worth reading, although his attempt to epitomize Baltimoreans fails. An equally applicable title for the book would have been "The Amiable Mob-towners."

More gross still are the racism and bigotry in Footner, who dislikes "uppity" Negroes (p. 170), and in Kent, whose constant refrain is the need for "disfranchising negroes" (sic) and "elimination of the ignorant and vicious negro as a political factor" (p. 265) (sic, again).

One-fourth of Footner's book is devoted to a step-by-step walk through downtown Baltimore, and the rest to local history, legends, and the homes of the great and near-great throughout Maryland (a map is all but indispensable in reading this book). On one point, Footner is correct. For the most part, Marylanders are provincial and sedentary. Family names, which first appeared in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, continue to appear in almost all areas of the state. On another point, Footner is continually wrong: it is "Centreville" and not "Centerville" (p. xi etc.). And though Pimlico is a section of Baltimore, it is "Pamlico Sound" (p. 15). Footner's reputation, I believe, will rest on his later Rivers of the Eastern Shore, which is better written and displays some degree of sensitivity.

Frank Kent was a remarkable man -- a political expert, a life-long Democrat, and our first modern political columnist and commentator. This book was written when he was in his thirties, a young newspaperman enamored of his profession and overawed by elder political leaders. It was unjust to his memory to reprint this work, which may be a primary source that should be in all libraries, but is exquisite torture to the general reader who must plough through lists of candidates for such obscure posts as that of clerk of the court of appeals to get to interesting snippets of a reporter's information on Rasin, Gorman, William Pinkney Whyte, and other politicians of the period. And this period extends only from the Civil War to just before World War I, hardly warranting the book's grandiose title. Only extensive surgery and editing could have helped. One wonders if David J. Lewis (p. 360) is the same Davey Lewis who tried, with Franklin Roosevelt's blessing, to unseat Millard Tydings in the 1930's. Good editing may have provided the answer. Even James H. Bready in his introduction damns this book with the faintest of praise.

The one book in this group most closely related to folklife is Gilbert Byron's story of growing up early in this century on the Eastern Shore. It also is the most readable, enjoyable, and human book in the lot. In short vignettes, surely autobiographical perhaps with some embellishment, Byron writes of the son of a waterman taking the steamer to Baltimore, visiting the showboat, making money selling hokey-pokies at the fair, helping to beat biscuits, and growing up among peepers, peelers, and shitepokes. It is life in a tight-knit, isolated community, written from the inside, and, as stories of youth in such communities go -- and there are some good ones -- this is a minor classic.
Klingel's book bears little relation to folklore or folklife. It is a naturalist's view of the Chesapeake, but should intrigue anyone interested in life in its myriad forms. This book was written only twenty years ago, but Klingel's bay, like that of Captain John Smith three centuries earlier, was a "paradise." It should startle us all that this is no longer so.

Things are moving so fast that much has happened since 1957, the latest date of the original publication of these books. The disturbances in April, 1968, gave the coup de grace to the Baltimore that Footner and Beirne wrote of, and vast sections of that and other cities now stand as mute testimony to our selfishness and ignorance. In the knowledge of recent history, most of these books seem like fossils trapped in the strata of time. It is ironic that the most relevant book in this group is Scharf's history, but Scharf wrote more than mere reportage. And, in his work, Gilbert Byron, the Eastern Shore's unofficial poet laureate, has written the story of Everyboy, which should be relevant as long as there are boys -- and they have to grow up.

The History of Maryland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day.

THE STUDY COMMISSION ON MARYLAND FOLKLIFE

After more than two years of canvassing the state, the Study Commission on Maryland Folklife submitted its final report early this year to the Governor and General Assembly. The report, which contained an introductory guide to Maryland folklife and folklore by George Carey, called for establishing an archive of Maryland folklife and employing a trained folklife researcher. A bill, based on the report, was introduced in this year's session of the General Assembly, but failed to clear the Senate Finance Committee. Subsequently, the Commission was dissolved and its effects turned over to the State Hall of Records in Annapolis.
Moving Folklore: A Review Essay

By Kay L. Cothran, Atlanta, Georgia

And out of what one sees and hears and out
Of what one feels, who could have thought to make
So many selves, so many sensuous worlds,
As if the air, the midday air, was swarming
With the metaphysical changes that occur,
Merely in living as and where we live.

--Wallace Stevens, "Esthétique du Mal"

Ray L. Birdwhistell is a gracious gentleman and extraordinarily fine teacher, and at least once during my single term of study with him I wanted to roll up my xerox copy of the splendid bibliography to the present volume and beat his head off. Having made this backhanded and self-congratulatory admission of bias, I should like to talk about what this book is not good for.

I cannot overemphasize that it is neither textbook nor handbook in kinesics, although it bristles with notations and reprints parts of the author's 1952 Introduction to Kinesics. Neither is it a vulgarized super-Freudian tome revealing what sprawls, squirms, and grimaces really (tee-hee) mean; if the reader would know whether SHE WILL or whether his informant loves his microphone as much as he does, this book will grossly disappoint. Similarly, the book does not recommend itself to those who think social communication would be as transparent as Finnegans Wake had we only a skeleton key to it; who prefer the linear and expository to the recursive and dialectic ("multilectic," professor?); who think Lévi-Strauss is either Christ or AntiChrist rather than Johann Sebastian Lucifer; who believe that statistics, shorthands, and information theory exhaust the account of man, or who recoil from these as dehumanizing via the mark of the Beast 666; who think that fieldwork and teaching amount to feeling good or exchanging goods. Narcosis, commerce, autism, revelation, seduction, and autoeroticism I do not object to except as suppositious social science. Finding nothing mere-tricious in this book, I must nonetheless complain that since there is no full index, finding anything at all is next to impossible.

Twenty-eight selections, most of them reprintings or excerpts of previously published articles on moving American English, stand in five parts dealing successively with learning, isolating, approaching, collecting data upon, and researching this part of social communication that is body motion. Readers unfamiliar with the critical importance of the term "social communication" in Birdwhistell's thought might read Part II and selection 28 first. Readers who can neither be coaxed nor shamed out of their terror of notation systems may profitably confine themselves to selections 1 through 15, 28, and pages 186 through 193 of selection 26.

Birdwhistell does not deny psychology but strictly avoids the category errors invariably committed in mixing psychological and sociological talk. While his borrowing the machinery of structural linguistics may put off readers unversed in this jargon, Birdwhistell ever applies rigorous self-scrutiny as guard against false analogies that would reduce his terminology to pretentious clatter promiscuously got.

Social communication shows itself as multidimensional in at least three ways. First, there exist many combinations of the senses usable in
communicating. The living social organism communicates continuously whether it wishes to or not; it can tune out but not turn off until it literally drops out dead from society, and even then it is remembered (pun intended). Second, communication serves not only to disseminate new information but also to integrate interactions: keeping them going, keeping them going properly, making each segment intelligible vis-a-vis the whole, and making the whole intelligible vis-a-vis other contexts. Third, while communication flows continuously, its segments overlapping, a given interaction takes place in space and time, neither of which need be continuous in the naive-realistic sense. Each performance of, let us say, a folktale builds onto a space-time whole unto itself but discontinuous relative to clock time and map space. Communication not only relates but is relativistic.

Through the process of socialization the social organism absorbs that part of the culture's range of communication patterns which will maintain him as a reasonably predictable social being; his socialization started long before he physically existed and in some sense extends beyond his physical extinction. Not simple difference but systematic queering, difference-in-relation-to, of expected behavior patterns -- including communication patterns -- strikes us as insane on the part of individuals, who must be resocialized, incarcerated, sacralized, or killed. When we enter a group exhibiting such systematic distortions of our own patterns, we experience culture shock, for not-our-order seems to be disorder and not-our-communication pattern seems to be communication broken down to the Ego under sensory assault. Our integrative patterns no longer apply and we do not know how to manage the new information pummeling us. We become ill, not from no communication but from too much of it for us to handle at that time.

A less terrifying example I draw from my fieldwork in southern Georgia. Southern urban middleclass upbringing taught me that only tedious peddlers, bothersome religious crackpots, credit bureau snoops, and persons of less savory occupation yet, ask strangers to allow them into the house. Only the daft so allow them. The proper response consists of fixing the fellow with surly eye in gelid face and closing the door firmly while inviting him to get lost. In the rural field I had often to appear unbidden on strange doorsteps requesting an interview and ordinarily was pulled cheerfully inside before uttering the first word. Knowing that I would never be rebuffed -- such is the rule in that region -- I always hoped to be, for it would have reassured me that I dealt with proper sane people and would have punished me for behaving badly. At times this ethnocentric annoyance with self and subjects, all of whom systematically violated my privacy-protection rules, threatened to paralyze my research, until the situation at last became so clear that it turned funny and thus manageable.

Not an additive process, communication has no natural, denotative, pure, archaic (choose one) core stream modified by other subsidiary and redundant streams. As in contemporary grammatical thought, the subject-predicate distinction dissolves. Communicational infrasystems do not mean in isolation but only in relation. Modifying is a superfluous notion if all things modify. What linguists call the double articulation of language instructs here. Phones signify nothing except in relation to phonemes, which in turn signify not in themselves but only related to morphs, and so on. One looks not inside a form or category of forms for meaning, but rather toward its regular relationships with other forms or categories, in an ordered hierarchy. One
looks inside for syntax, not for semantics. The whole becomes an ordered symphonic universe of discourses. Just as each discussion recurs upon and rewrites the history of the seminar, flipping now this Gestalt and now that into focus, so does social communication become an active, instrumental aspect of culture.

There exist difficult discontinuities among the works of Birdwhistell and those of Edward Hall, Erving Goffman, Alan Lomax, and the ethnographers of communication. Hall uses the dyadic encounter as paradigmatic, as western culture would have us presuppose, to talk about how events are spaced and timed. Goffman also treats of encounters, in which microbehaviours function though probably out-of-awareness, talking about what Ego experiences with respect to presentation, persona, and definition. I think that both Goffman and Hall, unlike Birdwhistell, start from the strategic premiss that man can not-communicate. Lomax deals with macroscopic "multimodal packages" (to use Birdwhistell's term), broadbrush ethnological contours.

Birdwhistell and Lomax prove the most strict scientists of the lot, by courtesy of their universes of data and choices of methods as well as by toughness of mind. Both have worked extensively with other specialists; even Weber would have needed colleagues nowadays. Neither, however, is a constricted scientific fundamentalist. Unable to speak further for any besides myself, I will do science as readily as poetry so long as I can distinguish them, formulating hypothesis or metaphor -- structured resonant analogy -- as may be. Despite my suspicion that the two ultimately fuse, I try to distinguish science from poetry because one can in principle confirm or disconfirm a hypothesis, while one can refuse or discredit but never disconfirm a metaphor. Thus some things can be done with metaphors but not hypotheses, and the other way about. One likes to know which he has. Given that no one knows anything about the psychology of scientific or poetic creativity but only about testing and criticism after the facts, and since there may be less difference even then than now generally assumed, one breathes deeply, falls back upon good logical positivist intuition about such things, and gets on with business.

In the end how one gets from microscopies to social communication and beyond, from infrasystem to encounter to ethnography to ethnology, considering that the man in the middle, the ethnographer, experiences not interaction but encounter and encounters not society but people, does not admit of immediate answer even by Birdwhistell. Ethnography under these conditions demands a pinpoint-aimed, intense and sternly-disciplined poetic thrust that uses the observer fearfully and cruelly dry. While no one knows better than Birdwhistell that one could fit the Cape Kennedy missile assembly building through some of the holes in his thought to date, his ideas derived from emergent evolution and Durkheimian sociology are as exhilaratingly suggestive as they are arguable. Let folklorists therefore not rush to deify, ape, or belittle. Let us learn and with exquisite care apply.

To the folklorist this book says that folkloric meaning does not occur "inside" taped and transcribed texts or filmed performances any more than linguistic meaning occurs within words or sentences. Purchasing new arsenals of gadgets with which to harass informants and pick to bits their performances cannot obviate the need for well-trained, sensitive, flexible eyeball-and-interview researchers. Folklore taken raw may have little new-informational content, being highly integrative. The integrations effected, however, may on some other level generate much new information via cross-indexing; thus might folklore well-done reorder a life history or the history
of a society, become a reality-producing fantasy regenerative of folklife. Folkloric creativity is a problem only if multidimensionality is ignored or if loose psychological talk is used to express smug ethnocentric simplisms.

I should never argue that the techniques proper to the study of social communication can exhaustively treat such genuine problems related to creativity as submorphemics, phonetic harmony, and formula construction. Birdwhistell would not reduce all of culture to communication, and I would issue a caveat against the sort of naive functionalism that would commit Whitehead's fallacy of misplaced concreteness by conferring upon "social communication" the status of brute ontological "given," when it actually refers to an analytical perspective.²

The point I would make to folklorists, however, is the following one. Suppose one hears a Georgia fundamentalist protestant preacher employ a parable which seems to the observer not merely irrelevant to but destructive of the moral being urged but finds the congregation responding as though to some entirely fitting narrative? To be content with a patronizing remark upon the irrationality of southern fundamentalists, as to be content with a condescending pseudosummary of dear old colorfully simple peasant folk speech, insults the informants' intelligences and renders that of the observer suspect. To look for integrative cross-indexing elements proves much more enlightening and enlightened.

From the descriptive material on body motion in this book the researcher on English-language American folklore can learn to amplify his own data, but he would radically underuse the volume's wealth of teaching if he made only this application. I have no argument with those folklorists who want to do comparative literature, save to say that I prefer not to, and the same applies to those who want to do continental-style Volkskunde. It does disturb, however, that some folklorists who would speak social-scientifically have not educated themselves beyond the superficialities of social science and remain thoroughly illiterate in the philosophic groundwork of social science.

My generation of folklorists -- recent and almost Ph.D.'s -- is likely to have to know more, bear more, understand more, fight more, heal more, than any group of teachers in recent history. We cannot do so by means of glib, thin fripperies of social science overlaying defensive ignorance. Perhaps we cannot do so at all, either times or temperaments or both being fatally out of joint. Regardless of what becomes of the greater tribe of "Emedaca," we of the lineage of folklore studies must read and understand important books like this one by Ray Birdwhistell, not just to keep Chicken Little quiet and Universitas marching on, but to build the discipline that makes a discipline. Not-decadence is not enough.


²Gregory Bateson makes this point admirably clear in another context in "Culture Contact and Schismogenesis," Man, XXXV (1935), 178-83.
So many bad things can be said of this book that I scarcely know which to say first. The prose style roams from good journales to bad Vonnegut to oopsy-poopsy cute. Parts Two, Three, and Four ("Transience," "Novelty," and "Diversity"), Whitmanesque catalogs of the erstwhile au courant, look like marshaled data from which something is forever about to be induced, but unmask as relevance-at-any-price and lip service to Aristotle. Toffler makes his points in Parts One, Five, and Six, and must have added the other three parts because books are supposed to have middles as well as beginnings and ends, and never mind that Part Five would have sufficed.

If the foregoing does not convince one that half the book amounts to hip gimcrackery signifying not nothing but not much, either, let him recall that McLuhan uses the same "data" to show that individuals, far from falling apart internally into shock and socially into anomie, are being electronically consubstantiated into one world tribe! For western civilization the problem may be that both Toffler and McLuhan, however bizarre their logics, arrive at sound conclusions and that both centripetal and centrifugal forces rip at us.

Your reviewer, being but twenty-four and reasonably indestructible, fails to see how this problem plaguing western civilization -- assuming it does plague us -- differs in kind from those perplexing any civilization in or before history. Similarly, although "future shock" excellently characterizes a present-day disorder, its very linguistic derivation shows it to refer to a special case of "culture shock," not to a new social-psychological disease altogether.

We Americans adore revolutions. Every new soap powder inaugurates one. But Toffler's revolution is spurious, being only a turning-up and not a turning-around. For example modularity, a principle of which Toffler makes much, is at least as old as the Japanese tatami mat -- thoughtfully brought to my attention by my colleague Mark Mealing -- and as venerable as the Scottish-Irish-German rectangular log cabin.

In Part One, "The Death of Permanence," Toffler shows that "future shock" aptly labels certain phenomena considered from a certain point of view. In Part Five, "The Limits of Adaptability," he discusses Selye's stress theory of disease to buttress his case. Part Six he devotes to "Strategies for Survival," and while his strategies strike me as painfully early-sixties liberal or simply phantasmagorical, Toffler has seen his vision through.

But how we remedy the damage inflicted by a careless, self-serving technology unlikely to become any less careless or self-serving, and how we cure the shock of overchoice and informational overkill by regressing to Athenian direct democracy and "progressing" to expert cliques (the same who gave us Viet Nam?), purely baffles me. I visualize trying to mend the gashes of strip mining by tacking down Astro-Turf and hear the reassurance that if we dump enough detergent into Lake Erie it will eventually get clean.

Toffler's faith in the corrigibility of profit-motive technology I do not share, not because I tropistically contemn machines but because I distrust their operators and gag at the notion of a group powerful enough and
thus corruptible enough to really turn our megamachine around. Besides, by the time any of Toffler's strategies could be implemented -- which would merely require the replacement of every economic, political, military, industrial, social, informational, etceteral power system in the world -- we should have all gone too catatonically into future shock to care.

So why bother with reading this or any book? First, because, future shock is a legitimate notion. There may be a limit to human society's ability to adjust cultural patterns for the individual's management of ever-faster-flowing event-time. Yet not all subjectively experienced time streams, and each of us swims in many, have so dreadfully sped up, and as Toffler correctly notes not all individuals have the same tolerances. As individuals we must make our ways, and as folklorists we must comprehend the temporal patterns and problems of our subject peoples. They, no more than we, live in the past, regardless of the nineteenth-century assumptions some of us continue to cultivate.

Further, folklore-folklife researches tend to emphasize the past, or at most the past-in-present, and we need to learn to think in terms of the folklife of the future, in order to comprehend that of the present and because the future is where we shall spend the rest of our careers participant-observing. Lamentably but understandably, our discipline shows no more aptitude than our civilization for maintaining a two-handed grip on the knowledge of the necessity of perspective.

Toffler assumes our civilization's trajectory matches that of Progress, a little-brown-brother Peace Corps-ism of which various nonwestern peoples (and some western ones) could disabuse him. A taste of Fanon's bile, perhaps too bitter a medicine but still a perspective, might help. Blacks and other American minorities, including southern whites, will no longer endure our refusal to be in touch with their realities of today and tomorrow. Any anthropologist can explain how and why these defensive-aggressive nationalistic groups avoid being in touch with our present and future. The question is what we students of various aspects of culture intend to do about our own shortcomings, and whether we shall eventually do our subject peoples the final insult of promulgating what they say they feel about themselves this minute as the gospel uncomplicated simple-minded truth, as though they had not depth of mind nor skill of tongue to symbolize, select, reinterpret, fantasize, rationalize, complicate and lie.

Finally, I commend Toffler's book to folklorists and all teachers for his recognition of the extent to which American education apes the mass production factory. This sounds like an easy gibe, and is, but the truth in no wise diminishes therefore. More than thirty years ago W.J. Cash traced the symbiosis of public education and the cotton mill in southern states. By no accident do public schools in the south and elsewhere resemble the mills and factories contemporary with them. By no accident do hideously many colleges and universities resemble public lower schools, and not by a long chalk is this resemblance solely a matter of funereal architecture and shoddy, deeply damaged, inutile "products." Having leaped from the medieval to the post-industrial in about a half century, higher education itself shows symptoms of future shock.
If best-seller lists mean anything, a great many people are buying, if neither reading nor reading sufficiently critically, Toffler's work. Imagine a best-seller with a good bibliography! Though perhaps it fails as a therapy for temporal claustrophobia, half this book warrants serious consideration for the stimulus it may give to sounder efforts. As for the other half -- lackaday, nobody plays "trivia" anymore.


In the 20's and 30's, a number of books about the people of the Upland South, the Appalachians, appeared. John C. Campbell's The Southern Highlander and His Homeland, Horace Hephart's Our Southern Highlanders, and Allan Eaton's Handicrafts in the Southern Highlands were three of the best known. And though they had all travelled extensively in the area, and had become intensely fond of the place and its people, they wrote from the outsider's point of view. James Watt Raine, however, though an English professor at Berea College, was in and of the culture and his book about Appalachia has the advantages of a narrative made by an insider. His objective in writing the book was no different than that of the others -- to reveal life and culture of the mountain folk as it was, without romanticization, to the outside world, to make them feel for and appreciate them as they came to understand them better. Yet Raine's book has the tone and content that comes only with the insider's ease with and affection for his own land and people.

This book is an informative, nicely written document of folklife in the Upland South, and remains an important early documentation of Appalachia's problems and needs. For the folklorist and sociologist in particular, and for the person interested in oral traditions and regional cultures, the book is especially valuable. Raine recounts no newly-discovered, long-hidden pieces of traditional lore or custom. But he takes the familiar bits and pieces of lore, of custom, of belief -- the crafts and practices, the dances and songs -- and puts them in the context of daily life and history. The folkways and the folklore are seen as they live, and more importantly, as the mountain people themselves saw them and lived them. Folk history -- the history of feuds, of local "characters," of remembered history -- is interwoven with the recorded history of the migrations, religious affiliations, wars, and settlements. More than any of the other books on the Highlands, this one is full of accurately recorded, representative folk speech, all set down with a commentary on its origins, antecedents, development, and use.

But Raine had concerns beyond the offering of information, though the information itself is worth the price of the book. Through the information, he wanted to show the outlander a richly textured, even admirable culture. He debunks the stereotypes fashioned by news people, by
"literary men," and by city-dwellers who are too concerned with the negative, "unsophisticated" aspects of mountain life to see the truth. In a sense, Raine engages in overkill in attempting to prove his point to outsiders. He traces specific mountain words, usages, and phrases back to the Elizabethan and Pre-Renaissance roots in the British Isles, citing Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Spenser to do it. He lays heavy stress on the "Elizabethan" qualities and roots of the people insisting on the worthy and admirable antiquity of the mountain culture. The section is interesting, and it does answer those who foolishly assume that the mountaineer's language is a degraded form of modern English, and that their customs and ways are rooted in illiteracy rather than in venerable tradition. If his enthusiasm for the mountain culture does become a bit strained, however, Raine never tries to whitewash the place or the people. He speaks of the violence, the illiteracy, the feuds, the moonshining, and tries to make these things understood in the context of environment, social structure, and economic imperatives of the area. He speaks to the stereotypes and to the truth, to the fact and to the fancy, trying to make it all understood, and what is more, appreciated.

The book is, in fact, a plea for aid as well as understanding and appreciation of the culture of the mountain people. Though the book's primary intention is not to effect social change, that is its underpinning. If there are things about the culture that offend the well-educated, well-fed, well-cared for city-dweller, then he should look to the causes of the things that provoke his discomfort. Raine specifies the economic and educational problems, the burden of the mountain environment, and indicates where things need to change. He is critical of well-meaning outsiders who believe that what the mountaineers need is what outsiders have -- the outsiders who believe that mountain children can be taught the way children are taught in Boston, and farmers instructed the way bankers in Philadelphia are instructed. He warns against those who, in their intention to "modernize," will help destroy. Raine urges the outsider to look at the culture and the people, talk to them, see what they need and want, and help them carry out their own plans and directions.

In all, Raine's book is remarkably contemporary in its tone and advice, and would bear reading by social reformers, tourists, newspaper editors, and folklorists in the field. Much of what he wrote about is gone -- partly from the benefits of modern technology, partly from the passage of time -- and yet that culture, any culture, is tougher than we might think, and remains, in spirit and form, more intact than we might expect. Raine didn't memorialize a dead culture in this little book, though he thought and feared that he was doing just that. He did give us a fine, gruffly affectionate description of a culture that still has vitality.

-Rayna Green
University of Arkansas


There was an interesting although tragic dichotomy in the life of Egbert Austin (Bert) Williams. On the one hand, he was an extremely talented, well-read, intelligent, gentle and soft-spoken man, a light-skinned Negro from Antigua where his grandfather reportedly was the Danish consul.
On the other hand, his career was spent on the vaudeville stage portraying the "darky" figure, a ridiculous caricature of the Negro fostered by the white man's minstrel show.

For many years, Williams teamed up with George Walker in an act that spawned many imitators, such as Moran and Mack. After Walker's death, Williams continued mostly as a solo performer. During his several seasons with the Ziegfield Follies, he was teamed with Eddie Cantor and Leon Errol. Always, however, Williams was forced into the same role. In view of this dichotomy between his private and public life, we are not surprised to read in Mrs. Charters' book that his life was, for the most part, one of quiet but bitter frustration; that his was "the story of a man neatly trapped by the prejudice and intolerance of his times." Williams later admitted that he was able to carry on only by visualizing himself "as another person" when performing. He was helped in this split-personality visualization by the fact that for performances, owing to his light skin, he blacked his face with burnt cork, which he could then use as a mask to hide his true self. Nevertheless, this man rose to the very top of his profession within the rigid limits allowed him, and when he died in 1922 at the age of 47 the entertainment world was stunned and saddened. Such figures as David Belasco, George M. Cohan, Nora Bayes, Eddie Cantor, and Ring Lardner paid him tribute.

Mrs. Charters has told Bert Williams' story with insight and compassion. One might wish, however, that it had been possible for her to cite sources of many quotes found in her narrative. It is not quite enough to preface a quote with "Williams once said" or "The New York Age reported." In the important discographical references the author again is not very precise. This is unfortunate because it is by his recordings that we know Bert Williams today. Through them we can come to know the infectious style of delivery that made him such a delight on the stage. These songs, most of which were written for him or by him, with their gentle humor transcend thoughts of race and one simply hears a very funny man telling a very funny story. Williams' recordings run from those made in October and November, 1901, for the young Victor Talking Machine Company to a Columbia recording made only eight days before his death. In her description of the earliest recordings I fear Mrs. Charters gives the impression that the 1901 Victor were cylinder recordings which they were not, also that all 1901 recordings were ipso facto "terrible," which is an inaccurate generality.

The discography itself is disappointing but this may not be the author's fault since she credits two periodicals, Music Memories and International Discophile. This section is divided into a cylinder group and a disc group. Space does not allow me to point out all the doubtful aspects of the discography, but I should like to cite the more obvious ones. In the cylinder group, the first four recordings listed were released in England and evidently never issued in the United States. In the disc group, the Columbia cylinder catalog numbers are repeated side-by-side with the disc numbers, which causes some confusion. The author's notation that all discs in Columbia's A5000 series are 12-inch is correct but there are no recordings by Williams in that series. What is meant here is the A6000 series. Another notation that all the Columbia records listed without the prefix "A" are cylinders is erroneous because none of the several single-faced discs listed have that or any other prefix to their catalog numbers. The Williams and Walker recording of "Pretty Desdemone" (sic) was issued on Columbia 10-inch single-face disc 3410 but not on Monarch 3410. The designation "Monarch" was never used by Columbia. In all, the discography is not as valuable as it could have been.

- James R. Smart, Library of Congress
RECORD NOTICES AND REVIEWS

"Roosevelt Sykes in Europe" (DS-616); "Electric Sleep," Sleepy John Estes (DS-619); "Black Magic," Magic Sam Blues Band (DS-620); "Crudup's Mood," Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup (DS-621); "Carey Bell's Blues Harp" (DS-622); "Jimmy 'Fast Fingers' Dawkins" (DS-623); "Love Me Mama," Luther Allison and the Blue Nebulae (DS-625); "Junior Wells' Southside Blues Jam" (DS-628). Delmark Records, Seven West Grand Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. $4.98 each.

The blues enthusiast has probably never had it so good. Even back in the good old days before World War II it took seventy-five cents to buy two short three-minute tunes. Now, about four dollars in a discount house will buy you seven to eight times that amount. Most of the golden oldies and even the platinum ones are reasonably accessible on re-issue -- and there's a hell of a lot of blues going on right now, too. Bob Koester's Delmark has been putting out blues since way back in the 50's. And with John Estes, Junior Wells, Arthur Crudup, and others, there are some heavy-weight contenders in his catalog.

There are some nice ones in the current batch, too. Arthur Crudup should be familiar by now through personal appearances in the Washington, D.C., area. If you haven't seen him you damned well should. His guitar isn't fancy. There's probably any number of young white imitators who can play rings around him. But that doesn't mean he doesn't play well. With simple musical economies, he achieves a compelling, deeply moving sound in his accompaniments. His voice is as beautiful as any you'll hear these days. He sings in a high, plaintive cry which is always effective, especially in person. This may be heard on his new record, which unfortunately is marred by severely out-of-tune instruments -- both Crudup's guitar and Willie Dixon's bass. The annotator, too, made what must be the faux pas of the year. "Arrangement for Me Blues" is given on the jacket as "Can't you Make Rain Meant for Me." Ugh!

Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins is an intelligent young man who for some time has been a regular contributor on the Chicago scene to the English journal Blues Unlimited. He also is an excellent musician who plays generally in the wide-vibrato school of B.B. King, although he tends toward a more basic, traditional sound than King. There are some good Chicagoans who share this record with him, including pianist Lafayette Leake, saxophonist Eddie Shaw, and guitarist Mighty Joe Young. They manage to stay mostly in the background and provide a constant, solid beat. Mostly it's the sort of slow, slow blues that only became possible when amplified instruments allowed musicians to play loud and sustain notes for a long time. But there are several real house-rockers, too, that will make you get up and dance around the room, even if you're all by yourself. This is Dawkins' first album I know of. I hope there will be more.

Junior Wells is one of the better-known modern Chicago bluesmen. His first Delmark album, "Hoodoo Man Blues," outstripped by far the usual sales figure for blues records. He is a little flashier than most, occasionally to the point of awkwardness. The dramatic effects, say, Dawkins and Crudup achieve naturally, seem to come to Wells only with obvious effort, which is to say that sometimes he comes on a little jivey. Buddy Guy (guitar) and the late Otis Spann (piano) help out, but not really enough to overcome Wells' apparent lack of conviction in his music.

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Luther Allison made a strong showing at Topper Carew's Howard University festival last fall, both on his own and as lead guitar behind J.B. Hutto. This is his first album as soloist, and it reveals a healthy, strong, young talent. His blues are tough and modern, out of the King's and Elmore James', a couple of whose uncredited songs he performs here. He uses the wa-wa and other effects in his guitar playing which nicely complements the rock feeling generated by the rest of the ensemble. His singing is a strong blend of blues and soul, which should aid in finding for him a contemporary young audience.

He'd have to go some, though, to compete with the late magic Sam (Sam Maghett) whose gentle beat comes without force. Although Maghett died in 1970, he was still a young man. He said of himself, "I'm the modern type of bluesman, but I can play the regular stuff." Indeed he can. Although he doesn't feature himself much as a guitar soloist, his instrument decisively underpins the rest of the ensemble. They rock along as he does, gently but solidly. He has a most appealing voice -- a good, high tenor with an intense vibrato, something along the lines of J.B. Lenoir. All in all, some of the best modern blues around.

The Sleepy John Estes collection is a real disappointment. The title "Electric Sleep" derives from the session having been done with an amplified guitar for Estes, another for backup man Jimmy Dawkins, and presumably an electric bass. Nothing is particularly wrong with that. The notes claim (accurately) that Estes prefers to play electric now. Unfortunately, his amp is turned up, revealing a woefully out-of-tune instrument. Apparently, it's enough to throw the others off too, because the whole date has a ragged, unfinished feeling. Not recommended.

Roosevelt Sykes is another story. Like Estes, Sykes is an old-timer whose reputation was made in the 30's. But Sykes has remained a professional all through the years, adding so called "modern" elements to his piano style to survive. Still, at heart he remained faithful to classic blues, and remains a competent creator in his original idiom, as this album attests. It's solo voice and piano all the way in the classic St. Louis style which Sykes pioneered. When Henry Townsend (himself a breathtaking St. Louis pianist) appeared at the Wolf Trap Folk Festival in August he chastised us strongly for not inviting Sykes, too. I couldn't agree more -- and with luck we'll have them both next year. Meanwhile, he's available on this unpretentious but glorious solo collection.

-Richard K. Spottswood
Takoma Park, Maryland

"No Special Rider," Little Brother Montgomery (AD1003S); "Early in the Morning," George and Ethel McCoy (AD1004S); "Really Chicago's Blues" (AD1005S) (Two-Record Set); "Backwards Sam Firk & Delta X w/ Fang!" (AD1006S); "On the Road Again," Furry Lewis with Bukka White and Gus Cannon (AD1007S); "Things Have Changed" (AD1012S). Adelphi Records, 516 East Indian Spring Drive, Silver Spring, Maryland 20901. $5.95 each, $9.95 for two-record set. (Special price to members of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington: $4.00 each, $6.60 for two-record set.)

In 1969, Gene Rosenthal, record producer from the Washington, D.C., area, went on a field trip to the midwest. His object was to record blues. His talent coordinator was Big Joe Williams. The results are now available on Adelphi Records in six attractively packaged long-playing records. While
they suffer, in part, the shortcomings of field recordings (too much noise, too little balance, and so forth), as field recordings they are important documents.

Some old-timers are revisited: In Chicago, pianist Little Brother Montgomery with a young strong female vocalist Jeanne Carroll; In Memphis, Furry Lewis, Bukka White, and Gus Cannon, and in Chicago, Sunnyland Slim and Big Joe Williams himself with others. George and Ethel McCoy, nephew and niece of Memphis Minnie, were recorded in East St. Louis.

There are memorable cuts: Little Brother Montgomery, with his solo piano and reminiscences of his beginnings as a pianist; Furry Lewis throughout but especially with his updated "On the Road Again" (Now come all you men if you want to flirt/Here comes a lady with a mini-skirt;/Got half yard of ribbon wrapped round her legs;/Steps like she's stepping on scrambled eggs.); Bukka White throughout but especially on "My Wife is Getting Old" and "Give Me an Old Lady"; Sunnyland Slim with his electric piano wailing "Rolling and Tumblin'," and Ethel McCoy with Memphis Minnie's "Meningitis Blues." The McCoys' record is their introduction to the general public and, as verified by their personal appearance this summer at the National Folk Festival at Wolf Trap Farm Park, they are restrained but strong performers, firmly rooted in a rich tradition.

Backwards Sam Firk (real name, Mike Stewart), a talented and accomplished blues guitarist from the Washington, D.C., area, accompanied Rosenthal on the trip and accompanied, on the guitar, a number of the performers on selections in these albums. The group also took with them high quality guitars which the musicians used on the recordings. Stewart's accompaniment may have helped the sessions proceed more smoothly but, as gratifying as the esthetic and other results may have been, one wonders if this may not have been an unnecessary tampering with the tradition and thus reduced the value of these particular cuts as field recordings.

Stewart himself, along with Stephan Michelson (Delta X), another blues guitarist and a former resident of the Washington, D.C., area, easily provide the most listenable record of this lot and, for the uninitiated, a good introduction to the blues vocal and guitar. Stewart and Michelson both come to the music from outside the tradition, have become thoroughly familiar with it, and have mastered its technique not only by listening to recordings but also from personal acquaintance with many of its performers. (Tom Hoskins plays "Fang.") Their combined playing, however, of Rev. Gary Davis' and John Hurt's versions of "Candy Man" is an interesting experiment but too contrived.

The "Really Chicago's Blues" set seems mislabelled. These records sound more like a loose house party than the close combo work usually associated with Chicago. On one of the cuts, some of the discussion during the session was saved and the message was that Chicago never was the blues, that the blues came from elsewhere. Perhaps the title points this out and the music tries to illustrate it. It seems to be primarily country blues. Johnny Shines, John Lee Granderson, and Honeyboy Edwards on harmonica perform well on this double album.

"Things Have Changed," recorded in St. Louis, is interesting in its variety: Henry Brown, singing and playing piano; Henry Townsend, singing and playing piano and guitar; Andrew Cauthen and George Roberson playing harmonica, and Clarence Johnson (son of Lonnie Johnson), singing and playing guitar. The title is from George McCoy's version, with guitar, of Big Maceo's "Worried Life Blues."
Clearly, all these records should be of interest to the blues aficionado. As indicated, however, the Chicago double album is somewhat muddled, and thereby relatively limited.

"Fiddle Jam Session" (VRLP 301); "Comin' Round the Mountain" (VRLP 302); "A Corn Licker Still in Georgia," Gid Tanner and His Skillet Lickers (VRLP 303). Voyager Recordings, 424 - 35th Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98122. $4.00 each. Monophon.

From that other Washington, a continent away, come three records, which, strangely enough, feature southern and southeastern music. Two are field or field-type recordings made in the 60's in the northwest, and the third a recording of seven 78 r.p.m. recordings made between 1927 and 1930 by a Georgia-based string band.

"Fiddle Jam Session" was recorded attendant to a 1964 fiddlers' contest in Missoula, Montana, and the 1966 National Old-Time Fiddlers Contest in Weiser, Idaho. During festivals and fiddle contests, a lot of good music is made on the parking lots, in hotels and motels, and in other places. Some of the selections on this LP were recorded in the bar of the Palace Hotel in Missoula and others in the Washington Hotel in Weiser. The spontaneity and excitement of these sessions are well-captured here. Featured are Kansas fiddler Byron Berline, later with Bill Monroe and then with the armed forces, and Lonnie Peerce from Kentucky, now (or last I heard) with the Bluegrass Alliance. One cut has an interesting fiddler Dwayne Youngblood from Payette, Idaho, playing a tune labeled "Jack of Diamonds". In this moderately paced tune (apparently unrelated to the "Drunken Hiccups" set), Youngblood makes limited and skillful use of vibrato.

"Comin' Round the Mountain" offers fiddle and banjo tunes, sacred songs, and other songs performed by former residents of southern and southeastern states. In content, this record is similar to "The Green Fields of Illinois," earlier released by the Campus Folksong Club of the University of Illinois. The material is drawn primarily from old-time and hillbilly tradition and illustrates, once again, the pervasive effect of phonograph records on traditional performers. Bill Pruett sings Grandpa Jones' "Eight More Miles to Louisville" and Grady Mills sings Molly O'Day's "The Drunken Driver." There are good performances here, attesting to a strong tradition. Also, indirectly attested to is the influence of the regional folklore and folksong society in providing an audience for traditional performers. A number of the selections on this album were recorded at concerts sponsored by the Seattle Folklore Society.

The Gid Tanner record presents one of the most popular, talented, and influential groups among early string bands. On "A Corn Licker Still in Georgia," originally recorded in fourteen parts, Tanner and his group enact, with much corny humor and many lively fiddle breakdowns, the story of a group of moonshiners and their brushes with the law and the moonshine. Novelty records, dramatizing a story or situation, were quite popular and recorded by many performers in the 20's and 30's. The Skillet Lickers were adept at this approach, and this record is fun to listen to. Riley Puckett's guitar accompaniment is just right.

Joe and Lynn Hickerson, Howie and Ann Mitchell, John and Ginny Dildine, and Michael and Dale Cooney, from the Washington, D.C., area, are members of something called "The New Golden Ring," which has just recorded twenty-eight songs on these two records.

In the mid-60's, Folk-Legacy released the first Golden Ring recording (FSI-16). It proved conclusively that there is a musical and tasteful approach to revival playing and singing — an approach true to the spirit of the music, cognizant of its importance, and broadly knowledgeable of its variegations. The motive, as Sandy Paton points out in the jacket notes: "...that's what the Golden Ring is all about, really: good times with good music and good friends." Paton also points out that the "Ring" is more a concept than a fixed group of people -- more "an approach to informal, non-competitive group music-making."

Most of the original "Ring" is here, with the notable exception of Win Stracke. But the number has grown to twenty-six, and on these records the full chorus is overpowering, at times completely subjugating the music. Yet this chorus seems just right, when Jack Stanesco leads the group in group songs he learned in the West Indies, or when Joe Hickerson and Ed Trickett lead in the congregational "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

One of the virtues of the first "Ring" recording retained here is the interesting variety of good songs and tunes. From the West Indies, Jack Stanesco brings a version of "Shenandoah," in which "We are bound across the wide Missouri" has become "We are bound away from this world of misery"; from the British revival, Joe Hickerson leads in Cyril Tawney's "Sammy's Bar" and Matt McGinn's "The Rolling Hills of the Border"; from Martha's Vineyard via Upstate New York, Ed Trickett leads in "Rolling Home" in a version in common rather than the usual waltz time; Becky and Jenny Armstrong fiddle through "The Temperance Reel," and there are two selections from the Sacred Harp. Other performers include George and Gerry Armstrong, Gordon Bok, Sara Grey, Barry O'Neill, Sandy and Caroline Paton, and Penny Trickett. Instruments include six-string guitar, five-string banjo, plucked dulcimer, hammered dulcimer, concertina, bagpipes practice chanter, and spoons. A number of the songs are unaccompanied.

As is characteristic of Folk-Legacy, the recordings are impeccably reproduced with excellent balance and fidelity. And, wonder of wonders, there are complete notes included with each record with the background of each song and the words accurately (it seems) transcribed.

Other Releases

Sara Grey with Ed Trickett, Joe Hickerson, and Gordon Bok are featured on individual releases from Folk-Legacy. They are FSI-38, FSI-39, and FSI-40 respectively (FSI-39 was reviewed in the Journal of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, II:1, Winter 1970-71, p. 34.) Also new from Folk-Legacy is "Tony and Irene Saletan" (FSI-37).

Joe Glazer, Washington's resident authority on labor and industrial song, a lecturer at the University of Maryland, and a singer, songwriter, and guitarist who has worked closely with labor, has recorded an LP, "Joe Glazer Sings Labor Songs." for Collector Records. There are a full sixteen songs on the record available for $5.00 from Collector Records, 1100-17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

-George A. Simpson