LET ME STATE RIGHT AWAY that I feel quite presumptuous preparing a paper like this. Until the past fall semester, I was inexperienced not only at teaching folklore, but also at directing students in collecting projects, and at directing myself in archiving procedures. Moreover, the basis for this paper derives from the fall collecting projects of a mere thirty-three students at the University of Maryland. Yet meager as this sampling seems, it may offer some insights into student collecting and its results.

College students are for the most part gregarious creatures. They put a lot of stock in contact with other people. Despite their overtures to individuality and solitude, they really like to mix, and I find there are a good many who get a warm democratic feeling by getting out there and mixing it up with the grass root folk. Least of all, students like to go to the library. So when they find a course that stresses personal contact above library research, their reception is usually favorable. Not always, but usually. There inevitably are a few who drop the course in the first week when I tell them that I require a collection of active folklore from oral sources. To those who remain I distribute a mimeographed sheet explaining how I want the collection turned in. I call for a full piece of paper for each of the longer items collected -- tales, songs, legends, and so forth -- and a three-by-five card for each of the shorter items -- proverbs, riddles, superstitions, and the like. Each sheet or card must contain both the collector's and the informant's name and address, and the date collected. Other things I require are a full list of all informants with their names, addresses, ages, and nationalities; a complete background sketch on any outstanding informant; a table of contents for all longer material; and an index to tape recordings when the tape recorder has been employed.

When this material has been turned out and explained, the students begin asking questions. Who do we collect from, they legitimately want to know? Four basic sources, I tell them: themselves, their families, their peer group, and finally, if they are energetic enough and have the time, they can collect from that conglomrate known as the folk.

After this, someone will assuredly ask the next logical question: But what is it you want us to collect? With this, I launch the course. I give them a long list of what I presume folklore to include, and then spend the rest of the semester talking about the larger genres of folklore such as the riddle, folksong, proverb, and folktale, relying on profuse examples where possible.

FROM MY LIMITED EXPERIENCE, I HAVE FOUND TWO TYPES OF STUDENT who can be counted upon to turn in outstanding collections. The first is the student who quickly grasps the motives behind the assignment and goes where he knows, or thinks he knows, folklore exists. One example of this type was a young man who lived in a small hill town, Smithsburg, Maryland. Over Thanksgiving vacation, he went home with his girl friend (who happily knew how to take shorthand) and went around knocking on doors asking people if they knew any old songs or stories. In so doing he uncovered several fine informants who supplied him with a number of witchcraft and other belief tales as well as what appears to be a seminal group of stories revolving around a local folk eccentric known as Devil Dan. A coed, employing much the same method in the Washington area, collected several Old Marster-John tales...
from an elderly Negro woman along with some Scandinavian maritime beliefs and songs from a retired Swedish sailor.

The other type of student who would please any folklorist is one reared in a folk culture. He will know immediately what it is you're after, and if he can't get back home to do some active collecting, will serve as a fine informant himself. At the moment I have a young man in class who has grown up on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in Somerset County. Part of his family was reared on Tangier Island just over the Virginia line; and from everything he has uttered in class, it is clear that the entire family harbor a great many traditions. If I talk about a particular superstition, he knows four or five variations; if I discuss water-witching or dowse, he knows several waterwatches and claims the process really works; if I mention hidden treasure motifs, he has heard the same stories told about the pirate Bluebeard down on the Eastern Shore. Similarly, last semester my class contained a middle-aged woman who had grown up near Chester, West Virginia. Over the Christmas holidays she went home and collected over 300 items, mostly in the shorter vein such as proverb and folksaying, but nevertheless it was a collection that revealed a very tightly-knit, family-oriented community, one that would probably yield a much larger body of lore to a professional collector.

But it is evident from all the student collections that one does not have to go as far afield as West Virginia or the Eastern Shore to find samples of extant folklore. Many students simply went home to their families in Potomac or Baltimore or Silver Spring or Buckeystown, and found folklore there. Others collected from street singers in downtown Washington, while yet another group remained on campus and gathered stories, songs, and jokes from their friends.

BY FAR THE LARGEST BODY OF MATERIAL TURNED IN came in the shorter forms. Of these, the superstition was the most well represented. I have divided the more than 400 superstitions according to subject matter. Let me give you some examples, all from Maryland, from the larger subject headings.

Pregnancy and Birth: If a pregnant woman raises her hand over her head she will strangle her child (College Park); During pregnancy, if a woman craves a particular food and eats a lot of it, the child will have a birth mark in the shape of the food (Bowie); If a pregnant woman walks under a clothesline, the umbilical cord will strangle the child; The first place one takes a new baby, that family will have the next pregnancy; If a baby is born with a veil of afterbirth on its face it will grow up to be a profit (Greensburg).

Company: If you find the clasp of a necklace in front of you instead of behind the back of your neck, you're going to receive company (Buckeystown); If you drop a spoon, a child's coming to visit you; If you drop a knife, a man's coming to visit you (Potomac).

Death: When the man of the house dies, all clocks stop; If a cricket sings near the head of a bed, it means a death in the family within a few hours (Temple Hills); Hearing three knocks is the forerunner of death (Rockville).

Comparable examples could easily be found for other subject headings such as good and bad luck, weather, the devil, marriage, clothing, and so forth.

In general, closely tied with the superstition is, of course, folk medicine. These beliefs I have categorized under the malady to be cured or eased. To name a few: asthma, croup, burns, colds, sterility, freckles, headache, hiccups, cramps, jaundice, mumps, pregnancy, rheumatism, rickets, scars, sties, warts, and cold and sweaty feet. In these cures we find some of the usual methods employed by the folk in discouraging illness. For example, the process called burying away:

To cure warts, steal someone's wash dish cloth. Bury the cloth. When it rots, the warts will disappear.(West Virginia.)

Or the process called counting away:
To cure warts, cut out as many eyes of a potato as you have warts. Throw out the eyes. When they rot, your warts will disappear. (Collected in Maryland, learned in Nebraska.)

Or selling away:

To cure warts, take a penny and rub it over the warts. Put the penny in an envelope. Leave the envelope on the sidewalk, and the first person curious enough to open it will get the warts. (Ohio.)

Or measuring away:

To cure rickets, measure a string around the person's chest. Hang the string over a well, and when it rots the disease will go away. (Greensburg, Maryland.)

Almost as abundant as the superstition is the proverb and its various subtypes: the true proverb, the proverbial saying, and the proverbial comparison. But space and the very common nature of the proverb preclude my writing more about this genre. I was somewhat surprised not to receive more collections than I did of current jokes. However, one female student did turn in a lengthy tape of stories collected in a university dormitory. The tape threw some light upon the kind of anecdote popular among coeds and, believe me, any one still laboring under the misconception that women have more delicate minds than men, I hasten to assure them it just ain't so. Along with scatologica, one finds a varied grouping of the recently popular Polack jokes -- "Why don't Polacks kill flies? It's their national bird." -- the Moron story, an old genre, and the perverted proverb, a story that turns things around so completely as to allow a ruptured moral at the end -- "Don't hatch your counts before they chicken."

THE LONGER FORMS OF FOLKLORE IN THE ARCHIVE fall into several categories, comprising belief tales, local legends, personal anecdotes, stories of local eccentrics, obscene toasts, and folksongs. Prominent among these is the belief tale, a story centering around a particular belief or superstition. Accounts of pow-wowing, for instance, cropped up in the collections of two students who gathered material in southern Pennsylvania. Belief tales told around the Washington area often related events occurring in neighboring states or communities. In one case, the familiar iradicable bloodstain motif appeared in a story told by a Rockville, Maryland, woman as happening in West Virginia. Likewise, from a Wheaton, Maryland, woman comes this account of a death token experienced in Virginia:

When I was about ten years old, I remember going with my parents to a town down in southwestern Virginia for a short vacation. We stayed with a friend of my father's who lived out of town a mile or two. Just up the road a ways there was a broken down house where an old woman lived. While we were there I went up to the house and the woman invited me in to talk to her. Several times after that I went to the house and played in the trees around her house. Then one time I heard a thumping noise which sounded like it was coming from under the house. When I looked I found nothing. Then, very strangely, the woman came out and told me that I must go home for that was her death omen. I was a little scared so I ran home. The next day we discovered that the woman had fallen dead on her porch.

Around Greensburg, another student collector found remnants of witchcraft belief tales still current in that region. One of his informants, Lee Miller, recalled the story of a wizard named Witmar. When a neighbor tried to steal one of Witmar's saws, the wizard cast a spell over the thief, and froze him in his tracks. In the same area another informant told this student that the inhabitants of the nearby mountains used to lay a broom across the path of Aunt Fanny to prove she was a bona fide witch..."cause everyone knew that a witch couldn't cross a broom without pickin' it up." Other archive belief tales include a good deal of ghost lore or what we might call scare stories. Few of these are anchored to any
particular locale and it is clear that in most cases the informant has simply heard the story at one time or another and makes no pretense believing it.

Belief tales will often spill over into the realm of local legend, an equally profuse category. A Baltimore student collecting from one of her friends on the Eastern Shore turned up several stories connected with the will-o'-the-wisp. Near a Cambridge gravel pit orange lights periodically flit about, reputed to be the spirits of persons murdered there some time ago. Other student collectors found evidence of haunted or cursed houses, further west in the state. Diana Harper interviewed several people in Buckeystown, Maryland, in connection with a particular dwelling in the village which had gained some notoriety over the years. Apparently, before the Civil War, the original owner beat to death one of his slaves whom he had chained to a ring in the floor. Before dying the slave cursed his master saying that his oldest son would come to a violent end during the father's lifetime. And, indeed, this came to pass within two years when the youth went bankrupt in Washington, D.C., and hanged himself. But the curse did not end there. According to one informant, the son of a man named Jackson who owned the house as late as 1940 died mysteriously that year with his fiancée. Moreover, the bloodstains of the murdered slave still remain on the floor of the bedroom where he died, and the clank of chains frequently pierces the stillness on dark nights.

In Garrett County, Maryland, a similar situation exists with the Harrington Manor. The Manor now is a recreation area, but the manor house still stands, deserted now these fifty years. According to one student informant, old Mr. Harrington had heard the sounds of someone dragging chains around the estate one night and had gone out to investigate. He never returned. The next morning, his body was found brutally stabbed in the yard. When the same sounds occurred the night following the funeral, Mrs. Harrington went out in turn to uncover the mystery, only to turn up the following day hideously chopped to bits in the meat grinder behind the house. The place was immediately deserted by the remainder of the family, but the belief still lingers that anyone courageous enough to spend a night in the house will not live to tell about it.

OTHER ITEMS IN THE ARCHIVE include a number of entries which can be said merely to border on the realm of folklore. Students understandably collect personal reminiscences and anecdotes from old people and include them with other material. One account may tell of how a still blew up, another of how a minister's wife sat up in her coffin and scared the wits out of a couple of prospective grave robbers. Still others recount the tale of a remarkable flood or wind storm in which some member of the community was miraculously saved or lamentably lost. Traditional as these may be in the area where they are told, I doubt that we would be able to append to them a particular tale type or motif. Perhaps they fall best into the bailiwick of oral history and, as we know, scholars are still far from agreement as to what to do with that complex category.

Under the heading of folksong there is not as much material in the archive at this point as I should like to have. Nor is it the type of material that one is likely to find in the large collection of English and American folksong. As one might well guess, the greatest segment of songs stems from the university campus. The groupings of fraternity songs, drinking songs, and risqué songs which comprise this material can hardly be termed mutually exclusive. The drinking song invariably retells some drinking exploit and calls upon all members of the group present to follow suit. Risqué songs merely suggest the obscene, while fraternity songs are often frankly scatological, and more often than not cast aspersions on the members of another fraternity. For example, from the Phi Delta Theta house:
Mary had a little lamb
Its fleece was white as mutton
And every time it wagged its tail
It showed its Phi Gam button.

Other folksongs in the archive include a version of "The Preacher and the Bear" and "The Great American Bum" received from a Kentucky informant. Also, one student turned in a fine taped collection taken from an urban street singer in Washington named Flora Molton whose bent appears to be towards religious songs. Joe Hickerson tells me that this kind of singer and this style have been common throughout the South, up and down the East Coast, and in some northern urban communities. At the moment, I have another student collecting similar material from a blind singer in Baltimore.

For the most part, however, the majority of songs presently collected by students could best be termed popular songs of an earlier day. They spring from the memories of informants who recall them as songs sung by their parents or grandparents. Certainly these items have a traditional note about them, but one is never quite sure whether the parent or grandparent learned the song from a songster, or recording, or from his parents.

This, then, aside from some interesting collections of classroom graffiti and other miscellanea, constitutes what is presently in the archive. Anyone fingering through the files would undoubtedly come to the same conclusion that I have: namely, that any student collection has to be accepted only with due consideration to the amateur status of the person doing the collecting. Some material will be excellent, and other material will be virtually worthless. But nevertheless, student collecting is, I feel, a necessary adjunct to the folklore discipline. Not only can it bring the student face to face with the true nature of oral tradition, but it can also further the collecting of a particular region or state like Maryland by pointing out to the professional folklorist where some rich areas of folklore may lie.

Maryland certainly has its share of these rich and uncollected corners. This is becoming increasingly apparent. And, when the definitive book comes to be written on the folklore of the state, the writer will, I believe, have to reckon with the University of Maryland folklore archives.

(The above paper was read May 12, 1967, at a meeting of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington in Washington, D.C. Since that time, under Professor Carey's direction, the University of Maryland folklore archives has been greatly expanded and received considerable university support. Professor Carey, with grant support, spent last summer in field collecting on the Eastern Shore, and has grants from the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Philosophical Society to continue his work there this summer. He is particularly impressed by, and interested in the oral history of the area, where there is very little in the way of written documentation.)

In God, Man, Salt Water and the Eastern Shore (Tidewater Publishers, Cambridge, Maryland, 1967, $6.00), William I. Tawes quotes a parody to an old gospel song, "On the Sea of Galilee." The parody was composed by Gus Ward and, according to Tawes, was popular with the younger set just after the turn of the century on the Eastern Shore. The parody goes:

Should I be carried to the skies
On flour bread and cheese
While others fight to win the prize
And sail through black-eyed peas? (p.14)

This reprint of two volumes edited by J.H. Dixon for the Percy Society in 1845 and 1846 makes available again for ballad scholars two of the very important and valuable printed sources for F.J. Child's The English and Scottish Popular Ballads (Five volumes, Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1882-1898). (Child lists both of these volumes on page 403 of volume five. ) Scottish Traditional Versions of Ancient Ballads (1845) contains the texts of sixteen ballads, in one version each with no music, selected by Dixon from Peter Buchan's two folio volumes "of ballads, songs, and poems...from the oral recitation of the peasantry of his country" (p. ix). Dixon, like Child after him, omits Buchan's bawdy ballads "in accordance with the altered manners and usages of society..." (p. xy).

Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England (1846) contains twelve poems, twenty-one ballads, and forty-two songs. Much of this material is far from oral tradition, but Dixon's headnotes identify authorship and printed or oral source when known.

S.B. Hustvedt in Ballad Books and Ballad Men (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930) identifies these volumes as "the only items in the Percy Society list that strictly belong to our field..." (p. 117). I recommend these volumes to those who wish to examine antiquarian collections, to those who wish to see some of Child's sources, and to those who wish to compare some of the sources with the appropriate sections in The English and Scottish Popular Ballads. Such procedures will identify for the student of balladry some of Child's problems and further will clarify some of his editing techniques.

Douglas J. McMullen
University of Maryland


In a world inhabited by new folk heroes like James Bond, a book on fairies seems to hark back to the Edenic childhood of the human race. Unfortunately, Dr. Briggs' latest work on fairy lore will not bring back a renewed interest in the little people who are still in the active folk tradition of the British Isles.

Although the book is highly documented and thus of interest to the scholar, it fails to stimulate both the scholar and any but the most avid general student of fairy lore. For one thing, Dr. Briggs overwhelms the general reader with her vast amount of supporting evidence for a strong fairy tradition that existed in the British Isles for centuries. On the other hand, the scholar is only too familiar with such topics as abductions of mortals by fairy maidens, the replacing of human infants, especially unbaptized ones, by fairy offsprings called changelings. Furthermore, the common habitat of fairies in caves and hills is common knowledge to both classes of readers. Her review of the origin of fairies over-stresses the fallen angel concept. Finally, her review of the Scandinavian theory that fairies are those children which Eve hid from the Lord when He was
visiting her household is vitiated by the fact that the original unequal children of Eve story is a very old one and has served to explain many things, such as the origins of different races and different occupations.

Other items included in the study are such practices as fairies needing human milk for their offspring and the help of mortal midwives for the delivery of their offspring. The first belief has led Europeans to leave milk easily available for fairies to ward off certain forms of mischief.

To say that the book is completely without merit is unfair. Some of the illustrations are delightful, and it brings together many of the older materials on the little people. Probably it would have been better if Dr. Briggs had chosen a general audience and simply presented the interesting aspects of the lore. Unfortunately, by trying to satisfy two classes of readers, she has alienated both groups. The scholars find very little that is new, and the general readers are simply too overwhelmed by the amount of facts to support the perfectly valid thesis that fairy lore has a long history and is also a continuing tradition in the remote sections of the British Isles.

Esther K. Bindsall
University of Maryland


Each volume in the series to which this belongs contains "between fifty and a hundred tales representative of the national stock and oral storytelling style of the country surveyed." So runs the publisher's blurb. This one should have been entitled Folktales from Chile. Its fifty tales have one connection with Chile: they were collected there. A few details, such as the use of mate by one character, are the only indications that the stories were told in Chile. Nor do they follow the "storytelling style of the country surveyed." The translation is hardly more than a paraphrase. The tales are taken from Pino-Saavedra's three-volume Cuentos folklóricos de Chile, but the translator slurs over whole portions of original dialog and telescopes dramatic scenes into brief paragraphs of summary. Moreover, he seems fond of four-letter words which do not occur in the original. For instance, "todos sus proyectos no le resultaban" is rendered into "his projects never worked out worth a damn." "No le vendo nada" is rendered "I won't sell you a damn thing." In fact, the style of the translation brings in the flavor of many lands other than Chile. Even Great Britain gets into the stories when "Véndeme el pito, hombre," is translated "Sell me the whistle, old chap."

Dorson seems conscious that the book misses the mark set for it. His exhaustive and exhausting foreword reviews the various non-Spanish traditions, stemming from the Indians, the desert and the sea, which converge in Chile, but the tales themselves reflect none of these. So he concludes his survey with the admission that "the present selection...directly contradicts the ideas advanced in this Foreword."

The documentation is sketchy. Some specific references are given, but one runs repeatedly into such general statements as, "Three versions have been published from Colorado and New Mexico, three from the Dominican Republic, five from Argentina and five from Chile," with no specifications of the collections in which the versions appear.
The book is readable, though, so it can be pronounced successful if popularization is the sole purpose of the series.

Frank Goodwyn
University of Maryland


Shadows from the Singing House contains eighteen authentic but simplified retellings in a collection broader in scope than its title indicates, for among the Eskimo stories is a Tsimshian Indian Raven tale, "How the Light Came." In a spare storytelling style well suited to the Eskimo narrative, the author both entertains and conveys a feeling of respect for a remote culture. She provides logical motivation for situations difficult to accept or comprehend -- as in the Sedna myth in which the brothers' cruelty is interpreted as an act of fear that is close to madness -- and, when necessary to communicate a dramatic moment, introduces background information as an integral part of the story. Her representative selection of Eskimo lore comprises tales of monsters and supernatural beings, adventures of hunters and mistreated children, and a few "how and why" stories. The bibliography cites, as primary source material, Eskimo and Indian texts collected by Franz Boas, Knud Rasmussen and others.

The author is not an ethnologist, but her interest in folklore is described on the jacket as a shared "family interest of fifteen years' duration of collecting folk tales from all over the world." She has not followed a formal plan of organization in presenting the tales, but in a prologue she does recognize and describe three categories of "song" as the form in which the oral heritage is passed on. This prologue also comments on the style in which the narrator sings his"song." It is an attractive book, with soft pencil drawings by an Eskimo artist.

Judith C. Ullom
Library of Congress


This song collection features culture area song groupings briefly introduced by extremely useful background commentary on roots and characteristics of the music itself and typical native performance styles. The introductions even touch on ancient epics, the wanderings of ancient peoples, and the shaping of empires as they are reflected in the songs.

With few exceptions, each of the 119 countries is represented by one or two songs (the United States gets eight, including American Indian), each song given in the native language or transliteration, with a singable English translation.

Mr. Smith's drawings impart a marvelous sense of the musicians' movements, and Dr. Haywood has contributed careful credits, good indices, and bibliography.

Ailene S. Goodman
Washington, D.C.
The author points out that banjos, unlike most other stringed instruments, are mechanical in nature with many interchangeable parts, and that many adjustments are possible. His descriptions of these adjustments appear to be valuable for the inexperienced enthusiast who realizes the advantages of doing his own work.

However, the style of writing seems a bit too informal for a manual. He gives stern warning to avoid some operations which would be foolish to attempt, but "better keep clear" of adjusting neck truss rods and shell rods is the only example made evident.

Since bluegrass banjo is his central theme, it's strange that he dedicates the booklet to the Vega Company. Most professionals and hobbyists I know prefer Gibsons, although endorsing Vega has become profitable for a few.

In my opinion, numerous good and poor points are made. But one of the latter stands out for special attention. Mr. Richardson recommends refinishing where needed, although for a banjo this isn't too critical. However, when a quality spruce-topped instrument is the object, more CAUTION and KNOWLEDGE are required than his instructions indicate. Spruce soaks up finish, unless properly sealed, and, as a consequence, tone has to suffer.

Tom Morgan
Takoma Park, Maryland

RECORD NOTICES AND REVIEWS:


Music critics themselves sometimes fall under criticism for their cooperation in the merchandising of records. Their dishonesty shows itself most often in the popular and jazz markets, but commercial folk music is not immune. Each new release by one of our "contemporary balladeers" is a bone tossed to a pack of professionals who are less eager to evaluate art than to encourage you to spend your dollar. For this reason, I have always felt it the function of the amateur critic to strike a balance — to help the reader save his money. And so it gives me particular pleasure to review a record by Len Chandler.

There are several reasons why this is a good album to save money on. To begin, there is the jacket cover. Not surprisingly, it is a color photograph. This is odd, however, in that it seems to have been taken at night.

In the darkness, one can't be certain, but lapping over the lower edge there appears to be a black leather boot. Thrusting upward from this, a tightly pegged trouser leg, and then, abruptly, a clenched fist. In the shadowy background, a guitar is dangling from something which we may assume is another clenched fist. Above the two fists, looms an expanse of suede leather, and bursting forth above this -- tan, bearded, dramatically highlighted -- is a face scowling up out of the night like a serenader who has just had the slop jar emptied on him. Next to one ear it says, "Len Chandler," and next to the other, "To Be a Man."

At first glance, this would seem to advertise a coming attraction. Closer reading, however, indicates that it is not only the album title, but the name of the first tune on side one. Which brings us to a second reason for economizing.

Mr. Chandler is the author of 'everything on the disk, and it is as an author he must be judged. His vocalizing needs no comment beyond that of identifying it with the all but nameless artisans on the Sunday evening variety shows. In the opinion of most listeners, he should be found guilty of (1) choosing images deliberately to withhold meaning, (2) disguising his message in an aura of quasi-
religious mystery, and (3) impersonating in the first degree a sensitive songwriter. Here is the evidence.

Exhibit A, Len Chandler as a wordsmith: "He'd been more than torn and tattered, he'd been bashed, debased, and scarred. He'd been held up, held in, held under, he'd been pushed out; 'kicked out, and barred. He'd been neglected and rejected, disrespected, stomped and mobbed. He'd been talked over, preached over, cried over, prayed over, run over, rolled and robbed." Well, at least he lived a full life, whoever he was.

Exhibit B, Len Chandler as an attempted metaphysical poet: "My eyes had turned to fingers and were tangled in your hair." This figure is supposed to be striking, but it is too grotesque. And all the more so considering it appears in a love song. Rather than tenderness, it calls to mind one of those hideous little details from a painting from Hieronymus Bosch.

With these two samples, the prosecution would gladly rest, except that an important question remains: Why spend time and energy in the arraignment of such a culprit? One answer is that Mr. Chandler himself forces it on us. Readers who attended last summer's folk festivals will bear me witness that the entire season was distinguished by two unwelcome presences...steady rain and Len Chandler. At every concert, every workshop, every hoot, every time you turned around from Vermont to Georgia, in he came dragging his guitar, ready for another bout of mind bending.

And why didn't he get the hook? Because in his personal appearances he has perfected a smirking, chichi slickness that enables him to command the stage while his audience sits in rapt incomprehension. In this sense, he is a powerful performer, make no mistake, but his powers lie in the nightclubby gimmicks to which folk music has shown such a refreshing alternative. In other words, he is working the wrong circuit. Just where he will find an audience that wants to be entertained with jet-set polish and psychedelic lingo, I don't know. I do know that if he really wants "to be a man," he will let loose the coattails of the folk music revival and go entertain whoever it is that is entertained with whatever it is he's trying to say.

Oh, and one thing more about the accused: At a time when popular songwriters are turning out a fantastic abundance of exciting, courageous and artful songs, Len Chandler has written one of the very best.

I can scarcely describe the efforts to which I went to avoid making such an admission. I listed all the overblown metaphors in the lyrics. I played the record over and over trying to wear out the melody. Finally I tried to question the song's true authorship, but is unmistakably by Len Chandler -- who else would write "...in the stark and ancient dark,"? My only consolation is that amateur critics, being free of all obligations except to their own consciences, are bound eventually to get into this sort of predicament. I have no choice but to concede that "Roll, Turn, Spin," is a beauty.

Lest you run off and sink your money on the strength of even so grudging an endorsement, let me make it clear that the song is not a folksong, close to a folksong, or even of particular interest to folksingers. What it is, is a baroque melody wedded to a text about a woman who plays mistress to an enemy officer while conspiring to bring about his assassination, an act which signals the dawn of popular revolution.

The artist (now in the proper sense of the word) has deliberately chosen his details so that one cannot pin the story to any particular woman, country, or time. This device opens the door to the central insight, namely, that Cleopatra, Mata Hari, the women of the Maquis, of our own 1775 revolution, and the slided-eyed Vietnamese girl who engineers the killing of your next door neighbor's son are, in some ways, the same person. The listener is left with a sense of wonder at the shameful, heroic, dirty, glorious sacrifices people will make for love of the land they walk on, a sense of irony that today's patriotic revolutionary is
tomorrow's invader, and a sense of hope for the dawning of a day when all these things are past.

"Roll, Turn, Spin" is a fine song. But on those rare occasions that I take two days vacation, drive 700 miles, and spend over a hundred dollars to attend a folk festival, I don't care to hear anything but folksongs. It seems to me that one of the surest ways to deprive traditional music of its present status is to allow songs from other idioms to claim kin just because they happen to be good songs. Moving lyrics and appealing melodies are created by sophisticates as well as the folk. There is no reason for an individual not to enjoy many different kinds of song. The problem that Len Chandler and many of his equally slick colleagues pose is not how to evaluate their work, but how to prevent them from fostering the gummy-brained notion that they are carrying on America's musical traditions. Mr. Chandler capsulizes this delusion in a comment quoted on the back of the record jacket: "What I'd like to do," he says, "is to create art songs in the folk idiom."

Anyone who has heard a rural singer finish even so recent a ballad as "Omie Wise," and then launch into "When You Wore a Tulip" knows that the marks of oral tradition are precise. If buyers of folk music records don't save their money for the records that show them clearly, the next few years will surely see this idiom overrun by the likes of Len Chandler. Len Chandler undeniably is a talented person, but he has been twice led astray, once by the rhetoric of theoreticians who say that the function of the artist is to load the symbol with as much meaning as it will bear, and once by the promoters, who, not knowing what else to do with him, have palmed him off on the open-minded, ever-affable folk music audience.

GEPJr.


Writing a critique of John Jackson for the Washington folk music audience is a little like trying to review sex: If you don't know what it's all about by now, what can I say?

But for the benefit of a few newcomers and stay-at-homes who may not have heard him, John takes his material from East Coast blues, Jimmie Rodgers, and Virginia square dance, puts it through his superbly efficient guitar-picking machinery, and comes out with a unified, warmly personal product that is one of the most exciting things going in Afro-American music. Most readers surely have their copies of Blues and Country Dance Tunes by now, so we'll waive further analysis and just make this the Society's official gesture of recognition to one of our best known local performers.

Something else worth mentioning: Indications now point toward national prominence for John in the near future. This past February, he appeared at the Chicago Folk Festival, he's lined up for Philadelphia in September, and Chris Strachwitz of Arhoolie was down in Fairfax Station early this year taping a soon-to-be-released second album. John's unofficial fan club wishes him every success.

GEPJr.


One blue-bright day in the summer of 1946, my father, grandfather, and I drove up from Keyser, West Virginia, to a point overlooking a hundred long Allegheny ridges. "You see that one with the deep scoop in it," said my grandfather pointing, "that's Saddle Mountain, where Nancy Hanks was born." And I was made to understand that Nancy Hanks was Abraham Lincoln's mother. It was one of those moments, undramatic on the surface, that cast the spell of childhood across a whole lifetime. I was then only six years old, and the impression of young Abe, the flesh and blood extension of his family, took deep root. It still holds precedence over my other
view of Father Abraham, the disembodied saint of democracy.

For this very personal reason, I found Allene Goodman's record most enjoyable. Miss Goodman and her crew of banjo pickers, mouth harp blowers, and singers have assembled here miscellaneous tunes and dialog of, by, and for Lincoln that greatly augment my pictures of his family life and the music he heard around the house as a child. One of the songs, which according to the commentary may have been sung by Nancy Hanks is "Buckeye Jim," and particularly appealing. Miss Goodman is a sprightly and polished vocalist and this single band is worth the price of the record.

However, I do have a few niggling reservations about the album. One is that while the songs start off in a pleasant, straightforward way, many lead the listener into a labyrinth of complicated medley arrangements. One such combines "Old Abe Lincoln Came Out of the Wilderness," "All My Sins Been Taken Away," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and "Rock My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham."

Another quibble: the talking parts have that over-simplified, over-enthusiastic, over-reverent tone reminiscent of Walt Disney, the Landmark Books, and your eighth grade history teacher. You will notice this particularly on side two dealing with Lincoln the president.

But, in all fairness, these two aspects that displease the adult ear may be precisely the qualities that will endear the record to children. The conglomeration of jokes, yarns, and melodies will fill their little rag-bag minds with vivid fragments. The larger-than-life account of a model man living in exemplary wholesomeness will feed their hunger for ideals. Sure, it shows Saint Abe in the whitest possible light, but for a small boy looking over ridges, what else would you want?


This is as good as Grant Rogers' first LP, but different in approach. His first release, on Folk Legacy, reflected three aspects of the Catskill folksinger's talents: a creative interpretation of traditional ballads and fiddle tunes, a marked ability to entertain with humorous and children's songs, and a genius for song composition, at least in the semi-topical vein.

The Kanawha disc, on the other hand, was programmed, annotated, and recorded by Grant himself, and indicates his and his community's broader musical experience and taste. The sources are mostly 19th-century pop, 20th-century hillbilly, and contemporary Rogers, but we suspect that traditionalists, children, and topicalists will enjoy this new recording as much as his friends, neighbors, and fans.

Joseph C. Hickerson
Library of Congress

Requiescant...

ERNEST V. (POP) STONEMAN, of nearby Carmody Hills, Maryland, whose career as a country music, hillbilly entertainer spanned the era from Edison cylinders, on which he recorded, to television, on which he appeared, and the long-playing record, on which he also recorded: who fathered twenty-three children, and whose family, the Stoneman family, himself included, last year was voted the top vocal group of the year by the Country Music Association...

and ISAAC GARFIELD (IKE) GREER, of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, whose singing of "Sweet William" (Earl Brand) and "Sourwood Mountain" to his wife's dulcimer accompaniment, graces records available from the Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress.
THE FOLK CALENDAR...

June 29-July 6
Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival, Kutztown, Pennsylvania.

July 3-7
Festival of American Folklife, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. Ralph Stanley, Doc and Merle Watson, Jean Ritchie, Ed Young, Lummi's Indians, Red Parham and Bill McElreath, Skip James, Bessie Jones, Swan Silvertones, Grandpa Jones, Jimmie Driftwood, Muddy Waters, Mike Seeger, Oincara Dancers from Boise, Idaho, Cooke County Singing Convention,Bill Lamey with Scotts Mill Song Group, and mariachi band.

July 4-7
Newport Jazz Festival, Newport, Rhode Island.

July 4
All-American Country Fiddlers Contest, Hale Center, Texas.

July 6
Old-time Fiddlers Convention, Elkin, North Carolina.

July 6-7
Ohio Bluegrass Festival, Le Mar Lake Park, Norwalk, Ohio.

July 10-13
Ohio Hills Folk Festival, Quaker City, Ohio.

July 11-13
Oregon State Square Dance Festival, Eugene, Oregon.

July 12-14
Highland Games and Gathering of Scottish Clans, Grandfather Mountain, Linville, North Carolina.

July 14
FGSW ANNUAL PICK-NIK, Fort Ward Park, Alexandria, Virginia.

July 15-19
Craftsmen's Fair of the Southern Highlands, Asheville, North Carolina.

July 15-21
Music Festival, Chesterbrook School, Falmouth, Massachusetts. Roger Sprung, New Lost City Ramblers, Bob and Evelyne Beers.

July 19
Far West Old-Time Fiddlers Contest, Cottage Grove, Oregon.

July 19-21

July 21
Topanga Canyon Banjo and Fiddle Contest, Topanga, California.

July 23-27

July 24-26
Wild Pony Roundup, Chincoteague, Virginia.

July 25-Aug 15
Virginia Highlands Arts and Crafts Festival, Abingdon, Virginia.

July 27
Old-Time Fiddlers Contest, Craftsbury Common, Vermont.

Aug 1-3
Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, Asheville, North Carolina.

Aug 3
Fiddlers Picnic, Lenape, Pennsylvania.

Aug 3
Fiddlers Contest, Byneg, Texas.

Aug 3-4
Chattahoochee Sacred Harp Convention, Wilson's Chapel, Carrollton, Georgia.

Aug 3-4
National Championship Country Music Contest, Warrenton, Virginia.

Aug 4-18
Pinewoods Camp Folk Dance Weeks, Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts.

Aug 7-10
Old Settlers Reunion and Fiddlers Contest, Quitman, Texas.

Aug 8-10
Old Fiddlers Contest, Galax, Virginia.

Aug 9-11

Aug 12-13
National Hobo Convention, Britt, Iowa.

Aug 15
Gospel Night, Prince William County Fair, Manassas, Virginia. The Lewis Family.

Aug 15-17
International Fiddlers Festival, Fort Worth, Texas.

Aug 15-18
Fox Hollow, Beers Family Festival of Traditional Music and Arts, Petersburg, New York.

Aug 17
South Carolina Folk Music Festival, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Aug 18-25
Pinewoods Camp Folk Music Week, Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts.

Aug 20-25
Pennsylvania Dutch Days, Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Aug 23-25
Folk Calendar (cont.)...


Aug 25
Highland Games, Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

Aug 25
Old-Time Fiddlers and Country Music Contest, Brownville, Nebraska.

Aug 26-Sept 1

Aug 29-Sept 2
Midwest Old Settlers and Threshers Association Reunion, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Aug 31-Sept 2
Old-Time Fiddlers Campout, Crouch, Idaho.

Aug 31-Sept 2
Arts and Crafts Festival, Beckley, West Virginia.

Sept 2
Fiddlers Picnic, Sunset Park, between Oxford and West Grove, Pennsylvania.

Sept 5-8
Mason-Dixon Steam Society Show, Carroll County Farm Museum, Westminster, Maryland.

Sept 8
Virginia Folk Music Festival (Bluegrass), Chase City, Virginia.

Sept 9
Flax Scutching Festival, Stahlstown, Pennsylvania.

Sept 15
Italian Fall Festival, Villa Rosa, Mitchellville, Maryland.

Sept 15
Virginia Folk Music Festival, Chase City, Virginia.

Sept 27-29
Fall Festival and Old Fiddlers Contest, Plattsburg, Missouri.

Sept 28-29
Goose-Calling Contest, Missouri Valley, Iowa.

Sept 29
Midway U.S.A. Old-Time Fiddlers, Pickers and Singers Convention, Salina, Kansas.

Oct 4-5
Tennessee Folk Festival, Johnson City, Tennessee.

Oct 5
Dog Mart (with Old Fiddlers Contest), Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Nov 23
North Carolina State Fiddlers Championship, Cleveland, North Carolina.

Nov 29-Dec 1
Folk Dance Jamboree, Folk Dance House, New York, New York.

(Note: Participants listed for a particular event are from those announced for that event. If you are interested in attending any of the above, it is advisable to contact the office for the event or the local Chamber of Commerce to obtain confirmation of the location and date(s), and perhaps additional information.)

POTOMAC PALAVER...

Births: First-born Michael James on June 7 to Joe and Lynn Hickerson...First-born David to Alvin and Carol Rosen...Third daughter, Joy, to the John F. Putnams...And your editor has a second aspiring copy-girl, Jane Margaret, born May 25:

(Writing of the Hickersons, your editor thanks Joe for information and background material necessary in preparing the Newsletter which he has consistently furnished.)

Gerry Parsons has been awarded a fellowship to the graduate program in American folk culture at Cooperstown, New York. This story via Gerry: Chuck Perdue, who is now studying toward the doctorate in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania, presented a paper there on hog butchering, with which he became well acquainted during his youth in Panthersville, Georgia. He told his audience that, as a visual aid, he had wanted to bring in some chitterlings, but that he "just didn't have the guts."

And someone send Jonathan Eberhart more records or send him to more concerts to review. Jon's reviews appear in the current Sing Out! and a recent Dick Cerri's Newsletter — and no pusillanimous pap there. In fact, the by-line is almost superfluous. Every line is stamped. In an age of non-writing and non-reviewing, it's a joy to find a writer who's intelligent, believes writing is to communicate, and does.
PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

The by-laws of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington were adopted on October 3, 1964, which puts us now into our fourth year of existence. Having been associated with the Society in one capacity or another since its inception, I would like to use this opportunity briefly to review those almost-four years -- to comment on some of the problems which we have faced, on some of our successes, and on some of our continuing difficulties.

To begin with, the major miracle is that we are here tonight at all. We not only still exist, but have shown steady growth over these few years. To be sure, we seem to be in no danger of becoming a mass organization, but no one ever expected that we would. From a small nucleus of perhaps fifteen or twenty people who were involved in the initial organization we now have a membership of over 200. Since perhaps half of these "members" represent families, the number of actual heads involved is at least half again this large. Our mailing list has grown to almost 2,000, and our activities are known, and spoken of favorably, far beyond the limits of metropolitan Washington. We have become a small, but noticeable beauty mark on the cultural face of our community. (I was going to say "pimple," but the metaphor didn't seem to be quite apt.)

According to the by-laws, our main purpose is to "further the understanding, investigation, appreciation, and performance of traditional folk music and folklore of the American people." That sounds terribly formal, but after all by-laws are formal documents. And, for some of us, I am sure, our purpose is formal and we approach it with a sense of mission. For others of us, the main issue is that this folk stuff is good. It is fun to sing, to listen, to watch. We want others to experience that particular fun and to share it with us.

Our programming over these few years has been shaped by that stated purpose. We have presented traditional performers and younger interpreters of traditional materials; we have had "sings," we have had programs such as the one we are having tonight, presenting formal discussions of various aspects of the spectrum of folk materials. This year we published, in addition to the regular issues of the newsletter, one expanded issue containing articles and book and record reviews. A second such issue is in the planning stage and these two preliminary efforts may sprout into a journal.

I am pleased to note that the reference to "the folk music and folklore of the American people" has been interpreted broadly. So we have had programs of English, Irish, Scottish music and dance, as well as Latin American, Yiddish, and Slavic programs, in addition to those more narrowly defined as "American." As "American people" we are lucky. We can encompass the folk traditions of the entire world and stay within our mission.

Our programming in the past has been handicapped by our uneasy financial status, but in some ways that handicap has been a blessing. It has forced us to look to our own resources and use our own "folk." And we looked upon them and they were fair. Also, for several programs of Negro blues and spirituals, members of the Society located performers in our own communities who were the equal of the best we might have imported. To this extent it was good that we could not frequently afford well-known performers. This year, being just a little bit fatter, we risked expanding our budget for programs, and we have been able to pay performers more consistently than we had before. That we have been able to do this is a sign of growth, but I hope that we will never reach the point of feeling because we can afford to pay a performer's fee that our own people are no longer good enough for us.

One aspect of our programing has been, I believe, almost unique -- the annual Get-away. (What a name! But I suspect we are stuck with it.) We have had two, now. Cold, wet, miserable, and great! The third is coming up next month and we expect it to be equally good. Better, if possible. From time to time, members of the Society have raised the question of a festival. For many reasons, we have
felt that it was not feasible for us to undertake one. The Get-away is a partial
answer to the festival question, but it is also a different answer. It permits a
degree of intimacy and total immersion in the events of the weekend, and a degree
of active participating as well as "spectating," which would probably not be possible
at a festival. It simply has to be experienced. If you have not already done so,
then you must come.

So, on the whole, we have been active, productive, and growing. But not with-
out problems. Let me spend a few minutes on those. There are two major ones and
they interact — money and people-to-do-the-work.

Money. Frank will be giving a financial report and I don't want to steal his
thunder by going into detail. The general outline of the problem is clear. We
don't really have enough, never have had, and so far have not really been able to
figure a way out of the dilemma. For our first two years our two major sources of
income were from dues and paid admissions at programs. Last year and again this
year we were extremely fortunate in being invited by Bob Stanley and Harding
Williams to share with them in the presentation of somewhat more commercially
oriented folk music at the Lisner auditorium. We were pleased to join them in
this, and the result has been extremely useful to us in producing a much needed
source of additional income. Actually, if it had not been for this joint venture
we would have been in a much more difficult financial position for the last two
years — and would have had drastically to limit the scope of our activities.
Our relationship with Stanley-Williams, however, proceeds on a year-to-year basis,
and it is difficult to depend on this as a stable source of income for future
planning. So far we have not been able to develop additional sources of support.
We did last year submit an application to the National Foundation for the Arts.
We didn't really expect a favorable response since there was great question as to
whether support of an activity like ours would be of interest to them and, unfortu-
nately, that expectation was justified. Other possibilities exist: perhaps in-
creasing annual dues, or increasing admission charges to programs for non-members,
perhaps even a small admission charge for members. None of these alternatives
are particularly desirable. This remains a problem for the future.

People. If you take the trouble to review the roster of officers of the
Society for the past four years you will be immediately struck by the reappearance
of the same names in a variety of combinations, I myself served as treasurer for
the first two years, as a member of the Board as past treasurer for the third year,
and as president this year. Other names continuously reappear. There have been
several new additions but they have been relatively few. I think there is no doubt
that the continuing growth and vigor of the Society would be enhanced by the con-
tinuous infusion of new people in running its affairs. On another level, we are
faced with the problem that all organizations like ours face, in that the people
who have to do the work do it in what time they can spare from other full-time
engagements. There does not seem to be any immediate possibility of hiring even
a part-time person to handle any of the routine activities which make the Society
go. In order, therefore, to avoid placing intolerable burdens on individual mem-
bers of the Board it becomes extremely important that we have help. Publicity and
the newsletter are two areas in which assistance is always desirable, and if any
of you have the time available and the interest in helping in these or other areas
I would urge you to make yourselves available. One final word: the Society be-
longs to its members — not to the Board. While it is true that the week-to-week
operations of the Society cannot be conducted by the entire membership, we do
welcome participation by the membership. Board meetings are open to members;
they usually are announced in the newsletter and I would urge you to attend them
when you can.

Sol. Schneyer, April 12, 1968
TREASURER'S REPORT...
June 1, 1967 - March 31, 1968:

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$2,240.07                   $1,246.50

Net Worth (April 1, 1968): $375.00

*Includes $200.00 advanced to Get-away III.

Frank Daspit, April 12, 1968

TAPE ARCHIVES...

Bob Silverman, the intrepid archivist of the Folklore Society, has steadily
tape-recorded Society programs and concerts until the collection contains (as
of April, 1968):

FIRST PROGRAM EVER (Second part only, Chuck and Nan Perdue, 11/64)
DULCIMERS (Lecture-demonstration, H. Mitchell and John Putnam, 12/64)

BLUES AND GOSPEL MUSIC (J. Jackson, E. Green, F. Molton, 1/65)*
FIRST OPEN SING (FSGW members and friends, 1/8/65)

McPEAKE FAMILY OF BELFAST CONCERT (3/65)*
LIBBA COTTON (4/65)
PICK-NIK I (Mini-festival, 7/3/65)
FSGW HOME FOLKS CONCERT (Local performers, 9/24/65)
FSGW SAMPLER CONCERT (Members and friends, 11/27/65)*

TOSSI AND LEE AARON (12/10/65)*
STUDENT PAPERS ON FOLKLORE (University of Maryland students, 1/66)
PHAM DUY (Songs of Vietnam, 4/3/66)
FIDDLERS (L. Wolfe, R. Beach, 4/66)*
BUDDY MOSS (6/66)*

FSGW CONCERT-MEMORIAL FRANK PROFFITT (C. & N. Perdue, J. & G. Dildine, J. Hickerson, 6/66)
PICK-NIK II (Mini-festival, 7/66)
GET-AWAY I (Folksinging, etc., in a national park, 9/66)
DES AND JULIET RAINNEY (1/67)

ARCHIE GREEN (Industrial ballads lecture, '66)

SARAH CLEVELAND (11/66)

BARN DANCE AND COUNTRY MUSIC (12/66)*

THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL FOLK FESTIVAL (12/2/66 et seq.)

THE PENNYWHISTLERS (2/67)*

FSGW SAMPLER CONCERT (Members and friends, 2/67)*

NEGRO MUSIC AND SONG (3/67)*

THREE FOLKLORE PAPERS (Prof. E. Birdsall, Prof. G. Carey, G. Meade, 4/67)

GET-AWAY II (Folksinging, etc., in a national park, 5/67)
Tape Archives (cont.)...

PICK-NIK III (Mini-festival, 6/67)

NORMAN KENNEDY (12/67)*

LOU KILLEN (3/68)*

GET-AWAY III (Folksinging, etc., in a national park, 5/68)

NEGRO BLUES AND OLD-TIME SONGS (S. Griffith and Yank Rachell, 5/10/68)

*Rental copies available to members. Rates: fifty cents for periods less than one month, one dollar per full month.

PERIODICALS LIBRARY...

The Newsletter is developing an exchange program with similar periodicals. The library contains a number of items which have been cataloged by Exchange Editor J. Carole Clarke, and there are many other items arriving monthly which have not yet been cataloged. Among some of the titles cataloged are the American Old Time Fiddlers News, Disc Collector Newsletter, Songmakers Newsletter and Calendar, Harpeth Valley Sacred Harp News, Northern Junket, Blue Yodel, The Folknik (San Francisco Folk Music Club), Sounding Board (New Haven Folk Music Society), and The Appalachian South.

If any member is interested in having access to these periodicals, contact Carole at 387-8045.

Folklore Society of Greater Washington Annual Pick-nik, Sunday, July 14, at Fort Ward Park, Alexandria, Virginia. Free-for-all (no admission)!