

Folklore Society

of Greater Washington

Vol. I, No. 5

February 8, 1965

RARELY SEEN FILMS: FILMS! FILMS! will be presented by the Folklore Society for the February concert. (See poster page for details.) The five movies were gathered and will be discussed at the meeting by Joe Hickerson. Since it is difficult to find films on folk music and folklore being shown, we hope you will join us at the Washington Gas Light Auditorium, 11th and H Streets, N.W., at 8:30 p.m. Friday, February 19th. (Business meeting at 8).

WHALER OUT OF NEW BEDFORD, produced for the New Bedford, Mass., Whaling Museum, is the longest and most unusual offering. This color film features singing and playing by Ewan MacColl, A.L. Lloyd, Peggy Seeger, David Swarbrick, Alf Edwards, a chorus, et al. It is based on a 1300-foot panorama (a "moving picture" painted on a continuous roll of muslin) done by Benjamin Russell, with Caleb Purrington, after a four-year voyage on the whaleship KUTUSOFF, 1841-1845. As the panorama unfolds, we hear songs such as "Tis Advertised in Boston," "Blow Boys, Blow," "Tommy's Gone to Hilo," "Greenland Whale Fisheries," and the beautiful "Go Down, You Blood Red Roses." Native music recorded on the Island of Tonga and different sound effects also accompany scenes in the movie.

LEADBELLY, who is the lead subject of Sing Our's March issue, was filmed in Hollywood about 1945 by two cameramen, Sloan and Chang, who studied him from many different angles. Pete Seeger has since undertaken the task of editing the sound and footage. He has also added some shots of Leadbelly's home area in Louisiana, resulting in a short film of Leadbelly singing three songs in as many settings. "Pick a Bale of Cotton," "Take This Hammer," and "Black Girl" are the songs.

TO HEAR YOUR BANJO PLAY features another side of Pete Seeger as he plays his banjo and narrates this film. Interspersed with him are examples of American folksongs sung in natural surroundings by Mrs. Texas Gladden, Horton Barker, Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry. The story and dialogue are by Alan Lomax, and also included is a square dance presented by Margot Mayo's American Square Dance Group (to which two of our FSGW members belonged).

SONGS OF NOVA SCOTIA depicts the well-known folksong collector and publisher, Helen Chreighton, as she records and interviews several of Nova Scotia's best singers. It was produced by the Canadian Film Board.

TALL TALES presents Burl Ives, Josh White, Walter O'Keefe, and Will Geer singing American narrative folksongs, "Strawberry Roan," "Grey Goose," and "John Henry." This film was produced in 1941 in a farmhouse setting, and was directed by Irving Lerner and Willard Van Dyke.

EVEN BEFORE SPRING, we find the Folklore Society coming up roses. We are very proud to present the McPEAKE FAMILY of Ireland on their first tour of the United States. (More on them in next newsletter). Leave Friday, March 12 at 8:30 pm open for this perfect early celebration of St. Patrick's Day. The concert will be held in the main hall of Hawthorne School, 6th and Eye Sts., S.W. (near Arena Stage). This Belfast family has a long tradition in Irish instrumental music and folksinging. Head of the family, Francis McPeake (80 years old) will be joined by his sons, Francis II and James, and grandchildren, Francis III and Kathleen, and Tommy McCrudden, their cousin, for a resounding evening featuring playing of the Uilleann bag-pipes, Irish harp, banjo, guitar, bass fiddle, Irish penny, or tin, whistle, and unaccompanied singing. They are creative and imaginative performers and have justly earned recognition throughout Europe, England, and Ireland.

OTHER ACTIVITIES are varied (several concerts are being planned now) and include the following:

MEMBERSHIP MEETING to be held Friday, March 19th at 8:30 pm — place to be announced. Please come and take part in the forming of your society.

SOME FSGW MEMBERS have started a singing group which is aimed at "children and discriminating adults". Their first performance will be on the Cousin Cupcake Show, 8 am on Saturday, February 13th. Watch for Helen Schnever, Chuck and Nan Perdue, Tom Nash, and Jack Bybee.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS are held on the 1st (at Perdue's — 273-0762) and 3rd (at Schnever's — 949-4552) Wednesdays of every month. Again, anyone who wishes is encouraged to join us. Call the numbers above for information and/or directions.

SKIP JAMES, the famous country blues artist, is now in the D.C. General Hospital facing several operations for cancer. Blood donations are very much needed in his name — Nehemiah James. He will probably be in the hospital for over two months, so blood given for him in that time will greatly assist him. Donations can be made at the hospital at the following times: Tues. and Thurs. 8-11 am and 6:30-9 pm; and Saturday 8 am - 4:30 pm.

EVERYTHING ABOUT THE FSGW is expanding tremendously, the newsletter included. Our mailing list now includes over 1000 names and is in the process of being cut. If you are at all interested in hearing of our activities and wish to continue receiving the newsletter, indicate this on the form below and send it with name and address to Carol Lee, Route 1, Oakton, Virginia 22124.

TO JOIN THE SOCIETY, fill out the form below and send it to Jim Lee. Checks (\$5.00 for individual, \$7.50 for family membership) should be made out to the "Folklore Society of Greater Washington."

Carol Lee, Editor

Folklore Society of Greater Washington, Route 1, Box 15, Oakton, Virginia

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

circle one: family \$7.50 individual \$5.00 mailing list only

The Folklore Society Presents

FOLK SONGS ON FILM

- whaler out of new bedford
- leadbelly
- to hear your banjo play
- songs of nova scotia
- tall tales

8:30 pm Friday, February 19

Washington Gas Light Co. Auditorium

11th and H Streets, N.W.,

Admission \$1.00