

# The Folklore Society

O F G R E A T E R W A S H I N G T O N

P. O. Box 19174 • 20th Street Station • Washington D. C. 20036

VOL. 2, NO. 9

May, 1966

Linda Brennan, Editor

## ARCHIE GREEN TO SPEAK AT MAY MEETING

Mr. Archie Green will be the featured speaker at the May 13 meeting of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, speaking on American occupational, industrial, labor, and radical folksongs, with recorded examples. The program will be held at 8:30 p. m. on Friday, May 13, at Pierce Hall. There will be a business meeting just after intermission which will involve the election of next year's officers (for the term June 1, 1966 to May 31, 1967). All FSGW members and prospective members are especially urged to attend. Nominations will be open until just prior to the balloting.

Archie Green is Librarian of the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of Illinois, and is currently a candidate for the PhD in Folklore at the University of Pennsylvania. He has written widely in the fields of labor-industrial folksong, hillbilly music, and folk music discography, and has participated in numerous folk festivals as moderator, and on various committees of the American Folklore Society.

Mr. Green will trace the development of occupational, industrial, labor, and radical folksongs from 17th century English broadsides to recent phonograph records. He will discuss the relationships of folksongs to individuals and "movements," and will determine the nature of the current folksong and topical-protest song "revival" as a possible "movement" in a sociological-anthropological sense. Specific contrast will be made among Joe Hill, Woody Guthrie, and Bob Dylan as singers, composers, and exponents of ideology.

Admission to the May 13 meeting is free to FSGW members; memberships are available at the door. (You must be a member to be eligible to vote in the election.) The public is invited and admission for non-members is \$1.00. Pierce Hall is located behind All Souls Unitarian Church, 16th and Harvard Street, N. W. A lighted private parking lot is east of 15th and Fuller.

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING FSGW EVENTS

May 18&June 1--Executive Board Meeting/8:30 p. m. /Suite 700-1200-17th St. , N. W.  
May 21--Open Sing run by Joe Hickerson with no set program or topic but stressing harmony and choruses/everyone welcome to sing/8:30 p. m. , Union Methodist Church/814-20th St. , N. W. /Members free/non-members, \$1.00; students, 50¢.

June 10--Bluesman Buddy Moss/8:30 p. m. , Wash. Gaslight Co. Auditorium/11th & H, N. W.  
June 17--Frank Proffitt Memorial Concert/8:30 p. m. , Pierce Hall (behind All Soul's Unitarian Church/16th and Harvard Sts. , N. W. /General admission, \$2.00; members, \$1.00/All proceeds to go to the Proffitt family/tickets may be ordered after May 10 by mailing a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Dale Music Company, 824 Georgia Ave. , Silver Spring, Md.

It's report time. Every year at this time the President and the Treasurer of the Society are required by the By-laws to report to the membership on the Society's activities and its financial condition. These reports follow...

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A summary of the past year's activities is probably in order here for those of you who have recently joined the Society. Beginning with June, 1965 our programs and events for the past 11 months were as follows:

- lecture on "Folklife Research" by Prof. Bruce Buckley.
- summer pick-nic with music and discussion.
- concert featuring Alice Foster and Hazel Dickens, Don Leace, and John Jackson.
- film program - "To Hear Your Banjo Play", "The Blues", "Rhythm of Africa", and "The Roots of Hillbilly Music".
- lecture with recorded illustrations by Richard Spottswood and Guthrie Meade on music recorded during the '20's and '30's on Hillbilly and Race records.
- sampler concert by members of FSGW.
- program of music by Lee and Tossi Aaron.
- program of papers by students at the University of Maryland.
- nomination meeting combined with two films - "Whaler Out of New Bedford" and "Music From Oil Drums".
- program of music by the Beers Family.
- program of fiddle music.

Events that are currently scheduled by the Society are listed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Last October the Society initiated a continuing series of open sings which are held on the last Saturday of every month. These have so far enjoyed a small (60-70 people) but steady audience. However, we would like to see more people on the participating end. Why don't you volunteer to sing at the next one?

An agreement was signed this past year by the Folklore Society of Greater Washington and Stanley-Williams Presentations under the terms of which FSGW has sponsored the Clancy Brothers and Buffy St. Marie in concert at Lisner Auditorium. A similar agreement may be signed later this year providing for a fall concert series. These agreements enable FSGW members to attend the concerts at a considerable discount and also provide an additional source of income for the Society's meager treasury.

The Society is in the preliminary stages of planning for a week-end Folk camp-out this September. It will be for members only and will be held at Prince William Forest Park. More details are given elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The biggest problem, and probably the only real one, that the Society faces is money--lack of enough of it to do all the things we would like to do. This will always be a problem. If we had a limitless supply of money we would no doubt find ourselves with a limitless number of worthwhile things to do. In consideration of the small budget with which we have to work (see Treasurer's Report which follows), most of our programs must necessarily depend on contacts that members may have and, to

some degree, on utilization of members and other local people. If you have suggestions, contacts, ideas, (lots of money), or anything at all to say regarding the operations of the FSGW, do not hesitate to contact me or any other officer of the Society or, better still, come to Executive Board meetings and get into things!

In the final analysis, the Society's programs and events are determined by you-- through membership dues, paid admissions, and participation (or lack of it) in Society activities.

Chuck Perdue, President

TREASURER'S REPORT (as of 2/28/66)

1. Income

Fiscal 1965 (10/64-5/65)

Fiscal 1966 (6/65-2/66)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Monthly Average</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Monthly Average</u>
Membership	\$ 537.00	\$67	\$ 450.50	\$ 50
Admissions	714.25	89	885.05	98
Other	<u>331.93</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>37.80</u>	<u>4</u>
Total Income	\$1,583.18	\$198	\$1,373.35	\$153

2. Expenditures

Hall Rent	\$ 208.60	\$ 26	\$ 300.00	\$ 33
Newsletter	357.64	45	432.71	48
Program	406.70	51	276.24	31
Publicity	140.29	18	222.83	24
Supplies	12.35	2	61.40	7
Other	<u>62.04</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>91.96</u>	<u>10</u>
Total Expenditures	\$1,187.66	\$149	\$1,385.54	\$ 154

3. Balance

		Balance Forward	\$ 395.52
		Income	<u>1,373.35</u>
Income	\$1,583.18		
Expenditures	<u>1,187.66</u>	Total Income	1,768.87
		Expenditures	<u>1,385.54</u>
Balance	\$ 395.52	Balance	\$ 383.33

As of 2/28/66:

Bank Account - First National Bank of Maryland, Kensington Branch	\$340.15
Petty Cash	<u>43.18</u>
Total	\$383.33

Note: Neither FY65 nor FY66 represents a full year of operation. Monthly averages are provided to permit some, though imperfect, comparison.

Solomon Schneyer, Treasurer

UPCOMING FOLK FESTIVALS and FIDDLE CONVENTIONS within  
500 miles of Washington, D. C.

- Connecticut: Indian Neck Folk Festival, Branford. April 29-May 1, 1966.  
Folk Music Workshop Weekend, Sharon, May 13-15, 1966
- District of Columbia: Folk Festival of All Nations, Roosevelt High School, May 13-14, '66.  
8:15 p.m. each evening. The FSGW will participate.
- Georgia: Georgia Festival of Folk Music, Unicoi State Park, Helen, Labor Day Weekend,  
1966. Sponsored by the Atlanta Folk Music Society.
- Kentucky: American Folk Song Festival, Ashland, directed by Jean Thomas. Second  
weekend in June.
- Massachusetts: Country Dance Society of America Folk Music Week, Pinewoods Camp,  
August 21-28, 1966.
- New York: New York Folk Festival, Carnegie Hall, announced for June 22-26, 1966.  
Beers Family Folk Festival, Petersburg, August 18-21, 1966.
- North Carolina: Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, Asheville, first weekend in August.  
Directed by Bascom Lamar Lunsford.  
Southern Highlands Craftsmen's Fair, City Auditorium, Asheville,  
July 18-23, 1966.  
North Carolina State Fiddling Championship, Cleveland, Nov. 19, 1966  
Old Time Fiddlers Convention, Elkin, July 2, 1966.  
State Fair and Folk Festival, Raleigh. Last year's was Aug. 11-16, '65.
- Ohio: Ohio Hill Folk Festival, Quaker City. Last year's was July 14-17, 1965.
- Ontario, Canada: Mariposa Folk Festival, Innis Lake, Orillia. Last year's was Aug. 6-8.  
Shelburne Fiddling Contest. Last year's was August 6-7, 1965.
- Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Dutch Festival, Kutztown, first week in July.  
Lenape Fiddlers Picnic, August 6, 1966.  
Sunset Park Fiddlers Picnic, between Oxford and West Grove, Sept. 5, '66.  
Philadelphia Folk Festival, Paoli. September 9-11, 1966.  
Pittsburgh Folk Festival. Last year's was May 14-16, 1965.  
Stewartstown Fiddlers Convention. Last year's was August 24, 1965.
- Rhode Island: Newport Jazz Festival, July 1-4, 1966.  
Newport Folk Festival, July 21-24, 1966.
- South Carolina: Sea Island Folk Festival, Johns Island. Last year's was Dec. 23, 1965.
- Virginia: Virginia Highlands Arts and Crafts Fair, Abingdon, July 23-August 14, 1966.  
Virginia Folk Music Festival, Crewe. Sometime in September, 1966.  
Annual Fredericksburg Dog Mart, October 1, 1966. Includes Old Fiddlers  
Contest.  
Galax Old Fiddler's Convention, August 12-13, 1966.  
Old Time Fiddler's Convention, Pulaski. Last year's was Aug. 6-7, 1965.  
National Championship Country Music Contest, Lake Whippoorwill, near  
Warrenton. Around first week in August.

Virginia (Cont.): First Annual International Bluegrass and Folk Festival, July 10th, featuring Flatt and Scruggs, Bill Monroe, Jim and Jesse, The Osborne Brothers, Mac Wiseman and Jimmie Martin. Lake Whippoorwill, Warrenton, Va.

West Virginia: West Virginia State Folk Festival, Glenville. June 16-19, 1966.

(ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO THIS LIST ARE WELCOME)

THE KICKIN' MULE...

Woodrow Wilson Guthrie: born July 14, 1912 in Okemah, Oklahoma--between 1932 and 1952 traveled everywhere, did everything, wrote a thousand songs, had three wives and seven children (two children dead), and became an inspiration for more aspiring singers and/or poets than you could shake a stick at. Twenty-six of the songs that he wrote were for the Bonneville Power Administration and on April 6, 1966 he was awarded the Department of the Interior's Conservation Service Award by Secretary Stewart L. Udall. Woody has been hospitalized since 1955 with Huntington's Chorea, a critical nervous affliction and the award was made to his second wife, Marjorie, and their three children. Long overdue recognition to the man who is the greatest folk-poet this country has known.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few more folk sayings...Grinin' like a jackass eating briars - Enough is enough and too much is a dog's bait - He wouldn't know me from a sack of salt - He's got more money than Carter's got oats - He wouldn't do it if it hair-lipped Judy - Deader than a door nail - Too much sugar for a nickel. All of these are from Panthersville, Georgia.

\* \* \* \* \*

Folk beliefs...When I was a kid I would occasionally see a mule wallowing in the pasture and it was always said that if he (or she) managed to turn completely over while wallowing that he was worth a hundred dollars. If you see a hog with a stick in its mouth, it's going to rain. A halo around the moon is a very bad sign--usually portends a death. If an owl flies onto your back porch and hoots, there will be a death in the family.

Chuck Perdue

MORE NEWS ABOUT THE "FOLK GET-AWAY"

Preliminary planning is continuing for the "Folk Get-Away" (camping week-end for members of the Society) to be held at the Prince William Forest Park in Triangle, Va. The outing is being planned for September 16-18, however all plans are necessarily tentative at this point pending receipt of a camping permit from the National Park Service.

This brings up an initial problem; we are required to make application for our cabin camping area by no later than June 1st, and the Park Service will make a decision on the application by June 15th. The applications are judged not on a first come - first

served basis, but rather on the basis of providing the maximum opportunity for a satisfying experience to a maximum number of people. This means that the number of members expecting to take part in the outing and who sign up for the purpose of the application by June 1st, will determine whether or not we will obtain a camping permit. So don't wait until the last minute thinking you have all summer to make up your mind about going; it is critical to us now to know your intentions. All that is necessary to make a reservation at this point if you are interested is to call Nan Perdue, 273-0762.

Obviously, there can be no definite plans until after June 15th; however, a possible program has been proposed including a square dance, campfire sings, a small concert, a puppet show for children and discriminating adults, workshops and possible craft demonstrations. There is also hiking, fishing, swimming, and a Nature Museum available.

NOMINEES FOR OFFICE IN THE FSGW, 1966-67

President--SOL SCHNEYER (chosen by nominating committee, '64-'65 Treasurer)  
CHUCK PERDUE ('64 vice president and '65 president)

Vice President-- JOE HICKERSON (chosen by nominating committee, '64-'65 Program Chmn.)  
GUTHRIE MEADE (presented FSGW program on commercial "race" and hillbilly music of the 1920's in Nov. '65)

Secretary--ANDY WALLACE (chosen by nominating committee)  
CAROL DAVIS  
JO PETERSON

Treasurer--BOB SILVERMAN (chosen by nominating, '64-'65 Archivist)  
JOE HICKERSON (see above)

Program Chairman--CHUCK PERDUE (chosen by nominating committee--see above)  
ANDY WALLACE  
MIKE RIVERS (worked on last year's picnic)  
GUTHRIE MEADE (see above)

Special Events Chairman--MIKE RIVERS (chosen by nominating committee)  
JOHN DILDINE ('64 president, '65 Publicity Chairman)

Publications Chairman-- LINDA BRENNAN (chosen by nominating committee '65 Pub. Chmn.)  
GERRY PARSONS ('64 Publicity appointee)

Publicity--no candidate chosen by nominating committee  
CAROL DAVIS  
JIM LEE ('64 Membership Chairman)  
RICHARD RODGERS (publisher of the monthly, Folk Strums)

Membership Chairman--JUNE SILVERMAN (chosen by nominating committee, '64-'65 Chmn.)  
GEORGE SIMPSON ('64-'65 Special Events Chairman)  
JOHN DILDINE (see above)

In 1964, Ed Morris (FSGW Vice Pres. - '65) interviewed Skip James, re-discovered Mississippi Delta bluesman. The interview was taped, and the transcript of the recording follows here, in part.

SKIP JAMES: I was born in a little town called Bentonia, Mississippi in Yazoo County on Woodbine plantation--born 1902--June 9th. And I lived there until I was about 8 or 9 years of age. I left there and came to up in the Delta part--stayed there a few years and went to school there. That's when I began to get a little interest in music. And I kept worryin' my mother all the time for a guitar, when I was a kid goin' to school.

I was always crazy about music, and I remember I used to go to a spring totin' water and I'd carry a bucket. I used to rap on that bucket for music. And from that day on I kept on until she decided to get me an old cheap guitar. I was about 9 or 10 then.

Then I left there and went to Leona, Arkansas. I was about 16 or 17 then, and started workin' in a big saw mill there. I wasn't tryin' to play any guitar at that time. So a fella there by the name of Will Crabtree--he's a mighty nice piano player--he played--and that's what he did for a livin'--didn't do nothin' but that--he got a little devoted to me for some reason, and I got a little of his version on the piano. He would play for parties, and when he got up to take his rest periods, he'd walk around and maybe take him a drink or shoot a crap or two, and rest a little while. And then he let me on the stool. I'd get up there and play what I could until he came back. Well, it got so then that I could kind of entertain pretty good, and so he got so that he'd go outside sometimes and stay for 10 or 15 minutes. And I'd still carry on the music for him.

And after I left there, I went back to Mississippi to Bentonia, and I began then to kinda get around the country frolics playin' the guitar and made a little bit. Then I went to Jackson, Miss. and started to play for parties. And I played around Jackson and Vicksburg, different cities, for quite awhile and that's the way I commenced on playin' the piano.

Then this man that ran the music store at Jackson--Mr. H. C. Spears--he heard of me playin' pretty good and he sent for me. I went and responded to his request, and so he asked me to play a piece or two for him. I played a piece. And he said--well, he was gonna have a contest tomorrow. "We have lots of musicians here, and we want to try to get some records made, and how about signin' a contract to record that song." He said "Have you recorded any?" I said "No, I haven't recorded any yet." I say I didn't think I was even eligible or qualified enough. He said "Oh, I think so." He said "Come around here tomorrow and you'll go through examination." So I went.

Quite a few were there, and the first piece I played, he stopped me. He said "I think you made a pretty good hit, Skip." He said "How about signin' a contract to make records for two years?" I told him I would. So I was the only one passed out of all those people that was goin' through that test at that time.

And so that's why I got into the record business in Jackson, Miss. through H. C. Spears. And he sent me to Wisconsin, and I recorded there for him, and I think I got about one or two releases from those records and the company went out of business. I just give up music then--I just got so casehardened and discouraged, and I just quit playin' all together.

Quite awhile and I came back then to Mississippi--stayed a little while and went into the ministry. And then I left that place and went to Dallas, Texas and organized me a quartet--as a traveling group, and we toured several states. And I would sing and then play music sometimes. Sometimes I would say a sermonette, and so forth and so on.

My father--he was in the ministry, and he was one of what you call one of those big DD's--Doctor of Divinity. And he has pastored in many states in the Union. And the last state he pastored in was Birmingham. And he pastored one of the largest churches in the city. That was Mt. Carmel. I reckon there was nearly 2,000 members in that church before he was superannuated. He was superannuated about two or three years before he died--just a few years ago. And he had been pastoring ever since I knew him, and that's

been a many year. And I imagine he's been a pastor for about 70 odd years, because I am 62.

Eventually then, I went back to Mississippi--stayed a little while again. After that I went to Birmingham--started to workin' there then at the ore mine and still I had quit playin' guitar and music all together.

Then I met my wife Mabel there. And after she and I got together, I played a little while after that. And then after she and I left Birmingham and come to Mississippi, I quit playin' again. Didn't play any more then until I was recently found there last year. I hadn't played any then in about six or seven years--up until last spring, and from then up until now I've been back on the job again.

(TO BE CONTINUED- space permitting -NEXT MONTH)

TO JOIN the FSGW, fill out the form below. Checks should be made out to:

Folklore Society of Greater Washington  
P. O. Box 19174, 20th Street Station  
Washington, D. C. 20036

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Check here \_\_\_\_\_ if you wish to make a donation.

Circle one: family \$7.50                      single \$5.00                      mailing list only

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