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folklife center news



Columbus Day pageants have become opportunities for Italian-Americans to celebrate their heritage, and they sometimes include such performances as this one, a reenactment of the landing of Columbus staged in San Francisco harbor, September 30, 1989. Readers of *Folklife Center News* may want to compare the 1594 engraving that appeared on the cover of the spring 1989 issue. Additional photographs depicting the event appear on pages 8 and 9. Photo by Ken Light for the Italian-Americans in the West Project (IAW-KL-B175-21)

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Legislation creating the American Folklife Center (Public Law 94-201) specifies that the Center shall be under the direction of a Board of Trustees. The board is to be composed of "four members appointed by the President from among individuals who are officials of Federal departments and agencies concerned with some aspect of American folklife traditions and arts; four members appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate from among individuals from private life who are widely recognized by virtue of their scholarship, experience, creativity, or interest in American folklife traditions and arts, and four members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives from among such individuals." In addition, ex officio members include the Librarian of Congress, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Director of the Center.

New Appointments

Glancing at the column to the left, one can see that fewer board members are listed than are called for by the legislation. We are happy to report, however, that two new members have been appointed "from private life," and that they will contribute to the geographical distribution already represented by the present members. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Thomas S. Foley, has appointed Nina M. Archabal of St. Paul, Minnesota, to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of a former member; and John Penn Fix III of Spokane, Washington, to a full six-year term. Dr. Archabal wrote a dissertation on Frances Densmore (whose collection of Native American music is housed in the Folk Archive), and she is the director of the Minnesota Historical Society. Mr. Fix is a business-

man who is also a contra dance caller and active in Washington state folklife festivals and programs. Plans are under way to add to the list further with presidential appointments of persons from federal agencies.

Those familiar with public sector folklore may be interested to know the names of the persons who represent the ex officio members at Center board meetings: for the Librarian of Congress, the associate librarian of Cultural Affairs (to be named); for the Secretary of the Smithsonian, Richard Kurin of the Office of Folklife Programs; for the Arts Endowment, Bess Lomax Hawes of the Folk Arts Program; and for the Humanities Endowment, Suzi Jones of the Museum Program.

Contribution to Folk Archive Fund

The Friends of the Folk Archive Fund has received a check for \$2,383.45 from the Ellen Levine Literary Agency, the second largest single contribution yet made to the fund. The generous gift represents a portion of the initial royalties from the sale of *A Prairie Home Companion Folk Song Book*, by Jon and Marcia Pankake with a foreword by Garrison Keillor. The Pankakes made the arrangement for the gift in recognition of the importance of the Archive collections and the help they and others have received from the Library of Congress over the years. Earlier this year, the Pankakes gave an informal concert here, performing songs from their book (see *Folklife Center News*, vol. XI, no. 1, winter 1989, p. 12).

The Friends of the Folk Archive Fund, established in 1978, consists entirely of non-appropriated monies donated by individuals and organizations to further the work of the Archive in cataloging, servicing, and disseminating materials about folk culture in the collections of the Library of Congress. For information on the

fund, call or write Joseph C. Hickerson, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. (202) 707-5510. Donations are tax deductible.

Day of the Dead Presentation

The final item for these notes is about an *altar de muertos* for the *Día de los muertos*, the Day of the Dead, November 2. Guadalupe Jiménez of the Library's Hispanic Cultural Society installed the altar near the cafeteria in the Library's Madison Building and provided this description of the exhibit:

An honored Mexican tradition at the time of the Day of the Dead is the *altar de muertos* (altar of the dead) prepared at home and in public places such as markets, universities, offices, and museums. These altars are decorated with candles, *papel picado* (paper lace), *flores de cempazúchil* (orange-yellow flowers) and *alcatrazes* (white flowers used for funerals), toys, food offerings, and drinks and sweets that the dead might find to their liking. Pictures of departed loved ones appear in the more serious and religious altars, while images of famous artists, intellectuals, bullfighters, politicians, and historical figures are used in those that portray death in a humorous way.

The altar shown in the photograph recreates one that might be found in any public place in Mexico. In this *altar de muertos* the Spanish concept of death as tragedy gives way to a satirical view of death, in that everyone is made equal by death, and death itself becomes a feminine friend, taking nicknames like "la pelona" (the bald one), "la calaca" (the skeleton), or "la flaca" (the thin one). The paper decoration in green foil above the table is "la catrina," the elegant lady, a joyful, vivacious representation of our friend, death. □

An *altar de muertos*, set up for several weeks this fall at the Library of Congress by the Library's Hispanic Cultural Society in honor of the Day of the Dead. Photo by James Hardin

FOLKLINE

For timely information on the field of folklore and folklife, including training and professional opportunities and news items of national interest, a taped announcement is available around the clock, except during the hours of 9 A.M. until noon (eastern time) each Monday, when it is updated. Folkline is a joint project of the American Folklife Center and the American Folklore Society. Dial:

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FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

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ITALIAN-AMERICAN IDENTITY, OLD AND NEW: STEREOTYPES, FASHION, AND ETHNIC REVIVAL

By John Alexander Williams

This is the third and last in a series of articles written initially to provide fieldworkers with historical background and theoretical considerations as they embarked on the Folklife Center's "Italian-Americans in the West" Columbian Quincentenary field project. Earlier articles appeared in Folklife Center News, volume XI, 1989, numbers 2 and 3.

Three forces have shaped the construction of pan-Italian ethnic identity since World War II. One is the reaction to the widespread stereotyping of Italian criminality inspired by congressional crime investigators in the 1950s and by film and television portrayals of famous Italian-American gangsters in the 1960s and 1970s. The second is the emergence of contemporary Italy as a leader in the production of high-fashion consumer goods. The third is the ethnic revival of the 1970s, an impulse toward "neo-ethnicity" that parallels the scholarly interest in ethnic studies.

Humbert Nelli, whose scholarly study *The Business of Crime* is the best available work on the subject, points out that in its origins and earliest manifestations in urban immigrant communities, Italian criminality was no different in kind or degree from the criminality of Irish, German, Jewish, or other immigrant groups. But two factors helped to emphasize Italian and Italian-American criminals, both in reality and in the popular imagination. One was the connection of criminal activity in America with traditional Italian secret societies, such as the Neapolitan *camorra* or the Sicilian mafia. Nelli's research shows that this connection was often more imaginary than real, but sensational newspaper publicity around the turn of the century generated horrified fascination among other Americans, even when the misdeeds of Italian criminals were

largely confined to immigrant districts. One possible source of this fascination, although Nelli does not mention it, was an even older Anglo-American cultural tradition of associating violence and a particularly calculating type of ruthlessness with Italians. Though the tradition derived from Machiavelli, the Borgias, and assorted Shakespearean villains rather than from immigrant behavior, it probably contributed to the American readiness to believe practically anything about the cunning and ruthlessness of Italian-American crime.

A second factor elevating Italian-American criminality to a perceptual plane above that of other ethnic groups was the collision of Italian cultural values and Anglo-American sumptuary laws and moral regulations during the Progressive Era. In smaller western communities, Italian-Americans often specialized in hotel, restaurant, and saloon-keeping—legitimate commercial activities which Anglo-American ambivalence about alcohol and sex served to endow with a certain disreputable aura. This reinforced the criminal stereotype, as did the fact that some saloonkeepers and wine-makers became bootleggers during Prohibition.

The Volstead Act of 1920, which created the enforcement machinery of nationwide prohibition, gave Italian-American criminals their opportunity to expand the scope of organized criminal activities far beyond the confines of the immigrant communities. Organization builders—such as John Torrio and his successor, Alphonse (Al) Capone, in Chicago, and Charles (Lucky) Luciano, in New York—were what their contemporaries Henry Ford, Julius Rosenwald (of Sears Roebuck), and A. P. Giannini were to manufacturing, retailing, and banking, respectively. Their means of reducing competition of course created more sensational headlines than did

the oligopolistic behavior of legitimate businessmen, and the headlines and the myths they inspired provided fodder for future generations of novelists and scriptwriters.

A consolidation of criminal gangs across neighborhood and ethnic lines took place during the 1920s in New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Boston, Kansas City, and Denver, thanks to the expanded criminal opportunities created by Prohibition. Nelli points out that cities with traditionally relaxed standards of enforcement of drinking, gambling, and vice laws did not experience this phenomenon. Both Italian and non-Italian criminal organizations in San Francisco and New Orleans, for example, remained small and fragmented during this period, and while Carlos Marcello later created a crime syndicate in New Orleans during the 1950s, a local civic vice and gambling clean-up movement driven by Anglo/Protestant moral values was one of the factors which gave Marcello his opportunity.

These historical circumstances help to explain why Italian-American criminals managed to capture the public imagination on a scale that Anglo-American and non-Italian ethnic gang leaders had not. But the resulting publicity tarred all Italian-Americans with the mafia stereotype. The stereotype is unfair and inaccurate, especially as it applies to the West. Historically, only San Francisco and Denver developed crime syndicates, and in both cities their size and influence were modest by the standards of the New York and Chicago mobs, according to Nelli. The postwar development of Las Vegas, Nevada, as the western capital of legitimate gambling and a place where criminal earnings could be "laundered" was the achievement of Jewish gangsters, although Italian mobsters soon cashed in on it.

The fact that *The Godfather's* author,

director, and principal male actors were Italian-Americans legitimated its reinforcement of the criminal stereotype for non-Italians, but resentment of the stereotype has been a principal motivating force for ethnic spokesmen and organizations during the postwar era. Both the Sons of Italy and the National Italian American Foundation have undertaken successful anti-defamation campaigns against entertainment corporations whose programming reinforced the stereotype. In relaxed circumstances, folklore about *mafiosi* seems to be as popular with Italian-Americans as it is with other Americans. The difference is that Italian-Americans, even when they take good-humored advantage of the fearful respect that mafia references evoke, are usually kidding. Other Americans, on the other hand, apparently believe what they hear, even when logic and a little historical knowledge should counsel them otherwise, and this faith in the folklore of criminality can act to the detriment of their understanding of and relations with the Italian-American community.

The reemergence of Italy as a center of contemporary art, fashion, and design during the postwar era has had an opposite but, in many respects, equally distorting effect on the image and self-perception of Italian-Americans, especially in California. The satisfaction of wearing Italian fashions, driving Italian sports cars, or collecting objects designed by famous Italian designers is of course confined to a relatively small number of well-to-do people. But middle class people can identify with such products symbolically, especially if they can afford to indulge occasionally in meals in trendy restaurants that specialize in "reinterpreting" classic Italian regional cuisine or in purchases at the new specialty Italian food shops that supplement or compete with the traditional Italian foodstores. This appeal is particularly strong with younger Italian-Americans to whom the established pan-Italian modes of ethnic performance seem old-fashioned and trite.

This development has reinforced the tendency to define Italian-American ethnicity in terms of elite

elements of Italian culture. Thus while demographic changes threaten established organizations like the Sons of Italy and declining attendance at Columbus Day rituals in many cities is a source of concern to their leaders, Italian-American "cultural centers" are offering instructional language courses in standard Italian and appre-

ciation courses on Italian fine arts and cuisine. In California, Italian-American winemakers report declining sales and production for varietal wines made from grapes brought over by their ancestors, such as the Piedmontese *grignolino*, but others are growing newly imported Tuscan varieties to make fine Italian wines to



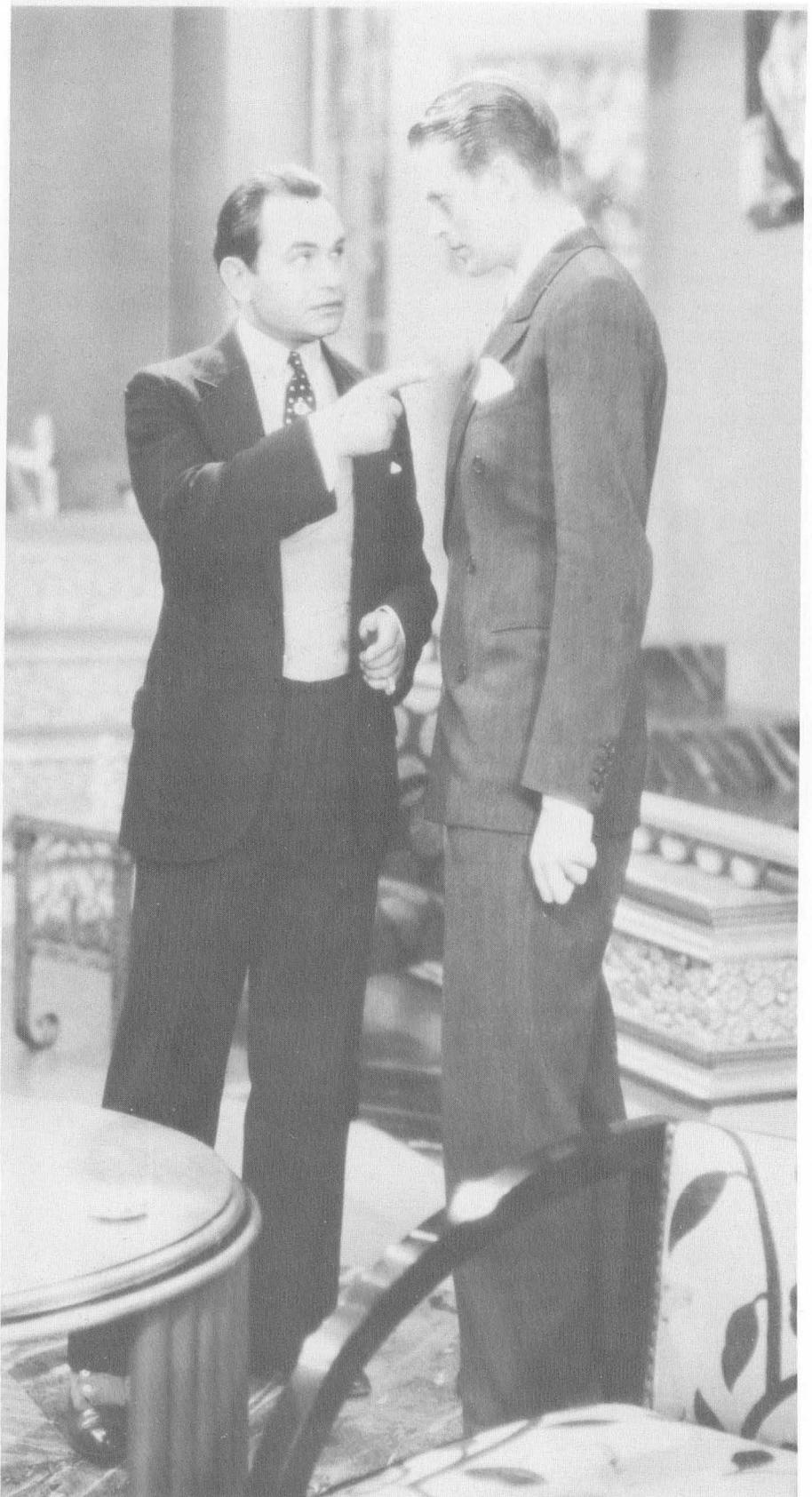
The vogue of high-fashion items from Italy has led to a tendency to identify Italian-American ethnicity with elite elements of Italian culture. Current issues of fashion magazines contain advertisements for Italian cars, watches, wines, shoes, and clothes. Price tags on the outfit, lower left, are \$3,635 for the overcoat, \$800 for the suit, \$120 for the shirt, and \$95 for the necktie. Now might be a good time to stock up. Collage of advertisements from GQ and Esquire by Raymond Dockstader

accompany the high-style *nuovo italiano* cuisine. In these ways the performance of contemporary Italian-American ethnicity is moving toward a very American blend of consumerism and nostalgia, an expression of personal style rather than of group identity.

The work of sustaining the idealized family relationships that lie at the heart of nostalgic Italian-American ethnic identity falls mainly upon women. As Di Leonardo points out, Italian-American women are increasingly disinclined to assume this responsibility as they, like their non-Italian counterparts, reshape their family obligations to accommodate career and personal interests outside of the home. She finds the surviving association of ethnic brokerage and food businesses objectionable, partly because it represents the trend toward the "commoditization" of ethnic identity and also because an emphasis on ethnic performance in food preparation places a disproportionate burden on women, "sustaining an idealized patriarchal past in which women stayed home and served men and children" (*The Varieties of Ethnic Experience*, p. 228).

But there has always been a link between economic interest and the promotion of Italian-American ethnicity. The fact that this link is now manifest primarily in areas relating to food-processing and services partly reflects the importance that foodways have always had in defining Italian-American ethnicity. It also reflects the absorption of ethnic businesses into the mainstream of other sectors, such as agribusiness, banking and insurance, entertainment, and journalism, leaving food-related businesses as one of the few remaining places where occupational and ethnic identities converge.

These changes have restricted the opportunity for men or women to sustain ethnicity through occupational cultures and work processes. In contrast to other ethnic groups such as Jewish-, Irish-, Greek-, Polish-, and Armenian-Americans, Italian-Americans lack religious or foreign policy issues which serve as ethnic rallying points, and so while the impulse toward "neo-ethnicity" is



Edward G. Robinson and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., in the motion picture *Little Caesar* (1930), the first talking gangster film glorifying the gang wars of the twenties. Robinson won the role of Rico on the strength of his performance in the Broadway play *The Racket*, in which he played a character based on Al Capone. The movie performance made him a star. Film still copyright 1954 Warner Bros. Pictures Distributing Corporation. Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress

strong, the available projects which might sustain it—defensive combat against the mafia stereotype, consumption of “commoditized” ethnic food or of elite Italian culture, nostalgia for a patriarchal family structure, or the commemoration of *prominenti* ranging from Columbus to Joe DiMaggio—are each in some way unsatisfactory in that they are unable to guarantee that sense of personal connection with an authentic past that most people search out in the name of “heritage.”

Such circumstances have led some sociologists to talk of “the twilight of ethnicity” among Italian-Americans, and indeed among all ethnic groups of European ancestry. Sociology has traditionally defined ethnicity as a linear process, wherein immigrants and their descendants have moved past certain demographic checkpoints in a seemingly inexorable movement toward assimilation. Measurements taken at these checkpoints today show slight differences, if any, between Italian-Americans and British-Americans in residential locations, educational attainment, family incomes, or intermarriage with members of other ethnic groups. As a result, “core values [among Italian-Americans] have been overwhelmed by a common American culture so that even though cultural uniformity has not been the end result, the remaining differences among groups are so mild as to constitute neither a basis for group solidarity nor a barrier to intergroup contact.” (Richard Alba, “The Twilight of Ethnicity among Americans of European Ancestry: The Case of Italians,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1 [January 1985], p. 153) Italian-Americans have thus become candidates for inclusion in a pan-European ethnic group which some sociologists have seen emerging among “unhyphenated whites” of northwest European descent.

It might be added that the ethnic frontiers where sociologists man checkpoints are playgrounds for post-structuralist punsters. From the standpoint of someone like Umberto Eco, the determined efforts of “neo-ethnic” revivalists to sustain a sense of separate identity are part and parcel of that

“faith in fakes” that is one of the benchmarks of authentic post-modern culture, a kind of artificial traditionalism, as it were, whose very phoniness elevates it to a plane of “hyper-reality.”

But the sociological and post-structuralist viewpoints ignore the potential connection between neo-ethnicity and cultural conservation. They embody a static view of ethnicity, defining it almost entirely in terms of biological descent and of social behavior—segregation, conflict, and mobility—reflected in aggregate data. Scholars who give more weight to cultural studies offer alternative definitions. In *Beyond Ethnicity* (1984), for example, Werner Sollors contrasts the ethnicity of descent with that of consent, ethnicity sustained by voluntary efforts as well as by external pressures and boundaries. In this view, the desire of Italian-Americans to sustain a sense of separate identity, and the organized efforts made on behalf of this goal, are just as valid expressions of ethnicity as those which sociologists measure. In the context of American cultural history, the ethnicity of consent, like American regionalism, constitutes an ongoing search for “a wholesome provincialism,” a *via media* between the extremes of cultural isolation based on the ethnicity of descent, on the one hand, and the submergence of everyone in a standardized national culture, on the other. □

John Alexander Williams is director of the Center for Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University. From 1986 until 1988 he was director of the presidential commission on the Columbus Quincentenary, and in 1989 he was a consultant to the American Folklife Center, engaged to research, plan, and organize the Center's “Italian-Americans in the West” project.



FOLKLIFE ANNUAL SEEKS AUTHORS

The American Folklife Center seeks articles for *Folklife Annual*, a yearly publication on the traditional expressive life and culture of the United States, edited by James Hardin and Alan Jabbour. All folklorists are encouraged to submit articles, which may be based on recent fieldwork or represent the analysis and interpretation of long-term projects and study.

Articles for the annual are written by specialists in folklife and related fields, but the annual is intended for a wide audience. The annual is heavily illustrated, both in color and in black and white, and the editors are especially interested in articles that require or lend themselves well to illustration.

There is no single theme for a particular year's volume, but articles are selected and organized so as to relate to one another in interesting ways. “Strategies for survival in a hostile world,” a phrase from Roger Abrahams article on Afro-American folktales, provided the unifying idea for *Folklife Annual 1987*, which includes discussions of the American Indian powwow, private rituals, black sermons and folktales, and ethnic schools. For *Folklife Annual 1988-89* (available early in 1990) historical and present-day ideas about the frontier and the development of ethnic tourism generated articles on fox hunting, pigeon flying, tourism in New Mexico and the Ozarks, pottery and basket making, among others.

The editors will consider for publication articles on all areas of American folklife. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced, free of jargon, and in accord with the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Illustrations need not be sent at the time of initial submission. A modest honorarium will be paid for accepted articles. Submit to: The Editors, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. For more information, call or write James Hardin (202) 707-1741. □

**CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS LANDS
AT SAN FRANCISCO HARBOR, SEPTEMBER 1989**
Photographs by Ken Light



Columbus Day parades began in San Francisco in 1869, and since 1885 Columbus Day parades and pageants have been elaborate occasions there, providing opportunities for the local Italian-American community to proclaim its ethnic identity. After World War I, the annual celebration came to include a variety of rituals, such as the mock landing of Columbus staged from fishing boats in the harbor, the selection of a pageant queen, "Queen Isabella," and the impersonation of Columbus by a succession of men who each in his turn

acquired a reputation among California Italian-Americans for the talent and enthusiasm he invested in the role.

On September 30, the 1989 Columbus Landing Ceremony was held at Aquatic Park, in San Francisco, with the U.S. Navy Band providing music and a local T.V. personality serving as master-of-ceremonies. Christopher Columbus was played by Joseph Cervetto, Jr., a member of the Columbus Day Celebration's Board of Directors. Cervetto's father had also taken the role. Ken Light documented the pro-

ceedings as part of the American Folklife Center's Italian-Americans in the West Project.

Above: Columbus and his escorts near the shore (IAW-KL-B175-5).

Right, above: A contingent of "Native Americans" greets Columbus (IAW-KL- B175-26).

Right, below: Columbus receives the gratitude of Queen Isabella and her court (IAW-KL- B176-36a).



FOLKLIFE PUBLICATIONS OFFERED AT LIBRARY'S NEW MADISON SALES SHOP

On June 5, a new sales shop opened in the James Madison Building of the Library of Congress. The attractive new shop should be appealing to the many visitors, both scholars and tourists, who come to the Library. It offers for sale many more books from commercial publishers than were available in the old shop, located in the Jefferson Building.

Sue Bates, manager of retail marketing, described the new policy for ordering books for the shops: the books must be related in some way to the collections and programs of the Library of Congress, and the categories of titles represented currently include history, reference, children's literature, cookbooks (the Rare Book Division houses a large collection of them), books for bibliophiles, books on special-format materials (like maps, music, motion pictures, and recorded sound), books published by the Library of Congress itself, and, of course, folklife.

The Folklife Center has been well represented at the shop for a number of years, both with its publications and with items made by folk craftsmen. But many books on folklife from commercial and university presses are not generally available, and offering them at the Library shop provides a new service for Washington-area folklife specialists and for persons who come to the Library for Center concerts and programs and to do research at the Folk Archive.

Ms. Bates says that she will order books on cultural conservation and other subjects related to scholarly projects at the Center, regional books from areas where the Center has had field projects, and popular and/or distinguished books on folklife subjects. □

CATALOGING FOLK MUSIC: A LETTER FROM SIDNEY ROBERTSON COWELL

The American Folklife Center is currently engaged in reorganizing and cataloging a collection of folk music recorded for the Archive of Folk Culture by Sidney Robertson from 1938 to 1940. The California Folk Music Project was the result of a joint effort of the Northern California Work Projects Administration, the Library of Congress, and the Music Division of the University of California, Berkeley. Conceived and directed by Sidney Robertson (who later married the composer Henry Cowell), the project was ahead of its time in documenting a representative collection of English-language and European ethnic folk music from Northern California. The Archive's collection comprises some thirty-five hours of sound recordings, photographs of the performers, scale drawings of the ethnic instruments, and field notes, as well as other valuable accompanying materials. During the course of researching and gathering together pertinent materials relating to the California Folk Music Collection, we have spoken to and corresponded with Sidney Robertson Cowell several times regarding her memories of the project. Reprinted here is a portion of one of her letters, which captures the texture and spirit of her scholarship and experience.

*Catherine Hiebert Kerst,
Folklife Center Consultant*

I have just remembered a contribution I think I must have made to the early organization of the folk music archive at [the Library of Congress]. It has nothing to do, however, with my California Folk Music Project, but rather with the cataloging of field recordings in the days when the Archive was young. John Lomax was, I believe, curator at the time, but was away, and Luther Evans was Librarian.

Charles Seeger [the ethnomusicologist] had been engaged by the Special Skills Division of the Resettlement Administration to carry out his proposal that clients of RA who were being moved from familiar places to Resettlement communities should be encouraged to carry their traditions

with them—in particular, anything like music that could serve communal forces. To this end, CS [Charles Seeger] proposed issuing song sheets, in the manner of British ballad sheets, to be distributed at community gatherings and in schools. I was engaged to locate and record the music of the areas from which RA clients had come. (Later on it occurred to me that our clients carried their songs and fiddle tunes with them and didn't need song sheets, but meanwhile the idea had grown popular and staff artists were vying for a chance to make the covers.)

Clients of the Resettlement Administration who were being moved from familiar places to Resettlement communities should be encouraged to carry their traditions with them—in particular, anything like music that could serve communal forces.

The Federal business office, charged with seeing to it that money appropriated by Congress was spent in accordance with congressional intention, did not see the relevance of a recording machine, and Seeger's order for it was delayed. (In the end, at the instigation of Adrian Dornbush, head of our Division, Mrs. Roosevelt spoke to her husband, who seems to have said: "Oh, let them have their recording machine!" to the legal people, and it finally arrived.)

Meanwhile, Seeger had been carrying his enthusiasm to other collectors, notably Robert Gordon, who had established the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress, and his successor John Lomax. Gordon was notably reclusive and uncooperative, but Lomax said cordially: "Use anything I've got, it's all in the Library," and went off on a field trip.

Mrs. Roosevelt spoke to her husband, who seems to have said: "Oh, let them have their recording machine" to the legal people, and it finally arrived.

Seeger sent me down to the Library to explore possibilities and make a preliminary selection for song sheet use. It was immediately evident that John Lomax had kept nothing at all in the way of a written list, and the covers of his aluminum discs had nothing much on them, either. He had consistently named place, date, and often a singer and a title on the disc, usually at the beginning of a cut. This was useful only to the ear, not to the eye. There was not yet any sort of consistent attempt to catalog the Archive material, and I could of course form no idea at all of what Lomax had offered us.

Luther Evans, Librarian of Congress, before appointment as Librarian, had organized and directed a famous historical records survey for the WPA, in association with our mutual friend from our Stanford University days, Robert C. Binkley. With the connivance of Harold Spivacke, newly appointed chief of the Music Division and Luther's paternal encouragement, I was able to borrow one rather demoralized and pathetic WPA worker, Mr. Henderson, from the Historical Records Survey to begin a catalog of the collection of recordings. (Most of the people we dealt with, particularly in the less rigid New Deal agencies, were new to government and very unsure about what could and could not be done, so that a certain air of derring-do accompanied any intra-agency action, no matter how reasonable and "justifiable.")

Mr. Henderson had an invalid wife and a sad struggle with unemployment behind him, and he suffered from an

eternally hopeful delusion that, if he just mentioned his need often enough, some one of the authority types around him would be able to increase his fortnightly check. This was never possible, but Mr. Henderson never failed to mention, in his gentle voice, that he had hoped the check would be just a little larger *this* time. He was "frozen" into some sort of classification so that this never happened. But it made people avoid Mr. Henderson, when they weren't openly impatient, and I grieved over my inability to stay around and protect him.

Mr. Henderson's job was to play the beginning and end of each cut—often 3-5 to a record—(with a bamboo or cactus needle forever needing resharpening) in order to gather the information he then set down on a Library file card. He sat on a little wooden box, with records and a playback on the floor beside him; the light was poor and the whole area chilly and depressing. But Mr. Henderson worked faithfully for many weeks and it was with his work, with occasional supervisory visits from me, that a catalog of LC's folk music was begun. (Robert Gordon had listed his material but had withdrawn both lists and material when he learned of John Lomax's appointment. Later I believe Gordon relented and returned everything.) (As to the Lomax collection, we found it consisted almost entirely of Afro-American music, recorded chiefly in prisons and road camps. As the first RA clients were clustered around failed industries, ejected from company housing usually, and were all white, the John Lomax material would not fit into the song sheet plan.) Entirely untrained as I was in the techniques of librarianship, it had not occurred to me that any particular discussion and musicological opinion was required for my enterprise, and as a matter of course I used titles as a main entry for the catalog card, since that was one element of identification that the collector could practically always provide. I was taken aback when Spivacke and Seeger conferred together and decreed that the main entry should be the name of the performer. This can only have come about, I think, because the two men as scholars were conditioned to the use of the

name of a person, as author, for the main entry.

I pointed out, in the face of firm scholarly instructions, that singers were not authors (for the most part, in those days) and there were too many of them. Using titles, as I had been doing, presented difficulties too because of the variants. But titles had the virtue of being related in one way or another to a song, and seemed far more possible to connect and remember than the name of any singer. What finally won my point for me was the impossibility of being sure of the spelling of a singer's name when all you had was what a microphone gave you. Titles at least were derived from some phase in the text. When there was no title, we used the first words of the first line of a song. This was far from per-

I pointed out, in the face of firm scholarly instructions, that singers were not authors (for the most part, in those days) and there were too many of them.

fect, but seemed the best one could do in dealing with an oral tradition, however variant prone.

Harold Spivacke told me later that he was glad I had stuck to my point, though I don't think CS was ever entirely reconciled. The last I knew, titles or first lines were still in use for the main entry in cataloging folk music. If so, I find it gratifying to claim some of the credit, particularly in view of my lack of academic credentials that CS sometimes offered in our disputes, instead of a logical argument. (I have only a BA degree in Romance Languages from Stanford University, class of '24.)

Some years later, when the Special Skills Division of the Resettlement Administration had folded, Seeger got a job continuing and updating this catalog, and in what sounded like a moment of panic he wrote me that I was badly needed in Washington to help with this job, and I was to come at once by plane and not take time to drive (ten days). His letter was on LC stationery and I had no idea at all that his was a WPA job, or I would have

pointed out that WPA required employment of local people, and that bringing anyone from a distance depended on very special circumstances. My California folk music project had closed and I was looking for some way of financing the continuation of my field collecting. Any connection with the Library was of course desirable, so I hurried east (by car), only to find that Charlie was on a WPA job that was being phased out. He considered, with some reason, that I had saved his RA job for him at one time, and in his anxiety he seemed to have a superstitious belief that I could do it again. As it turned out, his job didn't end immediately, but his best efforts, and those of Drs. Evans and Spivacke, never did succeed in getting me on to the WPA payroll, as I would have foreseen. A small library job was brewed up for me but never materialized either, and I spent several months almost penniless, living on \$40 a month sent by a good friend, and acting as house sitter to an assortment of Washington friends who made field trips. Until Charlie Seeger made me his office assistant at the Pan American Union in June 1941, the only income I had was a couple of \$50 payments, very kindly made me by Alan Lomax, for setting up the bibliography of American Folk Song that some music teachers' organization had asked him for. It turned out that what this group thought it was asking for was a list of the ten best collections of folk song. Alan misunderstood, and the result was the first selective list of its kind. ("Selective" because I insisted that any piano accompaniments should be extremely simple, derived from the tunes themselves.)

At the Pan American Union I was a total loss at managing the office—partly because I never did have any idea what the various secretaries were supposed to be doing; but I did a reasonable job of editing Gustavo Duran's little book on Latin American folk music. At the end of September, my three-months' Pan American Union contract job ended. Henry Cowell [the composer] and I were married September 27.

Sidney Robertson Cowell

SIGNIFICANT ACQUISITIONS OF THE ARCHIVE OF FOLK CULTURE FALL 1988 TO FALL 1989



Dancing the *Songe* in Cayenne, 1989, an activity documented in the French Guiana and Suriname Collection. Photograph by Kenneth Bilby

By Stephanie A. Hall

The following list represents a selection of significant collections processed into the Archive of Folk Culture during the 1989 fiscal year. Included are those collections that provide an especially large body of material, and those of particular importance to the fields of folklore and ethnomusicology. The list represents about a third of the material acquired directly by the Archive in the past year and only a small portion of the folklore items received by the Library of Congress as a whole.

The Archive is one of the world's largest collections of ethnographic materials, that is, materials which document and describe the cultures of various peoples. Collections often are multi-media, as collectors endeavor to represent the sounds, ideas, and visual expressions of the cultures which interest them. Individual collections focus on such diverse topics as folk music, costume, arts and crafts, religion, and narrative traditions. Materials in the Archive collections include sound recordings of music, ceremonies and events, storytelling, oral histories, and

interviews; printed materials such as manuscripts, theses and dissertations, and ephemera; computer diskettes; and visual materials such as drawings, photographs, and videotapes.

Readers may obtain information about these collections through the Archive's card catalog and published finding aids. An inventory listing these finding aids, as well as bibliographies and directories published by the Archive, is available free of charge.

The Archive acquires collections by several means. Some institutions or individuals donate materials, while others lend materials to the Library to be copied and returned. Still others donate collections in exchange for copies of their originals or of material in the Archive. In addition, the American Folklife Center undertakes its own collecting projects, conducted in the field or at events at the Library of Congress, which are then added to the Archive. All donated materials should be organized, labeled, and accompanied by appropriate documentary material, such as logs and inventories. Those interested in donating collections may contact the Ameri-

can Folklife Center for information on how to organize their materials and prepare documentation.

Kenneth Bilby/French Guiana and Suriname Collection (AFS 26,886-26,952). Field and studio tape recordings of music, songs, and rituals from the Aluku and Ndjuka Maroons of French Guiana and Suriname collected by anthropologist Kenneth M. Bilby between 1983 and 1987 as field data for his dissertation in anthropology at Johns Hopkins University. The musical traditions of the Maroons, the descendants of African slaves who escaped from Surinamese plantations between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, previously received little scholarly attention. In their instrumental music, songs, and dances the Maroons retain many of the traditions of their sub-Saharan ancestors. With the collection is a copy of Dr. Bilby's unpublished paper "Aluku Music," which includes a bibliography and discography of the music of French Guiana.

Don D. Campbell/Curly King Collection, Part 2 (AFS 26,816-26,819). Twenty-seven 16" acetate discs of performances by Curly King and the Tennessee Hilltoppers, a traditional country and bluegrass band influential in the development of country and bluegrass music. The discs were originally made and broadcast by WCYB Radio, Bristol, Tennessee, in the 1940s. Don Campbell, one of the original Hilltoppers, donated the discs to the Archive, adding to his previous donation of six discs of Hilltoppers' performances.

Harold C. Conklin/Philippines Collection (AFS 26,750-26,767). Tape recordings of Hanunoo and Buhid vocal and instrumental music, oral literature, and other sounds collected by anthropologist Harold C. Conklin.

Dr. Conklin made these recordings in the late 1940s and early 1950s, while these cultures were relatively free of Western influences. As a result of his research in the Philippines, Dr. Conklin developed a theory of culture and method of describing cultural information that profoundly influenced the field of anthropology. These recordings are therefore important both as a record of Hanunoo and Buhid culture and as a part of the history of anthropology as a discipline.

Ed Cray/Emma Dusenbury Collection. A 143-page manuscript of song texts and tunes thought to have been compiled by Charles Seeger, donated to the Archive by Ed Cray. The manuscript consists of songs sung by Emma Dusenbury of Mena, Arkansas, collected by Laurence Powell and Sidney Robertson Cowell, and includes handwritten scores, possibly by the collectors. The material relates to Archive collections of disc recordings from the 1930s: the John Lomax Summer 1936 Collection (AFS 829-877), and the Resettlement Administration Collection (AFS 2067-2069 and 3155-3314).

Journal of American Folklore Centennial Index Computer Text Files Collection. Computer diskette copies of the WordPerfect 5.0 text files used for the production of the 1988 index to articles published during the first hundred years of the *Journal of American Folklore*. Donated by the journal's editor, Bruce Jackson.

"Literature de Cordel" Collection. One hundred eleven chapbooks have been added to this collection of ephemeral Northern Brazilian popular literature. They join a collection of over three thousand chapbooks that began with a donation by Sol Biderman.

Guy Logsdon/Riley Neal Collection, Part 2 (AFS 26,820-26,824). Tape recordings of cowboy songs and other songs of the West sung by Riley Neal, an Arizona cowboy. Collected by folklorist Guy Logsdon in Payson, Arizona, in 1970. This collection adds further material to the collection of narratives and songs sung by Riley Neal which Dr. Logsdon contributed

to the Archive in 1973 (AFS 15,593-15,594). Many of the songs appear in Dr. Logsdon's recent book, *"The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing" and Other Songs Cowboys Sing* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

William T. Dargan/North and South Carolina Church Revival Collection (AFS 26,852-26,885). Field tape recordings of complete services in North and South Carolina black churches including Baptist, Methodist, and A.M.E. Zion congregations, together with oral history interviews with ministers, deacons, and church members collected by ethnomusicologist William T. Dargan. The recordings were made as part of Dr. Dargan's research on the revivalist movement in Chesterfield County, South Carolina, and vicinity. The recording equipment was provided by the American Folklife Center.

Die Dolpehock Sanger Chor/Mir Singe Pennsylvanish Deisth Collection. One VHS videotape and one transcript entitled *We Sing in Pennsylvania German*, a performance of Pennsylvania German and High German folksongs and hymns by the Tulpehocken Singing Choir of Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania. Donated by Die Dolpehock Sanger Chor.

Miervaldis Jansevics/1975 West Coast Latvian Song Festival Collection (AFS 26,838-26,851). Tape recordings of performances at the Sixth Latvian Song Festival in Seattle, Washington, July 3-7, 1975. The collection includes concerts by Latvian choirs from throughout the United States and Canada, a performance by the folksong trio "Tris no Pardaugavas," concerts of traditional and classical music by Latvian-American performers, readings by Latvian poets and writers, and performances of traditional Latvian dance music. The collection was loaned to the Archive for duplication by Mr. Miervaldis Jansevics, director of the festival.

Vance Randolph/"Unprintable" Songs from the Ozarks" Collection. A copy of the 334-page manuscript edited by Vance Randolph, with marginalia by G. Legman and Ed Cray,

was donated to the Archive by Ed Cray of the University of Southern California School of Journalism. This supplement to Vance Randolph's monumental collection, *Ozark Folksongs* (4 vols., 1946-1950), was excluded from publication by the State Historical Society of Missouri because of the songs' "vulgar" content. Randolph, who felt these songs should not be excluded from his collection, distributed a few copies of the bawdy song texts and scores privately as a separate volume. This version of the manuscript, dated 1954, includes addenda not found in earlier copies.

Pete Seeger/Sloop Singers Concerts (AFS 26,172-26,176). Tape recordings of two concerts by Pete Seeger and the Hudson River Sloop Singers given at Lisner Auditorium, Washington, D.C., on November 12 and 13, 1971. The concerts were given to raise funds for the Hudson River Sloop Restoration, Inc., a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the reclamation of the Hudson River. The tapes of the concerts were loaned to the Archive for duplication by one of the concerts' cosponsors, Harding de C. Williams.

The Archive often adds to its collections of periodicals through donations of back issues. Recent examples include the following: forty-four issues of the *BDAA Newsletter* were donated by Stephen M. Wolownik, the executive director and editor of the Balalaika and Domra Association of America; twenty back issues of *In the Mind* were donated by its publisher, the Seattle Storytellers Guild; twenty-eight issues of *Singabout* and *Folk 88/89* were donated by its publisher in Nottingham, England. □

Stephanie A. Hall, a former intern in the Archive of Folk Culture, is the archivist for the Italian-Americans in the West Project and is also assisting in processing collections into the Archive. She recently completed her Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife at the University of Pennsylvania, with a dissertation on folklore among the deaf.

CURRENT PUBLICATIONS FROM THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS

The following publications are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Cite title and stock number when ordering. Check or money order payable to the Superintendent of Documents must accompany order.

Folklife Annual

Edited by James Hardin and Alan Jabbour

Annual collection of articles on the traditional shared cultural activities of the American people, written by folk-life specialists but intended for a wide audience. Illustrated in black and white and color.

Folklife Annual 1985.

176 pp. (S/N 030-000-00169-9) \$16. Articles on the New Jersey Pinelands, the Archive of Folk Culture, a lumber camp ballad, cowboy culture, Italian stone carvers, the Watts Towers in Los Angeles, and folk artist Howard Finster.

Folklife Annual 1986.

176 pp. (S/N 030-000-00179-6) \$19. Articles on teenage breakdancers, whalers in the Caribbean, Peruvian Indians, Finnish-Americans and the Kalavala, and the life story.

Folklife Annual 1987.

160 pp. (S/N 030-000-00202-4) \$23. Articles on the American Indian powwow, private rituals of grief, black sermons and folktales, and ethnic schools.

Folklife Annual 1988-89.

Forthcoming. Articles on fox hunting, pigeon flying, fiddle playing, folk arts, and cultural conservation.

Ethnic Heritage and Language Schools in America

1988. Developed by Elena Bradunas,

compiled and edited by Brett Topping. 336 pp. Illustrated (S/N 030-001-00124-5) \$16.

Thirteen schools are described in this report on a project conducted by the American Folklife Center in 1982 to study a sampling of ethnic language schools at twenty locations around the country. Such topics as history, school administration, parents, teachers, classes, curriculum, and the purposes of the school are discussed.

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE BY THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The following publications may be ordered from the Library of Congress, Sales Shop, Washington, D.C. 20540. Checks payable to the American Folklife Center must accompany order. Add \$2 for orders to \$20; \$3 for orders to \$35; \$4 for orders to \$50; and \$6 for orders over \$50.

Folklife Sourcebook: A Directory of Folklife Resources in the United States and Canada

1986. Compiled by Peter T. Bartis and Barbara C. Fertig. 152 pp. \$8. The first comprehensive guide to folk-life resources in North America.

One Space, Many Places: Folklife and Land Use in New Jersey's Pine-lands National Reserve

1986. By Mary Hufford. 144 pp. \$8. Report and recommendations to the New Jersey Pinelands Commission for cultural conservation in the Pinelands National Reserve.

Pennsylvania German Fraktur and Printed Broad-sides: A Guide to the Collections in the Library of Congress

1988. Compiled by Paul Conner and Jill Roberts, with an introduction by Don Yoder. 48 pp. Illustrated. \$9.95. Lists 163 items of illuminated manuscripts and printed broadsides from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries located in the collections of the

Library of Congress, principally in the Prints and Photographs Division.

Quilt Collections: A Directory for the United States and Canada

1987. Compiled by Lisa Turner Oshins. 255 pp. \$18.95 in soft cover; \$24.95 in hardcover.

A directory of quilt collections and resources based on a questionnaire survey conducted by the Center. Organized by country, state, and alphabetically by institution, the entries provide detailed information on 747 collections, as well as visiting hours for the respective institutions.

PUBLICATIONS FREE FROM THE FOLKLIFE CENTER

The following publications are available free of charge from the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540:

American Folk Music and Folklore Recordings: A Selected List.

Available for 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988. Coordinated by Jennifer Cutting. Outstanding folk recordings of the year, selected by a panel of specialists in American traditional music. Please specify year.

Traditional Crafts and Craftsmanship in America: A Selected Bibliography.

1983. By Susan Sink, in cooperation with the National Council for the Traditional Arts. An indexed bibliography, citing Library of Congress call numbers.

Ethnic Folklife Dissertations from the United States and Canada, 1960-1980: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography.

1986. By Catherine Kerst. Lists dissertations that give primary attention to indigenous and immigrant ethnic folklife as it operates within the context of a pluralistic society.

FOLKWAYS OF THE JEWISH HIGH HOLIDAYS



Professor Dov Noy in the Library's Whittall Pavilion. Photo by David A. Taylor

On October 5, Prof. Dov Noy of Hebrew University in Jerusalem spoke to a large and attentive audience in the Library's Whittall Pavilion on the folkways of the Jewish High Holidays. The first ten days of the Hebrew month of Tishri, starting with the New Year (Rosh Hashanah) and ending with the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), are known as the Ten Days of Penitence and play a dominant role in the Jewish year-cycle. The first two days (Rosh Hashanah) and the tenth day (Yom Kippur) are the "Days of Awe" (Yamin Noraim) and are the three most solemn days of the Jewish year. The English term "High Holidays" reflects the special Jewish attitude toward them. The written sources connected with the High Holidays go back to the Bible and post-Biblical literature, prayers, and religious rites. These and modern surveys and anthologies describe the normative behavior.

Professor Noy began his lecture by drawing a distinction between folk-

ways and the normative traditions that derive from authoritative written sources, and he chose to make his points by speaking primarily about folk tales. Nonetheless, it became clear as Professor Noy spoke that the great Jewish rabbinical tradition of interpretation is as important in discussing folklore and custom as it is in reading biblical text. Many of the same irony, symbols, and layers of meaning come into play. The same sense of Jewish time and space is often established, the same numerology employed. And interpretation often reveals why a particular folk custom has come to be associated with the High Holidays.

For example, it is the custom in Eastern Europe to eat sweet carrots at Rosh Hashanah. The sweetness symbolizes the hope for good things in the new year and the Hebrew word for carrot is a pun on the word that means to multiply. In addition, the word refers to another word that means final judgement. Thus in Jewish tradition (as in the traditions of many other

groups) a simple folk custom is resonant with meaning and contains specific reference.

Professor Noy concluded his remarks by reading and analyzing four stories associated with the High Holidays: "This Too Will Pass," about a ring worn by King Solomon to cure depression; "The Tailor's and the Lord's Work," about a tailor who takes longer than expected to produce a pair of trousers for a rabbi; "The Evidence of a Tree," about a clever judge who tricks a man into betraying the fact that he took money from a friend; and "Reb Malkiel and the 702 Candles," about one of the hidden holy men of Jewish tradition.

Each story required interpretation because it contained compressed reference and unstated meanings; and a lively question-and-answer session followed the lecture, in which members of the audience, some former students of Professor Noy, asked for elaboration of particular points in the stories. □



A new sales shop in the Library of Congress's Madison Building carries folk arts and crafts and a variety of folklife publications. Story on page 9.

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