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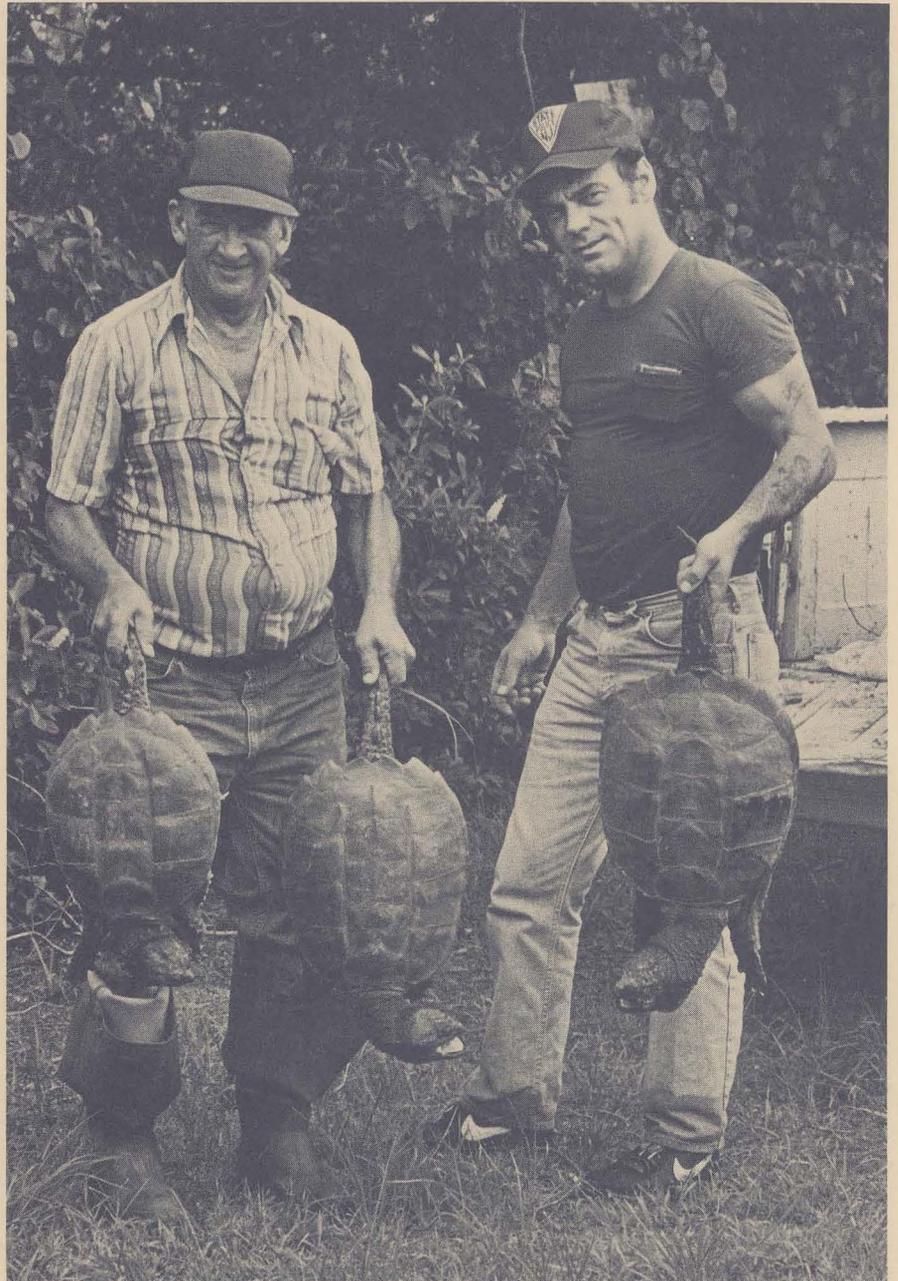
folklife center news

Omaha Indian Music

**Snappers and Snapping
in New Jersey**

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FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

In the spring of this year I had the privilege of serving as keynote speaker at a conference organized by the Tennessee Folklore Society in celebration of its 50th anniversary. A focal topic for the conference was "regionalism," which has always been of interest to folklorists and has emerged as a popular topic for general conversation in the past few years. I looked forward to contributing my two cents on the subject when I visited Cookeville (up on the Cumber-

land Plateau, where the meeting was held and where the Tennessee Folklore Society had been launched fifty years before). But as I began to sketch out my thoughts on regionalism in America, I was surprised to find myself swimming against the tide of both folklorists over the years and cocktail-party savants today.

Regionalism has been a hot topic at Washington social gatherings over the past four or five years, and there appears to be an emerging consensus on the subject. The burden of the usual argument might be summarized as follows:—The United States is subdivided into states (which, I might observe, looks at the subject from the top down). Unfortunately, state boundaries not only fail to coincide but clash with the natural regions that have developed in the United States. Those regions are a result of geographic features, natural resources, and the patterns of flow in goods, ideas, people, and values which have grown out of that geographic and natural-resource base. At best, states are inefficient mechanisms for accomplishing the business or serving the needs of regions; at worst, they are hostile or unresponsive to the hapless fragments of regions that fall within their borders. Thus (the argument concludes) the political structuring of the country into states makes no sense.

Such ideas are by no means unfamiliar to students of folklore, cultural geography, or for that matter political science or marketing. Clearly, though, something has propelled an old constellation of ideas into a sort of renewed currency. It was no trouble tracking it down. Many people who preached the idea cited Joel Garreau's book *The Nine Nations of North America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981). Garreau had in 1979 published an essay on the subject in the Sunday Outlook section of *The Washington Post*. The essay was reprinted in various newspapers throughout the continent, and the book followed in a couple of years as a more extended treatment of the subject. Garreau's efforts clearly had spread a durable academic concept into the broader arena of public-policy discussions.

Did he really denounce states as irrelevant? I wondered. The cocktail circuit seemed quite certain about that

conclusion. And indeed, when I finally sat down this year to read the book, I found some strong rhetoric about state boundaries: "Forget the maze of state and provincial boundaries, those historical accidents and surveyors' mistakes" (p. 1). I also found persuasive examples of segments of states feeling injured by their geographical alignment. The farm protest movement of the late 1970s, for instance, was born in the wheat fields of eastern Colorado, since "If any farmer was likely to be mad as hell, it would be he who sent his taxes to Denver, despite that capital's obvious interest in loosening its agrarian ties" (p. 3). Yet by and large, the book invests its energies simply in getting us to reflect upon the macro-regions of North America. If you ignore a scattering of rhetorical flourishes and trenchant observations, the author does not really advocate abolishing state boundaries. It is not a radical call for restructuring the continent's bodies politic. Thus it is fascinating to see how many people who read the book, or who have heard about it, drew the instant conclusion that states should be scrapped.

It is worth observing, before going any further, that discussions about regionalism often founder over a confusion about the size or level of region being discussed. The Memphis market area includes chunks of Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas; the Flint Hills are perhaps confined to one state, Kansas. Yet both seem to me to be "regions" of a quite different order from larger entities like "Dixie" and "New England" (to use two regions sketched out in Joel Garreau's book). Garreau solves this problem neatly by calling the larger regional units "nations," leaving open the possibility that they contain smaller "regions" within them. But "nations" flies rhetorically in the face of what I am about to expound, and though it stimulates conversation to use the word, one contradicts ordinary usage along the way. Nations are political units in this world, and very few of them coincide with the natural geographical-cultural units for which we reserve the word "region." So, for lack of better terms, I have taken to distinguishing between "macro-regions" and "micro-regions."

No matter what level of region we are talking about, the talk about states be-

ing inefficient or irrelevant troubles me. In June I happened to be visiting Finland, and after a few days without any American news and views I obtained a copy of the *International Herald Tribune* (Europe's "American" newspaper, put out by the joint efforts of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*). There it was again: an essay by a professor of constitutional law who, as he pondered a long-range agenda for changing the U.S. constitution, was convinced that states should be revamped into "10 or 12 regions" to prepare us for the future. Somehow, as I read the essay against the backdrop of Europe and its nation-states, with their histories of struggle to reconcile the interests of regional and ethnic groupings with the political units of nations, our American toying with redrawing state boundaries seemed naive.

States, or for that matter nations, are political units, which is to say that they are units for taking governmental actions. If every state in the United States corresponded to a natural region, then taking actions would no doubt be an easy

matter, for it would not require reconciling or balancing fundamentally different regional problems and aspirations. As it happens, though, every state embraces multiple micro-regions, and perhaps half the states embrace parts of more than one macro-region. Thus the job of reconciling is not merely an unpleasant inconvenience for states; it is at the core of nearly everything they do.

Would we have it any other way? What would be the consequences of making state boundaries conform more "sensibly" to natural regional boundaries? For one thing, it would probably promote the job of reconciliation from the state level to the national level. Issues that are now negotiated and compromised within state politics would be thrust upon the agenda of national politics, requiring solution by the national government. A variety of instances from abroad—Canada, say, or Yugoslavia—suggest that drawing state or provincial boundaries so as to represent economic and cultural regions inevitably passes the buck to the national government to effect all the compromising, balancing, and reconciling. Surely there is a virtue in decentralizing the process of compromise to the state or even the local level.

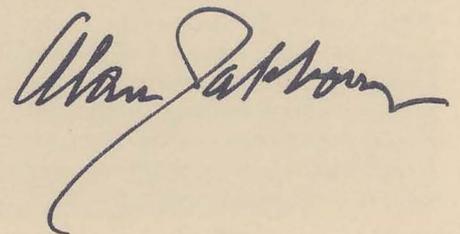
In fact, there are two virtues. The first virtue is that it spreads around the task of compromising, so that no single governmental unit has to bear the full brunt of it. To be sure, this creates a sort of governmental muddle—messy, inefficient, hard to comprehend or clearly blame. It is just the sort of ragtag process of solving problems that drives foreigners, and some Americans, wild when they try to comprehend how things ever get done in the United States. One might characterize it as a system of multiple, limited, and shifting alternatives for solving problems—a system, by the way, which is found not only in government but in the private sector (itself multiple and variegated) and in the non-governmental public sector of foundations and charitable organizations.

The second virtue flows from the first. When the process of reconciliation and compromise is decentralized throughout all levels of government, and in other sectors as well, it is in a literal sense thoroughly *institutionalized* in American

life. By that I mean that every institutional structure contains within it, and thus teaches as a social lesson, the necessity for compromising and accommodating in order to act. This principle is in turn the structural enactment of the cultural principle often referred to as *pluralism*. I myself prefer the slightly more homegrown word *diversity*, but in any case the principle is one of the cornerstones on which American society has been built. In short, if you like democracy in a large nation that accommodates great cultural diversity with a broader sense of ultimate unity, there might be another way to do it instead of having states that are themselves regionally diverse—but I wouldn't try it.

When I first broached these notions at the Tennessee Folklore Society meeting in Cookeville, a lively debate ensued. In the course of that discussion, I pointed out that, though folklorists had always had a special passion for the idea of regionalism, they tended to organize their own activities by state. Thus state folklore societies abound, and some are as venerable as the Tennessee Folklore Society, which has now celebrated its 50th anniversary. Regional societies, on the other hand, are few and far between, and none has lasted many years. The competition of scholars earlier in this century to collect traditional ballads was organized—apparently by mutual agreement—along state lines, and more published collections of folklore are organized by state than by region. Folklorists thus seem not so different from other Americans in this respect: they may think regionally, but when they take action they revert to state boundaries.

After all, we do not have to choose between states and regions. Both are available to us as options for identification, expression, and action. Perhaps it was in preparation for such options in American life that, when I was growing up, I was taught that I was a Florida Cracker.



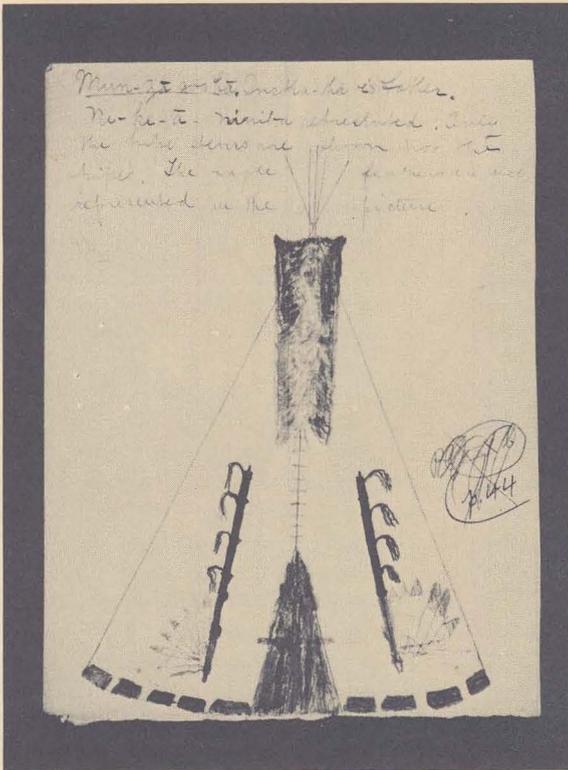
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OMAHA INDIAN MUSIC



The sketch at left, used as the basis of the album cover for Omaha Indian Music, is by George Miller, who sang two of the love songs on the disc. Miller sketched a series of tents for anthropologist George Owen Dorsey, which were included in Dorsey's monograph on Siouan cults. Ethnologist Alice Cunningham Fletcher, who recorded the album's selections with Francis La Flesche of the Omaha Tribe, is pictured below with an Omaha Indian in Macy, Nebraska. (Courtesy of the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution)





The cover illustration for the companion booklet to *Omaha Indian Music* is based on a photograph of a Hethus'shka dancer at the Omaha Pow-wow, August 23, 1925. (Nebraska State Historical Society photo no. I394-211)

Omaha Indian Music, a documentary record album of historic wax-cylinder recordings made between 1895 and 1910 by Alice Cunningham Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, is scheduled to be published by the American Folklife Center this summer. The album contains public and social songs of the Omaha people, selected in consultation with members of the Omaha Tribe. It features *Hethu'shka* or Warrior Society songs, the traditional Omaha funeral song, the song of the Ritual of the Maize, songs of the Tribal Dance, others celebrating personal and tribal honors, songs associated with war and victory, and love songs. A 17-page companion booklet contains essays by Dennis Hastings, archivist for the Omaha Tribe, and folklorist Roger Welsch, who has written extensively on Omaha Indian folklore. It also includes historical and contemporary photos of Omaha Indian life and events, a map which locates the Omaha Indian Reservation, and a

bibliography.

The collaboration of Fletcher and La Flesche dated from the 1880s, when Fletcher began her field studies of Native American culture, first under the auspices of the Peabody Museum at Harvard and later under the sponsorship of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution. La Flesche, the second son of Omaha chief Joseph La Flesche, worked with Fletcher and other scholars to document Omaha culture (see *Folklife Center News*, Vol. IV, No. 1, January 1981). He made substantial contributions to Fletcher's early monograph *A Study of Omaha Indian Music*, published in 1893, which used hand-notated transcriptions made in the field. In the fall of 1895 La Flesche took a cylinder phonograph to the Omaha reservation for the first time to record ritual songs. Over the next decade both scholars recorded over ninety cylinders of Omaha Indian music and narrative in Nebraska and at Fletcher's residence

in Washington.

The result of the collaborative efforts of Fletcher and La Flesche was the 1911 Bureau of American Ethnology publication *The Omaha Tribe*, which used the recordings as a musical framework around which the detailed descriptions of rituals were constructed. It was the first ethnography fully to integrate music and culture. Transcriptions for many of the songs duplicated on this album appear in that 1911 publication.

For the Omaha people *Omaha Indian Music* is a family album. The photographs and songs reproduced here evoke memories of friends and relatives who have died, and provide ample evidence of the persistence and strength of Omaha culture. For information on how to obtain a copy of the recording, write *Omaha Indian Music*, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

Just Grab the Tail and Hang On!

SNAPPERS AND SNAPPERING IN THE PINELANDS NATIONAL RESERVE



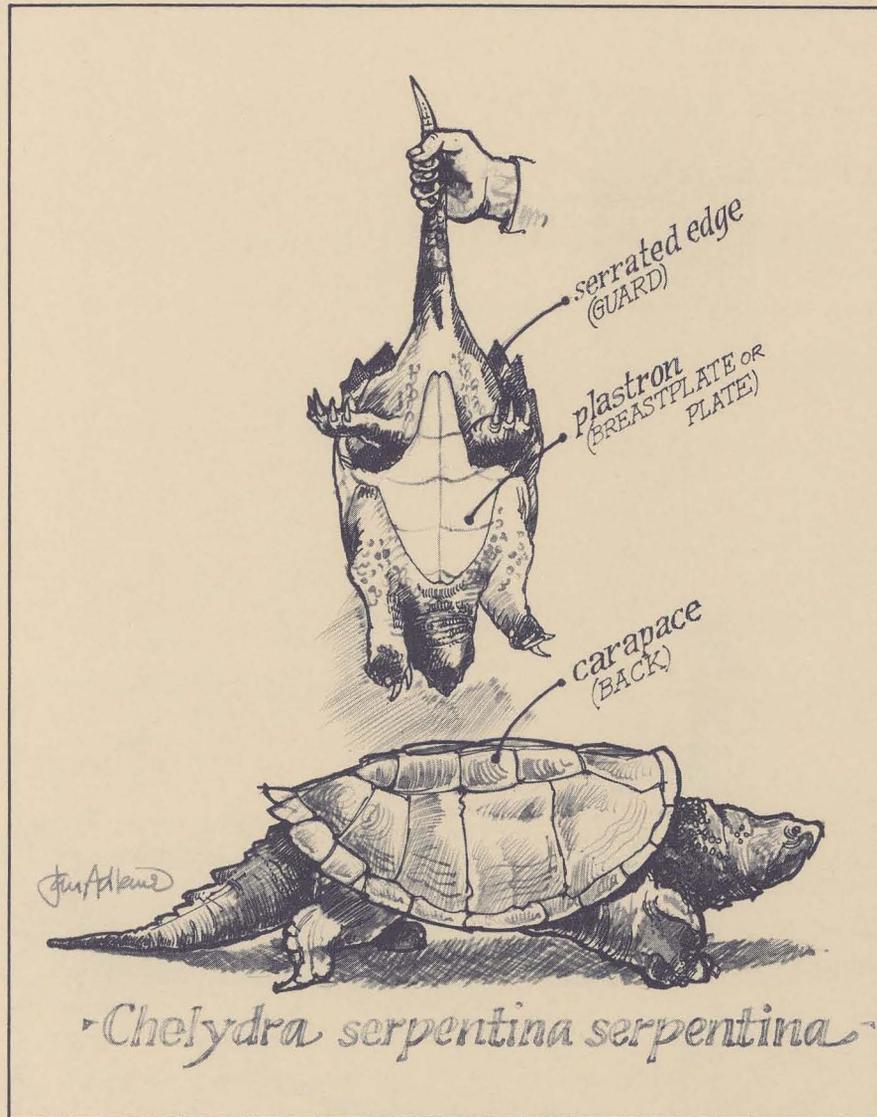
Snapperer Herb Misner with a baited trap in his rowboat. (Photo by Dennis McDonald - PFP84-B235200-11/28A)

South Jersey is a famed haven for endangered reptiles like Pine Barrens tree frogs, eastern tiger salamanders, bog turtles, and timber rattlesnakes. Perhaps least endangered of all, and most vigorously hunted, are snapping turtles, the feisty denizens of the swamps, ditches, and marshes throughout the region—"tigers of the ponds and streams," one naturalist called them.¹ John Bartram, reporting on this New World creature to an 18th-century colleague in London, called it a "Mud Tur-

tle, which is much hunted for, to feast our gentry withal." There can be no mistaking the creature he describes:

They are very large—of a dark muddy colour—large round tail, and feet with claws,—and the old ones mossy on the back, and often several horse leeches sucking the superfluous blood; a large head, sharp nose, and mouth wide enough to cram one's fist in,—very sharp gums, or lips, which

you will,—with which they will catch hold of a stick, offered to them—or, if you had rather, your finger—which they will hold so fast that you may lift the turtle by it as high as your head, if you have strength or courage enough to lift them up so high by it. But as for their barking, I believe thy relator *barked*, instead of the turtle. They creep all over, in the mud, where they lie *perdu*; and when a duck, or fish, swims near them, they dart



Drawing by Jan Adkins.

out their heads as quick as light, and snap him up. Their eggs are round as a bullet, and choice eating.²

Linnaeus named him *Chelydra serpentina*, meaning "the snakelike, fetid swamp beast." A New World creature, the snapper has the broadest distribution of any reptile in this hemisphere, ranging from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains, and from Canada south to Ecuador.

This strange primordial creature seems to have renounced evolution shortly after the basic turtle shell developed, 200 million years ago. Donald Hammer writes:

While their relatives experimented with almost everything from flight to tremendous bulk, turtles have changed little over the eons. Typical boxlike turtles watched the rise and demise of the dinosaurs, the development of the insects, and the proliferation of the mammals. Snapping turtles are one of the most primitive, unchanged groups within their ancient order.³

Trappers marvel at the prehistoric look of the creature. "That's one of the oldest animals in the world, the snapper," said Ted Ramp of Egg Harbor, who has caught a few in seventy-five years of living. "They never evolved

since they were put here! They're at least five million years old."⁴ Some of the hoarier specimens, weighing in at sixty or seventy pounds, look as though they consorted with mastodons themselves. Covered with algae and moss, these chthonic beasts peer out through a mass of fleshy folds, spangled with wartlike tubercles, as they propel their bulk on ponderous legs. Their tails are set with brontosaurus-like ridges and their craggy upper shells taper to a distinctively toothed rear end.

This last feature has several practical applications in trapping. For one thing, turtle trappers—known as "mud-wallopers" and "proggers" in the marshes along the Delaware Bay—who "prog" for the turtles in water, feeling for them with their feet or with large sticks or metal rods, can determine which end to pick up. This has been called "the braille system."⁵ The jagged edge also detains the turtle in the trap. "His shell fetches up in the net," explained Bill Lee, an octogenarian mud-walloper from Port Elizabeth.⁶ "It's a guard," said Tom Brown, a fellow trapper from Millville. "That keeps him from getting out of the fyke."⁷

The snapper has two systems of defense, one for the land and one for the water. On land he is belligerent—lunging, snapping, and hissing at his adversary, sometimes lifting himself off the ground in a spectacle of impotent fury. "They're mad all the time," laughed Herb "Snapper" Misner of Medford. "You get him out of water, you can't hardly touch him. . . . Soon as they hatch out of the eggs they'll want to bite you."⁸ Almost magically, however, the minute a snapper is placed in the water his aggressive rage subsides into mere violent efforts to swim away. Thus trappers can cautiously identify the business end of a submerged turtle with less risk of being bitten than one would think. "They call it proggin' 'em," said Misner.

Put down a boom, keep pokin' around. . . sounds different when you hit one's back. Just step your foot on him, give him a couple of pushes to see which way he's gonna move—he always moves forward, he won't come back—and then just grab the tail. . . Hang on!

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SNAPPERS

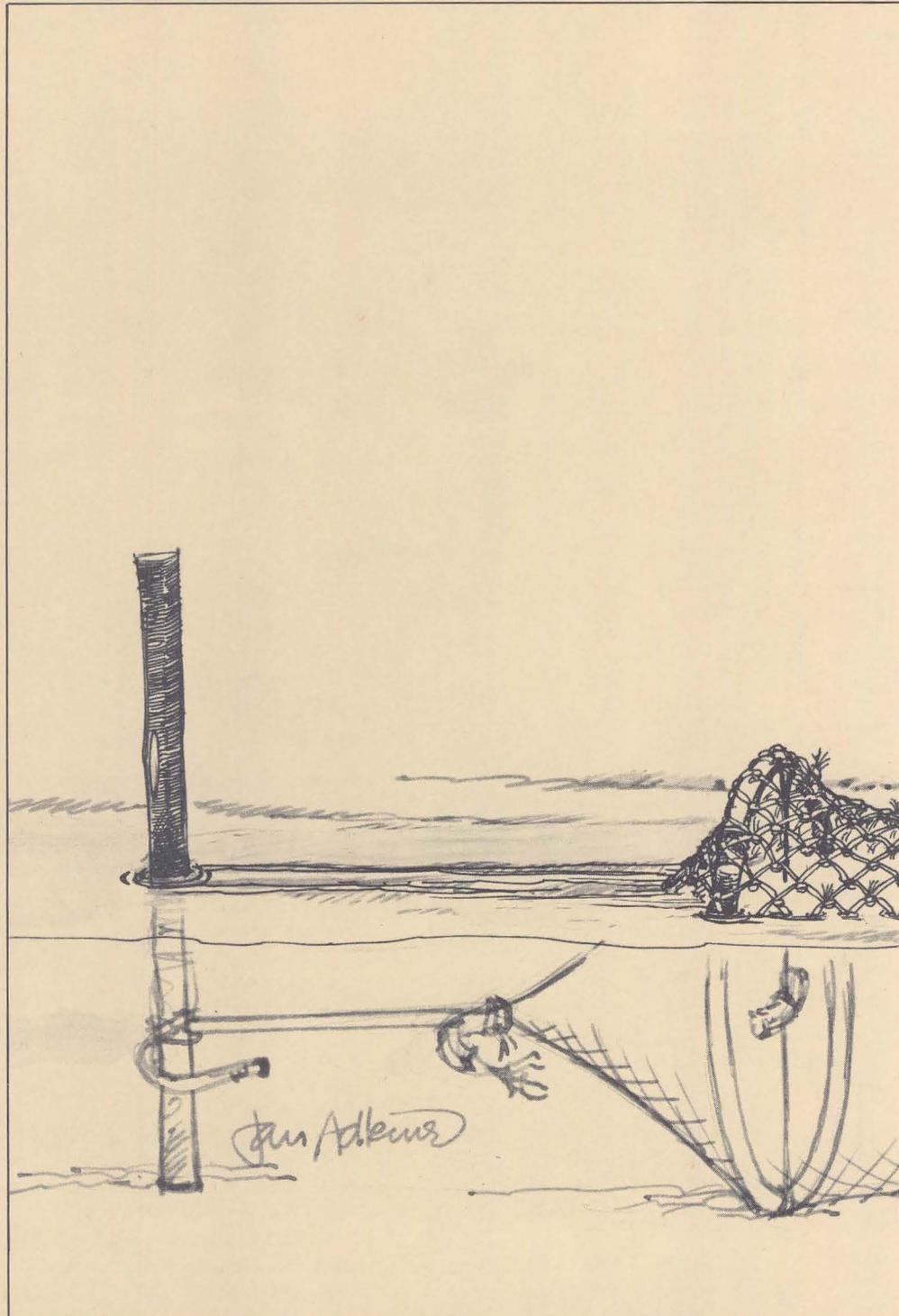
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Even if one is not a snapperer, being on the lookout for snapping turtles is part of being a South Jersey native, according to Mary Ann Thompson, a cranberry grower from Vincentown:

Snapping turtles are a big thing. My father got into a car accident. He picked up this snapping turtle and he put it in the back of the car, and it was a hatchback, and he was driving. He wanted to take it back to the guys at the bog because they love snapper. And the turtle kept coming up. And he was trying to keep it in the back and he ran into a telephone pole. And then, when he tried to explain to the state police why he hit the pole, the state policeman was from Jersey City, and he couldn't understand why he would pick up a snapper to begin with. It was a complete cultural difference to have to explain. But, anyway, he ended up with soup.⁹

Snapping turtles are not hard to find. "They leave a lot of sign, snappers," said Tom Brown. "If it's a big snapper he leaves a trail a foot wide." Good-sized snappers weigh twenty-five to forty pounds, but South Jersey occasionally yields turtles of fifty pounds or more. A trapper can obtain a rough head count in a given pond by clapping his hands, causing the turtles to pop their heads above the water, or he can simply sit and watch for a while with binoculars to determine their whereabouts. In colder weather, when turtles are in the mud and the marsh grass is short, he progs for them. In warmer weather he can prog, fish for snappers with a hook and line, or trap for them with fyke nets.

The classic turtle fyke is a barrel-like affair comprised of oak, hickory, or grapevine hoops set in a net. It has a funnel-shaped entrance leading to a bait box strung up in the receiving area. Bill Lee of Port Elizabeth, whose perennial grin during his professional boxing days earned him the name "Smiling Billy Lee," made his first fyke, out of "fisherman's bend" knots, more than seventy years ago, measuring its three-inch mesh by eye, as he told ethnobiologist Eugene Hunn.



Bill Lee of Port Elizabeth, New Jersey with snapper fyke. Drawing by Jan Adkins.

When I was a little fellow, seven, eight years old, I went to work and I knitted myself a snapper fyke. Now there's one snapper fyke. See this? Now look, you wouldn't believe that was done by hand, without a measuring stick. I done every one of 'em like this—by hand.¹⁰

Snappers have an uncanny sense of underwater smell. John C. McLoughlin reported that, according to herpetologist Karl P. Schmidt of the Chicago Natural History Museum, one snapping turtle was exploited for its nose:

An American Indian . . . on more



than one occasion aided officials in locating drowned persons by releasing into the fatal waters a snapper on a leash. That turtle sped unerringly to the decomposing corpse, to which it affixed itself in the manner of all snappers, and was then reeled in, body and all.¹¹

“Crabs would have gotten there quicker,” commented Tom Brown, when he heard the story.

The fyke is set with the entrance under water and the top above water, to keep the turtles from drowning. The funnel mouth is downstream and downwind to aid the turtle’s entry into the

trap. Setting fykes on the tidal meadows is more difficult, because the rising tide will disorient the fyke, fill it with mud, and drown a trapped turtle. “In the meadows you gotta weight ’em down,” said Misner, “wait till the tide goes out, go up them ditches in the muskrat holes,

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SNAPPERS

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Painting of a snapper attacking two ducks by Margaret Bakely, Vincentown, New Jersey. (Photo by Dennis McDonald - PFP84-B39985/5)

[and then] you gotta float 'em—take some of them white milk jugs and tie them on the sides."

Getting a turtle out of the trap is much harder than getting him into it. Tom Brown stuns it momentarily by tapping it on the nose with a ball peen hammer. Then he reaches in and grabs the tail, before inaugurating the second means of snapper disarmament:

If I got a piece of cord, I put what we call a bridle on 'em. I let 'em bite on a stick, and then tie a string on each end, and pull their head back, and fasten underneath the back part of the shell. And that's what we call "puttin' a bridle on 'em." Then they can't get their head out to bite. See? ¹²

If there is more than one turtle, the

operation is more chaotic, according to Misner:

I dump 'em out on the ground, then pick 'em up by the tail—go around 'em till you get a tail, or step your foot on his back. They'll come around after you if you try to reach down and get him, but you stick one foot on his back, keep him turned to you, his tail. Never

turn his back towards your leg; always show his belly toward your leg—if he's got his back toward your leg, they can bite up. Never had one yet bite under. Always got his head up.

A snapping turtle's fist-sized head is largely occupied by the two muscles controlling his jaws. Flanking a brain that is smaller than either of them, the jaw muscles of a large snapper can exert a pressure of up to 440 pounds per square inch.¹³ When something gives it is usually a chunk of a leg or the tip of a finger or toe. The saying goes that nothing pries those jaws open except thunder and the setting sun.¹⁴

Trappers generally store the live turtles somewhere until they have enough to take to market. Janice Sherwood of Forked River recalled that her father kept them in the basement of their house. One day, when some baby chickens fell into the basement, she was assigned the task of protecting them until her father came home, by sitting on the steps and throwing pebbles at any turtles that approached the chicks.¹⁵

Allie Chor was a legendary turtle trapper from Lower Bank who, according to local tradition, kept the turtles in his house, until his wife rebelled and told him to choose between her and the turtles. He moved for a time with the turtles to an outbuilding.¹⁶ "He used to kiss 'em!" recalled Ted Ramp with residual disbelief.

He'd come up town. He used to catch turtles, catfish, eels, and he'd come in town and peddle 'em. And he'd get in a bar after he sold a couple, and get drunk, and kiss these goddam turtles! He wasn't afraid of 'em!

Misner stores his snappers in a bathtub full of water behind his house until he is ready to sell them to a restaurant. He generally sells them live, even though snappers are worth twice as much when cleaned. For that local celebration known as a snapper soup party, however, he will clean them.

Chelydricide is very hard to commit. "The goddam things don't die right away, you know," said Ramp. "Some of 'em live a week after you cut the heads off—they don't die!"

I went into the snapper business about



Herb Misner taking a snapper out of the bathtub behind his home on Chairville Road in Medford, New Jersey. (Photo by Dennis McDonald - PFP84-B235200-18/30A)

six to eight years ago. I made a couple of traps; I still got three or four up in the shed—fyke nets. So, I'm goin' in the snapper business. The guy in Sweetwater Casino, he wanted about a hundred pound a week, cleaned, a dollar a pound. Well, boy, that was really money. So I made the nets and I set 'em. And I got 'em home. And got gas to heat the water and started in about seven o'clock one morning. And I got about six or eight heads off and I went to scald 'em. When you dumped him in the water he'd hunch up like this [demonstration] and all under his legs and sides you couldn't scald him! And you'd clean the rest up and then, when you had to scald that again, it would get

gummy like. It took me a whole day to get about ninety pounds. I sold it to him, and I went right out of the snapper business!

"You cut his head off," said Misner, "scald him, clean him, cut him open—[pausing for dramatic effect,]—and his heart's still beatin'. You can clean all his insides out, and lay his heart in your hand, and it's still pumpin'. They say if you swallow a snapper's heart you'll never be scared, while it's still beatin'. That's what they used to tell the kids, them oldtimers."¹⁷

And the beat goes on.

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SNAPPERS

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The traditional advice is to bury the severed head, because it will snap until sundown at anything that touches it. "They can bite you after you cut their head off," cautioned Misner. "Their head will stay alive a long time after you cut it off. Their mouth'll be open, but don't touch anywhere near that mouth: he's gonna get you."

A number of inquisitive dogs in the region are supposed to have lost tongues, noses, and toes by violating that interdiction. Joanne Van Istendal of Medford related a story of one snapper's revenge:

An old Piney friend of mine died about five years ago. He was eighty-four when he died. He told me a story that when he was maybe thirty-five, and, of course, being a Piney, he did the seasonal round, and snapping turtle was the meat of the spring and summer. They had gotten a thirty-five-pounder and brought it back to the house. And they went in to have some soup for lunch, and they had cut the head off—they'd put the turtle upside-down—and the head was layin' by the turtle out by the back door.

Well, over by the barn, right behind the house, was a dog chained to the barn. They're all in there having a good time talkin' about what happened—what they'd come up with for the day, the ones that got away and the ones they got, and so forth. And they heard the dog yippin' and whinin'. And they said, "What ails that dog?"

So they went out. And the dog's got the snapping turtle's head attached to his tongue. And they were over there and they were tryin' to pry his head off the dog's tongue—a thirty-five-pounder, which is a pretty good sized head. So, anyhow, it was a good dog, a good hunter dog. And they finally got the head off, along with a bit of the dog's tongue. I don't know what they cauterized it with, but they went back to the house again to get some of that. And when they came out again the doggone turtle was gone! It had



Interior of Tom Brown's trapper's cabin, featuring snapper shell painted with duck scene. Painting by June Taylor of Dividing Creek, New Jersey. (Photo by Joseph Czarnecki - PFP83-B217721-14/8)

rolled itself over! They spent the rest of the day looking for it.

So, anyhow, finally the other old fellow was going down the road in his car. And a quarter of a mile down the road the turtle was ahead of him, walking straight down the asphalt!¹⁸

The snappers that do not get away are featured in many local stews and pot pies. People also like to fry them, using cracker crumbs and eggs, seasoned with salt and pepper. Turtle eggs are regarded by some as a superb delicacy. To celebrate his fiftieth year in Browns Mills, Jack Davis gave a snapper soup party. His wife Ann made fifty gallons of soup:

You've got to be careful how long you cook it—it's accordin' to your size snapper. It's like lobster—if you don't cook it right, it's not good. There are people who fry it, make it into pot pies. There's a lot of people does a lot with it.

I shred my snapper. I start out with

cabbage, potatoes, celery, onions, carrots—cooked in stock. Then string beans, peas, whatever you want. Then I put six pounds of butter. Then . . . hard boiled eggs that I ground. That's the Piney way that we make snapper soup. In restaurants you get that brown gravy soup, and I don't like it.¹⁹

In terms of flavor, the snapping turtle is a sumptuous smorgasbord, distinctive for the assortment of meats it offers. "A snapper doesn't have anything that tastes like snapper, as far as that goes," said Bill Lee. "You'd think you was eatin' veal or somethin' like that. . . . There's chicken, pork chops, beef, and everything else." According to Johnny Broome of Chatsworth, the snapping turtle was creation's catch-all. "There's seven kinds of meat in a snapping turtle," he said. "And you know why that is? Because when God created the universe, he had a bunch of parts left over. So he threw all those together and made the snapping turtle."²⁰

Snapper soup is mysteriously volatile. "Is it true, Dad," Betty Gravinese asked

her father, Herb Misner, "that if you make snapper soup and you don't freeze it, if you just have it in the 'frigerator, or have it sittin' on the stove, it'll spoil in a thunder and lightning storm? It goes bad. I have always heard this."

"It starts to bubble, like," Misner confirmed.

"Like it's curdled," continued Betty. "My mother, if we were having a snapper soup party, and if it looked like rain, you had to hurry up and get it packed away."

A place that is crawling with snappers keeps its other citizens hopping. Recalcitrant in evolution, intractable in hand, indomitable in the pot, snappers reward those who pay attention, enlivening South Jersey's human nature with stories to tell, soup to be made and consumed between thunderstorms, and the spark in a snapperer's eye.

—Mary Hufford

This article is based on the final report from the Center's Pinelands Folklife Project.

¹ A. Hyatt Verrill, *Strange Reptiles and Their Stories* (Boston: L.C. Page & Company, 1937), p. 156.

² John Bartram, letter to Peter Collinson, November 3, 1754, in William Darlington, ed., *Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall* (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 196-197. David Scofield Wilson analyses this bit of literary nature reportage in his book *In the Presence of Nature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), pp. 103-104.

³ Donald A. Hammer, "The Durable Snapping Turtle," *Natural History*, Volume 80, Number 6 (June-July 1971), pp. 61-62.

⁴ Interview with Ted Ramp by Mary Hufford on February 21, 1983 (PFP83-AMH001). Interviews will be cited the first time they are quoted from; subsequent quotes are from the interview cited, unless stated otherwise.

⁵ Richard M. Rau, "'Braille System' for Turtle Trappers," *Outdoor Life*, Volume 158, Number 4 (October 1976), p. 115.

⁶ Interview with Bill Lee by Eugene Hunn, June 24, 1984 (PFP84-AEH016).

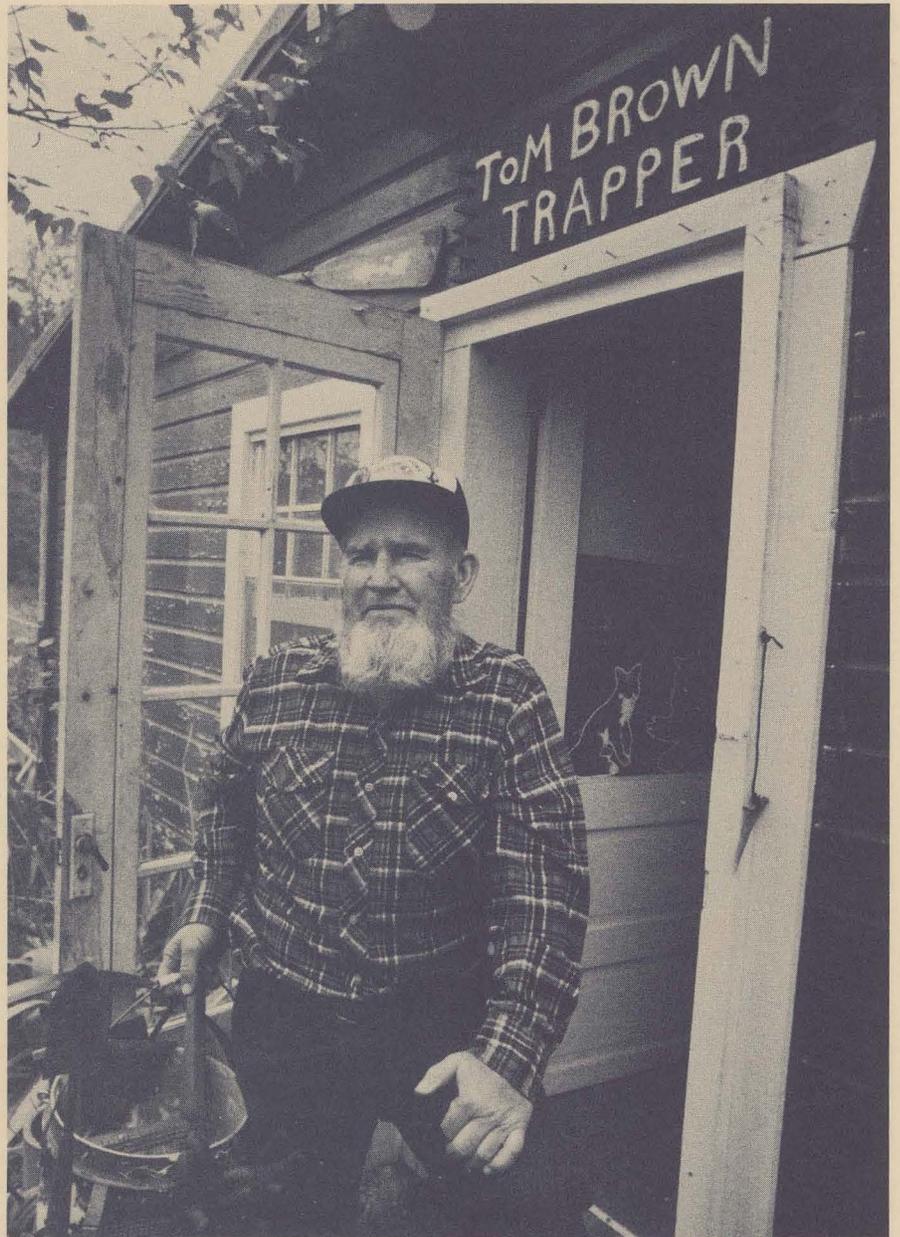
⁷ Personal communication, June 28, 1985.

⁸ Interview with Herb Misner, Betty Gravinese, and Lou Gravinese by Mary Hufford and Rita Moonsamy on April 11, 1985 (PFP85-AMH001-002).

⁹ Interview with Mary Ann Thompson by Jens Lund, Elaine Thatcher, Christine Cartwright, and Mary Hufford on September 16, 1983 (PFP83-RMH004).

¹⁰ Interview with Bill Lee by Eugene Hunn on June 21, 1984 (PFP84-AEH010).

¹¹ John C. McLoughlin, "The Snapping Turtle,"



Tom Brown at door of his trapper's cabin in Millville, New Jersey. (Photo by Joseph Czarnecki - PFP83-B216558-3/24A)

Blair and Ketchum's Country Journal, Volume 8, Number 7 (July 1981), pp. 30-34.

¹² Interview with Tom Brown by Eugene Hunn on June 21, 1984 (PFP84-AEH009).

¹³ McLoughlin, pp. 30-34.

¹⁴ This belief is widespread, appearing as a motif in Native American and Afro-American folk tales (Motif B761—Turtle holds with jaws till it thunders) in Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, Volume 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955) and elsewhere applied to snake and crawfish. See *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*, Volume 7 (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1964), p. 359 and *Popular Beliefs and Superstitions: A Compendium of American Folklore*, Volume 2, Wayland Hand et al., eds. (Boston: G.K. Hall and Company, 1981), p. 1311 for a sampling of similar

beliefs collected in North Carolina and Ohio.

¹⁵ Anecdote related by Janice Sherwood during a concert she gave with the Pineconers at Stockton State College in Pomona, N.J. on May 20, 1980.

¹⁶ This story was told to me in 1979 by Edmund Kemble, who grew up in Lower Bank, New Jersey.

¹⁷ This belief is also recorded in *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*, Volume 7, p. 408: "You'll always be brave if you swallow a turtle's heart raw."

¹⁸ Interview with Joanne Van Istendal and Elizabeth Woodford by Mary Hufford and Sue Samuelson on November 11, 1983 (PFP83-AMH022).

¹⁹ Interview with Jack and Ann Davis by Mary Hufford on September 19, 1983 (PFP83-RMH008).

²⁰ Interview with Johnny Broome by Mary Hufford in April 1980.

WATERMELON Ones That Got Away



Contemporary watercolor by Jonathan Heath of Berkeley Springs, W. Va., who displays his artwork at the Eastern Market on occasion.

In the year since the Folklife Center published *Watermelon* staff members and friends have spied images of the giant melon everywhere—from the Eastern Market to the National Archives. While the illustration on this page came to our attention after the fact, the 64-page book is chock-full of duotone and color reproductions of watermelon paintings, etchings, posters, and a variety of merchandise sporting the appealing red and green motif. In addition, it offers history, lore, a complete list of

watermelon festivals across the country, and recipes to help you enjoy America's quintessential summer fruit. *Watermelon* (AFC B2) is available for \$10 from the sales counter in the Jefferson and Madison buildings or by mail order from the Information Office, Box A, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. For single orders please include an additional \$1 postage and handling; for multiple orders please include an additional \$2.

FOLK ARCHIVE RADIO SERIES

If you tune in to the National Public Radio network on a regular basis, you may hear a series of radio programs drawn from the holdings of the Archive of Folk Culture this fall. Bob Carlin, the banjo playing host of two programs for NPR affiliate WHYI-FM in Philadelphia, produced the series, called "Our Musical Heritage," with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Each of the thirteen half-hour programs explores a separate instrument or type of music. There are programs on the fiddle, the banjo, and the harmonica and other portable instruments, as well as programs devoted to songs of work, music from the old country, and dance bands. Within those categories the programs offer a juxtaposition of ethnic traditions. The two segments on the fiddle, for instance, present Appalachian, Cajun, Middle Eastern, and Afro-American fiddle styles. The dance-band segment, also in two parts, includes Native American, New England, Southwestern, and Appalachian groups. "I am not an advocate of the American melting pot," notes Carlin, "but I'm excited by cross-cultural influences."

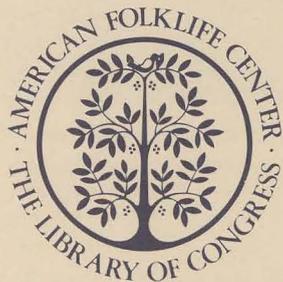
Carlin's primary motivation in undertaking the project was his interest in calling attention to the Archive's holdings—"a great collection of material, generally underutilized," as he characterizes it. "The shows, in general, are trying to let people know that the collection is there, that there are LPs available, and that, with proper advance notice, they can listen to the material." Another purpose of the programs is to present some of the country's strong ethnic musical traditions.

In developing the series Carlin tried to represent as many different ethnic traditions, regions, and geographic areas as possible. Other selection criteria included sound quality, performance, and whether or not a particular item had been published previously.

Carlin is quick to point out that it is not an academic series, although he did ask advice from many of the country's folk-music scholars while selecting the

material. The programs are mostly music, but will also include some anecdotal material, information about the piece or the collection, and other interesting tidbits. One program contains an excerpt from David Brinkley's interview of former Archive head Duncan Emrich. Another presents a portion of John A. Lomax's own radio series on folk music from around 1940.

Beginning in October, "Our Musical Heritage" will be made available through NPR's satellite service to some 290 member stations across the country. For information regarding the scheduling of broadcasts, contact your local NPR affiliated station. For further information regarding the content of the programs, contact Bob Carlin, WHYY-FM, 150 North 6th Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19106, tel. (215) 351-9200.



PAID INTERNSHIPS OFFERED BY FOLK ARCHIVE

Plans are afoot to create a paid internship in the Archive of Folk Culture. The duration of each internship will correspond loosely to the spring, summer, and fall academic terms—beginning and ending dates will be flexible as long as they fall within a single 120-day period. Initially, only one internship will be offered each term. The purpose of the internship program is twofold: first, to encourage graduate students in folklore,

ethnomusicology, American studies, anthropology library science, and related fields to develop professional skill in the administration of a reference/research facility, and second, to assist the Archive of Folk Culture by performing tasks that further its mission.

The Archive of Folk Culture is the public reference facility for the Library's American Folklife Center. Established in 1928 within the Music Division, its affiliation was transferred after the Folklife Center was created. Approximately 30,000 hours of field recordings, 150,000 pages of manuscript, and thousands of photographs are now under Archive control. Every region and every state of the United States is represented in this corpus. In addition to material from the United States, the Archive acquires and maintains extensive collections of traditional music and lore from many other parts of the world. At present, at least twenty-five percent of the Archive's recordings were made abroad and approximately twenty percent of the material from the United States represents non-English-language traditions.

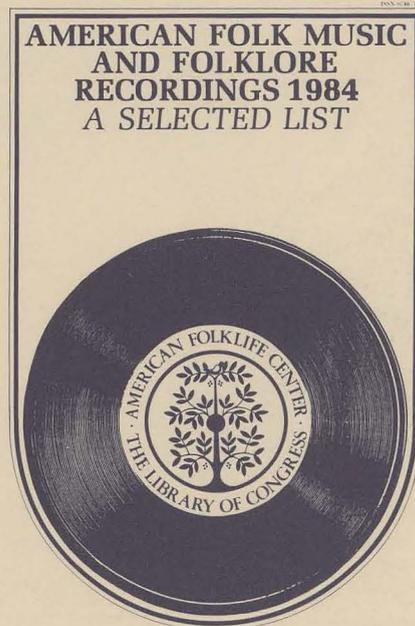
Processing new recorded materials into the collection is the core task around which the intern program will be structured. The steps in this activity provide an orderly and concrete introduction to the Archive's fundamental systems. Once these are well understood, the intern will be able to work with the same systems in order to perform reference research for the Archive's patrons.

Both administrators of graduate programs and interested graduate students may get on the mailing list to receive information as it becomes available. Send your name and address to Gerald Parsons, Reference Librarian, Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

Note that the paid internship complements, but does not replace, the *volunteer* intern program that the Archive has operated for more than a decade. Many persons have found their experience in these informal internships of great help in planning a career or furthering their education. Students often arrange with their own institutions to obtain scholastic credit for volunteer internships. A flyer describing the volunteer intern program in greater detail is available from the Archive.

FOLK RECORD LIST

American Folk Music and Folklore Recordings 1984: A Selected List is now available. The list includes recordings of old-time country music, shape-note singing, bluegrass, blues, Cajun, Cambodian, Native American, Norteño, Norwegian,



and other musical traditions found within the United States. Each entry has been annotated by project coordinator Michael Licht.

The recordings listed exemplify "root" traditions and provide extensive documentation through liner notes or accompanying booklets. The thirty records and cassette tapes described in this illustrated booklet were chosen by panelists Thomas A. Adler from the University of Kentucky, Norm Cohen of the John Edwards Memorial Forum, David Evans from Memphis State University, William Ivey of the Country Music Foundation, and Ethel Raim of the Ethnic Folk Art Center from among nearly 200 recordings released in 1984. Free copies of the list may be obtained by writing Annual Recordings List, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.



Joana Del Rio (L) and Estefania performing on the Neptune Plaza during an outdoor concert on September 19 that featured renowned flamenco dancer Ana Martinez. The Center presented the concert in conjunction with the Library's celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Week. (Photo by Reid Baker - 85-280/19)

Front cover:

Herb "Snapper" Misner of Medford, New Jersey (L) and Ray Drayton of Vincentown with the day's catch. (Photo by Dennis McDonald - PFP84-B235200-2/22A)

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