

American Folklife Center
Library of Congress

October–December 1985

Volume VIII, Number 4

folklife center news

Mississippi Fiddle Music

Omaha Pow-Wow Revisited

Folklife Annual 1985

Publications



OMAHA INDIAN MUSIC

HISTORIC RECORDINGS FROM THE FLETCHER/LA FLESCHÉ COLLECTION

FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

a quarterly publication of the

American Folklife Center

at the

Library of Congress

Alan Jabbour, Director

Ray Dockstader, Deputy Director

Carl Fleischhauer
Mary Hufford
Dorothy Sara Lee
Folklife Specialists

Peter T. Bartis, Folklife Researcher

Patricia M. Markland, Program Assistant
Brett Topping, Writer-Editor
Magdalena Gilinsky, Contracts Specialist
Doris Craig, Administrative Secretary
Lisa Oshins, Staff Assistant

Tel: 202 287-6590

Archive of Folk Culture

Joseph C. Hickerson, Head
Gerald E. Parsons, Jr., Reference Librarian
Marsha Maguire, Archivist
Sebastian LoCurto, Staff Assistant
Aldona Kamantauskas, Staff Assistant

Tel: 202 287-5510

Federal Cylinder Project

Dorothy Sara Lee, Director
Judith A. Gray, Ethnomusicologist

Tel: 202 287-9022

Washington, D.C. 20540

Managing Editor: Brett Topping

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Sometimes I think that we folklorists make our greatest mark upon society when we name things. Taxonomists will take comfort in my assertion, but others may find it wrong-headed. For over a decade we have focused on assistance to and advocacy for the people we study. A willingness to undertake "hands-on" work with various cultural traditions has become a virtual prerequisite for public-sector folklife positions. Now I am a tireless advocate of advocacy, and our fervor to be helpful to the cultural traditions we admire has no doubt been

beneficial. But I am troubled when I hear passionate advocacy accompanied by disparaging remarks about scholars who categorize culture instead of helping it. There is room in our field for both analyzers and helpers of culture, both taxonomists and advocates. In fact, the same person can do both, and a careful analysis helps the advocate to advocate. I would argue further that taxonomic analysis, category-making, describing—giving names to things—can have as powerful an impact on cultural conservation as direct cultural assistance.

When I was growing up in Jacksonville, Florida, we all used one word to describe the modest frame dwellings one encountered throughout the rural landscape of North Florida and in the working-class neighborhoods in town. The word was "shack." With that word as our guide, it is no wonder people agreed that such houses were a blight on the landscape; the very name "shack" implied it.

Little did I know that, while I was learning the word and worldview "shack," scholarly pioneers like Fred Kniffen were learning to see something more complex and interesting than what I saw. They categorized buildings, assigned names, speculated on taxonomic relationships, and began mapping them as evidence of the regional diffusion of American culture. Turning an undifferentiated corpus of materials into an intelligible universe—bringing order out of chaos—takes a formidable amount of naming, and the vocabulary they invented mixes terms borrowed from tradition (dogtrot house, shotgun house) with terms invented or shanghaied for the purpose. The whole process was full of the heady excitement of discovery. In the 1960s I first encountered their work, and I recall the sensation of having the blinders fall away from my eyes. By the 1970s their terminology was cropping up in the conversations of preservationists, and by the 1980s it was possible to visit a town like Louisville, Kentucky and have people from all walks of life point with pride to the "shotgun houses" lining their neighborhoods.

It is intriguing to ask: Who contributes more to preserving vernacular architecture in America, the scholar who categorizes it or the advocate who urges us not to tear it down? Since the con-

tribution of the scholars—the contribution of naming—has not only preceded but served as a prerequisite to the work of the activists, one might vote in favor of the scholars' contribution. But my real moral is that scholar and activist work symbiotically in our civilization, and naming is fundamental to what they accomplish.

This train of thought was prompted by my observing that a phrase the American Folklife Center seems to have coined is now working its way into other areas of society. It is neither as tangible as "dogtrot house" nor as particular as "blues ballad" or "urban legend," and it describes not what folklorists study but rather a cultural system that includes the work of folklorists in it. The phrase—or perhaps term—is *cultural conservation*. It is defined in the policy study that takes it as a title—*Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States*, coordinated by Ormond H. Loomis (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 1983). This column has previously reflected upon our goals in the study itself (*Folklife Center News*, Vol. V, No. 4, October 1982). For now our subject is the phrase and its history as an example of naming.

Why we coined the term is perhaps the easiest part of the mystery of naming to unravel. Our mandate, in The Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980, was to provide a report on "preserving and conserving the intangible elements of our cultural heritage." But two considerations inclined us to search for a new term. First, the word "intangible" defines negatively; it tells not what something is, but what it is not. Such words historically provide poor anchorage, and we wanted a better keyword in the report. Second, we saw that the report had to deal not only with intangible elements of culture but with tangible elements as well. What was needed was a conceptual system that related efforts involving intangible elements of culture to similar efforts on behalf of tangible cultural artifacts.

"Cultural conservation" was our terminological solution. We designated it as the overarching term for an integrated, comprehensive system for working with cultural traditions. Within it we discerned two subsystems for cultural efforts: *preservation* and *encouragement*. Within each subsystem we

specified various cultural strategies that could be employed. We selected conservation over preservation as the comprehensive term for a host of complicated reasons, ranging from the connotations of the two terms in current usage to the fact that "cultural conservation" alliterates.

When it was coined as a term, and by whom, remain more mysterious. Office lore traces the moment of genesis to a staff meeting not long after we had launched the study. Who came up with the chosen phrase, under what circumstances, and whether it received instant accolades or hesitant assent, already seem impossible to discover. Personally, I am fond of this aspect of the term's history, which reminds me of nothing so much as the "singing, dancing throng" posited by early ballad scholars as the collective creative source for composing traditional ballads.

It remains possible that we were not the first to use "cultural conservation." Indeed, the phrase now sounds so natural to me, and has such a comfortable ring (thanks to the alliteration), that

it is hard to imagine our being the first to happen upon it. Archie Green once mentioned having come upon "folklife" (or perhaps "folk life") in a 19th-century publication, though we think of it as a more contemporary term in English. Similarly, no doubt, someone will soon present us with early citations for "cultural conservation."

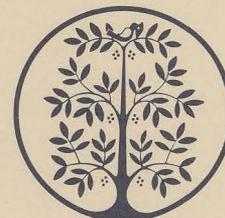
After its mysterious genesis, however, the historical trail for "cultural conservation" becomes a bit clearer. The term was presented to the panel of consultants who periodically met to assist us in the study, and after due deliberation they endorsed its use as a keyword. Then its public life began as a title on circulated drafts of the report. In time we began referring to it not only in *Folklife Center News* but in myriad conferences and academic meetings. After the report came out in 1983 the Center and the National Park Service established a Cultural Conservation Steering Committee to implement certain administrative recommendations within the Department of the Interior. Center staff began using the term in reference to some of their activities, and one irreverent staffer was heard to say "culcon."

My first inkling that the term "cultural conservation" was "taking off" came when I received in 1984 a copy of the program for the 38th National Preservation Conference, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. One session, coordinated by the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation, was entitled "Cultural Conservation." I scanned the list of participants and concluded that someone who had no immediate connection to the American Folklife Center had chosen the term. "Cultural conservation" was beginning to appear without our bidding.

In 1985 the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife adopted "cultural conservation" as a focal theme for a section of the festival. Visitors to the National Mall could stroll through an extensive area of the festival, read attractive exhibit texts, and become engaged in events and activities under the explicit rubric of cultural conservation, and the program booklet explored the theme in greater depth. Plans are now underway for another cultural conservation section in the 1986 festival, and

it will certainly spread the term and concept to thousands of visitors drawn from the general public. More recently, a lively debate inspired by the cultural conservation theme at the festival burst upon the pages of *The American Folklore Society Newsletter* (Vol. 14, No. 5, October 1985).

When the AFS newsletter aired its debate on the meaning of "cultural conservation," I had an impulse to chime in with my own definition, but then thought better of it. With naming, as with publications, one must be schooled by the moral implicit in the phrase "Go little book!" which provides a formulaic ending to many medieval literary compositions. Authorship is a painstaking, meticulous affair; yet there comes a moment when that which is authored takes on a life of its own, proceeds on its own path, and assumes its own signification. One may launch a term in a general direction, but one cannot precisely chart



its future course. Further—and here namers must be chastened—the surest sign that a term is taking hold is that its authorship begins to be lost sight of. Success and anonymity go hand in hand.

Someday, perhaps, we at the Folklife Center may find ourselves asking: How have we contributed more to American folklife, by helping folk culture at the grassroots level or by launching a phrase that helps people think and act a bit more effectively with regard to—well, to cultural conservation? The answer, I am sure, will be that both strategies are appropriate for the Center—within the larger goal of cultural conservation.

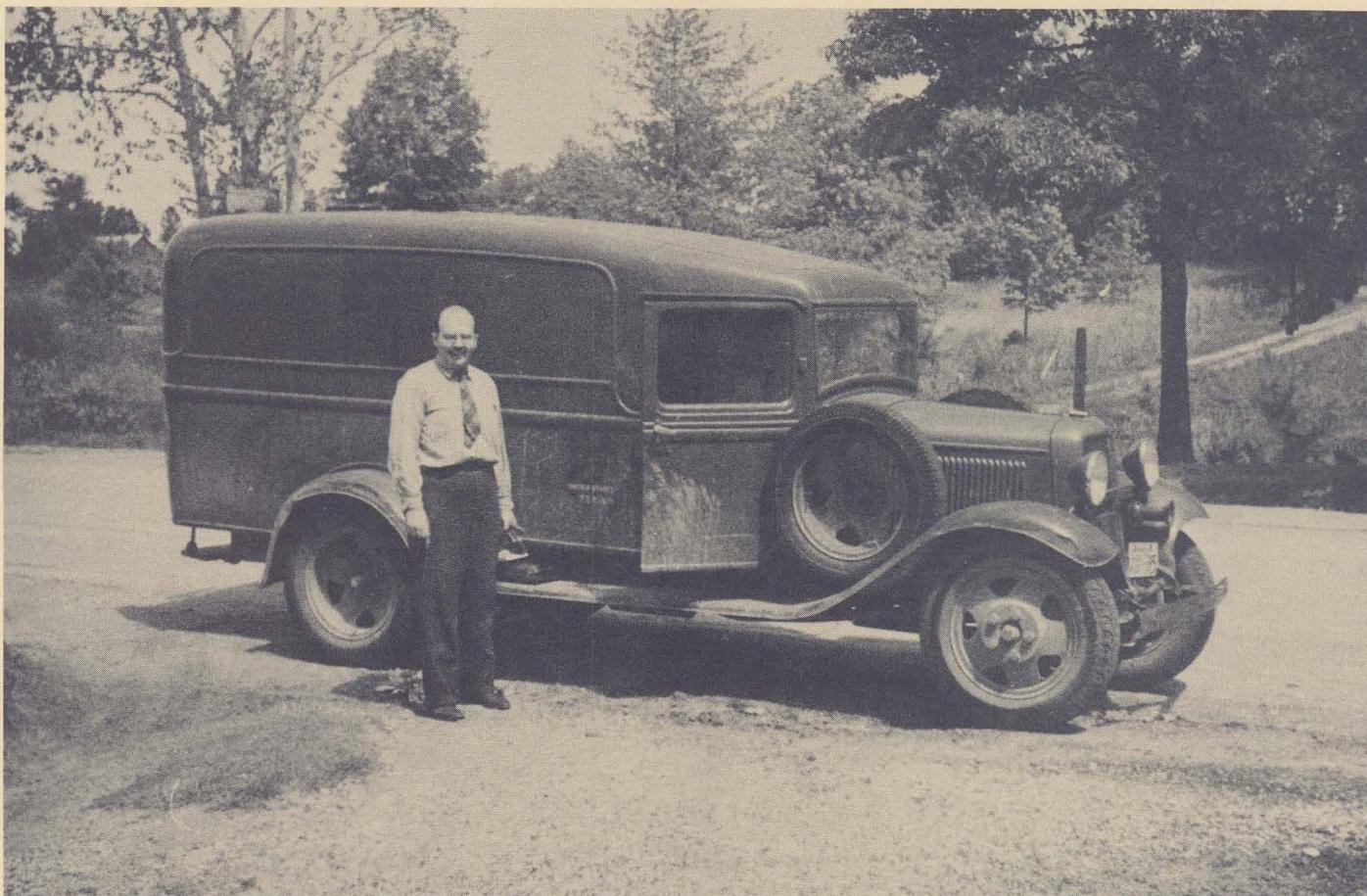
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jeanne Guillemin, Massachusetts,
Chairman
William L. Kinney, Jr., South Carolina,
Vice Chairman
Edward Bridge Danson, Arizona
David E. Draper, Louisiana
Ronald C. Foreman, Jr., Florida
Bruce Jackson, New York
St. John Terrell, New Jersey
J. Barre Toelken, Utah

Ex Officio Members

Daniel J. Boorstin, The Librarian of
Congress
Robert McCormick Adams, Secretary of
the Smithsonian Institution
Francis S. M. Hodsoll, Jr., Chairman,
National Endowment for the Arts
_____, Chairman, National Endow-
ment for the Humanities
Alan Jabbour, Director, American
Folklife Center

MISSISSIPPI FIDDLE MUSIC



Herbert Halpert and the "sound wagon," Saltillo, Mississippi, 1939. (All photos in this article are courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History)

On May 8, 1939 folksong collector and scholar Herbert Halpert arrived in Mississippi to document folklore and folk music during a recording tour of the South sponsored by the Joint Committee on the Arts of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). He drove into the state in an old ambulance outfitted with cabinets, a small cot, food, and clothes. The ambulance also had specially built shelves for the latest in recording equipment—an acetate disc recorder lent by the Archive of American Folk Song (now the Archive of Folk Culture) at the Library of Congress.

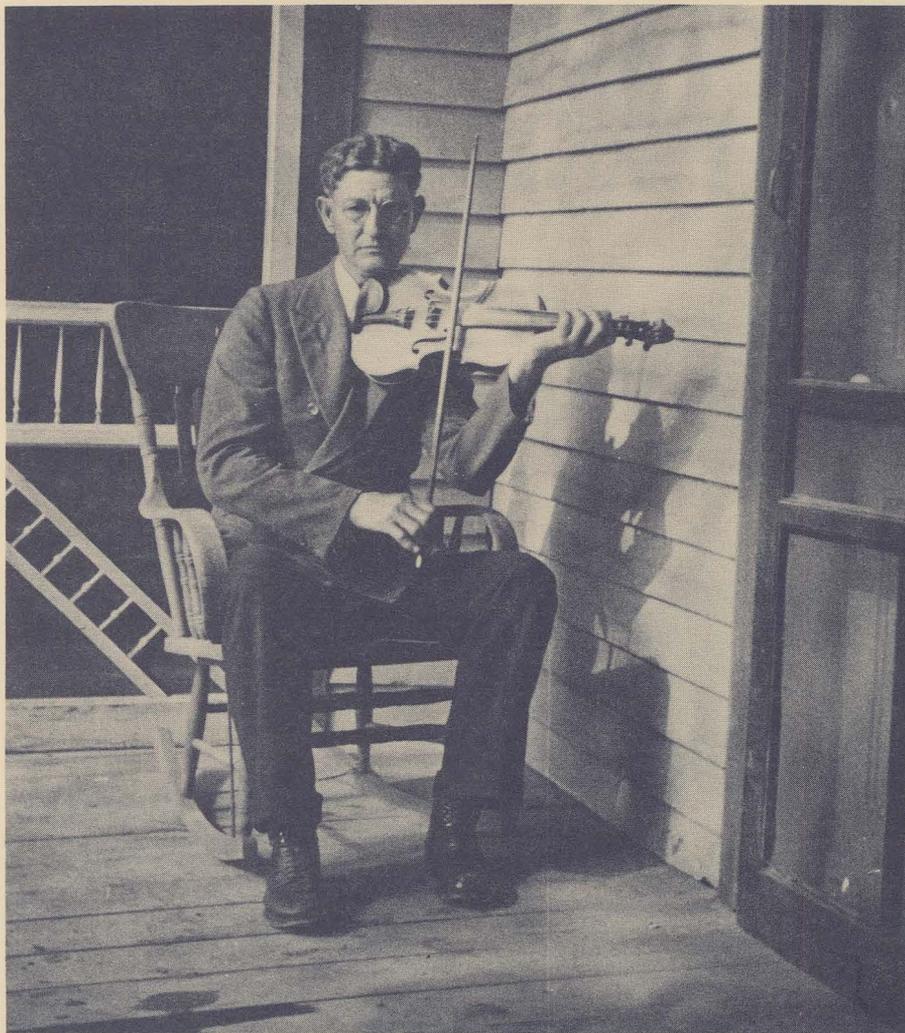
The arrival of Halpert and his "sound wagon" marked the high point of a survey carried out by local members of the WPA to locate Mississippi folk musicians and record their songs and tunes.

Members of the Federal Writers', Federal Music, and Federal Theater projects had been canvassing the state since 1936. By the time Halpert arrived they had assembled a prodigious list of ballad singers, fiddlers, blues and gospel singers, and many other artists throughout Mississippi.

To take full advantage of Halpert's short visit, local WPA workers acted as intermediaries, preceding the recording truck to make arrangements with the performers he would visit and grouping artists in convenient places to minimize travel and maximize recording time. Following their schedule, with a few side trips to pursue a couple of leads of his own, Halpert cut 168 records between May 8 and June 11, 1939. Abbott Ferriss, a Mississippi native, assisted him.

In addition to helping with the actual recording, Ferriss kept fieldnotes on the trip and took photographs of the musicians, their families, homes, and surroundings. At the project's conclusion the recordings became part of the folk-music collections at the Library of Congress. The photographs and much of the manuscript material related to the project remained in Mississippi.

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History has now published *Great Big Yam Potatoes: Anglo-American Fiddle Music from Mississippi*, an album of fiddle tunes collected by Halpert and Ferriss. To produce the disc folklorist Tom Rankin researched the field recordings at the Library of Congress. The Archive of Folk Culture has a collection of 419 acetate disc recordings made by



John Hatcher of Tishomingo County, Mississippi was recorded at the same time and place as John Brown on the following page. While Brown was recorded in the clothes in which he had just been plowing his fields, Hatcher had taken the time to put on his Sunday best. His five tunes on the disc are characterized as being among the finest in the collection.

Herbert Halpert in the South during the full WPA recording tour which extended from March 15 to June 15, 1939. In addition, it has recordings of Halpert discussing his work for the Federal Writers' and Federal Theater projects and research files containing interviews, correspondence, papers, clippings, and photographs resulting from the WPA's work. Rankin also located supplementary background information and photographs from the Mississippi portion of the recording tour at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

The LP recording includes forty-two fiddle tunes from the eastern counties of Mississippi. Many are played solo, others with a range of accompaniment, including "beating the straws," guitar,

and string band. A companion booklet includes extensive annotations by Tom Rankin and Gary Stanton. The booklet also contains an essay by Rankin on the WPA projects in the state, an analysis of Mississippi fiddling styles by Tom Sauber, and a brief recollection of the documentary tour by Ferriss, professor emeritus of sociology at Emory University (see excerpt).

Great Big Yam Potatoes offers fresh insight into the fiddle music of Mississippi as well as the work of the WPA. It can be obtained by mail for \$8 plus \$2 postage and handling from the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi, University, Miss. 38677. Volume discounts are available.

Meals in 1939 could be found in rural Mississippi for upwards of eighty-five cents or a dollar, and small hotels gave a night's lodging for one or two dollars. Even so, as we roamed the state recording folk music, Halpert often slept in the van he had driven from New York, and for convenience I sometimes found a bed in the spare room of the home of the musician whom we were recording.

Over dusty gravel roads and the newly-laid hard surfaces, our itinerary had been arranged so that we roved the entire state: from the cool hills of Tishomingo County to the sands of Harrison, from Parchman to Quitman, and many cities and towns between. Representatives of the Writers or Music Projects in each county had alerted locally-known folk singers and musicians to expect us, had written down the text of many of their songs, and often accompanied us to the home of the informant. Also, Arthur Palmer Hudson's *Folksongs of Mississippi* led us to many singers of ballads and play-party songs. We felt that, by following up on the leads of others and recording the authentic sound of a musical performance, we were contributing greatly to the study and preservation of Mississippi's folk culture.

Churches, schools and prisons were used for indoor recordings, but the hot May-June weather usually led to recording on the front porch of rural homes. An automobile battery was wired to the heavy recording machine and the twelve-inch wax put in place. The needle cut from the inside outwards, creating a black string of wax. Silence was requested during the recording, but it often was broken by a rooster or a cow or the scrape of a chair over the floor by family members or friends who had come to watch. Halpert was attentive to informant fatigue and sometimes broke off a session so that the performer could prepare supper or rest; we often returned the next day if we had met an exceptionally talented informant.

Continued on overleaf

MISSISSIPPI

Continued from previous page

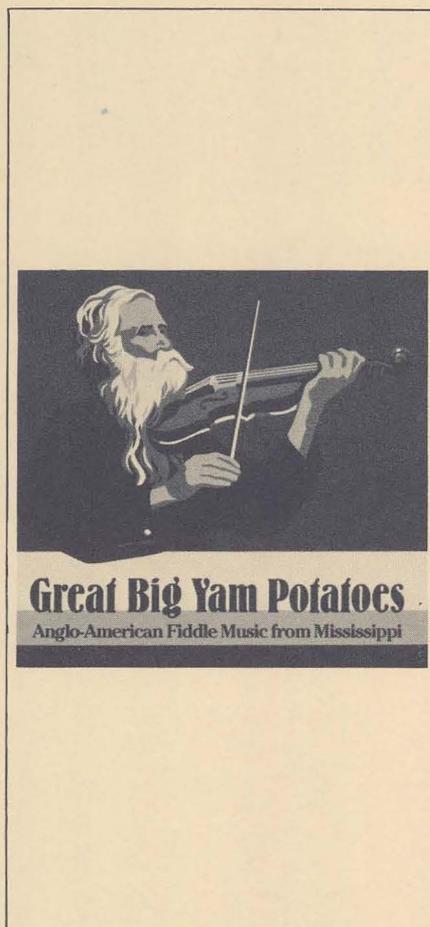
Besides taking photographs, and finding out when and from whom the song or tune was learned, to the extent possible I also wrote down the words. I could not always keep pace with the singer, nor record more than a poor phonetic equivalent, in letters, of the words. This process undoubtedly resulted in as much misrepresentation as it led to accuracy, for we were finding Old

and Middle English words mixed with Scotch and Irish, transformed by Civil War allusions and influences of cotton culture. We gathered work songs from the cotton fields and prisons, play songs of the genteel and proud Scotch-Irish, fiddle, banjo, and guitar tunes that had delighted the family before the radio or phonograph had substituted for this linkage with the cultural past, work songs and the plaintive "hal-looos" and calls to animals or family that were heard as dusk and wood smoke

from the kitchen settled upon the fields. . . .

These experiences led me to a deep appreciation of Mississippi folk culture, a respect for the dignity and humanity of its people, both black and white, and an abiding motivation to understand the process of cultural accretion and change.

Abbott L. Ferriss
"Music Tour Remembered"



John Alexander Brown, originally of Itawamba County, Mississippi, was sixty-seven when Halpert and Ferriss recorded his "careful and delicate fiddle style" in 1939. "I just picked fiddling up from my daddy," he told them. "Just practiced the sounds of it, just listened. I heard a piece and went back home and played it." His photograph is the basis for the recording's cover and booklet illustration.

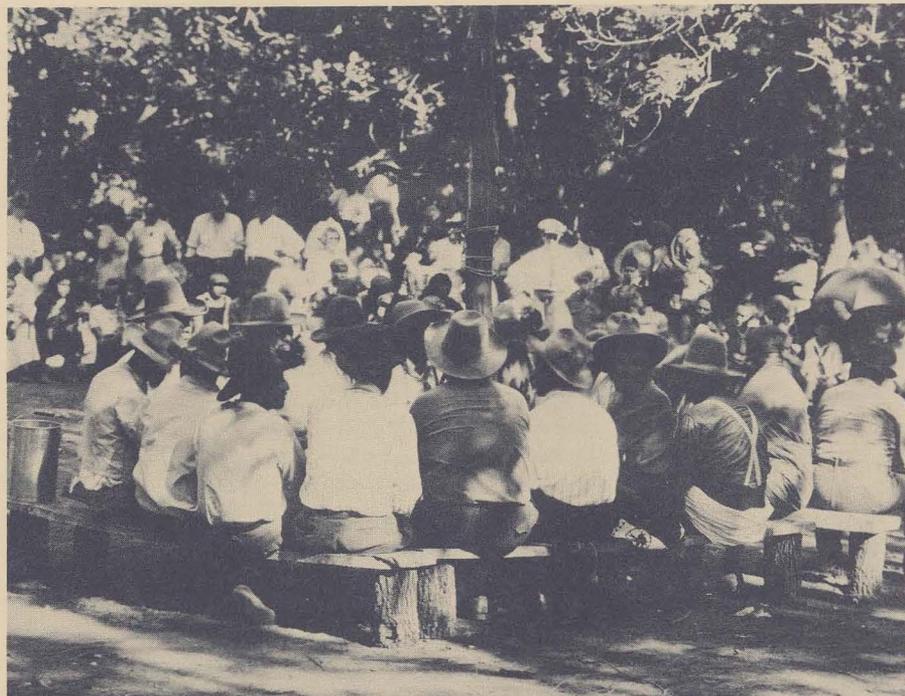
Bringing the Voices Home

THE OMAHA POW-WOW REVISITED

“Don’t believe anything you hear and only half of what you see,” goes the old saying. Off and on since 1973 I have worked with sound recordings in the collections of the Library of Congress documenting early ethnographic fieldwork, so I have had good reason to reflect on what can or cannot be learned from the sounds cut for us by the early collectors from among the densely textured sights, sounds, and movements they experienced.

I had occasion to think further on what fieldworkers bring back for others to see and hear this last September, when I accompanied Folklife Center director Alan Jabbour, Federal Cylinder Project director Dorothy Sara Lee, and sound engineer Mike Rivers to the Omaha Tribal Pow-wow in Macy, Nebraska. We had been invited to present the tribe with the newly released album *Omaha Indian Music: Historic Recordings from the Fletcher/La Flesche Collection*. I am not a specialist in American Indian culture, so this article represents only an informal series of personal impressions from a brief but memorable visit.

I first heard the Fletcher/La Flesche recordings around 1980 in the course of my work as technical consultant to the Cylinder Project. I remember being struck at the time with the vividness of the voices they preserved. It was not merely that the recordings had less surface noise than most and were exceptionally free of damage and distortion. It was not, in fact, what the recordings lacked; it was what was *there*, surviving years of neglect—a kind of freshness of presence, enabling the listener to imagine not only the singers but the setting, almost evoking the clarity of light and the quality of the air. I had seen an old photograph of a grove of oak trees on the Omaha reservation in Macy, Nebraska, where gatherings were held But the demands of preservation work do not



Omaha drummers at the 1922 pow-wow in Macy, Nebraska. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society - I394-171)

allow time for fanciful daydreams, so I dutifully sent the voices in the wax to their places on tape, interspersed with my own identifying announcements and technical remarks, and went on to the next batch of cylinders.

Several years later, in the spring of 1983, Dennis Hastings, the Omaha tribal archivist, visited the Cylinder Project team. Although I was no longer a full-time member of the project staff, I had returned to the Folklife Center under contract to do further preservation work on the cylinder recordings. Dorothy Sara Lee brought Dennis around to the recording lab to show him the cylinders and play him some of the Omaha material. He listened with motionless intensity, his excitement clear. Folklife Center staff had already been thinking about producing an album of the Omaha material with accompanying

notes, but it was Dennis’s enthusiasm that sparked the project to life.

Dennis added new dimensions to the plans for the recording: that the Center propose a collaboration with the Omaha Tribal Council, and that the release of the album coincide with the annual pow-wow in Macy. It was for this event that Alan and I met in St. Louis on Labor Day weekend and flew on to Nebraska. We were not attending the pow-wow as mere observers (if there *is* such a thing outside the academic mind)—we would be participating in a shared celebration of the return of the recordings, a part of Omaha heritage that had been lost and now was being given a solemn but joyful welcome home by the Tribal Council, the newly revived Hethu’shka (Warrior) Society, and the Omaha people.

Continued on overleaf

OMAHA POW-WOW

Continued from previous page

Alan and I arrived in Macy about 7:30 p.m. Already in its second day, the pow-wow was in full swing. In the half-light behind the risers that defined the arena the immense, gaudy feathered headdresses and bustles worn by the fancy dancers glared as though they had an inner source of light. The bells attached to the leggings of the costumed men made a steadily pulsing, high-pitched, shivery noise like a field of crickets. It sounded to me disconcertingly like surface noise on a cylinder—somewhere at the back of my mind I kept identifying the sound's frequency, as though I could reach for a knob and edit it away. It took a while before I could not only accept it but enjoy it.

It was bewildering to walk at early evening through the very oak grove I had seen in the old photograph, and bewildering to hear the songs that I had heard before thinly rendered on wax and tape now shake the air and even make the ground beneath my feet throb. The overload of alterations and continuities was confounding. But food is a great convincer; after I had eaten several tacos served on fry bread and further fortified myself with a bowl of corn soup, I was ready to sort out and even welcome any further confusions of time, place, and identity the weekend might bring.

Dorothy and Alan, who had both been in Macy before, introduced me around and helped me find my feet. Dennis, a thoughtful head host, was always handy to guide us through the intricacies of protocol we faced. Unexpectedly, I found that my voice (on preservation tapes from the Cylinder Project already circulating in Macy) represented a point of recognition to those I met—just as my sole familiarity with them was through the voices of their grandparents on the cylinders, they knew me by voice through the announcements on the recordings. It was like a meeting of people who had only talked on the telephone: an odd blend of surprise and reassurance.

On Saturday the weather was hot enough that the recreational vehicle rented by the Folklife Center as a recording station and headquarters became a

kind of retreat for both our staff and pow-wow participants—a distraction patiently endured by sound engineer Mike Rivers. If my knowledge of the Omaha had heretofore been limited to what I could gather from books and recordings, his must now be firmly bounded by the aluminum frame of the vehicle's window through which he observed all the proceedings. Throughout Saturday we kept the boxes containing disc and cassette copies of *Omaha Indian Music* under wraps, saving them for the ceremonial presentation Dennis and pow-wow MC Clifford Wolf were planning for Sunday.

The dancing and singing was steady and compelling. Even when it was broken by the "specials," formal opportunities for honoring individuals and giving away goods, one could still feel the music in the same way that the feeling of being rocked by waves continues after leaving a boat. The specials and other breaks in the dancing were opportunities to listen appreciatively to the forceful skill with which the Omaha endow their speechmaking. There was no pretence of informality or casualness about it. It was clearly serious business to speak, and speak from the heart. We knew that we would be expected to speak ourselves on Sunday, and hoped that we would somehow measure up.

Dennis reminded us that we would be expected also to dance during our honoring song. There were half a dozen clowns, male and female, scattered among the dancers, whom Clifford Wolf referred to with glee as visitors from Washington, D.C. from the renowned BIA tribe. I prayed that we would acquit ourselves as dancers acceptably if not with honor, and that pow-wows to come would not include a comic contingent from the long lost AFC tribe. My observation of the movements of the women dancers took on a desperate intensity.

Perhaps for this reason, despite the more dramatic and flamboyant leaps and feints of the men dancers, it is the image of the women dancing that remains with me most clearly. Too firmly rhythmic to be a glide, and too smooth to be a pace, the step is different and personalized for each woman, and yet the overall effect as the women move around the arena is of harmonious and poised revolution. Several times in the course of the women's dances MC Clifford



Top right—Omaha women dancers at the 1922 pow-wow in Macy, Nebraska. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society - 1394-167). Top left—Tribal Chairman Wade Miller introducing the Folklife Center's delegation to officially present Omaha Indian Music to the Omaha Tribe. (Photo by John Carter - 233189-1/8) Bottom right—Omaha women dancers at the 1985 pow-wow in Macy. (Photo by Dorothy Sara Lee - 233189-3/15)



Wolfe called out ecstatically “How beautiful! How gracious! How delicious!” It was a curiously reverent and accurate review, and one which did much to help me, however briefly, “see with a native eye” (to use Barre Toelken’s useful phrase).

Sunday’s events began for us with a lunchtime feast given by Charlie Holt on behalf of the Hethu’shka Society and attended by members of the society and their families. We sat in a circle on a windy hillside by an abandoned Mormon church and ate our fill. Then, led by Hollis Stabler, one by one the men of the society stood and spoke to us of the meaning for them of the recordings that we had had a part in bringing back to Macy, and the meaning for them of the songs of the past in making one’s way now as an Omaha in white man’s society. I thought of many hours spent in a chilly back studio over the course of the last eight years, working on these and other old recordings, and gave a silent thanks for the chance to have shared in this process and, finally, this meeting on a windy Nebraska hillside.

Continued on overleaf

OMAHA POW-WOW

Continued from previous page

There is much more that could be said. I wish that I could list the many men and women whose generosity and hospitality made our visit so special. Perhaps it is right simply to express gratitude to all the Omaha people, past and present, who made the event possible. Sunday afternoon, during the formal presentation of the recording at the pow-wow, I found myself imagining the arena crowded not only with the participants of the day but with those who had consigned the songs to wax ninety years ago, perhaps hoping for just such a renaissance of appreciation. I thought, too, of Alice Fletcher. My studio at the Library in Washington was only a block from where the house once stood that she shared with her adopted son Francis La Flesche, and now I was in the grandstand of the arena in the grove of oak trees old already when she made her recordings. How ironic that of the many schemes by which she sought to benefit the Omaha people the only one bearing fruitful dividends today is her ethnographic fieldwork, a task she undertook in the urgent certainty that the tribe's days as a distinct cultural group were numbered. Thank God she was mistaken. And thank God her mistake resulted in a body of song now finding its way home to the repertory of a proud people, today very much alive.

—Erika Brady

* Previous newsletter articles on Omaha collector Francis La Flesche, the disc and cassette recording, and the annual Omaha tribal pow-wow appear in Volume IV, No. 1, January 1981; Volume VI, No. 2, April-June 1983 ("Director's Column"); and Volume VI, No. 4, October-December 1983.

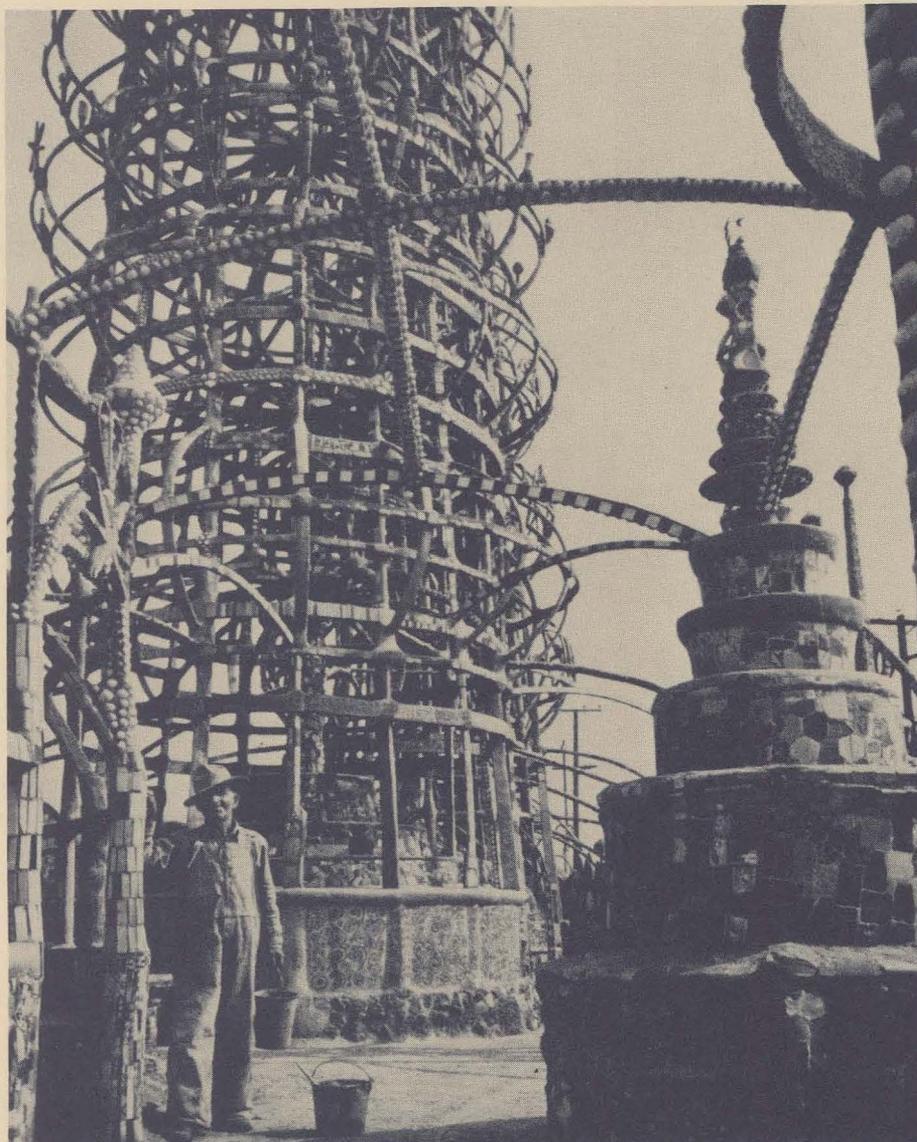


Omaha Indian Music: Historic Recordings from the Fletcher/La Flesche Collection (AFC L71), published under the auspices of the Elizabeth Hamer Kegan Fund with a generous grant from the L. J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, is available in disc and cassette for \$10.95 from Omaha Indian Music, Information Office, Box A, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Please add \$2 postage and handling. Also available at the sales counters in the Library's Jefferson and Madison buildings.

Top—Alan Jabbour (second from left) presenting a copy of the recording to singer Charlie Edwards of the Omaha Tribe. Joining him are Erika Brady (center), Dorothy Sara Lee (second from right), and archivist and tribal historian Dennis Hastings. (Photo by John Carter - 233189-1/27) Bottom—Mike Rivers recording the pow-wow. (Photo by Dorothy Sara Lee - 233189-4/32)

FOLKLIFE ANNUAL 1985

CONTENTS



Simon Rodia and his Watts Towers from Arts and Architecture Magazine, July 1951. (Photo by James Reed) Photos and excerpts on this and the following pages are from Folklife Annual 1985.

The American Folklife Center is pleased to announce the availability of *Folklife Annual 1985*, the first volume in a new series celebrating the traditional expressive life and culture of the United States. The essays in this 176-page, clothbound volume were selected and edited by Alan Jabbour, director of the American Folklife Center, and James Hardin, folklife publications editor for the Library's Publishing Office, and are intended for a wide audience. As

demonstrated by the table of contents and excerpts on these pages, they illuminate many aspects of American folk culture and its study—the performance and collection of folksongs, the relationship of inspiration and craftsmanship to folk art, continuous and changing features of traditional occupations, and the interdependencies of communities and their environment. The essays are beautifully illustrated with 136 photographs and drawings—36 in full

Culture and the Cultivation of Nature:

The Pinelands National Reserve
by Mary Hufford

The Origin of the Pineys: Local Historians and the Legend
by David Steven Cohen

The Archive's Shores
by Archie Green

"The Teamster in Jack MacDonald's Crew": A Song in Context and Its Singing
by Edward D. Ives

Range Culture and Society in the North American West
by John Bennett

Tom and I Were Cowboys
by John R. Erickson

"Born into the Stone": Carvers at the Washington Cathedral"
by Marjorie Hunt

Watts Towers and the *Giglio* Tradition
by I. Sheldon Posen and Daniel Franklin Ward

Howard Finster: Man of Visions
by John F. Turner and Judith Dunham

color—drawn from the collections of the Library of Congress and from many other sources.

Folklife Annual 1985 can be ordered for \$16 (postage included) from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. A check, charge card number, or account number must accompany the order. Please refer to stock number S/N030-000-00169-9.

Continued on overleaf

ANNUAL

Continued from previous page



Howard Finster preaching the word.

With as much determination as he preached to Baptist congregations in rural Alabama and Georgia for most of his life, Howard Finster began in 1971 to build and plant a garden in the two-acre yard behind his home in Summerville, Georgia. Like many of his ideas, this one came from a vision, wherein, he said, "it come to me to build a paradise and decorate it with the Bible." Over the past twenty years, Finster has filled his most celebrated creation not only with vegetation but also with hundreds of objects, concrete pathways embedded with broken glass, towers constructed from cast-offs, and other impressive and eccentric structures—interspersed with Bible verses handpainted on wooden signboards or spelled out in mosaic.

From "Howard Finster: Man of Visions"
by John F. Turner and
Judith Dunham



With an eye on the sculptor's plaster image behind him, Roger Morigi uses a pneumatic hammer to carve the image of the Good Shepherd for the Washington Cathedral. (Photo by Morton Broffman)



Wet harvesting with "walk-behind" machines at the Haines's bogs in Chatsworth, N.J. (Photo by Joseph Czarniecki - 216395-4/23)

Stone carvers view themselves as performers engaged in the skillful act of interpretation. "The sculptor is the composer," says Vincent Palumbo. "He creates whatever he has in his mind. And the carver is the performer. Our work is to transfer into stone what the sculptor creates in clay. But, nevertheless, on the carver goes much more responsibility, because the carver's doing the *finished* product." David Pye in his book *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* aptly describes craftsmanship as the "workmanship of risk." The carvers certainly attest to this: "The sculptor has the option with clay to put on and take off, but the carver's only got one chance and it's got to be the right one. If he takes off more than he's supposed to, he's ruined."

From "Born into the Stone":
Carvers at the Washington
Cathedral" by Marjorie Hunt

To know that an artifact is a folk artifact, one must know the processes that generated the artifact. A folk artifact is not merely an object created by one of the "folk," but a material product of the folk process, a physical manifestation of the interplay of tradition and innovation, an inherently pragmatic mixture of communally accepted convention and situationally demanded invention. Although Sam Rodia was thought to be something of a "crazy" by many viewers of his work, few would have argued that he was not also "folk" by any definition of the term. Calling the Watts Towers "folk" art, however, raised the problem of Rodia's marginal position in the community of Watts. There were no other Italians around. How could Rodia and his work operate within a tradition if he was alone in his world?

From "Watts Towers and the Giglio Tradition"
by I. Sheldon Posen and
Daniel Franklin Ward

Cranberry culture may not be a performing art, but it generates a lot of audience. Since the advent of wet-harvesting in the early 1960s, the harvest has provided a colorful spectacle of bobbing red berries herded toward a conveyor belt through water reflecting a deep blue sky, ringed with amber sand and bright evergreens. It attracts busloads of schoolchildren and a spate of reporters each fall.

Machines for wet-harvesting are essentially large horizontal egg-beaters that knock the berries off the submerged vines. There are two kinds of wet harvesters: "ride-ons" and "walk-behinds." The berries shoot to the surface, where they are shepherded ("hogged") over to the conveyor belt that raises them onto a truck. The hogging method was developed by Eduardo Torres, one of the farm hands at the Haines bogs in Hog Wallow.

From "Culture and the
Cultivation of Nature:
The Pinelands National
Reserve" by Mary Hufford

PUBLICATIONS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

Unless otherwise noted, available at no charge from the American Folklife Center.

American Folklife Center. A general brochure on the Center.

El Centro Americano de Tradición Popular. A Spanish translation of the Folklife Center's general brochure.

Archive of Folk Culture. A general brochure on the Archive.

An Inventory of the Bibliographies and Other Reference and Finding Aids Prepared by the Archive of Folk Culture. Information handout.

A Guide to the Collections of Recorded Folk Music and Folklore in the Library of Congress. Information handout.

Folklife Center News. A quarterly newsletter.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER:

No. 3—*Folklife and Fieldwork* by Peter Bartis. A 25-page introduction to fieldwork techniques.

No. 3A—*Tradición popular e investigación de campo.* A Spanish translation of *Folklife and Fieldwork.*

No. 6—*Buckaroos in Paradise: Cowboy Life in Northern Nevada* by Howard Wight Marshall and Richard E. Ahlborn (reprint), 120 pp.; \$15.95. A companion publication to the 1980 Smithsonian exhibit, including an essay on buckaroo life, a catalog of exhibit artifacts, and numerous photographs. Available from the University of Nebraska Press, Sales Department, 901 North 17th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588. Also available from the sales desks in the Library's Jefferson and Madison buildings.

No. 7—*Blue Ridge Harvest: A Region's Folklife in Photographs* by Lyntha Scott Eiler, Terry Eiler, and Carl Fleischhauer, 115 pp.; \$6. A close look at cultural landscapes, communities, religious expression, and life-style portraits of men and women from the area. Mail order with remittance, citing stock number, to: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office,

Washington, D.C. 20402; stock no. S/N030-000-00127-3. Also available from the sales desks in the Library's Jefferson and Madison buildings.

No. 9—*American Folk Architecture: A Selected Bibliography* by Howard Wight Marshall with assistance from Cheryl Gorn and Marsha Maguire, 79 pp. Articles and books on theory, antecedent references from the British Isles, and resources dealing with specific regions of the country.

No. 10—*Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States* by Ormond Loomis, 123 pp.; \$4.50. A report on means of preserving intangible features of the nation's cultural heritage, with an appendix that traces the history of relevant legislation and a bibliography. Mail order with remittance, citing stock number, to: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402; stock no. S/N030-000-00148-6.

No. 11—*Traditional Crafts and Craftsmanship in America: A Selected Bibliography* by Susan Sink, 84 pp. An indexed bibliography, citing Library of Congress call numbers. Produced in cooperation with the National Council for the Traditional Arts.

STUDIES IN AMERICAN FOLKLIFE:

No. 1—*Ethnic Recordings in America: A Neglected Heritage*, edited by Judith McCulloh, hardbound, 269 pp.; \$13. A collection of essays on the history and current status of the ethnic recording industry, with numerous illustrations and a complete index. Mail order with remittance, citing stock number, to: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402; stock no S/N030-001-00098-2.

No. 3—*The Federal Cylinder Project: A Guide to Field Cylinder Recordings in Federal Agencies.* Volume 1—*Introduction and Inventory* by Erika Brady, Maria La Vigna, Dorothy Sara Lee, and Thomas Venum, Jr., 110 pp.; \$8.50 (Stock no. S/N030-000-00153-2). An indexed listing by collection of more than 10,000 field-recorded wax cylinders for which preservation-tape copies exist at the Library of Congress. Volume 8—*Early Anthologies*, edited by Dorothy Sara Lee with a foreword by Sue Carole De Vale,

96 pp.; \$8 (Stock no. S/N030-000-154-1). Describes Benjamin Ives Gilman's cylinder recordings from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and the "Demonstration Collection" edited by Erich Moritz von Hornbostel and issued by the Berlin Phonogramm Archiv shortly after World War I. Mail order with remittance, citing stock number, to: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

FOLKLIFE ANNUAL

Folklife Annual 1985, edited by Alan Jabbour and Jim Hardin, clothbound, 176 pp.; \$16. A collection of essays on folk artist Howard Finster, the stonecarvers at the Washington Cathedral, Sam Rodia's Watts Towers, cowboys, the Archive of Folk Culture, folk songs and folk singers, and residents of New Jersey's Pinelands National Reserve. With 136 illustrations, 36 in color. Mail order with remittance, citing stock number, to: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402; stock no. S/N030-000-00169-9.

RECORDINGS:

Children of the Heav'nly King: Religious Expression in the Central Blue Ridge (AFC L69/70), edited and annotated by Charles K. Wolfe, two discs and a 48-page illustrated booklet; \$14. Available from the Recording Laboratory, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Checks payable to the Library of Congress must accompany order.

Omaha Indian Music: Historic Recordings from the Fletcher/La Flesche Collection (AFC L71), edited by Dorothy Sara Lee and Maria La Vigna, disc or cassette and 20-page illustrated booklet; \$10.95. Available from Omaha Indian Music, Information Office, Box A, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Please include \$2 postage and handling.

American Folk Music and Folklore Recordings 1983: A Selected List. An annotated list of thirty-one 1983 recordings selected by a panel as outstanding examples of records containing "root" traditions.

American Folk Music and Folklore Recordings 1984: A Selected List. An annotated list of thirty 1984 recordings

Folklife

ANNUAL 1985



selected by a panel as outstanding examples of records containing "root" traditions.

Folk Recordings: Selected from the Archive of Folk Culture. Brochure and order form.

RECIPE BOOKS, BROCHURES, AND GREETING CARDS

All items for which a price is indicated are available at the sales counters in the Jefferson and Madison buildings of the Library of Congress and by mail order from the Library of Congress, Information Office, Box A, Washington, D.C. 20540. Please include \$1 postage and handling for single orders and \$2 postage and handling for multiple orders. Those for which no price is given are available free of charge from the Folklife Center.

Recipe books—*Cranberries*, 132 pp.; \$5. Combines color cover and illustrations with traditional recipes to provide

a glimpse of cranberry cultivation and use in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey. The book grew out of the Pinelands Folklife Project, and the recipes were collected from residents of the region. *Watermelon* by Ellen Ficklen, 64 pp.; \$10. For watermelon lovers everywhere, includes historical and dietary facts, humorous observations, poetry, and a touch of serendipity to capture something of the good-times feeling that watermelons seem to produce. Amply illustrated in color and duotone. Contains "tried-and-true" recipes and newer thoughts on the subject of watermelon consumption.

Greeting card/brochures—*Egg Art*. Color cover; ten pages of text and illustration on the traditions associated with eggs and egg-decorating techniques. *Papercutting*. Color covers—Polish *wycinanki* by Magdalena Gilinsky

of blue reindeer and fir tree on a red background, and papercut by Claudia Hopf of a black tree, leopards, and fowls on white background in the German *scherenschnitte* style; ten pages of text and illustrations on the origins of papercutting and techniques used; blank centerfold for greeting with patterns for cutouts on reverse side. Card with envelope, \$2.

Brochures—*The Art of Basketmaking* by Rosemary Joyce; *Halloween: The Folklore and Fantasy of All Hallows* by Jack Santino; *Rag Rugs* by Geraldine Johnson; and *Weaving Harvest Grains* by Caroline Schultz.

Greeting cards—Blueberries on a bush taken during the 1983 Pinelands Folklife Project; and Watermelons, both red and yellow, photographed during the 1977 South-Central Georgia Folklife Project. Package of six blank cards with envelopes, \$3.50.

Recipe greeting cards—Canning Jars in the home of Mae Willey from Baywood, Virginia with Ruth Newman's recipe for uncooked relish on the back; Tomato Meringue Pie card with Ruth Newman's pie recipe on the back; Cranberries with a Pinelands recipe for cranberry pie; and Apple-Black Walnut Cake photograph with cake recipe on back. Package of six blank cards with envelopes, \$4.25.

Postcards—a selection of postcards reproducing quilt photographs from the 1978 Blue Ridge Parkway Folklife Project. Package of eight postcards, \$2.

POSTERS AND T-SHIRTS

Poster—"Washington Meeting on Folk Art," designed by John Crank of Staples & Charles Ltd. Black tree with blue, orange, yellow, and black birds, and orange lettering at base; twenty by twenty-six inches. Signed, hand printed and colored, limited edition (100), \$50; printed edition, \$10.

T-Shirt with a green tree-of-life emblem and red lettering "American Folklife Center, Library of Congress" on the front; heavy 100% tan cotton in men's sizes small, medium, large, and extra large, \$6.95.

Books, recordings, posters, greeting cards, and other items sold by the Folklife Center at the sales counters in the Jefferson and Madison buildings and by mail order are published under the auspices of the Elizabeth Hamer Kegan Fund. Contributions to the fund, which assists the Center's publications efforts, are tax exempt.

STAFF CHANGES

The Folklife Center is pleased to announce several recent staff changes. Dorothy Sara Lee has joined the staff as folklife specialist, filling the position vacated by Elena Bradunas. Marsha Maguire is now archivist for the Archive of Folk Culture, a newly created position, and Aldona Kamantauskas has received a two-year appointment to the Archive's staff to undertake various administrative and reference-related activities.

Dorothy Sara Lee from New York City has worked on the Center's Federal Cylinder Project since 1981, becoming its director in 1982. She received her doctorate in folklore and ethnomusicology from Indiana University. Her dissertation analyzes music performance and identity in Fiji. She is editor of the Center's catalog series *The Federal Cylinder Project: A Guide to Field Cylinder Recordings in Federal Agencies*, two of which have appeared—*Introduction and Inventory* (Volume 1) and *Early Anthologies*

(Volume 8). She also joined Maria La Vigna in editing the Center's recently released documentary record *Omaha Indian Music*, an LP disc of historic wax-cylinder recordings made between 1895 and 1910 by Alice Cunningham Fletcher and Francis La Flesche. Her other publications include *Franklin County Folklore*, *Native North American Music and Oral Data*, and "Toward an Understand-



ing of Music and Identity in the Social World" in *Discourse in Ethnomusicology: A Tribute to Alan P. Merriam*.

Marsha Maguire comes to the Center from the American Film Institute in Los Angeles, where she was working on *The American Film Institute Catalog of Feature Films, 1911-1920*. A native of San Diego, California, she holds a master's degree in folklore from George Washington University and a master's

in library science from the University of California at Berkeley. Prior to her tenure at the American Film Institute, Maguire held a position with the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division. She has also worked as an intern and later as a contract consultant for the Archive of Folk Culture, during which she assisted in the completion of a number of bibliographies and finding aids, including *American Folk Architecture* and *American Indian and Eskimo Music*. Her article "Confirming the Word," which discusses the Eleanor Dickinson collection in the Archive, appeared in the Library's *Quarterly Journal* (Summer 1981).

Aldona Kamantauskas from Columbia, Maryland is a graduate of Kenyon College, where she majored in drama and theater arts. She was previously an intern in the Archive of Folk Culture. She has also worked under contract on occasion to process donated and loaned collections of unpublished recordings into the Archive's holdings.

The Center is happy to welcome all three to its staff.

Cover illustration for the Center's LP disc and cassette recording *Omaha Indian Music: Historic Recordings from the Fletcher/La Flesche Collection*.

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, D.C.
PERMIT No. G-103