Volume 32
Nos. 1-2

Folklife Center News

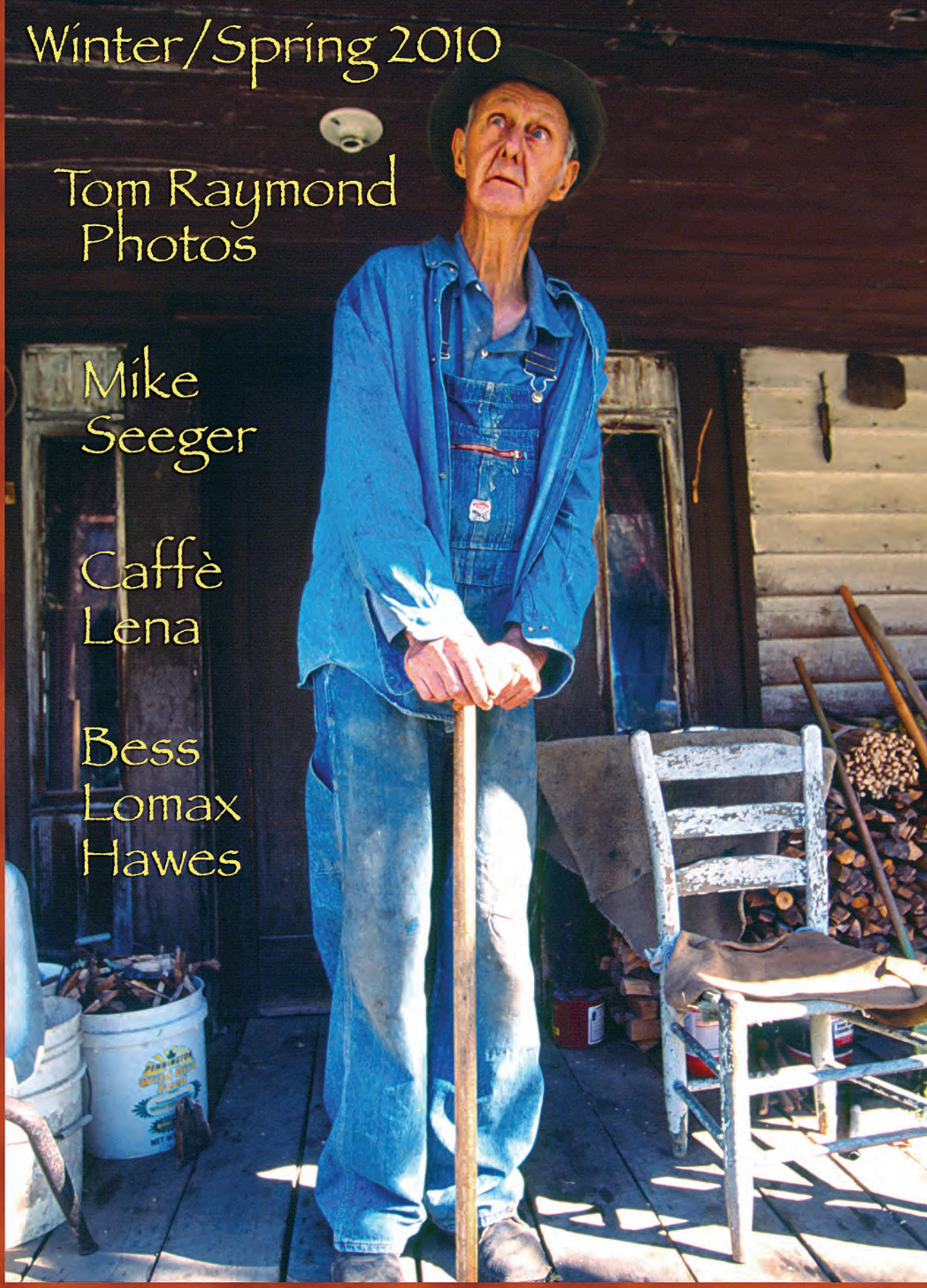
Winter/Spring 2010

Tom Raymond Photos

Mike Seeger

Caffè Lena

Bess Lomax Hawes



American Folklife Center
The Library of Congress

Folklife Center News

AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

CAFFÈ LENA COLLECTION

3 Caffè Lena is the oldest continuously operating coffeehouse folk venue in the United States. Read about their history and their collection, which has come to AFC

MIKE SEEGER 1933–2009

7 Mike Seeger was a pioneering musician and collector of old-time music who donated many important collections to AFC. Read FCN's appreciation of his life and work.

TOM RAYMOND COLLECTION

11 AFC's new Tom Raymond Collection is one of the foremost collections in the world containing photographic documentation of storytellers.

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The American Folklife Center was created in 1976 by the U.S. Congress to "preserve and present American folklife" through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, publication, and training. The Center incorporates an archive, which was established in the Music Division of the Library of Congress in 1928 and is now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world.

Folklife Center News publishes articles on the programs and activities of the American Folklife Center, as well as other articles on traditional expressive culture. It is available free of charge from the Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540–4610.

Folklife Center News does not publish announcements from other institutions or reviews of books from publishers other than the Library of Congress . Readers who would like to comment on Center activities or newsletter articles may address their remarks to the editor.

ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES: The American Folklife Center's Website provides full texts of many AFC publications, information about AFC projects, multimedia presentations of selected collections, links to Web resources on ethnography, and announcements of upcoming events. The address for the home page is **http://www.loc.gov/folklife/**. An index of the site's contents is available at http://www.loc.gov/folklife/az-index.html.

The Website for The Veterans History Project provides an overview of the project, an online "kit" for participants recording oral histories of veterans, and a brief presentation of some examples of video- and audio-recordings of veterans' stories. The address is http://www.loc.gov/vets.

Folklife Center News

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Cover: Storyteller Ray Hicks (1922-2003) at home in North Carolina in 2001. This photograph was taken by Tom Raymond, whose extensive collection of photographs of storytellers has been acquired by the AFC Archive. For more on this collection, see the story on page 11.

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Celebrating 50 Years of American Folk Music History:

The Caffè Lena Collection Arrives at the Library of Congress

By Jocelyn Arem

In August 2009, just in time for the 50th Anniversary celebration of Caffè Lena in Saratoga Springs, NY, the complete Caffè Lena collection arrived at the American Folklife Center. Caffè Lena is America's longest continuously running folk coffeehouse venue, and the Center's acquisition of its crucial collection was a collaborative effort of the Center, the Caffè Lena History Project, and the Saratoga Springs History Museum. Coffeehouses are once again a focal point of community life across the land, and Caffè Lena is considered the "grandmother" of them all.

Since the 1960s, intimate listening rooms like Caffè Lena have played a central role in the politics and music of the American folk revival. Caffè Lena's story begins with its embodiment of the 1960s countercultural coffeehouse scene. The Caffè has hosted a panorama of famous artists including Bob Dylan, Don McLean, Arlo Guthrie, Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagan, and (more recently) Ani DiFranco, playing some of their first concerts, as well as legendary Delta bluesmen Skip James and Mississippi John Hurt, playing some of their last.

Founded by Lena and Bill Spencer in 1960, the Caffè has provided a formative venue for influential artists, but there is much more to Caffè Lena's legacy than a laundry list of the stars of the folk revival who have passed through its doors. These musicians owe much to the Caffè's longstanding tradition of showcasing a diverse array of up-and-coming but as-yet-unknown artists, and providing a supportive setting where artists could hone their talents.

The child of Italian immigrants, Lena Spencer was born Pasqualina Rosa Nargi on January 4, 1923, in Milford, Massachusetts. In her youth, she spent weekends in New York City, where she was introduced to jazz music and theater. She performed with an amateur theater group in Boston, worked in a rubber factory during World War II, and later served as a waitress in her father's Italian restaurant. In her mid-twenties she held a position at a radio station, where she met future President John F. Kennedy on his campaign tour of Massachusetts. In 1958, Lena married Bill Spencer, a student and part-time instructor at the Boston Museum School of Fine Arts. Watching the folk revival boom around them in 1959, Bill Spencer had the idea of opening a folk coffeehouse as a moneymaking venture.

Caffè Lena poster for Hedy West, 1966.

Lena Spencer making espresso at the Caffè in the 1960s. Joe Alper, used by permission.

According to Lena's unfinished autobiography, the couple's goal was to make enough money to retire in Europe. On May 20, 1960, Caffè Lena was born, with the Italian spelling of "café" to honor Lena's Italian heritage.

Bob Dylan, Suze Rotolo, and Lena Spencer at Caffè Lena in 1961. Joe Alper, used by permission.

Although they were living in Boston, Lena and Bill Spencer chose Saratoga Springs as the site for their new coffeehouse after Bill visited the town with one of his art students during Skidmore College's family weekend. During the first two years of Caffè Lena's existence, the Spencers took weekly trips to Boston and New York to scout out the latest folk talent for their new venue. Mississippi John Hurt, Jackie Washington, and Hedy West were just a few artists imported by the Spencers for their new "bohemian" coffeehouse in Saratoga. A close connection with Dave Van Ronk—one of Lena's favorite musicians—led to the booking of a then-unknown Bob Dylan in 1961. To Lena and Bill, Dylan was nothing more than a young singer with a penchant for Woody Guthrie songs and a harmonica tucked into his back pocket, who needed a place to play and hone his craft.

In 1962, Lena began to run the Caffè without her husband, but with the help of an extended family of volunteers. For over four decades, Caffè Lena has joined other legendary folk venues like Club Passim (formerly Club 47) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Freight and Salvage in Berkeley, and the Bluebird in Nashville in providing a place where new and established musical performers are showcased. Together, these clubs have nurtured generations of performers, festival organizers, and managers. All of these venues were influential during the 1960s folk boom, but among them only Caffè Lena has never changed its name or location. The Caffè is also unique in that it has its own black box theater, a separate room adjacent to the Caffè's folk music performance space, where plays are staged.

The history of Caffè Lena provides valuable perspective on the community-oriented folk revival movement that began in the late 1950s and continues to the present day. An important folklorist and musician, George Ward, has dedicated a good part of his life to preserving the Caffè and the music it celebrates. In an August, 2007 phone interview, Ward described the importance of Caffè Lena as a location that helped to develop the skills of many folklorists, and also facilitated the exchange of critical folk texts. "It was because of Lena's that the world discovered Sara Cleveland, the great ballad singer," he remembered. "Sara's son Jim loved the old songs that his mother sang; they were really part of his world. Jim would come to Lena's particularly to hear people like Jean Redpath—people who sounded like traditional singers to him. At some point he brought one of Sara's notebooks to show Lena, and Lena, who was busy, put them aside. Sandy Paton found them when [he and his wife

Arlo Guthrie (c.), with Rick Lewis (l.) and Horald Griffiths, in Saratoga for a gig at Caffè Lena in 1973. Joe Deuel, used by permission.

Reverend Gary Davis (top) and Bernice Johnson Reagon both appeared at Caffè Lena throughout the 1960s. Joe Alper, used by permission.

Caroline] were performing at the Caffè, looked at them, and realized that Sara had some ballad texts that he had never seen before. So, he essentially said, 'Lena, what in the world is this?' Lena said, 'That's something Jimmy Cleveland brought by.' The rest, as they say, is history!" History was certainly made; Sara Cleveland recorded two LPs, one for Paton's Folk-Legacy label and the other for Philo Records. Her songs are now commonly sung by folk singers, who continue to perform her material at the Caffè today. In addition, over fourteen hours of Cleveland's songs and approximately two hours of her stories were later collected by folklorist Kenneth S. Goldstein, and preservation copies of those tapes are maintained in the AFC archive.

Caffè Lena has a remarkably well-documented history. A wealth of period photos taken at the venue and just recently discovered through the efforts of the Caffè Lena history project include unpublished, never-before-seen 1960s images by the late photographer Joseph Alper of Bob Dylan, Bernice Johnson Reagon, and Mississippi John Hurt, as well as images by current Caffé photographer Joseph Deuel of Rosalie Sorrels, Don McLean, Arlo Guthrie, and others. There are also interviews with some of folk music's leading figures, including the late Jackie Alper and Bruce "Utah" Phillips, who were both singers and activists.

The complete Caffè Lena collection is composed of three major components: the Lena Spencer Papers held by the Saratoga Springs History Museum (which include photographs, articles, and letters from the Kennedy Center and *Time* Magazine); archival materials held by Caffè Lena (which include rare reel-to-reel recordings of performances); and oral history recordings with musicians, patrons, staff and volunteers, which I have collected over the past seven years.

After Lena's death, the Lena Spencer Papers were donated to the Saratoga Springs History Museum by her niece, Jan Nargi, through the encouragement of former Caffè board member Field Horne. Doris Armstrong then organized the materials for the museum. In 2002, I founded the Caffè Lena History Project, and began collecting oral history interviews, in order to document the Caffè's history in depth.

In 2005, I was awarded a President's Discretionary Grant from Skidmore College to create a descriptive index and finding aid for the Lena Spencer Papers. This index soon revealed the importance of the collection I'd come to know well over the course of my oral history research. With support from regional archivist Susan D'Entremont and Saratoga Springs city historian Mary Ann Fitzgerald, the Caffè Lena History Project initiated collaboration between the Caffè Lena Board of Directors and the Saratoga History Museum, with the goal of arranging a transfer of all the Caffè Lena materials to the American Folklife Center. This transfer allowed the various parts of the collection to finally be brought together and preserved, creating a complete collection for researchers. The plan is to digitize a selection of these historic and irreplaceable archives, preserve the digital files, and then return the original materials to the Saratoga History Museum. AFC will retain all the research material that I amassed, making Caffè Lena's history permanently accessible to a national audience.

Michael Taft, head of the American Folklife Center Archive, explained the collection's relevance to AFC: "The Center has long been interested in the history and development of the American folk song revival movement. The Caffè Lena Collection fills in one of the missing pieces in this history—the role of coffeehouses and clubs in the folk song revival. For this reason it holds special interest for us." In addition to its historical importance to American folklife, the Caffè also has a personal connection with AFC. AFC's current director, Peggy Bulger, comes

from upstate New York, and performed at Caffè Lena during her teenage years. In addition, well before his tenure at the Library of Congress, the late Gerry Parsons, the Center's longtime reference librarian, was a member of "Daniel and the Deacon," one of the groups that performed at the Caffè during its earliest days. For all these reasons, the American Folklife Center is a natural home for this rare and extraordinary collection.

Folklorist and cultural historian Jocelyn Arem initiated the Caffè Lena History Project in 2002 to expand public awareness of Caffè Lena's history and cultural significance. Arem received a 2008 Gerald E. and Corinne L. Parsons Fund for Ethnography award from the American Folklife Center, to research materials relating to Caffè Lena in Library of Congress collections. She is currently writing a book on the history of Caffè Lena and its impact on America's musical heritage. To offer support for this publication and/or to donate archival materials to the Caffè Lena collection please contact jocelyn@caffelenahistory.org.

The Caffè Lena Board of Directors is now actively fundraising to finance the production of a coffee-table book that will highlight the Caffè Lena collection's stories and photographs. The book will augment Caffè Lena's 50th Anniversary celebration in 2010, which will include a concert series, and support the Caffè's efforts to renovate its building and make it handicapped-accessible.

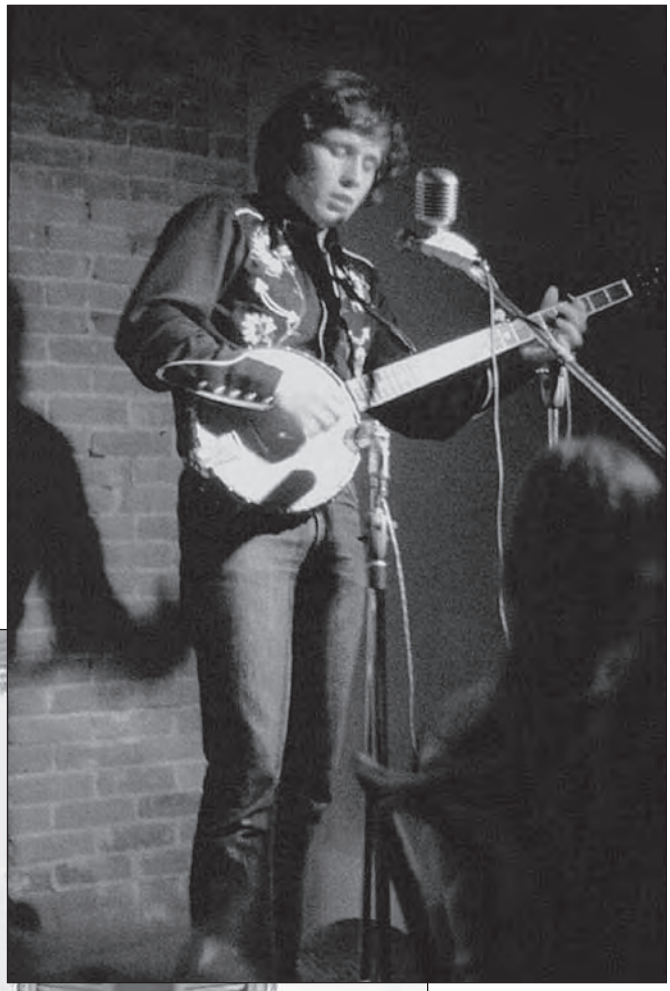
Sections of this article appeared in Arem's article "Forty-Seven Years at 47 Phila Street" in the Spring/Summer 2008 issue of Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore. ❍

References

To learn more about the Caffè Lena History Project and to support the archival effort to save Lena's story please visit: www.caffelenahistory.org. To learn more about Caffè Lena's current programming please visit: www.caffelena.org

Taft, Michael. January 13, 2006. Unpublished letter to Jocelyn Arem c/o Caffè Lena.

Ward, George. August 9, 2007. Telephone interview by Jocelyn Arem. Tape recording. lead page 2 col text



Top: Don McLean performing at the Caffè in the early 1970s. Joe Deuel, used by permission.

Left: Lena Spencer at the Caffè in 1989. Joe Deuel, used by permission.

Mike Seeger
August 15, 1933 – August 7, 2009:
"So Many Sounds"

By Stephanie Hall

With great sadness, the American Folklife Center notes the death of Mike Seeger, a folk musician and collector who contributed a great deal to AFC's collections and public programming during a long and fruitful relationship with the Center. Seeger's sixty-year career included work as a singer, multi-instrumentalist, folklore collector, scholar, presenter, and festival organizer.

Throughout his life, Seeger's passion was the music that has come to be known as "old-time music," that is, the traditional Anglo-American folk music of the southeastern United States. In an interview published in the *Banjo Newsletter* in 2000, Murphy Henry asked why Seeger didn't focus his career on bluegrass. Mike's reply was:

"There are so many sounds in old-time music that I can be real satisfied if I know enough of them to take care of almost any song. But that's not true of bluegrass. Bluegrass is one sound, where I consider there to be ten or fifteen sounds in banjo music. And I like to have them all, to try to choose which one I like the best for a given song or which I think is appropriate. Old-time music, to me, has so much variety in it—that's part of the reason that I've stayed with old-time rather than gone to bluegrass." [1]

Seeger's comments on banjo playing could be extended to his life-long fascination with traditional music, to the many instruments he played, to the many traditional musicians he documented, and to the recordings that he produced.

Mike Seeger publicity photo from the 1990s.

The Seeger Family, 1940. L-r: Charles, Peggy, Ruth Crawford, Barbara, and Mike.

Mike Seeger was born in New York, and grew up in Chevy Chase, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D.C. He was the son of ethnomusicologist and folk music collector Charles Seeger and composer Ruth Crawford Seeger. Mike's siblings were also musical; Penny, Barbara, and Peggy Seeger all recorded music, and Peggy's long career as a performer and songwriter continues to this day. Mike's older half-brother, the iconic folksinger Pete Seeger, was already a well-known performing musician when Mike was growing up. Another older half-brother, John Seeger, taught at the Dalton Music School in Manhattan.

While Seeger was growing up, the family hosted many musical guests who further piqued his interest in music. Peggy Seeger recalled, "exciting people were always dropping in. Lead Belly, Woody Guthrie, John Jacob Niles, Bess Hawes, Henry and Sidney Cowell, John and Alan Lomax, Lee Hays, composers and writers." [2] Thus surrounded by music, Mike began playing musical instruments as a teenager. His mother wanted

Left: Mike and Peggy Seeger in the 1940s.

Below: Mike and Peggy Seeger at Swarthmore College in 1955.

him to learn the piano, but Mike said he preferred to learn guitar, so classical guitarist Charlie Byrd was employed to tutor him.

If his mother hoped to turn her talented son's interests towards classical music, though, that issue was already decided. Mike had developed a passion for the traditional music of the southeast, which had also captured the interest of his parents. When he was nineteen, he picked up the banjo. His elder brother Pete gave him occasional lessons, but, otherwise, he taught himself by listening to the family's collection of traditional music recordings, which included both commercial 78s and his father's field recordings. In addition to the many sounds of the banjo, Mike eventually studied and mastered the fiddle, bass, cello, mandolin, harmonica, dulcimer, autoharp, guitar, jew's harp, and quills (pan pipes). Mike later claimed that, as a teenager, he only stopped playing music briefly, in order to learn to ride a bicycle.

As Mike's understanding of traditional music grew, he expanded his horizons. Copying the sounds from records was not enough; he needed to see instruments being played in order to learn fingering styles and other techniques. Soon, he was seeking out traditional musicians and learning from them. It was only a small step from observation to collecting folk music himself.

Mike often told a story about practicing his guitar in the kitchen when he was a teenager, while his family's housekeeper was working at the stove. He was trying the same tune over and over. The housekeeper asked if she could show him a similar tune. When he gave her the guitar, she turned it upside-down to play it left-handed, and taught him a traditional tune. The housekeeper was Elizabeth "Libba" Cotten, whom Mike was later to record and present on stage. Mike and his sister Peggy recalled doing Elizabeth Cotten's chores so they could listen to her play and sing.

In 1952, Mike Seeger made his first folk music recording of Libba Cotten at his home. Emboldened by the experience of finding traditional music under his nose, Mike began exploring the Washington suburbs for other traditional musicians. He broadened his own talents, too, when he found a broken, discarded violin, mended it, and began to teach himself to play the fiddle. At about nineteen, he took this instrument with him to the black neighborhood of Ken-Gar, Maryland, along with recording equipment borrowed from his father. There, he recorded the African-American fiddler William Adams, who could play the violin, but could not afford to own one. Providing instruments to people who didn't own them became part of Mike's interview process.

Mike Seeger's early passion for old-time music lasted a lifetime. He documented folk music all over the southeast, and conducted recorded interviews with many artists. He was particularly interested in older musicians, singers, and clog-dancers who remembered the styles of music played early in the twentieth century. He kept careful notes about performers and situations in which he collected. He donated most of his collected materials to the American Folklife Center's archive. As technology

Photo by Robert Frank.

The New Lost City Ramblers in 1960 (l-r): Mike Seeger, John Cohen, Tom Paley.

developed, Mike made use of new equipment, both for recording the music and for keeping fieldnotes; his were among the first computer-generated fieldnotes donated to AFC's archive by a collector.

Mike Seeger's collections in the AFC archive span the four decades between 1969 and 2008, and include recordings of The Bluegrass Alliance, Scott Boatright, Luther Bryant, Vassar Clements, Elizabeth Cotten, The Country Gentlemen, Veronica Stoneman Cox, Lester Flatt, Bill Monroe, Charlie Monroe, Birch Monroe, James Monroe, The Ozark Mountain Boys, Don Reno, Lesley Riddle, Earl Scruggs, The Stanley Brothers, Kate Sturgill, The Sullivan Family, Ricky Skaggs, Doc Watson, and Merle Watson, among many others. The American Folklife Center's collections also include recordings of interviews with Mike Seeger and recordings of his performances, both solo and with others, including the New Lost City Ramblers. Another large collection of Mike Seeger's recordings of other artists, and his performances with the New Lost City Ramblers, is held at the Southern Folklife Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Photo: by Robert Corwin.

Mike Seeger plays "quills" (panpipes) and rattle in the Library's Coolidge Auditorium in 2007.

By 1958, Seeger was proficient on guitar, banjo, and fiddle. Along with several friends, he had learned to emulate traditional old-time musicians. This activity developed into a performing group called the New Lost City Ramblers. The founding members were Mike Seeger, John Cohen, and Tom Paley. In 1962, Paley left the group and was replaced by Tracy Schwarz. The goal of the group was to present old-time country music to urban audiences. The Ramblers were concerned that radio programs and movies had changed the sound of the music, and sought to study and revive its original sound. The folk revival included musicians who played music in their own style, interpreting the music differently than those who had originally performed it, often "cleaning up" the sounds that were foreign to urban audiences. The New Lost City Ramblers, by contrast, tried to present the music as it was performed in the rural southeast, duplicating, as best they could, those old-time music sounds. Although their presentation of what was then called "hillbilly" music was not initially received well, the group members persisted in their effort to educate audiences. They eventually recorded twenty-five albums, performed all over the U.S., and received two Grammy nominations. They became a revival within a revival. Mike took this further still, with several solo albums, and solo performances in many countries around the world. On one album, *Southern Banjo Sounds* (2000), he showed just how many sounds the banjo could make, recording 26 cuts with 25 different types of banjos.

Photo by Paul Feinberg.

Mike Seeger and Elizabeth Cotton in 1971.

The Ramblers and Mike Seeger often included senior old-time musicians in collaborations on the stage. Mike also presented old-time artists on stage, often sparking second careers for them. In addition to promoting them through live performances, Mike produced and edited recordings of old-time artists, ultimately releasing albums from his field recordings. He worked with Folkways, Smithsonian Folkways, Arhoolie, Vanguard, County, and Rounder Records to bring genuine old-time music played by such artists as Elizabeth Cotton, Wade Ward, Lesley Riddle, Dock Boggs, and The Lilly Brothers and Don Stover into the living rooms of Americans who otherwise might not hear them.

In order to further his goal of promoting traditional folk musicians, Mike acted as a consultant for folk music festivals and organizations, sometimes serving on their advisory and oversight boards. He served on the board of the Newport Folk Festival from 1963 to 1967, that of the National Folk Festival from 1972 to 1978, and that of the Southern Folk Cultural Revival Project from 1973 to 1986. He was the director of the American Old Time Music Festival from 1975 to 1978, and of the Smithsonian American Folklife Company from 1968 to 1976. He was also a trustee of the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, a non-profit organization that promotes the study and dissemination of knowledge about pre-1950 American folk music, from its incorporation in 1962 until his death in 2009.

Mike made it clear that he was not only interested in preserving and making available the music itself; he also advocated a greater understanding of the music's context, its history, and the lives of the people who played it. To this end, he published articles and study guides about the music, taught classes and workshops, and continued to study it himself. He created a line of instructional recordings on the Homespun Tapes label for people who want to play old-time music, and his website provides a study guide for people interested in the history of southern Appalachian music. In 1976, he collaborated with John Cohen to write the *Old-Time String Band Song Book*. Similarly, in 1993, he teamed up with dancer Ruth Pershing to publish a video documentary,

Talking Feet, on various styles of clogging. He was a Smithsonian Institution Visiting Scholar in 1983, a Guggenheim Fellow in 1984, and Artist in Residence at the College of William and Mary in 2003.

In March 2007, the American Folklife Center sponsored a symposium, *"How Can I Keep from Singing?": A Seeger Family Tribute,* during which Mike Seeger discussed his career on a panel titled "Performing the Seegers." The events also featured a concert at the Library, during which he played solo, as a duo with his sister Peggy, and in a trio with Peggy and Pete. Because the Library's Coolidge Auditorium is an intimate venue, it could not accommodate all of the fans who wanted to see the concert. The Center thus partnered with the Folklore Society of Greater Washington to present the Seeger siblings in a larger venue, in Silver Spring, Maryland. AFC also partnered with XM Radio (now Sirius XM) to schedule an interview and performance with the Seegers in their *Artist Confidential* series, which allowed a nationwide audience to experience their artistry. This series of events marked the last time the three performing Seegers would appear together; Mike Seeger would pass away less than two years later.

Video recordings of AFC's symposium, and the concert in the Coolidge Auditorium, are available on the Library's website as streaming video webcasts. Through videos like these, recordings of his performances, and the recordings he made of many artists, Mike Seeger's talent, scholarship, passion and humor are available for his many fans today and for the future.

Mike Seeger is survived by his wife, Alexia, and by three sons from a previous marriage, Kim, Arley Christopher, and Jeremy.

Resources:

Streaming video webcasts, and other information regarding AFC's 2007 Seeger symposium and concert, including performances and interviews with Mike Seeger: http://www.loc.gov/folklife/Seegersymposium/

A list of Mike Seeger's collections in the AFC archive: http://www.loc.gov/folklife/Seegersymposium/seeger_AFC_collections.html#mike

Mike Seeger's website, including discography, biography, lesson plans, and other information: http://mikeseeger.info/html/

Mike Seeger's instructional tapes: http://www.homespuntapes.com/

A guide to Mike Seeger's collections at the University of North Carolina: http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/s/Seeger,Mike.html

Notes:

[1] Henry, Murphy. 2000. "The Insatiable Curiosity of Mike Seeger, Part 2." *Banjo Newsletter*, March 2000, p. 8.

[2] "Mike Seeger, American Folk Revivalist and Historian," Smithsonian Folkways Featured Artist article, by Jeff Place, 2009. http://www.folkways.si.edu/explore_folkways/mike_seeger.aspx ❍

Photo by Robert Corwin, AFC Robert Corwin Collection.

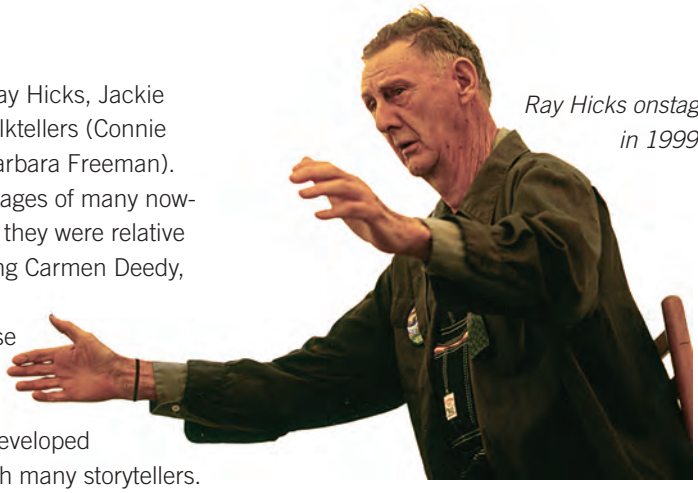
The Seegers onstage at the Library's Coolidge Auditorium, March 16, 2007 (l-r): Peggy, Mike, and Pete.

Every Picture Tells a Story: AFC Acquires the Tom Raymond Collection

By Valda Morris

On September 14, 2009, the American Folklife Center received one of the most significant collections ever assembled of photographic images related to storytelling and storytellers. The collection documents twenty years of the National Storytelling Festival, spanning the years 1984 to 2003. It comprises approximately fourteen linear feet of materials, principally 13,200 photographic images, in the form of black and white prints, color prints, negatives, and color slides. It is the work of one prolific photographer, Tom Raymond, who hails from Johnson City, Tennessee.

Until his retirement in 2009, Raymond was the official photographer for the National Storytelling Festival, which is held annually in Jonesborough, Tennessee. During the twenty years of festivals documented in this collection, Raymond photographed a wealth of professional and amateur storytellers, including such familiar names as Ray Hicks, Jackie Torrence and the Folktellers (Connie Regan-Blake and Barbara Freeman). He also captured images of many now-famous tellers when they were relative newcomers, including Carmen Deedy, Jon Spelman and Linda Fang. Because Raymond photographed the festival for thirty years, he developed excellent rapport with many storytellers. As a result, the tellers were comfortable in his presence, and each image, whether taken on stage or in a less formal venue, captures the personality of the storyteller. Moreover, since Raymond photographed many of the tellers over and over again down the years, researchers can observe and interpret changes in the appearance and performance styles of the festival's many return performers.



Ray Hicks onstage in 1999..

All photos by Tom Raymond.

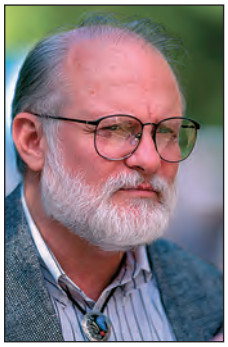
Jackie Torrance onstage in 1997.

Since its inception in 1973, the National Storytelling Festival has been held during the first full weekend in October in Jonesborough. A project of the International Storytelling Center, the Festival attracts over 10,000 audience members from across the country and around the world. The Festival's founder, Jimmy Neil Smith, spoke about Raymond's contributions: "Tom's talent and dedication to the International Storytelling Center for thirty years are exceptional and truly appreciated. His unmatched contributions have allowed us to capture the festival's rich tradition and history for future generations. For the first time since 1980, Tom will not be roaming the festival grounds with camera in hand. We will miss him tremendously."

Following his initial engagement at the International Storytelling Festival in 1980, Raymond said, "I quickly realized that my love of photographing people would be an excellent match for the Festival's need for quality imagery." Raymond was then hired to cover subsequent festivals, which led him to develop close personal ties with the staff, storytellers and audience members.

Connie Regan Blake onstage in 2002.

Raymond grew especially close to Ray Hicks, a renowned Appalachian teller. Hicks is a member of an extended family of storytellers whose tales have been extensively documented for generations, including by the AFC Archive. In describing the personal relationship he shared with Hicks, Raymond said, "Growing up, I often heard the phrase 'salt of the earth.' When I met Ray Hicks, I understood what that meant." In 2000, Tom Raymond traveled to North Carolina, to photograph Ray Hicks and his family in their hometown of Beech Mountain, the highest-altitude town east of the



Left: Jimmy Neil Smith, founder and president of the International Storytelling Center (ISC) and its National Storytelling Festival, in 1995. Right: Connie Regan Blake onstage in 1999.

Rockies. This photographic documentation of daily life revealed a side of Hicks unseen by festival audiences: his roles as a devoted family man and a naturalist. Three years later, in 2003, Ray Hicks passed away, and Raymond was there to capture the funeral service. Within the collection, there are over 1600 prints, slides and negatives which document Ray's life, both onstage in Jonesborough, and at home in the North Carolina mountains.

Raymond began his career in photography while pursing an undergraduate degree at the University of Tennessee. He worked for The Daily Beacon, a student publication, and earned several awards for photojournalism. After college, he spent most of his time pursuing a career in academic medicine. Photography was only a hobby until 1987, when Raymond resigned from his tenured position as Associate Professor of Medicine in the Department of Internal Medicine at East Tennessee State University to start a new commercial venture in the field of photography, Fresh Air Photographics.

Now known as Fresh Air Photo, Raymond's business is a 6000-square-foot commercial photography and digital imaging studio, which provides original images for advertising agencies, design firms, Fortune 500 corporations and national magazines. Since the founding of the studio, Raymond's photos have appeared in *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *Business Week*, *Outdoor Life*, *Parade*, *Smithsonian* and *National Geographic*. He has also worked with four-time NASCAR Champion Jeff Gordon, whom he has photographed in an official capacity since Gordon's NASCAR debut. Raymond's prominence as a commercial photographer makes his gift of professional-quality photographs all the more significant and valuable for AFC.

Ray Hicks at home in North Carolina, 2000.

Tom Raymond's gift is a welcome addition to the American Folklife Center's already large and growing ethnographic storytelling and photographic collections. In 2001, the Center acquired the International Storytelling Collection, which is one of the largest collections housed in the AFC Archive. It includes audio recordings and photographic images of live performances by hundreds of storytellers, most of them at the National Storytelling Festival. Even before Raymond's donation, this collection included some of Raymond's work among its 2,430 photographic images. AFC also houses the administrative papers of the National Storytelling Center. "Tom Raymond's photographs are a significant supplement to these materials, helping to create a much more rounded impression of the International Storytelling Center and the National Storytelling Festival," said Michael Taft, head of the AFC Archive.

"The Tom Raymond Collection is also an important addition to the visual resources at the American Folklife Center," Taft continued. AFC is home to many important collections of photographs documenting vernacular creativity, including the Jean Ritchie and George Pickow collection, the Working in Paterson Folklife Project Collection, the Paradise Valley Folklife Project Collection, and several collections by Alan Lomax. Among other traditions, AFC photos depict award-winning quilts, musicians in many ethnic genres (including the folk revival), traditional dancers, religious rituals, regional and ceremonial costumes, occupational traditions, local foodways, and folk medicine. With the addition of the Raymond Collection, storytelling can be added to the list of arts extensively documented by photographs in the AFC Archive. "Because storytelling is a performance, it is illuminating to see, as well as hear, the storytellers, and Raymond's photographs allow researchers access to this dimension of the storytelling phenomenon," Taft said.

Researchers can access the Tom Raymond Collection in the Folklife Reading Room, in the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. ❍

Carmen Deedy onstage in 2000.

All photos by Tom Raymond.

Simply Speaking: a Wide-Ranging Collection of Dialect Recordings Goes Online

By John Barton and Margaret Kruesi

On September 10, 2009, the American Folklife Center released *American English Dialect Recordings: The Center for Applied Linguistics Collection*, a presentation in the Library's American Memory project. The collection can be found at http://memory.loc.gov/ammen/collections/linguistics/index.html

The Center for Applied Linguistics Collection (AFC 1986/022) contains 118 hours of audio recordings documenting North American English dialects. It comprises 405 individual recordings, each one ranging from only a few minutes up to about twenty-five minutes in length. Of these recordings, 350 are now available online. The recordings were made from 1941 to 1984, but predominantly between 1968 and 1982. They were assembled by The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), which drew from various archives and organizations, with holdings representing the work of about fifty linguists, dialectologists, and folklorists.

The materials were collected as part of a project undertaken by CAL from 1983 to 1986, under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The project, entitled "Survey and Collection of American English Dialect Recordings," was intended to compile a directory of recorded American speech samples, and ultimately to improve access to the recordings by gathering them in one archive that was accessible to researchers. There were two parts to the project. First, CAL surveyed collectors of speech-sample recordings, and crafted a report entitled *American English Dialect Recordings: A Guide to Collections*, which describes over two hundred collections housed at institutions around the United States. Then, they selected a representative sample of recordings from those two hundred collections, with the goals of "creating a centralized source of American dialect samples and [providing] for the preservation of this valuable resource that might otherwise be lost." CAL borrowed the collections and duplicated the samples they had identified as the most desirable and representative for research purposes. Before copying the recordings, they consulted engineers from AFC and from the Library of Congress's Motion Picture, Broadcast, and Recorded Sound Division, to ensure that their copies met the Library's standards for recorded sound collections. Finally, in May, 1986, they donated the duplicated samples to AFC, where they became The Center for Applied Linguistics Collection (AFC 1986/022).

President Franklin D. and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, 1940. L.C. P&P Divison, repro # LC-USZ62-111584

The items CAL selected for inclusion in this unique collection include language surveys, interviews, oral histories, conversations, readings of poems and stories, and excerpts from public speeches. The speakers represent forty-three states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and parts of Canada. The documentation covers social aspects of English-language usage in different regions of North America, and reveals distinctions in speech related to gender, race, social class, education, age, literacy, ethnic background, and occupational group (including the jargon, or specialized vocabulary, of various occupations).

New York Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia, 1937. L.C. P&P Divison, repro. # LC-DIG-hec-23631

In addition to providing a wide variety of material for the study of American speech, the recordings reflect the diverse experiences of people from many walks of life, and their opinions on a broad range of topics. Some of the voices will be quite familiar, such as those of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose famous address to Congress requesting a declaration of war on December 8, 1941, is included; and Eleanor Roosevelt, who is heard speaking to the American people on a radio broadcast during wartime. Other voices, despite the speakers' fame, are seldom heard, such as those of pioneering pilot Amelia Earhart, champion boxer Jack Dempsey, and New York City mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia. Most of the recordings, however, feature voices of people whose names are relatively unknown, but whose comments reflect the richness of the American experience. There are Gullah speakers from coastal South Carolina, cotton farmers from Mississippi, African American teenagers from Detroit, peach growers from western Colorado, Chesapeake Bay watermen, and many others. Their collective comments comprise a rich resource on many topics, such as storytelling and family history; descriptions of holiday

Jack Dempsey, Jersey City, NJ, 1921. L.C. P&P Divison, repro # LC-USZ62-88716

celebrations; traditional farming; schools and educational experiences; health care, including the use of traditional medicines; race relations; politics; and natural disasters, such as floods.

The collection includes the work of prominent researchers in sociolinguistics, including Roger W. Shuy, Walt Wolfram, Donna Christian, and Joseph S. Hall, among many others. Some researchers focused on African American Vernacular English, others on the speech of second-generation Puerto Rican teenagers in New York. Other interviews document the English speech of adults and children in Vietnamese-American communities in Virginia, and in American Indian communities in New Mexico, including Navajo, Tewa, Laguna, and Zuni people. The varieties of speech of the Appalachian region, across seven states, and the Ozark Mountain region, are also well represented. In addition, the collection includes personal narratives of immigrants and second-generation ethnic Americans, including people of Basque, Dutch, German, Finnish, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Pennsylvania Dutch, Polish, Puerto Rican, Russian, Scots, Scots-Irish, Serbian, Slovenian, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, and Welsh ancestry.

Since the 1960s, African American Vernacular English has been an important research focus within American linguistics. Because of this focus on African American language, linguists documented a wide range of voices and experiences of African Americans in rural and urban locations across the United States, and that richness is represented in this collection. African American interviewees include landowners, farmers, teachers, laborers, railroad workers, domestic workers, poets, and high school students. Some of the interviews in the collection, from both black and white speakers, capture discussions about race relations and racism in America during the 1970s and 1980s.

In addition to its broad representation of American ethnicities, the span of years of the memories captured on these recordings is impressive. A significant number of the people recorded were born before 1900. They include people who immigrated through Ellis Island, people who farmed or ranched in frontier areas on the Great Plains and in the Rocky Mountain States, people who attended rural one-room schools, people who hunted for subsistence and sport, people who lived through the Great Depression, and people who served in both World Wars. On the other hand, they also include children and teenagers of the 1970s and early 1980s, who describe their games, sports, interests, families, school life, and popular movies and television programs ranging from *Goldfinger* to *Gilligan's Island*.

Among the collections surveyed by the Center for Aplied Linguistics for this project were a number of oral history projects, and some of these include the work of folklorists, including William M. Clements of the Mid-South Center for Oral History at Arkansas State University. The oral history interviews recorded for this project include John Williams Clark, born around 1899, who was recorded selling furniture in Marked Tree, Arkansas, and talking about his personal experiences of the Great Depression. Clark lived through the Depression as a white sharecropper, and learned how to farm in Arkansas from African American farmers. They also include Sallie Tyler, born circa 1897, an African American sharecropper who describes her childhood in Mississippi, during which she picked cotton to help her mother support their family.

Collections that focus on occupational speech include one by Mary Ritchie Key of the Program in Linguistics, University of California at Irvine, who interviewed tobacco workers and farmers in an area that extended from Connecticut south to Georgia and west to Missouri. Key studied the occupational vocabulary of tobacco production, and captured the experiences of both white and black farmers in this labor-intensive industry. Other occupations that are documented include mining and logging, in Canada, Kentucky, Colorado, and other states.

Of the collection's 405 recordings, 350 are available on the web; of these, 148 have accompanying transcriptions. The remaining recordings could not be placed online due to copyright and other restrictions, but they still may be heard in the Folklife Reading Room at the Library of Congress. In addition to the recordings themselves, the online presentation includes both the complete report *American English Dialect Recordings: A Guide to Collections*, which describes the larger collections from which CAL selected excerpts, and the final report that CAL submitted to NEH, describing the goals and outcomes of the project as a whole. Happily, those goals, which were to preserve these unique endangered recordings for the future, and to make them accessible to the public, are fully realized through AFC's stewardship of the collection, including the new web presentation.

Researchers with an interest in this collection may wish to know that there are several related linguistic collections in the American Folklife Center Archive: the American Dialect Society Collection (AFC 1984/011), consisting of 1400 aluminum discs of English language dialects, recorded during the 1930s primarily in New England and eastern Canada; the William Van Riper Recordings for the *Linguistic Atlas of Oklahoma* (AFC 1984/004), recorded between 1959 and 1963; the Raven McDavid Regional Dialect Collection (AFC 1984/012), which includes interviews for the *Linguistic Atlas of North America*; and the Audrey R. Duckert Collection (AFC 2008/004), which includes research and documentation of New England dialects. In addition to these collections, whose focus was linguistic surveys and dictionary projects, numerous other AFC collections include thousands of hours of audio recordings of English language dialects from throughout the United States, presented through storytelling and conversation, making the AFC website and the Folklife Reading Room prime destinations for researchers, sociolinguists, actors, and media specialists to listen to and learn from these distinctive American voices. ❍

Totem Pole TV: AFC Acquires the Rik Palieri Songwriter's Notebook Collection.

By Jennifer Cutting

The American Folklife Center has recently acquired an extensive collection of videotapes and DVDs featuring some of the best-known names in folk music. Created by Rik Palieri for his Vermont Community Access television series *Songwriter's Notebook,* the programs contain interviews with many of the greatest living figures in the American folk tradition and the revival, including singer and banjo player Pete Seeger, blues guitarist Guy Davis, and singer-songwriter Tom Paxton. There are also interviews with renowned folk artists who have since passed away, including storyteller, singer, and activist Bruce "Utah" Phillips, Vermont folklorist and singer Margaret MacArthur, and Ozark balladeer Jimmy Driftwood. In addition to musicians, the *Songwriter's Notebook* documents instrument makers, raconteurs, and tradition bearers of all kinds with whom Palieri has shared the road and the stage.

Palieri's *Songwriters Notebook* materials strengthen the archive in areas for which it has relatively few materials: hobo culture and lore; contemporary singer-songwriters; independent folk record labels; makers of folk instruments such as guitars, mandolins, and Native American flutes; and folk music journalism. Palieri's collection even covers a few areas for which the Center previously had almost nothing, such as dogsledding traditions in Alaska, and the recent tradition of making and playing vegetable-based instruments, such as the "slide potato," a rim-blown slide whistle carved from a whole potato.

Bruce "Utah" Phillips (l.) with Rik Palieri, 2001.

More importantly, Palieri's collection complements some of the Center's existing collections. For example, Palieri's interview with Rita Carter, the granddaughter of A.P. Carter, complements at least five different collections already held by the Center; his interviews with Frances and Deborah Flanders, the sister-in-law and great-niece of pioneering New England folksong collector Helen Hartness Flanders, complement at least a dozen Flanders and Flanders-related collections in the Archive; and his extensive interviews with Bruce "Utah" Phillips, a labor activist as well as a singer-songwriter, will enhance the Center's labor folklore collections.

Palieri in the studio with Guy Davis, 2000. Courtesy of Thom Wolke & VCAM.

Palieri's collection also includes documentation of several people important to the history of the AFC itself. His interview with Alan Jabbour documents the excellent old-time fiddling of the former head of the Archive, and AFC's founding director. His interview with Joe Hickerson, another former head of the AFC Archive, documents the musical side of another pivotal figure in the Center's history. His many interviews with Pete Seeger (who in addition to his work as a singer, musical innovator, and activist, was also an intern at the Archive in the 1930s) dovetail nicely with the Center's dozens of Seeger family collections. Finally, Palieri interviewed current Archive head Michael Taft and me about the AFC and its Archive when he came to Washington to donate the collection.

Palieri himself is an interesting figure in American folk music, a singer and songwriter who accompanies himself on guitar, banjo, and many other instruments. He has shared stages with every important name in American folk music, from Sis Cunningham to Jimmy Driftwood to Kevin Locke. He has performed at concert halls, schools and festivals throughout the lower 48 states, toured Alaska by float plane, ridden camelback

in Australia, and sung on trains hurtling throughout Europe. As a recording artist, he has recorded six albums of his own, and recently, a compilation album on which he performs, *Singing Through the Hard Times: A Tribute to Utah Phillips*, was nominated for a Grammy award. In addition to his music, Palieri is a storyteller, journalist, television host, and veteran of the road. Palieri's autobiography, *The Road is My Mistress: Tales of a Roustabout Songster,* is included in the collection.

Although he is not formally trained in ethnomusicology or folklore, Palieri has performed serious fieldwork, at one time spending over a year in a Polish mountainside village, learning to play Polish bagpipes, ocarina, and wooden trumpet from local masters. During this time, he developed a passion for documentation, and for this reason has documented a vast range of folklife subjects over the history of his television shows and his travels. He maintains a particular interest in hobo lore and culture. He has performed at the National Hobo Convention, and sports the hobo nickname "Totem Pole," which refers to the instruments he totes and his Polish heritage.

AFC first found out about Palieri's collection through my own attendance and participation in the annual conference of the North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance (Folk Alliance). AFC staffs a booth in the convention's crowded exhibit hall, where typically a parade of people, from strangers to old friends, stop by to find out more about what the Center is doing, and to tell us about their own work. It was at the 2009 Folk Alliance conference that Palieri approached me to discuss the possibility of donating his collection, and negotiations began soon thereafter.

Much of Palieri's *Songwriter's Notebook* Collection is already accessible to researchers in the Center's Folklife Reading Room in DVD format. From blues guitar to German lieder, from the Grand Ole Opry to the Sloop Clearwater, and from Martin Guitars to Aston-Martin cars, the Rik Palieri *Songwriter's Notebook* Collection covers a lot of ground. It will benefit artists, scholars, journalists, educators, media professionals, and all who are interested in the many facets of folklife. ❍

Photo by Mariana Holzer.

Top: L.-r.: Dick Boak and Chris Martin of the C.F. Martin Guitar Co., and Palieri, 2001.
Middle: Palieri with Pete Seeger in 2009.
Left: Palieri at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, 2006.

Folklife in Every State: AFC Launches the National Sampler Project

By Peter Bartis and Nancy Groce

The American Folklife Center is pleased to announce the launch of the online National Sampler Project (NSP). The first installment, featuring materials from the state of Rhode Island, is online at http://www.loc.gov/folklife/states/index.html. Visitors to the presentation can enjoy photographs, songs, music, stories, and interviews from the "Ocean State." Eventually, the series will include samplers of this kind from all fifty states.

Because many researchers are interested in a particular state's culture, and wonder where to start exploring the Center's resources, AFC has launched this initiative to place samplers online for each state. Each will provide an introductory tour of AFC's holdings from that state for library patrons, including scholars, educators, members of Congress, and the general public. They will also showcase a selection of the wonderful audio and visual treasures that the AFC Archive has amassed over the past eight decades.

The NSP website is the latest offering in AFC's rapidly expanding list of online resources. It is an enhancement of the popular "Folklife in Your State" feature of the AFC website, which gives visitors general information on the Center's activities and holdings for each American state and territory. AFC has remodeled each state's main page for easier access, including updates to many state finding aids, and new links to relevant online materials. In addition, each state will eventually have a sampler page, which will be the first link from the State's main page. The sampler page will feature content new to the web, including audio files, video clips, photographs, essays, and notes. Although only a tiny fraction of AFC's total materials for each state can be put online as part of the NSP, we hope each state's entry will provide an overview that will help visitors from across the globe explore America's local cultural traditions, and incorporate Library materials into their research, writing, and teaching.

Tony Matthews sings at the Community Baptist Church, Newport, Rhode Island, 1979. (AFC 1991/002:HH54)

The Center decided to begin with Rhode Island because of a unique confluence of material and expertise. There is a particularly rich selection of Rhode Island material in the Archive, including fieldwork from one of AFC's first extensive ethnographic surveys, the 1979 Rhode Island Folklife Research Project. In addition, one of the coordinators of the NSP, Peter Bartis, was a fieldworker on the 1979 project as well as a native of Rhode Island.

The core of the NSP Rhode Island website consists of an online presentation of eighteen audio and video selections. The presentation begins with Sam Hinton's 1947 rendition of "The Bombardment of Bristol," a historical ballad commemorating the British Navy's bombardment of the port of Bristol, Rhode Island during the American Revolution. (Because the town was bombarded twice, in 1775 and again in 1778, it is unclear which bombardment is being commemorated.) The recording was made by Library of Congress folklorists Duncan Emrich and Rae Korson. The second selection is another rarely heard item: a 1934 interview with Point Judith resident John Champlin, in which Champlin discusses fishing, his service in the Coast Guard, and how he helped rescue survivors from the wreck of the costal steamer *Lewiston* in 1898. Champlin speaks in the distinctive regional accent associated with Rhode Island. In fact, he was specifically recorded by a researcher from the American Dialect Society, who sought him out as part of a nationwide project conducted between 1931 and 1937 to document "regional variations of American speech." (AFC is the repository of 891 American Dialect Society discs, which formed the basis of classic scholarly publications such as the *Linguistic Atlas of New England* and the *Dictionary of American Regional English*. Although the linguists were primarily interested in accent, syntax, and other linguistic issues, they often asked about local history and traditions to get their subjects to relax and speak freely in front of the recording machine.)

Romeo and Georgette Berthiaume, Woonsocket, Rhode Island, 1979. (AFC 1991/002:HH33)

Other rarities from the AFC's Rhode Island holdings that are now accessible through the NSP website include 1952 recordings of singer William Webster made by Helen Hartness Flanders, an excerpt of a 1979 interview with North Kingstown wooden-boat builder Alfred

Potter by folklorist Tom Burns, and interviews with Greenville orchard owner Freida Steere.

Another interesting audio selection features materials from AFC's Local Legacies Project (1999-2000), which was undertaken to celebrate the Library of Congress's bicentennial and record a "snapshot" of local traditions and celebrations throughout America at the turn of the millennium. At that time, the Librarian of Congress encouraged all members of Congress to have people in their states and districts document activities, sites, and events that reflected their community's cultural heritage. The resulting photographs, recordings, and other materials were deposited in the AFC Archive. For the NSP, we selected an excerpt of a "Gaspee Days" celebration in Warwick, Rhode Island's Pawtuxet Village, which was documented in 1993 by a local television station. This community-based festival commemorates one of the acts of rebellion that preceded the Revolutionary War: the grounding and burning of the HMS *Gaspee*, a British revenue schooner, on June 9, 1772. The excerpt features fife-and-drum bands, a deeply rooted community tradition in Rhode Island and coastal New England.

Pea soup vendor at Le Foyer Picnic, Cumberland, Rhode Island , 1979. (AFC 1991/002:HH13)

As part of the AFC's 1979 Rhode Island Folklife Project, fieldworker Tom Burns interviewed husband and wife Eric and Ella Thomas Sekatau, members of the Narragansett Indian Tribe of Charlestown, Rhode Island. Track 9 features an excerpt from this interview, which was recorded in the tribal longhouse. The Sekataus describe the "August Meeting," an annual picnic with ancient roots, which serves as both a social gathering and an opportunity to discuss more serious tribal issues, such as the local church and its importance in the retention of the Narragansett language, and the preservation of Native American foodways.

Frieda Steere selling apples in her family's roadside stand, Greenville, Rhode Island, 1979. (AFC 1991/002:HH110)

The NSP site also includes a 1979 interview with Woonsocket resident and performer Romeo Berthiaume about French Canadian immigrants and communities in Rhode Island, as well as his rendition of a popular Québécois song, "La soupe au pois"; an excerpt from the 1979 Communion Sunday Service at the African American Community Baptist Church in Newport, featuring soloist Anthony (Tony) Matthews's moving rendition of Thomas Moore's early nineteenth-century hymn "Come Ye Disconsolate"; and an excerpt from a 2004 interview with Korean War veteran George Peter Ducharme, which was recorded as part of the AFC's Veterans History Project.

The inclusion of Providence-based storyteller Len Cabral's 1992 rendition of "Coyote and the Stars" highlights AFC's International Storytelling Collection (AFC 2001/008), the world's largest collection of recorded performances, manuscripts, sound recordings, graphic materials, moving images, electronic media, and artifacts related to storytelling. Other important AFC collections are also featured in the online presentation. For example, as part of its continuing commitment to documenting American culture, the American Folklife Center regularly presents the Homegrown Concert Series, a series of free public concerts, programmed in collaboration with state and regional folklorists, which highlight traditional music and dance traditions. These performances are recorded and added to the Folklife Center's archive and the Library of Congress website. Rhode Island's NSP site features a 2006 Homegrown concert by virtuoso Armenian musicians David and Levon Ayriyan from Johnston, Rhode Island.

Two excerpts from AFC's large and growing StoryCorps Collection allow visitors to hear personal narratives on two topics: a Cambodian immigrant's first experiences in the United States (Track 16), and a woman's memories of growing up in Rhode Island during the Second World War (Track 17). Both were recorded in StoryCorps's MobileBooth during its visit to Providence in 2007.

For now, the Rhode Island NSP website concludes with excerpts of a performance by the local Greencastle Band at the Irish Ceilidhe Club of Rhode Island in Cranston on November 30, 1979. However, AFC may choose to expand this presentation in the future; one of the advantages of online presentations is that they can easily be expanded as AFC acquires new materials or discovers additional interesting materials in the existing collections.

The goal of the NSP is to present audio and visual materials that illuminate the depth and breadth of the Center's archival holdings for every state and region of the nation. We hope selections will also engage site visitors in the fieldwork experience, as they listen to the dialogue between interviewers and interviewees, and come to understand some of the challenges posed by live recording. Our goal is to present collections that reflect the demographics and distinctive cultural heritage of each state, run the gamut from AFC's earliest recordings to more recent documentation, and highlight many of the Center's special projects and national initiatives.

The next step for the National Sampler Project is an online exhibit of California materials. Subsequent state postings will be announced as they occur on the AFC website. We hope that NSP will serve as a useful gateway to AFC state collections and resources for members of Congress, folklorists and other ethnographers, and the general public. As the project develops, we will continue to seek input and recommendations from state and regional folk arts programs. We also welcome feedback from members of the public, which may be addressed to us by email at folklife@loc.gov. ❍

Bess Lomax Hawes
(January 21, 1921 – November 27, 2009)

By Peggy Bulger

The field of public folklore lost one of its most charismatic and visionary pioneers when Bess Lomax Hawes passed away on Friday, November 27, 2009. There is no question that public folklore programming as we know it was substantially shaped and nurtured by this woman of boundless energy and strategic brilliance. Bess was perhaps best known for her ground-breaking work as the Director of Folk and Traditional Arts at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (1977 - 1993). She had the inspiration to create a network of state folk arts coordinators who would document, support, and celebrate the nation's diverse traditional artistic heritage in every corner of the country. As she put in place over forty-five state folk arts programs, she simultaneously conceived and implemented the highly successful NEA folk arts apprenticeship programs, as well as the NEA National Heritage Fellowships. These three initiatives gave the field of public folklore a nationwide visibility and a grassroots foundation from which to grow.

Bess Lomax Hawes with her brother Alan Lomax in New York City, 1975.

Bess Lomax was born in Austin, Texas, growing up a house filled with folk music. She was the daughter of John A. Lomax and sister of Alan Lomax, both folklorists of international stature. As a teenager, she assisted her father during his tenure as Honorary Consultant and Curator of the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress (1935-48), and she helped to edit *Our Singing Country,* by John & Alan Lomax and Ruth Crawford Seeger.

Following her graduation from Bryn Mawr College, Bess Lomax moved to New York City and joined the Almanac Singers, an activist performing group that included her friends Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. In 1942 she married another Almanac, Baldwin "Butch" Hawes. When World War II broke out, Bess produced radio programs for the Office of War Information. After the war, the Hawes family moved to Boston, where Bess was a political campaigner and co-wrote "Charlie on the MTA," which was a hit song for the Kingston Trio.

Bess Lomax Hawes, left, with Dan Sheehy, then head of Heritage and Preservation at NEA, Bill Ivey, then NEA Chairman, and Peggy Bulger, Director of AFC, in 2000.

During the 1950s, Bess and family moved to California, where she taught anthropology in the state's university system and performed at festivals and clubs. In the 1970s, Bess returned to Washington, DC to work at the Smithsonian Institution, and then took her pivotal position at the NEA.

Bess was the author of *Step It Down* with Bessie Jones (1987), and her memoir, *Sing it Pretty,* was published by University of Illinois Press in 2008. After her retirement from NEA in 1996, Bess Lomax Hawes was awarded the National Medal of the Arts, and the NEA created a new National Heritage Fellowship in her honor, which is awarded to "an individual who contributed to the conservation of our nation's artistic heritage through education, advocacy or cultural preservation."

For those of us who were in the first generation of public folklorists, Bess was our mentor, our cheerleader and our coach. She gave us support, encouragement and inspiration and taught us how to "carry it on." She will be greatly missed by all of us as we aspire to fulfill her vision for the field of public folklore. ❍

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Photo by Tom Raymond.

Jackie Torrence Performs at the National Storytelling Festival, 1997. See the story on page 11 for more about the Festival and about Raymond's photographs, which have recently come to the AFC Archive.