The Study of Folklore in American Education

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THE STUDY OF FOLKLORE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

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PREFACE

To express appreciation to all of those who helped make this thesis possible would be impossible in such a small space. The research and writing of this thesis represent only the surface of a very deep pool of understanding I have acquired in its creation. To those who have helped me understand the study of folklore, as well as to those who actually assisted in the writing of the thesis, I wish to express my thanks.

Especially I desire to thank Gordon Wilson, who first introduced me to the study of folklore and has been immeasurable aid with his suggestions and criticisms of my thesis; Lee Francis Jones and the other members of the Department of Education, who have assisted me by their interest and encouragement; Stith Thompson, who in a one-hour lecture kindled the fire that caused me to wish to do research in this field; Miss Margie Helm and the staff of the library, who have been of great aid and who have given me license to browse in otherwise restricted areas; my wife, who has assisted in typing and has corrected many of my errors that I have been too near to see; and the other friends and members of the faculty who have made the task of writing this thesis, not one of drudgery, but something that has proved a joyous and profitable experience.
CHAPTER I
THE FIELD OF FOLKLORE

According to Webster, folklore is the "traditional customs, beliefs, tales, or sayings, preserved unreflectively among a people; hence, the science which investigates the life and spirit of a people as revealed in such lore."\(^1\)

In order that we may see the great breadth of the field, it is wise for us to go to another definition, that of B. A. Botkin. In the introduction to his *Treasury of American Folklore* he says:

"The essence of folklore is something that cannot be contained in a definition but that grows upon one with folklore experience. Old songs, old stories, old sayings, old beliefs, customs, and practices—the mainskills and handskills that have been handed down so long that they seem to have a life of their own, a life that cannot be destroyed by print but that constantly has to get back to the spoken word to be renewed; patterned by common experience; varied by individual repetition, inventive or forgetful; and cherished because somehow characteristic or expressive: all this, for want of a better word, is folklore."\(^2\)

The name *folklore* may therefore be applied to any number of subjects that can be approached from the angle of


folklore investigation. Under our topic we could classify
as folklore ballads, songs, dances, stories, sayings, art,
superstitions, industries, and language.3

Organized education in America, as well as in Europe,
has been largely responsible for the investigations that
have come about in the field of folklore. As in most of the
literary and artistic investigation that has existed and
does exist, it has been education's task to originate the
study and to develop it to the point where the public realize
its possibilities and have started to use it for their own
betterment and happiness.

The purpose of this study is to trace the history of the
study of folklore from its origins in Europe through its de-
velopment here in the United States. Particular emphasis is
laid on the part organized education has played in this de-
velopment, the attitudes organized education has showed in
relation to the study, those persons in American education
who have furthered the study, and how folklore has been and
is being used in the curriculum of the secondary school and
college.

3Gordon Wilson, The Problems of Collecting Folklore,
unpublished essay, Western Kentucky State Teachers College,
Bowling Green, Ky.
The information here included seems to lend itself the following method of treatment:

First, a history of the origin and early stages of the study in Europe and how that study grew and developed there.

Second, America's becoming folk conscious and realizing that America, too, had a peculiar and original type of folklore. In this section are included the early American workers in the field.

Third, the more recent and contemporary efforts that have been made in the field, with particular emphasis on the part education has played in the movement and the addition of folklore materials to the curriculum of the secondary school and college.

Fourth, a brief summary as to the present importance of folklore and the possibilities of its future importance.

A study of this type has, of course, certain limitations. These limitations are partially due to the impossibility of gathering all information relating to the field and partially due to the impossibility of including all the material gathered from every point of view. An effort has therefore been made to treat only those phases of folklore that have had the greatest influence on education and have been studied by educators in the most comprehensive manner.
While folk art, folk customs, superstitions, folk dancing, and folk industries are important and present a challenge to the person doing research, they have not had the great effect on education that folk music and folk tales have had. This study, therefore, has been largely limited to the folk song and the folk tale, with mention of other phases of the study of folklore made only when it had a bearing on the topic of discussion.

While this study does have certain limitations, it also has certain advantages. The problem of recording the part education has played in gathering and studying folklore materials has been approached from the historical standpoint. No small amount of effort has been spent in an attempt to keep from the mere listing of investigations. It is the purpose of this thesis, rather, to present the study of folklore as a part of the development of literature, of our American education system, and of our American society.
CHAPTER II
THE ORIGINS OF THE STUDY OF FOLKLORE

The period of English literature called "The Age of Johnson" and generally ascribed the dates 1744-1784 was marked by a revolt on the part of many poets against the set and formal rules of the classical tradition. The time is filled with the origin of many things considered as romantic, and not the least of these romantic tendencies is the interest in antiquities. 4

The anti-Popeans became greatly influenced by the writings of J. J. Rousseau, who preached the doctrine of the simple life, the return to nature, and the study of the past. These poets who were so dominated by Rousseauism found much to be admired in the ballads and folk tales of medieval times. Many sought to copy the verse forms of these earlier poets, and a few stooped to counterfeiting such works. 5

One such poet was James Macpherson, a teacher, who in 1760 started bringing out a series of poems he asserted were songs of a third century bard called Ossian. In 1765 he


5Loc. cit.
brought forth a collection of poems that were previously published in smaller volumes and called it The Works of Ossian. While these poems are today all considered the works of Macpherson's own pen, they did much to stimulate the interest in the medieval folklore. His influence on later romantic poets, such as Wordsworth, is comparatively great.

Another poet who sought fame through poems he claimed to be of medieval origin was Thomas Chatterton, who is one of the most tragic figures of English literature. While only a youth he published, in 1770, a series of poems he asserted were written by T. Rowley in 1469. Although many people accepted Macpherson's works as genuine, people soon regarded Chatterton's attempts as forgeries; and he, overcome by a sense of failure, committed suicide when only seventeen years of age. His is a unique place in the Romantic Movement. For, although his work at its best is only fair, he aroused much interest in the study of the antiquarian verse forms and philosophy.

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8Ward and Waller, op. cit., X, 265-268.
The year 1760 saw the publication of what may be considered the first actual collection of English ballads done in a scholarly manner and with the idea of preservation of these earlier forms of English literature. This collection was done by Thomas Percy, a minister, who combined several older collections and added several ballads that he found himself among the people of the border country.9

Percy called his collection Reliques of Ancient Poetry. It was first produced in one volume, but later, as his collection grew, he added two more volumes. His completed collection contained 180 pieces, all of excellent quality.10 His works also include several essays on the problems of ballad collecting and other subjects, such as the origin of the English stage.11

Percy's work served not only the purpose of originating the study of ballads in England but also served to stimulate the Romantic Movement in England. Too, the term "ballad"

10 Ibid., I, lxxxvi.
11 Ibid., I, 431-458.
had fallen into great misuse and symbolized the often vulgar songs of the streets and alehouses. Percy's collection brought to the people a new meaning of the term and one of which the people could be proud.12

The years that followed brought forth many ballad collections, some worthy, and some that were a waste of time and paper. A few of the outstanding collections were Evan's Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative, published in 1777, and J. G. Dalzell's Scottish Poems of the XVI Century, published in 1801.13

In 1802 appeared the first two volumes of the only work which was comparable to Percy's Reliques. It was Sir Walter Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, and it included certain legends of folklore. His works also include certain essays on folklore and his imitations of the ballad form.

Sir Walter Scott was not only a collector of ballads, but he also used the folklore elements in most of his novels and poems. He copies the ballad style for many of his poems, and nearly all of his works are full of the feeling that is typical of English medieval times.14

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12 Ibid., I, xc.

13 Ibid., I, xci-xcii.

14 Needleman and Otis, op. cit., II, 495.
While the Romantic Movement was at its height, there were many collections of English ballads made. Among them were Jamieson’s *Popular Ballads and Songs*, David Laing’s *Selected Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland*, and J. H. Dixon’s *Scottish Traditional Versions of Ancient Ballads*.15

Another outstanding collection of ballads came in 1827, when William Motherwell published his *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern*.16 Motherwell’s work was of sterling character and remained as the outstanding collection of ballads until Child published his work and established himself as the outstanding scholar in the field of English and Scottish ballads.

While other students of the ballad published collections previous to Child’s editions, it remained for him, an American scholar, to make the most complete collection of English ballads that has been made.17

15Percy, *op. cit.*, I, xciv-xcvi.

16Ibid., I, xcvi.

In the field of the folktale, scholarly study was a bit more slow in starting. The brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm are generally conceded to have made the first great collection of folktales in 1812 to 1815.18

Previous to this, however, a Frenchman named Charles Perrault published in 1697 a group of children's folktales titled Tales of My Mother Goose. His effort was not done from the folklore point of view, however, and cannot therefore be considered as important in the consideration of the development of the study of the folktale.19

Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm approached the study of the folktale from a collector's standpoint at first. Their first edition of Kinder- und Hausmärchen contained 200 tales that they collected from the peasants of Germany.20

The work of the Grimm brothers stimulated other collectors, and soon there were many volumes of folktales published. There was also a great deal of translation of the folktales of other countries.


20Ibid., p. 237.
In 1828 Edgar Taylor translated the Grimm tales into English, and interest suddenly developed in that country on the part of scholars and the people alike.\textsuperscript{21}

Taylor's translation was followed by a translation by William Lane of the \textit{Arabian Nights} in 1840, and Joseph Jacobs made the first collection of English fairy tales in 1890.\textsuperscript{22}

Later James Orchard Halliwell brought forth his \textit{Nursery Rhymes and Nursery Tales of England} in 1849. His work included many tales that were greatly similar to the tales that the Grimm Brothers had collected.\textsuperscript{23}

Other nations followed suit, and many elaborate collections of folktales were made. Especially in Scandinavia did this work find many followers. Peter Asbjornsen and Jorgen Moe's splendid collection, \textit{Norske Folkeeventyr}, is typical of the work in the field.\textsuperscript{24}

The most important part of the works of the Grimm Brothers was, however, their discovery that the folktales of many nations had many similar ideas and plots. From their

\textsuperscript{21}Hubert, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 209.

\textsuperscript{22}Rawlinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 238.

\textsuperscript{23}Hubert, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 209.

\textsuperscript{24}Rawlinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 237.
study they developed two theories that were for a long time to be accepted as true. They are (1) the Indo-European theory, which stated that nearly all of the European languages were the outgrowth of one language family and one culture which had its origin in India, and (2) the broken-down myth theory, which stated that the tales started from the ignorant people's not being able to understand the myths and making their own variations.25

Both of these theories were later supported and enlarged upon by such European scholars as Angelo de Gubernatis, Max Muller, and Sir George Cox and American scholars such as John Fiske.26

The theories that the Grimms brought forth were challenged in the early twentieth century by many scholars such as Andrew Lang, who advanced the theories that the Indo-European culture was only one of several culture that had an effect on the folklore of the present European peoples and that the folktale was developed into the myth rather than the folktale's being a broken-down myth.27


26Ibid., p. 372.

27Ibid., pp. 580-382.
Lang's opinions are today generally accepted, and there has been a great deal of work done in tracing down the motifs of the various European folktales to various possible primitive origin. Among the scholars who have specialized in this work are E. B. Taylor, MacCulloch, and Frazer.²⁸

The folktale was studied from still another standpoint by Arnold van Gennep and Hans Naumann. They made a comparatively thorough study of the religion and pagan rites of certain primitive peoples. From their study they developed the theory that many elements in the folktales have their foundations on certain religious stories and rites that lead to the belief among these peoples that the stories were true ones concerning their gods.²⁹

The study of folklore in the last years of the nineteenth century began a period of vigorous activity. One of the greatest effects of this sudden growth was the move toward establishing an international organization for folklore journals. The first such journal to be published was the Melusine, a French paper, first printed in 1878. Germany, England, Denmark, and Italy soon followed by producing folklore journals;

²⁸Ibid., p. 382.
²⁹Ibid., p. 387.
and in 1888 the United States started publication of the
Journal of American Folklore. 30

Today, the international organization for the study of
folklore is enjoying a rapid growth. It serves a real need,
in that it gives students of the science a chance for com-
parison of stories, and it makes possible a method of index-
ing folklore materials. Conventions or congresses of the
international organization meet to enable scholars to get
together, compare notes, and establish aims for the organi-
zation. 31

Though the Second World War caused some interruption in
the continuation of the international organization, the folk-
lore scholars of the world were ready, upon the cessation of
hostilities, to reorganize their excellent movement. We have
every reason to expect great strides in the field of folklore
study in the not-too-distant future. 32

30 Ibid., pp. 391-392.
31 Ibid., p. 405.
32 Loc. cit.
CHAPTER III
AMERICA AWAKENS TO FOLKLORE

To leave the comparatively well-established international organization for the study of folklore of today and go back to the first rustles of folklore study in America seems indeed a long step backward. For even though America has always been a land that is rich in folklore, it was a long time before Americans realized that their country was due great study in that field. Indeed, most of the folklore scholars of the past in this country have only echoed those things that European scholars have already studied.

The studies that American scholars have made in the folklore of other countries is not to be belittled, however, for theirs have been among the best efforts in the field. Men such as Francis Child, who have put their effort toward the study of other nations' folklore, have been among the outstanding contributors to folk literature study. But before folklore investigation began as such in America, there were certain folklore movements that were developing without the

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realization that these were actually a part of what may justly be called American folklore.

The first of these was the furthering of the Noble Savage doctrine in America. The American Indian was an excellent example of the primitive man that was so praised in Rousseau's writings, and it was not long before there was a good deal of writing along this line in American literature.

One of the first writers to praise the Indian was William Bartram, a botanist whose travels through the southern colonies were recorded in a journal. William Bartram's works had a great effect on the writers that were to become the leaders of the romantic movement in both England and America. Part of Bartram's famous journal was dedicated to his observations of the Indians on his journey. Bartram's observations of these primitive people are highly romanticized and are full of the Noble Savage idea.

In the field of drama the Noble Savage doctrine enjoyed great popularity. The first of the plays in praise of the


Indian to be written was by Major Robert Rogers. Titled Ponteach, it tells the story of the Indian abused and misjudged by the white man. The play, written about 1765, was one of America's first dramas.36

Later plays along this same vein were The Indian Princess, Onliate, Logan, and The Indian Prophecy.37 All helped to develop the idea of the Noble Savage in the minds of the people of the time.

Paralleling the development of this doctrine was the growth of a thing that was typical of America, the American folk hero. There have been developed ten types of folk heroes which are the very spirit and essence of American literature. They are: The Indian, who has already been discussed; the frontiersman, who captured the imagination of the world with his heroic exploits; the pika, who represents the no-good, whether squatter or hill-billy; the Southern colonel of the pre-Civil War days; the Negro, who was represented by various types and characters; the cowboy of the "Golden West" days; the badman of the plains; the braggart, best represented by the riverman


37 Ibid., I, 114.
and the lumberman; the poor boy who became famous, perhaps the most American of all; and the corn field philosopher that started with the character of Jonathan in Tyler's *Contrast* and saw one of its best examples in Will Rogers.  

One of the first actual folklore studies that took place in the United States was done by an Indian agent named Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. During the 1830's and for more than a decade thereafter, this man took advantage of his position among the Ojibwas and recorded their legends and their customs. He knew the Indians and their language and worked hard toward presenting an accurate picture of their lives and habits. His work, however, had two limitations: he tried to get too much information and included tales from other tribes, and he tended to romanticize the stories that he retold. His influence on other scholars was great, and his work became the basis for Longfellow's now famous Indian poem, *Hiawatha*.  

It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that we see any great work done on the part of American scholars in the field of folklore. America's becoming folklore conscious was a very slow awakening, and had it not been for a

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38 Gordon Wilson, "Learned and Popular Phases of Folklore" (Unpublished essay, Western Kentucky State Teachers College, 1925), p. 8.

39 Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
few American scholars who dared investigate their field, it is doubtful that we would have so many people working in it and allied fields now.

The first work done in the field of the ballad was not done in America, but was an American interpretation of English ballads. In spite of the fact that the study of balladry started in England in the last part of the eighteenth century, it was nearly a hundred years before any great work was done in studying the ballad in the United States.

It was in 1894 that the first scholarly treatment of balladry was published in the United States. This was the work of Francis B. Gummere, a fellow-student of Francis Child; the latter was working on his splendid collection at the time Gummere produced his volume. Gummere had become acquainted with folk literature when he studied in Germany. As an instructor at Haverford College, he saw the opportunity of producing a volume of old English ballads for study in the United States. He titled his book Old English Ballads and dedicated it to Francis Child. Gummere included in his volume an excellent introduction concerning the manner of folklore investigation. This introduction was based on a

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40 Francis B. Gummere, Old English Ballads (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1894, passim.

41 ibid., pp. xi-xcviil.
series of lectures that Professor Gummere had delivered at Johns Hopkins University in the spring of 1893.\footnote{Ibid., p. viii.}

Gummere's work was for popular consumption, but at the same time he was producing his volume, Francis James Child was collecting what was to be considered by scholars as the greatest work in ballads to be done in the English language. Child, while teaching at Harvard, decided to make a collection of old English ballads to use in his classroom. Between the years of 1882 and 1898 he collected ballads from older manuscripts and from the people of England themselves. The result of these sixteen years of labor was a collection of ballads that has never been equalled. His collection of English and Scottish popular ballads fills five large volumes and contains three hundred and five separate and distinct ballads, many of which have several versions.\footnote{Sargent and Kittredge, op. cit., p. v.}

His work is the most complete investigation of its type that has ever been made. His desire was not only to find and record all of the ballads in existence at the time but to find as many variations as possible of each ballad. Examples of the many variations that he was able to find are eighteen
versions of "Sir Patrick Spens" and twenty-eight versions of "Mary Hamilton."

To make it easier for the student of his work, Child has introduced each ballad by a few remarks telling of the history of the piece, any bibliographical material concerning it, and parallel pieces that may be found in other languages. His collection is well indexed, has excellent rootnotes for bibliography and similar information, and has a glossary, an index of published airs, a collection of tunes, and many other aids for the study of his work.44

Each ballad is numbered (from 1 through 305), and each version is assigned a letter (A, B, C, etc.).45 Inasmuch as there have been very few, if any, popular ballads discovered in England or Scotland since the publication of Child's work, these numbers and letters have become more or less standard for the ballads they represent, and later books have used them as an indexing system.

Child's investigation was the thing that stimulated more interest in folklore in America than any other thing, and from

44 Ibid., pp. v-vi.

45 Loc. cit.
the time of its publication to the present we can see a gradual
growth of the study of folklore in our country.

Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge, realizing
the need for a collection of ballads that could be used in
secondary schools and colleges, condensed the mammoth work
of Child into a volume that can be easily understood and used
by beginners in folklore study.46

George Lyman Kittredge was indeed a great student of
folklore. In his position as professor of English literature
at Harvard University, he carried on in the methods established
by Child and thus made Harvard the center of folklore study in
America during the first part of the twentieth century. More
important still was his influence on scholars of today. Among
his students who have gained eminence in folklore study must
be listed Archer Taylor and Stith Thompson.47

A volume similar to that of Sargent and Kittredge was
produced by Edward A. Bryant. Mr. Bryant's volume presented
the ballads that would have the greatest appeal to the student
that was starting study in this field. He is one of the ear-
liest workers to classify ballads according to their type (for

46 On. cit.

47 Thompson, op. cit., p. 403.
example, supernatural ballads, border ballads, ballads of domestic tragedy, etc.\textsuperscript{48}

During the early part of the century folklore study became very much a part of the study of English literature; and the ballad and folktale, once shunned in the study of literature, became a definite part of the curriculum. This was due, not only to these American scholars' work in the field but also to the influence foreigners had on the study of folklore. The famous English scholar and novelist, Arthur Quiller-Couch, published a book of ballads in the Oxford Series, thus affording a further opportunity for American scholars.\textsuperscript{49} Another book that stimulated study of balladry was a series of essays on collection methods and classification by the Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco. This series of essays did much to heighten the interest in folklore in America.\textsuperscript{50}

The period from 1900 until the first World War was marked by many investigations in American folklore and the folklore of other lands. One of the best examples of the latter is

\textsuperscript{48} The Best English and Scottish Ballads (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1911).


\textsuperscript{50} Essays in the Study of Folk Songs (London: George Redway, 1894).
Mary F. Nixon-Roulet's study of Japanese folktales for reading by American boys and girls. 51

The realization that America had a folklore of its own, while slow in coming, arrived with great force. One of the early workers in the field was John A. Lomax, who, as a student of Kittredge at Harvard, had become vitally interested in the folk ballads in America and attempted to do some collecting in the songs of the West. As a professor at the University of Texas he started his collection of cowboy ballads which was finally published in 1910 under the title of Cowboy Songs and Frontier Ballads. 52 Later he and his son worked together and were able to put out a revised edition of the work in 1938. 53 These two scholars have spent a great part of their lives in this field, and they must be rated as among the best folklore scholars of America.

In the field of Negro folklore there was a great deal of study done previous to the first World War because of the picturesque element in the Negro's language and folk ways. The Negro has been one of the greatest investigators of his own culture, and such scholars as Brawley and Dubois deserve


credit for their work among their own people. Dr. W. E.
Burghardt DuBois, a native of Massachusetts, received his
Bachelor's degree at Fiske University and his Master's and
Doctor's degrees at Harvard. An ardent scholar of the folk-
lore of his people, he did not publish a book on folklore as
such, but the casual treatment given folklore in his histori-
cal treatment of the American Negro is very good.54

Benjamin Griffith Brawley, as a student of Dubois, carried
much of the same spirit of investigation into his studies of
the Negro folklore field. His chapter on "Folk-Lore and Folk-
Music" in his published thesis is an excellent treatment.55

The early years of the twentieth century saw the origin
of many local studies of folklore. These studies, though of a
meager type, were the basis of many more exhaustive studies
that were to follow. Two such studies were Sturgis's and
Hughes's work in New England56 and the work of Miss Josephine
McGill in Kentucky.57

54 Benjamin Griffith Brawley, A Short History of the
55 Ibid., pp. 192-198.
56 Edith B. Sturgis and Robert Hughes, Songs from the Hills
57 Josephine McGill, Folksongs of the Kentucky Mountains
While Miss McGill's efforts were no better than those of many other students in the field, a word as to her methods of collection may help in the understanding of how some of these earlier collectors accomplished their work. Miss Josephine McGill was a musician of no small ability when she first began teaching school in Louisville. She was a writer of many tunes and lyrics, some of which had been published and had received wide acclaim. While visiting in the village of Hindman, Kentucky, in 1914, she visited the settlement school there that was under the supervision of Miss May Stone. Miss McGill was quick to realize the beauty and value of the folk songs she heard the children sing there and started her collection of mountain ballads. She recorded both words and music of these songs and worked diligently to make her collection as complete as possible. Many of her songs were gathered in the mountain schools; others she rode great distances on horseback to obtain. The result was a collection of mountain folksongs of excellent quality.58

Miss McGill's work was published in 1917 under the title *Folksongs of the Kentucky* and represents only a portion of her collection. While Miss McGill collected some one hundred folksongs, this publication contains only twenty of them.

58Bettie M. Henry, *Louisville Library Collections* Biographical Series (Louisville: The Louisville Free Public Library, 1939), 1, 139-142.
These, however, are complete with music and references to their relation to the Child collection. 59

Such efforts were not uncommon during the early years of the twentieth century, and many such efforts led to brilliant collections. By the time of World War I there was a great deal of work being done in the folklore field. The American Folklore Journal had started its publication in 1888. 60 Other indications pointed toward a rapid growth of study in the field. The years since the first World War have presented much great work in the field of folklore, and an increased number of scholars working in the field, as well as a greater place for folklore in the curriculum, is the result of this work.

59 McGill, op. cit.

60 Thompson, op. cit., p. 392.
CHAPTER IV

RECENT FOLKLORE STUDIES IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

As has been indicated in the previous chapter, the study of folklore has received its greatest period of growth since the first World War. Previous to this, most of the folklore study had been a mere re-echoing of the studies that had developed in Europe. A few attempts had been made to study American folklore; but these, for the most part, had represented isolated fields and had not seen folklore as a part of the American heritage.

During and shortly after the first World War, there were many books published in the United States on balladry as it exists in England. Two of the best of these are by Guido H. Stempel and Loury Charles Wimberly.

Stempel, as professor of philology at Indiana University, saw the need of a study guide that would trace the elements of balladry from the Old English ballads to the modern literary ballads. He published a volume of ballads including the Old English selections, a few ballads of American origin, and some of the literary ballads that have a claim to fame. His study, while not exhaustive, is an excellent guide to the study of the ballad form.61

Loury Charles Wimberly, of the University of Nebraska, ventured into a new field with the publication of his *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads*. It was his purpose to make a study of all of the primitive customs and beliefs as they are shown in the Old English and Scottish ballads. His study traces ballad development from the pagan religion of Celtic England to the Christian religion as found in England at the time of Elizabeth. His study is exhaustive and has much in it of a commendable nature.  

Great study has been done in the United States since the first World War in the field of English ballads that have been transplanted to America and have become part of our American heritage. The collecting of such ballads has been largely done in New England and the Southern Appalachians.  

Perhaps the most complete collection that has been made of such ballads in the north-eastern part of the United States is the collection of Phillips Barry and his cohorts. Phillips Barry, along with Fannie Hardy Eckstorm and Mary Winslow Smyth, collected a group of ninety-four ballads that they found to be of English origin. All were traced to ballads

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that had been collected by Child in his famous work. The work, while rather forbidding in appearance, is of great value, inasmuch as it has the tunes to many ballads recorded and is very detailed in its explanatory notes. 63

Another volume of this type that is worthy of mention is Eloise Hubbard Linscott's Folk Songs of Old New England. Published in 1939, this book is valuable in that it treats such subjects as singing games, folk dances, sea chanteys, and children's songs. It is a relatively complete collection and has ample notes and tunes. 64

Other collections of such songs have been made, but few rival the preceding in excellence. Many volumes of lesser importance exist, one of the best being that of Helen H. Flanders. 65 In general, however, the collection of transplanted English ballads has been best accomplished in the Southern Appalachians.

The first of these collections to be accomplished with any degree of success was that of John H. Cox. Cox, as a student of Kittredge, realized the value of collecting such songs and recording them. As a professor at West Virginia

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University he was able to collect 185 ballads of English origin, as well as nearly thirty folk songs of questionable origin. It was his work that led to more comprehensive works of later scholars.66

The most complete collection of ballads made in the Southern Highlands is that of Cecil J. Sharp. Sharp collected 273 ballads which could be found to be of a definite English origin. Many versions of each song were collected, and the complete collection includes 968 different tunes of ballads. Collected in the mountains of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, it has been a stand-by for later collectors.67

Still another volume of excellent quality is that of Kellinger E. Henry. His book contains 180 songs, but he has made no attempt to classify his material, either from the standpoint of origin or subject matter. His notes, too, seem a little scanty for thorough ballad study.68 Other collections of lesser importance are Wetmore and Bartholomew's Mountain

66Folk Songs of the South (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925).


**Songs of North Carolina**\(^{69}\) and Matteson's *Beech Mountain Folk-Songs and Ballads*.\(^{70}\) Matteson is a professor at the University of South Carolina who has done much to further the study of folklore in that state.

In Kentucky the study of ballads and folk songs has been of no small proportions, and some of the leaders of the folklore field have done their work in this state.

Outstanding for his efforts is John Jacob Niles, a man who has done much to bring folklore appreciation to the public. John Jacob Niles is a Kentuckian who has spent most of his life in the study of the balladry that he knows so well. A native of Jefferson county, he acquired his musical education from his father and from the schools of Paris, France, where he served in the first World War. He has spent the last forty years, since he was fifteen years of age, in the study of ballads. His study has profited him greatly, for he is now internationally famous for his mastery of the ballad form.\(^{71}\) He has produced many famous collections of ballads, the most

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\(^{71}\) Courier-Journal, Louisville, Kentucky: (December 21, 1936).
popular being *Seven Kentucky Mountain Songs*,\(^72\) *Songs of the Hill-Folk*,\(^73\) and *More Songs of the Hill-Folk*.\(^74\) In addition he has done a good deal of recording of ballads, thus adding to their popularity.

Another Kentuckian who has done a great deal in the study of balladry is Henry Harvey Fuson, a teacher, principal, and superintendent in Kentucky schools for twenty-eight years. He has produced many volumes of verse and stories.\(^75\) His outstanding contribution to the study of folklore in the state is a small book titled *Ballads of the Kentucky Highlands*. Published in London, it contains about 125 ballads which Fuson collected in the eastern mountains of Kentucky.\(^76\)

There have been other collections made of ballads in the Kentucky folklore regions. The recent years have seen a great interest in regional folklore that makes us hopeful for still better work in this field.


More recent studies have taken some surprising new turns that have opened the way to still wider studies of folklore. One of the most interesting of the new fields studied is that of the white spiritual of the mountain country. Most people have been led to believe that the spiritual is of the Negro culture and not to be confused with the folksongs of the white people. Professor George Pullen Jackson of Vanderbilt University has done a great deal of collecting of what he calls the "white spiritual."  

Professor Jackson was surprised at Sharp's attitude when collecting folklore of shunning what he called "hymns." He, therefore, set about to collect these spirituals and to prove them worth of a study in American folklore.  

The results of his effort were two books of great interest, **White Spirituals of the Southern Uplands** and **Spiritual Folk-Songs of America**.

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78 Loc. cit.

79 Ibid.

Perhaps the greatest work that has been done in folklore collection of recent times is in the field of the Negro folk song. Several outstanding scholars have contributed greatly to this field.

The Negro poet James Weldon Johnson, famous for his book of poems called God's Trombones, written in imitation of Negro preaching, made an outstanding collection of spirituals while teaching at riske University, Nashville, Tennessee.81 In the same year Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson of the University of North Carolina produced a most scholarly dissertation on the music of the Negro. Odum and Guy Johnson did not confine themselves to the Negro spiritual but included all Negro music and attempted to explain it by the way of life of the Negro in the United States.82

Two other collections of outstanding value are those of William Francis Allen83 and John W. Work.84

The work of these men seems to have encouraged more and more scholars to investigate in the field of Negro folk music,


82 The Negro and His Songs (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1929).

83 Slave Songs of the United States (New York: Peter Smith, 1929).

and even now there are many scholars of note collecting the songs of the Negro. Not the least of these scholars making such a collection today is Dr. John Lomax, who has gained much fame for himself as a collector of cowboy and frontier ballads. 85

In the field of cowboy ballads work continues with its usual fascination. John A. Lomax, having started such investigation by his 1910 edition, 86 has recently revised his collection with the help of his son, Alan Lomax. The new volume has started a new wave of investigation in that field.

Louise Pound has added her bit to such efforts by her collection of songs of the Great Plains called Folk-Songs of Nebraska and The Central West. 88

There has also been an effort made to popularize the songs of the cowboy. This effort has been successful largely because of such men as Burl Ives, who have toured the country

85 Wilson, "Learned and Popular Phases of Folk Lore," op. cit., p. 5.

86 Lomax, op. cit.

87 John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, op. cit.

88 Nebraska Academy of Science Publications, Vol. IX, No. 3.
singing the cowboy songs in the manner that they were sung in the days of the cattle drive and the big round up.\textsuperscript{89}

In addition to the preceding collections, there have been many other investigations of special types of folk songs. Among these may be listed Mina Monroe's collection of Louisiana ballads called \textit{Bayou Ballads},\textsuperscript{90} Lummis and Farewell's collection of Spanish songs of the Southwest,\textsuperscript{91} and Whitfield's \textit{Louisiana French Folk Songs}.\textsuperscript{92}

From the foregoing information it is a more than justifiable conclusion to reach that the study of folk songs is now progressing in the most orderly and comprehensive fashion. Education has had a great deal to do with accomplishing the task and with inspiring the students to further the study of folklore. It is altogether logical to expect even greater studies in the future with education giving the efforts a direction and a purpose.

In the field of the folktale the work has not gained the momentum that it has in the collection of ballads and folksongs.

\textsuperscript{89}Burl Ives, Columbia Record Album, No. C-103: 1948.

\textsuperscript{90}(New York: G. Schirmer Inc., 1921).


\textsuperscript{92}(Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1939).
Nevertheless, America has contributed two men who are recognized world leaders in the study of the folktale. They are Stith Thompson of the University of Indiana and Archer Taylor of the University of Chicago.

Stith Thompson was born and spent his early life in Springfield, Kentucky, where he came in contact with little or no folklore material. His interest in the subject did not come about until his college days at Wisconsin, then University of California, and finally at Harvard, where he achieved his Doctor's degree as a student of Kittredge.

He did his first work with Indian tales and published his now famous *Tales of the North American Indian* in 1929. The tracing of elements of Indian tales gave him a great interest in Aarne's system of indexing the motifs of folktales and led to his translations of Aarne's works. Later he revised and improved Aarne's system and produced a six-volume work, *Motif Index of Folk Literature*, that is outstanding and used by scholars of all nationalities.

Indiana University saw fit to grant him the chair of professor of folk literature, the first such position to be created in the United States. His most recent publication is titled *The Folktale* and is aimed at the classroom rather than the library scholar.93

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Another student of Kittredge who has attained fame as a student of the folktale is Archer Taylor, now with the University of Chicago. He was the first American folklorist of the present generation to establish contact with the European scholars and has been an active member of the Folklore Fellows. He has made a rather comprehensive study of the northern tale and has done much work in the tales of Latin America. He is at present investigating the Indian tale.

There has been in recent years an interest developed in the study of the folktale and an attempt to re-establish this vital form in the culture of the American people. Many such attempts have been made by various state writers' projects. One such collection is that of the Tennessee Writers' Project and is titled God Bless the Devil. It is a collection of the tales found among the Negroes of that state.

In addition to these more or less standard treatments of the folk-song and folktale, there have been many special

94 Thompson, op. cit., p. 403.

95 Wilson, "Learned and Popular Phases of Folklore," op. cit., p. 5.

96 James R. Aswell and others of the Tennessee Writers' Project, God Bless the Devil (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1930).
treatments of various folk elements in our culture. Carl Sandburg has taken a great interest in our folklore and has published a volume of songs of folk nature or origin.97 Ruth Bernes has published a similar work;98 and the great music scholars, Downes and Stiegmeister, have published a collection of songs of sterling quality.99

Other works of this description have been published by Zanzig100 and Carmer,101 and Mary Wheeler has attempted to catch the spirit of the river folklore in her book, Steamboatin' Days.102


100Augustus D. Zanzig, Singing America (Boston: C. C. Birchard and Co., 1940).


102(Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944).
Two books that have appeared recently are Botkin's *A Treasury of American Folklore* and Thompson's *The Folktale*. Botkin, who once headed the folklore section of the Library of Congress, has attempted to bring together many samplings of American folklore in order to make the people more conscious of their deep folk heritage. Thompson's *The Folktale* has already been mentioned as a scholarly treatment of this earliest form of literature.

In other fields of folklore the development, while slow, has been of outstanding quality. In Florida, a Negro, Zora Neale Hurston, has made an excellent collection of Negro superstitions and primitive voodoo rites practiced there.

Typical of these folklore scholars who have turned from the more or less standard collections of folk-songs and folk-tales to the exploration of other folk materials is Henry W. Shoemaker, State Archivist for Pennsylvania. After producing two collections of ballads of Pennsylvania, he has turned


106 *North Pennsylvania Minstrelsy* (Altoona, Penn.: 1923) and *Mountain Minstrelsy of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: New-
mam F. McGiff, 1931).
his attention to recording the folk customs and industries of that state. He has published several books on the subject, and his daily syndicated column "The Morning Comment" enjoys a great circulation in Pennsylvania dailies. 107

In Kentucky a truly remarkable quantity of folk materials has been collected and given rather wide publication. In the field of folk industries, Eliza Calvert Hall did some excellent work in collecting and describing hand-woven coverlets. Her book describing the coverlets is a beautiful one, with many of the coverlets photographed in their original color. 108

Elsewhere in the state, Dr. Frank L. Hainey of Centre College has collected and recorded many of the superstitions found in the eastern mountains. Dr. Dan L. Thomas has also done a great deal of work in this practically virgin field of folklore study. Professor Karl J. Holzknecht and Mary Allen Griscom have done a good deal of work in Negro folklore, investigating their songs, tales, and superstitions. 109

Dr. Gordon Wilson of Western Kentucky State Teachers College has spent many years in the recording of folk customs and industries that he has found in the western portion of the state.

107 Henry W. Shoemaker, Unpublished letter (Harrisburg, Penn.: January 2, 1947)


CHAPTER V

FOLKLORE IN THE CURRICULUMS OF AMERICAN SCHOOLS TODAY

More remarkable than the growth of the original collections of folk materials has been the growth of folklore study in the curriculum of our schools. It was not too long ago that folklore was a poor step-child of the study of literature; it received little or no attention in literature text or in the classroom. But recently our authors of text books and our teachers have realized the importance of this valuable part of our literature and have included a great deal of such material in their curriculums.

Today we find more and more folklore studied in the courses in literature and in history. A new attitude has grown up about our folk ways that is perhaps best voiced by Thomas D. Clark of the Department of History of the University of Kentucky, who says:

"Too long the historian has neglected the earthy elements of humanity which went into the making of the West. He has written hundreds of learned essays and pamphlets about them, but seldom has he danced with their gals, or rolled on their camp-meeting floors. He has never drunk with their colonels, drilled with their privates, nor dozed their horses in main street or highway races. All of this to the learned fraternity of historians is frivolous, and above all historians must never
be frivolous. Of recent years a few bold
ones have dared break away from traditional
formality to tell some of the rich yarns
which amused another generation. This de-
partment has broken the ice, and the dig-
nified brethren have listened with increasing
interest to what apologetic chairmen of pro-
gram committees have labeled 'light stuff'.

An almost entirely new approach to the study of history
has been made by Hazel Gertrude Kinsella, Director of Music
at Temple University. Miss Kinsella has made an attempt to
study American history by studying the folk music of the various
periods that compose our development. Her book, History Since,
is a fascinating historical account of the development of our
folk music.

The addition of folklore courses to the college curric-
ulum has been one of the greatest things to cause the contin-
uance of study in the field. Many states have introduced
college courses into their 'state institutions in order to
better to equip the teachers of literature with this valuable
part of literary study.

In the East very little has been done in most states in
this field, but in New York and Pennsylvania many colleges
have introduced work to encourage folklore study.

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110 Thomas D. Clark, The Rampaging Frontier (New York:


In New York a course in American folk-literature is required of all those who are seeking the English teacher's certificate. This was an outgrowth of a course started at the State Teachers College at Albany by Harold W. Thompson in 1934. It was later taken over by Professor Louis C. Jones when Dr. Thompson went to Cornell. Dr. Thompson started a similar course at Cornell, and Mrs. Marion C. Thompson established at the State College at Courtland a course based on the state's folklore to prepare teachers of the junior high schools and grade. 113

The instructors of these folklore courses in New York cooperate greatly with the New York Folklore Society, and Cornell has underwritten the New York Folklore Quarterly. Likewise, all of the folklore scholars of the state cooperate with the State Historical Association and assist in the publication of that body, The Yorker.

Cornell University's folklore courses enjoy great popularity, one being one of the two largest elective courses in the department of English. A number of students are doing graduate work in folklore subjects. The department of speech

113 loc. cit.
and drama are doing much to make students conscious of their deep folk heritage by having students study folklore and write plays on folk-themes.\footnote{114}

In Pennsylvania, while there are no college courses as such in any of the state colleges, the study of folklore on the graduate level is encouraged; and great assistance is given such research by the State Historical Commission.\footnote{115}

Farther south Professor J. D. Clark of North Carolina State College is doing a good deal of work with graduate students in the collection of synonyms and proverbs peculiar to that state.\footnote{116} In Tennessee work has been rather spotted, but there has been an attempt to instruct the teachers of the state teachers institutions to make them conscious of this means of increasing interest in the fields of literature and art.\footnote{117}

The Midwest has proved to be the most fertile ground in America as far as folklore study is concerned, for here there is great encouragement of the study on the college levels. Two

\footnote{114}{Loc. cit.}

\footnote{115}{Shoemaker, Letter, \textit{on}-cit.}

\footnote{116}{W. Amos Abrams, Unpublished letter (Raleigh, N. C.: Jan. 4, 1947).}

\footnote{117}{Susan B. Riley, Unpublished letter (Nashville, Tenn.: Jan. 7, 1947).}
schools in particular are doing a great deal toward developing interest in the study of folklore. These schools are the University of Indiana and the University of Wisconsin.

The University of Indiana is the outstanding school for folklore study in the United States today. Dr. Stith Thompson heads the department that offers seven courses in the graduate study of folklore. The department has recently added an undergraduate course in American Folklore that is enjoying great popularity among the students. Among the courses offered are Literary Origins, Problems in Folklore and Mythology, The Folktales and Allied Forms, and American Indian Folklore. In the department of folklore assisting Dr. Thompson are Professors Harold Whitehall, Charles F. Voegelin, W. Edson Richmond, Ernest Baughman, and William Hugh Jansen.

While no courses are offered in other colleges in Indiana, there is a good deal of independent work going on in other Indiana schools. The colleges of the state are cooperating with Miss Bryant of Brooklyn College in her attempt to make a

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120 Indiana University Bulletin, op. cit., p. 22.

121 Jansen, op. cit.
nation-wide collection of proverbs. Miss Margaret Sweeney of Jeffersonville High School is attracting great attention by her use of folklore materials to improve her teaching techniques.122

In the state of Wisconsin, while the study of folklore has not advanced as it has in Indiana, it has made definite movements forward. Until his death in 1946, C. E. Brown did a great deal of investigative work, and at present Miss Helene Stratman-Thomas of the School of Music of the University of Wisconsin is collecting folksongs of some of the various Wisconsin nationality group. Mr. Robert Gard, of the speech and dramatics department of the University, has stimulated interest in the writing and production of the folk-theme drama.123

From these few samplings it is easy to see that the study of folklore, while not a universal thing in our schools, is gaining headway, and we have every reason to believe that it will soon occupy a more important place in the curriculum of both our colleges and our secondary schools.

For in the curriculum, as well as in the collection and classification of folklore materials, the study seems to be

122 Loc. cit.

destined for even greater things. From its rather humble origin as a side-line of literature, the study of folklore has developed into a science that gives us a deeper insight into the sciences of anthropology and philology.

The purpose of this thesis has been to trace the development of the study of folklore with particular emphasis on the part education has played in the study. The study of folklore has been largely due to the interest that education has showed in the collections, classification, and teaching of folklore materials. It is altogether probable that organized education will in the future assume the leadership in the exploration of still unstudied fields of folklore.
APPENDIX

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE USE OF FOLKLORE MATERIALS IN THE SCHOOLS' CURRICULUMS

In order that the reader might better understand the terms of this thesis and comprehend the possibilities of inclusion of such materials in the curriculum of today's secondary schools, the following outline of the field of folklore is presented:

I. Folk literature
   A. The popular ballad
   B. The Folktale
   C. The folk character

II. Folk music and dancing
   A. The popular ballad
   B. The folk song (i.e., lyrical songs, sea chanteys, singing games, etc.)
   C. The folk dance

III. Folk superstitions and beliefs

IV. Folk customs

V. Folk industries, arts, and crafts

In addition to these more or less standard treatments of folk materials in the schools of today, there exist many ways using folklore to enrich and broaden the existing curriculums. Courses in history may be enlivened by a parallel study of folk customs, stories, and beliefs; courses in dramatics may be made more vivid by the production of plays...
with folk themes; and courses in music and literature may be given a new interest by the study of this vital phase of the American heritage.

For a comprehensive study of how folk materials may be used in the secondary school curriculum, reference is made to the unpublished thesis of Mrs. Amabel Price, Western Kentucky State Teachers College, 1945.
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