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WKU Folk Studies Society

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New Heading and Logo

Readers will notice that we now have a new heading and logo. Ira Kohn, one of our graduate students, did the pen and ink drawing of the plow, which is housed in the Kentucky Building Museum.

Folk Studies in Academic Common Market

The states of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and West Virginia have made arrangements through the Academic Common Market for their residents to be accepted on an in-state tuition basis for the Master of Arts in Folk Studies at Western.

If your legal residence is in one of these four states and you want to enter the program as a Common Market student, you must obtain certification from the coordinator of the Common Market in your state. Write the Folk Studies Program for the address of your state coordinator.

Dr. Lynwood Montell, Director
Center for Intercultural and Folk Studies
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101

Lecture Series

The faculty of the Center for Intercultural and Folk Studies will conduct a "Mini-Lecture Series." The series, to begin on November 5th, is a response to an expressed interest that students have shown in areas not usually covered in normal classroom discussions. The list below provides some insight into the topics to be covered during the semester.

Dr. Mary Clarke, "The Place of Dialects in Folklore Study."

Ms. Camilla Collins, "Urban and Ethnic Folklore."

Dr. Lynwood Montell, "Folklore and Oral History."

Dr. Kenneth Clarke, "Literary Aspects of Folklore."
The Folk Studies Society is continuing last year's policy of bringing in guest lecturers from other schools and disciplines. To date, this year's lectures have been very successful. Following is a list of some of the individuals who have given or who plan to give talks to the students and faculty this semester.

Dr. Alan Jabbour, National Endowment for the Arts, "The Folk Arts Program in the National Endowment for the Arts."

Dr. Albert Petersen, Western Kentucky University, "Folklore and Cultural Geography."

Dr. Charles Wolfe, Middle Tennessee State University, "Dick Burnett and Old Time Music."

Dr. William Jansen, University of Kentucky, "Truth and Oral Performance."

Dr. Richard Levy, University of Kentucky, "Computers and Myth Analysis."

Kentucky Folklore Society Meeting

On Saturday, November 23, 1974, there will be a meeting of the Kentucky Folklore Society at Gordon Wilson Hall, Western Kentucky University. The general purpose of the meeting, which is jointly sponsored by the K.F.S. and the Center for Intercultural Studies, is to increase interest and participation in the Society. Lectures by Dr. Kenneth Clarke and Dr. William Jansen will provide a perspective on the discipline of folklore. The program will also encourage the use of folklore materials in various areas of the public school curricula. Workshops and discussions will focus on media aids (recordings and films) and will explore techniques to stimulate appreciation of our culture and heritage.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

9:45 A.M.-10:15 A.M. "What is Folklore?" Dr. Kenneth Clarke
10:15 A.M.-10:45 A.M. "Teaching Folklore in High School," Carol Parker, Olmstead High School, Logan County, Kentucky.
10:45 A.M.-12:00 P.M. Film Workshops: The Utilization of Folklore Films in Public School Teaching. A. "Traditional Hand Tools." B. "Traditional Quilting."
12:00 P.M.-1:15 P.M. Lunch at the Downing Cafeteria.
Comment and Criticism


Ketner explicitly states that there can be no science of folklore without the utilization of hypotheses for folkloristic studies. He downgrades two specific types of inquiry used by folklorists: 1) data collection followed by hypothesis formulation (inductive approach), 2) data collection with no specific problem or purpose (that is, inquiry merely for the sake of collecting). According to Ketner, true scientific inquiry employs an hypothesis, a statement asserting a uniform connection between phenomena, as a guideline for data collection.

Valid scientific inquiry begins with a puzzling question concerning a specific relationship between items. One or more hypotheses are then developed as an answer, which are testable. Being testable essentially means that there need to be deduced observable consequences derived from the relationship stated in the hypothesis. These observable consequences are the basic source of data collection.

Any hypothesis abstracts from reality in virtually the same manner as does a detailed map of a geographic area. In both cases, there can never be a perfect representation of reality. But such abstractions can present the folklorists with a simple, less cumbersome means of dealing with the real world. It is then up to the researcher to logically determine whether or not a particular hypothesis is both valid and useful.

The main advantage of using hypotheses for inquiry is that, in effect, the folklorist is dealing with the interactions and relationships of two or more distinct items. In contrast, folklorists in general employ the materialistic approach—studying one specific object or item without regard to its possible interactions with other phenomena. While this has traditionally been a most popular approach, especially for diffusionists and separatists, Ketner suggests that the recent uprisings of scientific folkloristics will pave the way for new channels of knowledge within the discipline.

It is important to note, however, that hypothesis formulation is merely another method of inquiry. Not all hypotheses are empirically testable. Others, while being testable, may not be applicable to all geographical areas or may not hold true over time. Therefore, there is a need for constant refining and revising of accepted theory derived from scientific folkloristics.

Doug Tucker
M.S. Candidate
Department of Geography
W.K.U.

(Editor's note: See Anne and Norm Cohen, "A Word on Hypotheses," Journal of American Folklore, 87 (1974), 156-160, for a different approach to Ketner's article.)
Notes and Queries

Recordings of folk music are generally difficult to locate because most stores have little or no folk music available. If they do carry any folk music, it is usually the Clancy Brothers variety of commercialized recording. Even bluegrass recordings are hard to find (in Pennsylvania, at least). Consequently, for the past several years I have been dealing with some record distributors which have large catalogs of traditional music recordings and tend to have cheaper prices than either stores or direct-from-company orders. I recommend any of the following distributors for people who need to buy records, either for personal use or for classroom purposes.

Roundhouse Records (formerly Rounder Records), P.O. Box 474, Somerville, MA 02144. Extensive catalog of country and blues. Good service and prices.

Dean Wallace, P.O. Box 473, Noank, CT 06340. New distributor. Handles English and Irish imports.

Thomas H. Stern, P.O. Box 1228, White Plains, NY 10602. Unusual recordings of European music. Some imports which are not available from Wallace.

There is a partial list of records available through Wallace in the Folk Studies office. I would be happy to lend anyone my Roundhouse catalogs or the Sterns listing.

Mike Stoner

I am doing research on flood tales of the North American Indians. My particular interest is a universal flood; that is, a flood that covers the entire earth. Any information concerning these Indian accounts will be greatly appreciated. Send all correspondence to

Steve Moorman
Center for Intercultural and Folk Studies
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Ky, 42101

Examples of oral narratives in our generation are hitchhiking stories. Everyone I know who hitchhikes has at least one such narrative. I am interested in collecting these hitchhiking stories, and if you have any stories from your own experiences or from the experiences of friends, please contact me.

Mike Stoner

In 1966, the U. S. Post Office initiated the "American Folklore Series" with a stamp depicting Johnny Appleseed. The 1967 issue was Davy Crockett, and in 1968, Daniel Boone appeared. For 1972, the Post Office issued a stamp showing Tom Sawyer whitewashing a fence. The 1973 theme was the headless horseman from Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."
Once again, it seems that someone likes the folklore theme but doesn't know what folklore is, or in this case, isn't. Perhaps this problem might be the result of a lack of contact with the subject area and might be best solved by writing a letter to: Postmaster General Washington, D.C. 20260

Stephen Moorman

Book Review

Index to Literature on the American Indian: 1970, Jeanette Henry, et. al., eds.
Pp. vi+177. Index, bibliography.
The Indian Historian Press, Inc., 1972.

This index is the culmination of an attempt by several Indian scholars to list available source material dealing with the American Indian for the year 1970. The index is arranged alphabetically, according to author and subject, and contains a total of sixty-three subject areas. Under the folklore section there were but seven entries; however, the editors state that the work is not a listing of all material available--just a representative sample of the periodicals that contain information on the Native American.

The fact that the index deals only with periodicals is both an advantage and a drawback. On the one hand, the index provides a list of publications edited and published by Native American organizations--a section of obvious worth to the scholar interested in contemporary Indian culture. On the other hand, the fact that only periodicals are listed detracts from its overall usefulness.

All points considered, the reviewer feels that the work would be a welcome supplement to a course such as Dr. Kenneth Clarke's, "Oral Literature of the North American Indians." It is hoped that subsequent editions of this index will be expanded to include other publications, as well as periodicals.

Steve Poyser

Blue Ridge Folk Life Festival

Ferrum College's Blue Ridge Institute is hosting the "Blue Ridge Folk Life Festival" on November 2nd. The festival will feature traditional craftsmen and musicians from the Blue Ridge Mountain area of Virginia and North Carolina.

Folk Studies Society Newsletter

If you would like to receive the Newsletter and are not on our mailing list, please send your name and address to:

Steve Poyser, Editor
Folk Studies Society Newsletter
Center for Intercultural and Folk Studies
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101

3:15 P.M.-3:30 P.M. General Session and Business.

3:30 P.M.-4:15 P.M. Tour of the Western Kentucky Folklore and Folklife Archive.

W.K.U. Bicentennial Program

The Center for Intercultural and Folk Studies is also participating in Western's Bicentennial Program Series. Dr. Kenneth W. Clarke's talk, "Historical Kentucky Reflected in its Artifacts," is one of eighteen programs available to various clubs, schools, and social organizations across the state.


Editor's Note

Although the primary function of this newsletter is the dissemination of news to its readers, the Editor feels that at least two other sections are worthy of inclusion in this publication.

Beginning with this issue, there will be a section entitled, "Notes and Queries," the function of which will be to provide an opportunity for the readers to exchange information with one another.

Secondly, a book and record review section has been re-instated in order that readers might keep abreast of the current works in the field of folklore and other related disciplines. If anyone comes across a recently published work that you think might be of interest to others, you are invited to submit a review to the Editor. The reviews should be critical in nature, (not just summaries) and should not exceed 200 words in length.

Faculty

Dr. Lynwood Montell attended a conference of the Kentucky Council for the Social Studies in Lexington, Kentucky on October 26th. Dr. Montell was a participant on a panel dealing with the folklore phase-elective course in secondary schools.