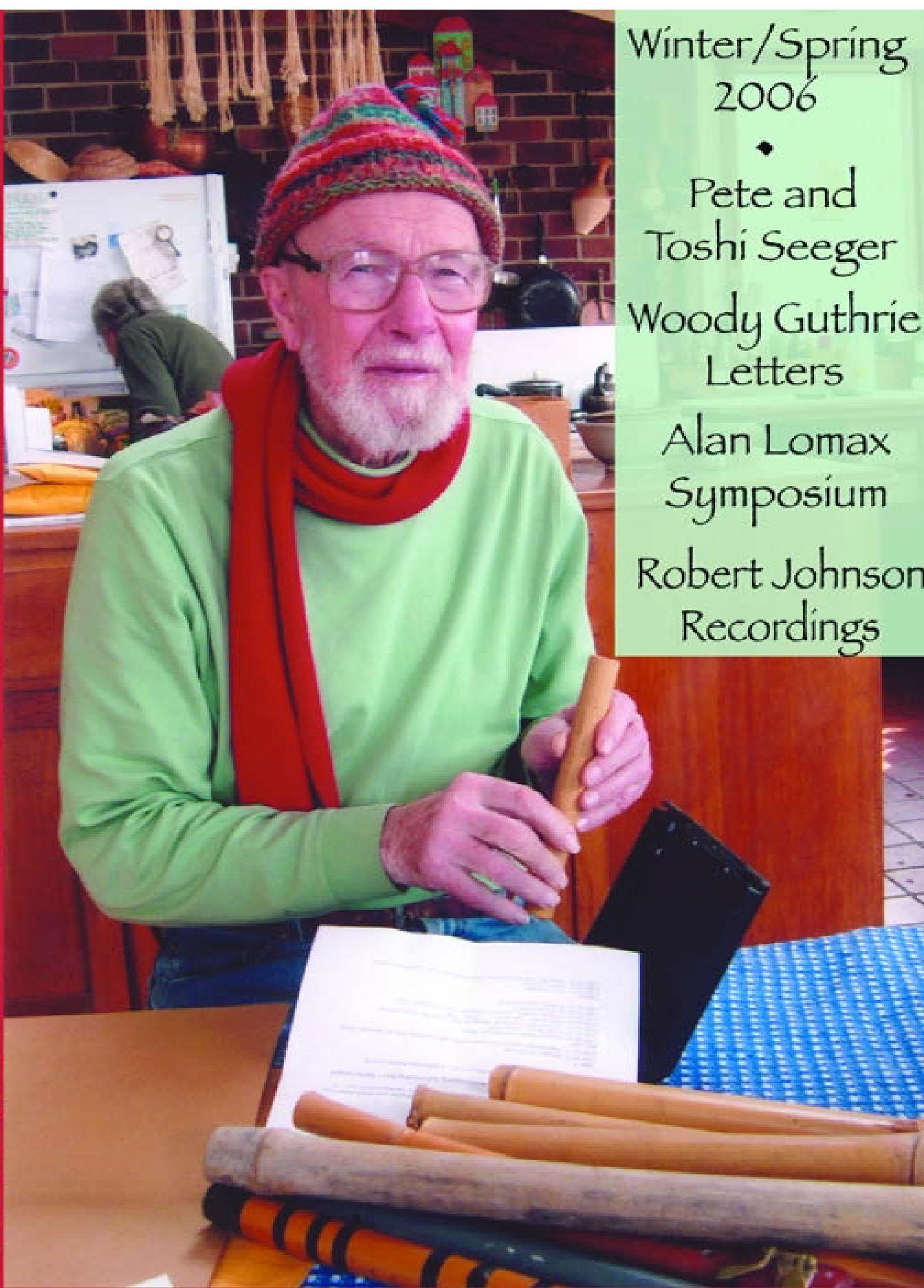


Folklife Center News

Volume 28
Nos. 1-2



Winter/Spring
2006

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Pete and
Toshi Seeger
Woody Guthrie
Letters

Alan Lomax
Symposium

Robert Johnson
Recordings

American Folklife Center
The Library of Congress





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 the Archive of Folk Culture, 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.

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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>

The Folklife Information Service is a cooperative announcement program of the American Folklore Society and the American Folklife Center. It is available only on the American Folklore Society's server: www.afsnet.org The service provides timely information on the field of folklore and folklife, including training and professional opportunities, and news items of national interest.

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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.

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Cover: Pete Seeger displays his collection of recorders and flutes. Toshi Seeger is in the background. This photo was taken while AFC director Peggy Bulger and AFC coordinator of acquisitions David Taylor were making arrangements to acquire the Seegers' collection of ethnographic films. See the full story on page 3. Photo: Peggy Bulger. Source: American Folklife Center

The Incomplete Filmmakers: The Little-Known Career of Pete and Toshi Seeger



Pete and Toshi Seeger at the Library of Congress in February 2006. Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

By Todd Harvey and
Stephen Winick

The world knows Pete Seeger as a pioneer of the folksong revival, not as a filmmaker. He has always been ready to share his musical experiences with interviewers, and has even written a book about his musical career, *The Incomplete Folksinger*. As a result, his time with such groups as The Almanac Singers and The Weavers, his solo career as a folk musician, and his social activism are all very well documented. It is generally not well known, however, that Pete and Toshi, his wife of more than

sixty years, are both excellent cinematographers. Throughout Pete's career, Toshi has preferred to remain in the background, helping Pete manage the many demands on his time, so interviews with her are rarely published. It was with great pleasure, therefore, that members of the American Folklife Center staff were able to interview both Pete and Toshi about their brief but important career in ethnographic filmmaking. On February 6, 2006, both Seegers visited the Center to speak about their film collection, which the Center acquired in 2004 (see *FCN* 26, no. 1, winter 2004, pp. 9–10).

The Pete and Toshi Seeger Film Collection contains hundreds of reels of film footage shot by the Seegers between 1955 and 1965. Since acquiring the films, the AFC has sought an opportunity to interview Pete and Toshi about their work as filmmakers and about the context of the individual films. That prospect became reality in early February, when Pete was scheduled to perform in Washington. The Library's Information Technology Services agreed to film the interview to broadcast standards, with the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division providing its studio.



Pete Seeger in the 1950s, around the start of his filmmaking career. Photo: Moss Photo, New York. Source: American Folklife Center Ray M. Lawless Collection

During the two-hour interview, AFC director Peggy Bulger and collection curator Todd Harvey showed the Seegers about a dozen clips from their films and solicited their comments. The interview shed new light on the film collection as well as the activities of the Seegers during this period.

The Seegers experienced significant changes to their lives from 1950 to 1955. In 1950 Pete and the Weavers had reached their zenith, with performances in important venues and hit records on the charts. In 1952, however, testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) claimed that the Weavers were communists. Like thousands of other artists, they found themselves on the blacklist, a list of Americans with alleged ties to communism. In the political atmosphere of the 1950s, many managers and promoters ceased to associate with blacklisted artists, for fear of ostracism within the entertainment industry and boycotts from audiences. The Weavers could no longer find work, and were forced to disband.

By 1955 Pete and Toshi had moved from New York City to a log cabin in rural Beacon, New York. Pete had become a barnstorming solo performer to support

his family; he played at small venues such as summer camps and college campuses, which had less to fear from the blacklist. 1955 was also the year Pete himself was subpoenaed to testify before HUAC. Details of his testimony and the ensuing seven years of litigation are given in David Dunaway's biography *How Can I Keep from Singing* (1981). In essence, Pete's scrupulous adherence to his ideals made the time even harder for him than for most artists called to testify. While most artists brought before this committee either informed on others or cited the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, Pete felt either course went against his ideals. The Fifth Amendment protects people from giving self-incriminating testimony. Pete believed that singing and saying whatever he wanted was a

right protected by the First Amendment, and that therefore to admit singing communist songs did not amount to self-incrimination. He instead challenged the anti-communists by citing the First Amendment, which protects the freedoms of speech and association. This tactic pointed out to the committee the uncomfortable fact that communism itself, both as an ideology and as a political affiliation, was protected under the First Amendment. It resulted in Pete's 1961 indictment for contempt of Congress, which was dismissed on appeal the following year.

This unusual personal and political history was the backdrop to the Seegers' career as filmmakers. In the February 6 interview, Pete talked about the start of that career: "Folklore Research Films was a tiny little nonprofit corporation which started in about 1955. I had applied for a Guggenheim some three years earlier to do this job, of filming the banjo and other techniques, and I was completely inexperienced and didn't apply for more than three thousand dollars. Anyone in movies said, 'This person doesn't know anything about movies, so don't waste your money.' So I didn't get any grant. But I'd started making money

singing in colleges, and we were able to buy the camera and buy some film."

"I was thinking, not to make money at this," he continued, "but to do something which would be of importance to folklorists around the world. If they were curious about American banjo-picking, they couldn't learn about it from just listening to tape recordings."

The September 1955 issue of the *Ethno-Musicology Newsletter* contains an open letter from the Seegers, which provides insight into their plans:

We have embarked upon a study of American folk instrumental techniques using a 16mm sound motion picture camera, and would welcome correspondence from others in the field concerning the form of such films as well as how best to make them generally available. . . . This year we are sticking fairly close to home (New York State), and while learning to use the camera have completed a 30-minute film on the technique of the 5-string banjo; we also have miscellaneous shots of blues guitar players, fiddlers, harmonicas, washtub basses, and so on. Next year, if funds prove sufficient, field trips will be taken. Aside from our needs to learn how to make high quality films, as well as the need for funds to permit more rapid progress, our most pressing problem is establishing a central library where all such films—not only ours, but others from every country—can be made available to students. (p. 17)

Although both Seegers shared duties as filmmakers, Toshi was more often behind the camera. "I was lucky that I had a natural eye for composition," she recalled. "I didn't struggle over it. My mother was a photographer, and I was brought up with various photographers." As a result, her first attempts at using some of the equipment went very well indeed, and she commented on this while looking critically at her own footage: "I must say, considering I'd never used a zoom camera, considering I'd never done any of this, I didn't make that mistake that most amateur people make of moving too fast, all over the place!" She was also generous in praise of Pete: "Pete was as good a camera person as I was," she said.

We showed the Seegers an excerpt from their film *The 5-String Banjo: An American Folk Instrumental Technique* (1955), which Toshi identified as having been made in their log cabin. Banjo students may already have known Pete's booklet (1948) and Folkways recording (1954), both titled *How to Play the 5-String Banjo*. A film version, released under the Seegers' own Folklore Research Films, followed. Toshi referred to this short movie when explaining the start of her career in cinematography:

The way I got in the whole thing, everything, was getting married to Peter. And then he has all these brilliant ideas, which I know nothing about. On The 5-String Banjo, that was one of the very first [films we made]. He says, "Here's a camera." And I had a brand new baby, Tinya. So in between things, I'd figure out what button to push, and push when he told me to push, and nurse the baby in between.

Subsequent Folklore Research Films include *The Country Fiddle* (1958), *Many Colored Paper* (1959), and *Finger Games* (1959). This last film, *Finger Games*, shows Toshi Seeger's mother teaching finger games to a group of children; it elicited interesting comments from the Seegers. Pete explained that he made the movie for "nursery school teachers, or conceivably any parent who wanted to learn finger games, more than one or two. These things appear in books, but without the motions, you don't really get the whole [game]." Originally, the Seegers envisioned a whole series of films documenting a range of children's play activities. "Theoretically, there could be other people in other countries, who were interested in the same subjects, and we could exchange films with them. But we never got that far." In the end, they only released a single ten-minute film. "It was [made] on the porch of a summer camp where Toshi's mother and father were the caretakers, in Beacon, New York," Pete explained. "The children were our three children, and our niece and nephews."

Pete's concert tours also provided opportunities for filming. At one point during the interview,

Peggy Bulger asked about footage of his friend, bluesman Big Bill Broonzy. Pete replied:

This was the last time that Bill ever sang, because he said "Pete, I'm going under the knife tomorrow." He had throat cancer. "So, do you have that camera with you? Why don't you film me?" Again, I was very unprepared. I didn't know what to ask him to do It was a wonderful little summer camp, which still exists in the far southwestern corner of the state of Michigan called Camp Circle Pines, a little cooperative camp Back then [1957], . . . I took the camera with me when I went out [on tour]. I did know that Bill had been hired to be a kind of artist in residence, and sing with the kids. And that's why I filmed him there. And I got close-ups on his fingers, and he sang just a few verses. And it's true, the next day he went under the knife and he never sang again, and he died a year later.

Another of Pete's friends in the blues world provided him with his most challenging film-editing job. It started when a television station agreed to make a half-hour program about Leadbelly. However, the only footage available of the great blues singer was from a 1935 *March of Time* newsreel, in which Leadbelly and John Lomax reenacted their first meeting and their later relationship. The newsreel footage showed Leadbelly singing while dressed in prison stripes, emphasizing that he had first come to prominence as a singer while in prison for attempted murder and other crimes. Leadbelly had always been uncomfortable and ashamed of that image, and the Seegers wanted to avoid using it if they could. Luckily, they found another option. When filmmaker John Cohen told Pete: "Out in Los Angeles I met a man who has some



Pete and Toshi Seeger in 1985. Photo: Robert Corwin. Source: American Folklife Center Robert Corwin Collection

Leadbelly movies in his closet," the Seegers sprang to action.

In 1944, Pete explained, Leadbelly had gone to California for a movie role. The idea was that he play himself:

They thought of Bing Crosby playing the part of John Lomax. It was going to be based on [Lomax's] book Adventures of a Ballad Hunter. Well, the movie never got made, and Leadbelly eventually came back east, disappointed. But while he was there an artist [Blanding Sloan], said, "Leadbelly, I've got a movie camera. Would you come to my house? I'd like to film you."

Leadbelly said, "Don't put any prison stripes on me or anything like that." He dressed in a nice suit and a bow tie and sang two songs.

But [Sloan and his co-worker, Wah Ming Chang,] did persuade Leadbelly . . . they said, "Come out back and sing like you might be outdoors. Nothing but you, and a straw hat on your head, and the blue sky behind you." And that's the way they did "Pick a Bale of Cotton." So they did three songs in total.

Pete's task of editing the film was made vastly more complicated by the fact that the footage was silent. Leadbelly was filmed playing along with his records, with the idea that the recorded song could be inserted as the film's audio track. The challenge was to syn-



The Seegers with AFC Staff during the 2006 interview. L–R: Jonathan Gold, Pete Seeger, Guha Shankar, Toshi Seeger, Todd Harvey. Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

chronize the audio from Leadbelly's records with the silent film footage, and at least one professional film editor found the task too daunting. Pete sat down in his barn with his Movieola, a film-editing machine that cost the considerable sum of three thousand dollars. "It took me two weeks," he remembered. "I kept cutting back and forth, with lots of cuts, so if it would get a quarter of a second out of synch, I'd cut it, and get it back in synch. Every time I cut, I could get it back in synch again So with those three songs, and me singing and talking about Leadbelly, and some still pictures of Leadbelly, came a half-hour show."

The Seegers' copy of the resulting program, *Two Links of the Chain*, can be dated to about 1963. Ironically, more than thirty years after Leadbelly's Hollywood career fizzled, Paramount made a biographical movie about Leadbelly rather than John Lomax. In *Leadbelly* (1976), Roger E. Mosley played Leadbelly, and James Brodhead played a supporting role as Lomax. Some of the footage from *Two Links of the Chain* inspired a scene of Mosley playing and singing outdoors in a straw hat. Subsequently, in 1985 Film Images released Pete's

edited version of the Sloan and Chang Leadbelly footage as a separate film, entitled *Three Songs by Leadbelly*.

Some of the most interesting footage in the collection was shot during the Seegers' 1963–64 world trip, which took them to four continents. Things had brightened somewhat for the Seegers in 1962 when Peter, Paul and Mary had a hit with "If I Had a Hammer," a song written by Pete with his Weavers bandmate, Lee Hays. The next year, Pete presided over the Newport Folk Festival and swapped topical songs in a workshop with Bob Dylan. Still, the effects of the blacklist continued to stymie him. Again and again television producers of programs such as *Hootenanny* refused to book him. As a result, the Seegers decided to spend the year touring internationally and making ethnographic films in their spare time. Dunaway (1981: 217) captures the moment:

They told the press they wanted to travel as a family before the kids grew too old. Interestingly enough, the bulk of their baggage turned out to be movie equipment. They were determined to film folk music in authentic settings, not in front of screaming college kids.

Just before he left, Hootenanny offered him a spot if he would sign a loyalty oath. "Dear ABC," he replied brusquely: "I just finished a seven-year court battle to prove the principle that such oaths are unconstitutional, and I was acquitted and vindicated." Next to this he noted: "Release after departure" and "Leave country without a stir."

Pete and Toshi, along with children Danny (16), Mika (14), and Tinya (8), departed around August 20, 1963, and returned around June 5, 1964. Their itinerary was approximately as follows:

August 20, 1963: Leave U.S. West Coast
 September 9–11, 1963: American Samoa
 September 11–22, 1963: Australia
 September 23–October 11, 1963: Indonesia
 October 12–November 20, 1963: Japan
 November 21–December 9, 1963: India
 December 12–30, 1963: Kenya and Tanganyika
 December 30, 1963–January 9, 1964: Nigeria and Ghana
 January 12–19, 1964: Italy, Austria, and Switzerland
 January 19–February 15, 1964: Israel
 February 16–23, 1964: England
 March 2–12, 1964: Holland
 March 12–17, 1964: Denmark
 March 17–29, 1964: Czechoslovakia
 March 30–April 8, 1964: Poland
 April 8–May 6, 1964: USSR
 May 6–June 5, 1964: England, Scotland, and Ireland
 June 5, 1964: Return to U.S.

Toshi emphasized during the interview that their world trip was a working tour. "We sang for our supper," she said. In just over nine months, the Seegers visited approximately two dozen countries, performing, giving press and television interviews, and shooting film footage in many of them. The whole family got in on the work; the Seegers' son Danny was the sound engineer, and Tinya carried the battery pack.

The pace of their trip is made clear through correspondence written by Pete and Toshi to Sis Cunningham and Gordon Friesen, the editors of *Broadside*; the papers

are currently in the possession of Ronald Cohen. In a March 18, 1964, letter from Prague, Czechoslovakia, for example, Pete writes:

At a conference in the hotel lobby Toshi and I find out they plan to keep us busy: nine concerts and a radio symposium on folk music, all in ten days. They want me to do more concerts, because these nine are all sold out, but I have to be firm: if I try too much I'll get hoarse. I know from sad experience.

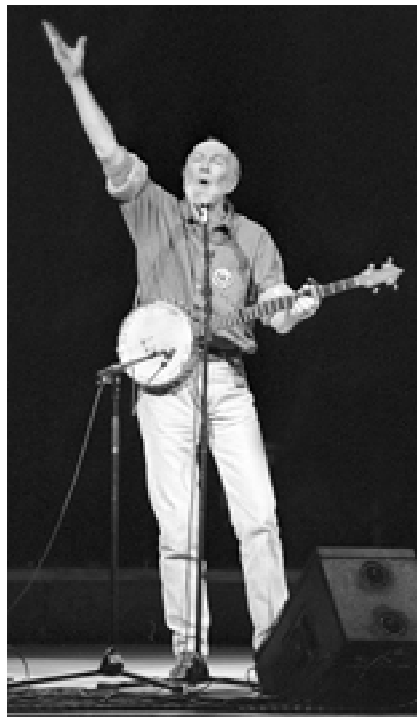
A few days later (March 22) Pete laments a cold, and describes a concert:

Last night I had my first concert [in Czechoslovakia], with a shaky weak voice. Plunged bravely on, with help of a very nice woman interpreter. Audience exceedingly friendly, but very shy. Like blues especially. Listened politely through my singing of strange and unfamiliar things. Stood clapping for ten minutes at end. O, maybe seven. But I was mightily flattered. Maybe partly it was because I was the first American performer in 18 years to have sung in Brno. But I could not get them to open up and really sing.

Pete's concert schedule in the USSR during April was similar:

I'm scheduled for 15 concerts in 5 cities. They are not sending me as far east as I hoped, but we will get down to Tbilisi, in the Caucasus . . . All concerts are sold out. A young woman in a fur coat stopped me in the lobby of the concert hall: "Mr. Seeger? Why aren't you giving more concerts? I came in from 60 miles, and cannot get even one ticket." I apologize, but can only tell her to check the TV schedule. Last night Toshi and I were interviewed briefly on the evening news program (60 million viewers, I was told) and I sang three songs.

Still, the April schedule did leave them some time to visit places they wanted to see, especially those Pete had sung about. One such visit occurred on April 21. "We were in Yalta, a vacation spot on the Black Sea . . . part of the Ukraine," Pete remembered during the AFC interview. "I found that the town of Dzhanikoy was right near. I'd sung a song about Dzhanikoy for years. It was a song



Pete Seeger in 1997. Photo: Robert Corwin. Source: American Folklife Center Robert Corwin Collection

in Yiddish. We got our driver to drive up there, and we met a man who remembered, 'Yes, this song was written in 1926. There were a lot of young people making up songs then.'

One highlight of Pete's trip was his attendance at Moscow's May Day parade. In a letter written from Moscow, he observed:

Every single store is closed; in the center of the city all streets are roped off, and there is not a car to be seen. We have special passes which allow us through police lines, and make our way to Red Square. On the sloping pavement near the Kremlin walls is space for about 30,000 people to attend. Already the square is filled with ten thousand troops at attention. Well, think I to myself, this is a May Day parade, all right. A parade to end all parades.

Two years earlier Pete couldn't buy his way onto American television and was indicted by a Congressional committee for his political beliefs. During the world trip he had performed for hundreds of thousands of listeners (one hundred thousand at a single concert in Calcutta), his face and

music had been broadcast to tens, perhaps hundreds, of millions through television programs and interviews. And through it all, Pete and Toshi made precious films.

The traditions Pete and Toshi documented on their trip include a wide range of music, song, and dance from around the world. There are films of Ghanaian fishermen singing rowing songs and Indonesian dancers performing court dances. There are also films of important individuals within music traditions, such as Irish fiddler John Doherty and Indian sitar player Imrat Khan—the latter at the very start of an illustrious career. There is even footage documenting the globalization and creolization of folk and popular music, a topic of much concern to ethnomusicologists today; the best example is the Seegers' footage of the Wagon Aces, a Japanese bluegrass band.

The Seegers continued to make films for a brief period after their return to the United States in 1964. The last film in the collection, *Afro-American Work Songs in a Texas Prison*, was made in 1965 at the Texas State Penitentiary in Huntsville. Toshi was the cinematographer. Pete explained that folklorist Bruce Jackson arranged for the Seegers to film. Jackson was concerned about the disappearance of work songs in the prison system following a period of automation of many of the tasks once performed by work gangs. "It was the last crew that knew how to sing the old songs," Pete said.

Throughout their decade of filming Pete and Toshi generally shared the work, but when the long hours over an editing machine began to take its toll on his eyes, Pete gave up the medium. Later, he suggested Toshi preserve her eyesight and give it up, too. She agreed. To some extent, Pete said in the interview, he regrets having asked her to stop, since he believes she could have been a great filmmaker had she continued.

Of the roughly five hundred and thirty items in the collection, thus far only about forty edited films have been transferred to a preservation format and then to DVD for public use—about ten hours of material. These composites are

the films that the Seegers' Folklore Research Films, Film Images, and other commercial companies released over the years. These films, a subset of which was issued on VHS and DVD by Stefan Grossman in 1996 as *A Musical Journey: The Films of Pete, Toshi & Dan Seeger, 1957–1964*, can be viewed in the Folklife Reading Room. An index to all films available for reference viewing may be obtained by visiting or contacting the AFC reference desk.

The remaining elements of the collection include original footage

and accompanying audiotapes, work prints, negatives, and magnetic tracks. They will be processed in two stages. First, archival staff will rehouse and index the elements at the same time, determining exactly which reels need to be preserved, which are copies, etc. Second, all of the material will be transferred to a preservation format, and finally to DVD for reference viewing.

In addition to its ethnographic and ethnomusicological value, the film collection sheds new light on the lives of the Seegers, including Pete's career from 1955 to 1965. The

recent interview will serve as a research tool, but it also provides a glimpse into a lasting partnership. The Seegers have been married since 1943—more than six decades of professional and personal partnership, of childrearing, family responsibilities, and intellectual interaction. "The last sixty-four years," Toshi claimed, "is nothing but being full of ideas." Pete corrected her, saying they had only been married sixty-three years.

Toshi shrugged him off with characteristic wit: "We must have kissed beforehand!"

Society for Ethnomusicology Honors Hickerson and McCulloh

By Judith Gray

Since 1998, the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) has been awarding Honorary Memberships to people who, over the years, have made special contributions to the life of the Society. At its celebratory 50th Anniversary meeting in Atlanta (November 17–20, 2005), the Society made five such awards. Two of the recipients—Joseph C. Hickerson and Judith McCulloh (as well as their presenters: Judith Gray and Kay Shelemay)—are people with connections to the American Folklife Center, and the encomiums read in Atlanta highlighted their ties both to the Society and to the Center.

Judith Gray, AFC's coordinator of reference services, presented the encomium for Joe Hickerson, focusing on his SEM contributions but also pointing to his invaluable career in the Archive of Folk Culture: "In 1963 he was hired as a reference librarian in the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress, becoming its eighth head in 1974 And with all of his links to scholars, performers, and the media, to traditional as well as the burgeoning folk revival communities, he has been throughout his career an advocate for archiving, bringing to the attention of many audiences the treasures to be found in archival resources and the need to think in terms

of archiving contemporary material for the future." As a performer himself, he has mined song traditions "in order to give them back anew to the communities in which they arose as well as to scholars and the next generation of performers." Given Joe's thirty-five years of service, he is the institutional memory of the

Archive. He has also been the face of the Archive in exhibition spaces for SEM, the American Folklore Society, the Folk Alliance, and sister organizations, roles that he continues to play to some extent in retirement.

The encomium for Judith McCulloh was presented by Kay Shelemay, member (1998–2004, 2006–) and former Chair (2002–2004) of the AFC Board of Trustees. In her statement, Shelemay said, "Judy McCulloh's unique contribution to yet another domain, beyond her worthy activities in SEM and her lifelong work as a folklorist, editor, and administrator . . . must be highlighted as well. Judy McCulloh has been a great



AFC's coordinator of reference services, Judith Gray, presents the encomium for Joseph Hickerson, retired head of the Archive of Folk Culture. Photo: Alan Burdette, Source: Society for Ethnomusicology

leader of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, a commitment to which she has given untold hours of service and creative advocacy as a congressional appointee to that board between 1986 and 2004."

"During recent years, Judy has continued to help guide the AFC through a transition into a new, expanded role of leadership in American folklife," Shelemay continued. "Everyone who values the American Folklife Center owes Judy McCulloh their gratitude."

The Center celebrates the achievements of Joe Hickerson and Judy McCulloh, and takes pleasure in the honors given them by the Society for Ethnomusicology.

AFC Symposium Celebrates Alan Lomax Legacy in Story and Song



Alan Lomax at Mississippi Festival, 1979. Photo: Bill Ferris. Source: American Folklife Center

By James Hardin

Alan Lomax had a genius for discovering genius. In his travels throughout the United States, the legendary American folklorist (1915–2002) met and recorded blues musicians Son House, Sid Hemphill, David “Honeyboy” Edwards, Muddy Waters, and Big Bill Broonzy. He was the first to record Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, and Aunt Molly Jackson. In Washington, D.C., in 1938, working at the Library of Congress as assistant-in-charge of the Archive of American Folk-Song, he recorded the flamboyant jazz pianist and composer Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton.

In a career that spanned sixty years, beginning in the 1930s, the indefatigable collector and advocate for folk culture and expression, working alone and with his father, John A. Lomax, his sister Bess, Zora Neale Hurston, Mary Elizabeth Barnicle, John Work, and others, conducted recording expeditions in the United States, as well

as in the Caribbean, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, and Spain. With the material he collected, Lomax produced folksong anthologies, films, and radio and television programs. He developed a system for analyzing and studying folk music and dance traditions; and devoted himself tirelessly to disseminating the creative work of remarkable performers and cultural communities, using the latest technologies and media outlets.

On January 18–20, 2006, the American Folklife Center (AFC), in cooperation with the Association for Cultural Equity in New York City (ACE), sponsored a symposium entitled “The Lomax Legacy: Folklore in a Globalizing Century,” celebrating the life and work of Alan Lomax and AFC’s 2004 acquisition of the Lomax Collection, a vast quantity of documentary materials Lomax amassed after he left his position at the Library of Congress in 1942.

At the opening session of the symposium, keynote speaker Bill Ferris introduced the central theme

of Lomax’s life when he said, “His greatest legacy will always be his Mississippi field recordings.” Ferris noted the intimate connection between the national library, with its mission to preserve a record of the history and creativity of the American people, and Lomax’s mission to document American and world traditional culture.

“Their worlds are inextricably linked,” said Ferris, who is currently professor of history and senior associate director of the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and former chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. “The Library was a second home for Alan Lomax and his father, John A. Lomax.” Ferris compared the Library’s acquiring the Lomax Collection to the acquisition, in 1815, of Thomas Jefferson’s library, and called the two men “icons of American culture.”

“The Library of Congress has had a long and valued association with Alan Lomax,” said Associate Librarian for Library Services Deanna Marcum, who welcomed symposium participants. Marcum noted that Lomax’s lifelong mission—to give voice to the world’s many diverse cultural communities through the use of the latest technology—coincides with several recent initiatives of the Library of Congress, such as the Global Gateways Project, which is providing access to the Library’s rich international collections and to the resources of other libraries and archives throughout the world.

Peggy Bulger, director of the American Folklife Center, said the AFC’s acquisition of the Lomax Collection “brought together under one roof the entire body of Lomax’s work, from the time he began making field expeditions with his father to the end of his



Symposium keynote speakers John Szwed, of Yale and Columbia universities, and Bill Ferris, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

long career." She explained that the purpose of the symposium was "to examine the persistence of past folklore scholarship in the present, and the resonance of Alan Lomax's pioneering work for scholars today." Symposium coordinator Guha Shankar added that the AFC wanted to find out "who is working now in the same arenas where Lomax worked, and how their work is similar to or diverges from his."

A diverse group of scholars, cultural workers, and media producers gathered in the Library's Mumford Room on the morning of January 19, to reflect on Lomax's life and work, and discuss their own research, publications, productions, and advocacy. Panelists discussed the care and management of the Lomax Collection materials (including issues of preservation, cataloging, and access); intellectual property rights, with a special emphasis on the rights of traditional performers and indigenous communities; Lomax's theories of music and dance, which he called cantometrics and choreometrics; and the dissemination of collection materials through radio and television broadcasts, published recordings, and the Internet.

At a time when many folklorists were concerned primarily with

song and story texts, paying little attention to music, dance, or the performers themselves, Lomax fell in love with the intense vitality and creativity of traditional life and sought to capture that experience in film and recorded sound, both to preserve it for future generations and to share it with the world. His mission was "to get the best singers and storytellers, and get them heard everywhere," said Robert Baron, folklorist at the New York State Council on the Arts. "He was bigger than life," said Lomax biographer John Szwed, who is professor of anthropology

and African American studies at Yale University and Louis Armstrong professor of jazz at Columbia University. "He had a fan's passion, even a teenage fan's passion."

William Westerman, director of the Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial in Chicago, Illinois, underlined Lomax's concern that "mass media was supplanting local music traditions and local voices." According to Robert Baron, Lomax believed that a profit-motivated society destroys diverse cultures. Lomax prodded and encouraged folklorists to advocate for the folk, provide access to traditions to a broad audience, return copies of documentary material to the places of origin, and disseminate generally recordings of traditional culture. Lomax believed in the "inherent genius and viability of every cultural community,"

said Jake Homiak, director of the Smithsonian's Anthropology Collection and Archives Program.

According to John Szwed, "Alan's entire extraordinary career is connected inextricably to his creation of recordings." Field recordings had a "spiritual quality" that could not be experienced in field notes and written accounts. They provided liberating outlets for both performer and collector. In a number of Lomax's recordings, for example, the performers address public officials, such as their state governors or President Roosevelt, speaking of their daily lives. Describing his own work in Carriacou, Grenada, Don Hill, professor of anthropology at State University College at Oneonta, New York, praised the recordings Lomax made in the Caribbean in the 1960s. Lomax "recorded the right people at the right time," he said, for many of the island traditions Lomax captured have now declined.

In his keynote address on January 20, John Szwed raised an ongoing question regarding the publication of field recordings when he asked, "Who owns the recordings, the performer or the recordist?" AFC director Peggy Bulger said that the related and larger question—"Who owns culture?"—increasingly confronts individuals and nations today, as they consider matters of intellectual property rights, ownership and control, universal sharing of



Outside the Library's Mumford Room, on January 19, 2006, Anna Lomax Wood, Director of the Association for Cultural Equity; Peggy Bulger, Director of the American Folklife Center; and Deanna Marcum, Associate Librarian for Library Services. All three made presentations at the symposium. Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

knowledge, and dissemination on the Internet.

Preston Hardison, representing the Tulalip Tribes of Washington, warned that some native peoples are not interested in having their culture documented and disseminated. The concept of property and culture ownership is foreign to indigenous peoples, who regard themselves as custodians rather than owners. Hardison said that institutions need to establish long-term relationships with tribes and work out mutually agreeable procedures for using their materials.

In addition to the formal symposium, there were three public events. On January 18, Lomax biographer John Szwed presented a lecture on Jelly Roll Morton in the Coolidge Auditorium, where Lomax interviewed and recorded the great jazz pianist in 1938. Composer and pianist Dave Burrell played examples of Morton's work, as well as one of his own.

Rob Bamberger, host of the public radio program "Hot Jazz Saturday Night," introduced the lecture-concert. Morton claimed to have invented jazz in the early 1900s, Bamberger said, but at the time he met Lomax he was playing in a U Street nightclub in Washington, D.C., and was "isolated musically and historically" from the newer musical styles, such as swing. For him, the recording session was an opportunity "to set the record straight" according to his own view of musical tradition. All nine hours of the historic recording session are now available in a new, uncut, unexpurgated release from Rounder Records, "Jelly Roll Morton: the Complete Library of Congress Recordings by Alan Lomax."

At an evening program in the Mumford Room, filmmaker John Bishop presented 'Oss 'Oss, Wee 'Oss, a film made in 1951 by folklorist Peter Kennedy about the annual May Day celebration in Padstow, England. The film featured cinematography by George Pickow, and was written and directed by Alan Lomax. Bishop also showed a film he made of the same event in the same Cornish town, fifty years later.

On the evening of January 19, the National Chorus of the Church of God and Saints of Christ, a tra-



Alan Lomax's image on the screen dominated the room during some presentations. Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

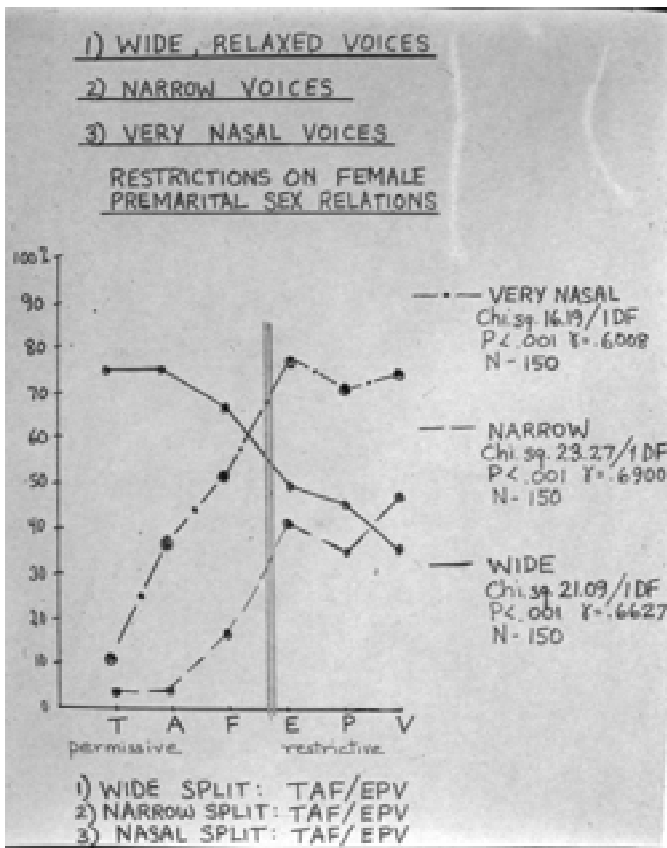
ditional, African American a cappella choir, performed in the Coolidge Auditorium. Alan Lomax had recorded the same church organization's Belleville, Virginia, choir in 1960, while making a film in Colonial Williamsburg. Among the choir members Lomax recorded was Solomon Carey, whose children, Solomon Carey Jr., Aaron Carey, and Sabrina Johnson, presented several songs in honor of their father. One of the Belleville choir members Lomax recorded, Rhonda Jackson, flew from Alaska to attend the concert, and sang several songs with the Careys. Also on the program, singing songs from the Luso-Hispanic tradition collected during her fieldwork in rural Spain and Portugal, was Judith R. Cohen, ethnomusicologist, performer, and professor at York University, Toronto. Cohen's work in Spain today parallels and complements Lomax's field trip in the 1950s.

After a peripatetic career of collecting in the United States and abroad, Alan Lomax settled in New York City and, in 1983, founded the Association for Cultural Equity to preserve, disseminate, and study folk performance traditions from around the world. Both Alan and his father, John A. Lomax, had been

devoted to publishing anthologies to ensure that America's traditional music and songs would not be lost, and such publications as *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (1934), *Our Singing Country* (1938), and *Folk Song: USA* (1946) contributed to and provided resource materials for the folksong revival of the 1950s and 1960s.

At ACE, Lomax continued his own studies; developed his "Global Jukebox," an interactive computer audiovisual system for studying world music and dance; and made arrangements to publish commercial releases of his field recordings, notably through a 1995 contract with Rounder Records. The commercial contracts served the purpose of dissemination and in addition brought in much-needed revenue. As Anna Lomax Wood explained, Alan "got into collaboration with music publishers . . . to support his work."

And, increasingly, that work was noticed: New York author, performer, and radio producer Henry Sapoznik said that Aaron Copeland drew inspiration from Lomax's field recordings. Goffredo Plastino, lecturer in ethnomusicology at the International Centre for Music Studies of the University of Newcastle, United Kingdom,



A cantometrics chart, showing correlations between singing style and sexual behavior in different communities. Cantometrics was one of Lomax's major theoretical contributions to comparative ethnomusicology. Source: American Folklife Center Alan Lomax Collection.

and timely access, and work closely with ACE on all matters of mutual concern and interest.

According to the ACE Website, Alan Lomax was a controversial and complex figure in American life, regarded with affection by many, including those he recorded in the field, resented

by others for his occasional high-handedness. Nick Spitzer, host of the public radio program "American Routes," called him the "gigantic model of the twentieth-century ethnographer," and said, "it is liberating to think of the many different roles he played."

In commenting on Lomax's work as an anthropologist-scholar examining his own materials, filmmaker John Bishop said that Lomax's enthusiasm sometimes triumphed over the need for detached analysis, that "the scientist clashed with his inner poet." Bishop displayed the candor and ironic affection of a family member (he is married to Lomax's niece) with a final enigmatic characterization: "[Alan Lomax] could be very irritating, but he turns out to be right about most things."

James Hardin retired from the Library of Congress in 2004. He lives on Capitol Hill.

pointed out that they were used in Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1971 film *Il Decameron* and, later, in Hollywood films such as *The General's Daughter* (1999) and *O Brother, Where Art Thou* (2000).

Today, the Association for Cultural Equity, under the direction of Alan's daughter, Anna Lomax Wood, carries on Alan Lomax's mission to further what he called "cultural equity," the concept that all local and ethnic cultures and traditions should be represented in the media and the schools. As she explained, "Alan Lomax believed in the importance of making sure cultural materials—especially oral cultural materials—would be available to people. [During Alan's career], we were at a threshold where many of [the cultural expressions that people had developed over many years] were in danger of being flushed away." Now devoted to her father's cause, and handling matters pertaining to licensing the use of materials from the collection, Anna Wood is mindful of her father's high standards and dedication. "He never felt satisfied with his day's work," she said.

The American Folklife Center maintains and provides research access to the Alan Lomax Collection—a treasure house of ethnographic documentation including recordings, manuscripts, photographs, films, and more—the largest of its kind in the world. Collection curator Todd Harvey says the AFC aims to employ the highest standards of archival preservation and conservation, honor the intellectual property rights of the performers, provide consistent

Alan Lomax and filmmaker John Bishop editing films, New York City, probably the 1980s. Photo: Folklore Film. Source: American Folklife Center Alan Lomax Collection.



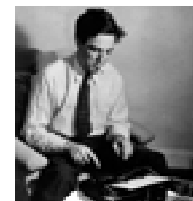
- 1915 Born in Austin, Texas.
- 1929-30 After his junior year at Terrill Preparatory School, in Dallas, Texas, transfers to Choate School, in Wallingford, Connecticut.
- 1931-32 Attends Harvard University.
- 1932 Transfers to University of Texas.
- 1933 Assists his father, John Avery Lomax, on their first recording field trip for the Library of Congress.
- 1933-42 Working alone and with his father, as well as with his sister Bess, Zora Neale Hurston, Mary Elizabeth Barnicle, John Work, and others, records folk and traditional music for the Library of Congress throughout the Southern United States, as well as in New England, Michigan, Wisconsin, New York, Indiana, Ohio, Haiti, and the Bahamas.
- 1934 Publishes, with John A. Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs*.
- 1937-42 Assistant in charge of the Archive of American Folk-Song at the Library of Congress.
- 1938 Records Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton in the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress; publishes *Our Singing Country*, with John A. Lomax.
- 1939-40 Writes and directs "American Folk Songs," a twenty-six-week survey for the CBS radio series *American School of the Air*.
- 1942-46 Serves in the U.S. Army.
- 1948 Host and writer of *On Top of Old Smokey*, folk music program on the Mutual Broadcasting radio network
- 1950-58 While living in England, records the traditional music of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Makes numerous radio and television broadcasts of folk music for the BBC.
- 1952-53 Records traditional music in Spain.
- 1954-55 Records traditional music in Italy.
- 1959 Back in the United States, on a major field trip, records traditions in Virginia, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, and the Georgia Sea Islands.
- 1962 On a six-month field trip to the West Indies, records traditional music of English-, French-, and Spanish-speaking Caribbean, as well as of the Hindu community in Trinidad.
- 1978-85 Makes numerous field trips to Mississippi, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Arizona, and Brooklyn, New York, to videotape traditional culture for the PBS television series *American Patchwork*, broadcast in 1990.
- 1983 Founds Association for Cultural Equity, which is chartered by the State of New York.
- 1986 Receives the National Medal of Arts from the National Endowment for the Arts.
- 1989-94 Develops the "Global Jukebox," an interactive computer audiovisual system for studying the music and dance of the world.
- 1993 Receives the National Book Award for *The Land Where the Blues Began* (Pantheon; reissued in 2002 by the New Press), an account of his work in the South from the 1930s to the 1980s.
- 2000 Named a "Living Legend" by the Librarian of Congress.
- 2002 Dies in Holiday, Florida, at the age of 87.



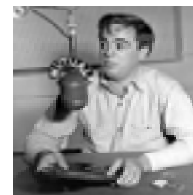
Lomax records "Jelly Roll" Morton in 1938.



Lomax playing the guitar in about 1940



Lomax at the typewriter in 1942



Lomax on the air circa 1948



Sid Hemphill and Lucius Smith, Senatobia, Mississippi, 1959. Photo: Alan Lomax



Lomax gives a lecture in 1974.



Lomax receives the National Medal of Arts from president Ronald Reagan.



Lomax and his daughter Anna at the Library of Congress in 2000. Photo: James Hardin

Jelly Roll Morton photo courtesy of Rounder Records
 All other photos are from the American Folklife Center Alan Lomax Collection

American Folklife Center

HOMEGROWN 2006

The Music of America

Ethnic and Regional Music and Dance Concerts from the Library of Congress

Each year, the Homegrown concert series presents the very best of traditional music and dance from a variety of folk cultures thriving in the United States. To make sure we are presenting the very best artists from all regions of the country, AFC works closely with state folklorists in each state, who advise us on artists and styles of performance that are important in their regions. The performances are documented and become part of the permanent collections of the Library of Congress for future generations to enjoy and study. The concerts are held once a month from April through November; this year's concerts are listed below. All concerts are free of charge and require no tickets for admission. Concerts will be presented from noon to 1 P.M. in the Thomas

Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, 10 First St. S.E., Washington, D.C. The closest Metro stops are Capitol South (blue and orange lines) and Union Station (red line).

April 12: David and Levon Ayriyan—Armenian music from Rhode Island

David Ayriyan is the inheritor of a long family tradition in music. He learned to play the violin and the kemancha from his father and from such illustrious masters as Nefton Gregorian. Mr. Ayriyan is a true master with an impressive list of performances both as a soloist and as an instrumentalist with international symphony orchestras. His astounding playing never ceases to enthrall audiences. Mr. Ayriyan plays Armenian dance music, and will be accompanied by his son on the dumbek, a Middle Eastern drum. The kemancha is one of the oldest stringed instruments from the Middle East. Played in ancient Persia, it has continued to be used for both classical and popular repertoires in such areas as Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is a three-stringed or four-stringed instrument played with a bow, held upright like a cello.

May 23: James "Super Chikan" Johnson and Richard

Christman—Blues Guitar from Mississippi

Sprinkled with stories about life in the Mississippi Delta, the music of James "Super Chikan" Johnson has been heard from Rovigo, Italy, to Russia, from Dakar, Senegal, to Dayton, Ohio. An energetic and exciting performer in the Delta blues tradition, he offers a variety of original and traditional music, spanning the blues spectrum from country to contemporary. Performing solo or with his band, "The Fighting Cocks," Johnson gives memorable performances to audiences from juke joints to elementary schools. His debut album, *Blues Come Home to Roost*, received wide critical acclaim, including three Handy Awards. He has released three CDs and was a 2004 recipient of the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts.

June 21: The River Boys Polka Band—Dutch Hop Polka music from Nebraska

Robert Schmer (accordion), Dave Beitz (hammered dulcimer), Jerry Hergenreder (trombone, vocals), and Steve Deines (bass, vocals) make up the River Boys Polka Band. They have played traditional Dutch Hop dance music together for ten years. All four have performed at traditional weddings, anniversaries, and other German Russian celebrations for thirty-five years or more in various groups. The term "Dutch Hop" can be used generically to describe all of the traditional dance music of the Germans from Russia in Nebraska, eastern Colorado, and Wyoming.



James "Super Chikan" Johnson. Source: Mississippi Arts Commission



The Gannon Family.

However, specifically, Dutch Hop is the name for a unique, quick-tempo polka dance that includes a slight hop not present in the polkas of other ethnic traditions. This hop, and the inclusion of the hammered dulcimer, give the Dutch Hop its unique, lilting sound. In addition to the dulcimer, the other typical instruments in today's Dutch Hop bands are piano accordion, trombone, and electric bass guitar.

July 26: Natasinh Dancers and Musicians—Lao music and dance from Iowa

Music in Laos is ubiquitous. It is influenced by Indian, Chinese, Khmer, Thai, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, and can be heard at Buddhist Temple functions, at rituals and festivals, and for social events to accompany sung poetry, dance, and religious rituals. The instruments used to accompany and complement classical dance include the *lanath* (curved wooden xylophone), *lanath oum* (bass xylophone), *khongvong* (gong circle), *khoy* (flute), *gong* (drum), *khene* (mouth organ made of bamboo reeds), and *ching* (small hand cymbals). Inpanh Thavonekham, a 2005 Master Artist in the Iowa Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program, plays with the Natasinh musicians, who will accompany the Natasinh dance troupe. He also makes a variety of traditional Lao

wooden instruments. Born in Atapeu in southern Laos, Inpanh moved to Vientiane, the capital, at the age of ten. He and his family fled Laos in 1979 for a refugee camp in Thailand, and on April 17, 1980, Inpanh came to Des Moines, IA.

August 16: Mary Louise Defender Wilson and Keith Bear—Sioux and Mandan Hidatsa storytelling and music from North Dakota

Mary Louise Defender Wilson, also known by her Dakotah name, Gourd Woman-Wagmuhawin (wha' gmoo ha wi'), was born in 1930 on the Standing Rock (Sioux) Indian Reservation of

North Dakota. She has spent a lifetime telling stories and performing songs and dances about the life, land, and legends of the Dakotah (Sioux) and Hidatsa people. Mary Louise first heard these stories at home from her family, especially her grandfather and her mother.

Keith Bear's name in the Nu E'ta (Mandan) language means Northern Lights, or "He Makes the Sky Burn with Great Flame." A self-taught flute player, Bear has been performing since 1986. His critically acclaimed performances include traditional storytelling and the sacred Buffalo Dance, a ceremony which only honored tribal members may perform. During the summer of 1995, Bear made his professional acting debut in the feature film, "Dakota Sunrise." Born and educated in North Dakota, Bear lives on the Fort Berthold Reservation.

September 20: 2006 NEA National Heritage Fellow—TBA

The River Boys Polka Band.

October 18: Sonny Burgess and the Pacers—Rockabilly music from Arkansas

Sonny Burgess's music spans five decades of airplay, concerts, dance parties, and radio shows. An original recording artist with Sun records, he recorded classic songs such as "Red Headed Woman" and "We Wanna Boogie" in the style now known as Rockabilly. Rockabilly is an exciting blend of the blues, country, and gospel, and was an important building block of 1950s Rock and Roll. Burgess and fellow band members put on a famously energetic rock and roll show, originally in their home region of northeastern Arkansas. In the 1950s they joined Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Billy Lee Riley, Charlie Rich, Johnny Cash, and many others on regional tours in local school gyms, promoting their releases on Sun Records. Sonny Burgess and the Pacers were known not only for their music, but for their acrobatic stage shows. They continue to perform regularly, and were inducted into the Rockabilly Hall Of Fame in 2002.

November 15: The Gannon Family—Irish music and dance from Missouri

Helen and Patrick Gannon emigrated from Ireland in 1967. Since then, they have brought traditional Irish music, song, and dance to thousands of children and families nationwide. They are also accomplished teachers, sharing their tra-



dition each week with over one hundred current students in the St. Louis Irish Arts school of music, song, and dance. Their students have won over thirty-five all-Ireland Championship medals, and sixty-six Congressional award medals, fourteen of which are gold medals. This concert will present three generations of an accomplished musical family. Patrick was the all-Ireland champion on harmonica in 1980 and 1981, and

Helen became the first commissioned Irish Dance teacher in Missouri in 1987. Helen and Patrick's daughter, Eileen, became all-Ireland champion on Irish harp in 2000, and their son Niall won the senior ensemble (*groupai cheoil*) competition in 2004. Eileen's husband Kurt plays piano and guitar, and Niall's wife Gretchen is the family's singer. Niall and Gretchen's daughters, Riley and Fiona,

are accomplished on fiddle, concertina, and whistle.

Homegrown Concerts are presented by the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, in cooperation with the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, the Smithsonian Institution's Arthur M. Sackler and Freer Gallery of Art, and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian.

Remembering Nevada Cattle Rancher Les Stewart

By Carl Fleischhauer

Leslie Stewart died at the age of 85 on January 28, 2006, near his home in Paradise Valley, Nevada. During the Paradise Valley Folklife Project (1978–1982), Les was the most important person that the American Folklife Center field team visited. He ran one of the biggest ranches in the valley, was influential within the community, and provided team members with rich and detailed information about regional folklife.

Les lived his entire life on the family ranch in Paradise Valley. In his German-American grandfather's day, it was called the William Stock Farming Company; by the time we visited, it had been renamed the Ninety-Six Ranch, with a brand that consisted of the numbers 9 and 6. One member of the team, the photographer and filmmaker Bill Smock, offered a reminiscence of Les in 1985:

Les Stewart offers a good counter - poise to the Hollywood image of ranch - ers as courtly men of leisure. Although he is a wealthy man, at least in terms of property, Les Stewart and his family live very simply. Their home is a standard suburban-style "ranch house." Like his neighbors, Les has always worked seven days a week, often prodigiously hard, often in bitter weather . . . Les's everyday attire is, if anything, plainer than that of his hands. This distaste for ostentation is characteristic of Paradise Valley; there are no Cadillacs with longhorn hood ornaments. The Ninety-Six ranchstead is neither sleek nor picturesque. There are no Spanish

touches, no arched entry gates, not even a paved driveway. The old two-story house and its stand of trees, the stone horse barns, and the gray willow corrals are striking, but the compound's ensemble of widely-spaced buildings make no unified impression. Buildings are constructed of stone, wood, sheet metal, painted or unpainted tarpaper, placed somewhat haphazardly as changing needs have dictated. In all these things, Les Stewart is like his neighbors. But his fidelity to tradition and his guarded, somewhat regal temperament set him apart.

The things we learned from Les have been distilled for the American Memory Website *Buckaroos in Paradise* (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ncrhtml/crhome.html>). There you will find film footage that Les himself produced from the mid-1940s to the 1960s, still photographs and video footage of work on the ranch, and video and audio recordings of interviews with him. In 1981 we asked Les why he was slow to adopt labor-saving advances such as the chutes, squeeze gates, and calf tables his neighbors use to manage cattle and carry out the spring branding:

If you're gonna run cows and have a cow ranch, you ought to run cows and have a cow ranch, and do it a-horseback and not afoot. And for young fellows in the business, it's a kind of a rough, tough, not very exciting business. And some of these things that are traditional and are a little more exciting, a little more action, it takes a little more skill to rope a calf than it takes to poke one up through the chute with a

hot shot [cattle prod]. The chute work is just plain old downright dirty hard old drudgery work, and if you stand there and tip that chute over all day, there's not much romance in it. But if you can rope calves, and sometimes somebody's horse'll get mixed up and the horse'll go to bucking, and somebody'll get bucked off—there's even a little element of danger, people might get hurt, and excitement. It's just a lot better way to do it than to make complete drudgery out of it.

Les is survived by his wife, the former Marie Jones, two adopted daughters, Debbie and Darlene, and his son Fred. Fred and his wife Kris operate the Ninety-Six today. Their eight-year-old daughter Patrice Marie represents the fifth Stock-Stewart generation on the ranch.

Carl Fleischhauer directed the Center's Paradise Valley Folklife Project. He currently works in the Library's Office of Strategic Initiatives.



Les Stewart in 1980, posing with a sign made for the "Buckaroos in Paradise" exhibit. The sign was not used. Photo: Carl Fleischhauer. Source: American Folklife Center

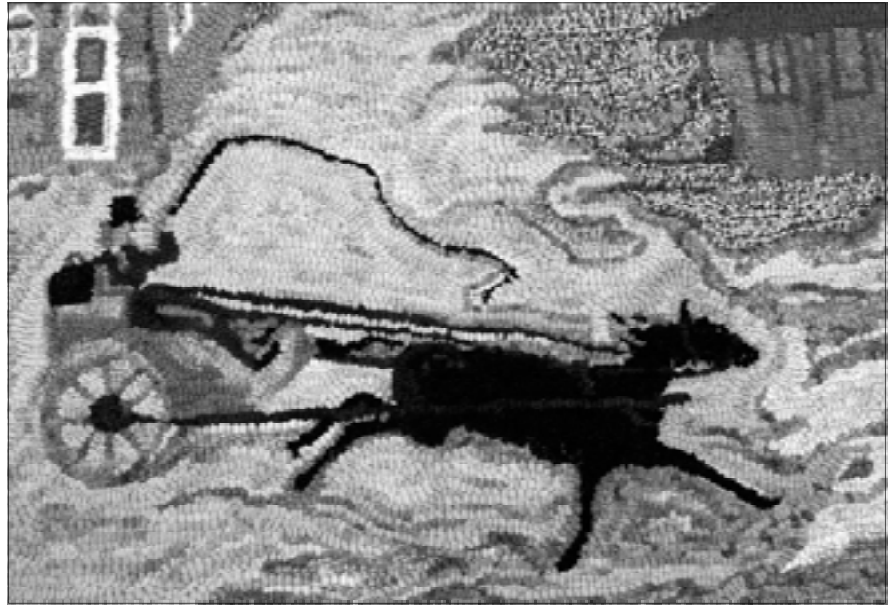
Tell Me 'Bout: AFC Acquires an Important Series of Hooked Rugs

By Stephen Winick

The American Folklife Center recently acquired a set of twelve hooked rugs and associated documentation from Maryland artist Mary Sheppard Burton. Burton is considered one of the world's foremost hooked-rug artisans, and is active in promoting the art form nationally and internationally. Max Allen, founding curator of the Textile Museum of Canada, has called her work "inventive, original, astonishingly beautiful, fun, historically significant, and wonderfully crafted." AFC director Peggy Bulger agrees. "Mary's rugs are a part of her family and community history, and are precious beyond their monetary worth," she said.

The set of rugs acquired by the Center is a discrete series entitled *Tell Me 'Bout*. It consists of twelve individual rugs, each hooked on a backing of twelve-thread-count linen, using hand-dyed strips of wool. Each rug presents a tableau inspired by a personal narrative from Burton's family history. One rug recounts a tale about a distant ancestor of Burton named Richard Dale (1756–1826), a commodore in the U.S. Navy. Two rugs depict the adventures of Burton's grandfather. Three depict the actions of her mother, and one large rug tells a story about her father. One depicts a childhood exploit of her stepmother. Two represent the adventures of her husband, one shows her own story, and one depicts two of her children. The vibrant colors vary from cool blues and whites for winter scenes to bright greens for summer and reds for fall.

One of the most poignant rugs, "Tell me 'Bout #3: The Secret Place," depicts Mary's mother Alice Phipps Sheppard, who died of tuberculosis when she was only thirty-two. According to



Detail from "Tell Me 'Bout #4: Strawberry Capital of the World." Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

Mary's grandmother, Alice had a secret hiding place in a cherry tree, where she would retreat to read. Mary accompanies this rug with the following rhyme:

Alice had a secret place.
'Twas her special hiding space.
She ate sweet cherries and read her book,
And no one even dared to look . . .
'Twas her SECRET PLACE.

Another fascinating rug, "Tell me 'Bout #4: Strawberry Capital of the World," depicts a day in the life of Pittsville, Maryland, the hometown of Burton's father, John Raymond Sheppard. Sheppard's general store, the church, the schoolhouse, the juice factory, and the railroad are all featured prominently. One detail shows a woman showing a hooked rug to a conductor at the train station. Burton explains that the figure represents a student of Burton's grandmother, who taught rug-hooking in those

days. Another detail shows a horse and buggy hurrying to the scene of an accident, carrying the town doctor, Lawrence Feeney.

AFC was originally given a single rug in 2004. That rug, "Tell Me 'Bout #7: A Chicken in Every Pot," depicts Charles Henning Burton (Mary's husband) as a boy in 1929. In that year, Charles climbed a tree on Capitol Hill and, from that vantage point, witnessed the inauguration of Herbert Hoover. The rug shows Charles in his tree, the U.S. Capitol building, a group of spectators, and a small group of men in suits, inaugurating the president. At the bottom of the rug are a number of brightly colored hens and roosters, recalling Hoover's campaign promise of "a chicken in every pot." This piece is currently on display in the Center's administrative offices, a fact that pleases Burton considerably. "Having my art shown as part of this collection, and in this wonderful location, is one of the greatest honors of my

life," she commented. In 2006 she expanded the gift to include the other eleven rugs.

The American Folklife Center does not typically seek to collect artifacts, but Burton's rugs are especially compelling for several reasons. First and most simply, they are spectacular and colorful examples of American folk art. They also represent an unusually effective form of both storytelling and oral history documentation. Rather than writing down the oral traditions of her family, Burton hooks her family stories into rugs, but the end result is similar: the stories are told for current audiences, and preserved for future generations. "Mary Sheppard Burton is a storyteller, a treasured tradition-bearer who recounts the history and heritage of rural Maryland in the early years of the 20th century," Bulger explained. "Her stories are told in a tangible, vibrantly visual medium: exquisitely designed and crafted hooked rugs."

This role as a storyteller is one of Burton's primary goals, as she explained in her book *A Passion for the Creative Life: Textiles to Lift the Spirit*: "I hope, by putting each story into rug form, to create a continuing love story from generations past that will nurture those who follow." According to Burton, the rugs embody not only her family's oral tradition, but also specific acts of oral storytelling. "My own four children used to love the time of day when we gathered before



Preservation Specialist Lisa Moburg vacuums "Tell Me 'Bout #11: Day's End on the Sinepuxent Bay." Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

bedtime," she remembered. "'Tell Me 'Bout' was a familiar phrase during a much loved time in our own lives."

The newly acquired rugs present AFC with many processing and preservation challenges. Processing technician Sarah Bradley Leighton, conservator Lisa Moberg from the Library's Preservation Directorate, and Beatriz Haspo

from the Library's Collections Access, Loan and Management Division, are planning customized housing for the rugs. "Each rug will be measured, weighed, carefully vacuumed, and inspected for any signs of insect infestation," Leighton explained. "Customized boxes will then be created for each rug based on its weight and dimensions. Each box will contain a spindle onto which the rug will be rolled and suspended. Storing the rugs in this manner will help to minimize any stretching or compression of the fabric over long periods of time." According to Leighton, the front and back of each rug will be photographed, and the images used to create reference tools for researchers. Researchers will only be able to view the rugs upon special request, as they will be transferred to off-site storage in Fort Meade, Maryland.

Plans are also being developed to display more of the rugs in the AFC's main office and in the Folklife reading room for limited periods of time. Leighton and Moberg are developing guidelines that will help AFC display the rugs without stretching the fabric or exposing the rugs to adverse conditions such as direct sunlight and temperature fluctuations. By following these guidelines, AFC will be able to share the full beauty of these rugs with visitors from across the country and around the world.



AFC staff members Ilana Harlow, Jennifer Cutting, and Margaret Kruesi examine one of Mary Sheppard Burton's hooked rugs. Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

Homehammered: a Collection of Woody Guthrie's Letters Acquired by AFC

By Sarah Bradley Leighton and Todd Harvey

The American Folklife Center is pleased to announce the acquisition of the Ken Lindsay Collection of Woody Guthrie Correspondence. The letters in this collection, written in 1952 and 1953, give evidence of Guthrie's activities during the last creative period of his life. They complement existing holdings in the Archive of Folk Culture from and pertaining to the Oklahoma-born folksinger.

The new collection contains unpublished correspondence between Woody Guthrie, his second and third wives, and British recording distributor Ken Lindsay. There are fifteen letters written by Lindsay, seven written by Guthrie, two written by Marjorie Mazia (Guthrie's second wife), and two written by Anneke Van Kirk

(Guthrie's third wife). In addition to the letters, there are a few pages of lyrics and verse embellished with drawings.

Ken Lindsay (1923–2001) was connected with the jazz and folk music revival movement of the 1950s in the United Kingdom and made a career of promoting jazz, skiffle, and folk music. He initiated contact with Guthrie while working as a manager at The International Bookshop in London. The first letter, dated February 15, 1952, expresses his



Woody Guthrie in 1943. Photo: Al Aumuller. Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division



A Letter from the Ken Lindsay collection. Source: American Folklife Center

company's desire to record and distribute the work of "left" and "progressive" American musicians and producers such as Guthrie and Moses Asch. Guthrie welcomed Lindsay's interest and the resulting exchange of letters included plans for special recordings, radio programs, and concert tours. Unfortunately, such plans never materialized, but the correspondence captures the development of a special relationship between two men who had never met.

Guthrie's letters to Lindsay also reveal his quirky and creative flair during a period of both professional and personal challenges. In his first letter to Lindsay on Tuesday, February 26, 1952, Guthrie enclosed some "home-

hammered, longyshort, lowlyhung progressive poems" typed on the back of wrapping paper from a local dry cleaner. In one poem, titled "Un Americans," Guthrie responds to the prevailing political climate when he writes: *If there be any unamericans in this room/ It is you guys that keep this room going/ For the good of your own paycheck and pocketbook/ That are the unamericans/ In my book.*

Later that year, the letters reflect Guthrie's struggle with family relationships, alcoholism, and Huntington's chorea, the disease that caused his death. In a startlingly honest and distressing letter written on September 30, 1952, Guthrie admits, "My wild disease of alcoholism got so terribly out of hand that I forsook and forsaken and tookoff [sic] and left her [Marjorie] at home here to battle her wits and senses out to attend to all the needs and comforting of our three kids [Arlo, Joady, Nora]." He concedes that his illnesses make him incapable of being a good father, but, in true Guthrie form, uses his personal tragedy to make a political statement: "I trace and

track all of my disease and 99% of our mental breakdowns . . . to the big general bill of our capitalist system, anyhow."

Ten years prior, in 1940, Guthrie had relocated to New York City and developed a friendship with Alan Lomax, then Assistant-in-charge of the Archive of American Folk-Song. As a result of their association, the Library of Congress has long been a repository of Guthrie materials such as correspondence, songbooks, and recordings, including his historic 1940 Library of Congress sessions. In 2001 the AFC launched an online presentation titled *Woody Guthrie and the Archive of American Folk Song: Correspondence, 1940–1950* that highlights letters between Woody Guthrie and staff of the archive. This correspondence reveals a young and confident Guthrie, reflecting on the

music scene in his newly adopted city, the looming Second World War, and his burgeoning career. The AFC's holdings, as well as Guthrie materials located in other divisions within the Library of Congress, are summarized in a finding aid accompanying the online presentation (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wwghhtml/wwghome.html>).

In 2003 the AFC and the Alan Lomax Archive formalized a cooperative agreement that brought the original materials in that archive to the Library of Congress. Included are approximately six hundred pages of Woody Guthrie materials, primarily correspondence and songbooks. Highlights include a typewritten and hand-colored 1947 birth announcement for Woody's son Arlo (see page 21), and an unpublished songbook titled *New*

Found Land (c. 1941). Two pieces of correspondence overlap with the new Lindsay collection, both written from Stetson Kennedy's trailer located, as Woody puts it, in "Belutchyhatchee Klannyswamp," near Jacksonville, Florida.

During the past two years, then, Woody Guthrie holdings at the American Folklife Center have increased significantly, bringing into greater focus Woody's life between 1940 and 1953. Along with other repositories, notably the Woody Guthrie Foundation and Archives in New York and the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, we are striving to preserve and make publicly accessible materials relating to this icon of American folksong.

I Go By the Name of Arlo . . .

By Stephen Winick

A birth announcement for Arlo Guthrie is one of the most whimsical treasures in the Archive of Folk Culture. Typed and embellished with fingerpainted lettering by folksinger and songwriter Woody Guthrie, it announces the birth of his son Arlo, now a well-known singer-songwriter himself. The announcement is in the form of a handmade greeting card, folded in half to form a front and back cover and a center spread. The front consists of stylized fingerpainted line art representing a mother and baby, a greeting to the Lomaxes, and the name "Arlo Guthrie," painted in several different styles and colors. The back consists of the words "Here I Am" in large painted letters. Both sides bear the date, and the name "Arlo Guthrie" written in Woody's handwriting.

Inside the announcement is a typed passage that bears the elder Guthrie's characteristic loose spelling and grammar, and salted with a lot of his famous wordplay. Dated "Tenth of Julio, Nineteen Forty-Seveno, Brooklyn New Yorkio," the announcement consists of a fanciful note, ostensibly



Arlo Guthrie in 1966. Source: American Folklife Center

from the baby Arlo, introducing himself to the Lomaxes. "This is to serve notice on you Lomaxes," it begins. "Alan, Chavella, Little Annie Banannie . . . and to let you know I made it out. Come the painless track and foot log. Found it." It continues:

"Marjorie smiled all the way through which gave me more room to make my jump in. I had to dive feet first because the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital was so little and so noisey and so packed. I come out weighing seven pounds and after the first three rounds I melted down to a few ounces short, but drew out okay on my next few hands and won my lost ounces

back. I had doctor Soifer to be my umpire and timeclocker. He said Marjorie and Woody both smiled all the way out. I got to ride out here and back in a big nice Cadillac Eight limousine which my daddy swears he's going to steal. I just mainly wanted you folks to know that I run onto our painless trail. I'd like to see every wiggler in this humanly race come out painless and go up painless and come down painless. It's fun to be born when the Watergates are wide open and you don't whang your noggin.

"I am Painless
Or I was
And just hope
You world livers
Will
By God
Help me to
Stay
Painless.

I go by the name of Arlo."

Todd Harvey, a reference librarian and folklife specialist at the Center, explained the item's provenance. "The Arlo Guthrie birth announcement was acquired by

the Folklife Center as part of the Alan Lomax Collection, which contains approximately six hundred pages of Guthrie manuscripts, primarily correspondence and song books," he said. In March 2004, the Center officially acquired the Alan Lomax collection, comprising materials Lomax collected after leaving the Library's employ in 1942. The purchase was made through an agreement with Lomax's organization the Association for Cultural Equity, and with the help of an anonymous donor. It was a particularly significant acquisition because it allowed Lomax's later collections to join the materials he collected for the Library between 1933 (his first field trip with his father, John A. Lomax) and 1942, bringing all seventy years of Lomax's collections under one roof for the first time.



The Arlo Guthrie birth announcement. Source: American Folklife Center

Even among the many treasures of the Lomax collection, this piece stands out. "For an archivist, especially someone interested in folk music history, this piece has very high intrinsic value," Harvey explained. He pointed out that the value increased because the item is

unique, because it's hand drawn, and because it's addressed to the Lomaxes, who are as important to folk music as the Guthries.

How interesting is this piece? "I would place it alongside the field notes Lomax made when he first recorded Muddy Waters," Harvey said.

The item is also a wonderful complement to the other Guthrie correspondence that AFC has acquired, including the

Ken Lindsay collection described on page 19. Together, these collections make AFC a significant resource for anyone interested in understanding this important family and its contributions to American folk and popular music.

From Robert Johnson to Texas Swing: AFC Acquires Important Test Pressings

By Michael Taft

The AFC recently acquired an important collection of rare, mint-condition recordings of American popular music from the pre-World War II era. Perhaps the most striking elements of this acquisition are discs by the great blues singer and composer Robert Johnson. These recordings are not the kind found in flea markets and old record bins; they were manufactured especially for non-commercial use, and in the case of this collection, they represent the most pristine sound possible from recordings of this era.

These recordings represent an important development in the history of the interplay between traditional and commercial music. In the days when 78 rpm records ruled the commercial music market, record company officials sometimes acted like folklorists: they traveled around the country with

recording equipment, collecting the performances of blues and gospel singers, preachers, traditional musicians, early country music artists, and the music of ethnic groups. Among the artists they found was Robert Johnson, who was recorded in 1936 and 1937 by traveling units of the Columbia (then ARC/Brunswick) Record Company, first in San Antonio and then in Dallas. In many other cases, of course, artists traveled to the studios of the record companies, where their performances were captured under more controlled conditions.

Whether field or studio recordings, these masters were then sent to the record company's factory, where metal copies of them were made and used to stamp shellac discs for commercial release. Occasionally, in addition to the mass production of the record, companies stamped just one copy

for internal use by their staff, and these single stampings were known as test pressings. In some cases, the only copy extant of a recording is such a test pressing; in other cases, the clearest copy of a recording is its test pressing. In all cases, the test pressing of a commercial 78 rpm is a rare item.

The AFC has recently acquired 186 one-sided, 78 rpm test pressings, all of them in mint condition, from collector and blues enthusiast Tom Jacobson. These pressings were originally made for Columbia producer Frank Driggs in the late 1950s or very early 1960s, when Columbia was considering the re-issue of some of its back catalog of country and blues recordings. Shortly afterwards, Columbia and almost all other record companies abandoned their old stamping equipment, and it was no longer possible to make such test pressings.



Michael Taft, head of the Archive of Folk Culture, displays a Robert Johnson test pressing from the Jacobson collection. Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

Driggs is probably best known for producing the first reissue anthology of Robert Johnson's recordings, *King of the Delta Blues*, in 1961—an LP which proved to be the most influential blues album for modern popular groups, among them the Rolling Stones, Cream, and Led Zeppelin. Johnson (c. 1911–1938) has since been recognized as one of the great geniuses of American music, and his reputation as both an innovator of blues songs, and a major inspiration for many other musicians, flourished only after his premature death. His recorded repertoire consists of only twenty-nine songs, which he recorded in 1936 and 1937, five of which were never issued during his short lifetime. The Jacobson acquisition includes twenty-five test pressings of eleven Robert Johnson songs: *Ramblin' on My Mind*, *When You Got a Good Friend* (takes 1 and 2), *Phonograph Blues* (takes 1 and 2), *32–20 Blues*, *If I had Possession Over Judgment Day*, *Little Queen of Spades*, *Drunken Hearted Man*, *Me and the Devil Blues*, *Stop Breakin' Down Blues*, *Love in Vain*, and *Milkcow's Calf Blues*.

This acquisition also includes correspondence between Driggs and Don Law, who originally recorded Johnson for Columbia. One document, which takes the form of typewritten questions from Driggs and handwritten answers from Law, includes Law's

important first-person account of his recording sessions with Robert Johnson. Law's description of Johnson, who died only a year after their final session together, is terse and poignant: "medium height, wiry, slender, nice looking boy. Beautiful hands." The collection also includes correspondence with blues researcher Mack McCormick and other Columbia Records documents relating to Johnson.

Beyond the Johnson material, the collection includes another 125 test pressings by blues and gospel artists Leroy Carr, Ida Cox, Lil

Johnson, Blind Willie Johnson, Blind Willie McTell, Memphis Minnie, Little Brother Montgomery, Sam Montgomery, Kid Prince Moore, Tampa Red, Peetie Wheatstraw, and Sonny Boy Williamson. There are also thirty-six test pressings of the early country music performer Bob Wills, who pioneered the Texas swing style of music. Rounding out the acquisition are several of Driggs's test pressings of blues reissue LPs that were never produced: a blues anthology, *Kings of the Blues*, and a three-LP set of the complete recordings of Robert Johnson.

Since the days of John and Alan Lomax, the Center has had an interest in African American blues, and among the many field recordings in the Archive of Folk Culture, there are a number by commercial blues luminaries, such as Son House, Bukka White, Willie McTell, Muddy Waters, and Huddie Ledbetter. In fact, the Center already holds a few Robert Johnson test pressings acquired by Alan Lomax in the 1940s. But the scope of this new acquisition of commercial field and studio test pressings adds a further dimension to AFC's collection, highlighting the crucial interdependence between traditional and commercial music in the twentieth century.



Victor publicity photo showing Tampa Red and Leroy Carr in the Victor studios in Camden, NJ. Source: Fred Barnum

Still Tending: *Tending the Commons Updated*

By John Barton

On October 17, 2005, The American Folklife Center released an updated version of its American Memory presentation, *Tending the Commons: Folklife and Landscape in Southern West Virginia*. The Website is available at the following address: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/tending/>.

New audio recordings and manuscript items have been added to the Website along with an essay by former AFC staff member Mary Hufford entitled *Landscape and History at the Headwaters of the Big Coal River Valley*. In all, the Website includes 718 sound recordings, 1,256 photographs, ten manuscripts, and seven essays.

The presentation documents traditional uses of the mountains in southern West Virginia's Big Coal River Valley. Functioning as a *de facto* commons, the mountains

have supported a way of life that for many generations has entailed hunting, gathering, and subsistence gardening, as well as coal mining and logging, which the community refers to as "timbering." The online collection includes extensive interviews on native forest species and the seasonal round of traditional harvesting, including beans in the spring; berries and fish in the summer; and nuts, fruits, game, and roots such as ginseng in the fall. It documents community cultural events such as storytelling, baptisms in the river, cemetery customs, and the spring "ramp" feasts that feature the wild leek native to the region. Interpretive texts outline the social, historical, economic, environmental, and cultural contexts of community life, while a series of maps and a diagram depicting the seasonal round of community activities provide special access to collection materials.



At a birthday party in 1997, Dave Bailey holds out Russell Cox's banjo. This photo is among the many items available in the online presentation *Tending the Commons*. Photo: Mary Hufford. Source: American Folklife Center

EDITOR'S NOTE

In this issue, we celebrate enduring legacies in our field and in the world. Not least of these is the legacy of the American Folklife Center itself, which celebrated its thirtieth anniversary on January 2. On that date in 1976, President Gerald Ford signed into law the American Folklife Preservation Act, which created the American Folklife Center. The law defines American folklife as "the traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups in the United States: familial, ethnic, occupational, religious, regional," and states that "the diversity inherent in American folklife has contributed greatly to the cultural richness of the Nation and has fostered a sense of individuality and identity among the American people."

To a large extent, the legislation was sparked by the success of the first Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, held on the National Mall in 1967. It owes its passage to subsequent efforts by indefatigable cultural specialists and members of Congress to create a permanent institution in the nation's capital for celebrating our diverse regional cultures. It was no coincidence that efforts to establish a folklife center (originally conceived as a folklife "foundation" similar to the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities) coincided with plans for cel-

ebrating the nation's Bicentennial, and discussions about the richness and diversity of American history and culture.

The American Folklife Center carries out its mission to "preserve and present American folklife" through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, public programs, and training. An integral part of the Library of Congress, the programs of the American Folklife Center and the collections of its Folk Archive broaden and enrich the historical record maintained by our great national library, and frequently serve as models for national and international archival practice and public programs. The Archive of Folk Culture, which was established as the Archive of American Folk Song in 1928, has an enduring legacy of its own. It was part of the Library's Music Division until the creation of the American Folklife Center gave it a new home and a mission that extends beyond the collection and preservation of music to encompass all areas of American folklife, including folktales, foodways, oral history, and material culture.

Our cover features Pete Seeger, who in addition to being half of the filmmaking team celebrated in these pages, is also referred to by our staff as "the Center's first intern." (When he worked for the Archive of American Folk-Song in 1940, he was paid a modest stipend out of Alan

Lomax's pocket.) A recent article on Seeger in the *New Yorker*, and a recent tribute album by Bruce Springsteen, prove that Seeger's legacy is being continued by the next generation of singer-songwriters.

Other legacies we remember in this issue include those of Alan Lomax, a crucial figure in the history of the Archive of Folk Culture; Woody Guthrie, who along with Lomax, Seeger, and others, is credited with starting the "folk revival" of the 1940s that developed into the "folk boom" of the late 1950s and the "folk scare" of the 60s and 70s; and Robert Johnson, the blues singer whose brief recording career has influenced generations of pop musicians. Closer to home, we celebrate the enduring legacy of Mary Sheppard Burton, a Maryland artist who creates hooked rugs that depict the stories of her family; the Center's guardian angels Joe Hickerson and Judith McCulloh, who were honored this year by the Society for Ethnomusicology; and James Hardin, retired editor of this publication, who agreed to contribute a major article—and who even helped me with several paragraphs for this introduction. As I embark on my second year as editor, it's good to know he's still on the team!

Stephen D. Winick
Editor, *Folklife Center News*



A detail from “Tell Me 'Bout #3: The Secret Place,” a hooked rug by Mary Sheppard Burton. The rug presents a moment in the life of Burton’s mother, Alice Phipps. As a girl, Phipps loved to climb a cherry tree and read among its branches. The American Folklife Center recently acquired a set of twelve of Burton’s rugs. Read the full story on pages 17–18. Photo: Stephen Winick. Source: American Folklife Center

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