Folklife Center News
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Jack Santino on Yellow Ribbons
StoryCorps Comes to Town
Working in the Archive
Jelly Roll Morton

Summer 2005

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.

ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES

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

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

The Folkline 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.

FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

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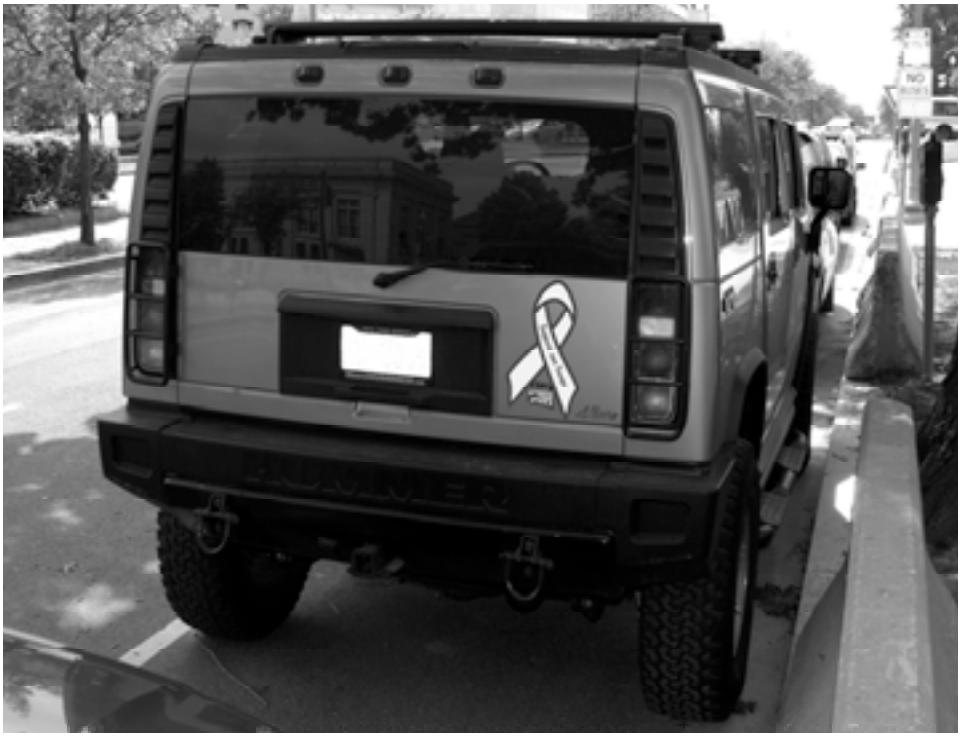
Folklife Center News publishes articles on the programs and activities of the American Folklife Center, as well as other articles on traditional expressive culture. It is available free of charge from the Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540–4610.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

Cover: Sen. James Jeffords of Vermont greets Vermont ballad singer Margaret MacArthur at the American Folklife Center's June Homegrown concert. The concert took place at noon, June 21, in the Jefferson Building's Coolidge Auditorium. MacArthur presented a program of ballads and folksongs from her home state, accompanying herself on several unusual instruments including the harp-zither shown here. Senator and Mrs. Jeffords attended the concert, along with about twenty staff members.

Apply a Ribbon Magnet to the Ole Humvee: The Yellow Ribbon Tradition Reborn

By Jack Santino

Editor's Note: In the following article, Jack Santino presents the third installment in the ongoing story of yellow ribbons in American cultural symbolism. When the symbol re-emerged in the context of the current conflict in Iraq, acting editor David Taylor thought it was time for a new article to appear. The first two articles on yellow ribbons had been written by the late Gerald Parsons, so Taylor needed another author for the third; the obvious choice was Jack Santino, who had already published academic articles on yellow ribbons and other wartime symbols. Santino is also a folklorist with a distinguished career in the field, a past President of the American Folklore Society, and a former member of the Board of Trustees of the American Folklife Center. We are very proud to present his work in Folklife Center News. *In the following article, the political opinions are Santino's own, but whether you agree with those or not, his scholarship and knowledge will speak for themselves.*



A yellow "Support our Troops" magnet adorns this Hummer. (Photo: Stephen D. Winick. Source: American Folklife Center)

Right up until Election Day in 2004, the media commentators had decreed the presidential election too close to call. For most of the election season, I had thought that to be true, until I noticed the sudden proliferation of "Support our Troops" magnets on automobiles. These were ribbon-shaped, usually yellow but often with a red, white, and blue stars-and-stripes design. To me these indicated support for the Iraq war effort, and in turn, for that war's principal architect, President (and candidate) George W. Bush. Prior to the seemingly overnight explosion of popularity for the ribbons, visible support for the two major candidates was about even. The Democratic candidate, Sen. John Kerry, had been drawing huge crowds to his campaign appearances, the polls were inconclusive, and while people had antiwar or pro-Bush bumper stickers, I noticed no particular groundswell of momentum in either direction.

Then came the yellow ribbon magnets. The sentiment expressed, and publicly displayed, seems uncontroversial. Who does not want to support the troops? No one, of whatever political persuasion, means them any harm. However, one might ask, can one support the troops without supporting the war effort? Even the wording is important: "our" troops, not "the" troops. These are our children, our warriors. Rhetorically, the use of the word "our" raises the stakes by personalizing the relationship of the viewer to the troops in question. The discourse stopped being about the legitimacy of the invasion of Iraq and came to be about the safety of American soldiers. So when I witnessed the mushrooming of these magnets, I felt that it was a good sign for Mr. Bush and a bad sign for Mr. Kerry.

"Support our Troops" ribbons like this are sold everywhere. (Source: American Folklife Center)

The magnets allowed a safer medium of popular expression than the more overt bumper stickers and other paraphernalia because they muted direct support for a problematic war effort; the primary stated reason for invading Iraq centered on great stores of weapons of mass destruction, but these were never actually found. Support for the war, strongly felt by many, was increasingly difficult to articulate, especially as the U.S. efforts became mired down in a drawn-out, deadly, and probably long-term occupation. It was in this context, of public debate and division, of increasing need for justification, and of lowered expectations of quick victory, that the ribbon-shaped car magnets emerged and achieved widespread popularity.

The yellow ribbon emerged as a national symbol of concern for a distant loved one in the final two decades of the twentieth century. The history of this symbol embodies several strands of tradition and illustrates the ways in which both continuity and change can occur within a tradition, or a traditional symbol. In the case of the contemporary uses of the yellow ribbon, and more lately other colored ribbons also, there has been a logical development of the meanings over time and in varying contexts. The tradition of wearing a piece of foliage, a flower, or a ribbon to show one's devotion to that absent loved one is centuries-old in Anglo-American culture. We know that a branch of willow was worn in Britain by women whose loved ones were "far, far away," at sea or on military expeditions. At least, several versions of a song referring to this practice were popular. In Shakespeare's *Othello* (ca. 1604), Desdemona calls it an "old song," and a version of it was printed as early as 1578 (Parsons 1981). What is important here is that the ribbons or greenery referred (1) to a loved one, who is (2) away, usually in a situation of (3) some danger, and that (4) the loved one is expected to return, if all goes well. Each of these elements was encapsulated by the wearing of these symbolic objects; they were publicly displayed by those at home, awaiting a loved one's safe return. The wearing of the ribbons signified as well the particular status of the wearer, who was usually a woman. As one might wear a ring to signify one's status as married, or something black to indicate that one is in a state of mourning, so did wearing a green willow or ribbon signify a personal status in which one was attached, but the loved one was not present at the moment.

Gerald E. Parsons wrote two definitive articles in previous issues of this newsletter, tracing the history and development of the yellow ribbon symbol through the First Gulf War of 1991, so there is no need to go into too much detail here (Parsons 1981; 1991). Suffice it to say that, according to traditional folksongs such as "All Around My Hat," women wore certain items—often ribbons—on their person for loved ones who were "far, far away." Parsons further reported that in American minstrelsy, performers sang a song known as "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" in the early twentieth century. This song, known in many variations, implied that soldiers' wives wore yellow ribbons during the U.S. Civil War for their soldier-husbands. There is no contemporary evidence that this actually happened during the Civil War; nevertheless, the song's popularity inspired a 1946 motion picture entitled *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon,* starring John Wayne and set during the Civil War.

At around the same time, just after World War II, an urban legend emerged. In this story a convict is returning home from prison. Hoping he'll be welcomed, he suggests that his family tie a white kerchief to a tree if they want him back. When he reaches his home, the tree is festooned with white kerchiefs. This story formed the basis of a popular 1970s song called "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree." The songwriters changed the white kerchief of the legend to the yellow ribbon of folk and popular culture, largely because of the song's metrical needs.

Curiously, this pattern was paralleled in real life when Jeb Magruder's wife put a yellow ribbon in front of her house to welcome her husband, convicted in the Watergate scandal of the Nixon administration, home from prison. When Penelope Laingen saw a report of this on television, she tied a yellow ribbon around a tree when her husband was taken hostage in Iran in 1979. (William Westerman has noted that these early uses of the yellow ribbon in recent times were carried out by the wives of people associated with the U.S. government, and he suggests that their usage might be seen more as an official rather than a popular action.) Other hostages' wives did the same thing, receiving a good deal of media attention. Thus, the yellow ribbon became a national symbol in 1980, referencing the captives in the Iranian hostage crisis—people who were far from home, in danger (in this case against their will, though the job had some risks), and whose safe return was devoutly wished and prayed for.

Having entered the national consciousness, the yellow ribbon continued to change and accrue meanings. Symbols tend to contain many specific and sometimes even contradictory meanings, and are understood differently by different people. This quality is called "polysemy," or multiple meanings. When the first President Bush sent American troops to fight Saddam Hussein because of the latter's incursion into Kuwait, the yellow

ribbon returned in force. This time, however, the ribbon referred to the troops as well as any hostages that were taken. Moreover, the government actively adopted the symbol—Bush and members of his cabinet were always seen in public wearing lapel pins in the shape and color of the yellow ribbon. Thus, the inherent polysemy of the symbol was exploited—what exactly was a yellow ribbon referring to? Was it the troops (who were, of course, far away, in danger, and beloved by their families), or the government policy that put them in combat? The yellow ribbon continued to be a popular symbol, in the sense that people all over the United States tied them to trees and telephone poles, or displayed images of them publicly—in yards, on housefronts, and on the facades of buildings. During this time, the ribbon was becoming an official symbol, both of patriotism and of support for a particular administration's policies.

On September 11, 2001, and for several days following, I watched as people grappled with the unfathomable events of that day, searching for an appropriate symbolic response. Ritual was important—meeting in groups, public prayer services, candlelight vigils, and marches were all availed upon. From the first, ribbons were displayed. I noted not only yellow ribbons but white, and also purple ribbons. People were, I believe, casting about to find a symbolic response that would match the enormity of the occasion. Along with these other colors, red, white, and blue ribbons emerged as the most common ribbon style, and flags displayed on homes, automobiles, and articles of clothing rapidly became the norm. This made sense: the yellow ribbon, tentatively used, didn't really meet the needs of the 9/11 tragedy. The victims were innocent, but since they had been killed, we could not wait and hope for their safe return. Rather, there was an attack on the United States, and a nationalistic response was most satisfying to many, many people.

As time went on, George W. Bush, whose father presided over the first Iraq war, decided to invade Iraq once again. Although officially the President never claimed this invasion was a direct response to the September 11 attacks, President Bush and especially Vice President Cheney often implied a connection between the government of Iraq and Al-Qaeda, the organization that attacked the Twin Towers. Therefore, many Americans believed not only that there was such a connection, but that striking against Iraq was an appropriate response to 9/11.

The decision to invade Iraq remains controversial, however. No conclusive evidence of an Iraq-Al Qaeda connection emerged, and many American citizens did not believe in one. Those Americans generally felt that Osama Bin Laden, rather than Saddam Hussein, was the real threat, and that the offensive against Iraq was not justified. Furthermore, President Bush's justification for the invasion seemed unfounded to many Americans; Bush argued that Saddam Hussein, Iraq's president, posed a major threat to this country because he had "weapons of mass destruction," but United Nations inspectors were unable to locate such weapons. For all these reasons, the invasion of Iraq was met with significant protest at home.

During this period, an interesting thing happened. The widespread display of flags, which had eased up only slightly since September 11, slowly began to signal support for a particular governmental policy as well as for the ideals represented by the United States. This was helped along by official government events at which flags and ribbons were displayed. Since the President's policy and American ideals were both referents of the same set of symbols, these two very different ideological positions were easily conflated. To some people, therefore, disagreement with the President's policy came to seem un-American, unpatriotic, even treasonous. Once again, strategists used national popular symbols to their advantage by confusing the referent of the displays.

It was into this climate that the ribbon-shaped magnets were introduced. Magnet America, a company in Bennett, North Carolina, claims to have first manufactured the yellow ribbon car magnets in early 2003, and have added a number of designs to their offerings, including "Pray for our Troops," "Pray for the USA,' and "One Nation Under God." The religious, if not specifically Christian, nature of the company is evident in these mottoes. Eventually, other companies offered blue-colored ribbon magnets which stated, "Bring the Troops Home," although these have not had the popularity of the others. Along with the yellow ribbons, magnets with a stars-and-stripes motif are also popular.

The question arises: What accounted for the apparently overnight, widespread success of these magnets? I believe there were several factors involved. First, they were offered at a time of national stress: the United States was (and is) at war, but the reasons for that war are ambiguous and contested. Weapons of mass destruction were never found, so the cause for a preemptive U.S. military strike was called into question. Still, American soldiers were fighting and dying, and people were very conflicted about questioning their cause for fear of appearing not to support them. The first magnets relied on the yellow ribbon motif, which, as we have seen, alluded to loved ones, in danger, far away, and their hoped-for return. This symbol applied perfectly to the situation of the soldiers in Iraq. Secondly, one could express public support for the soldiers without overtly supporting Mr. Bush (who, by this time, was a candidate in the presidential election) or his specific policies. The fact that magnets were also available in flag motifs allowed people to make a more directly patriotic statement, by collapsing the American flag with the (formerly yellow) ribbon. Here two major (or dominant) symbols, each with its own web of associations, were collapsed into a single, multivalent symbol.

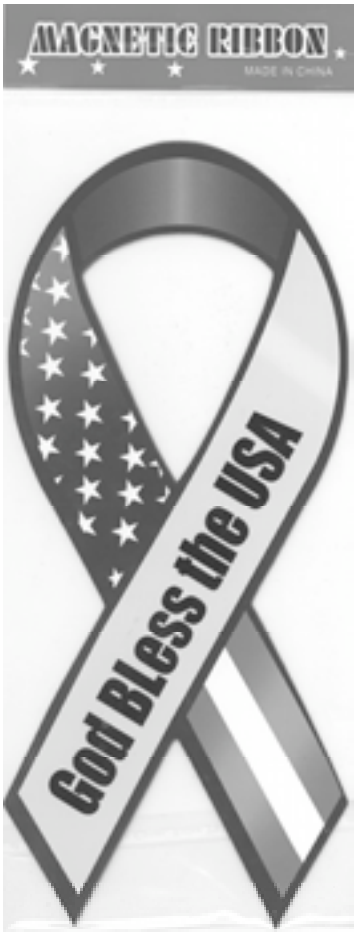
While many people made it a point to juxtapose their ribbon magnets with other statements that made it clear they did NOT support Bush or the invasion, generally, I believe that yellow and flag ribbon magnets most often suggested support for the war effort, and George W. Bush. That is why I suggested earlier that the sudden preponderance of these ribbons indicated a problem for the

Democratic candidate, John Kerry. The ribbon magnets allowed people a way to support a controversial president and a controversial policy in a relatively simple and direct way.

Another important reason for the popularity of the magnets is the fact that they are displayed on automobiles. This is crucial to their popularity, I think. The automobile has long been seen as, and marketed as, an extension of one's personality, as well as a marker of one's socioeconomic standing. Choosing to drive a BMW, a Volvo, or a Volkswagen, is a personal and social statement that reflects on the drivers. In a commuter society such as the United States, people spend a great deal of time in their cars, so cars are increasingly becoming portable homes away from home. People listen to their favorite CDs, chat on cell phones, drive through banks for money and fast food restaurants for breakfast. The interiors of cars have long been the site of personal decorative and ritual expression: St. Christopher medals, statues of Jesus, and fuzzy dice hanging from the rear view mirror are common. On the outside of the vehicle, the rear is the place for bumper stickers that support candidates or announce one's status as a grandparent, retiree, or parent of an honor student.

The ribbon magnets, manufactured for automobile display, allowed people the means to make a public statement without its being too specifically personal. These symbols are not worn on the body as an article of clothing. They are on one's car, where friends, acquaintances, and co-workers might see them, but so also will countless other people on the road, strangers all. The magnets, then, allow people to take a "safe" stand on a controversial subject, and do it in a way that both maximizes the communication and distances the individual from a more direct statement.

The success of the ribbon magnets has led to the rise of an industry. When the yellow ribbons displayed for the Iranian hostages became a nationally recognized symbol, people began to color-code ribbons for other uses, such as AIDS research (red) or breast cancer research (pink). In March 2005 I met a flight attendant on an airline who wore a white ribbon with a union pin in the center, in support of negotiations her labor union was undertaking. The first such development, I believe, was the practice of wearing green ribbons when a serial killer was murdering children in the Atlanta area in the 1980s. The same thing has happened again. The "ribbons" (that is, the magnets) can be found in many different colors, including pink for breast cancer research. There are magnets with military camouflage design, with Christian crosses, with pawmark designs for animal rescue organizations, black POW–MIA magnets, "Donate Blood" magnets and on and on. By now, the original set of yellow-ribbon associations has been pared down to simply and singularly indicating concern for a cause, be it breast cancer research, animal rights, or support for a particular branch of the armed forces.



This ribbon proclaims "God Bless America." Its packaging proclaims, "Made in China." (Source: American Folklife Center)

It is interesting to note, too, that we are no longer dealing with real ribbons, but with ribbon-shaped magnets, which iconically signify real ribbons, which themselves symbolize concern. Symbolic objects have many qualities—color, taste, shape, texture, and so forth, and any one of these can become symbolic itself, as indicative of the original symbol. A newly constructed item—in this case a magnet—can imitate that quality and thus share in the meaning of the original symbol.

The yellow ribbon can be traced to display customs dating at least to Elizabethan England. The display of yellow ribbons which developed in the United States in the late twentieth century can be seen to be a cross-fertilization of folk custom and mass media, which resulted in a popular cultural phenomenon. In each manifestation of change, there is a logic that can be uncovered, having to do with the symbolic potential of the ribbons themselves, the ways they have been used in the past, and the historical moment of their current appearance and adaptation. It is in the nature of symbols to change over time to adapt to new circumstances and needs. The ribbon magnets (and the display of ribbons generally) have continuously done this and show no sign of stopping.

Parsons, Gerald E. "Yellow Ribbons: Ties with Tradition." Folklife Center News IV: 2, 1981.

———. "How the Yellow Ribbon Became a National Folk Symbol." Folklife Center News XIII: 3, 1991.

Westerman, Harry William. *Folklife, Bread and Roses : The Moral Economy of Cultural Work, Political Belief, and Social Justice.* Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1995.

A Day in the Life of the Folk Archive: Processing and Cataloging Collections

By Maggie Kruesi, Sarah Bradley Leighton, Valda Morris, Judy Ng, and Marcia Segal.

On Thursday, March 24, members of the American Folklife Center's Board of Trustees visited room 106 of the Library of Congress's Adams Building, the American Folklife Center's annex, for a first-ever presentation on a day in the life of the processing staff. During the hour-long presentation, Board members took a "tour" of the room, set up as an exhibit space for the occasion with materials from AFC collections, including manuscripts, photos in various formats, a selection of audiovisual items, and artifacts. Staff took turns addressing the Board members, explaining the work of arrangement, description, and cataloging, and answering Board members' questions. This article was prepared by the processing team, based on their presentations. In it, we hope to give an overview of what happens between receiving a collection and serving it to researchers in the Folklife Reading Room.

At the manuscripts table, Archivist Marcia Segal describes to board member Dennis Holub the breadth of materials that the word "manuscript" can encompass, including correspondence, record sleeves, cylinder slips, and books. Even small scraps of paper can prove useful, as in the Eloise Hubbard Linscott Collection, in which there are hundreds of small pieces of paper that the collector used to write contact information for performers, locations and dates of lectures, and other information that might prove of interest to researchers. (Photo: Stephen D. Winick. Source: American Folklife Center)

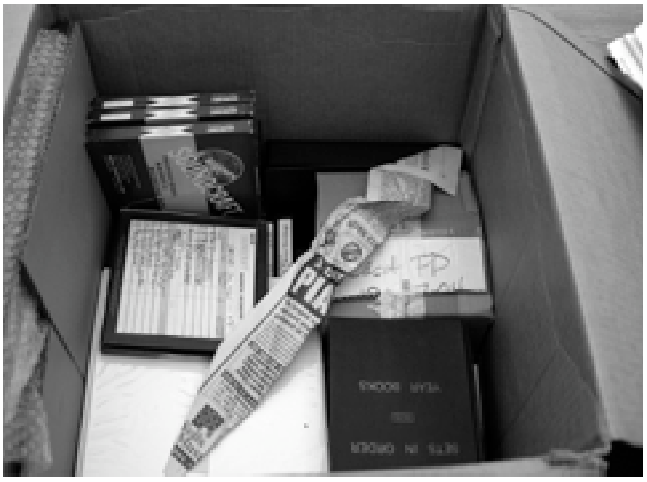
The Archive of Folk Culture, which houses the collections of the American Folklife Center (AFC), includes over three million photographs, manuscripts, audio recordings, artifacts, and moving images. It consists of documentation of traditional culture from all around the world including the earliest field recordings made in the 1890s on wax cylinder through recordings made using digital technology. It is America's first national archive of traditional life, and one of the oldest and largest of such repositories in the world.

Every year the archive receives multiformat collections from individuals and institutions engaged in documenting all aspects of traditional culture. Taking these collections and transforming them from various states of organizational chaos to a level of order and access is the primary task of the processing and cataloging sections within the Center. Processing a collection may best be described as seeing the big picture and understanding how a collection should be arranged, all with the express purpose of making the original documentation accessible to a researcher. A motto of the archiving world is "preserve and serve": we need to make sure the materials themselves are stable and well cared for, while at the same time making the intellectual content of the collection available to researchers. As with the processing of any archival documentation, charting a course and making many small but important decisions along the way make this work at the Center both interesting and challenging.

Physical Processing

The first major task of processing any collection is gaining intellectual control over the material. In order to track new acquisitions upon arrival, a number is assigned and a preliminary record is created in our collection database. Supporting indexes and additional documentation accumulated during the acquisition phase are then gathered together and referred to when inventorying the collection.This is the first opportunity to quickly assess the collection's physical condition and level of organization, and to document any red flags in the form of damaged or fragile materials. With the scope of the collection fresh in mind, the processor can begin to visualize the big picture and devise a processing plan. Giving ample time and forethought to the plan can reduce, if not completely eliminate, wasted time and re-work.

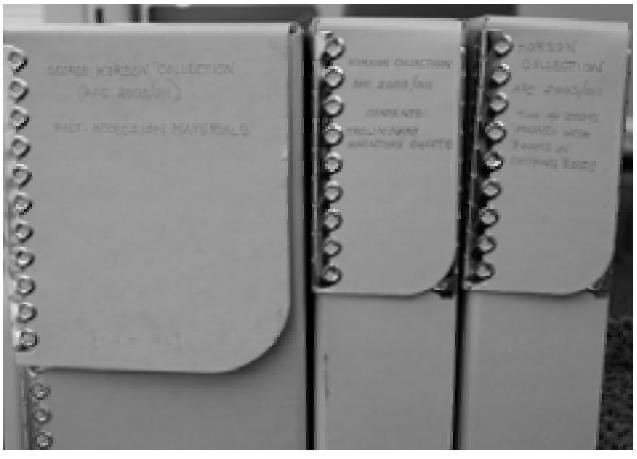
A collection often arrives at the archive in a box like this one. (Photo: Judy Ng. Source: American Folklife Center)



First, the box must be opened and its contents examined. (Photo: Judy Ng. Source: American Folklife Center)

The materials must be removed from the box, sorted, and treated. (Photo: Judy Ng. Source: American Folklife Center)

The collection materials must be organized into a comprehensible order. (Photo: Judy Ng. Source: American Folklife Center)



The collection must also be rehoused in archival boxes such as these. (Photo: Judy Ng. Source: American Folklife Center)

Moreover, this plan will serve as the roadmap outlining all the steps to organizing, rehousing, and labeling the materials in the collection for future access.

The second major task is to transfer the materials to their new containers. Before collection materials are removed from the boxes in which they arrived, the processor must determine what supplies will be needed to store the materials. All collection materials are finally housed in containers that are designed to protect and prolong the life of the collection. Each container must pass rigorous testing conducted by the Library's Conservation Laboratory. For this reason, the processing team works closely with conservators to evaluate and order the proper supplies.

When the supplies are procured, the processor can begin to dig into the collection material. As processors open boxes that might have been sitting in attics or basements for years, they evaluate the material for damage and preservation issues. Is there mold? Are the pages ripped? Is the paper acidic? Are the photographs stuck together? Are the tapes badly wound? All of these issues and more must be addressed as soon as possible to stabilize materials and increase their longevity.

In the course of unpacking, processors must also take note of the original order of the materials. In theory, the creator's original order should be maintained to preserve the context in which the documents were created and used. Unfortunately, the original order is not always evident within collections and in these cases processors must determine a logical arrangement for the materials. The Archive of Folk Culture usually arranges its collections into six series that correlate to the format of material. These formats are papers and manuscript material, sound recordings, graphic images, moving images, electronic media, and artifacts. Each of these formats presents its own challenges in terms of storage, preservation, and accessibility.

During the early stages of processing, team members also consider issues of both preservation and access. Preservation and access have related goals: safeguard the original, physical materials, and make the intellectual contents easy to retrieve and handle, through photocopies, digital files, and careful rehousing for both storage and perusal.

Marcia Segal showed Board members a few examples from the wide variety of audiovisual formats represented in the Folklife Center's collections. From a wax cylinder taken from the James Madison Carpenter Collection (shown in this photo) to a wire recording recorded by Don Yoder, to a variety of tapes and audio discs, the challenges of playback for these formats quickly become obvious. As processors look at these materials, they must decide which materials need preservation with the most urgency. (Photo: Judy Ng. Source: American Folklife Center)

Access is sometimes difficult to arrange. The Folklife Center receives audiovisual collection materials for which we don't have playback equipment. We also receive materials that are fragile or damaged. These cannot be served to researchers. The processors therefore look at the materials during the preliminary inventory, and make note of those items not readily accessible for reasons of either format or damage. First, we need to confirm the identity of formats and define the language used to describe these formats. We then determine whether the materials need to be treated before they can be used by researchers. We also decide if materials should be reformatted for preservation and access. This can mean preservation photocopying (newspaper clippings photocopied onto acid-free paper), making a reference tape or a digital copy of an original acetate so that researchers can listen to it, or any activity intended to extend the life span of a collection's content beyond the life of the original capture medium. This step involves triage, as the processor sorts through materials to decide which have the priority for conservation treatment. It also involves consultations with experts, both in the Folklife Center and in other Library divisions.

Finally, when items are described, treated, and copied, we rehouse the originals according to best practices, making sure that the items are stored as safely as possible to prevent deterioration. "Rehousing" means removing the items from the containers in which they arrived and putting them into acid-free boxes, envelopes, or folders. New housing helps store materials appropriately by format: so manuscripts, audiotapes, and videotapes are optimally stored vertically, while photos and cans of film are optimally stored horizontally. New housing is meant to be non-reactive, which means that it will not change the condition of the materials it houses.

Processors also consult experts regarding the intellectual content of materials. AFC collections include materials that document songs and cultures in languages other than English—recent examples include Yiddish and Hebrew in the Aaron Ziegelman Collection, and Pennsylvania German in collections material donated by Don Yoder. The vast resources at the Library of Congress allow the processing team to find someone who speaks each language, and who can help in translations as needed. This allows the staff, and ultimately the researchers, to gain basic intellectual access to the materials.

Creating Finding Aids

As the materials are inventoried and arranged, the processor is also working on the collection's finding aid, a written document that serves as the primary research tool for a collection. A finding aid serves as a map and allows the researcher to navigate through the collection. During processing, technicians and

archivists need to carefully and painstakingly take an inventory, design a processing plan, organize and arrange materials, number them, and label them. All this pertinent information is then gathered and included into the finding aid. A processor's main goal is to ensure clarity when processing a collection, and this is particularly important when preparing its finding aid. Before the process is deemed completed the finding aid goes through a rigorous review process in which a review panel checks for accuracy of information and clarity.

The first section of a finding aid gives a quick overview of the collection. Then we prepare sections giving not only a count of the materials and a counter list but, most importantly, a brief description of each item, of what content each item contains, and of where it can be found. For instance, if there is a cassette in a collection, these sections explain how many minutes of recorded sound there are, and whether (for example) it is speech, singing, or music. This helps the researcher tremendously in determining if he has the time to hear it or if it is likely to have content he needs. Finally, the administrative information contains a biographical sketch of the donor, reasons why the collection resides at our institution, and other relevant information. It also mentions any other related collections and Websites here at the Library. Providing as much information as possible is part of our job of serving the needs of researchers!

Cataloging for Access

What are the most effective means for researchers and the general public to find and use folklife collection materials? A cataloger's work is all about providing access by creating the interfaces through which researchers approach collections.

In ethnographic collections, documentation of cultural activities in multiple formats (e.g., sound, photographs, moving images, and field notes) provides detailed information about traditions and ways of life. All of the materials create the context for all others; this reflects the intentions of the ethnographer/collector who may work as a collaborator with the local community. The materials are often fragile and complex. It is important that their original order be maintained and that they be processed, described, and cataloged together. In AFC, our online cataloging at the collection level achieves the following:

Judy Ng shows some of the books that have been donated to the archive. (Photo: Krista Dorsey. Source: American Folklife Center)

- AFC collections comprise many unique items in multiple formats; we provide equal access to each format.
- We show the users the extent of the archival resources we have.
- We provide links to online digitized materials from our collections and links to finding aids that show the multilevel arrangement of the processed collection.

The cataloging we do depends on the careful and thorough work of the processing team. From a well-written finding aid, we can accurately create a collection-level catalog record in the Library of Congress online catalog. By adding our AFC catalog records to this huge database of millions of records at LC, we are in some cases intellectually reuniting our collection materials that were separated by format in the early days of the Archive of Folk Song. As an example, the Alan Lomax photos that were made during his early field recording trips, and which have been cataloged by the Prints and Photographs Division at LC, will be reunited online with the field recordings made on those trips as we catalog our own early Lomax sound recordings. In the twenty-first century, we would process and catalog the materials together, but in the earlier history of the Archive, there was no staff for this work.

Materials under archival control have varying levels of access, ranging from the collection level to the item level—this means that researchers are ideally provided the means to search in catalogs and find every level listed, from the whole collection to the individual song, manuscript, or photograph. In practice, providing this kind of access is a complex effort that relies on teamwork. At the collection level, we are in the process of cataloging all of our collections so that you can find them in the Library of Congress Online Catalog. Access to AFC collections at the item level is provided through several interfaces: through our WPA-era card catalog for our early sound recordings; and now, through Microsoft Access databases created together by the curators (who are on the reference staff of AFC) and the processing staff. Some of our materials are also available on servers linked directly to online catalogs and online presentations to be found on the Library Website. Making more of our digitized collection materials directly accessible to the public is a high priority for AFC and the Library of Congress as a whole.

The physical processing, treatment, and rehousing of collections, the creation of finding aids, and the cataloging of the collections constitute the major steps in preserving and serving. This is the work that allows the reference librarians and folklife specialists to guide patrons to the vast resources available in the Archive. The processing and cataloging team is proud to be playing such a crucial role in maintaining the Archive of Folk Culture.

StoryCorps: An Oral History Project Yields a New Collection

AFC Director Peggy Bulger receives from StoryCorps founder Dave Isay a hard drive filled with audio files of stories recorded in the MobileBooth. (Photo: Michaela McNichol. Source: *The Gazette)*

"Last year my sister and I came to StoryCorps with my then-91-year-old grandmother. We had this fantastic interview, in which my grandma was candid and funny and loving. Yesterday she died. I just took out my StoryCorps CD and noticed the date, a year to the day. Tomorrow will be her funeral. I could only listen to about twenty seconds before bursting into tears. But I am so grateful that I have this. Sure, I could have taped her anytime in the last forty-one years. But I didn't. Now the reward is so huge. Everyone should do StoryCorps—because we don't live forever."

—Note from a StoryCorps participant

StoryCorps, a national project aimed at instructing and inspiring Americans to record one another's stories in sound, began recording people's stories in 2003 with a single recording booth located in Grand Central Terminal in New York. In May of this year, StoryCorps launched a new initiative—a tour of mobile recording booths—at the Library of Congress. For ten days the Library hosted the kickoff of the first year of the American tour, presenting two Airstream Trailers fitted with recording booths on the Madison Plaza. Since then, the booths continue to travel from town to town, spreading the StoryCorps experience across the nation.

These soundproof recording booths create the opportunity for people to take part in broadcast-quality oral history interviews with their relatives or friends under the guidance of a trained facilitator. The facilitator helps to select interview questions and handles all of the technical aspects of the recording. At the end of the forty-minute session, the participants receive a CD of their interview, and with their permission a second copy becomes a permanent part of the Archive of Folk Culture at the American Folklife Center (AFC). StoryCorps is the first born-digital audio collection for AFC and the largest oral narrative collection in the nation. By documenting everyday history and the unique stories of grassroots America, the collection is rapidly becoming no less than an oral history of America. Scholars, researchers, the public, and the great-great-great grand-

children of the participants can always be assured access to the voices of today's America.

StoryCorps is designed to capture the everyday voices of America: A granddaughter interviewing her grandmother, a husband interviewing his wife, sisters interviewing each other. StoryCorps creates an opportunity for families and friends to reach across boundaries, to uncover the unspoken and the undiscovered, to forge new bonds, and to come to new understandings of our own and other human relationships. The stories, emotions, laughs, and surprises revealed in these interviews open our hearts, reminding us of the many diverse, complicated, beautiful, and unexpected aspects of "ordinary" American lives, and reminding us that each ordinary life has extraordinary moments.

StoryCorps founder Dave Isay with Danny and Annie Perasa, whose story of love and marriage has been featured on NPR. (Photo: Stephen D. Winick. Source: American Folklife Center)

StoryCorps is the brainchild of MacArthur Fellow Dave Isay and his award-winning documentary company, Sound Portraits Productions. "Over the past year and a half, we've seen the profound effect StoryCorps has had on the lives of those who have participated in the project, and we've seen the power that these stories have had on the millions who have heard them," said Isay. "We believe that listening is an act of love. StoryCorps will engage communities, teach participants to become better listeners, foster intergenerational communication, and help Americans appreciate the strength in the stories of everyday people they find all around them."

AFC director Peggy Bulger was equally enthusiastic. "StoryCorps will provide America with important social documentation on a grassroots, nationwide scale that mirrors what the historic Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Writers' Project accomplished more than half a century ago," she said. "We are delighted to be partners with StoryCorps and to house a new generation of America's stories." The WPA recordings, featuring similar oral history interviews with Americans of all walks of life, were recorded in the 1930s, and remain the single most important collection of American voices gathered to date. StoryCorps will build and expand on that work, becoming a WPA for the twenty-first century. Both collections will reside together in the Archive of Folk Culture.

The StoryCorps kickoff at the Library included interviews with a mix of everyday people, national figures, and local personalities, such as Mickey Hart, the percussionist for the Grateful Dead; James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress; Chuck Brown, the father of Go-Go music; Stetson Kennedy, Ku Klux Klan buster, folklorist, and author; the family operating the famed Ben's Chili Bowl; folk musician Tom Paxton; Charlie Brotman, the announcer for the Inaugural Parade and for the Washington Senators games; Sue Mingus, widow of jazz musician Charles Mingus; and many, many more. Special guests Danny and Annie Perasa, whose heartwarming story is often excerpted on National Public Radio (NPR), traveled from New York City to be a part of the opening day in DC. The AFC's own Peggy Bulger took part in the event, conducting an interview in the booth with Marvin Kranz, retired American history specialist in the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress, and one with Stetson Kennedy.

After leaving the Library, the MobileBooths set out in opposite directions across the country—one taking an eastern route and the other covering the western states. Visits in each city or town last between two and three weeks, with about one hundred interview slots available at each location. This inaugural tour will last one year and stop at nearly forty-five cities. In each tour city, local public radio stations and local folklorists are participating in the project. Segments from selected interviews are also being aired nationally on NPR's *Morning Edition*.

In July of this year, the second permanent StoryCorps booth opened at "Ground Zero," the site of the World Trade Center. Over the course of the ten-year project, StoryCorps plans to open StoryBooths—both mobile and stationary—across the country.

The StoryCorps project is being sponsored by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, NPR, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and Saturn. To learn more about StoryCorps and the tour of the MobileBooths please visit *http://www.storycorps.net* or contact Joanne Rasi at the American Folklife Center at jrasi@loc.gov

The New Orleans Legacy of JELLY ROLL MORTON

By Matthew Barton

In the spring and summer of 1938, twenty-three-year-old Alan Lomax, Assistant in Charge of the Archive of American Folksong at the Library of Congress, recorded over nine hours of the singing, playing, and boasting of Ferdinand Joseph Lamothe, aka Jelly Roll Morton (1885–1941), the New Orleans-born self-styled originator of jazz. Now, Rounder Records has released *Jelly Roll Morton: The Complete Library of Congress Recordings by Alan Lomax,* the first-ever uncut, unexpurgated, chronologically sequenced edition of these recordings. The piano-shaped, eight-CD box set, part of Rounder's *Alan Lomax Collection* series, features cover art by Robert Crumb, a bonus disc drawn from Lomax's 1949 interviews with Morton's peers, Lomax's Morton biography *Mister Jelly Roll,* and an eighty-page essay on Morton by Lomax biographer John Szwed. Szwed relates that Alistair Cooke of the BBC told Lomax to seek out Morton at the Music Box, a small Washington, DC, nightclub where he occasionally played piano and regaled local devotees with tales of his glory days. There Morton would also expound his pointed views on the history of jazz, which he claimed to have invented in 1902 and which few musicians born outside of New Orleans played well. Years later, Lomax credited him with the idea of a Library of Congress recording session:

"He was thoroughly prepared," Lomax recalled in 1978. "He'd thought about the whole thing. And we had a few minutes' conversation and I knew I had a winner and I had my own plot and I knew he had his plot and I ran up the Coolidge Auditorium stairs to Harold [Harold Spivacke—head of the Library's Music Division and Lomax's boss] and I said 'Harold, I want to have a guarantee of a hundred discs.' And he said 'What? and I said, 'Yeah—we're going to do the history of New Orleans Jazz!'"

Jelly Roll Morton, in a Victor Records Promotional Photograph ca. late 1920s. (Source: Rounder Records)

"I decided to see how much folklore Jelly Roll had in him, and that was my plot," Lomax remembered. "And his plot was to make sure that the place of New Orleans in the history of American music would be clearly and forever stated and he did that in a simply brilliant way." Seated at a grand piano on the stage of the Coolidge Auditorium, Jelly Roll talked, played, and sang the story of his life, his music, and his home, where he said ". . . . they played every type of music. Everyone, no doubt, had a different style . . . they had every class, we had Spanish, we had colored, we had white, we had Frenchmens, we had Americans . . . . we had 'em from all parts of the world."

Morton's emphasis on the importance of New Orleans in American musical history makes particularly poignant listening after the flooding of the city earlier this year.

With the piano as his only tool, Morton gave a series of illustrated, swinging lectures on his musical education, which included everything from nineteenth-century opera to the chants he sang as a "spy-boy" for one of the city's Mardi Gras Indian groups. At one point, he broke down the parts of a highly formal French quadrille, complete with dance calls, and showed how he reconfigured them to create the jazz standard "Tiger Rag." Morton filled disc after disc with blues, ragtime, hymns, stomps, and compositions of his own like "King Porter Stomp," "The Pearls," "Freakish," "The Crave," and "Pep." Though he had recorded extensively as a bandleader and pianist for commercial labels in the 1920s, Morton was virtually undocumented as a singer prior to his Library of Congress sessions, which showed him to be a fine interpreter of sacred and secular songs. Some of his songs were very secular indeed, with lyrics that still shock.

Various editions of these sessions, some censored, some unauthorized, have been available over the years. Early releases failed to correct the pitch problems created by the Library's disc recorder,

which frequently ran at the wrong speed. A 1993 CD release benefitted from speed corrections done by Morton scholar James Dapogny and LOC sound engineer Mike Donaldson, but left out most of Morton's talk to concentrate on his playing and singing.

For this edition, Library of Congress Magnetic Recording Lab Supervisor Larry Appelbaum and Lomax Collection restoration specialist Steve Rosenthal worked together for a week in the Library's sound lab to create the best transfers possible, using Sony's DSD technology for digital capture. Every fragile disc was first carefully cleaned by sound lab engineer W. B. Haley. Acetate copies made in the 1940s were researched and located by Folklife Center staff, and Recorded Sound reference staff provided additional sources for performances on the more badly worn original discs. Pitch fluctuations were meticulously corrected. Following the transfer sessions, free-lance engineer Matt Sohn, formerly of the Louis Armstrong Museum, performed careful surface noise reduction using a Cambridge Cedar system donated by Fraser Jones of Independent Audio.

"As a recording engineer, it's always a thrill to work with historically significant recordings," Appelbaum noted. "These discs are among the great legacy recordings made here at LC, as important as the concerts given by the Budapest String Quartet, or the readings by poet laureates or the premiere of *Appalachian Spring*. As a jazz specialist, I have a great appreciation for Morton's music and the stories he tells about the characters and the music scene in New Orleans during what he refers to as the birth of jazz. I've been working here for twenty-five years and working on this set is one of the highlights of my career."

"Restoring these sessions was a great audio adventure," Steve Rosenthal said. "Presenting Jelly Roll to the public the way that Alan heard him in the Coolidge Auditorium was always my goal, and with the help of some great audio people and gear, I think we got pretty damn close."

While the World Watched: a Veterans History Project Radio Documentary on PRI

By Stephen Winick and the VHP staff.

On Veteran's day, 2005, Public Radio International (PRI) stations across the country will air *While the World Watched,* fourth in the series *Experiencing War. Experiencing War* is presented by the Library of Congress Veterans History Project (VHP), a special project of the American Folklife Center. The series is intended to increase public awareness of its rich collections and to offer a perspective on war and how it has affected people's lives. Drawn from the provocative narratives of those who served as soldiers and civilians, the programs offer a riveting first-hand glimpse at the terrifying, poignant, and humorous moments of war—creating a penetrating look at who we are as a nation and what we value.

While the World Watched paints an unforgettable sound portrait of the Nuremberg Trials through the voices of veterans from World War Two and eyewitnesses from the trials themselves. Hosted by former Sen. Max Cleland, and produced by Lee Woodman Media, Inc., this provocative radio documentary comes at a time when people are forced once again to consider human rights issues across the globe and ask the question "where does culpability begin and end?"

Robert Jackson, chief prosecutor for the United States at Nuremberg, in 1951. (Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

In the opening statement of the Nuremberg Trial, chief prosecutor for the United States, Robert Jackson, pleaded:

The crimes which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated.

The truth of Jackson's statement is made clear by eyewitness testimony presented in this gripping radio documentary. The account of Cpl. Harold Raymond Fray is just one example. Fray was part of the U.S. Army's 188th Combat Engineers under Gen. George Patton when they liberated the Buchenwald concentration camp in early April 1945. He remembered:

I walked through the entire camp. I saw dead people. I went into the crematorium where they gassed thousands . . . I went into the laboratory where they were doing experiments on human bodies . . . never in my life could I even comprehend this kind of treatment of one group of people to another. There is nothing I can put into words that does justice to what that does to your own inner spirit and soul . . . .

Drawing from the extraordinary collections of the Library of Congress, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the

Hermann Göring during his trial at Nuremberg. (Photo: Hans Reinhart, International News Photo. Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

National Archives and Records Administration, and brand new interviews with witnesses still alive to tell the story, *While the World Watched* traces the lead-up to the trials through the firsthand narratives of POWs and liberators of the concentration camps in Europe. Listeners will hear actual testimony from the trials of major Nazi war criminals, as well as firsthand accounts of prosecutors, interpreters, and personnel who gathered and managed the heaps of documentation gathered as evidence. Noted historians and ethicists speak on the nature of evil and what the world has learned or not learned from this historic event.

The series *Experiencing War* is produced and directed by Lee Woodman Media, Inc. The first program of the series, *Coming Home,* was funded by Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust and was broadcast on Veterans Day 2003 to enthusiastic listeners nationwide by eighty-three PRI stations. The second, *Lest We Forget,* was funded by AARP and broadcast on Memorial Day 2004 to more than one hundred thirty stations in all major markets. The third, *More Than Love Stories,* aired on Valentine's Day and again on Memorial Day 2005. *Coming Home* and *Lest We Forget* won the 2004 Gracie Award from American Women in Radio and Television for excellence in writing and production.

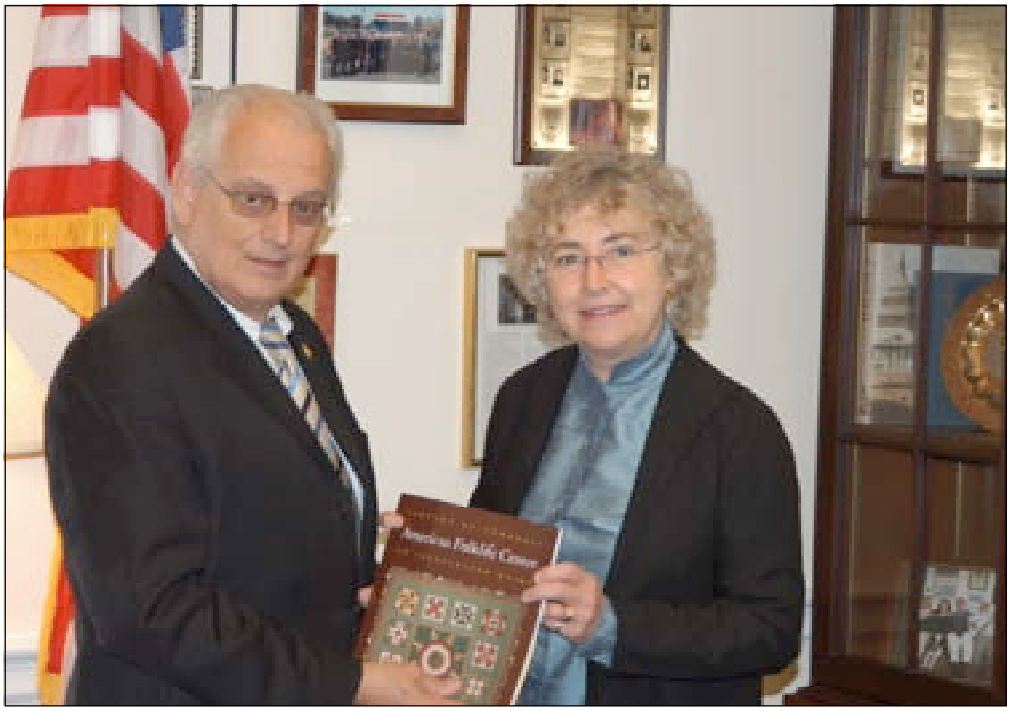
We regret that in the last issue of *Folklife Center News*:

- Slovenia was identified as part of the former Soviet Union rather than the former Yugoslavia.
- Henrietta Yurchenco's name was misspelled.
- Deanna Marcum's title was given incorrectly. The correct title is Associate Librarian for Library Services.

Mantle Hood: a Pioneering Ethnomusicologist Dies at 87

By Timothy Rice (President, Society for Ethnomusicology and member, AFC Board of Trustees).

Mantle Hood, a seminal figure in the history of the discipline of ethnomusicology, died on July 31 at his home in Ellicott City, Maryland. He was 87. He founded the Institute for Ethnomusicology at UCLA in 1960; that program evolved into the largest ethnomusicology graduate program in the world, and he trained many in the next generation of scholars, who went on themselves to found graduate programs at the University of Washington, Brown University, UC Berkeley, Wesleyan University, Florida State University, as well as programs and research institutes in many countries of the world. He was a leading figure in research on Javanese gamelan music and arranged for one of the first gamelans to be taught at a U.S. university. He was honored on two occasions by the Indonesian government for his contributions in this area: in 1986 they conferred upon him the title Ki, which means "Venerable"; and in 1992 they named him to their Society of National Heroes. One of his major theoretical contributions to the field was "bi-musicality," the idea that ethnomusicologists, presumably musical in the Western tradition, should learn to play the music of the cultures they study, in the process becoming bi-musical, as a fundamental aspect of research method. In 1971 he published an important book, *The Ethnomusicologist,* which outlined research issues, questions, and methods in the then nascent field of ethnomusicology. He also is remembered for a seminal ethnographic documentary film on African drumming called *Atumpan*, a film that is still shown in classes on music cultures of the world. He served a two-year term as president of the Society for Ethnomusicology, the leading academic organization in the United States dedicated to supporting and publishing research in this field. He was selected as its Charles Seeger Lecturer, and named an "honorary member" of the Society.



Congressman Bill Pascrell of New Jersey receives a copy of the American Folklife Center's Illustrated Guide from AFC director Peggy Bulger. Bulger visited the Congressman with several staff members to celebrate the completion of the Finding Aid for the Working in Paterson Collection, a collection project generously supported by the Congressman.

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