

“What Ordinary People Do Is Important”: Edith Fowke’s Life and Publications

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Abstract: *Edith Fowke’s life and publications are surveyed, from her childhood in Saskatchewan to her final books and articles on folklore and traditional song. Based on writings by and about Fowke as well as communications with friends and co-workers, emphasis is on her song anthologies, broadcasting career, and pioneering field recordings in Ontario.*

Edith Fowke was once asked why she had devoted so much of her life to the study of folk music and folklore. She responded by saying “I’m an ordinary person, and what ordinary people do is important” (Ross 1996). Edith was a very significant collector of Ontario folk songs, but her interest in folk music was national. Edith produced more than thirty books and dozens of articles dealing with Canadian folk songs and folklore. She exposed thousands of people to folk music and story through her radio broadcasts on the CBC and her university lectures. Edith was a Member of the Order of Canada, a Fellow of The Royal Society, and she had honorary doctorates from Brock University, Trent University, York University and the University of Regina. She wrote throughout her life and was still writing at the end. When Edith passed away on March 28, 1996 at Women’s College Hospital in Toronto, she had already left an indelible mark on the study and enjoyment of Canadian folk music and folklore.

1913-1955

Edith Margaret Fulton was born on April 30, 1913, one of two daughters of William and Margaret. The Fultons had emigrated from Northern Ireland to settle in Lumsden, Saskatchewan, a town of 500 located just northwest of Regina, on the Qu’Appelle River. William Fulton worked as an oil distributor and provided a middle-class home for the family.

Childhood and Adolescence

Edith said her enthusiasm for folk song and folklore came later: in Lumsden she was a reader. As a young girl, Edith loved books. She read everything she could get her hands on. Because Lumsden was short of good books, Edith had to work her way through the books of her neighbors and friends. She borrowed books from the Methodist minister’s wife and from

teachers. Literature was her passion (Donald 1975: 69).

By the age of ten, she was a member of the Torchbearer’s Club, a group associated with the nearby city newspaper, the Regina Leader-Post. The Torchbearer’s Club enabled amateur writers and artists to have their work published in a magazine which accompanied the newspaper’s Saturday edition. Over a period of approximately six years, Edith contributed poetry and fiction to the publication (Johnson 1996: 15).

Although she did not know it at the time, her folklore collecting had already begun in Lumsden. For her 1976 publication *Folklore of Canada*, Edith used four autograph books, filled by Lumsden and Regina friends from 1927 to 1933 “because of the dearth of English-Canadian folklore from Saskatchewan” (1976a: 237, 310).

University Studies

In 1933, Edith graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Her concentrations were English and History. The year of her graduation was the same year that the political party which had evolved out of a union of prairie farmers, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), held its first national convention in Regina. From an early age, Edith had been interested in social issues. It seemed natural for her to become attracted to the policies of the CCF and its prominent leader J.S. Woodsworth. Edith became an active member of the party, an involvement which would last twenty years. For a number of those years, she would edit the CCF newsletters (Fruitman 1996).

Edith taught school for a brief time after graduation. She also edited a magazine for teachers and carried on her interest in politics. But she wanted more education. After a while, she decided to return to the University of Saskatchewan for the

M.A. degree in English -- during the Depression, a time when very few women undertook graduate education. Edith graduated in 1937 with a thesis on the 19th-century English poet and novelist, George Meredith (Donald 1975: 69; Ross 1996).

Early Years in Toronto

In 1938, Edith married Frank Fowke, an engineering graduate with an interest in music (Ross 1996). The couple soon moved to Toronto where Edith worked as a freelance writer and editor for a number of years. Between 1937 and 1944, she was Editor of the *Western Teacher*. From 1945 to 1949, she was Associate Editor of the *Magazine Digest* (Johnson 1996: 18).

Edith continued her interest in political and social affairs through her involvement with the CCF, Citizen's Forum, Friends of Overseas Students, The Co-operative Committee for Japanese Canadians, and the Woodsworth Foundation (Johnson 1996: 7). Edith's participation in these organizations resulted in two books. In 1948, she edited *Toward Socialism: Selections from the Writings of J.S. Woodsworth*. This paperback book, for which she wrote the "Foreword," contained fifteen essays by the founder of the CCF. Published through the Ontario Woodsworth Memorial Foundation, the 48-page book was sold for 25 cents. A few years later, in 1951, Edith wrote *They Made Democracy Work: The Story of the Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians*. This was also a paperback book which sold for 25 cents.

In the early 1950s, Edith edited the magazine *Food For Thought*, which dealt with issues of adult education (Donald 1975: 70). As well, she served on the editorial board of *The Canadian Forum*, a well-known monthly journal of literature and public affairs. For this magazine she wrote one of her first articles dealing with folk music in Canada (Fowke 1949). The article provided some of the history of Canadian song collecting, described the work of collectors such as Elizabeth Greenleaf, Marius Barbeau, Maud Karpeles, Helen Creighton and Roy Mackenzie, and mentioned Alice Fletcher's work in collecting North American native music.

Edith became disillusioned with politics and the CCF in 1952. That was the year David Lewis and the Steelworkers packed the annual meeting and drove out many of the people who had been running the programs. Edith fought the new regime briefly. After a short time, however, she decided to turn her energy to the study of folk music and folklore (Johnson 1996: 7).

Her interest in folk music had started casually in the 1940s as she began to acquire recordings of performers such as Josh White, Burl Ives, and Dyer-Bennett (Weihs et al. 1978: 4). By the late 1940s, her collection of records was becoming quite significant. In 1949, Edith began to make some of these recordings available to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for use on a program called *Folk Song Time*.

Folk Song Time

In its formative days the program was narrated by CBC hosts, using scripts provided by Edith (Johnson 1996: 7).¹ The first programs, a half hour long, were a direct result of Edith approaching David Boyle at the CBC and persuading him it was time for a folk-music show (Weihs et al. 1978: 5).

Folk Song Time, which varied in length from 30 to 60 minutes, ran on the CBC until 1958. Edith eventually both wrote and read the scripts. After 1958, the name was changed to *Folk Sounds* and the show continued into the 1970s.

Most of the music played on the show in its early years originated in the United States. There were few recordings of Canadian folk songs or singers available. Canadian content was limited to the recordings of Ed McCurdy and Alan Mills (Weihs et al. 1978: 5).

At the time, these were the only people singing Canadian folk songs on record and Edith gave them "airplay." Through the radio program, Edith came to know many members of the folk-music community personally. She became a good friend of Alan Mills. She was a guest at the homes of Burl Ives and Pete Seeger. She socialized with Charles Seeger and Joe Glazer (Johnson 1996: 8).

The weekly radio show led Edith into researching the origin of folk songs. She felt it was necessary to know the background of the songs, particularly Canadian songs. It was information of which Edith thought listeners should be aware. She wanted her programs to be informative and interesting, as well as musical. This led to many hours of library research and the purchase of a substantial number of books (Weihs et al. 1978:5; Donald 1975: 70).

Edith quickly concluded that there was a limited quantity of historical material available on Canadian folk music. This was a situation she wanted to see remedied. As *Folk Song Time* gained

¹ One of the early narrators was reportedly Bill Reid, the noted Haida sculptor.

popularity in the early 1950s, listeners began to asking where they could get copies of the songs for singing. Edith felt the books of Marius Barbeau, Helen Creighton, and Roy Mackenzie could not satisfy this demand. She determined that a new singing book was required (Weihs et al. 1978: 5).

Folk Songs of Canada

In 1952, Edith began collaborating with Richard Johnston on a book of Canadian folk songs. She worked as the literary editor while Johnston edited the music. The collection of 76 songs selected for the publication was gleaned mostly from the field collections of Barbeau, Peacock, Karpeles, Greenleaf, Mackenzie, and Creighton.

The volume was designed as a singing book. The songs were selected on the basis of their perceived popularity, the ease with which they could be sung, and the extent to which they represented a particular aspect of Canadian history or life. Canadian versions of American songs were also included (Fowke and Johnston 1954: 9-12).

Johnston notated each song using keys that were suitable for group singing. The score contained a melody line, lyrics, piano accompaniment and guitar chords. Edith helped with the selection of the songs and their texts. As well, she prepared the historical sketches printed with each song. These explained the songs' significance for Canada.

After more than two years of work, *Folk Songs of Canada* was published in April 1954. It was such an immediate success that Waterloo Music produced a second printing less than a year later, in February 1955.

The successful introduction of *Folk Songs of Canada* to the public was followed by a couple of closely associated projects, also produced through Waterloo Music. First, a choral edition of the book was available the same year. The provision of choral arrangements by Richard Johnston was another step in the legitimization of Canadian folk music, enabling folk songs to be sung by choirs of all types: church, school, amateur, and professional.

The second project was the record album *Folk Songs of Canada*. Produced under the musical direction of Richard Johnston for the Waterloo label, It featured Joyce Sullivan and Charles Jordan singing a selection of songs from the book accompanied by chorus, guitar, and piano. Edith was much involved in broadcasting at the time and was firmly believed recordings were the most effective way to expose the general public to folk music.

Kenneth Goldstein

A few months after the book's release, Edith went to New York City to purchase more folk recordings. In the Stinson record shop in Greenwich Village, the owner introduced her to Kenneth Goldstein. Goldstein made his living at that time as a statistician, but his hobby was folklore and folk music. He was also a producer of folk recordings, and had worked with such prominent American folk singers as Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston, Leadbelly, and Milt Okun. Goldstein seemed to be aware of every folk music publication in existence. He surprised Edith by letting her know that he had enjoyed her efforts in *Folk Songs of Canada*. They became friends instantly, a friendship that would last until his death in 1996.

Through Goldstein, Edith became a member of the American Folklore Society. As well, he was instrumental in getting her books published in the United States. This establishment of a permanent connection with the American folk music and folklore community would be of considerable help to Edith Fowke in subsequent years (Fowke 1996a: 22).

Back in Canada, Edith resumed her work with Richard Johnston. Their next effort, *Folk Songs of Quebec*, would eventually be published in 1957. This book was intended to introduce French Canadian songs to English Canadian people. It was an idea that did not work well and there was little demand for the book (Weihs et al. 1978: 5). Nevertheless, the work involved in the creation of the two books, both published by Waterloo Music, along with her preparation of radio scripts, led Edith to the realization that there was very little folk music in print that had originated west of Quebec. (Weihs et al. 1978: 5).

One of Edith's earliest friends and associates in folk music was British Columbia song collector, composer, teacher, and singer Philip Thomas. In response to an inquiry I made about some of the early thoughts Edith may have had on song collecting, Thomas replied (1998):

Collecting, in the field, was something that Edith had considered doing from those early years. Edith, as I understand it, was initially primarily a popularizer of folk song in the mould of the American Ben Botkin. She truly believed that folk songs reflected lives of the people who sang them, and that assertion, which she scripted in the introduction to her weekly CBC program *Folk Song Time*, gave them a cultural pedigree to be honoured.

In the autumn of 1956, Edith began her song collecting in rural Ontario.

1956-1964

Edith Fowke purchased her first tape recorder in the fall of 1956 (Fowke 1965b: 1). Very soon her song collecting began in Ontario, specifically Peterborough County. In researching how Edith came to begin her fieldwork in the Peterborough area, I found two slightly different, but not necessarily contradictory, accounts.

Earliest Field Collecting

In a 1978 interview, Edith mentioned that in 1956 she had a friend who had a cottage in the Peterborough area. He had told her that some people there reminded him of rural people in the Appalachians. Edith followed up on this lead and went to Peterborough. She first contacted the individual who wrote a history column in the local newspaper, the Peterborough Examiner. When Edith asked him if he knew any old timers interested in songs, he replied in the negative. She then contacted the President of the Peterborough Historical Society. He also replied in the negative, but he suggested she visit a Mr. William Towns, a man known to be interested in local history (Weihs et al. 1978: 5-6).

Another account of how Edith came to be aware of Mr. William Towns is outlined on the first page of an eight-page manuscript I located at the Trent University archives in Peterborough. The manuscript is an essay which appears to have been written by Edith Fowke around 1965. In this work, titled "Folk Songs Of Peterborough," Edith gives a slightly different version of the story. She says that in the autumn of 1956 she was spending the weekend with friends in the village of Millbrook, just southwest of Peterborough. Her host Spencer Cheshire took her to see Nick Nickells of the Peterborough Examiner. Nickells had gathered a lot of information about old timers in the district, gave Edith some names, and put her in touch with William Towns of Douro (Fowke 1965c).

Regardless of how she came to know him, William Towns was the key to the successful beginning of Edith Fowke's song collecting in Ontario. Towns lived in Douro, a small village about fifteen miles east of Peterborough that had been settled by Irish Catholics in the 1820s. He operated the large general store, which along with St. Joseph's Roman Catholic church across the street, dominated the centre of the village. Edith went to that store on an autumn day in 1956 and asked Mr. Towns if he knew anyone interested in old songs. He

replied that his wife Mary sang some old songs, as did his father in law, Michael Cleary (Weihs et al. 1978: 6).

Edith's first recording session took place in the Towns home, directly behind the store. She recorded 81-year-old Michael Cleary as well as Mary Towns. Edith commented on the fine voice of Mary Towns, who had learned the folk songs from her father in the Irish oral tradition.

The Towns family told her of other singers in the area and Edith began seeking them out. Three singers in the immediate area were recorded shortly afterward: Dave McMahon, Jim Doherty, and Emerson Woodcock. Through Woodcock, Edith met Tom Brandon. At the time, Brandon was one of the better young singers of the older songs she recorded. As the network of source singers grew, so did Edith's workload, as she drove the 90 miles from her Toronto home to Peterborough each weekend to record them (Fowke 1977b; Weihs et al. 1978: 6).

These tape recordings were of great significance to Canadian folksong scholarship. Edith had discovered songs that had never been heard outside the Peterborough area. She also found unique versions and variants of older songs. These songs had never been documented; they existed only because they had been passed on in oral tradition, person to person, through generations, by family, friends, and co-workers. Edith had found a wealth of songs that up to 1956 were relatively unknown.

Edith compared her discovery to finding gold (1965b: 1):

Luck was with me for the first area I tried was Peterborough, some ninety miles north-east of Toronto, and there it soon became clear that I had struck a very rich lode.

Forty-two years after Edith met William Towns in Douro, Ontario, I went to visit the same place. I drove there in February, 1998 to retrace Edith's footsteps and to get a feeling of what she may have encountered. I found the village of Douro very much out of the way, in Douro Township, just east of the city of Peterborough. No major highways pass through, or even come close to it. The road into the village had virtually no traffic on it. The village itself is still dominated by St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, its accompanying presbytery and the equally large and impressive, red and yellow, P.G. Towns General Store. The elementary school, parish hall, cemetery, and a handful of homes make up the remainder of the village centre. There are plenty of old trees and

these only add to the sense that this place, at least on the surface, has remained untouched by outside influence for many years. Douro in 1998 quite likely looked the same as it did when Edith Fowke first visited in 1956.

When I walked into the store, I felt as though I were actually following in the footsteps of Edith Fowke. The interior of the store had a comfortable rural feeling. It is probable that Edith Fowke encountered the same atmosphere when she first entered. The store was still operated by the Towns family; the proprietor was now Michael Towns, the son of William and Mary Towns. Michael's wife Rosemary and his sister Mary also worked in the store.

I found the Towns to be warm, friendly, and knowledgeable, and they did not hesitate to answer my inquiries about Edith Fowke and Mary Towns. Michael easily remembered Edith's visits to the family store, and the family home behind the store. He recalled how Edith encouraged his mother to keep singing the old songs. When Edith took her to Innis Lake, Ontario to sing at the Mariposa Folk Festival, the entire family went along. Michael also mentioned that his mother, through Edith's encouragement sang at McGill University and Trent University.

In 1959, Edith selected two of the Mary Towns field recordings to be included on the album *Folk Songs of Ontario*. In 1961, Mary Towns was one of three Ontario singers Edith took to perform at the International Folk Music Council meeting in Quebec City (Fowke 1990: 297).

Michael told me that Edith would have liked his mother to do more travelling and singing, but she was a very devoted family woman, and felt uncomfortable being away from her husband, children, and the store. Over the years Mary maintained her friendship with Edith, through visits and letters. They both died in 1996, a few months apart.

Among the belongings of Mary Towns, placed between the pages of a large book, was a newspaper clipping that describes the honouring of Edith with the Order of Canada. The daughter of Mary Towns, who is also named Mary, said that the relationship with Edith was very important to her mother. Michael Towns perceived that the two women had a great mutual respect. His mother was so pleased that she, along with her father, were Edith's very first informants.

Alan Mills

The recording sessions in the Peterborough area represented only part of Edith's work in 1956. During the same year she had been collaborating with her friend Alan Mills to prepare 13 quarter-hour programs for CBC radio, called *The Song History of Canada*. Edith wrote the scripts; Alan sang the songs and narrated. The series ran from July to September. At the same time, Edith and Alan persuaded the U.S.-based Folkways recording company to release an album based on the radio series. The recording *O Canada: A History in Song* was chosen by the New York Times as one of the best recordings of 1956. Alan and Edith then completed the year with a series called *Songs of the Sea* which ran on CBC radio from October to December. All this radio work was in addition to the regular radio broadcasts of *Folk Song Time* (Fowke 1996b).

John Robins

Although Edith had taken on a significant amount of folksong oriented work in 1956, she found time to pursue her interest in folklore by editing a book of stories by Dr. John Robins. Robins, an English professor at the University of Toronto, had learned Paul Bunyan folk tales as a young man working in Ontario lumbering camps. Edith became acquainted with Dr. Robins when he was broadcasting a series based on the legendary lumberjack for CBC radio in 1951.

Upon his death in late 1952, Robins' widow turned all his Paul Bunyan writings over to Edith. Edith edited the material and prepared the final text for ten of the stories that were specifically set in Canada (Fowke 1957: Foreword). These stories were published by the Ryerson Press in February of 1957 under the title *Logging with Paul Bunyan*. Robins was a major influence on Edith's career in collecting folk song and folklore. Edith had thought highly enough of him to have the 1954 publication *Folk Songs of Canada* dedicated to his memory: "Dr. John Robins, whose love of folk songs was contagious." (Fowke and Johnston 1954: 5).

Apart from the Paul Bunyan stories, Dr. Robins had collected other pieces of folklore. In the summer of 1945 he notated some square dances and calls by hand in Goulais Bay, Ontario, on the eastern tip of Lake Superior. He also made a list of some of the fiddle tunes played in the area at the time (Fowke 1976: 215-16).

Edith probably became aware of this work when she came into possession of his writings. She would use the material much later, in her 1976 book *Folklore of Canada*. It is quite likely that Dr. John

Robins and his work were among the significant influences in the 1950s that led to Edith Fowke to begin collecting folk song and story in Ontario. In *Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and Their Role in Canadian Culture*, Carole Carpenter emphasizes that "Robins was instrumental in Edith Fowke's involvement in folklore" (1976: 50).

O.J. Abbott

Early in 1957, Edith was interviewed on the television program *Tabloid*, a very popular CBC early evening news and talk show which originated in Toronto. During the interview, Edith spoke about the hundreds of folk songs she had found and recorded in the Peterborough area. One of the interested viewers of that show was Mrs. Ida Dagenais. She wrote Edith and told her that her father O.J. Abbott knew a lot of old Ontario lumbering songs. Edith wrote back and asked Mrs. Dagenais to send the titles of some of the songs Mr. Abbott sang (Weihs et al. 1978: 6). When Edith received the list of songs, she became very interested and decided to spend part of the summer of 1957 in the Ottawa Valley recording Abbott.

Although he lived in Hull, Quebec, O.J. Abbott had learned the songs he sang when he was a young man working on farms and in lumber camps on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River in the 1880s and 1890s. He was 85 years old when he was first recorded, yet he sang with good intonation in a clear, strong voice. His songs were of high quality and complete, but most importantly, he knew a very large number of them. In the first week alone, Edith recorded 84 songs (Fowke 1965: 11-12). O.J. Abbott had become one of her most prolific informants.

Edith spent most of her time in 1957 recording Ontario folk songs. That year Edith also was involved in a second Folkways recording. *Songs of the Sea* was based on the radio programs she and Alan Mills had produced. As the first recording, *O Canada: A History in Song* had done in 1956, the second one also made the New York Times list of top recordings. Edith then collaborated with Alan Mills on a third series of CBC radio programs, based on legends of Indonesia. Edith continued her script writing as she worked on a number of radio programs about Australian bush ballads, with Merrick Jarrett as the singer and narrator (Johnson 1996: 9; Fowke 1996: 17).

Collecting, Publishing, Travels and Friends

Edith continued her Ontario song collecting into 1958. She had, by then, developed her own approach to

collecting and publishing. Most importantly, she recorded and noted the text of every song as it was performed, and carefully analyzed the results (Fowke 1996: 45; Thomas 1996: 23).

The field recordings Edith produced were, in themselves, superb. She used a very high quality tape recorder and microphone, and the performances of many singers were outstanding. The result was studio quality recordings, a number of which were selected in 1958 to compile an album titled *Folk Songs of Ontario*. Released by Folkways Records of New York City, it was the first of several record albums made exclusively from her field recordings. Edith wrote the extensive liner notes for the album. These included the text and history of each song and a photograph of each singer (Fowke 1958).

Later in 1958, Edith took a holiday in the British Isles with her husband Frank. This was one of many trips to Britain that enabled her to become acquainted with many of the folklorists and singers living there, such as Peggy Seeger, Ewan MacColl, Hamish Henderson, and Albert Lloyd (Fowke 1990: 297).

Back in North America, Edith started work with Joe Glazer on *Songs of Work and Freedom*, a book of protest songs. As well, she was working with Alan Mills on a book version of their collaborative 1956 radio series, to be titled *Canada's Story in Song*. Edith was also considering a publication based on songs sung by Canadian children (Johnson 1996: 9-10).

In 1959, Edith started to record songs sung by children in her own East York, Toronto neighbourhood. Edith's recording of children's material paralleled her continuing fieldwork in the Peterborough and Ottawa areas (Caputo 1989: 36). Along with her radio broadcasts and field work in 1959, Edith also completed the publications she had been working on with Joe Glazer and Alan Mills. In the summer, she took some time off to go to visit some relatives and old friends in British Columbia, including song collector Philip Thomas and folksinger Vera Johnson (Johnson 1996: 10). In early 1960, her new publications were released: *Canada's Story in Song* was published in Canada, while *Songs of Work and Freedom* was published by the Labour Education Division of Roosevelt University in Chicago.

Canada's Story in Song was a songbook containing 73 songs. It was similar in format to Edith's *Folk Songs of Canada*. Each song had a melody line, lyrics, piano accompaniment and guitar chords. As well, a historical sketch detailed the events on which the song was based. The songs were placed into 14 groups, arranged in chronological

order. Edith explained that there was a motive behind this book. She had expressly designed it to be used in teaching history and social studies. She felt that songs composed at certain periods of history gave people a clearer impression of what it was like then; a more vivid image than one could get from reading an historical account (Weihs et al. 1978: 11-12).

Songs of Work and Freedom was a little controversial when it was released. Some in the Canadian folk music community, such as Helen Creighton, felt that such songs were subversive and communist (McKay 1994: 147). However, Edith had been raised in Saskatchewan with an interest in the political left. She was aware of social issues and had been politically active. *Songs of Work and Freedom*, like the previous publications, was designed as a song book. For each of its 100 songs, the melody and lyrics were complemented by piano accompaniment and guitar chords. As in the previous publications, the story of the song and the events associated with it were detailed in an accompanying historical account.

In the summer of 1960, Edith and Frank went to the United States. They visited a number of friends in the folklore and folk music communities, including Ben Botkin, Oscar Brand, Alan Lomax, and Edith's longtime friend Ken Goldstein. Folkways continued to press recordings based on her fieldwork. They released an album of square dance music she had recorded as well as *Irish and British Songs from the Ottawa Valley*, featuring songs of O.J. Abbott (Johnson 1996: 10).

Edith travelled often and extensively, and it seemed that everywhere she went she knew people. There is little doubt her personal friendships were of great assistance to her work. In early 1961, for example, she and her husband made an extended trip to Mexico. Subsequent trips would find her in British Columbia, Europe, Banff, Newport, New York City, Philadelphia, Detroit and Trinidad (Johnson 1996: 11). Her ability to connect and sustain contact with people was a key to her success as a researcher. Through the people she knew, her song and record collecting, and her radio broadcasts, Edith was becoming a rich source of information about folklore and folk song.

By the 1960s, Edith had become a regular contributor of articles on folklore to magazines and journals in both Canada and the United States. Such periodicals as *Western Folklore*, *Midwest Folklore*, *Canadian Literature*, *Sing and String*, *Hoot*, and the *Alberta Historical Review* published her material. Edith continued broadcasting on a regular basis. One

of her new interests was the founding of the Canadian Folk Music Society.

Canadian Folk Music Society

The Canadian Folk Music Society was started in 1956 by Marius Barbeau, as a branch of the International Folk Music Council. Barbeau enlisted Edith as one of the directors. The society became autonomous in 1957 and was involved in the the organization of the 1961 IFMC meeting in Quebec City. Membership from the beginning was a mix of academics and non-academics. An important early function was publishing its *Newsletter*, which had its first issue in July, 1965.

The *Newsletter* evolved into the non-academic *Canadian Folk Music Society Bulletin*. Later, in the 1970s, the society began a second publication, the more academically oriented *Canadian Folk Music Journal*, which Edith edited until her death in 1996 (Weihs et al. 1996: 9-10; Rahn 1996: 1).

Fieldwork 1956-64

Since 1956, Edith had been recording source singers in Ontario. By 1964, she had located and recorded more than 50 Ontario singers of folk songs, as well as a large number of youngsters singing children's songs. The work done in this nine-year period represents the bulk of her song collecting.

It was very important to Edith that many of these recordings be made available to the public as soon as possible (*University of Calgary Gazette* 1997). Recordings were to take priority over books. The result was four record albums Folkways had published by 1964. Each was compiled completely from selected field tapes. In addition to *Folk Songs of Ontario* (1958) and *Irish and British Songs from the Ottawa Valley, sung by O.J. Abbott* (1961), Folkways released *Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties* in 1961 and *Songs of The Great Lakes* in 1964. Each album jacket contained a booklet of extensive notes Edith had prepared.

It is important to emphasize that Edith conducted most of her fieldwork in southern Ontario, for the most part recording adult singers in the comfort of their own homes. Although she gathered lumbering songs, she never did so in the lumber camps. She recorded songs of the sea, but never on the shoreline or on a ship. This, however, does not diminish the legitimacy of her collecting, the enormous amount of work involved, nor the significance of her work to Canadian folksong scholarship.

Her recordings began in Douro, Ontario in 1956 and expanded from there, throughout the

Peterborough area and into the Ottawa Valley. Edith also found sources much closer to her Toronto home. She recorded children in her neighborhood and at Toronto schools. The album *Songs of the Great Lakes* was based on songs collected from two Toronto friends, C.H.J. Snider and Stanley Parker. These men met occasionally in Toronto with other former sailors and their wives to enjoy an evening of singing. Edith sat in on these sessions and made the tape recordings that comprised most of the album (Fowke 1964).

Often Edith did not have to go very far to find a song. One of her more interesting field recordings was made in 1957. The recording captures the unmistakable voice of well-known CBC broadcaster and Toronto Star film critic, Clyde Gilmour, singing "H'Emmer Jane," a shipwreck ballad Gilmour had learned from a man who had heard it in a lumber camp on the south shore of Newfoundland sometime in 1939 or 1940 (Fowke 1974). Edith probably came to know Gilmour through the CBC. How she found out about the song and persuaded him to sing it into a tape recorder will forever be a mystery.

1965-1974

1965 was one of the more significant years in Edith's career. Since 1956, she had been recording Ontario folk songs and singers. Edith's field work began to slow down in 1964 as she finally began to compile a book based on her collection of tape recordings. To work with her as the music editor, Edith enlisted the assistance of the well-known folksinger, song collector, and composer, Peggy Seeger, whom she had met on one of her trips to England (Fowke 1990: 297).

Her longtime American friend Kenneth Goldstein also acted as General Editor on the project. Goldstein was no longer the hobbyist Edith had met in a Greenwich Village record shop in 1954. It was now 1964, and he had just completed his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation was to be published as *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore*, and he was teaching in the University of Pennsylvania's Folklore Department (Fowke 1996: 22). As well, Goldstein was involved in publishing through Folklore Associates.

Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario.

Early in 1965, Folklore Associates released Edith's *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*. Not a song book, the volume documented songs exactly the way informants had recorded them. The songs were grouped by singer along with the singer's biography,

repertoire, and, in most cases, photograph. Philip Thomas later assessed the book as follows (1978: 13):

With its introduction, scholarly notes, bibliography, discography, and singers' biographies, the book established Dr. Fowke as a major song collector and scholar; this is in addition to her role as a popularizer.

Folklorist Carole Carpenter wrote (1979: 51):

Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario is of particular note since it involves a means, innovative for Canada, of presenting traditional songs . . . grouped by the persons who sing them.

There is little doubt this publication brought Edith Fowke to prominence as a major folksong collector in Canada. Later in 1965, the book was published in Canada, by Burns and MacEachern of Toronto. The same year, Folklore Associates of Pennsylvania released Edith's edition of *Sea Songs and Ballads from Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia*. Also in 1965, the Saskatchewan Diamond Jubilee and Centennial Corporation published the less well known, yet interesting, volume *Saskatchewan: The Sixtieth Year--Historical Pageant*.

Saskatchewan: The Sixtieth Year

Telling the history of her native province, Edith wrote the work for performance by schools, theatre groups, and community organizations. Each of its two parts was intended to last 30 to 35 minutes, with an intermission. The piece contains songs, narrations, and stage directions. Most of the songs were taken from Edith's previous publications. It is difficult to know how often, and where the pageant was performed, but copies of it remain as examples of Edith's creative writing and her respect for her roots.

In 1965, Edith produced a radio series based on the publication she had co-authored with Joe Glazer, *Songs of Work and Freedom*. The series was aired on the CBC FM program *Learning Stage*. Edith also found time in 1965 to begin work on another songster with Richard Johnston. And in late November, she travelled to Denver Colorado to represent the Canadian Folk Music Society at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society (Fowke 1965d: 11).

Bawdy Songs

Because of her strict approach to field work, Edith did not censor the language of her informants' songs.

She transcribed the lyrics exactly as she heard them and did not attempt to mask the meaning of any of the material. Although she made no particular effort to find bawdy songs, she taped several in the course of her general collecting. She mentioned four singers were her main sources of this material, and reasoned that since they were varied in age and background, their songs were quite representative of the different types of bawdy ballads (Fowke 1966: 45). Edith's essay on the topic, "A Sampling of Bawdy Ballads From Ontario" was published by Folklore Associates in a 1966 *Festschrift* honouring Benjamin Botkin: *Folklore and Society*. Edith was definitely establishing herself as a folksong collector and scholar with a very liberal and objective outlook.

In 1966, Edith also produced a seven-week series of radio shows for the CBC-FM program *The Best Ideas You'll Hear Tonight*. The title of Edith's series was *The Travelling Folk of the British Isles*. During this period, Topic Records of London, England, released the album *A Canadian Garland: Folk Songs from the Province of Ontario*, based on field recordings Edith had made of LaRena Clark (Fowke 1966b: 13.).

Edith continued to be a popularizer of folk song as well as a collector and maintained her national perspective on Canada's folk song. 1967 was Centennial Year in Canada and many books were produced to mark the event. *More Folk Songs of Canada* was the third and final work Edith published with Richard Johnston, again through Waterloo Music. To indicate the book was to be considered part of the Canadian celebrations, the official Centennial logo was printed on the face page. *More Folk Songs of Canada* was designed as a song book, its format identical to the earlier two books'. The songs were selected to represent all regions of Canada and included some First Nations songs collected by Marius Barbeau. Edith much admired the great French Canadian song collector and a portrait of him hung in her study (Rahn 1998).

Sally Go Round the Sun

Edith's next project was one of her most successful publications: *Sally Go Round the Sun*, a book containing 300 children's songs, rhymes and games, all collected in Canada. Quite possibly this publication is the best known of all Edith's books. Yet, Edith did not have any publication in mind when she first began recording songs in her East York, Toronto neighborhood in 1959. She just invited children between the ages of six and nine into her home and asked them to sing songs they used for

clapping, ball bouncing, and skipping. The children simply gathered around the tape recorder and sang.

Edith then took her fieldwork into schools. She would contact a school principal and explain what she wanted to do. She asked specifically to work with Grade 3 classes where the children were 8 or 9 years old, a group she felt knew the most songs. Edith decided to visit a cross section of schools for her fieldwork in order to get recordings of children from different backgrounds. Once a recording date had been arranged, she would set the tape recorder at the front of the classroom and ask the children to gather around her and sing the songs they used during play. She wanted them to be spontaneous and unprompted, and would always get clarification as to what activity the song was meant to accompany. Between 1959 and 1964, Edith conducted such recording sessions in eight Toronto elementary schools (Caputo 1989: 36-38).

The eventual result of her work was the publication of *Sally Go Round the Sun* by McClelland & Stewart of Toronto in 1969, ten years after she had first begun to collect children's songs. Like the majority of Edith's books, *Sally Go Round the Sun* was meant to be accessible to a general readership. Edith took care to ensure that the layout, page turns, and illustrations were carefully planned. The publication's scholarly apparatus was not neglected, simply moved out of the way, to a section that comprises the last 11 of the book's 146 pages. These give brief directions for playing the games, indicate sources of the versions she used, and list a number of comparative references.

Edith continued to mix work with travel as the 1960s came to an end. She remained involved in the world of folk music, as a scholar and fan. In 1969, she attended the International Folk Music Council meeting in Edinburgh. A highlight of the conference for her was the *ceilidh*. After the conference, she went to Blairgowrie to hear the Singing Stewarts; she then found time to visit a folk club in Yorkshire, and attended a concert at Cecil Sharp House in London. The experience led her to say, "I was delighted with the vigour of the British folk scene... it made me most envious for, as you know, Canada has nothing to compare with it" (Johnson 1996: 12). Edith was also pleased to find that several songs she had collected were being sung by British singers (Fowke 1990: 297).

Mariposa Folk Festival

Despite her literary success, nothing remained more important to Edith than the music itself. Throughout her life, Edith continued to feel that folk music

should be accessible to the public. This is evident in her endless involvement with radio broadcasts, books, magazines, and the recording industry. It also explains her involvement, from the beginning, with the Mariposa Folk Festival.

The festival was named after the fictitious town of Mariposa, which had become known through the prose of Canadian author Stephen Leacock. Leacock had lived in Orillia, and the town inspired his writing. In 1961, the Orillia Chamber of Commerce had been searching for a summer attraction and settled on the idea of a folk festival.

Edith was involved from the start, serving on an informal advisory board which included Ian Tyson, Estelle Klein, Ted Schaefer, Ed Cowan and the president of the festival, Ruth Jones. The first festival was held in August, 1961, in Orillia. The following two were also held in Orillia, but troubles with crowds and vandalism in 1963 forced the city to relinquish its support of the annual gathering. The festival did survive, however, and for the next few years it was held at Innis Lake, eventually moving to Toronto Island in 1968 (Sharp 1977: 178-91).

The Mariposa Festival presented many major figures in commercial folk music, including Bob Dylan, Ian and Sylvia, Joni Mitchell, and Gordon Lightfoot. It also presented some of the lesser known. Edith remained involved in the festival because of her desire to have the public become aware of some of the traditional Canadian folksingers she had discovered. Over the years, she assisted in arranging for some of her informants, such as O.J. Abbott, Tom Brandon, and Mary Towns, to sing on one of the many Mariposa Festival stages.

Mariposa was a folk-music smorgasbord for Edith. In a visit to Toronto's CBC radio archives in March, 1998, I located a tape of a 1968 report on the festival that Edith had prepared for the CBC music program *Metronome*. The piece was described by the announcer as "A sound picture prepared by Edith Fowke." In the report, Edith enthusiastically commented on many of the types of music presented at the 1968 festival, and played short samples of each. She mixed these musical examples with brief excerpts from interviews she had conducted with folksingers Joni Mitchell, Tom Kines, and Steve Gillette, as well as rural blues singer Bukka White.

Edith's report certainly provides the listener with an idea of what occurred during that particular festival and also records first-hand her interviewing technique. Edith asked very straightforward questions, and never got in the way of the replies. After listening to this tape, I was left with the impression that musicians genuinely

enjoyed speaking to her. It also seemed to me that she thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of what she was doing (Fowke 1968).

Lumbering Songs of the Northern Woods

Publications written or edited by Edith were now being issued on a regular basis. A year after *Sally Go Round the Sun* was published by McClelland & Stewart of Toronto, the University of Texas Press released *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*. This 1970 publication was similar to *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*, in that it was based on Edith's field recordings. The transcription of the songs, from tape to musical notation, was done by Norman Cazden, who also provided a musical analysis of the tunes in an essay at the beginning of the book. Each song text and melody line is printed, transcribed closely from the singer's taped performance. The singer's name and home town, and the date of the performance is noted, along with a text prepared by Edith outlining the history of the song and the events it describes. The songs were grouped in five categories: The Shantyboys at Work, Death in the Woods, The Lighter Side, The Shantyboy and his Girl, and L'Envoi.

In describing how *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* came into being, Edith said that after she had completed *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*, she found she had a substantial number of lumbering songs left over. She felt there was value in assembling them into a publication, because "the lumbering songs gave a more vivid impression of what it was like to work in the woods in the late nineteenth century than you can get by reading about it" (Weihs et al. 1978: 12).

In the book's introduction, Edith provides a brief, but informative history of the lumber industry in Ontario. She also mentions that all 65 songs had been collected by her since 1957 and all but three came from Ontario singers, or Quebec singers living just north of the Ottawa River.

Folklore Advocacy

In 1971, Edith Fowke joined the English Department of York University as an Associate Professor to teach folklore (Johnson 1996: 18). This was a logical extension of her activities. She would never hesitate to take any opportunity available to educate people about Canadian folklore and folk song. Edith Fowke was definitely an advocate for the formal teaching of folklore in Canada. In *Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and their Role in Canadian Culture*, Carole Carpenter writes (1979: 419):

In her brief to the Symons Commission on Canadian Studies (1972-1974); Edith Fowke argued strongly for the institutionalization of folklore studies since such studies have a unique importance in any nation's scholarship and have been neglected in Canada. The general academic community and the wider populace remain largely ignorant of the nature or value of folklore studies, according to Mrs. Fowke.... In his report, *To Know Ourselves* (Ottawa, 1976), Commissioner Tom Symons specifically recommended the establishment of many more folklore courses throughout the nation.

enough, the major sale is in Canada, so it isn't really doing what I hoped it would do.

On May 31, 1974, Edith Fowke received her first honorary doctorate, from Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, in recognition of her devotion to folklore. In an interview with the *Toronto Star*, Edith was reported as saying:

I'm rather pleased about it.... In this field I'm entirely self taught, but in the [United] States at conventions, they assume everyone has a doctorate so they keep calling me Doctor Fowke. Now I won't have to disclaim it. (Fulford 1974).

Canadian Vibrations canadiennes

In 1972, The Macmillan Company published Edith's compilation *Canadian Vibrations canadiennes*. She had designed this volume to be a songbook that would reflect some of Canada's unique realities in the 1970s. There are 70 songs with lyrics accompanied by a melody line and guitar chords, as in her earlier folksong collections. However, the first 30 are contemporary, split evenly between such English Canadian composers as Gordon Lightfoot, Ian Tyson, and Joni Mitchell and French Canadian composers like Raymond Lévesque, Félix Leclerc, and Gilles Vigneault. The next 30 are from the past. Again half are in French, and half in English, including some songs Edith had collected. The next nine songs represent other Canadian groups: native peoples, as well as those of German and Ukrainian descent. The final song in the book is "O Canada." Each song is supplemented by a brief account of the song and the composer. The book is unique in that Edith included a wide range of Canadian folk song, combining traditional songs in several languages with a large serving of contemporary items.

The next year, 1973, saw Edith's publication of *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs*. This songbook contains 82 songs with text and melody line; guitar chords accompany some of the songs. 52 of the songs are from previous collections; the rest, from Edith's field collection, appear for the first time (Thomas 1978: 12). A section at the end of the publication contains extensive notes for each song. In a 1978 interview, Edith elaborated on the purpose and success of the book (Weihs et al.: 12):

I found that my books weren't being distributed in the States or Britain. There was a *Penguin Book of English Folk songs, American Folk Songs, and Australian Folk Songs*, so I thought, "Well, there should be a *Canadian Book*." Strangely

1975-1996

Edith's formal recognition continued later the same year when she became a Fellow of the American Folklore Society (Johnson 1996: 18). The following year, on October 25, 1975, Edith received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Trent University in Peterborough. In the citation given at the convocation, Professor Alan Wilson recognized the local aspects of her work (*Trent Fortnightly* 1975b):

Edith Fowke's most original work as a collector lies, of course in her adopted province, Ontario, particularly in the Peterborough area, for which we have special reason to honour and thank her.

In the autumn of 1975, Edith delivered a series of evening lectures on folklore and folksong at Trent University (*Trent Fortnightly* 1975a). In addition she continued to teach three courses on these subjects at York University. Edith mentioned, in an interview with the *Toronto Star*, that the increased work had resulted in her having to cut back on her song and story collecting. Edith commented: "Now I'm making my students do the collecting" (Fulford 1974).

Edith's *Folklore of Canada* was published by McClelland and Stewart of Toronto in 1976. This book has been recognized as the standard text in the broad field of Canadian folklore (Thomas 1978: 13). In this publication, Edith assembled significant writings from a wide variety of sources, dividing them into four groups, each dealing with the folklore of a specific segment of the Canadian population. The titles of the four sections: The Native Peoples, Canadiens, Anglo-Canadians, and Canadian Mosaic, provide an insight into how Edith Fowke perceived the nation. In each section of the

text, Edith walks the reader very carefully through the writings of the contributing authors, explaining each piece of work before the reader encounters it, but most importantly, outlining the context within which it should be read.

The publication of *Folklore of Canada* led to Edith appearing on the nationwide CBC radio program *Morningside*. In 1976, the hosts of the show were Harry Brown and Maxine Crook; together, they interviewed Edith about her book. I listened to an audiotape of this show at the CBC radio archives.

The first part of the interview went very well, as Edith answered Maxine Crook's soft questions about folklore: what it is, its presence in Canada, its categories, and where it was being taught at the university level. Edith then read a legend from Nova Scotia. Soon after that, however, the atmosphere became tense as Harry Brown, a Newfoundlander, confronted Edith about the ten pages of "Newfie" jokes which had been included in the book.

Edith argued she was merely collecting a tradition, and he should read the introduction to the section more carefully to understand the context within which the jokes appeared. Brown argued she was perpetuating a stereotype. As the exchange continued, he started to become quite hostile, at one point raising his voice noticeably and calling her "Miss Fowke." Edith calmly stood her ground and made her points in a straightforward, yet polite, fashion. If there was a winner in this argument, it was Edith. This audiotape remains as a permanent record of the powerful, yet quiet, determination that she could exhibit (Fowke 1976b).

In 1977, publishers McClelland and Stewart of Toronto released Edith's *Ring Around The Moon*. This book was intended to be a sequel to *Sally Go Round The Sun* but did not achieve the same success (Rahn 1998; cf. also Thomas 1978: 13). In the "Introduction," Edith explains that *Ring Around The Moon* is designed for slightly older children. Edith used some of her earlier tapes as sources for the material, but also gleaned material from the collections of prominent collectors such as Helen Creighton and Kenneth Peacock. As was the case in *Sally Go Round The Sun*, the source notes on the songs and rhymes in *Ring Around The Moon* are at the back of the book, out of the way. Careful perusal of these reveals that on occasion, Edith would persuade her husband Frank to recite a rhyme or two for her collection (1977: 151).

In 1978 Edith was appointed a member of the Order of Canada. It was very fitting, not only because of her contribution to Canadian folksong

scholarship, but because her contribution included all of Canada. Although Edith did most of her fieldwork in one area of the country, she was not a regionalist. Edith's Canada included all the provinces and territories, as well as both official languages.

The Smith and Hatt Manuscripts

Edith did relatively little field work, in the narrow sense, after the 1960s, and her broadcasting career came to an end in the mid-1970s. However, she never gave up the search for folk songs and stories, as she continued to be involved in the publishing of books, on a regular basis. It is evident that Edith was always sensitive to any new folk material which came her way. This was a trait that led directly to her 1981 edition of *Sea Songs and Ballads from Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia: The William H. Smith and Fenwick Hatt Manuscripts*

The book came into being as a result of Edith reading the short story "Blind McNair" by the well-known Canadian novelist Thomas H. Raddall. The central figure in the story was a wandering ballad singer and the main event was a ballad singing contest. When Edith read the story, having the memory that she had, she realized many of the stanzas quoted from the songs in the story were not from any printed source of which she was aware. In 1975, she wrote Thomas Raddall of Liverpool, Nova Scotia, to ask him about the songs.

Raddall replied by letter that he never had collected any songs deliberately but was quite aware of many when he was at sea as a teenager. In 1940, he had persuaded Brenton Smith, the son of wind-jammer Captain William H. Smith, to write down the songs his father was singing. Later Raddall came across a small manuscript book of sea ballads that was once owned by the 19th-century sailor, Captain Fenwick Hatt. Hatt's son George had the book and would not part with it, but did allow Raddall to make a typewritten copy.

Edith seized the opportunity and went to Nova Scotia, eventually locating both manuscripts in the archives at Dalhousie University. She edited them, deciphering much of the handwriting to establish the song texts; as well, she prepared an extensive analysis of each song (Fowke 1981: 1-5). According to Edith, the Hatt manuscript contains the earliest Anglo-Canadian songs discovered to date, and the Smith manuscript is one of the largest collection of sea shanties ever found in Canada (Fowke 1990: 298-99). The song texts and analyses were assembled, without accompanying music, into

the 118-page softcover book and released by Folklorica Press of New York in 1981.

Edith felt she had published enough books of songs by the 1970s (Fowke 1990: 298). Her interests began to move more toward folklore and children's song. She had become familiar with the work of the Hungarian composer, song collector, and music educator Zoltan Kodály (1882-1967). Kodály had developed a successful method of teaching music at the elementary school level. For a number of years in the 1980s, Edith lectured at the University of Calgary in conjunction with the Kodály summer diploma program (Rogers 1982: 30; Choksy: 1998).

In 1982 Edith received her third honorary doctorate, from York University, and in 1983 she was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. In 1984 she was given an honorary life membership in the Canadian Folk Music Society; the same year she left her fulltime position at York University, but continued to teach a course on ballads and folksongs. In 1986, she received her fourth honorary doctorate, from the University of Regina. Also in 1986, she won the prestigious Vicky Metcalf award for children's publications (Anon. 1996: 18).

Edith's renewed interest in folklore and children's songs was reflected in the number of books on these subjects she published throughout the late 1970s and the 1980s. The *Bibliography of Canadian Folklore in English*, co-authored with Carole Carpenter and *Folk Tales of French Canada* appeared in 1979. *Riot of Riddles and Songs and Sayings of an Ulster Childhood*, the latter with Alice Kane, appeared in 1983. *Explorations in Canadian Folklore*, also co-authored with Carole Carpenter, was published in 1985. *Tales Told in Canada* appeared in 1986, and in 1988, *Canadian Folklore and Red Rover, Red Rover: Children's Games Played in Canada* were issued.

Throughout this period, Edith also continued to provide folksong articles to the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin*. As well, she wrote essays on folk music and folklore for specialized publications such as the *Festschrift* for Horace F. Beck *By Land and by Sea: Studies in Folklore of Work and Leisure*.

Final Publications

1994 was the last year any new books authored, or co-authored, by Edith, were published. *Legends Told in Canada* was the final folklore publication, and *A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark*, co-authored with Jay Rahn, was the last of the folksong books. This volume was based on the song tapes of LaRena Clark, a singer whom Edith had begun recording in the 1960s, in Richmond

Quebec. Later LaRena moved and the song collecting continued. Although she lived many years in the Ottawa Valley, she had been raised in central Ontario, near Lake Simcoe, to which she returned. Edith continued collecting from her throughout the 1980s.

Edith's most prolific informant, LaRena could sing in their entirety more than 600 traditional songs, all learned during childhood from her own family. Even more remarkable was that LaRena had only started singing the old songs after she had raised her children and they had left home (Fowke and Rahn 1994: 16-18).

Edith, who had already established herself as the primary contact with LaRena, asked Jay Rahn to be the music collaborator on the LaRena Clark book. Every few weeks, Edith would give Jay tapes of LaRena's singing, a half dozen or so at a time. Jay then prepared the musical notation of each song directly from the tape, exactly as it was sung. After the notation of a set of songs was complete, Edith would ask, "Are the tunes good?" (Rahn 1998)

A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark by Edith Fowke and Jay Rahn was published by The University of Calgary Press in 1994. It contains a biography of LaRena Clark, as well as an analysis of her singing style. Historical notes supplement each of the 93 songs which are presented with their complete text, music, and guitar chords. One of the most difficult tasks in the preparation of the book was deciding which songs would be included, since the source material was so vast. The latter part of the publication provides more notes on the music and its sources, as well as a complete list of LaRena Clark's recordings and original compositions.

Detailing 22 folk stories from different times and all parts of the country, *Legends Told in Canada*, published by the Royal Ontario Museum in 1994, was the final folklore book Edith edited. Edith contributed to the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* right up to her death in March, 1996. The magazine that month printed an obituary of Kenneth Goldstein, prepared by his friend Edith. Two months after her death, her recollections of Alan Mills appeared in the *Bulletin*.

Edith did not intend these to be her last publications. At the time of her death she was completing a book of bawdy songs, which she had been working on with Kenneth Goldstein. She had also been working on a book of women's folk songs as well as a cookbook in songster format (Fruitman 1996; Rahn 1998).

Conclusion

Edith donated books, tapes, and notes to the University of Calgary's library. To all of Canada, she left a wealth of published materials and an indelible mark on folksong and folklore scholarship. A self-taught song collector and folklorist, she did things her own way. Despite criticism, Edith never apologized for being a popularizer, answering her critics by saying (Ross 1996):

What a lot of nonsense! I am criticized because I am a popularizer, which is apparently a bad thing. But I feel if I collect from the folk, I should return to the folk.

Edith had a passion for folklore and folk song, and she wanted to pass it on to all Canadians. She also wanted Canadian institutions to recognize the value of folk culture. In *Folklore of Canada*, Edith wrote about (1996: 12):

... folk culture -- what Dr. Dorson has termed "the hidden submerged culture lying in the shadow of the official civilization about which historians write." In the search for our national identity surely this folk culture deserves more recognition that it has so far received.

Edith Fowke liked folk songs because they were about ordinary people, and she considered herself ordinary. She said "What ordinary people do is important" (Ross 1996). In her life and publications, Edith Fowke proved her point!

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