

## INTRODUCTION: FOLK MUSIC PANEL

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The following five papers in this issue of the *Canadian Folk Music Journal* were read at the panel titled "Folk Music" held at the annual meeting of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada in Fredericton, N.B., June, 1977. As it was I who assembled the panel, acted as moderator, and, with the substantial support of Herbert Halpert, prevailed upon the editor of the *Journal* to publish these papers, I feel I owe the readers some explanation.

When plans were being laid for this, the first FSAC meeting at which papers were to be presented, I indicated an interest in organizing a folk music panel. This was advertised to the approximately 130 members of the newly organized society. At the time I approached a number of scholars whom, I hoped, might be willing to prepare papers. Of these, two, Georges Arsenault and Edward D. Ives, responded. The other three papers (Ashton, Lovelace, Narváez) were submitted in response to the Association's advertisement. Thus the panel was a somewhat random collection of folksong scholars.

Panels assembled in such a fashion often have little continuity. However, it turned out that this set of papers shared much in the way of viewpoint, even though five distinctly different topics were presented. Shared was a concern with the analysis of the traditional matrices in which folksongs live.

Martin Lovelace's paper on W. Roy Mackenzie, "the first major collector of folksong in Nova Scotia," demonstrates that this interest is a natural result of intensive field research within a limited region. While the first impulse of folksong students is simply to collect songs, the collector who concentrates upon a limited region and stays long enough to get to know the singers and their milieu learns that there is much more to folksinging than the performance of songs. Mackenzie, trained in techniques and theories of literary ballad scholarship at Harvard, developed his own approach to folksong after returning home to collect in Pictou County. As Lovelace points out, Mackenzie's comments in *The Quest of the Ballad* anticipate many of the conclusions of later scholars.

The motivation of the singer in learning and performing folksongs becomes evident during the course of intensive research. John Ashton builds on the observations of earlier collectors, especially Herbert Halpert, that folksingers place a high value on "true" songs in their repertoire. He suggests some new perspectives on truth in folksong, based upon his own research.

The varying contexts in which songs are performed take on meaning and pattern when examined by the experience of fieldworker. Edward D. Ives reviews the contexts in which folksongs are performed, suggesting two parallel "traditions": public and domestic. These differing contexts can be seen to have a definite relationship to differing repertoire preferences.

As the collector examines the tradition, certain aspects of the repertoire which may not seem important to the outsider take on added significance. Songs about local events, such as the murder complaint discussed by Georges Arsenault, are often of great importance to singers and their audiences, even though they may lack the musical or textual finesse which attracts the attention of outside collectors.

Of the many possible ways in which new songs on local topics are created within folk traditions, none has been as neglected by scholars as that of parody. Peter Narváez points out that high culture disdain for parody as art has biased folkloristic thinking about folk parody, especially serious parodic composition. As Narváez shows, this technique is an important one in folk traditions, especially when the composer wishes the song to be learned quickly and sung widely.

There is another factor which serves to unify the papers presented here: all deal primarily with Atlantic Canada. Those which refer to other regions treat areas which have social and historical ties with this part of Canada — Ashton's paper containing reference to the similarities between Irish immigrant traditions in England and parallel Newfoundland traditions; and those of Ives and Narváez referring to the musical traditions of the state of Maine, where Canadian singers and songs have played an important role.

Finally, although it is difficult to prove, there is another factor shared by the five authors which I suspect has some bearing upon the perspective they bring to this panel: each is an accomplished singer and performer. This gives them the advantage of the insider's viewpoint, or, at the very least, a measure of empathy with the persons they study.

Martin Lovelace, a native of Dorset, was educated at University College of Swansea, Wales, and holds an M.A. in English from the University of Alberta. His master's thesis in Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland was "The Life History of a Dorset Folk Healer: The Influence of Personality on the Modification of a Traditional Role" (1976). He is currently completing the Ph.D. in Folklore at Memorial. His paper grew out of a term paper for a course in Canadian folklore.

John Ashton, from Yorkshire, received his master's degree from the University of Leeds in Folk-Life Studies. His thesis research involved the study of Irish singers in England, within the context of pub singing. His paper is based upon that research as well as further research done in Newfoundland where he is presently completing his work as a Ph.D. candidate in the Folklore program at Memorial.

Edward D. (Sandy) Ives is professor of Anthropology and Folklore at the University of Maine. Founder and Director of the Northeast Folklore Archives, and editor and guiding light of the Northeast Folklore Society, he is author of a number of important works dealing with the folksong traditions of Maine and the Maritime Provinces, such as *Larry Gorman: The Man Who Made the Songs* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1964) and *Lawrence Doyle, The Farmer Poet of Prince Edward Island* (Orono: Univ. of Maine Press, 1971). The present paper comes from Ives' forthcoming book on the New Brunswick songmaker Joe Scott, to be published by the University of Illinois Press.

Georges Arsenault is from Abram's village, Prince County, Prince Edward Island. A 1974 graduate of l'Université de Moncton, he is currently finishing a master's thesis in *Arts et traditions populaires* at Laval, on the topic "Les plaintes acadiennes de l'Ile-du-Prince -Edouard." The present paper comes from his thesis research. He has taught at l'Université de Moncton and is presently Animateur Culturel for La Société St-Thomas d'Aquin on Prince Edward Island.

Peter Narváez came to Memorial University of Newfoundland, where he is assistant professor and folklore archivist, from Maine, where he taught at Bliss College. A graduate of Drew University, he holds the M.A. in folklore from Indiana University and is currently completing his doctorate there. His dissertation deals with the creation and use of union songs during the 1973 miners' strike at Buchans, Newfoundland. He has produced an LP of these songs performed by the miners, which was recently released by Newfoundland's Breakwater Books (Breakwater Recordings 1001, *Come Hell or High Water*). The article here is based on his dissertation research.

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Résumé: *Neil Rosenberg offre un rapport de la session de musique folklorique qu'il a organisée à l'occasion de la Reunion annuelle de l'Association Canadienne pour les Etudes de Folklore à l'Université du Nouveau Brunswick, Fredericton, le 3 juin 1977, et présente une identification des différents collaborateurs.*

## W. ROY MacKENZIE AS A COLLECTOR OF FOLKSONG<sup>1</sup>

MARTIN LOVELACE

W. Roy Mackenzie was the first major collector of folksong in Nova Scotia and his work *The Quest of the Ballad* contains much information about himself in his relationships with singers.<sup>2</sup> My intention here is to review his works on folksong and explore his attitudes toward its collection and presentation in published form. Mackenzie, it seems, progressed, as a result of fieldwork experience, from a simple interest in texts to a fuller appreciation of context and performance.

Mackenzie was born into a middle-class family; his grandfather, an emigrant from Scotland, had established a ship-building business in River John, Pictou County, Nova Scotia, where Mackenzie was born in 1883. He graduated from Dalhousie University in 1902 and then studied at Harvard for an M.A. and a Ph.D. in English. While there, in addition to his interests in Shakespeare and Old English philology, he studied under G. L. Kittredge, the disciple and successor to Francis James Child. Kittredge encouraged him to return to River John to collect the songs which Mackenzie had heard there as a boy and which he now realized were, many of them, "English and Scottish Popular Ballads."<sup>3</sup> He began collecting in Pictou County and continued over

<sup>1</sup>The author wishes to thank Dr. Neil V. Rosenberg for his critical comments on this paper.

<sup>2</sup>W. Roy Mackenzie, *The Quest of the Ballad* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1919). For convenience in the remainder of this paper this title will be given as *Quest*, within the text following citations.

<sup>3</sup>For a discussion of G. L. Kittredge's influence in stimulating collection of ballads throughout North America see D. K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship since 1898* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1959), pp.145, 147, 174.