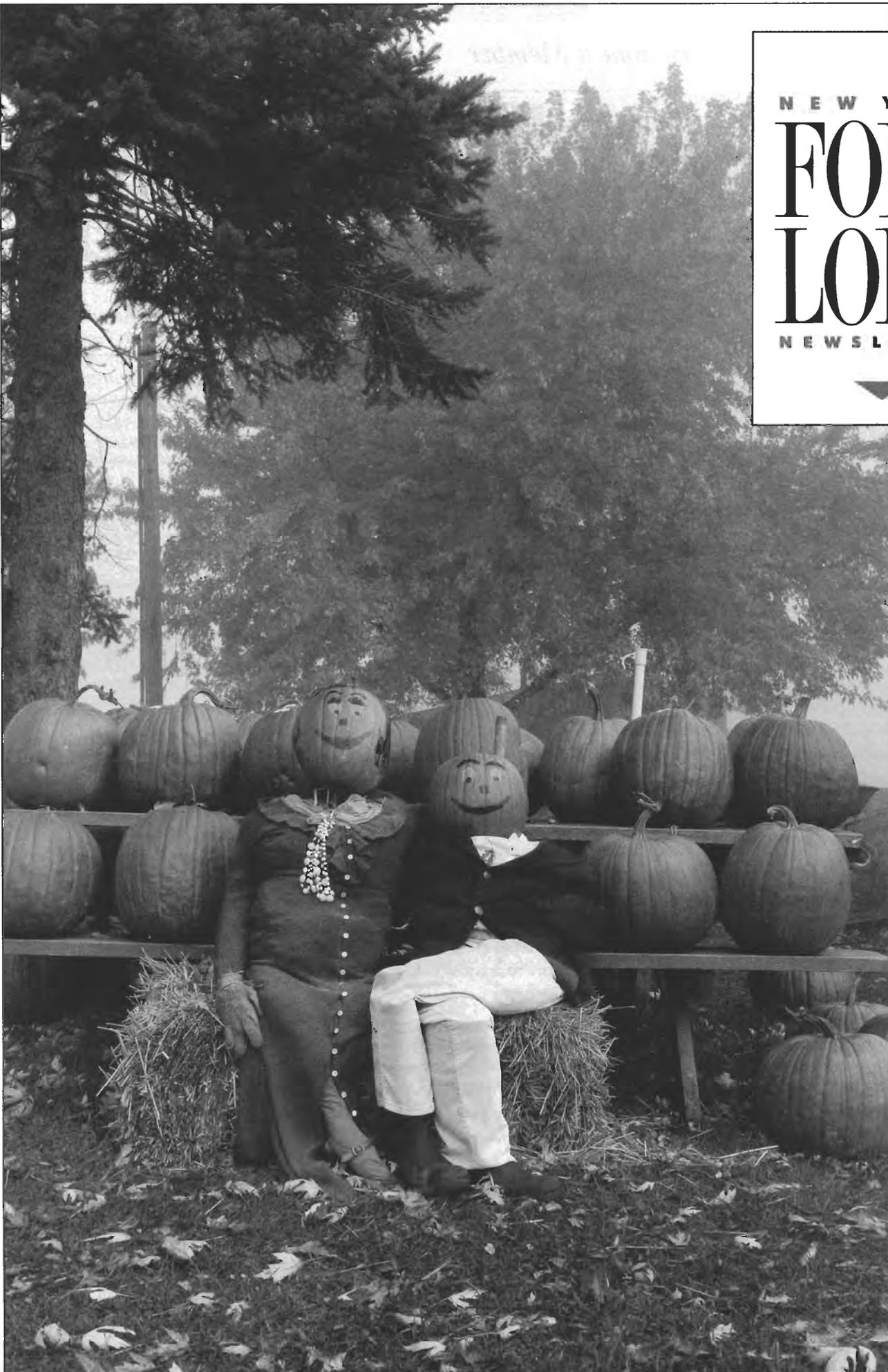


NEW YORK
**FOLK
LORE**
NEWSLETTER



Fall 1992
Vol 13 No 3

Please Join Us – Become a Member

Here comes a pitch for your financial support. You're probably receiving several of these a day now, at a time when you, too, are in the midst of the recession. So I ask only that you read this one through and make your decision—join us if you can.

Who are we? We are one full-time director with a half-time assistant, a dedicated board of directors, a network of paid consultants and volunteers who get involved with particular projects, and our members, the foundation of NYFS who provide the financial support without which we cannot survive.

If you've been receiving this newsletter for a while, you know that the New York Folklore Society is making important and unique contributions to the understanding and support of folklore and folk arts in New York State. Through our annual Fall Conference and eight quarterly New York State Folk Arts Forums, through the newsletter and our journal *New York Folklore*, we help keep you connected with people and ideas and information. Our Archives Project, Mentoring Project, and ongoing advocacy work address critical issues facing our field. Exciting new projects are in the works.

All this costs money, of course. Our membership base has grown gradually in recent years, and our major funding from the New York State Council on the Arts has levelled off after the recent drastic cuts. We are cutting costs wherever we can. So although we are stable and secure, we are facing serious financial challenges. We need the support of the people who believe in what we are doing and benefit from what we offer.

Now for an anecdote. I give money to a range of organizations that are doing important work I believe in. A couple of years ago, I looked over the list and was stunned to see that nearly all were dealing with environmental or social issues; almost none addressed the cultural concerns that I believe are also vital and that I have made the focus of my life's work. I was responding either to large national organizations that could afford to pummel me with requests or to local community groups addressing short-term, life-or-death issues.

But contributions to cultural organizations, particularly ones that work with folk or community-based cultural traditions, are essential investments in the long-term health of communities—and of the nation. These investments can be a welcome relief from quick-fixes and damage control. They reflect, and instill, ongoing confidence in human beings and in cultural diversity at the grassroots. So I decided to correct the imbalance and began to give more to arts and cultural organizations like the New York Folklore Society and the other organizations you read about in these pages.

If you aren't yet a member of the New York Folklore Society, please consider a small investment in the health of folklore and folklife in New York State. Join us and become a member. As a benefit of membership, you will receive our semi-annual journal *New York Folklore*, which contains lively and provocative articles written for both scholarly and general audiences, as well as this newsletter. And you will be able to participate as a full voting member in the governance of the Society. (See the special offers on the back cover and the membership form on page 11.)

Thanks for hearing me out. I hope to hear from you.

—John Suter
Executive Director

NEW YORK FOLK LORE NEWSLETTER

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New York Folklore Newsletter

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AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER FUNDING BATTLE

The American Folklife Center is facing a grave threat to its existence this summer as the result of a vote by the House of Representatives to eliminate its funding.

The American Folklife Center, a division of the Library of Congress, was established in 1976 by Congress "to preserve and present American Folklife." The Center, with a budget of just over \$1 million, engages in field research, documentation, publication, recording, and public programming throughout the country. It is regularly consulted by other federal agencies and actively participates in a wide range of cultural networks in the arts, humanities, conservation, and preservation.

The Center also includes the Archive of Folk Culture, the national repository for folk cultural documentation. Its holdings include irreplaceable collections, many from New York State, of recordings, books, manuscripts, photographs, film.

The American Folklife Center is subject to periodic reauthorization by Congress. In June, a five-year reauthorization bill was approved in committee and sent to the House floor for a vote. Unexpectedly, apparently in a mood of "fiscal responsibility" panic, the legislators voted it down and sent it back to committee for reconsideration later this summer. Fortunately, on July 1, an identical bill was passed in the Senate.

The Center is mobilizing a national campaign to educate Representatives, particularly those who voted no, about the importance of the Center and the folk culture it is mandated to preserve and present. NYFS is coordinating the effort in New York State.

The issue should be resolved by the time you read this. In case it is not, if you would be willing to write or call your U.S. Representative, please contact Tim Lloyd, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540 (202/707-6590).

FOLK ARCHIVE TASK FORCE MEETS

Much of the documentation of New York State's folk cultural heritage collected over the past decade is threatened with irreversible deterioration, and most of it is inaccessible to the public. Phase II of our Documentary Heritage Program-funded Folk Archives Project, which is addressing this crisis, began with a very productive two-day meeting outside Albany on August 4-5.

A task force of ten, representing the folklore and archives professions, began working on standards for describing and appraising folklore collections and laid plans for a manual and a series of workshops for folklorists and archivists, which will be tested in 1993. We'll keep you posted.

MENTORING PROJECT TO RESUME

The Mentoring Project will be up and running again in January, 1993, if funding from the NEA Folk Arts Program comes through. This three-year-old program, which provides consulting fees and travel costs to organizations for technical assistance with folk arts programming, has funded some 29 one- or two-day consultancies to date.

However, the pool of mentors and client organizations has been small, limited primarily to the network of active folklorists and their associated organizations. The project has been cut back for most of 1992 due to lack of funds. We will expand and redirect the Mentoring Project in the coming year, enlarging the pool of mentors and giving highest funding priority to two groups: 1) Folk artists and 2) Community-based organizations in underserved communities of the state.

Look for a full explanation of the project in the next newsletter, if it is funded—we'll know by the end of September.

NEW YORK FOLKLORE

Call For Articles

As befits the journal of the New York Folklore Society, we are interested in articles on folk culture from New York State and the adjoining region. We particularly welcome critical reflection on:

- ▼ Public programs in the folk arts
- ▼ Urban folk culture
- ▼ Relationships between traditions and the tourism industry
- ▼ Rural material culture
- ▼ Traditions related to gender, age or ethnicity
- ▼ Traditional foodways

Initial submissions should be on paper; final drafts on disk are encouraged. Please submit your article to: Egle Zygus and Ray Allen, Editors, New York Folklore, P.O. Box 130, Newfield, NY 14867. Call us if you have questions: Ray Allen (718) 857-7024, Egle Zygus (212) 249-5574.

NYFS OFFICE IMPROVEMENT

With a Little Help from Our Friends

The New York Folklore Society office, located in two rooms above a bicycle shop at 632 West Buffalo St. in Ithaca, has two new additions, one human and one electronic, that will make our work more efficient and less expensive. Cynthia Yahn, a building contractor with a growing business, has set up her office in one of the rooms and built shelving in the attic for our storage of back issues of *New York Folklore*. She is sharing rent, bringing warmth and energy to the space, and generously helping with improvements to the office.

Ken Zeserson, a friend who runs a medical publishing company in Ithaca, has donated a fax machine to us. Faxes are almost indispensable now, and commercial services are very expensive, so we are most grateful to Ken for his generosity. (He also donated our indefatigable computer printer in 1990.)

Our fax number, which is operational 24 hours a day, is (607) 273-8225.

Watershed: Folklore and Public Policy

New York State Folk Arts Forum

John Suter

Watershed: Land Use & Conflict in the Catskill Mountains, a new traveling exhibit curated by Janis Benincasa, was the point of departure for a stimulating discussion of cultural conservation and public policy at the Delaware County Historical Association (DCHA) on June 22. This first New York State Folk Arts Forum of 1992 brought folklorists together with representatives from the Erpf Catskill Cultural Center, the Schoharie County Arts Council and DCHA (co-sponsors of the exhibit, along with the Greene County Arts Council), as well as the Roxbury Arts Group.

The conversation revolved around three main topics: The exhibit and the specific issues surrounding the Catskill watershed, the place of local culture and people in disputes regarding development and the environment, and the roles folk cultural specialists can—or ought to—play in such disputes.

Land and Water

In 1905, when faced with the need for an abundant supply of water for its growing population, New York City expanded its system of reservoirs into the Catskill Mountains. The resulting construction, which spanned seven decades, radically altered the landscape, flooding villages and farmland and displacing local residents. New York City now obtains about ninety percent of its water from six reservoirs in the Catskills. But pollution is growing, and federal law (the 1984 Safe Drinking Water Act) requires that the State decide either to filter the water from the reservoirs or enact strict new regulations governing the use of the land surrounding them, or both.

Thirty-three Catskill communities, seeing their ways of life and economies threatened by the 1990 draft regulations, some of which would prohibit farming, other traditional occupations, even resi-

dence in large areas, have formed a coalition which is negotiating with the City, the State, and other interested parties to seek an affordable solution that ensures the safety of the New York City water supply without creating unnecessary hardships for the people and communities of the Catskills.

Overall, it has been a challenging and sometimes contentious issue. According to Janis Benincasa and other participants in the discussion, people in the region often perceive an arrogance and disdain for rural people and culture on the part of policy makers and urban dwellers in general. These attitudes, many believe, led to grave injustices in the destruction of ways of life, inadequate compensation for lost land and buildings, and other policies enacted during the construction of the watershed. They perceive similar threats in the current controversy. Environmentalists and policy makers charged with carrying out the federal mandate to protect the water supply, on the other hand, call attention to local attitudes and practices that pose serious threats to the quality of water that flows into the city from the reservoirs. According to Janis, the issue is not whether the watershed should be protected, but how, with whose input, and how the burden should be shared.

Sandy Alpert and Carol O'Beirne from the Erpf Center spoke eloquently of the need for cooperation and understanding between the parties. If the issue becomes polarized and tied up in confrontation and litigation, the costs will be far greater for both sides. On the other hand, they suggested, if each side can come to understand the human, as well as environmental and economic, costs of various solutions and agree to share responsibility for conservation and protection of environmental and cultural resources, the long-run costs will be much lower. To that end, the Erpf Center will be conducting programs designed to promote understanding and dialogue; one is a series of bus tours for opinion leaders from New York City to educate them about the local culture and folklife of the

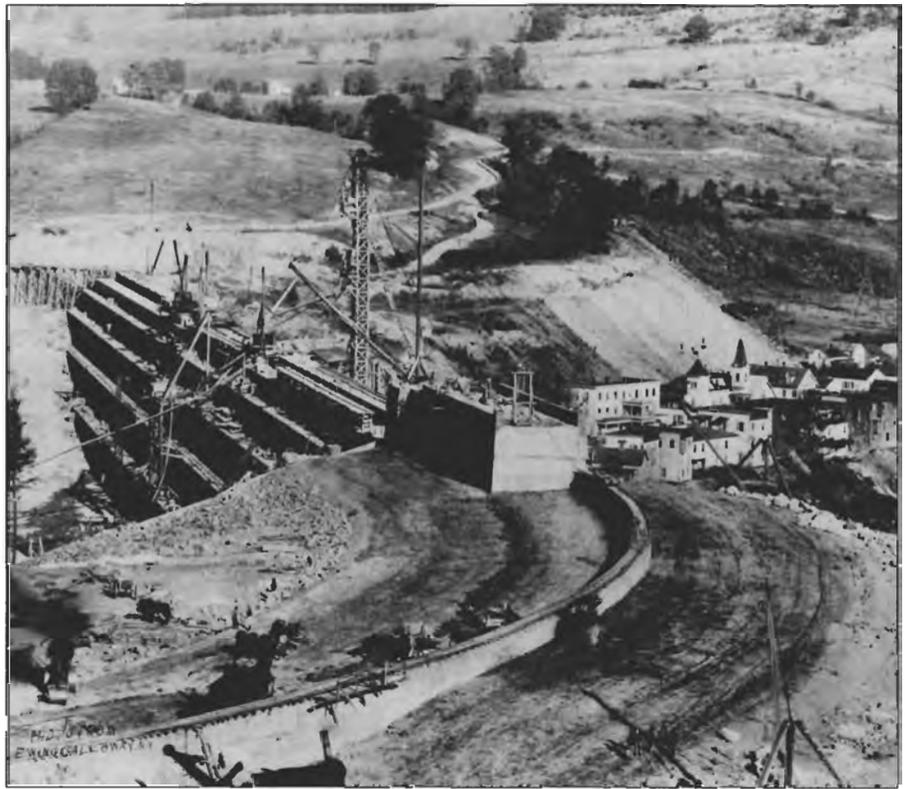


New York City Watershed regulations inspired Margaretville resident Bob Kavanaugh's political cartoons for local newspapers.

Catskills, people's connection with the environment in the area, and the effects the new regulations would have on local life. Another is a symposium, a collaborative project with the Schoharie County Arts Council, being planned for the fall on Folklife and Cultural Resources in Land Use Planning.

Nancy Solomon, a folklorist from Long Island who has done pioneering work integrating cultural issues into land use planning and who works closely with the Sierra Club, is another strong advocate for cooperation and dialogue between cultural conservationists and environmentalists. She is currently working on a book that will teach public planners how to conduct "reconnaissance surveys" that identify the highly valued cultural parameters of a community likely to be affected by land use changes. Nancy resists the name calling on both sides—the labeling of environmentalists as insensitive to people in their zeal to protect the environment and the charges by environmentalists that local people concerned with their culture and way of life are anti-environment. While the charges may be true in particular cases, blanket indictments inhibit dialogue and cooperation.

Nancy outlined the range of regulatory agencies at the state and federal levels involved in land use issues. She pointed out that while social impact statements on cultural resources are often required, the State Historical Preservation Office and similar agencies rarely have the power to stop projects on cultural issues alone, regardless of the results of the impact statements. However, environmental impact statements can form the basis for local community resistance that may prevent or modify unwanted projects. She suggested that folklorists work with architectural and social historians and cultural geographers in assessing community cultural resources, and that alliances with historic preservationists, as well as environmentalists, can be productive. Janis also emphasized that the perspective folklorists bring to many issues is complementary to those of preservationists and environmentalists.



Gilboa Dam under construction.
Courtesy the Schoharie County Historical Society.

Telling the Story

The Watershed exhibit consists of historic photographs, superb color photographs by Drew Harty, text panels and various objects mounted on 20 panels and a few pedestals. It tells the story of the development of the watershed to supply water for New York City; it looks at contemporary local attitudes toward land use in the Catskills; it examines recreational tourism related to the state-owned forest presence; and it samples the folklife of the area and profiles several folk artists whose work relates to these issues.

Most of us at the forum agreed that the exhibit, while not strident or polemical in tone, does convey a point of view—namely, that the people living in the Catskills whose lives and culture will be affected by the proposed regulations are as important as any other parties in the issue and ought to have a significant voice in the decision-making process. The exhibition also makes a plea for vision on the part of a population whose only latent sense of regional consciousness

and whose resistance to planning has invited other more powerful vested interests to step in, often to the detriment of the rural population. The controversy is about environmental regulation and development, but the key issue the exhibit addresses is the empowerment of ordinary people.

The exhibit also functions on another, more abstract level. Says its curator, "The term conflict in the title actually refers to discordant values and attitudes toward land use that have informed land use decisions on the part of the region's three main landholders—New York City, New York State, and the region's residents." The content of the exhibit—objects, photographs, and folk artists—explicate the major theme: that the predominant land use patterns in the Catskills arise from very different fundamental values. Conflict is the result. "Not all viewers have enjoyed the findings, but they are valid analyses of the landscapes."

According to Benincasa, "We have heard every possible inter-

Continued on page 10

Photographers & Folklore: Marion Faller, Buffalo

Photographers & Folklore is a series of interviews with outstanding photographers who work closely with folklorists in New York State. Marion Faller's background is in Photography, Fine Art and Education. She received her B.A. in 1971 from Hunter College (NYC). Her M.F.A. degree was awarded by SUNY/ Buffalo in 1979 after she completed the Program in Photographic Studies at the Visual Arts Workshop (Rochester, NY). Faller is an Associate Professor in the Art Department at the State University of New York at Buffalo where she is Director of the Photography Program. In 1985 she received a New York Foundation for the Arts Photography Fellowship. Her photographs have been shown in numerous one-person shows and group exhibitions in museums and galleries throughout the country, including The State of Upstate: New York Women Artists, a traveling exhibit which was shown at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC in 1990. Currently, her work is included in the travel group exhibition Motion & Document/Sequence and Time: Eadweard Muybridge & Contemporary American Photography, which originated at the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The following essay is excerpted from responses to interview questions written by Kate Koperski, Folklore Curator, Castellani Art Museum, Niagara University.

My father was an amateur photographer who photographed my sister and me at least once a month while we were growing up. He often processed the film and made the prints, too. I didn't always like the photographing then. But, as an adult, I realized that being photographed is an important form of attention. The pictures are a terrific document. When I look at them I'm reminded of how much my grandparents meant to me, of my relationships with my sister and my cousin and my friends, of the clothes my mother made for us. She made *all* of them, including the coats and the elaborately knitted sweaters.

While working at my first career as a freelance book designer in New York City in the mid-1960s, I began doing black and white street photography. This was partly to document a neighborhood art project I was involved in—Summer in the City, a "Great Society" project sponsored by the archdiocese of New York. I also did a lot of photographing of my own child, my son Will, while he was growing up. Later, I began to do photography for some of the books I designed. In 1971 when I completed my undergraduate work at Hunter, I was asked to teach photography there part-time. I moved

color because it provides so much more information.



From 1979 to 1983, I worked on *Local Conventions*, an extensive series of color photographs which examines the kinds of things people in Central New York State do to their houses or property in response to seasons and holidays. Some of the 'conventions' were: gardening customs, things like tree houses, wood piles, birdhouses and doghouses, lawn ornaments and holiday decorations—Easter egg trees, Halloween porch goblins and elaborate Christmas displays. I realized then how much of my work had been concerned with everyday aesthetic decisions people make—decisions that are traditional and personal at the



Halloween display at Durfee Pumpkins, Tuscarora Road, Chittenango County. October 1989 (original in color).



Halloween display of skeletons on West Seneca Turnpike, Marcellus, NY October 1989 (original in color).

upstate in 1974 to join the Colgate University Art Department. From then on, I did more and more photography, and the freelance book design tapered off.

When I did my graduate work at the Visual Studies Workshop, I began to work with color photography which was becoming more accessible at the time. Now most of my work is with color. Unfortunately, it's not always possible to reproduce the photographs in color, but I prefer to work with

same time. I am interested in how individuals and groups of people visually express their values, their interests and their sense of what is beautiful. This is visible in the artifacts and objects they surround themselves with, either intentionally or inadvertently.

I moved to Buffalo in 1982 to teach photography at SUNY/ Buffalo. In western New York, I've photographed public holiday displays, as well as those at private homes. In 1987, I was approached

by Mia Boynton who was curating an exhibition for the Burchfield Art Center in Buffalo (*Remarkable Artifacts: Folk and Popular Art in Western New York*, January to March 1989). Mia asked me to photograph large outdoor pieces of folk art, including murals and gardens for the exhibit. Anthony Bannon, the center's director, suggested I do the photographs because he'd seen my photographs in another exhibition and knew I'd be interested in the subject matter. In a way, it was very much like what I was photographing already. The project was a great opportunity for me to learn about the different western New York neighborhoods.



Through this project, I also met Kate Koperski who had worked with Mia as a member of the Erie County Folk Art Survey Advisory Board. Kate was doing research in the Polish-American community on Buffalo's East Side. During our first collaboration, we set out to do a survey of Polish-American Holy Week traditions. Kate was particularly interested in the elaborately decorated altars that are customarily visited at seven churches at the evening of Holy Thursday. While reviewing the documentation, however, we were especially captivated by the variety of ways people arranged and decorated their *swienconka* baskets—baskets

containing symbolic foods and blessed on Holy Saturday. An exhibition of just the *swienconka* photographs was shown at the Castellani Art Museum in 1988.

Because there is so much more to the Polish-American Easter celebration, we decided to continue the research and photography for another year. In 1988, I photographed Buffalo's historic Broadway Market, Holy Week devotional displays in the beautiful old churches of the neighborhood, Easter foods and the Easter Monday Dyngus Day celebrations. This work was shown, along with decorated eggs and palm weavings by local artists, in *Ritual Renewal: Polish-American Easter Traditions* at the Castellani Gallery, and later at a number of other locations. Each year since then, I've added to this body of work.

My own background is Polish-American. All of my grandparents came from Poland shortly after the turn of the century. Working on the Easter projects helped me to recall the observances of my childhood in northern New Jersey. When photographing in the Polish-American community, it has really been helpful to be familiar with some of the customs and language. In the summer of 1990, I was fortunate to go to Poland for a four week ethnographic tour, primarily to the mountainous southern part of the country. My travel

companions were Judy Krauz, who researches and teaches eastern European folk arts, and Sophie Knab, who writes about Polish-American culture and folk traditions. It was a wonderful experience and I photographed every-



An example of the local custom of floral painting on a building exterior, Zalpie, Poland. July 1990 (original in color).

thing in sight! But I would like to go back to Poland to photograph again. Perhaps I'd be more selective next time and try to show one aspect in greater depth.



Halloween is a holiday that has fascinated me for a very long time. I had photographed Halloween displays when I did *'Local Conventions'* and again for the Western New York Folk Art Survey. But in the fall of 1988, when I was on sabbatical from teaching, I did a residency at Light Work (Syracuse University) to research the current visual expression of Halloween in Central New York and to photograph displays as much as possible during the month-long residency. In 1991, I again added a considerable number of images to this work.

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A *swienconka* basket, St. John Kanty Parish, Buffalo, NY. April 1987 (original in color).

Public Programs

A GATHERING OF FALL TRADITIONS

Autumn has historically been a time of both harvest celebrations and commemorations of the dead. Beginning October 11, the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University will host an exhibition and series of related events exploring these fall traditions among upstate New York's diverse communities.

The exhibition will include photographs of outdoor Halloween and harvest displays by Marion Faller, objects made by local Mexican migrant workers for the Day of the Dead celebration, and a Halloween display installation. An exhibit walk-through at the opening reception will give audiences an opportunity to meet the people behind the objects in the exhibit and learn more about their traditions firsthand. A presentation on the history and development of Halloween customs by Dr. Phillips Stevens Jr., Associate Professor of Anthropology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, will preface the exhibit tour.

A talk with a seventh generation Niagara County farmer and apple grower; games with apples traditionally played at Halloween and harvest parties including bobbing, dunking, and a "paring bee"; a tour of outstanding area Halloween displays; and a program on Native American harvest traditions are among the activities being planned for children and families.

PUT ON YOUR DANCING SHOES

On September 18, 1992 at 5 pm, the Polish Community Center of Buffalo will host an opening party with a Bulgarian orchestra to kick off a seven week series of events and a photographic exhibit about Southern Balkan and Polish folk dance and music history. Funded by the New York Council for the Humanities, *Put On Your Dancing Shoes* is curated by folklorist Mia Boynton. The series features both local culture and visiting Balkan cultural experts and consists of weekend events from September 25 through November 7, 1992.

The line-up includes Saturday morning oral history sessions at the Polish community center, followed by lunch and afternoon song or dance workshops. Other events include: a showing of the film *Popovich Brothers of South Chicago* by Martin Koenig and Ethel Raim on September 25 to 26 with discussion and song and dance classes by the filmmakers; a panel about changes in Balkan song and dance led by Irene Markoff of Toronto on October 3; the *Sebyani Macedonian Folklore Group* on October 10; polka history and Polish rural dance led by Jim Kimball and Bill Falkowski on October 17; the history of Tamburitza music and Buffalo's *Balkan Serenaders*, October 23 to 25; discussions and demonstrations of Serbian dance with Carla Borden of the Smithsonian Institution on October 31; and, on November 7, the final dance party featuring the Bulgarian group *Karamfil*, the Macedonian group *Boys From Bouf*, and the polka band *Steel City Brass*.

For further information, call Mia Boynton at (716) 883-8114.

SHASHMAQAM TOUR

The Bukharan Jewish Ensemble Shashmaqam (pronounced Shash-Makham) represents one of the most fascinating cultural regions of the former Soviet Union. Carrying on the rich traditions of Central Asia, this emigré ensemble offers a stunning example of the music and dance of the city dwellers, villagers and nomads of Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan.

Its music reflects the diverse cultures that influenced Soviet Central Asia: Turkish, Iranian, Afghani, Indian, Pakistani, and Chinese. In addition to lush vocals, the repertory is performed on the *tar* and *rebab* (plucked lutes), *doire* (frame drum), accordion and clarinet. The dances, highly stylized and choreographed, range from the subtle and serene to the exuberant.

Dressed in traditional styles made from ikat-dyed embroidered striped silk, their stage presence is as visually powerful as its music is virtuosic. In addition, their presentations are accessible, designed for general public audiences while maintaining their appeal to particular ethnic audiences, such as all

communities from the Jewish diaspora, as well as immigrants from Central Asia, Iran, and Afghanistan.

If you are interested in presenting the Bukharan Jewish Ensemble Shashmaqam in concert, workshop or music & dance classes, contact the Ethnic Folk Arts Center at (212)691-9510.

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT

The South Street Seaport Education Department announces its schedule of events for September through November, 1992. On September 17, 1992 from 5 to 8am, join the museum and the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment for an early morning tour of the Seaport's Fulton Fish Market, a sunrise tour of the Brooklyn Bridge, and a breakfast of smoked fish and bagels at Parker's Lighthouse, a restaurant overlooking the East River and the Manhattan skyline. A \$20 fee (\$17 for members) includes breakfast. Preregistration is required. For information and reservations call BCUE at (718)788-8549.

On Thursday, October 15 the seaport will host two evening talks on archaeology at 5:30 and 6:30. *An Evening of Archaeology* includes a gallery talk by archaeological curator Diana Wall about artifacts in the exhibition *Of Sailing Ships and Sealing Wax* (AA Low Building, 214 Water Street). At 6:30, Ms. Wall describes how the South Street Seaport Museum uses artifacts rescued from beneath New York City streets to interpret the history of a modern city in a slide/lecture at the Museum Gallery (214 Water Street).

On Wednesday, November 11, from 3 to 6pm, New York City veteran merchant seamen offer first-hand history relating to their own experiences in WWII (Seamen's Church Institute Auditorium, 241 Water Street).

Finally, on Wednesday, November 18, beginning at 6pm, Wendy Shadwell, Curator of Prints at the New York Historical Society, shows how New York printers served the maritime industry, using ferry tickets, clipper ship cards and other maritime ephemera from the 18th and 19th centuries. The talk at the gallery museum is immediately followed by a reception and printing demonstration at Bowne & Co., Stationers (211 Water Street).

AFS MEETING IN FLORIDA

The American Folklore Society will hold its annual meeting this year October 14-18 in Jacksonville, Florida. The theme of the conference is "Transnational Articulations: Critical Perspectives from Folklore." Other areas of concentration, with several sessions offered in each, include minority access to careers in folklore, folklore and computer applications, public folklore, folklore and education, and theory in folklore. The AFS Archives Section will be briefed on the status of our Folk Archives Project.

New York Folklore Society president Dan Ward, executive director John Suter, and *New York Folklore* co-editor Ray Allen will be at the conference representing the Society, and our publications will be displayed for sale. Registration information is available from AFS, 1703 New Hampshire Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20009.

PUBLIC OUTREACH IN ARCHIVES

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference Fall meeting in Buffalo, October 29-31, 1992, will emphasize discovering more effective ways for archivists and other custodians of archives and manuscript collections to communicate and advocate their collections to a range of audiences.

Preconference workshops addressing graphic design, computerization, and photo conservation join archival supplies vendors and services and traditional and innovative hands-on sessions during the weekend conference.

For further information contact Heidi Ziemer at MARAC at (716)852-3846.

IROQUOIS INDIAN MUSEUM

The Iroquois Indian Museum on Caverns Road, Howes Cave, NY announces the appointment of two Iroquois artists to the position of Museum Intern. Tammy Tarbell of Syracuse is a Mohawk whose family is from the Akwesasne Reservation near Hogansburg, NY. Ms. Tarbell has exhibited and demonstrated

her black pottery creations throughout the state and often follows traditional Iroquois pottery shapes in her work. Her pottery is also influenced by southwestern pottery but has its own distinctive style.

Onondaga/Seneca sculptor Michael Arthur Jones, creates pottery and highly expressive figurines in clay, dramatized by painted glazes. His subject matter includes traditional and contemporary images. Both artists have work in the museum's current exhibit, *Visual Voices of the Iroquois*.

FOLK ARTS PRESENCE AT ARTS PRESENTERS CONFERENCE

The New England Foundation for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Southern Arts Federation are collaborating on plans to produce a series of folk arts showcases and other services at the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Annual Conference in New York City, December 18-21, 1992. The programs are designed to expand and enhance the presenting and touring of performing folk artists throughout the nation.

Building upon successful programming that these three agencies offered at the 1991 APAP Conference, these activities include a panel discussion on current directions in folk arts presenting; a special-interest-group meeting for folk arts presenters; a folk arts resources booth to be located in the exhibit hall; and two nights of showcase presentations from diverse regional and ethnic traditions to be presented at the conference hotel.

This project is a response to changes in performing arts presentation in the U.S. which signify a new interest in folk arts presenting of all kinds. However, there is a clear need for dialogue between professionals in the folk arts field and arts presenters to further opportunities for traditional artists to reach new audiences. As the premier national professional gathering for presenters, the annual Arts Presenters Conference offers folk arts advocates the most advantageous forum to begin this dialogue. For more information on the conference and the proposed folk arts services and activities planned, contact Robert Baron at NYSCA (212/387-7031).

POLISH CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS AND FOLKLORE

Polish Customs, Traditions and Folklore is the only comprehensive, English language work on Polish customs and traditions in print today. Translated from early 19th and 20th century sources, the book is divided into 14 chapters. The first twelve take the reader month by month through the calendar year, celebrating the days that were of special importance to Polish people. These include details on the lesser known aspects of Polish peasant life including marriage and harvest customs, May Day activities, herb and plant lore, as well as legends, proverbs and superstitions. The last two chapters are devoted to beliefs and customs associated with birth and death. Numerous illustrations enhance a text that is geared toward a general audience but will also interest folklorists and folklife enthusiasts, genealogists, teachers, and historians. This book aims to enlighten and entertain as well as celebrate a rich and ancient heritage.

Polish Customs will be released this Fall by Hippocrene Books, Inc., 171 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

HISTORIC HUDSON VALLEY

In the fall of 1993, Historic Hudson Valley will sponsor the Philipsburg Manor Tercentenary Anniversary Research Colloquium on manor life and culture in New York State. This session will address topics relevant to history and culture in the Lower Hudson Valley from 1664 to 1835.

Proposals, due November 1, 1992, will be reviewed by a panel of scholars. Abstracts should be no more than 300 words, stating the purpose and approach of the work and the method of presentation. Lectures should be approximately 40 minutes long and should examine new ideas and original research.

Selected participants will be notified by February 1, 1993. For further information please contact Radiah Harper Sumler, Director of Programs, 150 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, NY 10591; (914)631-8200.

MARION FALLER

Continued from page 7

My photographs are shown in both folk art and fine art contexts, which makes it possible for the work to be seen by different audiences. Folk art exhibitions generally have more of a text component which serves an interpretive function; my photographs might also be shown with related folk art which provides an interesting context. In a fine art exhibition, the photographs are always titled, but there is generally less text, less need to explain. Both types of exhibitions are important to me; I try to make photographs that work as both *image* and *document*.

I also produce other art work, as well as the photography I do in collaboration with folk artists. In the past few years, I've been involved with a number of computer art projects. However, my other projects do share the same sensibility and some similar concerns.

These include an interest in long-term projects, attention to detail and repetition, and impulse to use photography as a means of cataloguing visual phenomena, and an attempt to occasionally employ a gentle sense of humor. Some of my work refers to the concept of observing or marking the passage of time—over one calendar year, or many years.

The "theme and variations" idea is very interesting to me. I like to have many examples of a particular situation or observance; the influences of both tradition and individual creativity are then more evident. Gina Murtagh, former Assistant Director at



Children in costume at a fair in Poronin, Poland. Beadwork patterns on vests depict regional flowers. July 1990.

Light Work, wrote that my photographs "function both as visual inventories of folk customs and as witness to personal and lively responses to special events."

WATERSHED

Continued from page 5

pretation of the exhibit. Some think it is neutral, that it takes no position at all. Some see it as rabidly anti-environment, others as only weak support for local concerns. We attempted to present an ethnography of conflicting values and attitudes toward land use rather than push a particular position; the range and intensity of the responses we've received suggests we succeeded in allowing room for different voices and viewpoints." Some at the forum thought that by giving voice primarily to local residents who are opposed to the regulations or are potential victims of changes, the exhibit did not adequately portray all sides of the issue and was thus limited as an ethnography of the conflict. "We focused on how the region's inhabitants interact with these landscapes," says Janis, "but that's a pretty diverse group, representing rural and exurban residents, and urban and suburban vacationing populations."

Folk Cultural Specialists' Roles

What is the responsibility of the folk cultural specialist who becomes involved in research in a controversial area of

public policy? To whom is one accountable: the sponsoring agency, the community where research is conducted, broader political or cultural entities, or simply the truth as one sees it? Several people asserted that although research is never neutral, one must attempt to maintain the separation between one's professional responsibilities and one's role as a citizen participating in public issues. In Mary Zwolinski's view, as long as one's biases are stated clearly, others can take them into account and the illusion of pure objectivity can be dropped. Janis acknowledged the tension between her roles as ethnographer and advocate and sees the Watershed exhibit as "giving voice to the people in the region."

Some folklorists feel that "you can't do research and just leave it up to someone else to decide how it is used." Others aren't so sure and are more willing to let the information speak for itself. Nancy Solomon feels strongly that the researcher's job is to document all the groups in a conflict, illuminate their histories and interests, and present the full picture in all its complexity for people to evaluate. In most cases, she views advocacy as a step beyond the professional responsibility of the folklorist. Bruce Buckley believes that the growing orien-

tation to public policy issues and advocacy is redefining the field of public folklore.

If there was common ground in the discussion—and I'm not sure there was—I would put it this way: For most folklorists who enter the realm of public policy issues, an underlying goal is to help members of the folk group or community in question find their voice and their power to gain control of their own lives and cultures. Sometimes this means presenting research to policy makers that raises the profile and concerns of the marginalized community or group; sometimes it means educating the folk group or community themselves about their own or others' traditions and cultural resources, giving them the information they need to make informed decisions. In both cases it may mean debunking common myths and stereotypes and challenging people to think more broadly and openly.

Participating in the forum were Sandy Alpert, Janis Benincasa, Bruce Buckley, Hal Clapper, Nancy Harding, Drew Harty, Ellen McHale, Linda Norris, Carol O'Beirne, Howard Rapp, Nancy Solomon, John Suter, Gail Turi, Mary Beth Vought, Dan Ward, Vaughn Ward, and Mary Zwolinski.

ARCHIVES REPORT AVAILABLE

Folklore Archives and the Documentary Heritage of New York State, the final report from the New York Folklore Society's 1991 Folk Archives Project, is now available. The 54-page publication contains consultant Fred Stielow's report and recommendations, Bruce Buckley's excellent keynote address from the September Folk Archives Conference, and a summary of the conference proceedings.

To obtain a copy of the report, send your request with a check for \$6.50 per copy to our office.



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