

NEW YORK

FOLK LORE

NEWSLETTER



DAN SHERMAN AND MABEL DE FOREST

Spring 1997
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*Whose Lore, Whose History
Fall Conference in Seneca Falls
September 4-7, 1997*

Seneca Falls is a picturesque, historic, small city situated on the old Seneca Cayuga Canal in the northern Finger Lakes region of New York. Once a thriving industrial town, it is now best known as the site of the first Women's Right's Convention in 1848 and home of the Women's Rights National Historic Park and the National Women's Hall of Fame. These sites commemorate and interpret a mid-nineteenth century event that happened in Seneca Falls and the related global issues of social change and women's rights. A more locally focused Urban Cultural Park addresses in addition the city's industrial past, architecture, and social history. It is to these tourist attractions that Seneca Falls owes much of its current economic vitality. How do the leaders and citizens of the city view the historic sites—the political and social issues they document, the interpretations they offer of local history and culture, their impact on the look and feel of Seneca Falls and the lives of its people? How does a community that depends on cultural and historical tourism reconcile its contemporary life and concerns with the lore and legacy of its historical past? The conference will examine these issues and explore some of the history and folklore of the Seneca Falls area. We'll have more details in the summer newsletter. In the meantime, please save the dates.

*Voices: A New NYFS Project
Help Us Meet the Challenge!*

The New York Folklore Society has received a Challenge Grant of \$10,000 from the New York State Council on the Arts to launch *Voices*, a new project that will provide new ways for people interested in folklore and folklife to get involved with the NYFS and our field. *Voices* includes the following three components:

Voices in Print Beginning with the fall issue, this 12-page newsletter will be expanded to 16 pages and will include a new section called *Voices* that will publish the content of folklore in the voices of its creators. It will include interview transcripts, photographs, personal narratives, and discussions of folklife contributed by readers. This will be a place for you to share the traditions of your family or other groups you're part of and be part of a stimulating cultural exchange.

Voices on the Web The Newsletter, including *Voices*, will be put up on the NYFS Web site, which we are developing over the next few months. This will grow into an interactive forum where Web readers can respond to what they see on screen and contribute to a folklore dialogue. On-line responses can be featured in the printed newsletter and vice versa, so *Voices* will cross from one medium to the other.

Voices in Person Public folklorists around the state will conduct a series of informal workshops in historical societies, church basements, cultural organizations and the like to introduce people to folklore as a way of looking at their own lives in community. The newsletter and brochures explaining *Voices* will be available

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NEW YORK
**FOLK
LORE**
NEWSLETTER

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The New York Folklore Society Newsletter is published quarterly and provides information and services to individuals and organizations involved with folk arts.

Please observe the following copy deadlines: October 1 for the Winter issue (Jan.-Mar.); Jan. 15 for the Spring issue (Apr.-June); April 1 for the Summer issue (July-Sept.); and July 1 for the Fall issue (Oct.-Dec.). Articles should be submitted on disk using a standard Macintosh or DOS word processor. If this is not possible, please contact the editor in advance.

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MAFA CONFERENCE IN ITHACA, NY MAY 2-3, 1997

The Middle Atlantic Folklife Association (MAFA) will hold its annual meeting in Ithaca on May 2-3, 1997. This year's meeting focuses on The Finnish Sauna: Folklore and Vernacular Architecture and includes a reception, panel presentations, a tour, and a dinner/dance. New York Folklore Society and the Roberson Museum and Science Center are co-sponsoring the meeting.

The event begins Friday evening with a reception in the historic Clinton House in downtown Ithaca. Saturday morning panels will include professionals and community scholars representing a diversity of perspectives including folklore, history, historic preservation, construction and personal experience. "The Built Environment: Folklore and Vernacular Architecture" discusses the general considerations, while the second panel "Perspectives on Finnish Culture and History" will take a closer look at the Finnish experience in the Southern Finger Lakes region of New York State. A guided tour on Saturday afternoon will take participants through the rich Finnish cultural landscape and built environment in the area and will stop at several saunas, a typical Finnish-American farmstead, the first Finnish-American church and cemetery in the area, and other sites important to the Finns. We'll end with an evening of Finnish food, music and dancing at the Newfield Fire Hall, site of the annual local Finn Fest. The MAFA annual business meeting will be held during the lunch break on Saturday.

The Middle Atlantic Folklife Association is a not-for-profit professional organization of folklorists, educators, artists and community leaders interested in folklife research and presentation. The organization serves the states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Co-

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Meet the NYFS Board

In our continuing effort to introduce the NYFS Board to our members, we present profiles on Mary Kay Penn, Vice President of the Board, and one of our new members, Elly Shodell. As was the case in our last pair of Board profiles, Mary Kay and Elly have authored their profiles themselves. Both have broken with the Dewars Scotch ad-format of their predecessors. Elly, in keeping with her calling as an oral historian, wrote hers in the form of a self-interview.

Mary Kay Penn

Joined in 1994

Vice President since 1995

I created the Institute for African-American Folk Culture six years ago while still in graduate school. Studying anthropology for six years left me disappointed over the relative lack of anthropological documentation of African-American folk culture but enthused about what many of the cultural studies were telling us about the importance of cultural traditions, both artistic and utilitarian, in the lives of people all over the world. I knew I wanted to further explore the effects of folk culture on African-American cultural development but didn't see any venues for employment in an African-American community. I had had great concerns about the availability of information on culture in the African-American community and noticed a complete lack of venues for presenting African-American folk traditions. I stepped into that void with a series of programs and projects that, hopefully, entertain and educate.

I was inspired in my vision by two African-American women who were anthropologists but were only acknowledged academically for their artistic pursuits: Zora Hurston for her fiction writing and Katherine Dunham for her dancing. Their work in documenting African folk culture in the Caribbean and the United States is greatly disregarded by an overwhelmingly White and male academic community, but I found it to be a gold mine. Something changed in me when a professor teaching a cultural anthropology course looked me in the eye and in an attempt to refer me to Zora Neale Hurston said "See if you can find anything on that Black



anthropologist . . . oh what's her name . . . Pearl Bailey!!! What I was learning about Black folk traditions took on a new meaning as I understood that no one would care about those traditions the way I would. I understood both women's choices in that moment. I understood their need to make this information available to the world through means that people were more open to. Relatively few people may have read the book "Island Possessed" by Katherine Dunham when it was published in 1969. But her dancing and choreography none could ignore. She was critical in bringing a greater acceptance of African dance to the African-American community and in this way has enhanced African-American culture, something few academics can claim. I was inspired by their "applied" use of an anthropological education in the service of African-American culture.

I was a lover of folklore, folk tales and oral history for years before I heard of the New York Folk-

Mary Kay Penn
Photograph by
Deborah Clover

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Elly Shodell

Q: What are the events in your life that led up to your recent election to the Board of the New York Folklore Society?

Elly Shodell: It all started in Manhattan, where I was born at the now-defunct French Hospital. Much of the first five years of my life (on the Upper West Side) were spent in a sandbox at the 81st Street and Riverside drive playground. Later, I went to P.S. 9, Joan of Arc Junior High School and then to the High School of Music and Art (for piano and voice) where for the first time, I met incredibly talented people not from the Upper West Side. Thence to

City College. After eight years of taking the #5 bus to school (from J.H.S. through college), I received a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and departed for UC-Berkeley to do graduate work in American History.

Q: How did you prepare for life in California after growing up in New York City?

ES: I telephoned my future husband-to-be, Mike, an old family friend from Fire Island, who was already at Berkeley and who had already adjusted. We got married three years later. And then we had two sons, Matthew (now 26) and Daniel (now 23), who continue to amaze and delight us.

Q: How did your early family life impact on your educational and career choices?

ES: As the only child of a career third-grade-teacher mom (now 90 years old), I benefited from long hours of being read to, singing, and playing with blocks. From Russian folk tunes to Romanian food to Yiddish jokes, I learned to enjoy the spoken word. From having a working mother I learned to be social and get invited to other kids' houses for lunch every day. It was inevitable that folklore would appeal.

Q: Let's get back to your career.

ES: The gist of my resume reads as follows: "**Education:** MLS, Palmer School of Library and Information Science (Long Island University), 1986; MA, American History, University of California at Berkeley, 1968. **Positions:** Director of Oral History at the Port Washington Public Library since 1983; Researcher, staff member, Columbia University Oral History Research Office; Lincoln-Juarez Scholar, Biblioteca Nacional, Mexico, D.F.; teaching and research assistant, UC-Berkeley; assistant to the editor, *The Papers of Aaron Burr*, New-York Historical Society; researcher, London School of Economics. **Oral history Projects, Publications and Exhibitions:** 1) *Flight of Memory: Aviation and Long Island History*; 2) *Cross Currents: Baymen, Yachtsmen, and Long Island Waters*; 3) *Changing Channels: Maritime Folk Artists on Long Island's North Shore*; 4) *In the Service: Workers on the Grand Long Island Estates*; 5) *It Looks Like Yesterday to Me: The Strength of the African American Family Over Six Generations*; 6) *Particles of the past: Sandmining on Long Island*.

Q: If I may interrupt, we'd prefer that you don't read from printed matter but instead give us some anecdotal, reflective, detailed accounts of your work and what motivates you.

ES: But this is my voice and not the cold, printed word. Which is what attracted me to folklore in the first place. I spent so many years in the dusty archives and metal stacks of impersonal manuscript repositories in the U.S., Latin America, and Europe, that when a grant opportunity from the New York State Council on the Arts' Folk Arts Program came my way in 1983, I seized the moment and learned how exciting and fulfilling a community-based project could be. After 13 years of directing oral history and folk arts projects for the Port Washington Public Library, I still greet each new project with excitement and trepidation, knowing that an undiscovered part of the Long Island community will be found and will find themselves and be recognized for their talents.

Being a part of the Board of the New York Folklore Society will challenge me to broaden the scope of my work and learn from mentors who come to this organization with different perspectives and approaches.

Q: Because we are aware of the responsibilities involved in personal interviewing, we ask that you sign a release form allowing us to quote your words for educational use only.

ES: I'm glad to see that you've been reading the *Oral History Evaluation Guidelines* as well as NYFS' own *Working with Folk Materials in New York State: A Manual for Folklorists and Archivists*. I hope to promulgate some of the standards of oral history work as part of what I do on the NYFS Board.

Penn (continued from page 3)

lore Society. I was impressed with the organization's mission and current executive director, John Suter. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the Society is much more than folklore. We are concerned about the "health" of folk cultures all over New York State. We're located in a state that provides us with an endless abundance and diversity of folk expressions so the work has been challenging.

There is an area where my vision for African-American folk culture fits neatly with the Society's mission. We are both concerned with documenting folk traditions in a useful way, and we both seek to encourage cultural equity as a societal value. At the NYFS I have found colleagues who share my feelings about the value of folk expressions and who also feel an urgency in building an environment in this state where all cultures are respected, valued, embraced, and learned from.

I hope to contribute conceptually to the building of this environment. Imagining the benefits to each community is what keeps me motivated.

Elly Shodell

Following Eyes

Art Horton

(as told to Peter Voorheis)

With a grant from the Folk Arts Program of the New York Council on the Arts, the Arts of the Southern Finger Lakes has been conducting fieldwork in Allegany County to identify folk artists willing to share their work outside their own communities. Although the project was originally concerned with material folk arts, the fieldwork has uncovered a number of artists and individuals who are gifted storytellers-not professional or even locally famous raconteurs-but everyday people whose stories are seldom heard outside their immediate families and close circles of friends.

One such storyteller is Art Horton of Alfred Station. Art is a construction worker who worked his way up from common laborer to skilled drywaller and tile layer. Twenty years ago, a tumor on his back left him partially paralyzed from the neck down and unable to walk. At the suggestion of Ann Brewer, a therapist at the Veterans Hospital in Bath, he took up rug hooking to restore the use of his hands. After mastering that craft he began wood carving. Art eventually recovered to where he can walk using canes, and his carvings, mostly of animals, have been showcased in a traveling exhibit sponsored by the Arts of the Southern Finger Lakes.

Many of Art's carved animals have eyes which "follow" a viewer, as do those of a person photographed while looking at the camera. The following story was told to exhibit designer Maureen Harding and me while Art was looking through a photograph album of his work. He had been explaining the technique he uses to get the eyes of his carvings and portraits to follow the viewer.

Now this one here, there's a story behind this. My wife's aunt wanted me to go to church with her. I'm a little religious, not a lot, but a little. We got into church, and I see a Jesus picture hanging there. I said, "Well, why don't I create one of my own?" So, what I did was I sunk his eyes in, and I'll tell you, he really gets to you. This picture is really staring at you.

I had a friend, I guess he was in jail a lot, he was in jail probably 75 times. Even the troopers are scared of him. He lived up in the hills, way up in there, and he had an old house he lived in. And when I needed a favor, he'd come down and see me and do me a favor. I never had any problems with him. Everyone else was afraid of him, I wasn't. And I was doing this picture-his name was Charlie. I said, "Charlie, you want to come down and see my picture. You can't believe, Jesus is following you." He said, "Oh, I don't believe it." He and his friend had two six-packs under their arms. So I had it outside on the sawhorse. And I said, "This guy Jesus will follow you," and he says, "Aw, I don't believe you." And I said, "Well, wherever

you are, He'll see you, and you'll see Him." And they were carrying their six-packs under their arms, walking back and forth in the driveway. And they looked at that picture while they were walking, and they kept looking, and the next thing you know they left, and they threw their six-packs in the garbage can. They really did, they threw them right in there and said, "I can't take this, I can't take it!"

So I hung the picture up in our living room in the farmhouse when we lived over there, and my daughter-I don't know, she must have had a guilty conscience-she came in, and the next thing I know, I got home from work, I looked in, and I said, "My picture isn't there, I wonder what happened to that?" It was in the closet, so I didn't think anything about it. I went and got my picture and hung it up on the wall like I usually do, ... the next thing you know it's in the closet again. So I kept saying, "Well, who keeps putting my picture in the closet?" And my daughter says, "I put it in there. I can't stand it. It stares right at you. It's looking at me, I can't stand it. Get rid of that pic-



Picture of Jesus by Art Horton

ture." I said, "Did you do anything wrong at school?" And she said no. Well, the next day I get a call from the school, and it turns out she'd gotten mad and swore at some kid there.

So finally I gave it to some guy who was religious. I hope he didn't have a guilty conscience, because it does get to you. So then there was a lady over at the V.A. hospital, I guess it wound up coming to her, and I asked her one day whatever happened to that picture, and she said, "I passed it on to someone."

It did get to me. I was mowing the lawn-this is really a true story-over at my father-in-law's. My friend Charlie, the one with the beer-he didn't know about that picture yet-I'd just got done varnishing the frame, and I had it setting in the kitchen. And he comes down and says, "Hey Art, how'd you like to look at a Playboy magazine?" And I said, "Oh boy, I love to look at those." So I'm setting there, and I'm supposed to be mowing the lawn, and I've got the book open, and I'm looking at the picture, and all of a sudden I looked up, and those eyes are looking right at me, so I closed the book up. I had that little guilty conscience too, so I laid the magazines there, and I got out on the tractor, and my wife says, "Well, you better get over there and mow

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Catskill Folklore Discovered:

The Delaware County Folklore Collection at the Hartwick College Archives

Bethany E. Caird



Dan Sherman and Mable DeForest. Photograph courtesy of the Paul F. Cooper, Jr. Archives of Hartwick College

Author's Note: I have been working with this collection since September 1996 as an academic intern in anthropology at Hartwick College. I am indexing the interviews according to an expanded categories of interest list including family histories, education, and economic activities. I have also provided brief summaries of the content of each interview. This should make it easier to find detailed information focused on a particular subject. As I was working on this, I was struck by how vivid and detailed these memories are. As a long-time resident of central New York, I found the information fascinating and I believe others will as well. There is a wealth of information waiting to be tapped.

There wasn't any herb I don't think that that lady didn't know about. If they got something wrong with their kidneys, she'd go out and pick trailing arbutus. Now maybe you don't know what it is. It's a pretty smelling flower. And she'd go out and pick that and steep it and give that to them for their kidneys, and it made their kidneys run off more. It helped 'em. She didn't go to school or anything, but she could do all that stuff and go out and take care of people." (Interview, Florence Melious, about her mother's best friend and neighbor, Bertha Zum, Delaware County Folklore Project, October 24, 1978)

The Catskill mountain communities of the late 1800s and early 1900s, were very different from today. Local hospitals were only houses and "they couldn't have a doctor every time they had an ache or pain. That's all they had, [herbal] remedies, they didn't have any doctor's medicines" (Interview, Louise Sutton, October 27, 1978). It was a time when "people didn't run to drug stores and get things they get today to clean their systems out" (Interview, Albert Astes, July 31, 1978). Kerosene mixed with a small amount of sugar was a popular cure for sore throats and stomach aches. Fried onions placed on the patients abdomen were a common remedy for colds. Herbs such as pine pitch, slippery elm, balm, horehound, and pennyroyal provided important medicinal effects to the sick.

Herbal remedies and old-time medical care are just two examples of folkloric information contained within the Delaware County Folklore Project. In 1978, Hartwick College, in Oneonta NY, received a grant from the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA) to research folklore traditions of Delaware County. Bob

Doyle, director of the college's environmental campus at Pine Lake, near West Davenport, initiated and supervised the project. Two interviewers, Margaret Stumpf of Downsville and Tom Buckner of Meredith did the majority of the interviews. Thirty students were also involved. This extensive project yielded over 60 taped interviews, most with accompanying transcripts. Senior citizens, throughout the county, shared their memories on a variety of subjects. Many, having been born in the area, had witnessed drastic changes, and their firsthand knowledge revealed many of the lost and forgotten folkloric details of the life and times of the early twentieth-century Catskills.



Sherman Lake merry-go-round. Photograph courtesy of the Paul F. Cooper, Jr. Archives of Hartwick College.

The collection thus offers vivid details of the region's people and places. Senior citizens' personal memories offer evocative, crisp images in the stories they tell and contribute to an understanding of this very different period.

A few examples will illustrate the depth and clarity of some of these images. Evident in the stories told about the legendary Andes doctor, Charles Leonard

Wakeman, are distinct images of his life and medical practice in the county. Described as a "real country doctor", he relied on his educational knowledge of medicine as well as his experience with herbal remedies. He would travel any place day or night and often through terrible weather to tend desperate patients. He once even walked through a snowstorm to deliver a baby.. The community of Andes honored his humane contributions on August 25, 1939 by holding a "Dr. Wakeman Day." Dr. Wakeman once said to a friend, "I had an awful lot of bills out, but I'll tell you, I lost a lot of money, but I gained a lot of friends. And those friends meant more to me than that money did" (Interview, Viella Bonton, October 18, 1978). The interviews pertaining to Dr. Wakeman create a vivid profile of this old-time country doctor—the ways he helped create a sense of community, and the reasons why "everybody loved him."

Not only does the collection contain an abundance of stories

about special people, but it also preserves memories of the occupations which made up the economic environment of the early part of the century. While one part of the county relied heavily on dairy products to generate income, another developed the charcoal and lumbering industry. In Acidelia, NY, "everybody that lived in the town was pretty much involved in the [acid]factory. They

were factory towns... little farms, but there wasn't any big dairies. It was really a lumbering and acid factory country," commented Reubon Todd during a group discussion at the Delaware County Home.

Many of the large dairy farms in the county relied on the Delaware Northern Railroad, opened in 1906, for economic prosperity. In his interview, Lockhart Russell recalls what the railroad meant to the small farming communities of Delaware County. "They had what was called the milk trains... They went up and down the valley and would pick up the milk and take it to East Branch. They would stop in Downsville. We had a creamery. It was called the Borden's Creamery, and up and down the valley different companies owned creameries." Milk was shipped to various parts of the state. With the creation of the Papacton Reservoir, started in 1947, the railroad was disconnected and the rails sold to a New York City subway contractor. Milling companies, feed businesses, and large dairy industries slowly crumbled without the support of the railroad.

Of course, the economy required hard work by all community members, but the people of Delaware county also had entertainment and recreation to relieve them after their labors. The town of Downsville, NY was a lively center for fun activities. The Downsville Band, a well-known musical group, toured throughout the Catskills and beyond. Marvin Bull, a member of the band said, "It dates back before the turn of the century, and it was quite a well noted organization. They traveled all over, and it became quite widely known throughout the area. I didn't join the band until 1917." Mr. Bull continued, "We used to put on home talent plays and shows in the old opera house for the benefit of the band. Usually took in quite a bit of money. We would pack the house, and the band would furnish the music" (Interview, March, 1978). Traveling shows such as the Drew Brother's Minstrels also performed at the old Downsville Opera House. Resi-

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The Silent Macarena

Steve Zeitlin

It's yesterday's news. Marilyn Bergman, the famous songwriter and president of ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) says it was all a big mistake. No sooner did the story hit the press, than ASCAP formally withdrew its initiative to demand royalties from girl scout camps for songs sung around the campfire. It was "a public relations nightmare," culminating when a troop of scouts at the Diablo day camp near Oakland, California—afraid of being charged a fee—danced the Macarena in silence. ASCAP now claims they had only wanted to charge summer camps for large public performances by professionals, leaving unexplained their letter demanding royalties which mysteriously found its way into the mailboxes of almost every summer camp in America.

A few years ago, the Disney Corporation just as quickly withdrew its effort to charge a day care center in Hallandale, FL, royalties for painting Mickeys, Donalds, and Plutos on their walls. These attacks were both called public relations disasters, and the corporate forces beat a hasty retreat. But the attacks are emblematic of a much wider affront on the traditions that define our everyday life. They suggest the way corporations shape our lives by encouraging only those traditions which they can effectively market to us—and oh how it irks them when they can't collect a royalty!

In the 1940s and '50s, when Walt Disney was producing his animated features Snow White and Cinderella, the stories were traditional—free for anyone to use whether around a campfire or in a book. They were part of a common heritage of widely known songs and stories that had been handed down by word of mouth for generations. In fact, some years earlier, while Disney was still exploring ways to transform folk into popular culture, a group of acade-

micians from countries around the world led by Stith Thompson and Antti Aarne were engaged in an unprecedented effort to catalogue, index, and map out the world's traditional stories into tale types and motifs. The result was the Aarne and Thompson, *Types of the Folktale* (1928, revised edition, 1961), and the six volume *Motif Index of Folk Literature* (1932-1936). According to folklorist Bruce Buckley, Walt Disney Productions was the largest single purchaser of the publication, giving a set to each of its writers. The folk heritage of the world was theirs to copyright.

We need to encourage camps and schools to adapt and personalize popular culture, not force them to pay royalties on it. For children who spend school nights watching T.V., camp is a respite from television and advertising—each camp is left to create its own culture. Camp songs and parodies are classic folklore, and campfire skits and melodies are, in fact, the repository for many vaudeville and medicine show routines, as well as other older American traditions and popular songs. Our folk culture has to be protected just as vociferously as Disney's right, and every songwriter's right to make a buck.

If corporations thought they could get away with it, they might charge a few cents every time we hummed a song in the shower, every time we doodled Mickey Mouse or Xeroxed a cartoon to distribute in the office. But it's part of our job in life to make songs and stories our own, to transform pop culture to what Gary Fine calls *idioculture*, the idiosyncratic adaptation of mass culture that occurs in families and communities. Americans cannot find meaning in their lives as purely passive recipients of popular culture across the airwaves. In his introduction to *Rise Up Singing*, the classic sing-along collection used by many camps and scout troupes, Pete Seeger writes, "Change a word, add a verse...plan for improvisation."



Steve Zeitlin
Photograph by
Nicole Keys

From The Field

PEOPLE

Janis Benincasa, former Newsletter editor, is now working as Program Coordinator of the Language Immersion Institute at SUNY New Paltz. She travels to Spain this summer to study Spanish. She likes her work very much and finds her folklore background to be helpful. **Deborah Clover**, Ithaca, spent the month of January working with 120 seventh graders at the DeWitt Middle School in Ithaca. She made classroom presentations on folklore and assisted students with folklore projects of their own. Look for some of the students' work in an upcoming issue of the *New York Folklore Newsletter*. **Todd DeGarmo** at Crandall Library, Glens Falls, continues his "Folklife, Music, Dance and Storytelling" series in March with "A Bit of the Irish," featuring Friday night evening concerts followed by Saturday morning family workshops with musicians, stepdancers and storytellers from the region. Also coming up at Crandall is an exhibition on ice traditions: skating, fishing and harvesting. **John Eilertsen**, director of the Hallockville Museum Farm and Folklife Center on Long Island, is currently overseeing the Museum's acquisition of five adjacent acres. The Museum recently was awarded an ISTE A (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) grant for \$389,600 for stabilization and restoration of its original homestead complex and the newly acquired property. John has recently hired a new education curator, **Vicki Fleming** whose masters degree in American Studies includes a focus on journalism and folklore. With two full-time and one half-time folklorists (the half-timer is administrative assistant Caroline Coderre) Hallockville is evolving from a museum farm with a folklife approach to a regional folklife center. **Catherine Schwoeffermann**, Roberson Museum and Science Center, is finishing a one and a half year long survey to identify traditional artists in the 11 counties of the New York Southern Tier and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania. The survey will be used to expand and update the museum's school program and permanent exhibition on ethnic heritage. Catherine is also in the beginning stages of developing an exhibition on traditional puppetry to open in 1998. **Elly Shodell**, oral historian at Port Washington Public Library (and new NYFS board member—see her profile on page 4),

announces the opening of her exhibition, "People, Places. Planes: Aviation, Folk Art, and Community," based on interviews with Long Island residents long involved in the aviation industry and flying. The exhibition will be on display at the library from April 2 to May 29. **Nancy Solomon**, Long Island Traditions, Baldwin, has completed an outdoor exhibition on the building of Jones Beach and the Wantagh Parkway, which opens in June. Her ongoing Maritime Folk Arts Program brings baymen, decoy carvers, and model makers into local fourth grade classrooms. Through a NYSCA Arts in Education grant she will work with **Amanda Dargan** and **Judy Kugelmass** to develop an ethnic artist training program. Nancy will soon begin an inventory of historic shellfishing traditions on the east end of Long Island. **Peter Voorheis**, Folk Arts of the Southern Finger Lakes, Corning, is researching storytelling in Allegheny County as well as organizing the annual Old-Time Fiddlers' Gathering to be held this summer in Watkins Glen. Coming up this spring in Corning, Peter will be installing his traveling exhibit on Art Horton, a woodcarver from Alfred Station. **Dan Ward**, Cultural Resources Council, Syracuse, has just started the "Hmong Scrapbook Project" which trains Hmong teens to act as community scholars documenting their community's traditions through video and audio interviews and photography. He is collaborating with other community organizations on an intergenerational program, "A Time for All Ages: A Celebration of Generations," to take place at the New York State Fairgrounds on May 16. In March, Dan chairs the panel, "Folklore Today: The Power of Tradition" at the annual conference of the American Culture Association in San Antonio. **Vaughn Ward**, Black Crow Productions, Rexford, founded her organization in 1995 to continue the work of the Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council on a broader regional scale as they phased out their folk arts program. Upcoming programs include a Spring Solstice/Winter Retreat at Indian Lake; an April 27 workshop, "Sense of Place: Regional Song Writing" in Charlton; and a May 31 Canalside Festival in Canajoharie. Vaughn also plans to reactivate LARAC's Family Farms Families project and is developing an educators task force for the Adirondack, Mohawk Valley, and Lower Hudson regions.

EVENTS

1997 Folk Arts Roundtable

The twelfth annual Folk Arts Roundtable will take place on May 21-23 at the Hotel Syracuse. The Roundtable is an annual forum for the public folk arts field in New York State devoted to the discussion of ideas, issues, and practices of public folk arts programming. It is organized by the Folk Arts Program of the New York State Council on the Arts and the Cultural Resources Council of Syracuse and Onondaga County. This year's theme will be cultural tourism, and the program will include presentations by folk arts professionals involved in this work. The Roundtable will also feature a conversation with Nicolette B. Clarke, the new director at NYSCA, and a workshop on personal finance and investment strategies for people working in the folk arts field. For more information contact Daniel Franklin Ward, CRC Folk Arts Program Director, Cultural Resources Council of Syracuse and Onondaga County, 411 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202, tel. 315-435-8554, fax 315-435-2160.

RCHA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Regional Council of Historical Agencies will be held on May 12, 1997 at the Oneida Community Mansion House. This year's focus is the ways in which museums, historical agencies, municipal historians and other institutions interested in history make connections with their communities. For more information contact RCHA at 800-895-1648.

1997 Old Songs Festival

The seventeenth festival and twentieth birthday for the Old Songs organization will begin 6:00 p.m., Friday, June 27, and continue through Sunday the 29th at the Altamont Fairgrounds, Altamont, NY. The Festival presents a roster of 80 performers of folk, celtic, and world music and dance in a family-friendly setting. Discounted tickets (\$13.00 per section and \$45.00 all-festival) are available from April 1 to June 1. Children 12 and under are free. For a festival brochure contact Old Songs, Inc., P.O. Box 399, Guilderland, NY 12084.

PUBLICATIONS

The Ribbon around the Pentagon: Peace by Piecemakers

By Linda Pershing
Publications of the American Folklore Society, New Series
University of Tennessee Press
Knoxville, TN (1996)
242 pages, \$45.00 cloth, \$22.50 paper

Forty years after the United States used the atomic bomb against Japan, More than 20,000 participants—most of them women—gathered in Washington, D.C. for a unique demonstration on behalf of world peace. In a colorful ceremony on August 4, 1985, they wrapped 15 miles of decorated fabric panels, which they called the Ribbon, around the Pentagon and other government buildings. This book examines the Ribbon project in depth, exploring how it began and the meanings it had for those who participated.



Sew to Speak: The Fabric Art of Mary Milne

By Linda Pershing
University Press of Mississippi
Jackson, MS (1995)
72 pages, \$29.95 cloth, \$15.95, paper

In a wide range of techniques, from quilting to collages, Mary Milne of Ithaca, NY, creates elaborate pictures and banners out of fabric. Like many other folk artists, she has never considered her work "real art." Her exploration of her medium blossomed when she became involved in 1985 with the Peace Ribbon project (see above). Milne contributed over one hundred feet of Ribbon panels, more than any other participant. This study of Milne and her art accents modern folklife as a creative outlet for outcries against apathy and injustice.

A folklorist and feminist theorist, Linda Pershing is an assistant professor of women's studies at the State University of New York, Albany.

Vietnam Remembered: The Folk Art of Marine Veteran Michael D. Cousino

By Varick A. Chittenden
University Press of Mississippi
Jackson, MS (1995)
72 pages, \$29.95 cloth, \$15.95, paper

Like many other veterans of the Vietnam conflict, Michael Cousino, a disabled former Marine from Gouverneur, NY, continues to struggle with bad memories and daily life adjustments. Unlike many other veterans he has found an outlet for his frustrations and grief. He creates miniature replicas of his Vietnam experience. In these astonishingly detailed dioramas he recalls scenes of battle and related episodes that reflect his life of nearly 30 years ago. The unique art of this ex-Marine, as this study of his fascinating work shows, serves both Cousino and an appreciative audience. For him it is both therapeutic and didactic. For those who see his dioramas there is aesthetic understanding and interaction.

Varick Chittenden is a professor of English at SUNY College of Technology at Canton, NY and the director of Traditional Arts in Upstate New York (TAUNY).

Birds in Wood:

By Melissa Ladenheim
University Press of Mississippi
Jackson, MS (1995)
72 pages, \$29.95 cloth, \$15.95, paper

This volume features the collection of carved birds created by Andrew Zergenyi, a Hungarian immigrant to the United States. When Russia advanced into Hungary in 1945, Zergenyi and his family fled to Austria, where he began carving as a means of supplementing the family's income. From Austria he traveled to England and in 1952 to the United States, where he was employed as head greenhouse keeper at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. The book explores the creative process and aesthetic dimensions of Zergenyi's work. His carvings play the integrative role of drawing together pieces of time and experience into a coherent and meaningful whole and of making a place for him in his adoptive home.

Melissa Ladenheim is a New York State folklorist now living in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

LETTERS

Thank you for your call today, and thank you for your interest in our museum. I tracked down Dick Case's article from last summer [reprinted in the Winter 1996 New York Folklore Newsletter], and read it again. There are a couple of comments that I would like to make. Mention is made of my art and that of my son, Don. Also mentioned, further into the article is my son, Dave, who is also an artist. For your information, I'm including Dave's resume, which isn't updated and therefore does not mention his present job as artist/designer for *Indian Time*, a newspaper published at Akwesasne (St. Regis Mohawk Reservation). Dick, in his article, states that my father is a non-Native. My father is a member of the Wolf Clan of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne. His Mohawk name is Tehanetorens (which means, 'He peers through the woods'). Genetically he (we) have Native as well as non-Native ancestry, and he (and I) identify as Kenienkehake—People of the Flint, whom most people call Mohawk. Generally, I like Dick's article...after all, it's quite flattering. And, I appreciate the fact that you are going to have it reprinted, as such articles help our museum effort.

Good wishes,
John Kahionhes Fadden

From the Editor:

My apologies for not including this information with the article on Ray Fadden in our Winter issue.

OTHER NEWS

Funding Available for Irish American Research

The Irish American Cultural Institute (IACI) is now accepting applications from researchers to investigate the Irish experience in America. Original research and possibly assistance for travel or publication costs can be funded up to \$5,000. For an application contact Irish Research Fund, Irish American Cultural Institute, 1 Lackawanna Place, Morristown, NJ 07960 or call 210-605-1991. Applications must be received by August 15, 1997.

EYES From page 5

that lawn and not be looking at those books."

Okay, I get on the tractor, and I drive over. And I swear to God, I don't know how my canes fell off the back of that tractor, but they did. They dropped right off, and I had good leather on there to hold them on. They fell off, and I ran right over them. I ground them up in the lawnmower. I heard this noise, and came back, and I said to my wife, "Look what happened to my canes." She said, "Well what did you do?" And I said, "I don't know. They fell off the back of the tractor." She said, "Well, get your other canes, and go out and mow lawn."

And just as I got down over the hill, something told me I should mow that section there while I'm going. My daughter had this rope hanging from the tree, and instead of putting it where it belonged, she left it in the lawn, and I didn't know it. I still had that guilty conscience, like, and I turned the mower on, and that rope wrapped right around and picked the tractor right up in the air. I had to go and get an ax to get it cut loose, and my wife's hollering out the door and says, "Haven't you mowed that lawn yet?" I said, "No, I'm hanging in the tree." So I finally got the darn thing cut, and I had to go and drive it up a ramp to get the rope off.

Then I come in for lunch, and all of a sudden I look over at the picture, and I finally took the picture and put it out on the back porch, because of that little problem I had. So I'm eating my lunch, and my wife says, "Well, you better get over there and finish up my dad's lawn." And I said, "Yeah, I will," so I went over and mowed that. I come back and go in for something cold to drink, and just as I got in the door that picture was on an angle. As soon as I spotted it, it spotted me. I drank real quick, I got on and went out and mowed the front lawn.

And I'll tell you, *that rock was never there in that lawn before. Never there.* I mowed that lawn every day, and that rock was *never* there. But I don't know how that rock got there, a rock that big. And I went out there, and I heard "Culing, BANG!" And it drove that rock way up in those blades. I stopped the tractor, got off, come in the house, shut the door, I shut the other door, and I went in there. My wife says, "You gonna mow lawn?" I says, "No! I'm not gonna touch

the lawn today. I'm not going out there today." It was that picture. I had a guilty conscience, I guess.

But that picture did get everybody. That's why every time I asked anybody about the picture, they kept saying they passed it on to somebody else.



Art Horton in workshop, carving fish. Photograph by Peter Voorheis, courtesy of Arts of the Southern Finger Lakes.

CATSKILLS From page 7

dents also regularly enjoyed concerts, parades, and various community and church gatherings.

Delaware County also housed a summer vaudeville resort. Dan Sherman, a well-known vaudevillian during the early part of the century, bought a small lake, now known as Pine Lake, and created a "health" resort for vacationing stage people from the Boston, New York, and Chicago circuits. A number of interviews describe the diverse activities at this vacation spot. Visitors described Sherman Lake as a "mini Coney Island." It became a popular place for entertainment in the area. Vaudevillians set up shows in the theater Sherman built, and local residents paid a minimum fee to see comedy acts, trapeze artists, and famous entertainers. Mrs. Ray Rider of Davenport Center recalls, "...That was a real resort. It had a merry-go-round and everything you could think of... We used to go there a lot. They had picnics and vaudeville shows" (Interview, January, 1978). As a young boy, Ezra McDougal also spent a lot of time at the resort. He knew Dan Sherman well and talked about various

activities at the lake. "They used to have dances there, and they used to have Sunday school picnics. When you went to shows... they sold hot dogs 'n frankfurts and rolls. You could rent boats 'n they had a motorboat—an inboard motor boat, and you could ride around the lake at 10–15 miles an hour, you know. I used to just love doing that" (Interview, January 1978). Tessie Sherman, the daughter of Dan Sherman and Mabel DeForest, remembers of the local visitors, "Oh yes, they came in a great big tally-ho*... They'd come over with this great big tally-ho... a double decker... men sitting on top and they'd blow these horns and they'd resound all the way through the mountains" (Interview, January, 1978).

From people and places, to economic activities, entertainment and recreation, the Delaware County Folklore Project contains information on a large variety of subjects. The collection contains information on water-witching, panthers and wildcats, ghost stories, family histories, education, and memories of small towns displaced by reservoirs. It is a great resource for those researching the early 20th century cultures and individuals of this Catskill region or for those who just enjoy walking back into history for a moment.

*A tally-ho is a coach or bus drawn by horses.

MAFA From page 3

lumbia.

Registration for the conference is \$50 and includes all events as well as a box-lunch on Saturday. More information may be obtained by calling the NYFS office at (607) 273-9137 or emailing dcnyfs@aol.com.

The Finns of the Southern Finger Lakes

Finns began moving to the hill country south of Ithaca in 1910, setting off a wave of migration that lasted more than 50 years and brought more than 500 families to the area. New York was not the immigrants' first place of settlement in the US. Their arrival in this region was part of a national movement of Finns from the mines and factories to the land, and many who settled here came by way of the upper Midwest. Attracted initially by stories of "ready made farms," the arriving Finns instead

found dilapidated houses and barns with stony, uncultivated fields. However, Finns are known as hard workers, and they quickly set about rebuilding the farms, a process that often took years. The sauna was generally the first building to be constructed, sometimes serving as living space while the farmhouse was renovated. With the collapse of milk prices following W.W.I and the deepening depression of the 1930s, many Finns converted their dairy barns to chicken houses and entered the poultry industry. It is the remnants of these farms that are visible today. In 1997 the aging immigrant population continues to decline. Most farms are no longer active, and the younger American-born Finns still in the area earn their livelihood in other occupations. As farm buildings deteriorate and property is sold or leased to non-Finnish residents, many of the original saunas have been converted into storage sheds or fallen into disuse. However, the sauna is a primary symbol of one's Finnish identity, and the tradition is anything but dead. A few of the old structures have been maintained. New saunas have been built, often in the garage or basement, and the sauna still serves as a focus for social gathering.

VOICES From page 2

to let people know about the opportunities to share their traditions with others, in print or on the Internet.

The Challenge Grant requires a three-to-one match, so we need to raise \$30,000 before next February 28. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to help the New York Folklore Society sustain our work and help people around the state discover the folklore in their own lives and the lives of their neighbors. We'll be in touch with you soon about *Voices* and about how you can help with the challenge. In the meantime, if you are not yet a member of the New York Folklore Society or have not renewed for 1997, please join us now. Use the form to the right.

Thank you very much!

The New York Folklore Society is dedicated to furthering cultural equity and crosscultural understanding through its programs serving the field of folklore and folklife in New York State. The Society seeks to nurture folklore and folklife by fostering and encouraging folk cultural expressions within communities where they originate and by sharing these expressions across cultural boundaries. ▼ The Society publishes the scholarly journal *New York Folklore* and the *New York Folklore Newsletter*. You will receive subscriptions to both as benefits of membership as well as discounts on various publications and events. ▼ We provide technical assistance to organizations engaged in folk arts programming and produce conferences and other programs with statewide scope that address issues concerning folklife. ▼ We welcome your involvement and support. ▼ Thank you!

Please Join Us

Become a member or renew ▼ Make a special donation ▼ Order NYFS publications ▼ Notify us of your new address

MEMBERSHIP – Benefits include this newsletter and *New York Folklore* plus discounts on NYFS publications and activities.

<i>Membership Category</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>Foreign</i>
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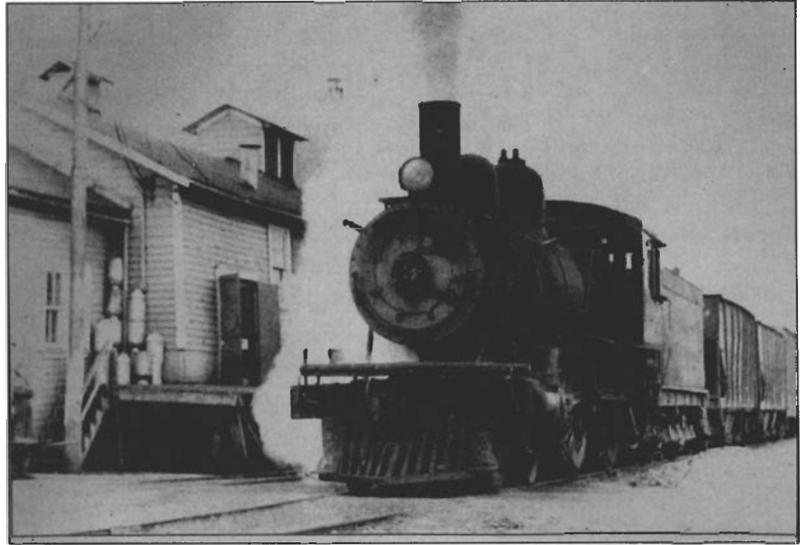
▼ Profiles

Mary Kay Penn and
Elly Shodell,
board members

▼ Folk Artists Art Horton on Following Eyes

▼ Steve Zeitlin on The Silent Macarena

▼ An Archives of Catskills Folklore



Engine #3 at the Downsville Creamery. Note the pile of milk cans on the creamery platform. Photograph taken from Gertrude Fitch Horton, *the Delaware and Northern and the Towns It Served*, courtesy of Purple Mountain Press. (See Catskill Folklore, page 6.)



The New York Folklore Society's programs are made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency. The Annual Fall Conference and the Mentoring Program are supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Folk Archives Project is made possible by grants from the New York State Documentary Heritage Program and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. All NYFS activities are made possible in part by the generosity of our members and contributors.



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