

# Voices

Fall–Winter 2014  
Volume 40: 3–4

The Journal of  
New York Folklore

Alice Testrake  
In Her Own  
Words

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Cultured Wilderness  
and Wild Culture  
in Rochester

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Petrifaction Legends  
in Turkey

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In Memoriam  
Yacub Addy  
National Heritage  
Fellow

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My Grandfather's  
Left-Wing  
Bungalow Colony



## From the Director



Today, President Obama released his FY2016 budget. Economists and politicians will spend the next several weeks dissecting and debating its merits, and the final result will very likely be an alteration of President Obama's original intention. In its first presentation, however, the President recommends a modest increase for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and specific funding for a national program of arts education.

Why, one might ask, should government support the arts? The reasons are numerous and range from the purely economic reason that the arts are economic drivers for the nation's downtowns and tourist industries, to the quality of life issues, which have shown that the arts provide important vehicles for leisure and for the aesthetic expressions of our everyday lives. Government support for the arts, although not a total answer for arts activities, provides a mechanism for art and arts activities to reach every member of our nation.

The arts have historically benefitted from wealthy patrons, predominantly located in urban areas and that continues to be the case, as the wealthier among us provide support to those arts activities that inspire them. However, to rely upon that patronage for the entire nation skews the equation and creates a situation where art is accessible only to those who can pay for it. With arts funding from the state or federal level, it has been found that arts education, and the opportunities to experience art activities, reaches a less enfran-

chised portion of our nation: the rural, the poor, minority populations, and the young.

For a folklore organization, government support for folk arts provides support for arts that are specific to certain communities or segments of our populations. Support for folk arts provides a validation for arts, which are seldom seen within American popular culture, or within Western European fine art expressions. Referencing the American populace as a whole, Bill Ivey, former NEA Chair and folklorist, pointed to the importance for Americans everywhere to live a vibrant "expressive life" comprised of two components: heritage and voice. He said, "Every American (and all people) must continually choose between activities and engagements that connect them with family and community and those that enable them to 'go inside,' digging into personal expression, individual creativity, and idiosyncrasies" (Ivey 2012, 142). Folk and traditional arts provide one vehicle for this expression of heritage, coupled with a personal aesthetic and creative impulse.

In the upcoming months, as Congress debates the proposed FY2016 budget, I urge you to contact your local congressman to express your support for arts and culture. Your support matters.

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**Source:** Ivey, Bill. 2012. *Handmaking America: A Back-to-Basics Pathway to a Revitalized American Democracy*. Berkeley: Counterpoint.

## From the Editor



My brother Mark surprised me in early November with a request for his birthday. He wanted to come up from New York City to visit grave sites of our father's ancestors found on both sides of the upper Hudson River. He thought it was fitting, given his birthday's proximity to *Día de los Muertos*, the Mexican celebration, Day of the Dead.

This was not a typical request. There had been no such visits within our immediate family. We were taught that loved ones were not found at the grave; these contained only earthly remains, and reunions would take place in the afterlife, in heaven.

Nonetheless, I could easily fulfill Mark's request. As the family historian living in the upper Hudson Valley for almost 30 years, I had tracked down many generations of my father's family who lived here since before the American Revolution. We could spend many hours visiting a dizzying number of small plots with headstones bearing the names of DeGarmo, Ham, Spicer, Angel, Sprague, Sutfin, and so on. After all, as you trace your lineage back through the generations, you add the family of each mother and acknowledge another bloodline. If we wanted to be inclusive, this could be a long visit.

We had an interesting day, touring the countryside, visiting a select number of graveyards and house sites in our quest for ancestors. That evening, I posted on Facebook, "Celebrating family, birthdays, and *Día de los Muertos* with Mark DeGarmo," and included a photo of Mark embracing a family headstone where my dad, his brother, and their parents are buried.

*continued on page 2*

*"There are those who identify themselves as part of a tradition or heritage that their families have not been a part of for long because it suits their personal interests and the way they wish to express their own self-identity."*

—Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens. 2005. *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, p. 44.





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Cover: We remember Yacub Addy, Ghanaian drum master from Latham, New York, and 2010 NEA Heritage Fellow. See p. 31.

## From the Editor (continued)

Among the “likes” and assorted supportive comments to my post was the question, “Are you Hispanic?”

This seemingly innocent question brought me back to school-age questions of nationality, and ultimately, identity. Are you Italian? Maybe, Spanish? “No,” I would reply, “DeGarmo” comes from a ‘de Garmeaux’ with a castle in Brittany, and that our first ancestor in this country was Pierre, a fur trader who left some debts behind in Montreal.” I was pleased to be connected to this “vagabond” and his French nobility. I readily claimed my French heritage and still do. This identity, however, doesn’t match the genetics. Pierre married a Dutch woman in late 17th-century colonial Albany, and his descendants married many different nationalities over the generations. Though my surname is a reminder, the French has become a very diluted portion of my bloodline.

Borden is my mother’s maiden name, tracing back to an English ancestor who came to this country, also during the colonial period, marrying into German, Swedish and many other nationalities over the generations. When asked about his ancestry, my mother’s father, called “Pop” by his grandchildren, would reply with pride, “We’re mutts, American Mutts, a blend of many nationalities; no purebreds here!”

Pop would follow up with a story from the early 20th century, from the time he was courting his wife-to-be, Bessie McDowell. Sitting in the parlor of his future mother-in-law, he was told by Bessie’s mother, “Our family came over on the *Mayflower*. What about your family?” Without missing a beat, he replied, “My family heard that there were a bunch of ruffians aboard the *Mayflower*, so they waited for the next boat.”

McDowell is Scots-Irish. One or more of this family’s ancestral lines can be traced back to the group on the *Mayflower* and other New England cultural hearths, but the McDowells themselves arrived a bit later. This line of the family also had later immigrants added to the mix: folks from Norway and Ireland in the mid-19th century. Although my great-grandmother felt a need to identify with one

of the oldest lines instead of the newer additions, it’s interesting to note that her daughter (my Grandma Bessie) was quite proud of her Scots-Irish heritage, proclaiming, “We’re a frugal and hearty stock!”

Although my family ancestry can be called “American Mutt,” I continue my search to rediscover the journeys and interesting stories of our multiple bloodlines, and seek to discover how these contribute to the family we are today.

“Are you Hispanic?” I did celebrate *Día de los Muertos* with Mark that day, but I do not claim “Hispanic” as a bloodline or an identity. But surely Mark does. When he called me with his birthday request, he had just gotten back from Mexico. His life and work has many special connections to Mexico and Latin America, as an artist, teacher, and adopted son. On this most recent visit, he celebrated a wedding as a witness and special guest of the Velasco family who had “adopted” both he and his husband Jan in the 1970s. They identify Mark and Jan as family, with open-armed hospitality and love.

My brother-in-law Jan responded to the Facebook question: “Should it be called the Day of the Dead or also the Day of the Living? If it helps us appreciate what we have and where and whom we come from. Tombstones always make me think, “They’re there and they’re not there.””

Bloodlines can be important but are certainly not the end-all in determining family identity. Mark’s celebration of *Día de los Muertos* in the graveyards of upstate New York is a natural extension of this identity with his adopted Mexican family. As with all of us, it is but one of many family identities he claims. Family histories are often more complicated than at first glance. Teasing out the details of stories of identity requires careful search and careful listening to all the parties involved, both the dead and the living.

Todd DeGarmo

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# *In Her Own Words:* The Story of Alice Testrake

COLLECTED AND ILLUSTRATED BY VALERIE WALAWENDER

*These stories were told by Alice Testrake at her home in Ripley, NY, in the winter of 2013–2014. Family members were sometimes present. The stories were collected and illustrated by Art Facilitator Valerie Walawender, MA, as part of Hospice of Chautauqua County’s Art Enrichment Program.*

## **My Early Years**

*Alice:* I was born in Coder, PA, at my grandparents’ place on May 20, 1924. Of course, I don’t have memories of my first few years. I knew my grandparents. I had a great-grandmother I knew real well. We just called her Grandma. My great-grandmother was my dad’s grandmother. We’d go to her house in the fall, just about every fall.

It was her birthday. She liked to eat. Everybody took a dish to pass. I think we had to go to Oil City. The sun was shining real nice one day. We were on her porch. I had an uncle. Uncle John. Someone had a magnifying glass. (While he slept) any one of the kids held a magnifying glass over his bottom. He got burnt. He was “hot”—a little bit perturbed. When we were young we didn’t have all this—video games. . . . We had to make our own fun.

I had a sister older and a sister younger. I got my oldest sister in trouble when I was in high school. My uncle played football. The people in high school thought we were twins (my oldest sister and me). Virginia (my sister) didn’t like it. One day the coach came up to me and asked me, “Where’s your brother?” I told him that John was not my brother. He’s that other Carnes girl’s brother. She got mad because I had said Uncle John was her



Portrait of Alice Testrake, 2014. Photo by Valerie Walawender.

brother, not mine. So he got in trouble for not being in school. Uncle John was just two years older than we were.

Virginia was my oldest sister. Maxine was the youngest. There were three boys: Jim, Henry, and Bob. I was second. I just had a sister younger than me. My brother Bob is 10–11 years younger than me.

My grandfather, their name was McAfoos. He was my mother’s father. He liked to go hunting. He’d go hunting on his deathbed, I think. He chewed tobacco.

*Paula (Alice’s daughter-in-law):* That’s why they called him “Tobacco Juice.” Ron used to tell me that.



*Alice:* My grandfather always made our skis for us in the winter. We had dozens of cousins. He made a sled for us. There was a “crick” just down below the house. He always had a swimming hole. He’d clean it out to make the swimming hole.

He was a farmer. Back then they grew wheat, hay, corn, and oats to feed the animals. They had two horses. Sometimes they had three or four cows. They had pigs, chickens. Cats were in the barn. For some reason, they never had a dog.

Walter and Loretta, my aunt and uncle, never had a dog either. They’d let the horses out. There was a watering trough in the woods. You’d let the horses out. They’d have to go as far in the woods for the watering trough, as far as Myra’s, the first house up the road. They’d go out and drink and come back. Nobody went with them. The cows, they’d always have to have somebody with them. You’d put a rope on them and lead them out. The watering trough never froze in the winter. The crick always froze in the winter.

My grandmother’s name was Louisa Hice. My grandmother always wore an apron. She’d always say, “If your nose is clean, you can come in.” One day the pastor came. She never looked. She was busy. It didn’t bother her. She was surprised it was the preacher.

She was right out with the boys. She made things for Halloween. Coder School was, half of it was my relations. She made a list of things you had to hunt for the scavenger hunt for Halloween. She made cookies for Christmas. We had cookies galore. Molasses. Sugar.

When it came to butchering, she’d help butcher the pig. They made their homemade whatever. They called it liverwurst then. You could have it in a sandwich. You could just have it on a plate. I don’t know what it was made of, but it was delicious.

*Paula:* Your grandma was Louisa. Your middle name is Louise. I put two and two together and realized you were named after your grandmother.

*Alice:* I am also named after my mother’s aunt. Mom had an Aunt Alice. She’d be my great aunt. My father was a farmer and drove truck for the highway department. My mother kept house. She had six kids.

I’d have to walk to school. One mile to the one-room schoolhouse. Three miles to the high school. You always wore a dress when you went to high school. You could wear anything when you went to Coder School. Nothing much happened in high school.

## The “Hoopie”

*Alice:* When I was in high school, my uncles, they wanted a tractor. They didn’t have money for a tractor, so they made one out of an old car. They called it a hoopie. And that’s what I learned to drive on, a hoopie. They took all the sides off and the roof. We had a lot of fun learning how to drive a hoopie.

The farmers got tired of using horses, so they made a “hoopie.” They made them out of old cars. Usually a small car. A big car would be too big to put in the cornfield. A hoopie is an old car. They took the sides and top off to make it just like a frame. You had the seats, two seats. My uncles made the one I drove because they couldn’t afford a tractor.

## After High School

*Alice:* After I graduated, I went to Erie to work with one of the girls I graduated with. One friend and I came to Erie, and

we both worked at Lord’s. I don’t know what they made. It was during the war years, and everything was top secret. We rented a place there. The place we rented was from her sister. Then she got married and moved out. I found another place from my Italian landlady. She made her own spaghetti and sauce. It was really delicious. She was a good cook. I had my own apartment in Erie. And it was closer to work. I worked at Lord’s. When working there, a bunch of us girls got acquainted. We worked in the same department. Thirteen of us girls decided we wanted to rent a cottage out by the beach. Three bedrooms, one bath. That was a lot of fun, because if one of us wanted to take a shower, you just took a bath in a rinse tub. After work, there was a beach between us and the lake. We still snuck down and went in the lake. We all worked the second shift. We had to work 4:00 to midnight. We didn’t fuss too much with our hair. We hung out on the beach. One day, we all went into town on a bus and went to a movie.

There was Dorothy and Betty and Esther and Doris and Eva and Marilyn. Oh! I can’t think of any more.

That was my first experience with drinking and smoking. It didn’t last long for me. On the wharf, Betty and I’d both take a swig of beer and throw up. We decided that wasn’t for us. Smoking only lasted three days. I couldn’t stand it.

It was a lot of fun. One day we called



“The Hoopie.” Illustration by Valerie Walawender.



"The Grapes." Illustration by Valerie Walawender.

in sick. We told the nurse we had food poisoning. We knew the nurse. She told us we needed a doctor's permit.

### Meeting My Husband

*Alice:* I met my husband in the grapes. I came down with his sister one weekend. They were picking grapes. He was there to help pick grapes. He was on leave from the army for a week or two. I just thought he was just another man. I guess I would have been 20 when I first met him. We started going out. I don't remember how he asked for our first date. I guess it wasn't very impressive.

My uncles were still calling me "Tommy" when I got married, because they thought I was a "Tomboy." Uncle Russel, Uncle Howard, Uncle Walter. They were my mother's brothers. They were all McAfoos. We got along. Everybody pitched in to help. None of them farmed. Russel worked in a factory in Ohio. Howard worked in a service station. Walter—I don't remember what he did do.

When we dated, Carl and I, we'd go to a movie. You went uptown where that place is covered with plastic, near the library. That used to be a restaurant. You'd go there and have a hamburger or a bowl of chili.

He would have been 33. He was 13 years older than me. He had to milk the cow. If he didn't like it, we could get rid of the cow, and we could buy milk.

We got married when he was on leave.

I got married in '45. I was 21. I was married twice in the same day. We got mixed up. We were going to get married at the church in Erie. My husband, he got the marriage license here in Ripley. So we had to get married before noon in Ripley and after noon in Erie. I had my long gown for the second (ceremony). I had my suit on for the first one.

We had a small reception at his sister's house in Erie. Then we went to Niagara Falls. We spent two days and two nights. His sister was Gertrude. The lady where I stayed, her daughter gave me slippers for "something borrowed." The lady I rented from, she gave me a hankie that was "new." We had finger sandwiches and cake, because that was when everything was rationed out. We went to Niagara Falls that evening.

We rode on the *Maid of the Mist*. We toured around Buffalo. He was in the service yet then. He had to go back to California the day we got back from our honeymoon. He was discharged the first of the next year, the first of '46. I moved back down with my folks till he got back. We wrote letters back and forth. The letters were all about the same, the news of the day. There are none left. I'm not one to keep stuff, I guess.

I quit working when I got married. When he moved back, we moved in with his parents because he had to help with the grapes. I got along well with his sisters.

### The Older Generation

*Alice:* We were married five years before we had any kids—before Tom was born. When Tom was born, Carl's mother (Della) was in bed, so I had two to take care of. She didn't get out of bed. She died in bed. In 1950. She'd seen her grandson Tom born. She was in her late 70s. We had the funeral. We went on like before. It was still hard. We made it through. When I had my baby and Carl's mother to take care of, I thought, "It had to be done," so that was it. Of course, Carl's father was a big help. I didn't have to peel potatoes or shell beans or shell peas. He did that. I don't know how to explain it. To me, something that had to be done, you just did it.

Carl's father lived with us after his mother died. Carl worked the farm and drove bus, and his dad was getting up there. We had a grape farm. My husband drove school bus for 20 some years.

His dad would farm with a horse. His dad wouldn't drive a tractor. He took me to Home Bureau lots of times and would



Portrait of Carl and Alice Testrake on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary in 1995. Courtesy of Alice Testrake.



Alice Testrake's parents, Frank Carnes and Iva (McAfoos) Carnes. Courtesy of Alice Testrake.



Alice Testrake's mother-in-law and father-in-law, John and Della Testrake (Carl's parents). Courtesy of Alice Testrake.

pick me up. The Home Bureau, it was like Farm Bureau, but for the women. Men joined the Farm Bureau to learn agriculture. The Home Bureau was for women to learn cooking, sewing, and crafts. We did caning and knitting. We made tree skirts. I made a baby's yellow sweater set and a fake fur rabbit for Easter and a sock rabbit. We made the clothes for it. We made a big doll. We made baskets and macramé. I made a big Santa Claus. My grandson liked it so I gave it to him.

I was offered \$200 for that picture up there [Alice points to the "Woodland picture" on her wall that she made at the Home Bureau], but I could never part with it. We had to go to the beach to gather driftwood. The pictures weren't all the same. The moss was green when it was put on there. It's just made of everything you gathered outside, except there's a deer, squirrel and a bird, a little dog. I think there might be a goat. The building is made out of grapevines. There are acorns, pinecones, fungus that you get off dead trees. That was there the year you [Pat] and Cheryl graduated from high school. When was that? '74. That's how long that picture has been hanging there.

Carl's father (John Testrake) died when Ron was a baby in '57. Ron was my fourth child, when their grandfather died. He was 90 when he died.

My parents lived down in Brookville. They didn't live here. I had Tom, Bob, and Pat and Ron before Carl's father died. Ron was 3-4

weeks old when his grandfather died. I had good help with everything. His daughters would come to take care of him and stay with him if I had someplace I wanted to go. I still belonged to Home Bureau at that time. They'd come and stay with him, so I could go to the grocery store. Things like that. They would look after their dad.

### The Kids

*Alice:* We took that trip out west. Pat would have been a year and a half old. We went in '58. August. Tom would have been eight. Bob would have been six. Ron would have been about nine months. He wasn't that hard to take care of.

### Tom

*Alice:* Tom was raised mostly by his granddad. His granddad worked in the grapes and garden. He made a little hoe for Tom. I always said he was raised by his granddad. He followed his granddad.

### Bob

*Alice:* Bob was a devil. I'll admit to that. He's probably listening, thinking that's not something you tell people. He decided one day he would go out on the highway with his little trucks and cars. Pretty soon, we heard cars honking and screeching. We looked out. There was Bob. He figured he could run his cars and truck on the yellow line because the others weren't using it. That's the last time he did that. We didn't paddle

or anything. We just told him that's not a safe place to play.

### Ron

*Alice:* Ron and Bob were instigators. Ron still is an instigator. He's worked at G.E. for 30 some odd years. He was a little over two years old before he got his hair cut. He had long curls, and everybody thought he was a girl, so we decided to get his hair cut. His favorite food was warmed up potato soup. He still really likes potato soup. He'd come up with mischievous. He made up the trails in the locust patch for his homemade go-cart. He was probably around 15. He was a mischief maker.

### Pat, Hog-Tied

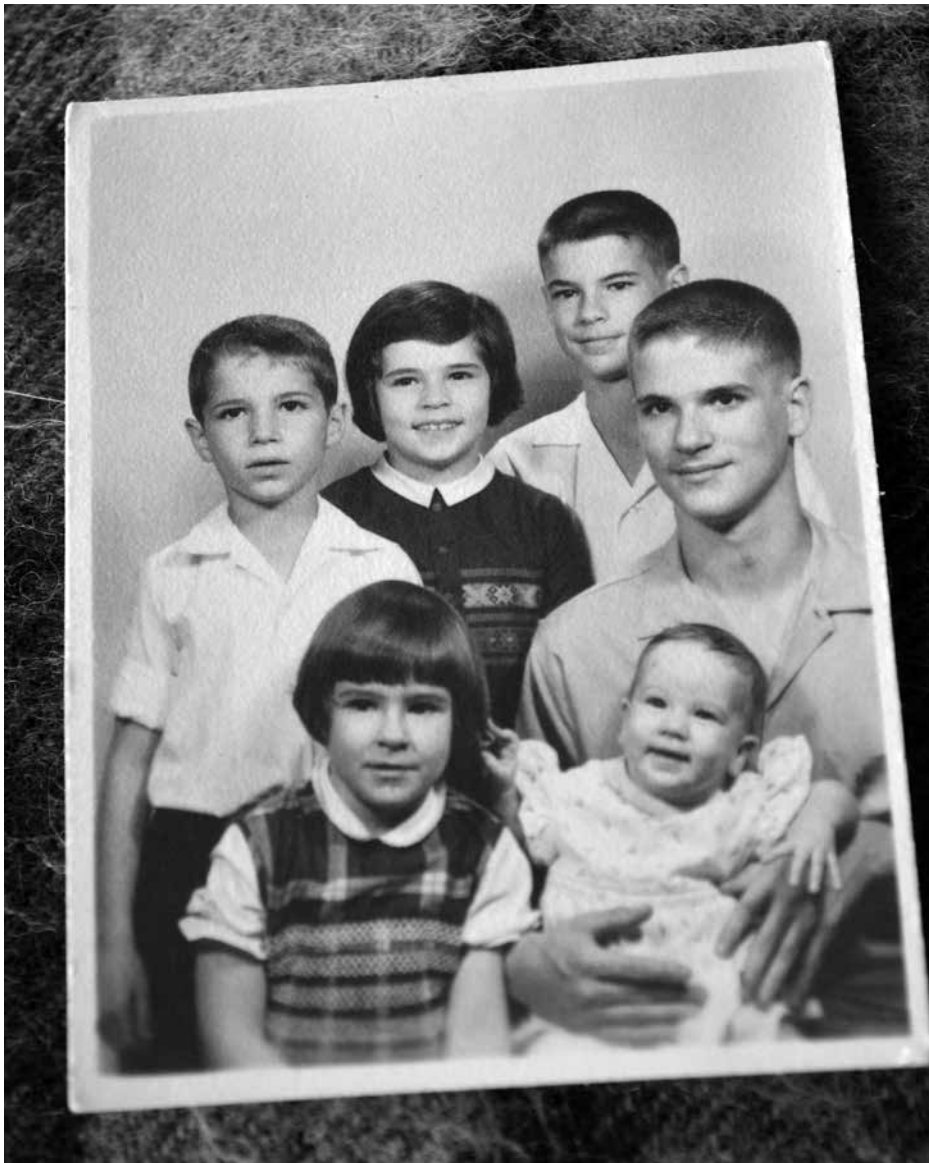
*Alice:* We tied Pat up when she was born, to a tree, with a rope around her waist. People thought that was cruel. I said, "You may think that is cruel, but what if that was your daughter who got out in the road near the trucks?" We tied her to something back by the house.

*Pat:* "Yup, I was hog-tied."

### One Christmas

*Alice:* One year, we got the kids up on Christmas to go to Brookville to visit their grandparents. We had their presents all wrapped in the back of the station wagon. The first one got sick. It wasn't two minutes, the next one was sick, Then another one and another. They all said they were sick. They





Alice Testrake's children 1964: left to right, front row, Darlene, Pam; second row, Ron, Pat, Bob, and Tom. Courtesy of Alice Testrake.

were pretending. When we got back home, nobody was sick. So that's the last time we ever tried to go to Brookville on Christmas.

*Pat:* Your gifts are in the back and you can't touch them. It was torture. They didn't think that through very good.

### **Pam and Darlene**

*Alice:* Pam was born. Darlene would pick flowers and bring them in. She'd put them in the crib where Pam was. Pam was allergic to all those flowers. Pam couldn't breathe. After 3–4 times, the doctor said, "Are you doing anything different?" Then I thought of the flowers.

### **Pat's Memories of "Sullivan"**

*Pat:* My memories center mostly around the farm. We'd make our own games. We'd play cowboy and Indians. Climb the apple trees. Throwing green apples.

We'd get rotten tomatoes. We'd put those on the end of a stick and whip those at the barn, trying to hit the barn.

Sledding. We'd start up on the thruway bridge on Wiley Road. We'd slide all the way down to Route 5. It was a half mile. They made their own roads among the apple orchard.

The favorite game we'd play, and the kids still play, the grandkids even play, is

"Sullivan." In Sullivan you start in the front yard with a Frisbee or football and you'd throw it or kick it to Sullivan's, which is the next place over. You'd have to go through the apple orchard and the grape vineyard, and the woods. That made it hard when you had to go through the woods. And then you'd end up in Sullivan's backyard. But they were never there. They lived in Erie. They used it as a summer place. That was basically Sullivan. Whoever was the closest to the correct number of throws won the game. The correct number was somewhere between 75 and 100. We played Sullivan all the way from my brother's house to here. I don't know how many throws that was. We had to cross the thruway. Both Paula and Cindy were pregnant at the time. Did we ever get in trouble for doing this?

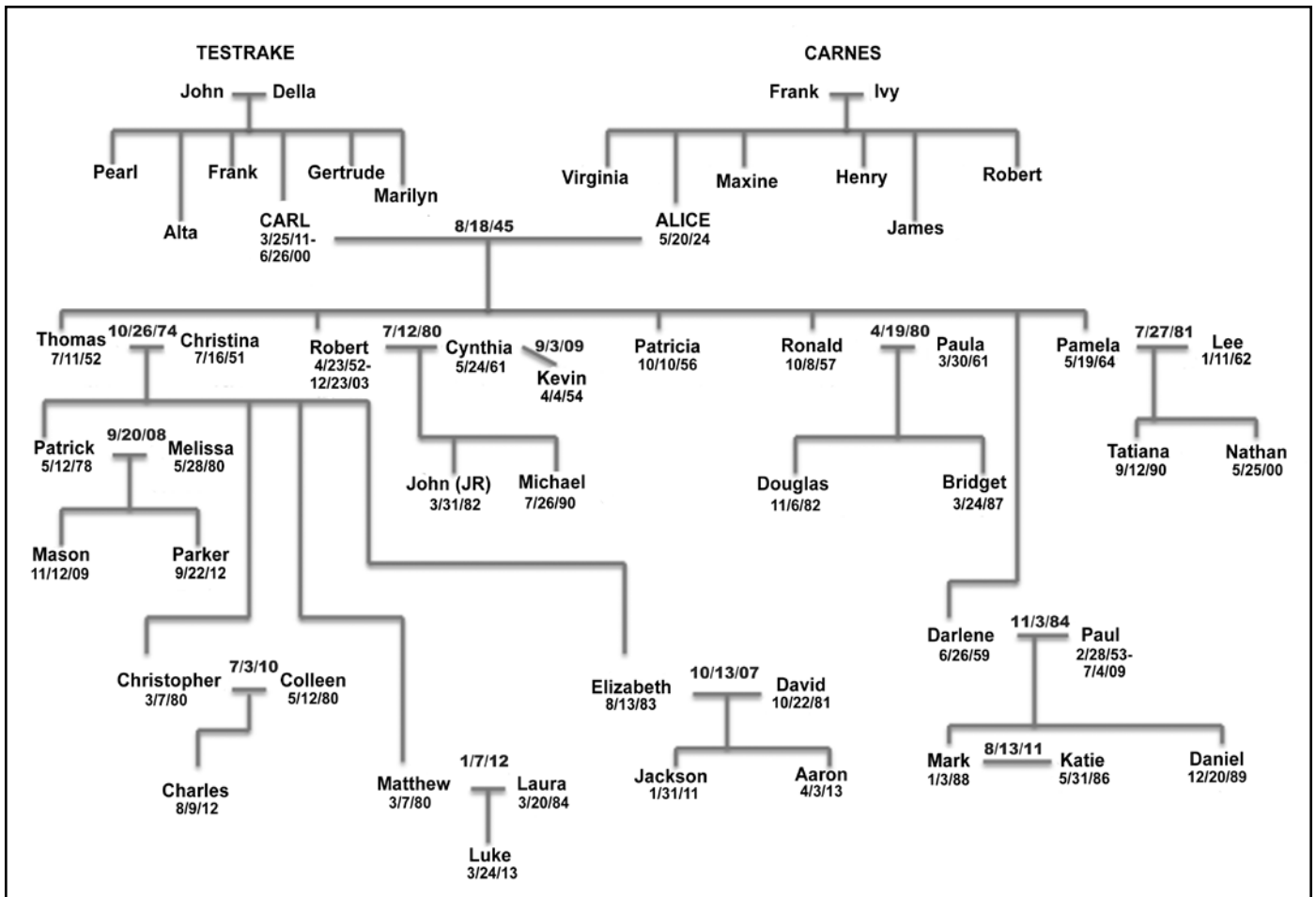
### **Trip Out West**

*Alice:* We were watching Disney World on TV. When the kids got up the next morning, they wanted to know why they couldn't go to Disney. They didn't know it was on the other side of the country. We got to talking about it. We hadn't had a vacation. We talked to the doctor because Ron wasn't that old. He told us to take disposable diapers. He gave us medicine.

Before we went to California, we stopped at John Testrake's on the way out. On the way back, we stopped at Brookville before we ended up home.

We took off to California. We bought a tent, propane stove, and air mattresses. We went in August. We pitched a tent every night but two. We stayed with Aunt Maxine. We went to the Pacific Ocean. The kids went in, but not me. We went to all the National Parks. Grand Canyon. Bryce Canyon. Yellowstone. Big Redwoods. Hoover Dam. We went to the Badlands. Salt Lake Desert. Death Valley. The High Sierras. Petrified Forest. We stopped at Mount Rushmore. We stopped at Carl's father's half sister's. We stopped at my uncle[s] and my aunt [s] in Cincinnati.

[The trip was] about four, four and a half weeks. We could stay in those national parks. Now you have to wait years to get a reservation.



Alice's Family Tree. Compiled by Pat Testrake. Courtesy of Alice Testrake.

## The Grape Tour—'81 or '82

*Alice:* The only thing next I know, we took the grape tour. We flew to Vancouver. We saw all the grapes. We got on a bus. We went to the state of Washington. We flew to California. I saw the Golden Gate Bridge from above and crossed it, then saw it from below. Ron drove us to Fredonia. We met the other people who were going on the bus tour.

## A Trip to Holland—'85

*Alice:* My father-in-law, John Testrake, was from Holland. Winterswijk was the name of the town. He came to the US in 1886. He didn't know any language except his native Holland [Dutch]. Carl wanted to go and see where his father was born and raised. That's where we went for our 40th anniversary. We were gone for two weeks. We saw the house where his dad was born and raised. The houses were different from the houses here. Some of them had barns right with the house.

We were married in '45. Went to Holland in '85. Doug (Paula's son) would have been three. Doug was in the picture.

## Alice the Adventurer—Wish List

*Alice:* When I was going to high school, everybody was saying they wanted this and wanted that, so I made a wish list. I think you remember what you wished for.

My wish list consisted of a hot air balloon ride, white water rafting, and Alaska.

I took the hot air balloon ride in 1997. I did white water rafting in 1999. I went to Alaska two times. The first trip was 2001. The second time was in 2004, after we lost Bob.

I went to Canada and New England on a cruise in 2011.

We could talk to people on the ground from the hot air balloon. The hot air balloon was fantastic. You could see the animals run in the cornfields. We didn't go over water. He

wouldn't go. There's spotters that go along. They went in a car with a trailer in the back, to take the hot air balloon.

The white water rafting was fantastic. Because I went with my son and grandson. I fell out. They got me back in. Doug fell out and got back in. We had hot dogs. They were delicious. We had to carry the raft to where the starting place was.

I said, you raise a family, you couldn't do all that stuff. Six kids.

The next thing was my first trip to Alaska. I went with the Shriners. They were trying to get enough people to make a good showing. We went to Pittsburgh. We flew from there to Vancouver. That's where we got on the boat. They would sail at night and pull into ports in the daytime.

Ketchikan. We made a stop there. Seven days on boat, three or four on land. When we pulled in ports. In the morning, there were tours. I took about three.



You could go swimming. They had a library. They had where you could play cards or games. We could watch the ice floes, glaciers. Boy, would it make a noise when it would crack and fall in the water! We saw whales and all kinds of seals. In the main lobby, they had all kinds of things out of ice. People showed how they made things out of ice sculptures.

We landed in Fairbanks. The big park Denali. Mount McKinley is in the National Park.

In Alaska, we went to the park. When we went there the first time. On the north side, you could see those goats. I thought they were goats. They were white. They had real big mosquitoes. The second trip was more fun than the first one. I saw more things. I took the second trip two or three years

later. Pat and my friend, Rose. We flew out to Vancouver. We took the boat out there. We went to Ketchikan, Juno, Seward, and Skagway.

They took us in by a salmon factory. They canned salmon like you'd buy in the store. There was a great big salmon factory. I never saw such big salmon. The salmon place was right there.



Alice holding a photo of herself as a young woman. Photo by Valerie Walawender.



Alice and 10 of her family members went ziplining on October 18, 2014. Her son, Ron is with her on the ride down. One of the workers told the family that Alice was the oldest to go down the zipline. Her daughter, Pat, reported that Alice had so much fun, with the biggest grin on her face throughout the zip, that Alice said she wants to do it again early next summer, before it gets too hot to climb the steps. Photos courtesy of Alice Testrake.

We went on the train down in their gold mine. They let us pan for gold. Nobody got much. I guess they weren't going to let us take much of their gold. We took a boat ride. It went around to different places. We saw where they catch the fish. The people would do their own salmon. Catch them, clean them, and hang them up to dry.

We saw where the lady had dog sleds. She had the dogs, too. In the summertime, they still have them. In the summertime, they pulled sleds with wheels. They took care of their dogs, just like they were people.

We saw the Alaska pipeline. All you saw was the pipes as far as you could see. Both ways. They were real big.

They had those big cabbages. They were planted in boxes on street corners. There was a vine growing. In the center were those big cabbages. They were big as bushel baskets.

We went into a restaurant. That's where they had that big dahlia. It was over six feet tall. It was bigger around than a dinner plate. They had real nice flowers.

It was daylight all the time. I said you can take pictures at night.

On that boat, everything was chocolate.

We had entertainment. They had movies, floor shows, singing, and dancing.

I done the rock climbing on the boat. I started up. When I was about two-thirds of the way up, I lost hold of one of the rocks. I've had my experience. When I got to the bottom, some young man came up and said, "I hope I'm as agile as you are when I'm 80!"

We had to fly back home.

Since then, I did take another cruise. Boston to Nova Scotia. We stopped and saw the wild huckleberries. The tame ones are blueberries. We stopped in one restaurant and had huckleberries pie. We stopped in ports. We got to Nova Scotia. It was nice up there. Their houses were built a long time ago, and they kept them up. They had big rocks.

I didn't like the train ride from Erie to



Alice Testrake, white-water rafting, age 75. Courtesy of Alice Testrake.





Alice Testrake tubing on Lake Erie at about age 75. Courtesy of Alice Testrake.

Boston and back. I was on it a long time. There was a place you could eat. It was too long, especially after flying places.

That trip was two or three years ago.

### These Days

Update from Valerie Walawender: *Alice “graduated” from Hospice in May 2014 (her prognosis improved so much that she no longer qualified for Hospice Services). I can’t help but think that her zest for life has had so much to do with her improved condition. She provided*

*the following update on her life at 90 on October 11, 2014:*

Lately, I’ve been to Olean. I’ve been up to Erie. I’ve been to Kevin and Cindy’s. If they have too many steps, it’s too hard for me to go up. Kevin was there to help me. I’ve been to Brookville to see my brother. I go out to eat quite a bit. I do some cooking. I peel the apples for apple pie. I get my own breakfast and my own lunch, and start supper. Sometimes I have two or three great-

grandsons that come. They have a ball here, because they get to run. They have room to run. The kids’ toys are back out again. We put them away, and now they’re back out. That’s the first place the boys go, is to the toys. I’m trying to get back into things. I’m going to go “zip-lining” at Peak ‘n Peak on October 18th. I graduated from Hospice in May (2014). It was before my birthday. There was 78 people here [when] I turned 90. They all said they were coming back in 10 years. My neighbors keep pretty close watch over me.

I don’t go to the bank anymore. Pat does my banking. ▼

Valerie Walawender, MA, is Interim Curator of Folk Arts at Castellani Art Museum at Niagara University and instructor of folk arts at the university. Walawender also leads the Art Enrichment program for Hospice of Chautauqua County, working with patients and their families as an art facilitator. Awarded a patent and accolades for her diversity and violence prevention tool and methodology, Walawender’s Faces in the Crowd Program has been endorsed and adopted by the M. K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence. Walawender’s MA degree in Liberal Studies from Empire State College was focused on folk art, community documentation, and the development of art-based tools and methodologies to assist people who have experienced trauma. For her BFA degree from Florida International University, she focused on documentary photography. She lives in Western New York with her husband. They have two adult sons.

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# An Open Invitation To My Downstate Friends

BY VARICK A. CHITTENDEN

“Get Outta Town!” the ads around Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan have screamed. To New Yorkers of the five boroughs (and maybe a little beyond), the recent message has been clear. For a couple of years now, a big focus for tourism in New York State—at the behest of our current Governor Cuomo—has been to get people of The City and close environs to vacation Upstate. Posters in city buses try to catch riders’ attention with photos of exciting things to see or do north of Yankee Stadium. TV and radio spots with voiceovers by well-known New Yorkers urge city dwellers and suburbanites to think of the Hudson Valley, the Finger

Lakes, or the Adirondacks when they’re looking for a weekend—or a week-long—getaway. For a short time, even some cars on the 42nd Street crosstown shuttle were wrapped with dramatic images of hikers or snowboarders and a call to take advantage of Upstate assets for recreation and relaxation.

Actually, this is hardly a new idea. While lecturing to city folks in Boston and Connecticut in the 1860s about the health-enhancing, spirit-reviving values of travel to the Great North Woods, Rev. W. H. Murray became a household name—“Adirondack Murray”—to urban dwellers. His book, *Adventures in the Wilderness, or,*

*Camp-Life in the Adirondacks* went through eight printings in 1869, its first year. Realizing its value as a tourist’s guide, Murray’s later editions included maps of the region and train schedules from various Eastern cities to places like Lake George, Old Forge, and Saranac Lake. An amazing flurry of activity in these isolated areas occurred; railroad and steamboat access deep into the wilderness was created to accommodate the sudden demand; scores of rustic Great Camps and upscale resorts were constructed in the wilds to appeal to people who were not quite used to living like Adirondackers; and a regional industry of hunting and fishing guides, camp



People eating bullheads at the annual Brier Hill Bullhead Feed in the local fire station, spring 2009. Photo by Varick Chittenden. All photos courtesy of the Traditional Arts in Upstate New York (TAUNY) Archives.





Volunteer firemen cutting blocks of ice from Crystal Pond, New Bremen, for the annual ice harvest, winter 2004. Photo by Martha Cooper.

caretakers and cooks, guideboat and canoe builders, tourist cabin and small hotel owners was born.

In the same era, vacationers from The City—especially the more prosperous kind—found their way to various parts of Upstate to vacation. Seasonal homes were built in the Hudson Valley, a short train ride from Grand Central Station. Ethnic resorts and hotels, catering to the Irish, Germans, Czechs, and Italians, prospered as did, of course, the much-celebrated Jewish destinations to “the Borscht Belt” in the Catskills. Niagara Falls for honeymoons, wineries and TB-cure resorts in the Finger Lakes, religious retreats like the Chautauqua Institution and Lily Dale—all these and more have had their days as popular destinations away from city life. Some are still doing well; some are long gone.

Promoting travel to “the provinces” is not a new idea, either. Who doesn’t recognize the iconic “I Love New York” logo—complete with the red heart symbol—that was created

by graphic artist Milton Glaser for a state-funded ad campaign in 1977, to promote tourism to New York City? Soon after, came the song “I Love New York,” and within a couple of years Governor Hugh Carey declared it New York State’s anthem. By that time the program and funds to support it were increased to attract tourists to all parts of the state.

In the years since—including the current TV ad series that run frequently—the usual emphasis has been recreation in the Great Outdoors. Exciting video of happy people in inflated rafts crashing through white water in the upper Hudson near North Creek, seniors and teenagers racing down the slopes of Whiteface Mountain on skis or snowboards, anglers standing hip deep in Catskill streams and casting for trout, or families cycling around breathtaking waterfalls in Letchworth State Park—all provide the clarion call for tourists to jump in their Volvos or minivans and head upstate. It’s Adirondack Murray all over again, 21st-century style.

There’s no question that Upstate has some of the most varied, beautiful, and compelling landscapes in all of America, (including the largest public park and the largest state-protected area in the contiguous United States, with a longstanding commitment to remain “forever wild”). There are lots of good reasons for visitors, whose daily drama comes from subway rides at rush hour or hearing sirens screaming through the neighborhood in pursuit of miscreants on the loose, to take to the woods.

Just as those of us who live up north like to protest that “there’s more to New York than New York City,” I like to say there’s more to Upstate than wild rivers and rugged mountain peaks. There’s plenty going on culturally as well. In fairness to the TV ads, they’ve recently featured some big names, like the Glimmerglass Opera and the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, Proctors Theater in Schenectady, FDR’s home in Hyde Park, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, or the National



Clay Ferguson and Jim Brabant, veteran 1000 Islands fishing guides in their shared boathouse in French Creek Bay, Clayton, summer 2010. Photo by Martha Cooper.

Museum of Play in Rochester. These are only a few of the great cultural institutions in Upstate; I love them all.

But the folklorist in me thinks *Voices* readers will be interested in other possibilities as well. I'm reminded of a visit to the North Country in the late 1970s by David Whisnant, a Maryland-based folklorist who'd been sent by the Folk Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to audit our first folklife festival. It had been carefully planned for the campus of SUNY Canton, where I taught at the time, with

plenty of spaces, parking, and volunteers for a good festival. Typical of other festivals we had observed, we had gone to great lengths to bring together musicians, dancers, craftspeople, ethnic cooks, an auctioneer, logging crews—you name it, we had it. The event was a big success with our public.

However, Whisnant followed his visit with a lengthy and rather stinging written review of our project that he later sent to us and to the NEA. According to him, as festivals go, we had done a good job, but his general impression was that such events provided an

artificial context for real folk activities and were not be encouraged. Greek cooks making baklava in a college gym, square dancing with old-time fiddlers in a courtyard surrounded by classroom buildings, or a country auctioneer selling random goods on a carefully groomed football field were hardly natural and usual. He pointed out that during his stay he'd stopped in several places—the local post office, a grocery store, a feed store, a convenience store—where bulletin boards were covered with posters and notices, often handmade, announcing music and dances, church suppers, ball games, fishing derbies, winter carnivals, fundraisers (and lots more), in the small towns and hamlets scattered throughout the St. Lawrence Valley. All these things were going on where people lived, worked, entertained themselves, and did things for each other. It was a good point. None of these things required a curator or a choreographer (or folklorists) to plan or carry them off; they didn't have or need ad agencies or celebrity spokespersons to draw a crowd. These were homemade community events, many of them traditional for generations, so who better knows how they should be done?

I agree in principle with Whisnant's opinion. These are social gatherings that bring rural people together in ways more common to their grandparents' time; they preserve some sense of community identity when outside forces chip away at it on a regular basis; they give elders ways to introduce children and grandchildren to the values of being a member of a community; and often they raise money to help local causes do much needed good. Being present when and where such things are really occurring, rather than where they may be recreated for the convenience of the public, can be a much richer experience for any visitor, whether she is from the community and knows what to expect, or if he's never been there or seen anything like it before.

All parts of Upstate have events like these. Because I'm most familiar with the North Country, I'd like to share some examples we have. Some are more organized than others; some have a long history and, while intended





Santa Claus and elves dance and sing in front of Santa's house at Santa's Workshop, Wilmington, summer 2003. Photo by Martha Cooper.

mainly for fun and excitement at home, are welcoming of visitors, including tourists, to join in. I think of pancake breakfasts during maple syrup season, fish fries during Lent, chicken barbecues all summer long, harvest dinners in the fall, and chicken and biscuit suppers and spaghetti dinners in the winter months. There are outdoor events all year long—maple festivals in the spring; firemen's field days, fireworks, parades, and county fairs in the summer; college homecomings and hunting club gatherings in the fall. Our long winters inspire everything from ice fishing derbies, polar bear dips, snowmobile races, and pond hockey to pass the time and recover from cabin fever. If you live here—or visit, like David Whisnant—you can check out bulletin boards to see what's up or you can check with local TV or radio stations for their community calendars. Today, however, even our smallest towns maintain websites and Facebook pages, so

there's little excuse not to keep informed.

After all my years here, I have some favorites that occur regularly, and really reflect important parts of our way of life. If you really want to *experience* some memorable times while you visit our region, I suggest you consider these for starters:

**The Brier Hill Fire Department Annual Bullhead Feed.** Bullhead are bottom-feeder fish in northern waters—similar to catfish. For centuries, locals have fished for them in early spring to feed their families. For decades, public suppers usually prepared by firemen's or veterans' groups are a rite of spring in many communities. In late April, the Brier Hill version, in northern St. Lawrence County is one of the oldest and typical, but nearly 1,000 people gather in the fire hall in the hamlet of 200 for all-you-can-eat. Someone local will surely help you figure out how to eat them, an interesting challenge.

**The Wilson Hill Goose Drive.** Since 1974, scores of volunteers—from elders to kids—gather in June in a colorful array of kayaks and canoes to assist Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) personnel round up several hundred Canada geese for banding and gender identification. At a time of year when the birds shed their feathers and can't fly, the task of herding them into holding pens along the St. Lawrence River near Massena is easier. It gets exciting when rogue birds get away, but being involved in good wildlife conservation practices is a pleasure to those who participate.

**Thousand Islands Guides and Shore Dinners.** If you want your turn at the very old tradition of “sports” going out with their personal guides for a day of fishing on the St. Lawrence River, this is the way to do it. “River rats”—local men who know the river well—hire out to take a party as large

as six or eight in pursuit of perch, bass, northern or walleye pike, or the biggest prize of all—a muskellunge. With well-equipped boats—some of them historic—it can be an exciting day on the water, often topped off with your guide preparing a complete shore dinner of the day’s catch and all the trimmings, including the celebrated “Thousand Islands French Toast” for dessert.

**Woodsmen’s Days.** To honor one of the North Country’s oldest and richest occupational traditions, for decades now woodsmen’s associations have turned work into play with festivals featuring competitions that test the skills of modern workers in cutting logs, throwing axes, climbing poles, and more. It’s also an occasion for manufacturers to display their newest equipment and for families to get a better idea of the difficulties and requirements for work in the woods. Weekend events in Tupper Lake in July and in Boonville in August are among the best known.

**The Hammond Fair.** Recently celebrating its 75th anniversary, this small town agricultural fall exhibition is meant for competitors under the age of 18 from area towns. With even the local school closed for the two-day event, it’s taken very seriously by the whole community in one of the best farming areas of the St. Lawrence Valley.

The entire event emulates an agricultural fair of the past, with cattle, sheep, goat, poultry, vegetables, fruit, and “domestic arts” competitions all produced by members of 4-H and FFA (Future Farmers of America) clubs.

**The Lowville Cream Cheese Festival.** Home of a Kraft cheese plant that produces all the famed Philadelphia brand cream cheese, local people organized this late September event to celebrate the product and agriculture in their area in the Black River Valley. It’s entirely for fun with Kraft employees making the world’s largest cheese-cake on a large wagon bed and giving out thousands of samples to visitors. There’s a milk tray relay race, a cream cheese toss, a kid’s hand milking contest, and lots more. TripAdvisor recently included the festival on their list of “wackiest in America.”

**Adirondack Canoe Classic [The 90 Miler].** This is a three-day, 90-mile long canoe race from Old Forge to Saranac Lake through the historic Fulton Chain of Lakes and more. What began in the early 1980s as a more local event has evolved into a well-known competition, drawing paddlers from all over the US and Canada. Limited to 250 boats, there are some professional paddlers, but the vast majority are recreational, some well into their 70s. It’s not uncommon for whole families to participate.

**The Edwards Opera House.** While opera houses—usually a combination of town offices, a theater with proscenium stage, and some small businesses—were often the centerpiece of late 19th-century North Country villages, most are gone now, the victim of fires or deterioration. The Edwards Opera House is an exception, having been restored with its original stage curtains and molded plywood seats, so an active schedule of programs keeps it thriving. Most events feature local theater or musicians or groups, with an occasional star—like Jay Ungar or Tom Rush—lighting up the tiny raked stage.

**Santa’s Workshop.** This is the only commercially operated place on my list, but it’s such a step back in time that it’s really worth a visit. Created in the late 1940s as what some call “the first theme park in America,” it’s barely changed in the decades since. Colorful chalet-like cottages dot the landscape at the base of Whiteface Mountain. A cast of playful characters, including a team of live reindeer, talking trees, elves, and of course, Santa and Mrs. Claus, play to children “who still believe,” as founder’s son Bob Reiss maintains. While open all summer, for several extra festive weekends in late November and December, the village welcomes families to stay in nearby lodging with all kinds of special holiday entertainment, including visits by Santa to tuck kids in at night.

**The New Bremen Ice Harvest.** Keeping alive an ancient tradition of harvesting blocks of ice from North Country ponds for refrigeration before electricity, the local volunteer fire department in this Lewis County hamlet cuts ice on Crystal Pond (usually in February, after several weeks of sub-zero temperatures), mostly for socializing and entertainment. It’s become a spectator activity, when men gathered with ancient tools to saw 16-inch thick blocks that weigh about 200 pounds and load them onto wagons for a short trip to their community icehouse. It’s a fascinating experience to see, one that’s been cancelled a few times because the ice never froze enough to make it work.

So, to my friends in Poughkeepsie and south—“Downstate” to us—the next time you consider “getting out of town,” I hope



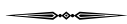
Local musicians perform on stage at the Edwards Opera House, Edwards, spring 2009. Photo by Varick Chittenden.





Young competitors show their sheep for judges at the annual Hammond Fair, fall 1999. Photo by Martha Cooper.

you think of coming north. It's a great place to visit, whether you want to climb the 46 high peaks of the Adirondacks, tour the Thousand Islands on a sunny afternoon cruise, or experience, up close and personal, a little bit of life as we know it. You're invited anytime!



This is my last Upstate column for *Voices*. Editors, designers, and, of course, readers of *Voices* have indulged me and my particular worldview long enough. It's time for me to move on to other long-awaited projects and time for others to speak up for Upstate. I'm really looking forward for someone else—from Buffalo, the Southern Tier, the Mohawk Valley, the Capital District, wherever—to have the opportunity to write about people, places, events, and things from the perspective of their part of Upstate. I wish them the very best and

half the fun I've had in thinking about and writing these columns since the Spring/Summer issue of 2001 (I missed the first issue for some reason, just like me, usually a day late and a dollar short!).

When the New York Folklore Society decided to launch *Voices*, one of their early decisions was to reintroduce regular columns called Downstate and Upstate, as they'd been called in the early days of the society's journal in the 1950s. I was intrigued and challenged by the invitation to write on behalf of all "Upstate," for as we all know, life in America's largest city and its outskirts is a parallel universe with some areas of the state that are as rural and isolated as they come in the rest of the country. I was struck that I would be part of a history of commentary on folklore in our state that goes back to the days of Harold Thompson, Ben Botkin, and my own Cooperstown Gradu-

ate Program mentor, Louis C. Jones. And I was flattered to be asked, especially when I realized that my partner in this project would be Steve Zeitlin, my old friend and colleague from Manhattan, who writes so intelligently and beautifully about any topic he tackles. Finally, I'm grateful to the editors over the years for the privilege of writing for this audience and for the freedom to write about anything I wanted (as long as I kept it to 875—give or take a few—words!). It's been fun. ▼

Varick A. Chittenden is a North Country native, a resident of Canton, a folklorist, the founding director of Traditional Arts in Upstate New York (TAUNY), and Professor Emeritus of Humanities at SUNY Canton. Photo: Martha Cooper.





# Lion's Gate

BY STEVE ZEITLIN

Wandering through the Garden of Eden, looking for the Temple of Love, Victoria and I strayed from the beaten path. Victoria is a friend of my daughter and was visiting from New Orleans, staying with our family in Westchester while she attended an art opening that included her work in Manhattan. She had a few hours to kill before her flight. She is a naturalist, and I decided to take her to one of my favorite places in all New York State, Untermyer Gardens in Yonkers.

Samuel Untermyer purchased what was then the Greystone Estate in 1899, and in 1915, he hired William Welles Bosworth, a *École des Beaux Arts*-trained architect and landscape designer, to create the “greatest gardens in the world.” The centerpiece is the Walled Persian Garden,



The Lion's Gate, Untermyer Gardens, Yonkers, NY. Photo by Jonathan Wallen. All photos in this column are courtesy of the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy, Inc.



Walled Garden (“Garden of Eden”), Untermyer Gardens, Yonkers, NY. Photo by Jonathan Wallen.

inspired by the Indo-Persian gardens of the ancient world, which, in turn, were inspired by descriptions of the Garden of Eden. The Biblical Eden includes four rivers (Pison, Gihon, Tigris, and the Euphrates) and two great trees (the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life). The garden is divided into quadrants with four long rectangular pools representing the four rivers. Victoria and I walked between the two majestic trees at the entrance and marveled at the mythological pools, resplendent with water lilies and other elements from Greek and Islamic mythology. If an apple had been hanging from the tree, I am sure Victoria would have picked it.

Once we'd seen the Tree of Knowledge and wandered through the Persian Garden, I asked Victoria if she'd want to see the Temple of Love, which I had visited once before. It's a fanciful rock structure, once an elaborate fountain, capped with three stone bridges and topped with a tiny temple where John Lennon once had a now famous photograph taken, and where the Son of Sam



The opening at Lion's Gate, Untermyer Gardens, Yonkers, NY. Photo by Jonathan Wallen.

serial killer is said to have performed dark rituals back in the 1970s when the park was in disrepair.

Following a less-than-clear map, we made our way along seemingly endless winding pathways till we crossed over a brook. Victoria mentioned at this point that the ions were charged in a way that should improve our moods, which was a good thing since after wandering for



another 15 minutes we crossed right back over it from the other direction, completely lost. Victoria was increasingly nervous about missing her flight. We were hot and sweaty and needed to get back to the Garden of Eden, past the Tree of Life, to where our car was parked.

Suddenly, we came upon the heavily vandalized sculpture of a lion and a headless horse. On the brochure we learned that the piece may be attributed to Edward Clark Potter, the sculptor responsible for the famous lions, Patience and Fortitude, outside the main branch of the New York Public Library (1911). We wondered who had stolen that horse's stone head. Looking at the map, we now realized that the path we had followed did not lead to the Temple of Love.

The path back up to the Garden looked to be just south of the Lion and Horse Gate. We searched the underbrush and saw what looked like a pathway. We started up and ran smack into a wall of brambles. Definitely not a path. We studied the map once more—aha! the path was on the other side of the gate. We looked—started up again—till the trail disappeared. It's said that not all those who wander are lost. But we were truly lost.

Flummoxed, we stood in front of the Lion's Gate, between the carved lion and the headless horse. "Oh my God," I told Victoria. "Perhaps the pathway is through the Lion's Gate." I was reminded of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* in which Indy has to traverse a treacherous cave to find the Holy Grail. The clue to get through is the phrase, "Only the penitent man shall pass." We felt penitent, or perhaps just brave, but swept up in the mythologies referenced by the gardens. A eureka moment—penetrate the Lion's Gate. Would it be another dead end or the pathway to Paradise? With trepidation, summoning fortitude, between the lion and the headless horse we chanced it. Suddenly, just a small steep climb ahead, we could see the long set of stairs that



The Temple of Love, Untermyer Gardens, Yonkers, NY. Photo by Jonathan Wallen.

led back up. I took Victoria's hand to help her up the hill. We laughed our way back to the Garden.

Now, it's up to you, dear pilgrims, to stray from your own beaten paths to visit Untermyer Park. It may be Yonkers, but it's as close as you'll get to the Garden of Eden. ▼

Steve Zeitlin is the founding director of City Lore in New York City. Photo by Martha Cooper.





# Cultured Wilderness and Wild Culture:

## The Olmsted Legacy in Rochester and Graffiti in the Grove

BY CHARLES BURROUGHS

At least on the map, the Genesee River dominates the city and region of Rochester, New York, as it cuts northward to bisect downtown before entering a deep gorge and joining its waters to Lake Ontario (see Figure 1). On the ground, certainly, the

river is less evident and, in much of the city, it is the cluster of antennas on Pinnacle Hill that catch the eye. The antennas draw attention to an ancient “hummocky ridge,” formed by glacial deposits, that runs roughly perpendicular to the river, just to the south

of downtown (Grasso 1993, 112). The more prominent section of the ridge extends to the west of the river and is known locally as the Pinnacle Range; it has played a key role in the lives of Rochesterians for a century and a half. Where the Range meets the river on the



Water tank in Washington Grove: Nature meets culture, but not as usually understood. All photos by Charles Burroughs.



**Survey of Rochester's  
Historic Parklands**  
*City of Rochester, New York*

**MAP OF SURVEYED PARK SITES**  
CITY OF ROCHESTER



*Map of park sites corresponds to site I.D. numbers on Executive Summary Table and Introduction.*

**Fig. 1. Map of Rochester Park System.** Genesee Valley Park is to the far south, below the University and Cemetery, and Seneca Park hugs the valley to the north. Cobb's Hill is to the east, at the edge of the city. Courtesy City of Rochester, Department of Community Development. A Survey of Rochester's Historic Parklands, prepared by Bayer Landscape Architecture. Rochester, NY, 2009.

western side, the glaciated, picturesque terrain is taken up by Mount Hope Cemetery, one of the great Victorian commemorative landscapes dedicated to the memory of the affluent and important (including Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass), and filled with solemn marble monuments among mighty trees (Reisem and Gillespie 1994; Chaisson 2004). Also adjoining the river is the campus of the University of Rochester, established in 1930 on the site (formerly "Oak Hill") of a section of the Pinnacle Range that had been previously removed

to accommodate the fairways and bunkers of a golf course.

On the ridge, to the east of the cemetery, the noted landscape architect and urban planner Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., laid out Highland Park, part of one of four park systems that he designed and implemented in the US (the others are in Boston, Buffalo, and Louisville) (Comeau 2013).<sup>1</sup> Olmsted took the Highland Park commission with reluctance; the park was founded as an arboretum for the display of a collection of exotic—as well as native—trees and shrubs

donated by the nursery firm of Ellwanger and Barry, then perhaps the most prominent nursery in the nation and which was located nearby. Throughout his career Olmsted's preference was for an appearance of natural landscape, including meadows, glades, and water features that gave harassed urbanites respite from the noise, stress, and pollution of their daily lives. Certainly, Olmsted used exotic plants in his landscapes, but he consistently opposed fussy but popular garden features, like the flowerbeds that have subsequently intruded into many of his parks (Beveridge and Rocheleau 1998; Spirm 1996). During his career, indeed, Olmsted especially admired and fought to preserve large-scale "wild" landscapes, notably Yosemite and Niagara Falls, where he allied a democratic concern with public access to the concealment, wherever possible, of human presence (Beveridge and Rocheleau 1998, 166–177).<sup>2</sup>

Olmsted is, of course, best known for an almost entirely artificial landscape, New York's Central Park, where tree-fringed pastoral meadows alternate with formal elements (like the Mall), highly informal planting (like the Ramble), and lakes and water features, all constructed by human hand. Central Park was Olmsted's earliest park, and it remains his most famous achievement as a park planner, perhaps in part because of his increasing interest in park systems, with diverse elements connected by parkways or other links, rather than stand-alone parks. This ambitious expansion of the scope of landscape architecture to embrace urban planning produced impressive results, most famously in Boston and Buffalo,<sup>3</sup> but all Olmsted's park systems suffered from later changes in transportation, economic, and demographic conditions; ideas about the functions of parks; and sheer neglect. Of course, the current fame of Central Park is a corollary of the relatively recent recovery of New York and the availability of resources for park restoration and urban development that are simply not available in Buffalo, say, or Rochester.

The parks that Olmsted designed for Rochester are markedly diverse in character.



Fig. 2. Aerial view of Cobbs Hill Park and Washington Grove. The two Water Authority tanks are located to the northwest of the reservoir. Between the tanks and the reservoir, the meadow and curving fringe of pines are visible. Imagery ©2015 Digital Globe New York GIS USDA Farm Service Agency Map Data, © 2015 Google.

As we noted, Highland Park is an arboretum, with contrasted ornamental plantings and an encyclopedic ambition. More typical of Olmsted's approach is Genesee Valley Park, south of the urban core, which resembles Central Park in its markedly pastoral character and the presence of water, although here, in contrast to Central Park, the water feature is a preexisting river, which Olmsted left as it was. The Genesee River flows north from the park past the University of Rochester and Mount Hope Cemetery into downtown, which in Olmsted's day was densely packed with commercial and industrial buildings, extending even across one of the bridges over the Genesee. At that time another bridge served as a viaduct to carry the Erie Canal, which traversed downtown, across the river. By 1918, the route of the Canal through downtown had been abandoned; the new route of the Canal, now renamed the New York State Barge Canal, took it

directly through Genesee Valley Park.<sup>4</sup> The park's integrity was even more seriously compromised in the 1950s by the intrusion of a major highway, an emblem of the irresistible triumph, as it seemed, of the automobile that affected Rochester as negatively as most US cities at the time.

The river flows gently through Genesee Valley Park. It is a far more dramatic component of Olmsted's other major park in Rochester, which encloses the deep gorge of the Genesee in the northernmost reaches of the city. Olmsted responded with enthusiasm to the geographical conditions he encountered along the Genesee; as he wrote to Edward Mott Moore, the eminent physician and leading proponent of the Rochester park program, "I don't know of another city in the country favored with such an opportunity" (Olmsted 2013, 541). Indeed in Olmsted's North, later Seneca Park (now divided into Seneca and Maplewood Parks),

the calm and tranquility of the southern park gives way to a spectacle of cliff and forest, and water crashing over falls, where in Olmsted's day were located the water-powered mills and factories, perhaps contributing to the picturesque, or perhaps rather sublime, effect (a power station survives close to the Lower Falls; the factory district, known as McCrackenville, once located between the Lower and Middle Falls, has now disappeared) (Beveridge and Rocheleau 1998).<sup>5</sup>

Olmsted had only a few years to devote to Rochester, among his countless other projects. His failing mental and physical health forced his retirement in 1895; he died in 1903. He thus played no part in the involvement of his firm, led by his two sons, in the creation in 1908 of a further Rochester park at the eastern end of the Pinnacle Range, where quarrying and road construction had begun to eat away the natural ridge. The new park, known as Cobb's Hill (see



Figure 2), owed its existence primarily not to any concern to provide recreational amenities for the citizens, but rather for the need to supply the growing city with water (Comeau 2013; McKelvey 1949). The top of the hill was excavated to create a reservoir, with elegant neo-classical pumping stations and ancillary buildings and promenades providing views over the southern section of the city, stretching to downtown in the distance. Olmsted's younger son, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., the chief planner, had developed a close connection with Rochester, which he knew well by 1911, when the city issued a very detailed, statistics-based urban plan that he had prepared. In the following decade, at the other end of the Pinnacle Range, the new campus of the University of Rochester took shape, to Olmsted's designs (May 1977). In general, the independent status of Fredrick

Law Olmsted, Jr., as a planning expert, as well as landscape architect, is increasingly receiving recognition (Klaus 2002); notably, he took his father's place on the Macmillan Commission, established in 1901 with the charge of creating a monumental district in Washington, DC, worthy of a newly imperial nation (Gutheim and Lee 2006; Foglesong 2014).

At Cobb's Hill, in or around 1908, the Olmsted firm planted a pinetum of spruce and other evergreens on the eastern side, and on the west, a fringe of Austrian pine along the curving drive around the reservoir. These ornamental plantings largely survive; they are composed of exotic species, or at least species that were never part of the local forest but surely deserve preservation, where possible, or restoration as much as any important building of the time.

Beyond the pines, the ground slopes down, forming a meadow that must have been part of the design of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., although he surely did not anticipate the closely spaced grove of Norway maples now occupying the area. The meadow adjoins a forested area belonging to the local Water Authority that, in turn, merges into Washington Grove, which was officially incorporated into the park in 1912, and which has subsequently become a much loved amenity for generations of citizens.

Though the Olmsted firm's design for the park preceded this acquisition by four years, the partners surely took into account the extensive grove of old growth forest—in their day still dominated by huge chestnut trees—that adjoined the area acquired by the city. Indeed in 1909, Frederick, Jr., went on record advocating the transformation



Austrian pine and view across Cobb's Hill Reservoir to the Pinetum. This pine is part of a fringe of similar trees separating the circular drive from the meadow and the Grove.



Washington Grove. Trees growing on the edge of one of the glacial kettles in the Grove.

of the entire Pinnacle range into a park; his views appeared first in the inaugural issue of a weekly broadsheet *The Pinnacle*, but were soon reported in the main local newspaper.<sup>6</sup>

Today's Washington Grove is a world of towering trees and intricate terrain, through which paths meander and where the prevailing silence is broken by the sounds of birds and skittering chipmunks.<sup>7</sup> To many observers it is a natural cathedral, lifting the spirit to higher things, according to an attitude deeply rooted in American culture, at least since Henry David Thoreau retreated to his cabin at Walden Pond. But the appearance is deceptive; like urban forests throughout the

eastern US, the Grove has suffered serious degradation, in part through past neglect, but especially through inappropriate use and the suffocating effect of a range of invasive species, such as Norway maple and autumn olive. Fortunately, the Grove has found its champions; since 2008, a dedicated group of volunteers, in collaboration with the city authorities, has freed much of the Grove from invaders, and there are now many signs of recovery (Debes 2014).

The removal of unwanted species, however important, is not enough to secure the regeneration of the woodland. The star species of the Grove are its ancient oaks,

but because of a weevil infestation the black and white oaks, in particular, are not regenerating, so that human intervention is needed to replace the fallen giants. Thanks to a survey of plant communities in the Grove made in the 1920s, the successive impoverishment of the woodland in terms of biological diversity is only too clear, and the work has begun of reintroducing lost species, especially in the understory. Passive preservation, in short, has given way to a more activist conservationist stance, resonating, largely unconsciously, with a redefinition of "wilderness," articulated notably by environmental theorists and historians William Cronon and Anne Whiston Spirn, as existing less in the "real world" than in the mind of nature lovers and users. In other words, apparently "wild" nature is in fact profoundly shaped by human intervention and interpretation; the more "wild" a forest or other biome seems to be, the more cultivated it may actually be (Cronon 1996; Spirn 1996; Solomon 2014; Pollan 1991).<sup>8</sup>

Through the lush foliage and the shafts of massive trees, a walker in the Grove, approaching the high ground toward the woodland edge, may glimpse a flash of color in sharp contrast with the surrounding subdued browns and greens. On top of the rise stand water tanks, long in disuse, surrounded by trees and thick undergrowth.

The water tanks have been discovered by graffiti artists, who have covered accessible surfaces with paintings, many of high quality, especially in the interior of one of the tanks, reached through a small opening in the side. The paintings are highly diverse in style, scale, and subject matter, and it is obvious that many hands have been at work. The contrast, for example, with the ordered and decorous landscape of remembrance and mourning of Mount Hope Cemetery, further along the Pinnacle Range, is striking indeed. The imagery suggests that the painters and likely audience of the graffiti not only belong to a younger generation than the Friends, but also are far more ethnically and culturally diverse. As yet, I know the identity of only one of the artists, the Afro-Brazilian painter Eder Muniz, from Salvador, Brazil,



who has built a considerable reputation in New York, as well as in his native country (Jones 2013).<sup>9</sup> The anonymity of the artists and taggers is not surprising; in Rochester, as elsewhere, graffiti art is almost by definition a secretive or even “underground” activity, and graffiti artists traditionally seek out illicit or at least unauthorized sites for their imagery.<sup>10</sup>

None of the artwork on the tanks has much expectation of longevity. New paintings obscure earlier ones, giving the impression of the tanks as an arena of impassioned competition, where rival artists cancel out each other’s work. The tanks are less like a staid art gallery than a visual equivalent of a “slam,” where rappers or even poets try to outdo each other. Or perhaps the

arrangement and succession of paintings also evoke very ancient practices. Typically, graffiti artists break with the traditional conception of a painting as bordered by a (usually) rectangular frame, which separates a surface carrying imagery not only from the “real world” but also from other framed surfaces, whether painted by the same or other artists. Overlapping imagery is a feature of the Paleolithic cave paintings at Lascaux and similar sites, or of the pictograms of indigenous peoples, for whom the western concept of the “frame” or the convention of framing is entirely unknown (Kittredge 2010). Of course, the nature of the audience of the Lascaux paintings cannot be known, though it is reasonable to presume the absence of more or less professional crit-

ics in the modern sense. At the tanks, also, even the most elaborate graffiti seem to be done for an immediate audience, namely the painter and any companions, rather than for a lasting effect, for the reasons I have noted. Everything suggests that, at the tanks, it is the performance rather than the product that matters.

The upshot is a remarkable paradox. In its range of species and through the absence of overt signs of human intervention, the Grove appears to be authentic old-growth woodland. In fact, however, it is carefully tended, if not increasingly “constructed” by volunteers whose activity is carefully organized and circumscribed. To an extent this is an open-air museum, illustrating a certain historic biome, which can no longer



Anonymous artists, The Great Owl and assorted graffiti on water tank, Cobb’s Hill.



Eder Muniz's Fantastic Head, graffiti on water tank, Cobb's Hill.

exist unaided. At the tanks, however, there is no discernible orderliness in the arrangement or succession of imagery produced, apparently, by individuals perhaps more or less motivated by an anarchic attitude or even ideology. Indeed, in the imagery itself, there is nothing to suggest that the graffiti artists see—or wish to represent—themselves as constituting a community of some kind, for all the evidence of shared cultural values and creative impulses. At the tanks, then, a cultivated wilderness confronts a competitive culture of unregulated and, in a word, “wild” attitudes. If we can think of nature as an unregulated process guided by no conscious planning, therefore, we can

understand the Grove as a place where art and nature have changed places, and where an artful nature surrounds and conceals a “natural” assemblage of art. ▼

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Comeau’s article, “125 Years of Rochester’s Parks” (2013), celebrating the 125th anniversary of the foundation of the park system, is the only monographic treatment. Probably the leading Olmsted expert is Charles Beveridge, but Rochester merits just two pages in Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau’s *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape* (Beveridge and Rocheleau 1998, 94–95). See also Birnbaum and Comeau (2009).

<sup>2</sup> For a now classic critique of a naïve notion of “wilderness,” see Cronon (1995) and also, more recently, Solomon (2014).

<sup>3</sup> For an exceptional recent account of an Olmsted integrated urban project, see Kowsky (2013).

<sup>4</sup> This was part of a “major overhaul of the canal system” Robb (2014); see also Mannion (2008).

<sup>5</sup> Beveridge (1998) distinguishes Olmsted’s pastoral and picturesque styles. As I will argue elsewhere, here a third, “sublime” approach was operative.

<sup>6</sup> *Democrat and Chronicle*, Rochester, August 31, 1909. I thank Larry Champoux for the reference.

<sup>7</sup> For expert opinion on the biology and geology of the Grove, I am grateful to Peter Debes and Edward J. Olinger of the Friends of Washington Grove.

<sup>8</sup> I thank Evelyn Brister for the Pollan (1991) citation and for general inspiration.

<sup>9</sup> I am grateful to Peter Debes for information about Muniz.

<sup>10</sup> For an authoritative history of graffiti art, from the street or subway car to the gallery, see Gastman and Neelon (2010).

A recent full-time resident of Rochester, NY, Charles Burroughs retired in 2014 from the Smith Chair of Humanities at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, where



he was Professor of Classics and Art History. Earlier, he spent two decades at Binghamton University, State University of New York (SUNY), and he is currently adjunct Professor of Art History at SUNY Geneseo. Educated in the UK (Oxford and London Universities), he is an art and architectural historian best known for his work on Italian late medieval and Renaissance built environments and designed landscapes. He is also active in historic preservation and landscape restoration, and he is an enthusiastic gardener. Photo courtesy of the author.



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# How I Spent My Summer (1967)

BY ERICA WOLFE BURKE

[*Author's Note:* Some names of individuals have been changed or omitted, for the usual reasons.]

## How I Got There

I graduated from college in New York City in January 1967. I planned on attending acting school in the fall, but in the meantime I needed a job. The head of the drama department recommended that I apply for a job at a small theatrical costume business, which I got. I made \$53 a week after taxes. When that job disappeared in May (they lost their big summer contract, which was with the Lake George Opera), I worked for two weeks running the Baby-sitting Bureau in the placement office at my college. I moved on from that when a student came fuming into the placement office, declaring she couldn't stand it, and she had quit the job she had gotten through the office. She had been modeling fur coats in the garment district. The old guy was a dirty old man and—and—and ... They asked her, at the fur coat company, why she was leaving. Did she not like the work? Oh no, she said, the work was fine, but she wanted a job in her field. And what was her field? Organic chemistry.

So I took her job—and I think she took mine, at least temporarily.

## I'm a Model

So now I had a job as a showroom model. I had to wear a black dress, heels,

makeup, and my hair put up. Quite a change from jeans and sweatshirts. I took the subway from 116th Street to 34th Street and walked to the Brooklyn & New York Fur Manufacturers on 29th Street. When a buyer came—say from a department store in St. Louis or Des Moines—I would slip into a fur coat and walk across the showroom, turn, pause, hold the coat open, then closed, and then leave the room. Unless the buyer had a question or wanted to look some more, I would not speak except to say the model number. This was written on a tag, which dangled from the sleeve when the coat was on a hanger, but was secreted in my hand while I modeled the coat.

This was not as glamorous as it might sound. In the first place, it was June, and it was very, very hot that year. The showroom was air conditioned down to a reasonable shirt-sleeve temperature, but *still*. Also, Brooklyn & New York was not a top-drawer establishment then. They made “fun” furs—mostly dyed blue or green or something else fun and bright. Remember this was the summer of '67. But mostly, there weren't any customers. I think there were maybe four customers in the six weeks I had that job, which, by the way, paid \$65 a week *before* taxes. My predecessor was right, too, about Mr. Stein being a dirty old man. He was fitting a coat on me one day and copping a feel of my breasts and said I shouldn't mind, because he was just an old man, and no harm was done.

Not glamorous to be sure, but I remember the job as both intensely interesting and intensely boring. The boring part was spending the morning sitting in the office by myself, playing solitaire and keeping track of how often I won. I played 50 games a day, and I don't remember how many I won—maybe every 33rd game. After lunch, Shirley, the bookkeeper, came in. She was a tall woman with acne scars and brown frizzy hair. She listened to talk radio all afternoon, and it nearly drove me nuts. Monday through Thursday afternoons, she worked on the books. On Friday, she did the payroll. After she wrote out all the paychecks, she figured out exactly what bills and what quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies she needed to cash all the paychecks. She went to the bank and got the cash. At 2:30 in the afternoon, the men (and the two women workers) lined up outside the window to the office. Shirley handed each one his or her check. The employee signed it and handed it back, and she handed out an envelope with the right amount of money. I took my check home and put it in the bank.

I always brought my lunch. At lunchtime, I'd go back in the workroom and sit around a cutting table with the furriers. It was some time before I realized that this might be a breach of etiquette—that, maybe, I wasn't supposed to fraternize with the (highly skilled) labor, plus maybe, I wasn't supposed to sit with the men.





Erica, 1967. Photo by Peter Reich.

The two women who worked there didn't work on fur. They did linings and pockets and buttons and buttonholes. They sat in their own corner of the room; and they ate their lunch there, too. I *think* they spoke English, but I don't remember that they ever spoke to me.

There were four or five men in the workshop: the foreman, maybe three furriers, and someone whose job it was to sweep up and run errands. I think they were all in their fifties—gray hair, maybe a receding hairline. They had all grown up on the Lower East Side, when it was a Jewish world. They knew the Yiddish theater and the Broadway theater. I think they'd seen

every musical on Broadway in the past 30 years, and most of the straight plays, too. All the men thought it was wonderful that I wanted to be an actress—they were huge theater fans, and they thought it was a terrific business to go into—and they all knew people who had gone into it. I think that was the year that Herschel Bernardi replaced Zero Mostel in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Herschel had dated Sammy's sister in high school. This was a revelation to me: first of all that there still was a working class audience for theater, and secondly, that these guys didn't think I was a hopeless romantic nut case for thinking I could act.

## Furs of the Rich and Famous

Brooklyn & New York was not, as I said, a really classy outfit—but it did have some classy connections. They did contract work for patrons of Jacques Kaplan, a very fancy furrier on 57th Street. An old established firm, Kaplan had branched out into “fun fashion” furs in the 1960s. While I was there, Brooklyn & New York made a black and white pony-skin jacket for a customer of Kaplan (i.e., B & NY did the work, and then they put a “Jacques Kaplan” label in it). The customer was an art collector and heiress, with houses in Paris, New York, and elsewhere. I wouldn't have known who she was, except a college friend of mine was also a friend of the heiress's daughter “Pip” and had been living at their New York apartment during the school year that had just ended. My friend threw a cast party there, which I went to. The only thing I remember of the apartment was a small Paul Klee painting on the stair landing.

My other brush with the very rich and famous came about because Brooklyn & New York was the New York workshop for Birgir Christensen (BC) in Copenhagen.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stein came originally from Berlin. He had fled to the United States; his brother, also a furrier, had found refuge in Denmark and now worked for Birgir Christensen. And the connection was made. Mrs. Moore-McCormack (that is to say, she was either Mrs. Moore or Mrs. McCormack—of Moore-McCormack shipping lines) had ordered a mink jacket at Birger Christensen in their brand new color “Arctic Pearl.” When it was finished and she got it (in the mail?), it didn't fit quite right. It needed to be let out a little across the bust. Well, that meant, of course, inserting additional fur. There *was* no “Arctic Pearl” mink in America, because Birgir Christensen had just invented the color. BC had a business representative in New York City, a slim young blonde Dane, who brought over a pelt dyed “Arctic Pearl,” which had been shipped (mailed?) to him from the home office. Mrs. M. came in for a fitting. She was a pretty blonde woman, maybe in her early

forties, with a pleasant informal manner. She wore a red-and-white, checked cotton suit and white cotton gloves. When she took off her gloves, I got a sight of *the* largest diamond I have ever seen. It was a rectangle that seemed to cover her finger from knuckle to knuckle. Hooeoooo!!!

One of the things about working in the fur district is that it was a *district*. Every floor of every building was a fur manufacturer. You look out your windows and you look into their windows. And the only women I saw were sitting in the corner sewing fabric, while the men sat in the middle of the room sewing fur. I watched through a window across the street and a floor or two down at a man doing something that looked very odd. He had a small animal skin and he was slicing it lengthwise every inch or so. Then he started making small slits that went sort of sideways, something like this //////////////// and then on the other side of the long slit, creating a herringbone pattern. I asked someone, and it was explained. He was working on mink. Minks have long silky hair and thin fragile skin. So the furrier preparing a mink skin cuts it all up, and then somebody else sews it back together. This has the double advantage of making the hair denser and making the skin stronger. No wonder mink garments cost a fortune! The name for this process, by the way, is “letting out.” Well, every occupation has its own jargon.

## All Good Things Must Come to an End

I mentioned that we didn’t have very many customers. So on a Monday in mid-July, Seymour, Mr. Stein’s partner, said he had to let me go. As few customers as they had, Shirley, the bookkeeper, could model the coats. He said I should take as much time as I needed during the week to look for another job. And tell them I was making \$85 a week, and he’d back me up.

Well, I did a little of that (job hunting) with no success at all. But what was probably more important was that I spent most of the week in the workroom, learning to nail furs. When I told the guys I would be

leaving, the foreman invited me to spend the week learning. I still went to work in my little black dress and heels, but I didn’t hang out in the office any more.

Here’s how it works. The furs come in flat and stiff. They get put in a tumbler to soften them up. The patterns for the coat pieces are drawn on brown paper stapled to a 4’ x 8’ table top. The pelts are then dampened and stretched to fit the pattern pieces. They are not cut the way you would cut fabric. It takes five pelts of hair seal or otter (the furs we used) to make a coat—this is a “60s length” coat, maybe 36” long. Not a jacket, but certainly not a “full length” fur coat. One pelt makes the back of the coat, one each for the two fronts, and one each for the sleeves. The first skilled hand-done job is nailing the pelt, fur side down, onto the pattern. You pull and stretch and tap in a nail to hold it in place, and then pull and stretch some more. In the end, you have placed nails every half an inch all the way around the skin. Each nail is bent over to the outside to help it hold its place. You develop a rhythm: tap tap bend tap, tap tap bend tap. I also learned how to cut without damaging the hair, and how to sew on a fur machine. At the end of the week the foreman said, sadly, that if it weren’t for the slump in the industry (the same slump that cost me my modeling job), he’d hire me to nail. I don’t know whether he really would have, because I didn’t see *any* women working at nailing.

(As a side note, my mother, who is a lefty intellectual college professor, thought it would be great if I could get a job nailing furs because, she said, the furriers had a really good union.)

So I said goodbye and went on to other things.

## The Rest of My Summer

1. My mother hired me to make a slipcover for her couch.

2. I was a salesperson in a hip little boutique (1967, remember?).

3. I did a week’s work for a former employer, a professor at the Columbia School of Social Work, coloring maps for a study

he was finishing, paid for by a grant from the American Geographical Society (AGS).

4. On Friday of that week, he got a call from the AGS saying, “Who is it that we’re paying to work for you, and can she come and work here?” So I started there on Monday.

I found an apartment to share with my college friend, who had been living at the rich art collector’s New York apartment, and we moved in together, and I started acting school, and she started her junior year of college.

Now I’m an archivist and Special Collections Librarian. You could tell it was going to end that way, couldn’t you? ▼

## Note

<sup>1</sup>Birgir Christensen, starting as a small fur business in 1869, is today “a highly revered brand ... where some of the world’s most elegant and exclusive furs are made.” From BC website, [www.birger-christensen.com/en/about-us/history/](http://www.birger-christensen.com/en/about-us/history/).



Erica grew up in New York City. She graduated from Barnard College and has a MLIS from SUNY Albany. She is the Archivist and Special Collections Librarian in the Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls, NY. Along the way, she has had a variety of odd and interesting jobs. She lives in Hartford, New York, in a 1795 farmhouse with her family and one dog, three cats, and 15 chickens (see prophetic accompanying photo). Photo by Gladys Meyer Wolfe.



# Remembering Yacub Addy NEA National Heritage Fellow

It is with great sadness that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) acknowledges the passing of 2010 National Heritage Fellow Yacub Addy, Ghanaian drum master from Latham, New York.

A master of traditional music of the Ga ethnic group, a creator of new works rooted in tradition, and a committed educator, Yacub Addy is part of the renowned Addy family of drummers, singers, and dancers from Avenor, Accra, Ghana. In 1956, the year of Ghana's independence, Addy organized and led the first major staged performance of genuinely traditional Ghanaian music and dance at the Accra Community Center. He later formed the historic groups Ashiedu Ketrekre, which set a performance standard in Ghana in the 1960s, and Oboade, which became the first professional traditional Ghanaian group to tour in the West (1968–75). Addy's music took him from Ghana to Europe and America, where in 1982 he created the performance ensemble Odadaal, composed predominantly of Ga artists. With Odadaal, Addy also collaborated with artists of other traditions, including NEA Jazz Master Wynton Marsalis, which resulted in two projects, *Africa Jazz*, and the co-composition *Congo Square*, which premiered in New Orleans in 2006 as a gift for the spiritual revival of the Crescent City. Through his ensembles, Addy trained numerous Ghanaian artists. In the 1960s in Accra, he identified Five Hand Drumming Techniques, a system to train non-Ghanaian students, copied by many instructors. He has taught widely in America, including Washington State Cultural Enrichment Program; the Seattle Public Schools; Evergreen College in Olympia, Washington; Howard University in Washington, DC; Rensselaer [Polytechnic Institute] in Troy, New York; and Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York.

In a 2010 interview with the NEA, Addy discussed what makes Ga music distinctive: “We

Ga are unique among Ghanaians. We love human beings, no matter where you come from. We are very social. We welcome strangers. We are also independent, proud, and we don't take nonsense. Our music is also unique. We are very creative. We play drums with our hands more than the other ethnic groups in Ghana. It's more difficult to play with hands than with sticks, and you get more tones. Our medicine music and royal music is complicated. And we have many different styles of social music—music played just for enjoyment. Rhythms such as *Ali*, *Koyi*, *Tumantu*, *Ayika*, *Boade*, *Konkoma*. Most Ghanaians today have never heard

of these. Also, we play the music of other ethnic groups, but not many of them can play our music, especially our ritual music.

“My family plays Ga medicine music and social drumming. The medicine rhythms we play are *Akom*, *Otu*, *Kpele*, and *Tigari*. *Tigari* came in the 1960s from Northern Ghana, and one of my nephews, Aja Addy, became a *Tigari* medicine man. *Tigari* became hot in Avenor in the 1960s. The social music was always there—when the moon came out, we would play whatever rhythm was happening at the



Yacub Addy at the NEA's 2010 National Heritage Fellowships Concert. © Photo by Michael G. Stewart, courtesy of the National Endowment for the Arts.

time. Avenor drummers were the champions of Oge, the predecessor of Kpanlogo. My senior brother Akwei Wejei would go village to village and bring the latest rhythms back to us, and we would improve them and add our own styles.”

Visit the NEA's website for more information about Yacub Addy, the full interview with him, and samples of his music: <http://arts.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/yacub-addy> ▼

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# Evaluation of Petrification Legends in Turkey in Terms of Cultural Heritage and Tourism

BY HASAN BUĞRUL

*Petrification legends told in Turkey are one of the most interesting subjects that draw our attention. Although the legends are said to be stories that have been told over a long period of time with no proof of existence, the legends told in Turkey about these rocks are so logical and authentic that whoever experiences them find themselves deeply affected. When having a look at the map of the petrification legends told in Turkey, you realize how common they are, especially in the east, southeast, and northeast of Turkey. The*

*bride, groom, bride and groom, camel, dragon, and wedding procession rocks are the elements integrated with the petrification legends. Both listening to the legends from the local people and seeing the related rocks can be a good opportunity for visitors who are interested in cultural heritage. In this study, we have tried to draw attention to the petrification legends told in Turkey and the related elements (rocks) in terms of tourism. It is hoped that it will contribute to Turkish culture and tourism.*

We know that people travel for various reasons, and one of the main reasons is the curiosity about cultural heritage. In fact, cultural heritage is rich in content. It involves both tangible and intangible values. While tangible heritage includes archaeological sites, museums, monuments, palaces, works of art, natural parks, and so on, intangible heritage covers oral traditions (folktales, sayings, songs, chants, and so forth), social practices, festive events, folklore (legends, music, oral history,



View of the dragon-shaped rock (petrified dragon), Ilıcak (Huzi) village, on the main road of Van-Hakkari provinces, about 25 km to Başkale town, Van-Turkey. All photos by Hasan Buğrul.



fairy tales, tall tales, stories, traditions, and customs), and more.

Although it seems that tangible and intangible heritage embrace different things, there are some values that have some connections with both of them, and one example is “petrification legends.” On one hand, the legends are told orally or can be read in books, and on the other hand, you can see rocks in different shapes that are believed to have relations with each of the legends. Anyone who is interested in cultural heritage can’t help hearing the legends and seeing the related rocks in Turkey, after learning about them. Besides being the cradle of civilization, we can say that Turkey is “the land of legends,” because you can hear legends and come across the rocks related to them in many parts of Turkey (see map on p. 34).

The subjects of the legends told in Turkey vary, but the legends about petrification seem to be the most striking. The impressive legends, with the incredible rocks, are told as if they were true and factual. That is why we think that it is worth evaluating this subject in terms of cultural heritage and tourism, but first we should consider what petrification stands for:

According to Cemile Kınacı,

Petrification is turning of human, plant or any other object to stone. There are a lot of reasons for turning to stone. Sometimes, an imprecate causes it, sometimes one who commits a sin suffers the wrath of God by turning to stone. And sometimes turning to stone comes true by wishing it. The ones who are in difficult situations pray to God to be petrified in order to get rid of the situations they are in. (Kınacı 2008, 78)

Here is another definition:

With their forms, some of the rocks and stones have an image like people or animals. These images of the rocks and stones are associated and made sacred with a legend related to any person or animal punished by God, often as a result of the desecration of a sacred object or person. (Kıyak 2011, 13)

When having a look at the legends, we can see that there are various reasons for being



View of the dragon-shaped rock (petrified dragon) with a petrified dragon cub on its left hand side, next to its head.

petrified. According to Nesrin Feyzioğlu, “Sometimes a curse (imprecation) causes petrification; sometimes those who commit sin are petrified by undergoing the wrath of God. And sometimes it happens by wishing it. Those who are in a difficult situation wish to be petrified by God in order to get rid of their situation” (Feyzioğlu 2011, 122).

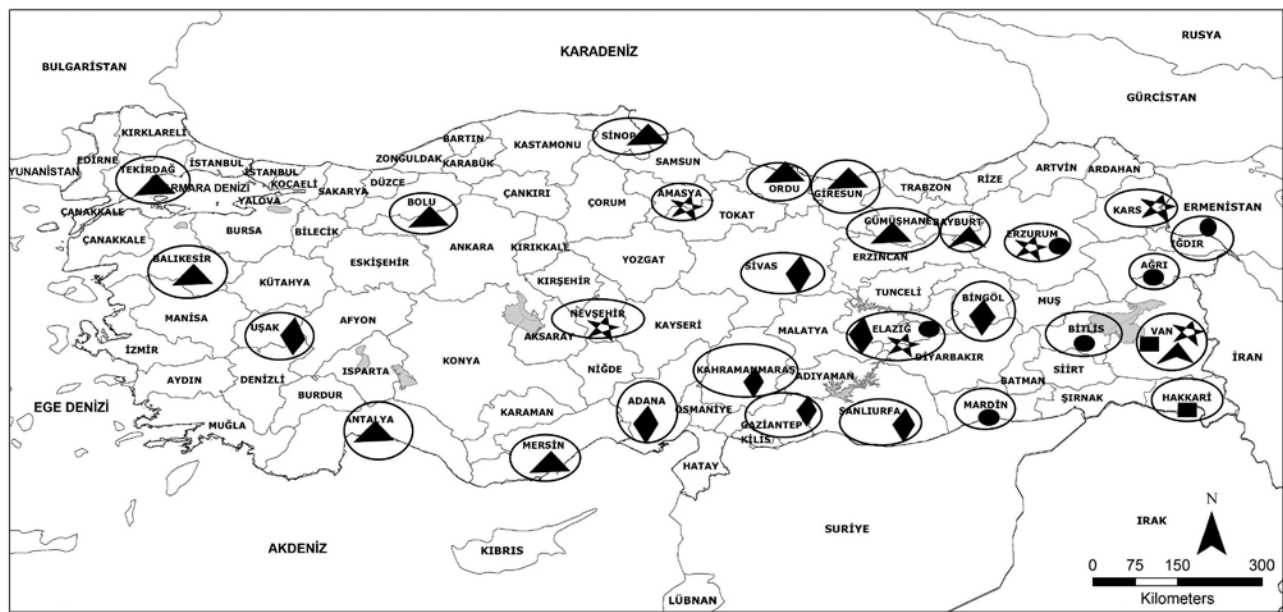
It is thought that there is a great impact of pre-Islamic Central Asian Turkish culture and beliefs on the legends related to petrification told in Turkey and in the Asian countries. In pre-Islamic Central Asia, some natural forces such as the sun, sky, mountains, stones, and trees were considered sacred. Some of the stalagmites were considered to be petrified humans or animals. Here is what a woman told Yaşar Kalafat<sup>1</sup> about some stones located in the Altay Mountains: “There were three

rocks on the edge of the water. It was believed that they were ‘three brothers.’ A few kilometers further, there were seen three rocks more which were thought to be the brothers of the other ones” (Kıyak 2011, 136).

### Two of the Krygyz and Kazakh petrification legends

Here is “*Deve Taşı / Camel Rock*,” a legend of Krygyz told by Metin Ergun<sup>2</sup>:

There was a place where people lived in unity and solidarity and had respect for each other. These people, going about their daily lives, became anxious and worried one day. A camel—[it was] not certain where it came from,—disrupted the peace of the people. Wherever it appeared, it started to bite and kill people. No one



Map of Turkey related to Petrified Legends. Map of Turkey from the Geography Department of Yuzuncu Yil University, Van-Turkey. Images by Hanefi Alter. Customized by lecturer Guler Yilmaz.

could catch this camel. A gray-bearded man with mysterious eyes who lived there was not affected when he was cursed (imprecated). People gathered and decided to have that camel cursed by the gray-bearded man. And the graybeard cursed, “Don’t stand up where you are lying, petrify!” The next day, the people saw that the camel was petrified where it had been lying. (Kinacı, Cemile 1997, 608–609)

Metin Ergun also tells about a legend of Kazakh:

There was both a strong and a very good hero. One day, he became rich, and with the intention of saving the people’s lives, he set out. He came across some other heroes on his way. The young hero offered to join their forces and form an army. He told them it was easy to be defeated alone, but it was difficult to be defeated when they were together. The

heroes he encountered didn’t take any notice of him, and everyone went their separate ways. First, the young hero encountered enemies. However strong he was, it was impossible for him alone to cope with the large enemy army. After a while, he was exhausted, tumbled down, petrified there, and fell into an eternal sleep. As this hero struggled alone, he was named after the mountain Ceke Batır (Kinacı, Cemile 1997, 623–624).

### Some of the petrification legends told in Turkey

The petrification legends have been studied by many academics, but we think that Professor Dr. Saim Sakaoglu<sup>3</sup> has studied this subject most extensively. In Turkey, you can find bride-, herdsman-, sheep-, camel- or dragon-shaped rocks and hear legends told that are related to each of them. Some of the reasons for being petrified are listed as follows:

- Some of the petrification legends are about fleeing lovers. In such legends, the boy and the girl fall in love; however, they are not permitted to marry by the father of the girl. It is due to the girl’s father’s fame and wealth that he boy, from a poor family, is not acceptable to the father. The lovers escape, and with the fear of being caught, they both pray to be petrified. As both of them are petrified, you can see two rocks which are associated with them and are called “**girl-boy / the bride and groom rocks.**” These types of legends are told in the cities such as Şanlıurfa, Kahramanmaraş, Sivas, Karlıova-Bingöl, Adana, Sivaslı-Uşak, Nizip-Gaziantep, and Sivrice-Elazığ.

- Among the petrification legends, the most common ones are the legends about petrified brides, and you can see “**bride rocks**” related to them. The legends of this type can



be seen in two groups. In one group, the bride is in a bad situation, and she would like to get free of it. As she is helpless, she prays to be petrified. In this way, honor is preserved. Another variation is when the bride exhibits behaviors that are not acceptable to society. Although the girl is not permitted to marry her lover, she escapes with him. Generally, the boy is caught and killed, and the girl, left alone, prays to be petrified, and this becomes reality in the rocks. Such legends are generally told in Ürgüp-Nevşehir, Merzifon-Amasya, Kağızman-Kars, Kars, Erzurum, and Elazığ.

- You can also come across **“boy-rocks / groom rocks.”** Such petrifications come into being because a son shames his mother or father with degrading behaviors. You can see such rocks in Balıkesir, Sebinkarahisar-Giresun, Fatsa-Ordu, Korkuteli-Antalya, Kelkit-Gümüşhane, Tirebolu-Giresun, Silifke-Mersin, Mudurnu-Bolu, Muratlı-Tekirdağ, Sinop, and Gönen.

- Some petrification legends are about the rich who overlook the poor or the com-

munity, or despite offering oblation, back down. In similar legends, a rich man makes a vow, but is petrified with his camels for not keeping his promise. So these types of rocks are named **“cameleer mountains.”** You can see related rocks in Bitlis, Ağrı, Karayazı-Erzurum, Iğdır, Mardin and Sivrice Elazığ (Zekeriya 1992, 66).

- You can see atop certain mountains some rocks that are associated with a wedding procession. It is said that the people in the wedding procession were all petrified due to treating sacred values in an inappropriate way. Another reason why this happened is that the bride was not happy about her marriage, because she was forced to marry her husband. As she wanted to get out of this situation, she prayed to God to petrify the wedding procession. You can see **“wedding procession rocks”** on a mountain of Şemdinli, Hakkari, and on a hill in the Aşit village, Van.

- You can also see **“dragon-shaped rocks.”** In such legends, a lady is chased by a dragon. The fearful lady prays to God to

petrify the dragon, and this occurs. You see such rocks in Nişantaşı-Bayburt and Ates-Başkale (Van).

I think it would be useful here to mention some of the legends with the related rocks in more detail:

### Legend I

There is a dragon-shaped rock in the Nişantaşı (Osluk) village. The village is a distance of 18 km from the main road, connecting Bayburt to Gümüşhane. It is situated on the slopes of a mountain. Here is the legend told about the dragon-shaped rock:

People see a dragon coming to the village, and they start to leave their houses and run away. A woman can't go very far, as she is very old, and she squats down in despair. On the one hand, the old woman starts waiting for the dragon, expecting to be eaten by it. On the other hand, she prays to God and pleads, “God, petrify either me or the dragon.” The prayer of the old woman is accepted, and the dragon is petrified at the last point that it could advance



Dragon shaped rock, said to have been divided into two (bisected) by Hazreti Ali with his sword. The bisection can be seen near the tail. The men (villagers) who told the legend also can be seen in the foreground.



View of both the dragon-shaped rock (petrified dragon) and the fountain (related to the girl thought to have become a fountain).

before reaching the old woman. (Şimşek and Sakaoğlu 2004, 97)

## Legend 2

There is a rock on the shore of Van Lake in Adilcevaz, which is called “Kıztaşı” (“girl-stone”). Here is the legend told about that rock:

A young peasant falls in love with the daughter of a commander of the castle. Because of the fear of the cruel commander, they meet in secret. One night, the young boy swims through Van Lake in order to reach his lover. However, the young boy can't see the light that guides him. He gets tired of searching and drowns. The girl, who sees that her lover doesn't come, prays to God to be petrified. The young girl's prayer is accepted. In the region, it is believed that the shape of the Kıztaşı reflects the state in which the young girl was when she was petrified. (Çevirme and Sakaoğlu 2003, 25–26)

## Legend 3

When a girl was bringing food for her father, who was working nearly 1 km outside of the village, the girl was attacked by a dragon. Realizing that she would not survive the dragon's attack, she prayed to God and

said, “Petrify the dragon and turn me into a fountain.” God accepted the prayer of the girl. The dragon was petrified and she, herself, became a spring. Now you can see a dragon-shaped rock and a fountain beside it. It is said that the fountain was once in the shape of a girl, but unfortunately, the villagers altered the original shape over time. The fountain contains mineral water, and it is said to be good to drink for treating different diseases.

According to another variation of the legend, a dragon attacked the girl who was taking something to her father to eat. When the father heard the screaming, he rushed to the scene. He was overwhelmed by what he saw. He could not do anything other than to pray to God. He said, “God, I can't manage to save my daughter. I beg my daughter to be rescued.” Not long after this prayer, Hz. Ali<sup>4</sup> appeared and divided the dragon into two with his sword. At that moment, a dragon cub emerged. Shortly after that, both the dragon and its cub turn into stone (were petrified). You can see a 60 cm gap that is nearly 10 m from the tail and a 3 meter-long rock in shape of a dragon cub. (See the box on page 37, “Data Collection,” for more information about this legend and the related rock).

## Legend 4

There was a very beautiful girl in Timar region, and there was a very handsome boy in the same village. They fell in love with each other. However, the girl was very unhappy, because she was forced to marry a man in another village. When the wedding procession was on the way to the other village, everyone was happy, except the bride. The girl prayed to God to be petrified with the wedding procession. The bride's prayer was accepted, and all the people in the wedding procession were petrified. It is thought that the two separate tall rocks next to each other are the petrified bride and groom, and the rocks around are thought to be the petrified wedding procession. (See the box on page 37, “Data Collection, for more details about this legend.)

## Evaluating legends in terms of cultural heritage and tourism

When people travel for cultural heritage, they expect to experience the places and activities that represent the stories of the people of the past and present in a reliable manner. Cultural heritage is not only an element of tourism, but also belongs to many other disciplines. It can be seen from many different perspectives. If a subject is a focus of multiple disciplines, this implies that the subject is an important one. It is thought that by adopting different perspectives on a subject, one can provide more accurate and complete knowledge. If a subject is studied by the scientists from different disciplines, it will be more popular and more people will be interested in it. So, if cultural heritage is considered in terms of tourism in addition to other disciplines, it will become more accessible to more people.

We see that cultural heritage is very rich in content, and each of the elements has a great importance of its own. We cannot say that one cultural value is more important than another. Each cultural value is a cornerstone of cultural heritage. Both tangible and intangible, all related elements, can be regarded with this viewpoint.



Besides values such as music, oral history, fairy tales, tall tales, and stories, legends also take an important place in a country's folklore. Listening to legends from someone or reading them in books may not elicit sufficient interest alone, but if they are expressed in terms of the places where they are thought to have occurred, and if one can encounter the related rocks of petrification legends, for example, the impact becomes stronger. You can experience the thrill of "discovery."

When evaluating cultural values and heritage tourism, it can be said that they make substantial contributions to each other. Without cultural values, you can't attract visitors, and without visitors, there is no value to your attractions. The number of the visitors can show the value of a touristic attraction. In this regard, one of the ways of protecting and keeping the cultural values familiar is to encourage their relationship with tourism. Hakan Melih Aygün emphasizes that, 'It is known that one of the effective methods of protecting cultural heritage is through cultural tourism. When considering the effect of tourism in protecting cultural heritage, with accurate and scientific evaluation, tourism can be seen as a means of making an economic contribution to cultural heritage' (WTO 1999, 57–61, as quoted in Aygün 2011, 203).

There are such interesting legends in Turkey that they can attract many people. However, we cannot say that they are well known enough to be recognized by those who might be interested. As Philip L Pearce says, "Good scenery is not a tourist attraction, but a scenic lookout which is named, managed, and well used is included" [in visitors' travel plans] (Pearce 1991, 46). If something isn't known as widely as it should be, how can it be evaluated or be the center of interest?

These objects related to legends can be significant tourist attractions, if they are promoted as much as they deserve. The first aspect to be considered is to whom this cultural value will appeal. When having a look at the theme of the legends, we can say the ones who are interested in cultures, customs, a different way of life, and so forth, would definitely like to have an opportunity to hear the legends from the local people and see the

## DATA COLLECTION

### Legend 3

#### 1. Information about the legend:

- a. **The name of the legend:** Petrified dragon
- b. **The place:** Ilıcak (Huzi) village, 4 km to the main road of Van-Hakkari and about 25 km to Başkale town, Van.
- c. **The material aspects about the legend:** A dragon-shaped rock and a fountain

#### 2. Information about who told the legend

- a. **Name:** Namet Parlak
- b. **Place / Date of the birth:** Ilıcak-Başkale, 1964.
- c. **Education and job:** High school. Tradesman
- d. **When, where, and from whom he heard:** The man who told the story was born in the village where the dragon-shaped rock is located, and he still lives in the same village. He heard the legend from his father, grandparents, and the old people living in the village.

#### 3. Description of the dragon-shaped rock:

There is a stream that divides the residential area of the village into two parts, and a dragon-shaped rock can be found in the streambed, nearly 500 m down the village. The dragon-shaped rock has a fascinating view. The length of the dragon is about 50 m. Although its tail's height is about 3-4 cm, its height gradually increases, and towards the head, its height is up to 5.50 m (Photo on p. 32). This portion, which is like a dragon head, has a dimension of 2.20 m x 3.50 m, and its mouth is 1.00 m x 1.75 m (Photo on p. 33). As the rock is sandstone and is subject to wear, it has been considerably eroded. Ten meters from the tail of the dragon, there is a 60 cm rift (Photo on p. 35). The back part of the rock has a nearly 10 cm width, and there is a curving line extending from the tail to the head. The line seems to be natural. Near the western side of the head, there is a small rock with a length of about 3 m, which reminds us of a dragon cub (Photo on p. 33). A spring, which is about 30 m away on the east side of the rock, also draws one's attention. It has mineral water (Photo on p. 36).

### Legend 4

#### 1. Information about the legend:

- a. **The name of the legend:** Wedding procession became rocks
- b. **The place:** Aşit Village-Van, on main road from Van to Özalp, near Anzaf Castle, 15 km away from Van province.
- c. **The material aspects about the legend:** Two separate rocks and lots of smaller rocks around.

#### 2. Information about who told the legend:

- a. **Name:** Murat Uysal
- b. **Place / Date of the birth:** Van, 1973
- c. **Education and job:** University, civil servant

**3. When, where, and from whom he heard:** Murat, who told the legend, often goes to the villages of Van because of his job. He heard about the legend when he paid a visit to the village. He heard the legend from the village headman and from some others who live in that village.

#### 4. Description of the wedding procession rocks in Aşit Village

You can see two tall rocks next to each other (Photo on p. 39). They symbolize the petrified bride and groom. The taller one, about 8 m tall, is thought to be the petrified groom, and the shorter one, about 6 m tall, the petrified bride. You can see many smaller rocks around, and they are called wedding procession rocks (Photo on p. 38). They represent the ones who joined the wedding, but became petrified because of the bride's prayer.

related objects. This can be young people, adults, and elderly people. In addition to these general audiences, there can be newly married couples on honeymoons, filmmakers, writers, social scientists, nature lovers/conservationists, adventurers, and anyone who is curious about learning or seeing new things.

## Conclusion

Legends mostly come into prominence with expressive language, and therefore, they are evaluated as intangible cultural values. Although it is known that there are related physical elements (rocks in different shapes), this aspect is often disregarded. However, in addition to its abstract or intangible value, if the tangible aspect is taken into consideration, then its importance and the place it deserves among the other cultural values will be understood.

When the petrification legends are analyzed, it is seen that they have an important place in terms of both the subject and geographical area they cover. It is thus important to consider the following points on petrification legends and related rocks:

1. Legends associated with rocks (bride, groom, camel, dragon rocks) can create a new

market for tourism. By considering the map of the legends, tours can be organized.

2. Each legend and associated rock can be considered in the field of arts and crafts.

3. Books can be written about the associated legends and presented in the cinema and television sector.

4. The Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection Board of Turkey should protect the specific objects (rocks in different shapes) related to the legends. The legends will gain more meaning and vitality with the associated objects.

5. There are books related to the legends. The photos of the related rocks and documentation will contribute more in all respects.

6. The local people should be made aware about such cultural wealth.

7. The local people can benefit from such values economically if the values are considered in terms of tourism.

8. Although the petrification legends told in Turkey are thought to be based on pre-Islamic Central Asia Turkish culture and beliefs (paganism), they are regarded as if they were true and factual by the local people.

9. The legends are generally transmitted from generation to generation orally. As most of them don't have written versions or records,

it is inevitable that there are different versions when told over a long time period. In order to preserve the most accepted version, written records must be provided.

10. Another way to protect the legends from extinction is to keep them as an active part of local life. In this respect, tourism can be a good opportunity for preservation. ▼

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Front view of the wedding procession rocks. Petrified bride (the short rock), groom (the tall rock), and the wedding procession (the rocks around). Aşit Village-Van, on the main road from Van to Özalp, near Anzap Castle, 15 km away from Van province.





Back view of the petrified bride and groom rock.

works as a folklorist and writer. He has published many books, including these on legends:

- 1) *101 Anadolu Efsanesi (101 Anatolian Legends)*, İstanbul 1976; Ankara 1989; Ankara 2003, 2004. (Most of the legends are from the other Turkish countries).
- 2) *Anadolu—Türk Efsanelerinde Taş Kesilme Motifi ve Bu Efsanelerin Tip Kataloğu (Anatolia—The Motif of Petrification in Turkish Legends and The Catalogue of these Myth Type)*, Ankara 1980.
- 3) *Efsane Araştırmaları (Legend Studies)*, 2nd ed., 2013, contains many of his articles.

<sup>4</sup> “Hz” is written as abbreviation of *Hazreti* in Turkish. It is a “honorific” word, which was used for very important persons in Islam. Hazreti Ali is the cousin of the Islamic prophet Hazreti Muhammad. He ruled the Islamic world as a Caliphate from 656 to 661. Known for his courage, he was also respected for his knowledge, honesty, belief, and loyalty to Hazreti Muhammad. With respect to his courage and bravery, in legends, when someone is danger, he/she prays to Allah to send Hazreti Ali to rescue him/her.

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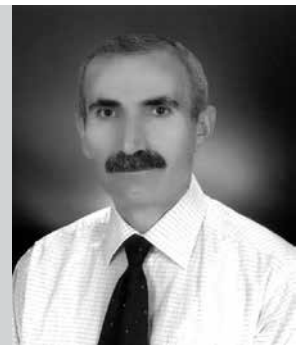
## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Yaşar Kalafat is a member of the Society for the History of Religions of Folklore Research Institute in Turkey and has conducted much research in this field, mainly, in Asian countries.

<sup>2</sup> Metin Ergun is a professor of science and literature at Selcuk University in the field of Turcology (study of languages, history, literature, folklore, culture, and ethnology of people speaking Turkic languages and Turkic peoples), Konya-Turkey.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Dr. Saim Sakaoğlu was born in Konya in 1939. He is a retired professor, but still

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Department, in Van, Turkey. He has taught vocational English to art history students and to tourism guides, as well as lectured on Byzantium Art, Seljuk Art, and Ottoman Art. As a project researcher, he has been involved in the study of gravestones and the excavation of Şavşat Castle in Artvin, built in the ninth century.

# Rumrunners on the Bay

BY NANCY SOLOMON

Few events raise as much curiosity on the bay than the stories of the legendary rumrunners, many of whom called Freeport and other South Shore communities home. When I first began doing fieldwork in the late 1980s in this area, some of the people I approached were still concerned for their safety in sharing their memories of the 1920s, when prohibition was the law of the land. On Long Island, many baymen earned extra money on the side, bringing booze from offshore boats that traveled from the West Indies to the waters off Long Beach. Their small garveys and skiffs were difficult to detect, especially at night, and waiting cars and trucks quickly collected the barrels and boxes of imported liquor.

Fred Scopinich was born in 1927 in Freeport, part of the third generation of a family of boat builders. They built fishermen's garveys and military boats during the two world wars, and rumrunners and Coast Guard boats in between. "I grew up in the boatyard—every day I would watch what was going on. There was nothing else I wanted to see except what the next day's progress was going to be."

According to Fred:

The boat, *Mauveen*, took five crew members out of the inlet. They got out to the Coast Guard boat that was patrolling the inlet, who stopped them and asked where they were going. They told them they were going mackerel fishing. As they said, these two fellows jumped off the boat with pistols and held up the Coast Guardsmen. They stayed in the Coast Guard boat, and the other boat went out, got its load of rum, went in and unloaded. Afterward, the Coast Guard sent a skiff out to pick up the two guys. The two guys who held them up hid \$200–300 dollars in the boat and told the Coast Guardsmen, "If you report us, we're reporting you that you took a bribe."

Some baymen played an indispensable role in rum-running, smuggling, via their bay houses, illegal booze from large cargo ships offshore to hotels from Brandt Point to Woodmere Bay. Fishermen and sportsmen,

like Carmine Marinaccio and Arthur Pearsall, frequently witnessed illicit activities. They kept many of their stories secret until recently, because of fear of retribution.

Jack Combs, a burly bayman, and his partner, "One arm Charlie," shared a bay house in the Haunts Creek area. The tale he told me: He and his friend had converted their booze into cash and deposited it for safekeeping in a cigar box and hid it under a cot. By the time they returned the next day, the extra high tide had soaked their "deposit box," the \$5s, \$10s and \$20s, now soggy with saltwater. Jack hastily went to town and returned with a box of thumbtacks. The two had just finished tacking the money on the walls to dry when federal marshals, gun in hand, kicked the door open, and gaping at the money hanging on the wall, shouted, "You are under arrest!" Jack stuttered and gasped, "What for?" "Possession of alcoholic beverages" came the answer. "Wa, wa, wa, we only got money; no booze," Jack protested. "Ain't against the law to have money." All the while, "One arm Charlie" was nodding in approval. "You have a point," admitted the officer. "We will be watching you," he cautioned as he left.

—Carmine Marinaccio,  
September 1989

Arthur Pearsall remembers how, only a short distance from the mainland, stills dotted the marshlands. As a child, Pearsall sold scrap metal, which made the bootleggers' scrap metal stills very valuable to Pearsall. According to local legend, some baymen and bay house owners made substantial fortunes as rumrunners in the 1920s, enabling them to eventually retire in fashion.

Schoolteacher Lillian Chapin recalled an outing taken by her and some fellow teachers to Meadow Island, where several hotels co-existed with baymen and celebrities. She jotted down her memories in an illustrated poem:

Eight little maidens reached the Freeport dock.  
For the ferryman, they waited half an hour by the clock.

Wet and laughing, joking, chaffing, to the bungalow repaired.  
Dirty dishes, dirty floors, dirty mattresses and doors.  
Sadly the homesick maidens eyed the feather bed,  
with mental reservation. "Here I will not lay my head."

Then up rose the fair young boatman,  
who had been our faithful guide, pointed out the hotel near us  
where he thought we might abide.



This rumrunner was one of 25 built during Prohibition. Photo courtesy Fred Scopinich.



Then the maidens wandered. O'er the sand. . . Lou and Etta went in bathing while the others stayed on land. Thus passed by the happy moments, maidens feeling all was well. Little knew they at the time of goings-on at the hotel.

For nightly ran the host with bottles armed, while the ever thirsty crowd around the hotel and beaches swarmed. Daily in his tower sat a member of the Coast Guard crew. Though one hundred yards away, yet little of these things he knew.

Three days spent the carefree maidens, mostly lying near the shore . . .

. . . while their arms and necks and faces from the sun grew pretty sore.

Chapin and her friends stayed at Charlie Johnson's Hotel until Chapin married. The album containing this poem was passed down to Marylynne Geraghty, Chapin's great-niece, and then to Grace Remsen, a friend of Geraghty's. The Remsen family owns a bay house and run a killey-fish business that has been passed down in their family.

Further east, near Captree State Park, once stood the Wa Wa Yanda Club, along with bay houses that survived Superstorm Sandy. Several of the bay house owners recall this storied club. The islands were used primarily by commercial fishermen until 1885, when a



Meadow Island hotel circa 1921. Courtesy of the Remsen family.

group of recreational duck hunters and fishermen from New York City founded the Wa Wa Yanda Club, a private fishing and hunting club on the southeast tip of Captree Island. The club was well known among prominent Long Islanders and out-of-towners. Advertisements for the club could be seen in such magazines as *Gray's Sporting Journal*.

Capt. Charley Islein began a club ferry that ran from Babylon to Captree Island, which was originally a half-mile long and a quarter-mile wide. According to old-timers today, Captains "Windy" and "Shorty" ran the club's fishing boats so guests could fish for fluke, striped bass, and other finfish that were common in the surrounding bay waters.

"Old Lige Raynor" was the club's caretaker and best known for his entertaining stories. During the "Roaring Twenties" the club was a safe haven for those who enjoyed a drink now and then. Rum-running was a major activity at this and other island clubs and hotels.

There is scant visual evidence from this storied period of Long Island's history. Yet many residents are familiar with this chapter and the stories of Long Island's rumrunners, in part, because of the stories that have been told and published. One of the stories, shared by Bob Doxsee, is that Bill McCoy, a legendary rumrunner, brought booze through Jones Inlet, making sure the booze was high quality. According to Doxsee and others, the phrase "the real McCoy" was a reflection of McCoy's insistence that the alcohol be genuine. Like all traditional stories, there are those who doubt its validity. However, as I and other folklorists like to say, "why let the truth get in the way of a good story?" ▼



Bay Houses like this one were used for rum-running in the 1920s. It was destroyed by Superstorm Sandy. Photo by Martha Cooper, 1991.

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# Remembering My Grandfather's Left-Wing Bungalow Colony in Dutchess County

BY RAANAN GEBERER

There's a common perception that all of the old-time Jewish bungalow colonies in New York State were in the Catskills. Maybe the majority were, but not all. Off NY State Route 9D, in Dutchess County, at the foot of a mountain, lies a large parcel of land with several modern houses on it. If you went back 50 years, during the era of my childhood, however, you would have found one medium-sized house and a group of wooden bungalows, painted white with red roofs; a swimming pool; two see-saws and a jungle gym for kids; and a social hall (called the "casino").

The bungalow colony was where my Belarusian-born maternal grandfather, Harry Rothstein, and his friends held forth every summer. I don't know its exact origin—my mother used to say that the Lebanese-American family who owned it once operated it as an actual farm, with the bungalows merely a way to make extra money. By the '50s, the farm was gone, but the bungalow colony remained.

I last visited the area about two years ago, by which time the bungalows had long been demolished. Before that, the last time I visited was in 1987. At that time, the bungalows were still there, but the paint was fading, the see-saws were rusted, and it was obvious that at least half of them were unoccupied. The writing was already on the wall.

Interestingly, when I met my wife, whose family had gone to a more conventional bungalow colony in the Catskills, she told



The author, age five, with the bungalow colony dog, "Bingie," near his grandfather's bungalow, in 1956 or 1957. Photo courtesy of Raanan Geberer.

me that my grandfather's colony must have been wealthier—although I never thought of it as such. That's because my Dutchess County bungalows had attached porches with screens, while her childhood bungalows had no porches, and only one bedroom with a kitchenette and bathroom. Come to think

of it, when my brother or I visited for more than a day, we slept on a little couch on that porch.

Many of the old folks' activities were, I suspect, similar to those in the Catskill colonies: playing pinochle, playing chess, sitting in folding chairs by the pool,





At the bungalow colony, probably in the 1950s (left to right): Yankif Gorelick (the author's uncle), Polya Gorelick (Yankif's wife), Fanny Rothstein (partially obscured, the author's grandmother), and Harry Rothstein (the author's grandfather). Photo courtesy of Raanan Geberer.

occasional entertainment at the casino (such as Yiddish folksongs or square dancing). One guy, who had a car, would go into town to get groceries, and the Dugan's Bread truck would come once a week. There was one important difference, however.

My grandfather and most of the other people there were communists, former communists, or "fellow travelers." They would hold meetings and discussion groups, often led by Grandpa himself, in which they discussed current events. Talking about the '68 election, Grandpa exclaimed, "*Vun thing ve don't want is Tom Dewey!*" He meant Richard Nixon. Another time, he said, commenting on a column in the *New York Times*: "*People are just beginning to talk about how bad Joe McCarthy was. Ve always knew!*"

Curiously, although some of these old-timers had known each other for 30 or 40 years, they always called each other "Mister": "Mr. Rosen," "Mr. Sholovsky," "Mr. Rothstein."

While Grandpa acknowledged that Stalin had been a murderous dictator and that there were serious problems with the way Jews were treated in the Soviet Union, he still defended the USSR, in general: "*Maybe dey don't have color TVs in Russia, but everybody has*

*enough to eat,*" he said in a speech on his 75th birthday. "*All dese people like Mayor Lindsay or Bobby Kennedy, who are trying to help people under de current economic system, are OK, but it's like de're trying to bail out a rowboat vit a tin can!*"

While neither one of my parents agreed with Grandpa's politics (my mother had rebelled against his communism when she was still a teen), they basically took the whole thing with a grain of salt—as one of Grandpa's idiosyncrasies, just like his funny jokes and his comic malapropisms ("*How do you feedle?*" or "*De Armory and Navy forever!*").

Because Grandpa was so beloved by everyone, other family members also tolerated his communism as an eccentricity, a quirk. Indeed, in so many ways, like his generosity to his grandchildren (he always gave us toys), he was like a typical Jewish grandfather. The difference was that the typical Jewish grandfather didn't constantly spout phrases like "*monopoly kepitaleesm.*"

I don't know whether the family who owned the colony knew anything about the summer renters' political side, especially since Grandpa and his friends often reverted to Yiddish. I spoke to one of those family members about 10 years ago, and she made

no comments that would indicate this. She did, however, clear up one big mystery for me. Amid all the seniors, there were usually rowdy, rock music-playing teenagers filling one or two bungalows. I wondered where they came from. Now I know—they were the owner's kids' friends.

Grandpa had opposed Mom's Zionism when she was younger. By the time I was growing up, however, he was at least nominally friendly to Israel—for example, he had a book by David Ben-Gurion about the efforts to reclaim the Negev Desert through irrigation. He also had a decorative plate with stylized drawings of Israeli dancers. However, after he died, a much more hard core Marxist faction dominated the colony, and they were extremely hostile to Israel. This, mind you, was well before Begin and Sharon, before most of the settlements, before the Lebanon War, or any of the other actions that made Israel somewhat controversial.

One day, my mother told me a story she had heard from my Uncle Yankif, Grandma's brother, who had been visiting someone at the bungalow colony. One of this new crew was making a fiery speech denouncing Israel, when Yankif suddenly rose from his seat and said, "Tonight, I speak from my heart," and went into an impassioned defense of the Jewish state. As he sat down, people muttered, "I didn't know he was for Israel."

During my conversation with the member of the owner's family, she mentioned that one of the last old-timers to survive, before he died in the early '90s, stipulated in his will that his ashes be scattered over the grounds.

Rest in peace, old-time Jewish left-wing bungalow colony. ▼

Raanan Geberer is a journalist who lives in Chelsea with his wife, Rhea, and cat, Bonnie. He grew up in the Bronx and is a SUNY Binghamton graduate. His hobbies include playing music with his friends, vegetable gardening, working out at the gym, traveling, and reading. He also is the author of three novels. Photo by Rhea Lewin Geberer.



# Bairbre McCarthy: Irish Storyteller

INTERVIEW BY ANNA MULÉ

*March is a busy month for Irish storytellers. I spoke with Bairbre McCarthy on the phone about her CD, The Keeper of the Crock of Gold: Irish Leprechaun Tales. Drawn from her book of Irish stories, the CD is a combination of “old retellings” and original stories by McCarthy that “stick up for the rights of Leprechauns.” Throughout the stories, McCarthy weaves in sean-nós singing by her daughter Mary Willems and fiddle playing by Maura McNamara. In our conversation, she tells me about her roots, about her activism for Leprechaun rights, and about becoming a professional storyteller in America:*

I’m from County Clare, on the west coast of Ireland. When I came to America in 1980 on my summer holidays, I met my husband. We got married the following year, and we’ve been here ever since. I grew up on a horse farm—my father used to raise horses—and I got a trainer’s license to train horses in Saratoga Springs. But the horses have to go south in the winter, because Saratoga is a little too snowy for racing. And so I was asked to teach a class in Irish history and language. And, of course, when you teach history you really do have to go back into the mythology. It’s so much a part of the Celtic culture; we have this oral tradition. The storyteller is a very important person in the community. They make stories about all the great events and pass it down in the stories. And so this is how I became a professional storyteller (because, you know, in Ireland people don’t think of themselves as professional storytell-



Bairbre McCarthy. Photo courtesy of the author.

ers). I was telling all these old stories as part of the history.

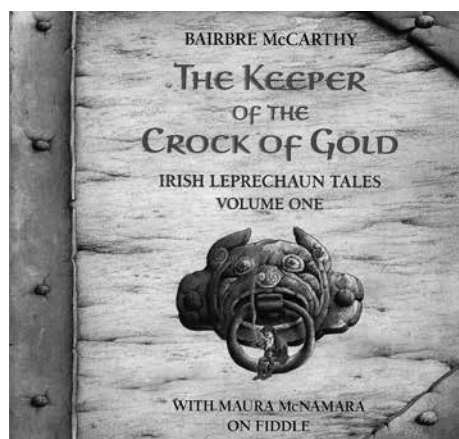
Everyone knows the Leprechauns over here, but I really don’t think we were being fair to the poor Leprechaun. We’re always grabbing his gold and shaking him, and not treating him very well. And basically, when people do that, they don’t get very good results. The Leprechaun always tricks them. So, in the book, there are 10 stories. Three of them are original, old retellings. But the other ones, I made them up, because I was basically sticking up for Leprechaun rights, I guess. I felt if you treated the Leprechaun with respect, you might get better results. [On Volume 1 of the CD, tracks 2, 3, 4 and 6 are new stories by McCarthy.]

I really had a lot of fun with [writing new stories], because I’ve been a traditional storyteller for so long that I know what you need to put in there. So, really what I did is take all the same elements—like things happen in

trees, and there are a lot of giants. I did use a lot of those old elements and a lot of actual history, and then just tied it in with a new story, that really had the Leprechaun helping people.

If you grow up in Ireland, everybody really is a storyteller. It has something to do with the culture, the fact that we have this oral culture. Things were passed down orally. So when I was a child, I heard stories from my parents, my grandparents. It was even part of the school curriculum. Once you started school, you had all these little stories that blended with the early history. We had a radio show every week with a very famous Irish storyteller, Eamon Kelly. It came on the air every week, and I remember my father gathering us all eight kids, and saying, “It’s time! *In My Father’s Time.*” Or my father would just tell a story. We’re very good in Ireland at entertaining ourselves.

I would never have thought of myself as becoming a professional storyteller until the





opportunity just landed in my lap [in America], really, as far as people coming to ask me if I would tell stories. I still prefer the small setting, where everyone is cozy and sitting around in a circle. But I do end up doing big auditoriums, where I end up on the stage with a microphone, and everyone just sits in their seats.

I think storytelling brings you closer to people. Everybody has some good stories to tell. I really enjoy [it] when I get to do a workshop, where I help people develop their own stories or ideas. I also do some archiving of stories for communities, where we set up story-sharing sessions, and we invite people to come and have a cup of tea and either listen to, or tell, a story about the community. And then we set up a little recording booth. I like to be close to the people when I'm telling a story. I like to see their eyes, see what their expressions are as they're listening.

I'm happy that storytelling hasn't completely disappeared. Sometimes you hear of communities that are starting new storytelling clubs. When I do the workshops, it's usually personal stories. I think that people in this country don't know as many of the historical or mythical stories as we do in Ireland. I do feel like that's lacking here. It's a shame that they don't. I think everybody in Ireland knows all the stories of the mythology. They know all the Leprechaun stories, and they know all about the magical people who might have lived there thousands of years ago. We're big storytellers in Ireland.



Bairbre McCarthy's CD, *The Keeper of the Crook of Gold: Irish Leprechaun Tales*, was the March 2012 featured selection in the New York Folklore Society's CD-of-the-Month *Voices in New York* membership program. Her CDs are available in the New York Folklore Society's online store, <http://www.nyfolklore.org/gallery/store/music.html>. For more information about Bairbre, visit [bairbremccarthy.com](http://bairbremccarthy.com). ▼

Anna Mulé is the director of digital marketing and adjunct professor at Wagner College, where she curates the website, produces multimedia stories, directs social media strategies, and teaches video storytelling. With her organization "Media Folk," she also supports traditional arts and culture through multimedia production and archive management ([mediafolk.org](http://mediafolk.org)).

## Good Read

### *Caffè Lena: Inside America's Legendary Folk Music Coffeehouse*

Edited by Jocelyn Arem in collaboration with Caffè Lena. Photography by Joe Alpers. Foreword by Tim Robbins. Original texts by Lena Spencer and Sarah Craig. Brooklyn, NY: Powerhouse Books, 2013, 8x11 in., 288 pages, ISBN: 978-1-57687-652-7, \$49.95, hardcover.



Finally, there is a book worthy of Caffè Lena's rich history. This big, beautiful, oversized hardcover is a love letter to the Caffè, the many musicians who've graced Lena's tiny stage, and to folk music itself. Arem has spent years researching, collecting, interviewing, and archiving thousands of pieces of ephemera for this volume.

From Caffè Lena's humble beginnings in the early 1960s to the cultural institution it is today, every era of the coffeehouse is explored. Huge photos, many never before seen by the general public, fill the pages, and many major musical acts offer deeply personal thoughts on their time at Lena. Rufus Wainwright, Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, and, of course, Lena Spencer herself are among the many subjects profiled. It is simply amazing to think of all the talent that has performed in that tiny building on Phila Street.

This book is guaranteed to be a hit for fans of folk music, the 1960s cultural revolution, or Saratoga Springs history. There is something for everyone here, and *Caffè Lena* is sure to spark many wonderful conversations when lovingly displayed on your coffee table. Has there ever been a book more fitting for such a spot?

—Chris Linendoll  
Northshire Bookstore  
Saratoga Springs, NY



# Submission Guidelines for *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore*

*Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* is a membership magazine of the New York Folklore Society ([www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org)).

The New York Folklore Society is a nonprofit, statewide organization dedicated to furthering cultural equity and cross-cultural understanding through programs that nurture folk cultural expressions within communities where they originate, share these traditions across cultural boundaries, and enhance the understanding and appreciation of folk culture. Through *Voices* the society communicates with professional folklorists and members of related fields, traditional artists, and a general public interested in folklore.

*Voices* is dedicated to publishing the content of folklore in the words and images of its creators and practitioners. The journal publishes research-based articles, written in an accessible style, on topics related to traditional art and life. It also features stories, interviews, reminiscences, essays, folk poetry and music, photographs, and artwork drawn from people in all parts of New York State. Columns on subjects such as photography, sound and video recording, legal and ethical issues, and the nature of traditional art and life appear in each issue.

## Editorial Policy

**Feature articles.** Articles published in *Voices* represent original contributions to folklore studies. Although *Voices* emphasizes the folklore of New York State, the editor welcomes articles based on the folklore of any area of the world. Articles on the theory, methodology, and geography of folklore are also welcome, as are purely descriptive articles in the ethnography of folklore. In addition, *Voices* provides a home for “orphan” tales, narratives, and songs, whose contributors are urged to provide contextual information.

Authors are encouraged to include short personal reminiscences, anecdotes, isolated tales, narratives, songs, and other material that relates to and enhances their main article.

Typically feature articles range from 1,000 to 4,000 words and up to 6,000 words at the editor's discretion.

**Reviews and review essays.** Books, recordings, films, videos, exhibitions, concerts, and the like are selected for review in *Voices* for their relevance to folklore studies or the folklore of New York State and their potential interest to a wide audience. Persons wishing to review recently published material should contact the editor. Unsolicited reviews and proposals for reviews will be evaluated by the editor and by outside referees where appropriate. Follow the bibliographic style in a current issue of *Voices*.

Reviews should not exceed 750 words.

**Correspondence and commentary.** Short but substantive reactions to or elaborations upon material appearing in *Voices* within the previous year are welcomed. The editor may invite the author of the materials being addressed to respond; both pieces may be published together. Any subject may be addressed or rebutted once by any correspondent. The principal criteria for publication are whether, in the opinion of the editor or the editorial board, the comment constitutes a substantive contribution to folklore studies, and whether it will interest our general readers.

Letters should not exceed 500 words.

## Style

The journal follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Consult *Webster's Third International Dictionary* for questions of spelling, meaning, and usage, and avoid gender-specific terminology.

**Footnotes.** Endnotes and footnotes should be avoided; incorporate such information into the text. Ancillary information may be submitted as a sidebar.

**Bibliographic citations.** For citations of text from outside sources, use the author-date style described in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

**Language.** All material must be submitted in English. Foreign-language terms (transliterated, where appropriate, into the Roman alphabet) should be italicized and followed by a concise parenthetical English gloss; the author bears responsibility for the correct spelling and orthographics of non-English words. British spellings should be Americanized.

## Publication Process

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For the initial submission, send an e-mail attachment or CD (preferably prepared in Microsoft Word and saved as Rich Text Format).

Copy must be double spaced, with all pages numbered consecutively. To facilitate anonymous review of feature articles, the author's name and biography should appear only on a separate title page.

Tables, charts, maps, illustrations, photographs, captions, and credits should follow the main text and be numbered consecutively. All illustrations should be clean, sharp, and camera-ready. Photographs should be prints or duplicate slides (not originals) or scanned at high resolution (300+ dpi) and e-mailed to the editor as jpeg or tiff files. Captions and credits must be included. Written permission to publish each image must be obtained by authors from the copyright holders prior to submission of manuscripts, and the written permissions must accompany the manuscript (authors should keep copies).

Materials are acknowledged upon receipt. The editor and two anonymous readers review manuscripts submitted as articles. The review process takes several weeks.

Authors receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their contribution appears and may purchase additional copies at a discount. Authors of feature articles may purchase offprints; price information is available upon publication.

## Submission Deadlines

Spring–Summer issue      November 1  
Fall–Winter issue          May 1

Send submissions as Word files to  
Todd DeGarmo, *Voices* Editor  
(e-mail preferred): [degarmo@crundalllibrary.org](mailto:degarmo@crundalllibrary.org)

or  
New York Folklore Society  
129 Jay Street  
Schenectady, NY 12305

## NYFS News and Notes

The New York Folklore Society Welcomes New Board Members to its governing body and expresses thanks to those who retired at the close of 2014. Our Society has benefitted from the wise counsel and visions of outgoing President, Gabrielle Hamilton; outgoing Treasurer, Jessica Schein; and board member, Ellen Fladger, who have all served the maximum time allowed by the NYFS bylaws, as well as the service of former board members Puja Sahney, Anna Mulé, and Connie Sullivan-Blum. We are indebted to them for steering the Society through some difficult periods.

The organization has emerged stronger and more robust. With 2015, we welcome new board members, Gabrielle Berlinger of New York City, Naomi Sturm of Staten Island, and John Braungard of Latham, NY. John will step into the role of Treasurer. Gabrielle Hamilton of the Bronx will continue to serve another two years in the position of “Past President,” with Tom van Buren of Westchester County, now President of the Board and Christopher Mulé of Brooklyn taking on the added role of Secretary, in addition to his Vice-Presidential duties. This new slate was elected at New York Folklore Society's New York City Gathering and Annual Meeting that took place on Tuesday, March 10, 2015, at Union Hall in Brooklyn.

**Other New York Folklore Society transitions have taken place during the last few months.** Lisa Overholser, our program manager and manager of the Mentoring and Professional Development Program has taken a position in St. Louis, Missouri, and we bid her a fond farewell in December 2014.

Dr. Eileen Condon of Queens, NY, has agreed to serve as the New York Folklore Society's New York City Program Manager for the New York City region. Eileen holds a

PhD in Folklore from the University of Newfoundland and served as Acquisitions Editor





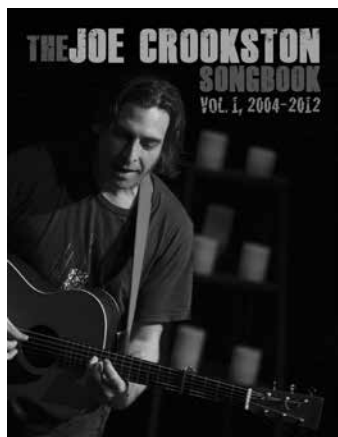
for Voices from 2008–2012. She is available to speak to persons within New York City and the lower Hudson Valley regarding New York Folklore Society opportunities, including those provided through the Mentoring and Professional Development Program. For further information, email Eileen at [eileen@nyfolklore.org](mailto:eileen@nyfolklore.org) or phone 347.205.0053. For Mentoring Program specifics, please visit our website at <http://www.nyfolklore.org/progs/mentor.html>

A central and western New York representative will be named later in 2015.

**Save the Date!** for our benefit concert, the “Adirondack Attic Musical Tour,” featuring Dan Berggren and Andy Flynn, which arrives at Proctors in downtown Schenectady, on May 22, 2015, at 7:30 p.m. See back cover of this issue for more details. Hope to see you there!

**Artist Demonstration in the Gallery**, Sunday, March 29, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. in the Gallery of New York Folklore and Traditions, 129 Jay Street, in downtown Schenectady. NYFS is hosting a presentation by Carol Lukovich. Ms. Lukovich will be demonstrating the making of baskets and decorations woven from pine needles, as part of the NYFS’s “Artist in the Gallery” series. This demonstration is supported by a grant from the Schenectady County Initiative Program (CIP).

**Available in Gallery of New York Folklore and Traditions** and online at [www.nyfolklore.org/gallery/store/music.htm#crookston-songbk](http://www.nyfolklore.org/gallery/store/music.htm#crookston-songbk)



The Joe Crookston Songbook, Vol. 1, 2004–2013

**Look for an Artist Spotlight on Joe Crookston in the next Voices!**

## Unsettling Assumptions: Tradition, Gender, Drag

Edited by Pauline Greenhill and Diane Tye. Published by the Utah State University Press. Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2014, 260 pages, 6 x 9 inches, paper. ISBN 978-0-87421-897-8.

It’s a perfect title. I considered myself fairly knowledgeable on gender issues, if not history, and settled down for an easy, familiar read.

Not to be. The essays in this volume address queer identity and sexuality in such varied places as Mennonite mummers’ plays and Chinese folklore. In case the reader was about to dismiss the writings as not relevant to contemporary American life, rockabilly culture and cinematic interpretations of the Brothers Grimm are also covered.

Each independent essay is well researched and cited, and the authors’ short biographies show varying levels of expertise and education.

Sadly, the person who would most benefit from *Unsettling Assumptions* would not read it. That is, practices examined in the book are often a common part of American culture, but the “person on the street” would not likely wish to read this book. The subject is relevant to the non-academic person, but not packaged attractively. It is, while not difficult, fairly academic in tone, as one sees from the first sentences of the Introduction, “What do Thanksgiving turkeys, rockabilly, and bar fights, and Chinese tales of female ghosts have in common? Each offers an example of how tradition and gender can intersect—sometimes with modes of drag—to unsettle assumptions about culture and its study.”

However, the authors do not assume expertise on the part of the reader on each subject. Clear, concise descriptions are included, as with *The Distaff Gospels*. “*The Distaff Gospels* (*Les Evangiles Des Quenouilles*), a 15th-century French manuscript, presents a series of about 230 items of folklore—beliefs, sayings, and remedies—within a frame narrative.”

At once the most familiar and most challenging chapter for the non-academic reader will be the chapter on the Brothers Grimm

and their treatment by the American cinema. The author, Kendra Magnus-Johnson, writes that, even in biopics about the Brothers, attention to biographical detail was not observed. The author observes that the Brothers’ “failed masculinity,” in part, made it impossible to tell their story straightforwardly. I would say that the brothers were simply too odd, too gender-nonconforming, for a TV movie for general consumption. Magnus-Johnson addresses the Brothers’ tendency to be “patriarchal appropriators and silencers of female storytelling,” even as she addresses the repeated fictions about their lives. I almost get the feeling that they asked for it.

The tone of the whole volume is remarkably neutral, given the incendiary topic and the many authors. Repeatedly, in different times and locales, practices which I had not noticed or believed had any particular gender identification significance are revealed to be important, but the authors uniformly point them out without anger. For example, Thanksgiving is given as a day when “division of labor between males and females becomes more pronounced than usual,” and these practices are examined in the context of several popular movies such as *Home for the Holidays* and *Brokeback Mountain*. The general tone is: “This is what you have really been seeing, so are you going to do anything with this information?”

On the whole, *Unsettling Assumptions* was not at all unsettling for this reviewer. On the contrary, it was at once comforting and inspiring. The fact that gender roles have been challenged, even if in a hidden way, for so much longer than even a life-long ally knew, is inarguable once one looks at folklore through the lens of this volume. With cultures other than white and western included here, the universality of the subject is addressed.

I would recommend *Unsettling Assumptions* for college libraries, for anyone doing gender studies, or for adults who enjoy reading folklore.

Frieda Toth, Librarian  
Crandall Public Library, Glen Falls, NY

# Join the New York Folklore Society today and become a subscriber to *Voices*

Join the New York Folklore Society and become part of a community that will deepen your involvement with folklore, folklife, the traditional arts, and contemporary culture. As a member, you'll have early notice of key events.

**Annual Conference.** People travel from all over to meet in a different part of the state each year for the NYFS Conference and Annual Meeting. Professionals in folklore and related fields join with educators and practitioners to explore the culture and traditions of the area. Lectures and discussions are balanced with concerts, dancing, and tours of cultural sites.

**New York State Folk Arts Forums.** Folk arts professionals, colleagues in related disciplines, and lay people come together each year to address a topic of special interest—whether it be folklore and the Internet, heritage tourism, cultural conservation, or intellectual property law.

## Help When You Need It

Become a member and learn about technical assistance programs that will get you the help you need in your work.

**Mentoring and Professional Development Program for Folklife and the Traditional Arts.** Receive technical assistance from a mentor of your choosing. You can study with a master traditional artist, learn new strategies for marketing, master concert and exhibition production, organize an archive, or improve your organizational management.

**Folk Artists Self-Management Project.** If you're a traditional artist, you know the importance of business, management, and marketing skills to your success in the marketplace. NYFS can help you with workshops, mentoring, and publications.

**Folk Archives Project.** What could be more critical than finding a repository for an important collection? The NYFS is a leader in the preservation of our cultural heritage. Attend our workshops and order copies of NYFS books at a discount.

**Consulting and Referral.** The NYFS offers informal counseling and referral services to the members in the field. Contact us by telephone, e-mail, or letter.

**Publications.** Members receive discounts on all NYFS publications. Visit [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org) for current titles.

## A Public Voice

The NYFS raises awareness of folklore among the general public through three important channels.

**Print.** *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore*, published twice a year, brings you folklore in the words and images of its creators and practitioners. The journal's new look distinguishes it from other publications in the field. Read *Voices* for news you can use about our field and legal issues, photography, sound and video recording, and archiving.

**Radio.** *Voices of New York Traditions* is a series of radio documentaries that spotlight the folklife of the state, aired on public radio. Stay tuned!

**Internet.** Visit [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org) for the latest news on events in folklore. Updated weekly, the NYFS web site is designed to appeal to the public as well as keep specialists informed.

## Advocacy

The NYFS is your advocate for sympathetic and informed attention to folk arts.

- We represent you on issues before the state legislature and the federal government when public policy affects the field. Visit the advocacy pages at [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org) to learn what we're doing and how you can help.
- The society partners with statewide, regional, and national organizations, from the New York State Arts and Cultural Coalition to the American Folklore Society, and frequently presents its projects and issues at meetings of professional organizations in the allied fields of archives, history, and libraries.

## So Join!

Become part of a community that explores and nurtures the traditional cultures of New York State and beyond. Membership in the NYFS entitles you to the following benefits:

- A subscription to *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore*
  - Invitations to conferences, workshops, and meetings
  - Updates on technical assistance programs
  - Opportunities to meet others who share your interests
  - Discounts on NYFS books
- Plus the satisfaction of knowing that you support the only organization devoted to folklore across New York State.

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Make a tax-deductible donation and help support the organization that supports folklore.

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Membership dues	\$ _____	\$ _____
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The amount of memberships greater than \$20 and all donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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The New York Folklore Society thanks the people and organizations that supported our programs and publications in 2015. Your help is essential to our work. If your local library is not listed among the institutional subscribers here, please urge them to join.

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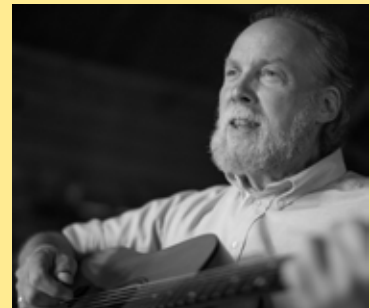
The New York Folklore Society presents

## ADIRONDACK ATTIC MUSICAL HISTORY TOUR

Featuring Dan Berggren and Andy Flynn



May 22, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
GE Theater, Proctors  
432 State Street  
Schenectady, NY  
Tickets: \$20.



The Adirondack Attic Musical History Tour vibrantly brings history to life. Author, editor, publisher and host of North Country Public Radio's *Adirondack Attic*, Andy Flynn joins Adirondack folk singer Dan Berggren for a special presentation that mixes folk songs with stories and images from the archives of the Adirondack Museum.

Tickets go on sale on April 1, 2015, at NYFS in downtown Schenectady, online at [www.nyfolklore.org/progs/comprog/attic.html](http://www.nyfolklore.org/progs/comprog/attic.html) or by mail to NYFS, 129 Jay Street, Schenectady, NY 12305.

For more information or to order by phone, call NYFS at 518/346-7008.

***This is a benefit concert for the New York Folklore Society.***

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