

# Voices

Spring–Summer 2022  
Fall–Winter 2022  
Volume 48:1–4

The Journal of  
New York Folklore

## *Ice Harvest Festival*

A Photo Essay

Adirondack Pipes  
and Drums

A Visit to City  
Lore's Archives

May Baskets

My Menstruation  
Ceremony

Norwegian Artist:  
Ellen Fjermedal

Suffragists in  
Redwork

A Banjo Story



## From the Director



Since 1999, New York Folklore (NYF) has been located in the heart of Schenectady's downtown on the Jay Street pedestrian walkway. For many years, our location

has been secondary to our activities elsewhere in New York State, including national American Folklore Society conferences in Rochester and Buffalo; artists' workshops in Utica and Ithaca; the Upstate Regional Project in far western and central New York State; and New York State Folk Arts Roundtables in Peekskill, Utica, Syracuse, Haverstraw, and Glens Falls. Our presence in the Capital Region is often not apparent to our own geographic community.

With an expanded and competent staff, NYF has experienced increased activity within the greater Capital Region, including the inauguration of the Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival in Albany's Washington Park. In addition, NYF is experiencing a resurgence of activity in folk arts education, much of which involves partnerships with Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education and area school districts, including the Schenectady City School District. NYF is pleased to be a participating and involved partner. Three current arts education initiatives are:

- In partnership with the Schoharie River Center, NYF has supported artists appearing within the Middleburgh Advantage Program, an after-school enrichment program in rural Schoharie County focusing on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning and the arts. In 2022, with NYF support, selected artists worked directly with K–6 students, engaging children with cultural traditions found in the Capital District's most recent newcomer communities. These programs, supported by artists' grants from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), have assisted newcomer artists with developing their skills as presenters within school settings. For a sample of the programming, with Pinya

and Eshue Aung, representatives of the Capital Region's Karen community, see: <https://youtu.be/dGZJOr2MwJI>

- An Individual Artists' grant from NYSCA, submitted by Schenectady-based Ghanaian drummer Zorkie Nelson is a currently sponsored project of NYF. With the support, Zorkie Nelson is launching a "Pan African Youth Orchestra" for the Capital District. This orchestra of traditional instruments will be an entirely new musical group, engaging middle and high school youth throughout the region. Practices have begun, and additional partnerships have been forged with the Schenectady City School District.

- A grant from the Our Town Program of the National Endowment for the Arts will provide programming for the 2023–24 school year for the entire Schenectady School District. Programming will focus on introducing North Indian Classical music and arts through presentations by renowned musicians Veena Chandra and Devesh Chandra; community concerts and presentations by additional artists representing diverse Indian cultural traditions; and presentations pertaining to cultural traditions of Schenectady's Guyanese community in Schenectady's five "Community Schools." The Our Town "place-making" project will engage all 17 schools in the Schenectady School District, including hundreds of students and dozens of instructional staff throughout the 2023–24 academic year.

These activities are in addition to the New York State Folk Arts in Education Network activities managed by Mira Johnson, the Network Coordinator, in a jointly supported position by NYF and Local Learning. For more information about ongoing New York-based Culture, Community and the Classroom Workshops, or to join the network, please contact us at [NYNetwork@locallearningnetwork.org](mailto:NYNetwork@locallearningnetwork.org).

*Ellen McHale, PhD, Executive Director  
New York Folklore  
[info@nyfolklore.org](mailto:info@nyfolklore.org)  
[www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org)*

## From the Editor



John Michael Vlach (1948–2022) served as the Director of the Folklife Program at George Washington University (GWU) for over 32 years. He was a giant in the field, a Fel-

low of the American Folklore Society, a leading expert on folklife, folk arts and craft, vernacular architecture, and cultural history (see his obituary and tribute on pages 84–7).

His books, exhibitions, and guidance inspired so many, including this young graduate student, attending GWU in the mid-1980s. He was my mentor, opening my eyes to the artistry found in the everyday—too often ignored—handmade objects, activities, and processes found within diverse communities.

John was not the reason I was initially attracted to GWU. I think its graduate program in American Studies satisfied my eclectic interests in fields of study, already running from undergraduate work in biology, history, and the natural environment to graduate work in anthropology and archaeology.

More importantly, I learned that anthropologist Colin Turnbull (1924–1994) was teaching there. He had made a name for himself with *The Forest People* (1961), his humanistic study of the Mubui pygmies, and I had just read his book, *The Human Cycle* (1983). I found his work accessible and informal, a breath of fresh air, coming out of a graduate program that I found to be sterile in the study of culture, with its artificial constructs and "us versus them" mentality.

Unfortunately, by the time I enrolled at GWU (after a year's deferment to work in Japan), Turnbull had left. They said classroom teaching was not for him. History notes he turned down tenure at GWU to care for his partner.

*continued on page 2*

***"Under the banner of folklife, history and culture are fused into a single entity; different cultural forms are linked within a single perspective, or single cultural forms are set against the backdrop of their pertinent cultural history."***

*—John Michael Vlach, Preface, xv, By the Work of Their Hands: Studies in Afro-American Folklife. Charlottesville & London: University Press of Virginia, 1991.*



## Features

- 3 Miller’s Mills’ Ice Harvest  
by Kevin Hoehn
- 21 A History of the Adirondack Pipes and Drums:  
In Honor of its Sixtieth Anniversary in 2009  
by David Jones
- 35 A Visit to City Lore’s Archives  
by Seth Orren Schonberg
- 38 May Baskets  
by Todd DeGarmo
- 47 My Menstruation Ceremony  
by Jan Hanvik
- 51 Portrait of an Artist: Ellen Fjermedal  
by Nils Caspersson
- 56 Redwork Embroidery and the Suffragist Tea Cozy Project:  
Why Redwork?  
by Tisha Dolton
- 62 A Banjo Story  
by Dan Hubbs
- 72 Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival, 2022  
by Anne Rappaport Berliner  
Photographs by Kevin Hoehn
- 78 New York State Council on the Arts Grants
- 84 In Memory of John Michael Vlach
- 86 A Tribute to John Vlach  
by Nancy Solomon

## Departments and Columns

- 12 Upstate  
by Dan Berggren
- 13 Announcement  
Congratulations to Iryna Voloshyna
- 14 Downstate  
by Steve Zeitlin
- 29 Announcement:  
Joseph Bruchac: Poet Laureate of  
Saratoga Springs  
by Todd DeGarmo
- 30 Empire State Legends  
by David J. Puglia
- 44 Foodways  
by Camilla Ammirati
- 54 From the Waterfront  
by Nancy Solomon
- 66 The Poetry of Everyday Life  
by Steve Zeitlin
- 69 From the Field  
Capital Region, Edgar Betelu  
Mohawk Valley, Anne Rappaport Berliner  
Rochester, Hannah Davis



Cover: Miller’s Mills’ townsfolk saw blocks of ice and load ice cakes onto a sleigh at the annual Ice Harvest in this hamlet located in Herkimer County. Kevin Hoehn captures the activities in photographs and essay, beginning on p. 3.

## From the Editor (continued)

I stayed with the program, selecting folklife as one field in a four-field PhD program, rather reservedly signing up for the folklife studies courses taught by the relatively new professor, John Michael Vlach.

These courses turned out to be game-changing for me and my career. John's work in material folk culture studies was stellar. *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Art* (1978) comes to mind, an exhibition catalog for the Cleveland Museum of Art. Scholarly, well-researched, but also accessible and inspiring. You had to consider the person as well as the object. Historical and cultural context was all important in his work.

John gave us large reading lists, encouraging us to be in touch with the work by folklorists all over the country. This necessitated a move beyond the GWU library to the Library of Congress, eventually gaining access to the back storage areas to find the more "limited edition" texts, or to specialty areas like the American Folklife Center, to dig through its collection of brochures, booklets, and pamphlets from small local organizations around the country.

I was a convert. Cowboy poetry, Italian puppetry, chainsaw carving, shotgun houses. Not as historic relics or products of an "other," but the tangible expressions of a people's creativity, beliefs, connections to friends, family, and neighbors. He opened my eyes to another way of viewing my local neighbors and their creativity. We could all be the folk.

I was introduced to the work of folklorists in my own homeplace: Louis Jones and Bruce Buckley at Cooperstown. New York Folklore Society and its journal. Varick Chittenden was hosting national conferences like *Getting the Lore Back to the Folk* (1979); Steve Zeitlin was publishing award-winning books like *A Celebration of American Family Folklore* (1982); and Jane Beck was curating exhibitions like *Always in Season: Folk Art and Traditional Culture in Vermont* (1982).

Early on, John congratulated me on my Master's thesis on an upstate New York

bootleg legend (especially, given its birth within an anthropology program focusing on Mayan culture), appreciated my newfound enthusiasm for folklife studies, and encouraged me to continue to work on my writing skills to better reach the public.

He put me in touch with Alicia Gonzalez at the Smithsonian's Office of Folklife Programs, who was coordinating a Japan Program for the upcoming Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife (1986). I was given an internship that spring, that turned into a temporary hire as Program Coordinator in 1986 and 1987.

When I asked John what else could I do with my specialty in folklife studies, he pointed to my home state of New York. They give public money to do this kind of work, he advised. You apply for grant money from the state arts council, and be sure to include time for your salary to do the work. Soon after, he made a point to introduce me to Robert Baron, director of Folk Arts at the New York State Council on the Arts, who was recruiting young folklorists to build a regional network in the state.

John Vlach was not Colin Turnbull, but he did share Colin's passion for people and their culture. He also was a meticulous scholar, digging deep in the historical and the living cultural meaning of his subjects. He opened a door for me those many years ago, sending me down this road where I continue to travel to this day. My life is so much richer for his gifts. My love goes out to his family, friends, and colleagues.

Todd DeGarmo  
Voices Editor

Founding Director of the Folklife Center  
at Crandall Public Library  
tdegarmo@sals.edu

## ERRATA

The caption for "The Last Sixties Show" on p. 37 of "K's Ghost City: Haunted by New York's Vanished Sites," by Kathryn Adisman, in *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore*, Fall/Winter 2021, was incomplete. It should have included the following credit: Screenshot photo taken by Mitch Corber from his video.

# Voices

Spring-Summer/Fall-Winter 2022 · Volume 48: 1-4

**Editor** Todd DeGarmo  
**Associate Editor** Patricia Mason  
**Administrative Manager** Laurie Longfield  
**Design** Mary Beth Malmshaimer  
**Printer** Eastwood Litho

**Editorial Board** Todd DeGarmo, Chair;  
Edward Y. J. Millar, NYF Board Liaison;  
Eric Ball, Maria Kennedy, James Kimball,  
Elena Martinez, T. C. Owens, David J. Puglia,  
Nancy Solomon, Elizabeth Tucker

**Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore**

is published twice a year by  
**New York Folklore**  
129 Jay Street, Schenectady, NY 12305  
**Voice** (518) 346-7008 / **Fax** (518) 346-6617  
**Website** [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org)

**Executive Director** Ellen McHale  
**Gallery and Publications Manager**

Laurie Longfield  
**Gallery Assistant** Ellen La Que  
**NYF/Local Learning Folk Arts in Education Network Coordinator**  
Mira Johnson

**Mentoring and Professional Development** Elinor Levy  
**Staff Folklorist: Upstate Regional Project** Anne Rappaport Berliner  
**Community Fieldworkers:**

**Upstate Regional Project:** Ladan Nikravan,  
Edgar Betelu. **Binghamton:** Akilah Briggs-Melvin

## Board of Directors

**President** Maria Kennedy  
**Vice President** Kay Turner  
**Treasurer** James Hall  
**Secretary** Mira C. Johnson  
**Past President** Tom van Buren  
Sandra A. M. Bell, Evelyn D'Agostino,  
Mackenzie Kwok, Edward Y. J. Millar, Nada Odeh,  
Aaron Paige, Vicie Rolling, Will Walker

**Advertisers:** To inquire, please call NYF  
(518) 346-7008 or fax (518) 346-6617.



Voices is available in Braille and recorded versions. Call NYF at (518) 346-7008.

New York Folklore is committed to providing services with integrity, in a manner that conveys respect for the dignity of the individuals and communities that NYF serves, as well as for their cultures, including ethnic, religious, occupational, and regional traditions.

The programs and activities of NYF and the publication of *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* are made possible in part by funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

*Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* is indexed in *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* and *Music Index* and abstracted in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*.

Reprints of articles and items from *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* are available by contacting NYF or visiting the NYF website.

ISSN 0361-204X

© 2023 by New York Folklore. All rights reserved.

# Miller's Mills' Ice Harvest

BY KEVIN HOEHN

As many of us in the Northern parts of the country push through the winter's chilly wind, sleet, and snow with the same determination our ancestors did, looking back at history reminds us that our ancestors had "harvest" on their minds. An ice harvest.

For two centuries in the winter, the people of Miller's Mills have come to Unadilla Lake with long saws, pikes, and tongs to cut pond ice, and then store it for refrigeration needs in warmer months.



Unadilla Lake in Miller's Mills, where the ice comes from. *All photos courtesy of the author.*



**MILLERS MILLS**  
**GRANGE**  **N° 581**

Miller's Mills Grange No. 581 sign.



The two draft horses that haul the sleigh with the ice up to the storage shed.



Sawing the blocks and loading the ice cakes onto the sleigh.

Miller's Mills is a hamlet located in the Town of Columbia in Herkimer County a few miles south of the Thruway (the population on their website indicates 29+ and the site points out that the number is not a mistake). Every February, weather permitting, the residents, members of the local Grange, church, fire department, and highway department join together to host the annual ice harvest.

Ice harvesting was a large industry in America for about 150 years, from the early 1800s to the mid-1950s, second as an export only to cotton at one point. It was called harvesting because it involved the gathering of the cold-weather "crop." In the spring, summer, and fall, ice was delivered to homes, businesses, and railroads for preserving food. The home icebox may have needed re-icing a couple of times a week, especially during hot summer months.

In the late 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order to create the Rural Electrification Administration, which brought electricity to rural areas. This led to mechanical refrigeration and by 1950, 90 percent of American city homes and 80 percent of the rural households had mechanical refrigerators. The ice business could not compete.



The tongs used to grab and haul the blocks of ice.



The cutting blade used to "score" the ice for the saws to cut along.





Sawing the blocks of ice.



Loading the ice cakes onto the sleigh.



Break in the action as the empty sleigh returns to be loaded.



Unloading the ice blocks into the shed, where they will be covered with sawdust and stored until summer.



Using tongs to drag the ice blocks onto a horse drawn sleigh for transportation to the ice house for storage.

The Miller's Mills community maintains the authenticity of a 19th century ice harvest. The hamlet was founded in 1790 by Andrew Miller. Andrew and his six sons ran a gristmill and sawmill on the pond. The ice from the pond was needed to preserve food and to cool farmers' milk.

To begin the process of harvesting, a grid is cut on the surface of the lake that defines each block (this is done with an antique gas-powered machine, the only exception to the traditional tools used). The individual blocks are cut by using 5-foot hand saws and breaker bars. The ice cake is judged by size, thickness, clarity, and weight, as it has been done for over 200 years.

The floating blocks (cakes) are guided to the shoreline with pikes where a ramp

leads up to a horse-drawn sleigh. Tongs are used to snare the ice, pull it up the ramp, and stack the cakes securely on the sleigh. Then, draft horses, who have been used for this work for 200 years, haul the load to the ice house, up on the hill, for the next step.

The secret of the ice harvest is in the packing of the ice as well as in the cutting. A good six inches or more of sawdust is laid around the ice cakes to preserve them as they are stacked. And for all those years, as the load was emptied, the children (and adults) have climbed aboard the empty sleigh for the trip back down to the pond.

The ice harvest, which was once used to keep food cold, is now an event that is used to keep precious memories alive. The mid-winter ice is used in the making of the

Grange's summer ice cream social. It seems to be also making something more than that. It is almost a remembrance of a time and life that has passed. This is one ritual that a town has decided not to change. ▼



Kevin Hoehn is a retired hospital pharmacist. He spends his time enjoying photography, visual storytelling, running, reading, family time, and looking into history. Photo courtesy of the author.

# Hearing Voices

BY DAN BERGGREN

*Say it slowly: voices*

*V clears the way like a snowplow*

*Letting vowel sounds arrive*

*Before the plural ending of inclusion*

I've been thinking a lot about the title of this journal—and the fact that it's plural. When I worked for the American Forces Network Europe, it was called The Voice of Home, because its primary audience was American listeners stationed overseas. The Voice of America has people of all different nationalities tuning in its signal. The SUNY Fredonia station, which I advised, calls itself The Campus and Community Voice of Fredonia. Each of these radio examples is a voice serving a community with diverse programming. *New York Folklore* is dedicated to sharing our state's many voices of folklore, and with that in mind, this edition's column explores several ways of thinking about upstate voices.

## Jeder baum spricht

*Every tree speaks* is a phrase Ludwig van Beethoven used, demonstrating his musical connection with the sounds of nature. That's what comes to my mind first when thinking about voices of upstate New York. Some ignore the soundscape altogether, never allowing it to become foreground; others may think of it as being like a vinyl record's surface noise or a cassette tape's hiss—that is, a distraction from the intended message. But the sounds from our surroundings carry many stories: the rivers' roar in spring; the brooks' summer babble; the songs of chickadees, jays, and white-throated sparrows; the call of the loon; the chilling howl of coyotes; and the mysterious, ever-changing voices of the trees. My uncle, Van Wilson was a social studies teacher in the classroom and a hunter safety training instructor in the woods. He taught me how to truly listen for wildlife and to the trees around me; how to distinguish the sound of wind through the leaves of maple and poplar, or through the needles of white pine and spruce. These sounds are all part of the choir, while our friends' and families' voices become the intermittent

solos and duets. One April, a river roaring in the valley prompted an elderly neighbor to recall the days of his youth, being summoned by the sound of the Hudson to report for duty as a river driver.

## Vox Humana

Swimming in this ocean of sound are the voices that breathe life into a thought, get something off their chest, say what they're thinking, tell us a story we'll never forget. My parents died over 20 years ago, yet I can still hear their voices in my head whenever I want.

Dad's cousin Margaret gave me lessons on the pump organ in the photo. It came from Vermont.

My mother Dorothy Wilson Berggren used to tell me about walking a quarter-mile to her older cousin's house to practice on the 1880s Estey reed organ made in Brattleboro.

This legacy now sits in our living room—my daughter played it when she was a teenager, pumping its foot pedals, filling the organ's lungs with air. Now, our granddaughters bring it to life when they visit, and they all know about Cousin Margaret and the organ's Vermont origin. One of the “stops” that channels air through a particular brass reed is called *Vox Humana*, but I can also pull that imaginary stop in my memory and hear the *vox humana* of my mother telling this and other stories. It's also possible for me to hear the sound of my parents' voices via audio recordings. We have Thomas Edison to thank for that (and for my career of capturing voices and teaching others how to do so), but more importantly, I owe a huge debt of gratitude for Edison's passion. Part of his original list of uses for sound recording was: “The family record—a registry of sayings,

reminiscences, etc., by members of a family in their own voices...”

## Upstate Voices

I've found that upstate voices are fairly free of physical borders or definitions. As *North Country Public Radio* producer and morning show host Todd Moe says, “I'm not sure there are boundaries for these voices, certainly not in any political or geographic sense.” Perhaps, living in or near the Adirondack Park gives a certain perspective on life.

Melissa Hart, Digital Editor for *Adirondack Explorer*, points to “The rugged individualism that defines the people who call this place home...communities set among mountains, lakes, rivers, and forests.” More specifically, *Adirondack Mountain Club* Deputy Executive Director Julia Goren points to the voices “belonging to those who survive our harsh winters...the great proving ground.” Sharing those experiences with others becomes the next step. “Lives are constructed through the telling of stories,” says

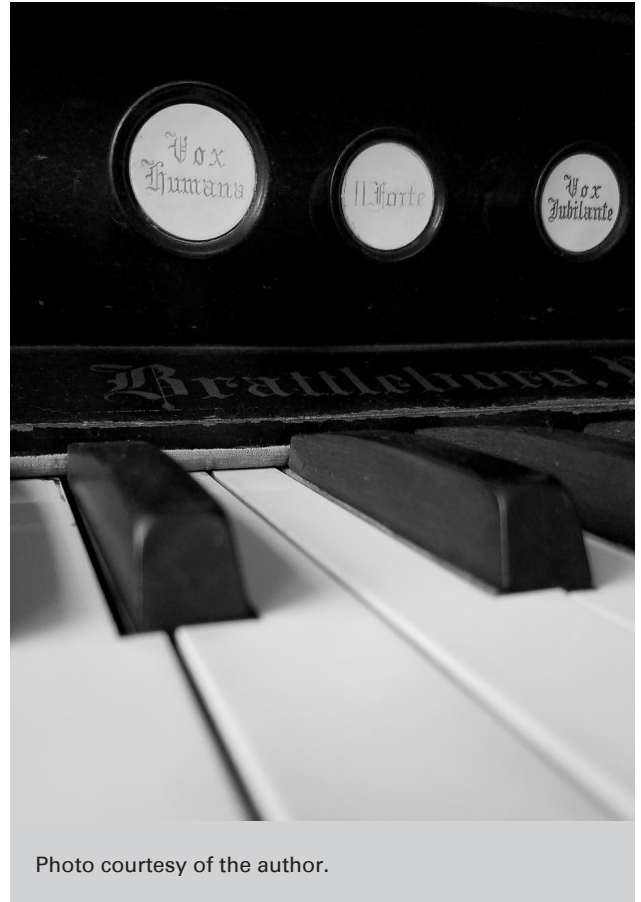


Photo courtesy of the author.

Willsboro music educator Jennifer Moore. She continues, “The histories shared, the names remembered, and connections that locate each of us within a particular place and community.”

My friends Goren, Moe, Hart, and Moore find rural life and community to be at the core of upstate voices “associated with authenticity, vulnerability, and a certain kind of truth that can be recognized and felt and therefore, understood when heard” (Moore). All agree, however, there are upstate voices that we don’t hear. “Conspicuously absent... are the Native people who were here long before European settlers arrived” (Hart). “People we depend on, like farm workers or seasonal staff... and we don’t hear the voices of those who are incarcerated here. I also think it’s hard to hear the voices of the families that don’t need outside help—where they depend entirely upon relatives” (Goren). “Voice is a kind of barometer for the well-being of a community... I wish that the authentic voices of children were more appreciated, supported, and encouraged” (Moore).

I’ll let Todd Moe have the last word, with the suggestion that we all become better listeners to the voices of others. “The elderly, the young, migrant workers, people of color... I think it’s easy to listen to voices that we’re most comfortable with—those closest to our own social or generational connection.” Maybe it’s time for more courageous conversations. ▼

Dan Berggren’s roots are firmly in the Adirondacks, but his music has taken him throughout the United States and abroad. Dan has worked in the woods with a forest ranger and surveyor, was a radio producer in Europe, professor of audio and radio studies at SUNY Fredonia, and owner of Sleeping Giant Records. An award-winning musician and educator, Dan is also a tradition-based songsmith who writes with honesty, humor, and a strong sense of place. Visit [www.berggrenfolk.com](http://www.berggrenfolk.com) to learn more about Dan and his music. Photo by Jessica Riehl.



## Congratulations to Iryna Voloshyna

**Iryna Voloshyna, a 2019 graduate** intern at the Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library, following her graduation with a MA in Folklore from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and now a Folklore PhD student at Indiana University, was the recipient of the inaugural 2022 Presidential Award for exceptional meritorious service to recognize service to the discipline, at the opening ceremony of the American Folklore Society annual meeting, October 12–15 in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Originally from Ukraine, Iryna “initiated efforts to protect a wide variety of cultural heritage documentation when Ukraine was suddenly invaded by Putin’s forces from Russia. While she supported her colleagues in need of information and resources as they sought safety during the invasion and became a resource to journalists and scholars trying to understand what was happening in real time on social media apps, she also took action as her colleagues in Ukraine worried about their work: multimedia research collections documenting decades of traditions in communities across Ukraine were under threat in individual homes holding researchers’ hard drives and in digital collections housed in museums and other cultural institutions. This work involved lis-



Iryna Voloshyna. Photo by Proda Photography.

tening to the needs and advocating for support of colleagues in Ukraine, coordinating a team to amass appropriate resources, and relentless efforts to assist in the dissemination of information” (American Folklore Society, <https://americanfolkloresociety.org/iryna-voloshyna-presented-with-inaugural-presidential-award-for-meritorious-service/>). ▼

## Send Your Story to Voices!

Did you know that *Voices* publishes creative writing, including creative fiction (such as short stories), creative nonfiction (such as memoirs and life/work stories), and poetry? If you are one of New York’s traditional artists or working in a traditional occupation, please consider sharing with our readers. For more information, see our Submissions Guidelines or contact the Editor at [tdegarmo@sals.edu](mailto:tdegarmo@sals.edu)

New York **FOLKLORE**

# The Best Book Group in New York

BY STEVE ZEITLIN

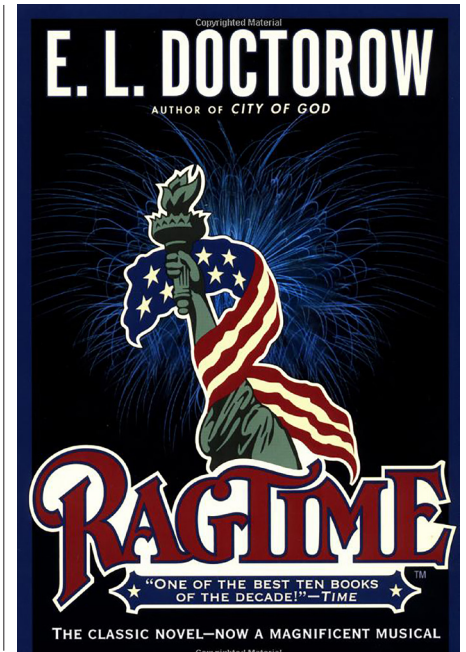
OK, maybe we're not the "best book group" in all New York. But back in 2004, author Wayne Barrett nominated us to the *Village Voice's* annual "Best Of" list, and so the name Best Book Group (BBG) stuck. We had only been around a few years back then. We were founded in 2002. According to founding member Lynne Harlow, it happened this way:

*Alex Herzan and I were having a sushi picnic at the Lily Auchincloss Foundation office when this idea was hatched. For our lunch picnics, we would sit on the carpet that was a fantastic shade of red that had been the founder, Lily Auchincloss' signature color. I mentioned to Alex that I had decided to mark my 10th anniversary as a New Yorker by reading a year of books about NYC. I hadn't*

*come up with a list of books yet, but I had decided to start with Ragtime.*

*Alex was excited about my plan and had the great idea to make it a book group. The original group included Caroline Wharton, Jamie Bennet, Janet Levoff, the late and beloved Ted Westergard, Alex, and me. Other members straggled in as the years wore on: Jonathan Kuhn, Alvin Eng, John Loonam, Alden Warner, Deborah Wye, Christina Spellman, Tom Finkelppearl, Doug Chilcott, and you, Steve. We've operated with the same basic format from the very beginning, rotating through members to select each book, and giving the group about a month and a half to read it.*

So the rainstorm of words began with *Ragtime*—Harry Houdini crashing his car into a telephone pole in 1906 in New



A meeting of the Best Book Group at La Palapa. All photos courtesy of the author.



Rochelle, ushering in a host of characters ranging from Emma Goldman to Sigmund Freud and an itinerant peddler. Then *Great Fortune*—on the building of Rockefeller Center. The next month BBG was on to *Motherless Brooklyn*—Lionel Essrog, an orphan with Tourette’s syndrome, tries to keep the words straight as he solves a mystery. Next, *A Century of Pleasure and Profit in Times Square*, followed by Hubert Selby Jr.’s *Last Exit to Brooklyn*—with its transgender prostitutes and hoodlums. Then, *Astor Place Riots*—where a well-known American actor, Edwin Forrest, and William Macready, a notable English actor, fought over who was a better Shakespearean, sparking a riot that resulted in more than 20 deaths. A month later, BBG read *Time and Again*—time traveling back to 1882 NYC to solve a beguiling mystery. Ping-ponging from fiction to nonfiction, the next book was Russell Shorto’s *Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan*. BBG then read about the fall of high society in

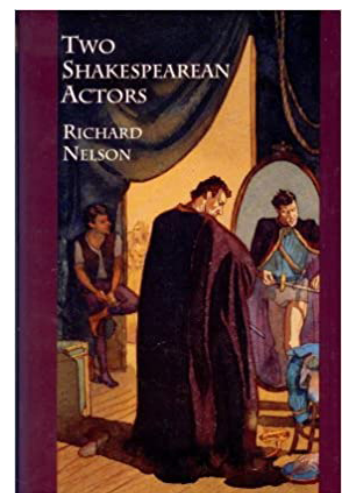
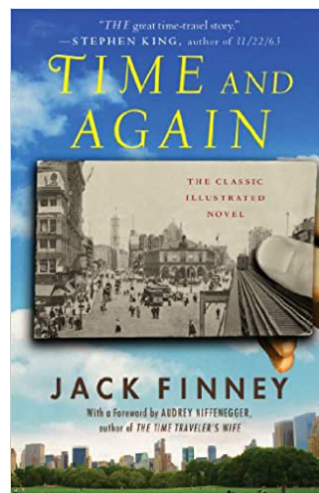
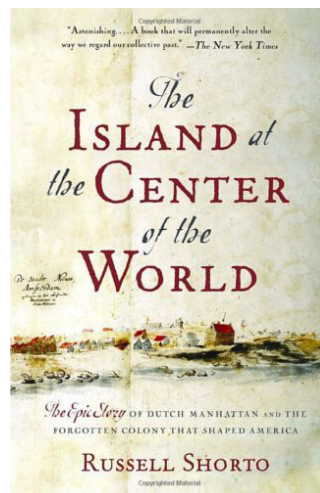
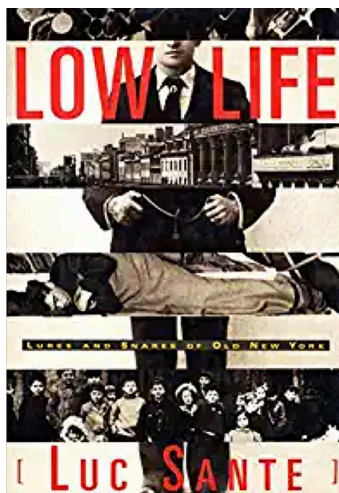
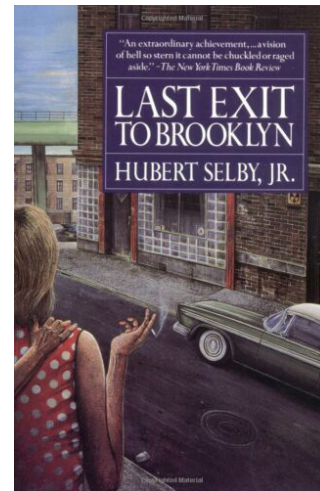
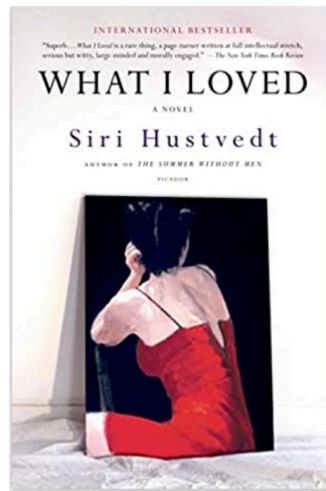
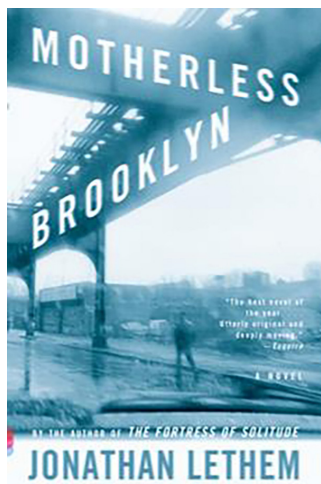
Edith Wharton’s 1905 *House of Mirth*, then tackled Luc Sante’s *Low Life*, imbibing the teeming, turbulent, and sometimes murderous story of the city’s slums. And BBG was just getting started.

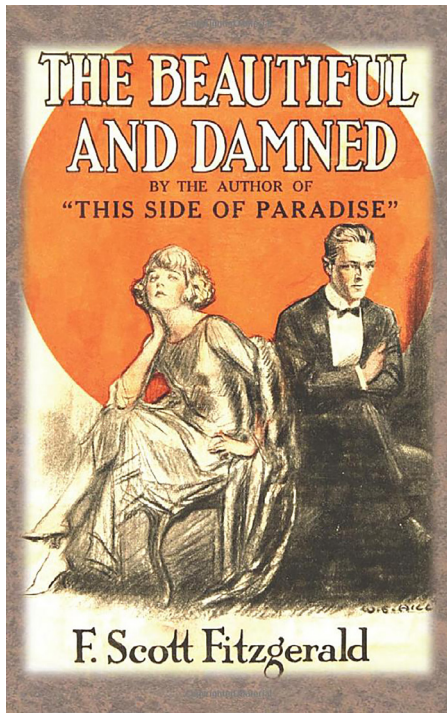
With more than 150 books behind us, picking favorites isn’t easy. David Oshinsky’s *Bellevue: Three Centuries of Medicine and Mayhem at America’s Most Storied Hospital* proved a favorite of a number of members. Alden Warner recalls, “When Alex Herzan chose this book, she apologized in advance for picking such a doubtlessly dull tome to inflict upon us. In the end, not only did I enjoy it, but I gave this book to at least five friends and every single one thanked me profusely.” Andrea Elliot’s *Invisible Child* was another selection of several members. John writes, “To see the drive and intelligence of the young woman portrayed here, and to see the obstacles society constantly puts in front of her is an invitation to the complex compassion that we owe each other.” F. Scott Fitzgerald’s, *The Beautiful*

and *Damned* and Alex Haley’s *Autobiography of Malcolm X* are two other noteworthy titles that stand out in members’ memories.

Founding member Alex Herzan picked Marie Winn’s *Central Park in the Dark*. “This book explores the natural world of Central Park after dark—and the plethora of wildlife that thrives there. For the book discussion, the author Marie Winn joined us for a meal at the Central Park Boat-house. The meeting was some time in the winter, and I remember a large languorous raccoon came and tapped on the glass as we were having dinner! Almost sending us a message. After dinner, Ms. Winn guided us to other nearby spots, including an exposé of slug sex on tree branches, definitely a scintillating moment for the group.”

The essential feature of BBG is that we have our discussions at places either mentioned in or evocative of that month’s book. The group thus becomes our own adventurous way of exploring the city. The





places and tastes take us deeper into the books, and the books enrich our experience of the flavors.

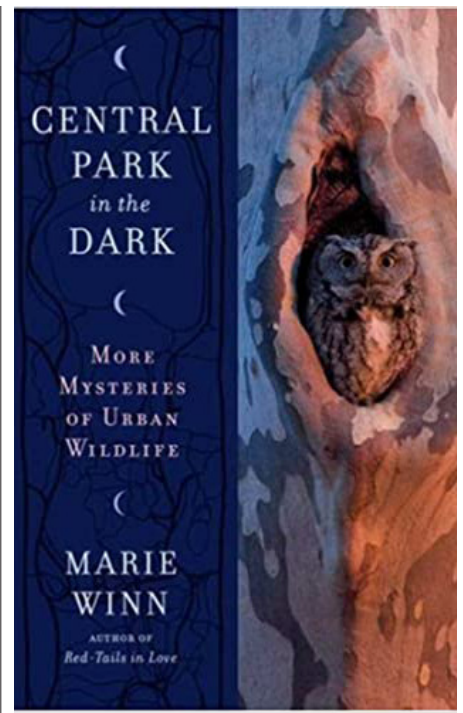
A plethora of memories overflows from the many glasses raised and clinked at the tables where we've met and dined:

*Dancing with Janet to the strains of Jewish tunes at Sammy's Roumanian Restaurant on Christie Street on the Lower East Side after we read Michael Gold's 1930 novel, Jews Without Money, about a young immigrant boy in New York. (Steve)*

*Sipping wine at the River Club, looking out over the river toward Manhattan, trying to imagine where George Washington's troops landed after being surrounded by the British in Brooklyn and having to retreat by water to Manhattan, after reading Steven Jaffe's New York at War: Four Centuries of Combat, Fear, and Intrigue in Gotham. (Caroline)*

*Listening to our own member Jonathan Kuhn singing George Cohen's "Give My Regards to Broadway," Cole Porter's "Take Me Back to Manhattan," Gerry Goffin and Carole King's "Up on the Roof," Billy Joel's "New York State of Mind," and other classics at a Times Square music studio, with piano accompaniment, after reading Nancy Groce's Songs of New York.*

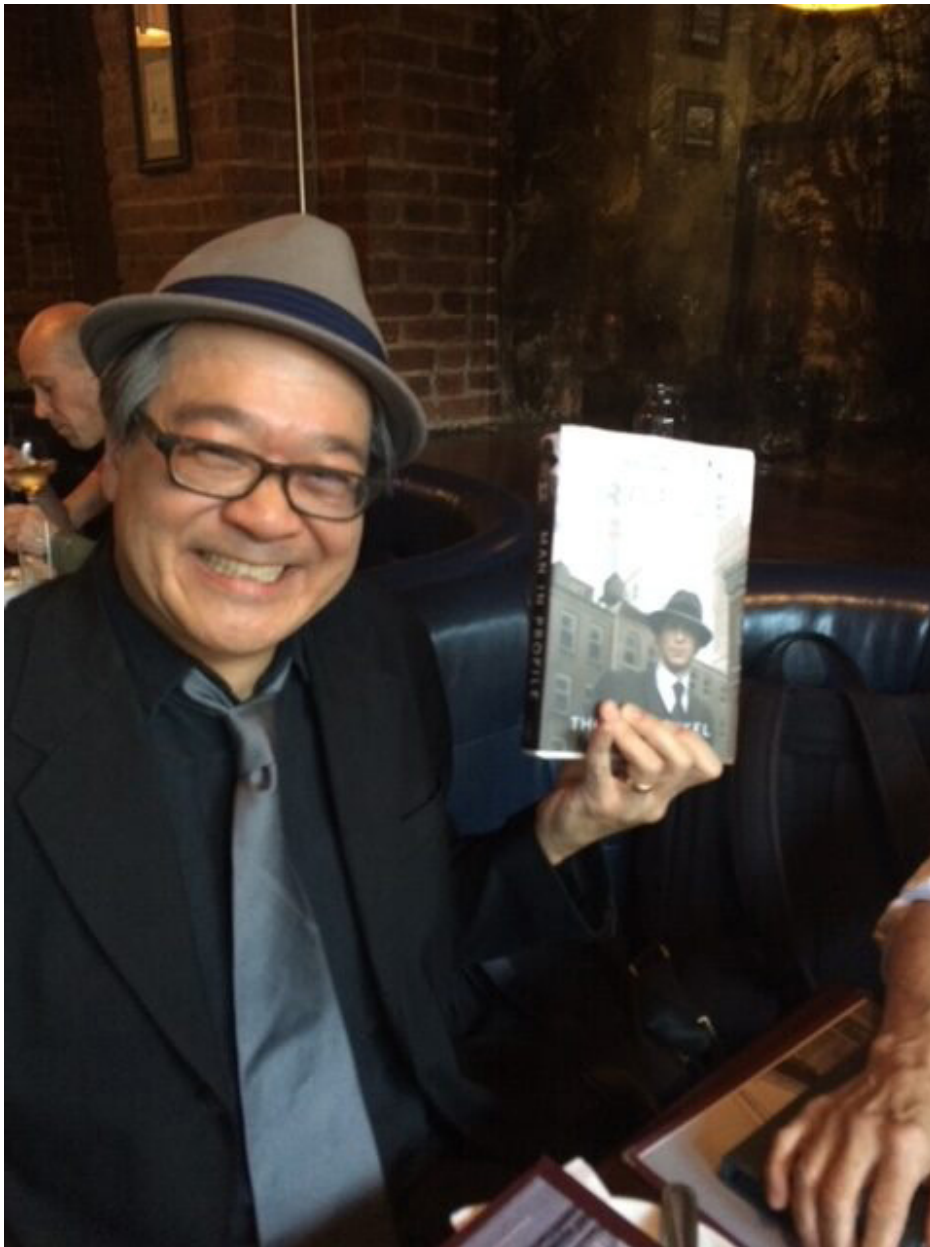
*Biting into the beef tibs wrapped in soda bread at Awash Ethiopian restaurant on 6th street after reading Sister Rashidah Ismaili's, The Autobiography of the Lower East Side. (Steve)*



*Feasting on soy-braised Pork Belly and Beef with Bitter Melon, among many other old school Toisan standards at new Chinatown fave, Uncle Lou's. The perfect now-and-then table to discuss Chinatown and Flushing family memories from book group member Ahin Eng's own memoir, Our Laundry, Our Town.*



Janet Levoff dancing at Sammy's Roumanian (screenshot).



Alvin Eng holding up his selection, *Man in Profile: Joseph Mitchell of the New Yorker*.

*Daintily drinking tea, eight pinkies up, with Ted Westergaard at the Carlyle, to discuss Breakfast at Tiffany's.*

*Picnicking on the grass in Central Park by the Andrew Haswell Green bench, as we discussed his remarkable life and shocking death in Jonathan Lee's 'The Great Mistake.' (Deborah)*

The featured books and our discussions are now part of our own lives and memories. Yet, not all the memories were positive.

Alex selected Hella Winston's *Unchosen: The Hidden Lives of Hasidic Rebels*. "We met at a deli in the heart of Hasidic Williamsburg, and all of us felt very much that we

were "the other." An uncomfortable dinner—it was also pretty difficult to discuss this book in that setting. We felt conspicuously unwelcome!"

At each of our meetings, it's as if we arranged our chairs around an oversized book that serves as a table for a riveting discussion and a sumptuous meal served right on it. And New York City is always the silent partner joining us at the table and the hero of the story.

We go around the table, and each of us offers our take on the reading. We always end with the exuberant Deborah Wye, ever the scholar, who reaches into her satchel

for her copious notes taken on each book. She makes sure our discussion has covered every point. We order one, sometimes two desserts with a bunch of spoons. After dessert, we ask the waiter to take a picture of the group. Then we go our separate ways, having taken one more bite of what might best be called, not the Big Apple but the Big Onion, with each book revealing a startling new layer of the City's history, humor, stinkiness, and tears.

As Alex writes, "What I have loved all through this is that our reading reveals layers of New York that are new to me, and that I always learn something unexpected. Our group has only enhanced my love of NYC and my sense of belonging here—happy to be part of a throng of diverse humanity."

Among this throng in New York, there are those who paint and write and sing—and in the process, these souls reflect, reorganize, and reimagine reality, so we can experience it from vantage points other than our own, and then feel the beauty in it all.

There are also those hearty and intrepid souls who risk opening neighborhood restaurants, bringing the flavors of myriad long-standing and new immigrant cultures to our lips, the way books bring those worlds to our minds. Our mission, as Janet Levoff put it, "is to love our city, to learn about her continuously and to enjoy the company of people who cherish her."

Era after era, New York's tiny apartments squeeze us, elevators pack us in, railroad tenements once made us take a bath in the kitchen, tar beach on tenement rooftops and fire escapes give respite from the heat, basement apartments make us sweat, Central Park carves out a usable wilderness, office cubicles pay our salaries, unscrupulous drivers steal our parking spaces, tin can subways rattle the bejesus out of us, and the urban beehive buzzes. We are hemmed in, pushed around, squeezed out, hassled and harassed, but New Yorkers are sculpted and shaped—individualized—by the tight spaces, the jostling of a human traffic jam. And we are blessed by the endless possibilities for serendipity, with so many

people squeezed into so small a space. It's like ... nuclear fusion ... where small spaces force New Yorkers together, releasing huge amounts of creative energy and always a new entity, a reimagined City.

The books we read are filled with mishaps and tragedies, and a New York continually on the skids, but always redeemed by the people—for us, the City is always saved by the characters in the books, the owners, waiters, and waitresses we meet in the restaurants, and our own circle of book group friends who know each other better each time we meet. BBG has offered us a way to experience this endlessly layered metropolis, which James Baldwin, in *Another Country*—one more book on our fabled list—describes as the “city which the people from heaven made their home.” ▼

## Here is our complete list of books, and partial list of restaurants.

### BOOKS 2004–2023

*Subject to repairs & improvements*

1. *Ragtime*, E. L. Doctorow
2. *Great Fortune: The Epic of Rockefeller Center*, Daniel Okrent (The Rainbow Room)
3. *Motherless Brooklyn*, Jonathan Lethem
4. *The Devil's Playground: A Century of Pleasure and Profit in Times Square*, James Traub. (Sardis)
5. *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, Hubert Selby, Jr. (Last Exit)
6. *Two Shakespearean Actors*, Richard Nelson
7. *Time and Again*, Jack Finney (Pete's Tavern)
8. *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America*, Russell Shorto
9. *What I Loved: A Novel*, Siri Hustvedt (Fanelli's)
10. *The House of Mirth*, Edith Wharton
11. *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York*, Luc Sante
12. *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, Jonathan Safran Foer
13. *East Side Story*, Louis Auchincloss (Knickerbocker Club)
14. *The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*, Jerald E. Podair
15. *de Kooning: An American Master*, Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan
16. *A Time to Be Born*, Dawn Powell
17. *New York Trilogy*, Paul Auster



The book group dines overlooking Grand Central Station.

18. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, Betty Smith
19. *740 Park Avenue: The Story of the World's Richest Apartment Building*, Michael Gross (Cosmopolitan Club)
20. *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*, Oscar Hijuelos
21. *The Prince of the City: Giuliani, New York, and the Genius of American Life*, Fred Siegel
22. *Butterfield 8*, John O'Hara
23. *Boss Tweed: The Rise and Fall of the Corrupt Pol Who Conceived the Soul of Modern New York*, Kenneth Ackerman
24. *Garlic and Sapphires*, Ruth Reichl
25. *Bronx Primitive: Portraits in a Childhood*, Kate Simon
26. *A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints*, Dito Montiel
27. *Bad Blood*, Linda Fairstein
28. *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, William Dean Howells
29. *Lulu Meets God and Doubts Him*, Danielle Ganek (Bottino)
30. *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, James Baldwin
31. *Unchosen: The Hidden Lives of Hasidic Rebels*, Hella Winston
32. *Bright Lights, Big City*, Jay McInerney (Odeon)
33. *Hotel de Dream: A New York Novel*, Edmund White
34. *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*, Adrian Nicole LeBlanc
35. *Call it Sleep*, Henry Roth
36. *The Extra Man*, Jonathan Ames
37. *The Red Leather Diary: Reclaiming a Life through the Pages of a Lost Journal*, Lily Koppel
38. *Julie and Julia: My Year of Cooking Dangerously*, Julie Powell (Chez Herzan)
39. *Netherland*, Joseph O'Neill (Chelsea Hotel/El Quijote)
40. *Central Park in the Dark*, Marie Winn (Central Park Boathouse)
41. *Wall Street: America's Dream Palace*, Steve Fraser
42. *Crossing the BLVD: Strangers, Neighbors, Aliens in a New America*, Warren Lehrer and Judith Sloan
43. *Banished Children of Eve: A Novel of Civil War New York*, Peter Quinn
44. *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Truman Capote
45. *Brooklyn*, Colm Toibin
46. *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison
47. *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took On New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City*, Anthony Flint (The White Horse Tavern)
48. *Strength in What Remains*, Tracy Kidder
49. *Let the Great World Spin*, Colum McCann
50. *Man on Wire*, Philippe Petit
51. *The Beautiful and Damned*, F. Scott Fitzgerald (Grand Central Oyster Bar)
52. *Coney Island: Lost and Found*, Charles Denson
53. *Diamond Ruby*, Joseph Wallace (Foley's Bar, W. 33)
54. *New York*, Edward Rutherford (Delmonico's)
55. *Super Sad True Love Story*, Gary Shteyngart (Miss Korea)
56. *Whatever It Takes*, Paul Tough
57. *Just Kids*, Patti Smith (El Quixote)
58. *Object of Beauty*, Steve Martin (Bottino)
59. *Mrs. Astor Regrets: The Hidden Betrayals of a Family Beyond Reproach*, Meryl Gordon
60. *The Puzzle King*, Betsy Carter
61. *Kafka Was the Rage: A Greenwich Village Memoir*, Anatole Broyard (Cornelia Street Café)
62. *Chinatown Beat*, Henry Chang
63. *Rules of Civility*, Amor Towles (The Algonquin)
64. *Boulevard of Dreams: Heady Times, Heartbreak, and Hope along the Grand Course in the Bronx*, Constance Rosenblum
65. *Manhattan '45*, Jan Morris (Frankie & Johnnie's on 45th)
66. *The Gods of Gotham*, Lyndsay Faye
67. *New York at War: Four Centuries of Combat, Fear, and Intrigue in Gotham*, Steven H. Jaffe (The River Café)
68. *Love, Fiercely: A Gilded Age Romance*, Jean Zimmerman (Robert, at the Museum of Arts and Design)
69. *Under Their Thumb: How a Nice Boy from Brooklyn Got Mixed Up with the Rolling Stones (and Lived to Tell About It)*, Bill German (Josie's)
70. *Lowboy*, John Wray (Steak Frites)
71. *Grand Central: How a Train Station Transformed America*, Sam Roberts (Michael Jordan's Steak House)
72. *Psmith, Journalist*, P. G. Wodehouse
73. *High Line: The Inside Story of New York City's Park in the Sky*, Joshua David and Robert Hammond (La Luncheonette)
74. *The Godfather*, Mario Puzo (Umberto's Cafe)
75. *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, Serge Guilbaut (The Jane Hotel)
76. *Triangle: The Fire That Changed America*, David von Drehle (Favela Cubana)
77. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Mohsin Hamid (Masala Wala)
78. *L is for Lion: An Italian Bronx Butch Freedom Memoir*, Annie Rachele Lanzillotto (Trattoria Spaghetto)
79. *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, Jennifer Egan (Café Mogador)
80. *Dissident Gardens*, Jonathan Lethem (Our 10th Anniversary Selection!) (Quaint)
81. *The Goldfinch*, Donna Tartt
82. *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design*, Charles Montgomery
83. *The New York Stories of Henry James*, selected by Colm Toibin (Chez Jaqueline)
84. *The Big Oyster: History on the Half Shell*, Mark Kurlansky (Grand Central Oyster Bar)
85. *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, Neil Simon
86. *Bonfire of the Vanities*, Tom Wolfe (Orsay)
87. *Subway Lives: 24 Hours in the Life of the New York City Subway*, Jim Dwyer
88. *10:04*, Ben Lerner (Jack the Horse Tavern)
89. *Island of Vice: Theodore Roosevelt's Quest to Clean up Sin-Loving New York*, Richard Zacks (La Pizza Fresca Ristorante)
90. *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, Michael Chabon
91. *Up in the Old Hotel*, Joseph Mitchell (McSorley's)
92. *Man in Profile*, Thomas Kunkel (Paris Café)
93. *Burr: A Novel*, Gore Vidal (Morris Jumel Mansion)
94. *Downtown*, Pete Hamill (Pete's Tavern)

95. *Lush Life*, Richard Price (Schiller's Liquor Bar)

96. *Trump: The Deals and the Downfall*, Wayne Barrett (at Wayne and Fran Barrett's)

97. *Down These Mean Streets*, Piri Thomas (La Fonda Boricua, turned Sapitos!)

98. *Jews Without Money*, Michael Gold (Sammy's Roumanian Steakhouse)

99. *Margaret Sanger: A Life of Passion*, Jean H. Baker (Edo Sushi)

100. *Ship Ablaze: The Tragedy of the Steamboat General Slocum*, Edward T. O'Donnell (Malai Marke)

101. *Seize the Day*, Saul Bellow

102. *The Poetry of Everyday Life: Storytelling and the Art of Awareness*, Steve Zeitlin (The Purple Yam)

103. *Christadora*, Tim Murphy (Gnocco)

104. *The Letter Writer: A Novel*, Dan Fesperman

105. *Bellevue: Three Centuries of Medicine and Mayhem at America's Most Storied Hospital*, David Oshinsky (Riverpark)

106. *The Gargoyle Hunters*, John Freeman Gill (Walkers)

107. *Gowanus: Brooklyn's Curious Canal*, Joseph Alexiou (Runner and Stone)

108. *New York 2140*, Kim Stanley Robinson (Sabbia)

109. *February House: The Story of W. H. Auden*, Sherill Tippins (Jack the Horse)

110. *Manhattan Beach*, Jennifer Egan (Vinegar Hill House)

111. *Golden Hill: A Novel of Old New York*, Francis Spufford (Fraunces Tavern)

112. *Our Laundry, Our Town: My Chinese American Life from Flushing to the Downtown Stage and Beyond*, Alvin Eng (Salam)

113. *A Walker in the City*, Alfred Kazin (Cornelia Street Café)

114. *M Train*, Patti Smith (Dante Cafe)

115. *The Black Hand: The Epic War Between a Brilliant Detective and the Deadliest Secret Society in American History*, Stephan Talty (Café Select)

116. *New York: Song of the City*, Nancy Groce (Rehearsal Studios, Barbetta)

117. *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, Ottessa Moshfegh (Bottino)

118. *Vanishing New York: How a Great City Lost Its Soul*, Jeremiah Moss (Bamonte's)

119. *Rats: Observations on the History & Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants*, Robert Sullivan (Dead Rabbit)

120. *The Poet X*, Elizabeth Acevedo (Nuyorican Poets Café, with D. Gallant, Café Cortadito)

121. *The Friend*, Sigrid Nunez

122. *Ninth Street Women: Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, Joan Mitchell, and Helen Frankenthaler: Five Painters and the Movement That Changed Modern Art*, Mary Gabriel (June 2019)

123. *Jazz*, Toni Morrison (Melba's)

124. *The Policewomen's Detective Bureau*, Edward Conlon (Da Nico)

125. *My Young Life: A Memoir*, Frederic Tuten (12th Street, "old red sauce Italian")

126. *Poet in New York*, Federico García Lorca

127. *Manchild in the Promised Land*, Claude Brown (The Grange Barn)

129. *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan*, Jill Lepore (11 Hanover Greek)

130. *The World to Come*, Dara Horn

131. *Damnation Island: Poor, Sick, Mad, & Criminal in 19th-Century New York*, Stacy Horn

132. *Deacon King Kong*, James McBride

133. *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, E. L. Konigsburg

134. *The Autobiography of Malcom X*, as told to Alex Haley

135. *The Lebrman Trilogy*, Stefano Massini

136. *Red at the Bone*, Jacqueline Woodson

137. *Behold the Dreamers*, Imbolo Mbue

138. *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and its Urgent Lessons for Our Own*, Eddie S. Glaude, Jr.

139. *The Lions of Fifth Avenue*, Fiona Davis

140. *Boss of the Grips: The Life of James H. Williams and the Red Caps of Grand Central Terminal*, Eric K. Washington

141. *Guided Suffragists: The New York Socialites Who Fought for Women's Right to Vote*, Johanna Neuman

142. *Another Country*, James Baldwin

143. *The Great Mistake*, Jonathan Lee (A picnic in the park! By Andrew Haswell Green bench)

144. *The Barbizon: The Hotel That Set Women Free*, Pauline Bren (Cos Club)

145. *Passing*, Nella Larsen (Settapani)

146. *When No One is Watching*, Alyssa Cole

147. *Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival & Hope in an American City*, Andrea Elliott (Walter's, Fort Greene)

148. *Our Laundry, Our Town: My Chinese American Life from Flushing to the Downtown Stage and Beyond*, Alvin Eng (Uncle Lou's)

149. *Save the Village*, Michele Herman (chez Kuhn & Herman)

150. *Secret Identity*, Alex Segura (Pete's Tavern)

151. *The Golem and the Jinni*, Helene Wecker (Nish Nush)

152. *Also, a Poet*, Ada Calhoun (La Palapa)

153. *The Autobiography of the Lower East Side*, Rashidah Ismaili (Awash Ethiopian Restaurant)

154. *Ladies and Gentlemen: The Bronx is Burning*, Jonathan Mahler (to be selected)



Founding Director of City Lore. He is the author of *The Poetry of Everyday Life: Storytelling and the Art of Awareness* (Cornell University Press, 2016). His latest book, His latest book is *JEWels: Teasing Out the Poetry in Jewish Humor and Storytelling* (University of Nebraska Press, 2023). Special editorial thanks for this column: Martha Dahlen. Photo by Amanda Dargan.

# A HISTORY OF THE ADIRONDACK PIPES AND DRUMS

*In Honor of its Sixtieth Anniversary in 2009*

BY DAVID JONES

*Editor's Note:* In February 2022, David offered me a copy of his “little history,” from 2008, of the Adirondack Pipes and Drums bagpipe band to add to our files in the Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library, saying “I’d like someone to be keeping this, especially now that the band is gone.” He added, “The band disbanded (or rather disintegrated) after Dr. Kirkpatrick died around 2014. Many of the former members (myself included) are now in the offshoot band that formed in ’85, the Galloway P & D. So really, there has been a continuous band since ’49.”



## Boom

By 1949, the Baby Boom had begun. There was a “boom,” when China and Russia had only recently acquired the “A-bomb.” There was to be a boom in the economy, as the United States quickly emerged from the Depression and war into being a great superpower. There was a much smaller boom in Fort Edward, New York, as the first bass drummer of the Adirondack Bagpipe Band began to practice.

Earl Stott and Larry Cashion were working at GE in Schenectady. They went to see a performance of the Cleveland Caledonian Pipe Band in 1949, and got excited about playing the pipes. They worked with Bill Monroe from Schenectady and convinced him to come to Fort Edward to teach them.

Earl Stott and his friends began to take lessons. According to Larry Cashion, one early recruitment effort involved telephoning 100 people from the phone book who had Scottish last names! So, the word got out, and Bill Kirkpatrick showed up with Robert and John. Jack Donahue showed up, as did Bruce and Bob Waite. Wes Cox and Brad Wright were drummers, along with Frank and Mal Vaughn. There were a few more, including Fred Harris and Wayne Harris. According to Jack Donahue, without Earl Stott, there would have been no band. Earl had the commitment and the “dream,” to use Jack’s words.

Jack Donahue, band member from 1949 through 1997, reported that it was Bill Kirkpatrick who donated the first set of pipes to the band, a set that may have been in his family. In fact, the band only had one set of pipes to start—the pipers would trade off each week for who got to practice on the pipes!

It is recorded that the founders of the band wanted to pay tribute to the highlanders that fought in the area during the French and Indian War. The band sought permission from the appropriate officials of the British military in Canada to wear the Royal Stuart tartan for pipers and the Black Watch tartan for drummers. A charter was obtained for the organization from a local judge. Instruction in piping and drumming was arranged through members of the Schenectady Pipe Band. Marching

practice took place in a member’s pasture, where an onlooker commented that the beginning marchers looked like laborers lumbering off to work.

Wives and mothers of some of the members sewed kilts and uniforms, while other members sent to Scotland for their uniforms. A story is recounted in Fred Harris’ *Highland Echoes* of how they did not have material to serve as straps for the kilts, and they improvised with roller skate straps. Jack Donahue reported that Bob LaCross’ grandmother was a well-known, expert seamstress and that they gave her a borrowed kilt from which to copy the pattern. Eight or nine band members wore these homemade kilts for several years.

After a season of practice and preparation, the band played its first gig in Hudson Falls, New York, in the spring of 1950, at the “Thistle Day” parade. Jack Donahue reported that this was one of his proudest moments.

The band grew through the 1950s. Practices moved out to a member’s pasture in warm weather and into the A&P supermarket basement in Fort Edward. One story comes down that, while practicing in a pasture one evening, one, then two, then a whole group of cows approached the wailing bagpipes. The pipers kept playing as the bovine investigators approached to eventually stop and nearly surround the group. Apparently, they were just curious. Jack Donahue reported that piper Bob



1950 Band. Drum Major: Robert Waite. Pipers, *first row, left to right*: Fred Hamilton, Earl Stott, Bruce Waite, Larry Cashion. Pipers, *second row, left to right*: Jack Donahue, Robert Kirkpatrick, John Kirkpatrick, Fred Harris. Pipers, *third row, left to right*: Bradley Wright, Robert LaCross. Drummers: William Jones, John Callahan. Drummers: William Kirkpatrick, Frank Vaughn, Wayne Harris. *All photos courtesy of the Adirondack Pipes & Drums Archives, The Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, New York.*

Dixon from the Schenectady band, who played with the Seaforth Highlanders during the First World War, really “snapped the band into shape.” The core group from 1950 remained the principal players in the band for over a decade to come.

## Banquet

On the evening of February 2, 1963, a member would have attended the annual band banquet. The band would have

bought you one drink during the cocktail hour from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., and you would have enjoyed an invocation by Jim Palmer before dinner at 7:30 p.m. Jim was a local artist and band member for many years, serving as Band Manager in 1963. Jim did the artwork for the covers of the programs for the Adirondack Scottish Games for many years.

After a *piobaireachd* solo by Pipe Major Hugh McInnis, you would have enjoyed a

harmony pipe duet by Jerry Cashion and Tom Kirkpatrick. Perhaps, you would have won one of the door prizes. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Galloway and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Waite would have shown you some steps in Scottish country dancing. You and your colleagues at the table may have discussed last year’s successful band banquet. The annual evening’s program was once again decorated with caricatures of the band officers expertly drawn by Jim Palmer.



Through the 1960s, the band had grown in membership, in musical expertise, and income. Annual events at that time included the Schroon Lake July Fourth parade, and events in Ticonderoga and Lake George. In the mid-1960s, the band played from time to time at Fort William Henry in Lake George. The band settled on a “constitution” in 1965, stipulating, among other things, that members had to be male and that the band was to consist of components of a Scottish military bagpipe band. By its 1970 season, the band earned \$2,025, which, when adjusted for inflation, equates to around \$11,000, in 2008 dollars. Back in those days, the members divided the money between them at the end of a season.

### “Come on Lads and Lassies, Help Us Celebrate our Ochter Mod”

Such ran a phrase on the program for the Adirondack Bagpipe Band 25th anniversary banquet in 1975. (They were counting from 1950.) Jim Palmer was master of ceremonies. After dinner, you would have heard a bagpipe trio of Jerry Cashion, Dr. Kirkpatrick, and his brother Thomas Kirkpatrick. A “Bandsmen of the Year” award was given, and Jerry Cashion

accompanied the Highland Dancers. Tom Harrington printed up a fine brochure. Pipe Major Jack Donahue would have entertained the audience with a piping solo before the dinner broke off into Scottish country dancing with Betty and Ed Galloway. Band banquets and celebrations go back to the early days of the organization. The band is a social organization that benefits from the positive society of its members.

During the 1970s, pipers Hugh McInnis, Hamilton Workman, and David Moir were principals in the group. *Adirondack Life* magazine featured the band in an article in 1973.

### “Let the Games Begin!”

At the annual meeting in the autumn of 1971, you would have heard the treasurer’s report. You could have been impressed with the earnings, growth in membership, and activities. In 1969, the band teamed up with the Lake George Chamber of Commerce to host the “Lake George Scottish Games” at the Lake George Athletic Field. Visitors could get in for a buck and enjoy a Highland Dancing exhibition and Pipe Band competition. The program reads that it was to be the “first annual” such event and, indeed, the band and/or the Glens

Falls Institute of Gaelic Arts resumed similar events in the area from 1975 through 1991. Jim Palmer drew many of the program covers, and band families all pitched in to organize piping and drumming competitions, parking, dancing events, concessions, venue, insurance, etc. By 1979, 17 bands from the Northeast competed at the games. The band that year consisted of 22 active members, with 10 piping and drumming students in training, and advertised opening classes in the program to promote additional membership.

Putting games together is a monumental task. The band was joined by other organizations whose membership often overlapped: the Adirondack Highlanders, a dance group organized by Judy Cubbins in 1972 (which by 1980, with 25 members, was as large as the band); the Glens Falls Institute (or “Academy”) of Gaelic Arts; the Adirondack St. Andrews Society (formed in 1980); and Friends of the Adirondack Pipes and Drums. Games were held in several local venues, including the Washington County Fairgrounds, Queensbury High School Fields, and Crandall Park in Glens Falls.

At the 1980 games, 89 registered piping and drumming soloists competed;



2008 Band. *Back row, from left:* Stacia Burns, Nick Kirkpatrick, Peter Pofahl, David Jones, Jerry Cashion, Jeff Duxbury Jr., Larry Jeffords, Kilian Smith, Dick Merrill. *Front row, from left:* Jeff Duxbury Sr., Gary Conrick, Mitchell Smith, Mary Merrill, Andrew Harrington, Ethan Burns, Cameron Hood, Anna Burns, Sharon Conrick, Tom Harrington, Josh Harrington, Andrew Moore, Jim Hood, Nate Duxbury.



Performance during Brigadoon, 1951.

and bands competed in grades II, III, and IV. There were 110 dancing competitors registered! These annual events featured not only Scottish music and dance, but also Irish dancing and traditional music. In July 1981, the *Post-Star* reported, “Rain dampened the Gaelic festival several times Saturday, but it didn’t dampen the spirits of several thousand people at East Field.”

Dr. Kirkpatrick reported that the games made money only one year. The 1983 Games was competing ground for only 45 solo competitors in piping/drumming and 74 dancers. By 1987, the games themselves faced tough competition from other events, a sagging economy, and smaller numbers at the admissions gate. Only 36 dancers registered to compete that year, 35 solo pipers (a third of whom were in the band), and 13 drummers. The last Adirondack Highland Games was held in 1991. In a 1984 festival program, Dr. Kirkpatrick credited the Adirondack St. Andrews Society as having played a very key role in promoting the games. However, it is common knowledge that Dr. Kirkpatrick played a vital role himself. Dr. Kirkpatrick served as games chairman for many years and was

always instrumental in coordinating the events, including providing financial backing, when necessary, from his own pockets.

### “No Kids, No Women, and No Doctors!”

Even after 20 years and even after most of the people involved in the event are no longer participants in either band, there is still a discomfort addressing the division in the band in the mid-1980s. Nearly identical versions of the story come to this writer from four sources: Dr. Kirkpatrick, Tom Harrington, Rich Leibold, and Jerry Cashion.

Tensions grew among musicians in the band, arising from a variety of conflicts of interest, especially the goals and focus of the group. Pipe band competition is a highly developed and important part of highland bagpiping, while parades provide income, advertise the band more publicly to promote additional jobs and recruitment, and include every musician in the band possessing basic proficiency. Presented as incompatible goals, there was a series of disputes and a number of the band members resigned. At one point, one

of the men who were leaving the band announced his resignation and the creation of a new band. He growled that the new band would have “no kids, no women, and no doctors!”

In 1985, the split-off group gathered together some former members of the band and created another band, named the Galloway Gaelic Pipes and Drums, in honor of the late Ed Galloway, who passed away in 1984. They received a grant of \$5,000 as start-up money from the Sandy Hill Corporation. The Galloway band still performs in the area and has improved greatly since their start. Over the past decade, the Adirondack Pipes and Drums band has been unsuccessful in arranging collaboration with the Galloway band, though relations between the two remains cordial.

### 1990s

The band was very active, perhaps at its most active, in the 1990s. In 1996, the band appeared at 18 performances (not including competitions). The competition band was performing in grade IV. The band was featured periodically in local newspapers and maintained a strong public presence.

Minutes from meetings in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s indicate “spirited discussion” over a number of issues. The introduction of black jackets into the uniform seems to have been a bone of contention. It is during this period that the military uniform gave way to a simpler, civilian style of dress. (The last time military uniforms were worn seems to have been the 1989 Joy Store Holiday Parade in South Glens Falls, though a note in Fred Harris’ scrapbook indicates it had been a long time since they were worn.) Another source of discussion seems to have been, once again, the degree of focus on competition. In an entry in the minutes in 1996, a motion to establish the band as a purely competition band was tabled and appears to have not been revisited. In 1997, a separate competition band entity functioned in the band, and there was discussion of a name for this group. According to band minutes, they settled on the name, “North County

Highlanders,” although it is unknown whether they competed under that name.

## The Pros

An interview with the writer Sharon Conrick brought two important points to light about this band. First, it has a very long tradition as being a strongly family-oriented band. Whole families followed into the group: the Kirkpatricks, the Halls, the Durlers, the Conricks, the Thorpes, the Schiavonis, the Merrills, and Harringtons, to name a few.

A second point Sharon brings to mind is that the band was the training ground for some truly excellent pipers and drummers. Brian Green (1980s–1990s) is a grade I piper serving as Pipe Major of the award-winning Manchester Pipe Band in Connecticut. Erin McCarthy (1990s) and Keegan Sheehan (early 2000s) are now professional grade pipers. Peter Hall (1980s) is a master piper playing with the City of

Washington pipe band. Andrew Moore (2000s) is currently a grade II drummer who has played with the Mohawk Valley’s Frasers and the Toronto Police Pipe Band. This strongly family-oriented organization has been responsible for the start of some truly excellent musicians’ careers. There is no doubt that more names have escaped this writer’s research, and apologies are offered for any left out.

## 21st Century

The first decade of the 21st century found the band experiencing one of its periodic contractions, as one group of students reached college age and inevitably moved away, while a younger group getting training was just coming up.

The band moved its practice to the Park Street Theater from the Nelson Street Grange around 2004. The Park Street Theater was destined for demolition in 1984, when Dr. Kirkpatrick purchased it to save


it from the wrecking ball and restore it as a performing arts center. The theater’s grand opening was held in April 2006, and it has been host to many events. Dr. Kirkpatrick donates use of the Park Theater to the band.

The band became a New York State not-for-profit corporation, organized under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(3), in 2007. The pros and cons of incorporating were discussed for some time before going through the process. Among the advantages of incorporation are access to grant funding for nonprofits, reduced non-profit rates on postage and other services, exemption from paying tax, and legal and financial protections.

The band organized Celtic Arts Recitals in 2007–2008, with plans through 2009. These recitals continue the tradition set in the games of decades past, when we partnered with other Celtic folk music and dance artists, though on a smaller scale.



Postcard, Mt. Hope, 1957.



## ADIRONDACK PIPE BAND *Annual Banquet*

January 20, 1962  
6:30 P. M.

HOWARD JOHNSON'S RESTAURANT  
South Glens Falls

6:30 - 7:30 COCKTAIL HOUR  
(The Band will buy everyone  
two drinks at this time)

INVOCATION - Jim Palmer

7:30 - 8:30 DINNER -  
Tenderized Scottish Steer - Chopped Heather -  
Highland Potatoes - Bannockburn Broccoli

8:30 - 9:00 - Robert Waite - Master of Ceremonies  
Introduction of Guests and New Members  
(During this time the band will buy one  
drink for everyone)

9:00 - 9:15 - Wm. Kirkpatrick -  
"Purpose of the Band"


9:15 - 9:30 - John Kirkpatrick -  
"Plans for the Coming Year"

9:30 - 9:45 - PIPE SELECTIONS -  
Hugh McInnes and others

9:45 - 10:00 - DOOR PRIZES -  
Robert Davis

10:00 - Dancing and Massed Pipes and Drums

\*Pipers are requested to tune pipes  
before dinner only.



## ADIRONDACK PIPE BAND *Annual Banquet*

FEB. 2, 1963

Menu - - -  
Choice of Steak, Ham or Beef,  
Juice Cocktail, Individual Tossed  
Salad, Assorted Relishes, Potatoes,  
2 Hot Vegetables, Butter Rolls,  
Coffee, Tea, Dessert

6:30 - 7:30 - COCKTAIL HOUR  
(One drink courtesy of the Band)

SET BY  
**G. WEST COX**

INVOCATION - Jim E. Palmer

7:30 - 8:30 - DINNER

8:30 - 9:15 - Drum Major Bob Waite - Master of Ceremonies  
Introduction of Guests and new members  
(During this time the band will buy a drink)

POEM - "Credit where Credit is due"

- Band Mgr. - Jim Palmer - "Elans for 1963 Season"

- M. C. Bob Waite - Presentation of Gifts and  
Enthusiasm Speel

- Pipe Major Hugh McInnes - Picobaireachd Solo

- Door Prizes - Pipe Sargent John Kirkpatrick


- Harmony Pipe Duet - Jerry Cashion, Tom Kirkpatrick

- Dancing - Scottish & American -  
Mr. and Mrs. Galloway, and Mr. and Mrs. R. Waite

\*Please pay all additional banquet money to Ed Galloway

\*Pipers are requested to tune pipes before dinner



3



## THIRD ANNUAL ADIRONDACK SCOTTISH GAMES

Washington County Fairgrounds  
JULY 19, 1980  
GREENWICH, N. Y.

EUSPBA SANCTIONED GAMES

## 1st ANNUAL LAKE GEORGE SCOTTISH GAMES

SATURDAY, AUG. 16, 1969

LAKE GEORGE ATHLETIC FIELD Games to Start  
Promptly at 11:30 A.M.

FIELD EVENTS	THROWING THE HAMMER	TOSsing THE CABER
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Highland Dancing Exhibition</b></p> <p>Highland Fling    Strathspey and Reel O'Tullach    Sword Dance Sailors Hornpipe    Seann Tribhas</p> <p>OPEN SOLO PIPING COMPETITION March, Strathspey, Reel (Combined)</p> <p>Adm. \$1.00 — Child \$.50</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sponsored By <b>LAKE GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE and ADIRONDACK BAGPIPE BAND</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pipe Band Competition</b> March, Strathspey, Reel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SLOW MARCH    INDIVIDUAL DRUMMING DRUM MAJOR CONTEST</p> 	

Annual banquet programs and games posters.

ANNUAL BANQUET

The Adirondack Pipe Band would like to honor and thank two good drummers and two great guys, Joe Aiken & Bill Kirkpatrick

Cocktail hour - 6:30 - 7:30  
(Two tickets for drinks furnished by the band)

MENU - - Roast Beef, Juice Cocktail, Individual Tossed Salad, Assorted Relishes, Potatoes, 2 Hot Vegetables, Butter Rolls - Coffee, Tea, Dessert

INVOCATION - Jim E. Palmer  
7:30 - 8:30 - DINNER  
8:30 - 9:15 - Drum Major Robert Waite - Master of Ceremonies  
Introduction of Guests, Officers and New Members  
-----  
9:15 - INTRODUCTION of V.S.P.'s  
Manager - Bob Davis  
Pipe Major - John Kirkpatrick  
9:30 - DOOR PRIZES - Jim Palmer  
9:35 - HUGH MCINNES - Pipe Solo  
9:40 - DANCING - Scottish & American -  
Ed Galloway in Charge

Originally, recitals were seen as fulfilling a need to give students a reason to practice in winter when there were no parades or games for which to prepare. The recitals take the form of a variety show, in which piping, dancing, and other instruments are featured. The band holds some of these events at the Park Theater. Our partner in these ventures has been the Wild Irish Acres Dancers.

The band continues the tradition of Burns Night celebrations that date back to 1979, though they now take the form of more music and dance recitals than the full suppers of the past. As in the decades past, families form an important part of the organization. They donate their time and services, and the group is very grateful: accounting, printing, graphic design, and marketing—the list goes on. That year, the band started holding summer practice in City Park, in front of the construction site that is now Crandall Public Library.

The band continues the tradition of competition, though in 2008, the group did

if only to offer the opportunity to those musicians in the group who are interested and proficient. The band could lose out on some great musicians if it does not compete, and competition can bring out the best in a musician. On the other hand, there is insufficient population in the area to field a competition-only band. Furthermore, parades and other public performances bring in revenue, wider public exposure, and potential new recruits. In addition, in a band of mixed musical proficiency, public performances are open to the participation of just about everyone in the band, whereas competition would be limited to those few who reached certain levels of skill. In the procedures currently agreed upon, a separate competition band exists within the band. There is a process to approve participants based on musical skill level. Extra practices are required, and it was decided not to use substitutes, so if the whole “team” could not make a scheduled game, the whole band did not go. Our regular Tuesday night practice is dedicated

not have enough musicians to qualify to field a band. The reader will notice a history of conflict between competition and the “street band.” It was recognized that this conflict was a threat to the stability of the group, so in the new bylaws in 2007, the band took steps to balance the focus of the group once and for all. Competition is important, and it is part of highland piping. To be a successful band, we need to field a competition band

to parade and performance tunes, and the competition set is addressed only on a limited basis at those rehearsals.

Another significant change in the bylaws of 2007 pertained to membership. Membership had always been based on participation and musical proficiency. Traditionally, members were either “active” (meaning they met the attendance test of 50 percent of performances) or “honorary.” Honorary members could not vote or hold office. New members were elected only by unanimous consent. The group experimented with taking attendance at practices and counting this toward membership, but that proved too complex a task. There arose a controversy with the nomination of a musician who did not achieve unanimous consent for membership. The bylaws of 2007 established the classification “members” and “associates.” Associates are students presumed to seek membership or are people who just help out the band. The “honorary” classification was dropped, and membership is maintained through participation in 50 percent of the events. Election of members is now by majority consent (instead of unanimity), while nominations can only come from the pipe major or drum sergeant.

In 2008–2009, the band has several projects. The band is working to increase the number of pipers by offering beginner lessons in a group format, as it has done frequently in the past. It has a marketing plan in place, thanks to Mr. Troy Burns and his expertise, and will have at its disposal a set of ready-made marketing materials, such as posters and brochures. Contact has been made with organizations like the village of Lake George and Fort William Henry, with a view to arranging concert-style performances by the band.

Drum sergeant Tom Harrington and pipe major David Jones collaborated to produce a list of band sets for the group to work on through the winter months. The tune list is long enough to fill a one-hour program, and Tom is teaching the group some new “tricks” to enhance our stage presence. An effort is also underway



The Adirondack Pipes and Drums, December 1989. *Front row, left to right:* Chris Bowen, Donna Schiavoni, Beth Merrill, Sharon Conrick, Joshua Gonyeau, Matt Conrick, Matt Hall. *Back row, left to right:* Fred Harris, Gary Conrick, Dick Merrill, Ben Conrick, Bob Schiavoni, Harold Kirkpatrick, Andrew Kirkpatrick, Peter Hall, Brian Green.

to write grants to fund things like recitals, instructors, and uniforms.

For over 30 years, more than half of the band has been composed of adolescents. A consequence of this is that the organization experiences periodic contractions and relies on instruction to continually feed new musicians into the process. Many of the adult musicians who have formed the core of the group for the past 20 years are reaching retirement age. To maintain the organization, it seems that well-organized instruction, combined with extensive advertising and outreach, will be more important than ever. In 2008, 57 percent of the principle pipe section is under 19 and another 28 percent are over 65.

David Jones and Jerry Cashion have worked to give piping instruction through 2007 and 2008. Tom Harrington has carried the drumming instruction. In addition, the band offers scholarships to young pipers and drummers to attend events like the Invermark Piping & Drumming Summer School.

The strength and longevity of an organization depends on the contributions and creative energies of its members. The group has been fortunate over the decades to have had the commitment of some very dedicated individuals. There is not space for all here, and no disrespect is intended to anyone left out. ▼



David Jones was a bagpiper with the *Adirondack Pipes and Drums of Glens Falls* from 2000 to 2009. He is currently a bagpiper with the Galloway Gaelic Pipes and Drums of Glens Falls, and also, plays fiddle and concertina in the band, *Hudson River Ceili*. Photo courtesy of the Adirondack Pipes & Drums Archives, The Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, New York.

# JOSEPH BRUCHAC

## Poet Laureate of Saratoga Springs

BY TODD DEGARMO

Our heartfelt congratulations to storyteller, author, poet, Abenaki elder, and *Voices* columnist, Joseph Bruchac, for being appointed as the first Poet Laureate of Saratoga Springs.

The ceremony took place at City Hall on January 17, 2023. Bruchac was selected through a competitive nomination and interview process by members of the City's Poet Laureate Committee. His two-year appointment will run through December 2024.

Poet Laureate of Saratoga Springs is an honorary, civic position appointed by the Mayor of Saratoga Springs, recognizing an exceptional local poet who is committed to the power of poetry to engage and inspire. The Poet Laureate forges a meaningful connection between poetry and the community, undertaking projects that make poetry more available and more accessible to people in their everyday lives. The Poet Laureate will officiate at selected public gatherings, initiate a dialogue between poets and the community, inspire others in their writing and personal expression, and bring recognition to the history and tradition of poetry in Saratoga Springs.

Joseph Bruchac is a highly acclaimed, prolific writer and storyteller. In his work, Bruchac explores his Abenaki ancestry and Native American storytelling traditions.

He was born and raised in Saratoga Springs. He traces his maternal ancestry back to the Abenaki people and is a member of the Nulhegan Abenaki Nation, a state-recognized tribe in Vermont.

His poems, articles, and stories have appeared in more than 1,000 publications, from *American Poetry Review* to *National Geographic*, and he has authored more than 180 books for children and adults, including *Bowman's Store: A Journey to Myself*, *Thirteen Moons on Turtles's Back*, *Code Talker*, and *Rez Dogs*.

Bruchac earned his BA in English Literature from Cornell University, MA in Literature and Creative Writing from Syracuse, and PhD in Comparative Literature from



Joseph Bruchac

the Union Institute of Ohio. His honors include a Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Writing Fellowship for Poetry, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers Circle of Americas.

His work as an educator includes four years of teaching in West Africa, and eight years of directing a college program for Skidmore College inside a maximum security prison.

With his late wife, Carol, he founded the Greenfield Review Literary Center and *The Greenfield Review Press*. He has edited a number of anthologies of contemporary poetry and fiction, including *Breaking Silence*, winner of an American Book Award. As one of the founders of the Woodcraft Circle of Native American Writers and Storytellers, he has helped numerous Native American authors get their work published. ▼

# Marking New York Legends

BY DAVID J. PUGLIA

Throughout New York State, you've encountered the ubiquitous royal blue historical markers, wayside signage memorializing significant historical people, places, and events. These public adornments date to 1926 and the sesquicentennial celebration of the American Revolution.

If you are wandering in Strykersville, Johnson City, Staatsburg, or dozens of other New York towns, you may be startled to see newer, ruby red markers. This is not a manufacturing error, but a cause for celebration: red signals the commemoration of local folklore. Over the past seven years, the William G. Pomeroy Foundation's Legends & Lore® program has erected 73 such legend-centric signs across New York State, ranging from well-known community legends, like the Headless Horseman in Sleepy Hollow and Champ the Lake Monster in Plattsburgh, to local oral traditions, like a cannon heist in Wilmington or a bear brawl in Queens.

Once the responsibility of the New York Education Department and the State History Office, the Pomeroy Foundation now funds the vast majority of all new historical and cultural markers in New York State. Who are these noble philanthropists honoring local lore? Located in Syracuse, the Foundation began after founder and trustee Bill Pomeroy's battle with leukemia. A successful match with a donor allowed for a stem cell transplant that saved his life, and he promised to help others do the same. The Pomeroy Foundation's first initiative was to diversify the bone marrow donor registry to facilitate donor matches. From there, the Foundation expanded into cultural matters, with a second mission to aid communities in celebrating and preserving their history by funding historical and cultural markers.

Since 2006, through six signature marker grant programs and others funded through partnerships, the Pomeroy Foundation has



Top: The "Beef on Weck" marker in West Seneca. All photos courtesy of the William G. Pomeroy Foundation.

Bottom: The "Michigan Hot Dog" marker in Plattsburgh.

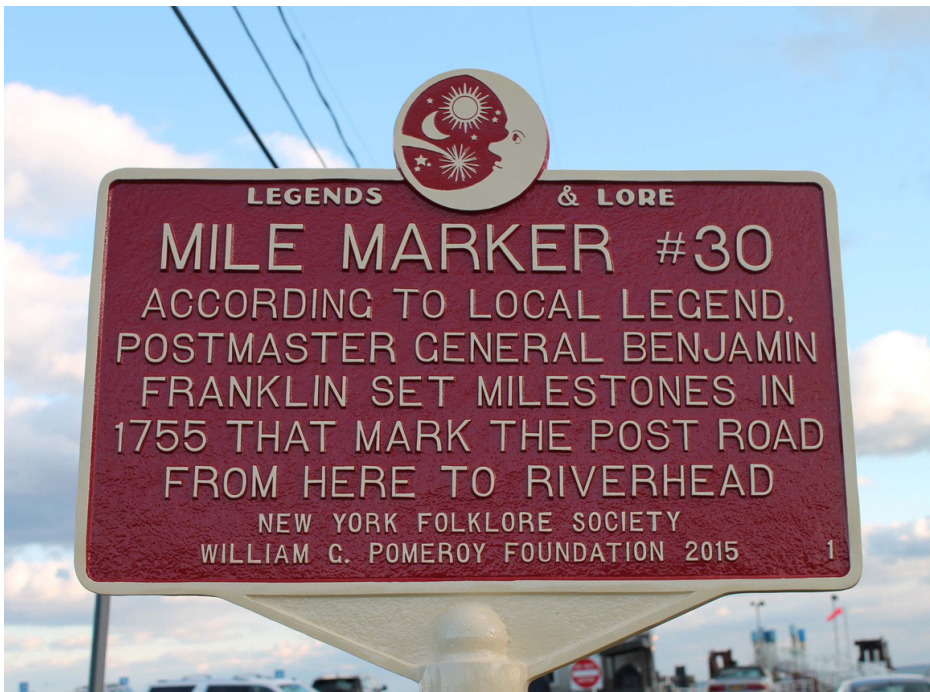
sponsored over 1,700 markers in 46 states and the District of Columbia. "Communities want the opportunity to recognize the history and heritage important to them," says Deryn Pomeroy, Trustee and Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Pomeroy Foundation. "Through the Foundation's mission, we are proud to support communities

across the country achieve that goal by awarding grants for roadside markers and plaques. The impact is clear, and we deeply believe in the benefits of markers, including that they educate the public, encourage pride of place, promote tourism, and generate economic benefits" (Personal communication, Deryn Pomeroy, April 25, 2022).



## The Lewis Giant at 8583 U.S. 9, Lewis, New York

Joe Call was a 19th-century strongman and wrestler from New York's Champlain Valley. He came from a long lineage of large and powerful men with exceptional physical gifts. He stood 6 feet 3 inches tall, thickly muscled and broad shouldered with the purported strength of three men. Call is often referred to as the Lewis Giant, but he also earned the more whimsical nicknames of the Modern Hercules and the Paul Bunyan of the East. Unlike Paul Bunyan, Joe Call was very much a real person; but much like Paul Bunyan, a folk tradition grew around his legendary feats of spectacular strength. One tall tale tells of a foreign champion wrestler who made the long trip to New York specifically to wrestle Call. When the stranger found a formidable



The "Mile Marker #30" marker in Cutchogue.

The Pomeroy Foundation supports commemorative signage not just in its native New York, but across the country, and not just for history and folklore, but for foodways, women's suffrage, early transportation canals, and a host of other topics. In the Hungry for History™ program in New York, for instance, the Pomeroy Foundation has erected markers for beef on weck sandwiches in Buffalo, Michigan hot dogs in Plattsburgh, and chocolate jumble cookies in Esperance. In the Legends & Lore program, the first sign was planted in 2015, for the legend claiming Benjamin Franklin installed mile markers along the old post road in Southold. In partnership with New York Folklore, recent honorees include the "Lewis Giant" in Lewis, "Franklin Spring" in Ballston Spa, "New Hope Named" in Moravia, "Fiddler's Ghost" in Staatsburg, "Kau-Qua-Tau" in Cowlesville, and "Stryker Willow" in Strykersville. Sampled below are abbreviated legend narratives from the most recent round of markers. For the unabridged versions of these and many other New York legends, visit the Pomeroy Foundation's markers map on its website (<https://www.wgpfoundation.org/history/map>).

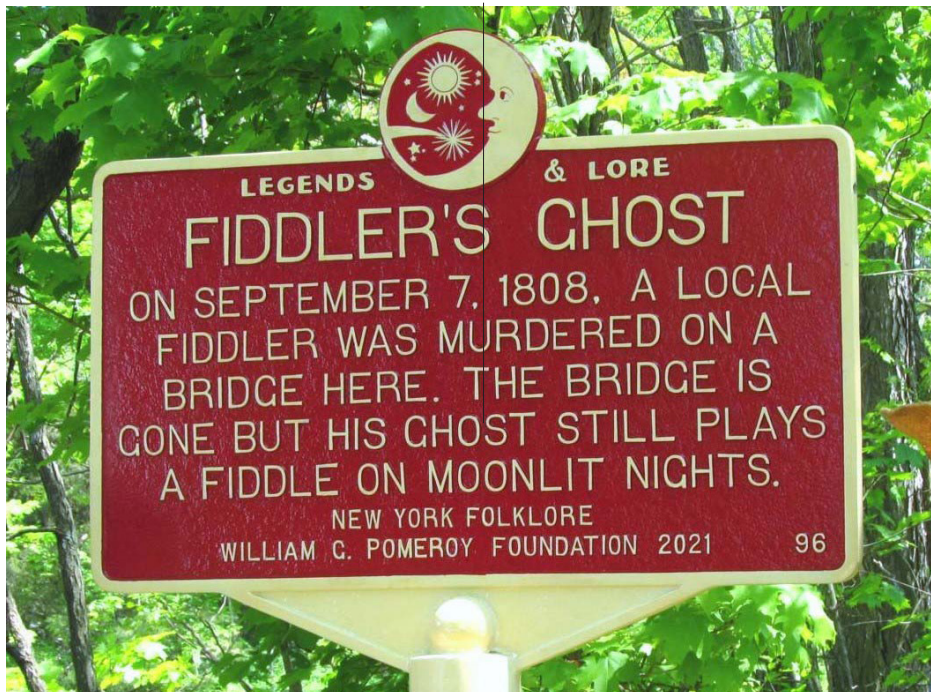


The "Lewis Giant" marker in Lewis.

man plowing his fields, he asked to be pointed in the direction of the Lewis Giant's residence. Call lifted the plow with one hand, or in some versions the ox itself, and pointed it at the nearest farmhouse. The challenger sized up the man in the field, made an educated guess as to his identity, and promptly departed.

**Franklin Spring at  
190 Malta Ave,  
Ballston Spa, New York**

Benjamin Franklin had a reputation as a convivial carouser who devoted himself to improving the nation, but did his gregariousness and patriotism extend itself to attending spiritual seances in the afterlife as a benign spirit directing mineral spring exploration? The wealthy Ballston Spa resident Samuel Hides dabbled in Spiritualism, a system of belief centered on communication with spirits of the dead through a medium and a popular movement in Central New York at the time. During a seance, the supposed spirit of Benjamin Franklin revealed himself,



The "Fiddler's Ghost" marker in Staatsburg.

divulging a hidden mineral spring 715 feet beneath Hides' property, one with great medicinal value that could provide healing waters for the entire nation to enjoy. Franklin directed Hides to dig at a particular spot on his property, and when Hides hit that exact depth, a hundred-foot geyser burst from the earth. Hides constructed a cobblestone shelter and bottling house to aid in national distribution. The spring proved valuable and, as Franklin had foretold, provided coveted mineral waters shipped by request all over the United States. To acknowledge his otherworldly tipster, Hides named his discovery the Hides-Franklin Spring.

**New Hope Named at  
3716 NY-41A,  
Moravia, New York**

Sodom, often paired with Gomorrah, was the ancient Biblical town destroyed by fire from heaven as punishment for its inhabitants' wickedness and depravity. It was also the unfortunate name of a small, struggling 19th-century hamlet located in Cayuga County. In 1823, Charles Kellogg built a gristmill in Sodom. This water-powered mill turned out fine flour that fed Central New Yorkers for generations, and locals remain loyal to the New Hope Mill's popular pancake mix. The improved fortunes that the mill brought the town also inspired a place-name legend that lives on. The year the mill was built, a thankful Sodomite climbed to the top of the mill, precariously balancing a jug of whiskey on his ascent. While some of the jug's contents was imbibed before the climb, enough remained when he summited for the man to douse the mill in a pseudo-christening ceremony. He proclaimed that the mill had saved the town, which was born again and should be renamed accordingly. From that moment on, the wretched Town of Sodom became the cheerful Town of New Hope.



The "New Hope Named" marker in Moravia.

## **Fiddler's Ghost at 469 Fiddlers Bridge Rd, Staatsburg, New York**

Though the bridge is now gone, the Hudson Valley's Fiddler's Bridge ghost remains, sawing away for evening visitors. In 1808, an old fiddler who played at local hootenannies was murdered while walking home from a dance. His body was abandoned on the bridge, and ever since that fateful night, according to tradition, his ghost can be heard playing the fiddle on moonlit eves. Even a hundred years later, visitors to Clinton, often traveling up from New York City, would hear renditions of the legend of the musical ghost of Fiddler's Bridge. A local, Chris Carpenter, who also happened to be Clinton's town supervisor, was tired of visitors telling him the story was preposterous. One night, Carpenter crowded disbelievers into his hay wagon and shot off for the haunted site. As the wagon barreled toward the bridge, Carpenter's flabbergasted passengers heard the wails of a great fiddler

at work. Even after the bridge was torn down, the town chose to name the thoroughfare Fiddler's Bridge Road in honor of the old fiddling ghost.

## **Kau-Qua-Tau at 979 Folsomdale Rd, Cowlesville, New York**

The Ebenezer Cemetery in West Seneca is the site of a supernatural legend, one based in verified historical murders, trials, executions, and burials. In 1821, on the Buffalo Creek Reservation, a Seneca man fell ill and died. The medicine men considered the death suspicious and concluded it was an act of witchcraft. The prime suspect was the deceased's nurse, Kau-Qua-Tau. Sentenced to death, Kau-Qua-Tau fled to Canada, only to be lured back to Seneca territory, where she was executed and buried beneath her own cabin. Decades later, the Ebenezer Society purchased the land and redistributed the Seneca's abandoned cabins to its parishioners. The new residents who had the misfortune of receiving

Kau-Qua-Tau's cabin complained of sleepless nights, strange sounds, and evil visions creeping up from the floorboards. The society's spiritual leader, Christian Mentz, attempted to quash the rumors by spending a restful night in the cabin. Early the next morning, Mentz ordered the cabin burned to the ground, confessing that the ghost of Kau-Qua-Tau, bound in chains and dripping blood, had revealed herself to him. The cabin was razed, and legend says that, to this day, no second person has ever been buried on that spot in Ebenezer Cemetery.

## **Stryker Willow at 3815 Main St, Strykersville, New York**

In 1810, Garrett Stryker purchased the untamed land that would become Strykersville. He packed up his wife and children for the move, piled all their worldly possessions into a wagon, and trudged the couple hundred miles to his newly acquired acreage. His wife, Saloma Stryker, led the ox-pulled wagon the entire journey, guiding the team with her willow riding crop. When the footsore family arrived at their new home and hunkered down for the night, Saloma planted her willow riding crop in the dirt. Whether she was discarding it from exhaustion, pulling herself back to her feet, or staking her family's claim, no one knows for sure. However, it happened, the willow riding crop took root, and as Strykersville grew, so, too, did a majestic willow, standing tall and proud in the middle of Strykersville. According to locals, it was the first tree to bud in spring and the last tree to shed its leaves in the fall. But as all things must pass, the once mighty tree gnarled, wilted, and died. To this day, however, there are reports of a willow continuously sprouting in that same spot, no matter how many times it's ripped up.

Curious New Yorkers can explore the Pomeroy Foundation's interactive online markers map, which inventories every marker and plaque that they have funded across the United States—a potent resource for history buffs, culture lovers, and modern-day legend trippers alike. The



The "Kau-Qua-Tau" marker in Cowlesville.



The “Stryker Willow” marker in Strykersville.

*Voices* readership can filter by programs to look only at Legends & Lore and only in the Empire State. Each legend includes an exact address, a pinned Google map, latitude and longitude coordinates, a legend narrative (including the extended versions of those recounted above), and the original marker inscription. The marker inscriptions are an art form in and of themselves, where unwieldy legends must be boiled down to their five-line essence, a sort of folklorist’s haiku.

If you’re reading this article or perusing the marker map and thinking, “Hey, why haven’t those Pomeroy folks erected a marker in my town yet? There’s a yarn that’s been spun around here for decades!” then, you’re in luck. The Legends & Lore program accepts applications twice per year. “The Pomeroy Foundation is committed to helping recognize special shared stories from across New York State with Legends & Lore roadside markers,” says Deryn Pomeroy. “We offer two Legends & Lore grant rounds each year and welcome prospective applicants to share their ideas and ask questions about the program any time.” Although the program’s title

emphasizes legends, the Pomeroy Foundation is willing to consider all folklore genres, including tall tales, myths, superstitions, place-name anecdotes, calendar customs, folk music, traditional medicine, and any other community tradition passed on person to person, generation to generation by word of mouth or imitation. The Pomeroy Foundation supports the entire cost of casting the marker, the pole, and the shipping, with no matching funds required. The grantee’s only responsibility is for installation and maintenance, and public works, highway departments, and civic organizations are often willing to assist with those tasks.

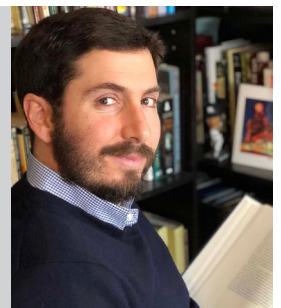
To vet applications, the Pomeroy Foundation works closely with professional folklorists in each partner state through public folklore centers, nonprofits, and arts councils. Legends & Lore grants are available to 501(c)(3) organizations; nonprofit academic institutions; and local, state, and federal government entities within the United States. Interested New Yorkers should contact an eligible local organization to discuss applying for a marker grant on their behalf. To apply,

organizations will need a contact person who will lead the effort, the GPS coordinates of the proposed installation location, a brief description of the folklore being commemorated, supporting documents, an argument for why the address is the appropriate site for signage, a first crack at a marker inscription, and a letter from the landowner granting permission to install a sign. Professional folklore consultants will be assigned to review the application, follow up with questions or concerns, assist in improving the application for clarity and storytelling, and if accepted, refine the inscription and write a full legend narrative for the marker map before final approval, casting, shipping, and installation.

“Once the marker is installed, it’s time to celebrate,” says Deryn Pomeroy. “The applicant will often organize a marker dedication that brings people together and highlights the legend or folklore being commemorated. This is an opportunity for community engagement, generating public awareness, and showcasing your community’s story.”

The Legends & Lore program offers ordinary New Yorkers the opportunity to stake a claim to the stories and customs that matter most to their communities, honoring ephemeral and intangible traditions with permanent cast aluminum markers. ▼

David J. Puglia, PhD, is Associate Professor and Deputy Chairperson in the English Department at Bronx Community College of the City University



of New York, where he teaches courses in folklore. He is the author or editor of four books on folklore and legend, including the Brian McConnell Award-winning *North American Monsters: A Contemporary Legend Casebook*. Photo courtesy of the author.

# A Visit to City Lore's Archives

BY SETH ORREN SCHONBERG

In September 2022, City Lore, located in Lower Manhattan, had a visitor who told us that she believed we might have a photograph of her mother in our archives. The image that she was looking for showed her mother working at their family-owned vegetable stall in New York City's Chinatown, shortly after her parent's immigration from Hong Kong in the 1970s. Fortunately, she knew who had taken it.

In the City Lore Archive, there are three long, lateral filing cabinet drawers dedicated to the *Ethnic USA Collection* of photographs

taken from 1971–1983 by Katrina Thomas (1927–2018). Thomas was an independent photographer, who in 1968, was hired by New York City Mayor John Lindsay to capture the initiative, “Streets in Play.”<sup>1</sup> In 1971, she returned to photographing New York City life, this time covering ethnic communities through the lens of cultural and religious events. She documented a range of festivals, parades, religious ceremonies, street scenes, family and holiday celebrations, and folk music and dance performances. The collection provides

evidence not only of the diversity of neighborhood, ethnic, and immigrant life in the City, but is also an important documentation of the rise of ethnic identification and heritage celebrations that took place across the United States in the 1970s. The communities captured in these images were in the midst of an expansion, thanks to the Hart–Celler Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which inaugurated a new era of immigration from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean. Thomas generously contributed the collection to City



Mother of family working at the family-owned vegetable stall on the corner of Mulberry & Canal St., Chinatown, NY, in April 1976. Photograph by Katarina Thomas, *Ethnic USA Collection*, City Lore Archive.



Daughter with father and mother during their visit to City Lore, viewing slides in the Katrina Thomas *Ethnic USA Collection*. Photograph by Seth Orren Schonberg.

Lore in 2002, before she retired, and we have stewarded it ever since.

However, the collection consists of 5,000 color slides (in addition to a number of prints and many more negatives), approximately 550 of which are dedicated to the Chinatown community. In order to find the photograph in question I needed more information to go off of!

Remarkably, our visitor told us that she had discovered the photograph in question while reading her third grade social studies textbook! While sitting in class at Transfiguration Catholic School in the mid-1980s, she turned to page 35 of *Holt Social Studies: Communities* (©1983 Holt, Rinehart

and Winston, Publishers) and saw the photograph of her mother. She has held onto the textbook this entire time, knowing that at some point she would want to find out more. In our visitor's own words:

My parents are now in their late 70s, and I am in search for everything to document their amazing journey. Everyone has a great immigration story somewhere in their history. I am fortunate enough to be generationally close enough to this story to have heard first accounts of the myriad of trials and tribulations that bring them to today.

Our visitor shared with us her family's journey to New York City:

Growing up in Communist China on the wrong side of politics, my mom's side of the family was left starved and persecuted. She found herself swimming from China to Hong Kong to escape and to find ways to feed her starving family back in China. My dad sailed the seven seas to find the place where he would set roots and make his money. With just \$11 and the clothes on his back, he left his coolie job behind on a merchant ship in New York City. Amazingly, these two were childhood sweethearts back in China but were only able to communicate through letters throughout their 10 years apart. I have every single one of these letters and have treated them like my precious treasures.

Since the image in her textbook was credited to Thomas, she found out about a photography exhibit at the Arsenal Gallery in New York City's Central Park, entitled "Streets In Play: Katrina Thomas, NYC Summer 1968," which ran through the summer of 2022. There, she was pointed in City Lore's direction and, after checking our web page, came to us.

With a photograph of the textbook page in hand, I was able to confirm that we did have that image in our collection, and better yet, it was one in a series of 10 of her mother and their vegetable stall on the corner of Mulberry & Canal Streets taken in April 1976. We scheduled an appointment, and she returned with her elderly mother and father. In City Lore's gallery space, I set up a light table and brought out to the family three slide pages (each page holding 20 slides) for them to peruse.

Looking over the slides through a magnifying glass, the father found photographs of himself working alongside his wife at their vegetable stall, and after a moment

the elderly couple, with their daughter's help translating, were excited to point out to me a photograph of their daughter as a baby, no more than a year old, strapped to their mother's back! Across another slide page, they found six more images of their family working at their stall. It turns out that these additional photographs were taken later the same year, in August 1976, when Katrina Thomas stopped at their stall on her way from photographing the Chinatown Cultural Festival, in Manhattan's Columbus Park.

Despite the long and dangerous paths that brought this family from China to New York City, the inspiration behind an intrepid photographer's wandering through Chinatown, the various connections and serendipities that led to a captured moment being shared and rediscovered, and ultimately the location of the photograph here at City Lore, the story is not yet over. Following the family's visit, they asked me to digitize the slides so that they may be printed and hung on the elderly couple's

apartment walls. We were happy to comply, and I expect these images will now help share the family history for years to come. I am honored to have played my part in their story and, after all, this is what archives live for. ▼

**Note:**

1. "Streets In Play: Katrina Thomas, NYC Summer 1968." <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/central-park/events/2022/08/23/streets-in-play-katrina-thomas-nyc-summer-1968>

Seth Orren Schonberg is Archivist at City Lore where he helps catalog and preserve the New York City urban quotidian. He has a background in music archiving and exhibit curation, and is currently pursuing his MLS at CUNY Queens College. Photo courtesy of the author.



To receive *Voices* and enjoy the full range of New York Folklore programs, become a member!

For more information, turn to the inside back cover, or visit our web site: [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org)

### Are you new to New York Folklore? Missing back copies of the Journal?

You can fill in the gaps in your collection. Selected back issues of *Voices*, *New York Folklore* (1975–1999), and the *New York Folklore Quarterly* (1946–1974) are still available. You can check availability of a specific issue by calling our office at 518/346-7008, or checking online at [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org)

<i>Voices</i> and <i>New York Folklore</i>	Single Issues \$10 each (\$8 member price)
<i>New York Folklore Quarterly</i>	Single issue \$5 each (\$4.50 member price)
Special offer for the <i>Quarterly</i>	5 issues for \$15

If you want to order just a single article from any journal, you'll find order blanks in our publications section of the website. A PDF may be ordered online and will be can be emailed to you for \$3.

### TO ORDER

Tell us what you which issue(s) you want:  
 Voices     NYFolklore     NYFQ

Vol. & Issue No(s) \_\_\_\_\_ or Date \_\_\_\_\_

Publication Subtotal        \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shipping & Handling        \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(add \$5.95 for orders under \$25; \$6.95 for \$25–\$50; \$8.95 for orders over \$50. Email [info@nyfolklore.org](mailto:info@nyfolklore.org) about foreign postal rates)

Total enclosed                \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose check payable to New York Folklore and mail to New York Folklore, 129 Jay Street, Schenectady, NY 12305.

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_

---

Shipping Address \_\_\_\_\_

---

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

# May Baskets

BY TODD DEGARMO

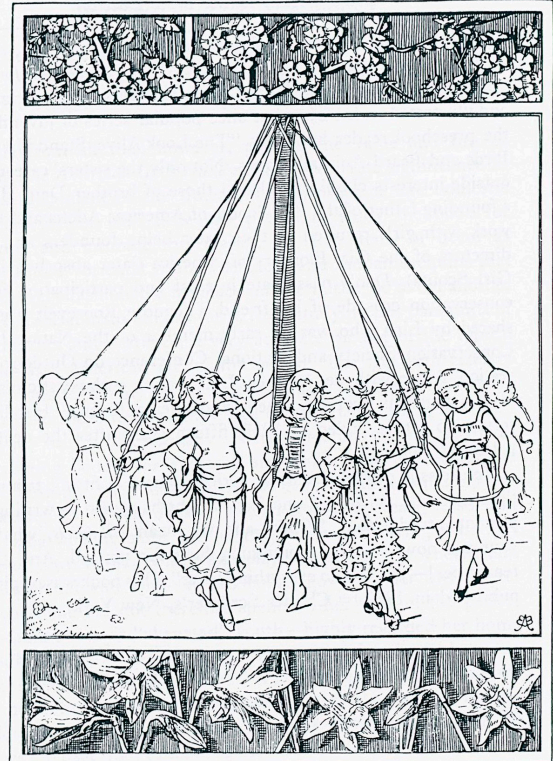
Come springtime, generations of children in the greater Glens Falls area spent weeks making May Baskets to distribute to friends and neighbors on the first of May.

I was new to the area in the mid-1980s and learned of this local tradition through recording local memories and reading newspaper accounts, noting activity from Warrensburg and Lake George to Glens Falls, Hudson Falls, Fort Edward, and further south along the river to Fort Miller and Schuylerville, going back over 100 years.

Historically, May baskets have been traced to Great Britain, where the return of Spring was celebrated with singing, dancing, and an abundance of flowers. Flowers made into wreaths and garlands decorated doorways, maypoles, and the local May Queen. Children presented flowers door-to-door, singing carols, and

carrying the Lady of May, in return for small gifts or money for the church.

The custom traveled to America, noted in the late 19th century by Lina and Adelia Beard in their 1887 book, *The American Girls Handy Book*: “A May-day custom, and a very pretty one, still survives among the children in our New England States. It is that of hanging upon the door-knobs of friends and neighbors pretty spring-offerings in the shape of small baskets filled with flowers, wild ones, if they can be obtained; if not, the window-gardens at home are heavily taxed to supply the deficiency.”



The May-Pole Dance.

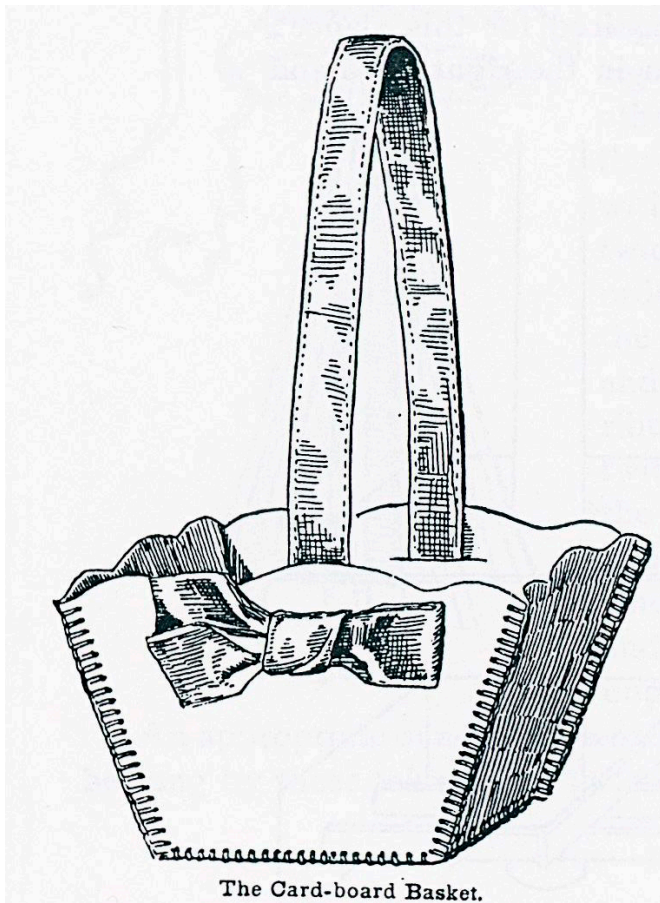
“The May-Pole Dance.” *American Girls Handy Book*, 1887.



May Baskets by the Moreau Community Center. Photo by Todd DeGarmo.

As early as 1896, *The Post-Star* (Glens Falls) reported, “The little ones enjoyed hanging May baskets last evening” in Fort Edward, and up the road in Sandy Hill (Hudson Falls), they tell of a group of 15 to 20 children, ages 8 to 12, delivering the baskets. In 1900, it’s noted that, for Glens Falls, “Many of the representatives of the younger generation were out last evening, leaving remembrances in the form of May baskets at the homes of their friends.” By 1919, it is called a custom relatively unique to the area: “In spite of the heavy rain last night hundreds of young people throughout the city followed the old time custom of ‘hanging May baskets’... While it has been the custom here for many years to





The Card-board Basket.

"The Card-board Basket." *American Girls Handy Book*, 1887



May Basket by the Moreau Seniors c.1995. Photo courtesy of the Folk Art Collection, Crandall Public Library.

hang the baskets, filled with candy and flowers, on the first day of May, in many communities the idea is unheard of."

Locally, I was told, May baskets were originally homemade. Children spent hours finding and putting together just the right materials. Old boxboard containers of all shapes and sizes were used. Folks in Warrensburg remember using small ice cream cups or matchboxes. Many cut down oatmeal boxes or milk containers. In Schuylerville, they salvaged the cones that held thread from a Schuylerville knitting mill for a cornucopia appearance.

The containers were then covered with colorful tissue papers and decorated with twisted crepe paper flowers. A handle was added, using paper, string, a pipe cleaner or salvaged twist of some kind. *The American Girls Handy Book* gives similar instructions for making baskets: "The dainty little baskets which are used by the Mayers are

generally of home manufacture. They are made of almost any material, and in a variety of shapes. Some, constructed of cardboard, are covered with crimped tissue-paper, or with gilt, silver, or colored paper. They are never large unless flowers are plentiful, and even in that case a small basket is prettier."

The May baskets were then filled with spring flowers, popcorn, and/or candy. Fay Crandall, who grew up in Warrensburg, recalled, "I'd fill them with violets because violets were usually out, and sometimes mother would make up some candy and I'd put that in." A 1919 local newspaper article noted many beautiful baskets, and in particular, a "fine basket" by Miss Lydia Barker of Third Street, contained "candies, bananas and eggs."

There was a technique to delivering the baskets, as described in *The American Girls Handy Book*: "When the dusky twilight

approaches, it is time for the merry bands of young folks to start out on this lovely errand of going from house to house, leaving behind them the evidence of their flying visit in these sweetest of May-offerings. Silently approaching a door, they hang a May-basket upon the knob and, with a loud rap, or ring of the bell, scamper off, and flee as though for life."

Ruth Jenkins, who grew up in Fort Edward, confirms the technique: "We used to fill them with candy and sneak up to friends' houses, hang the baskets on the doorknob and run." Marie Herrick of Schuylerville remembers, "You'd go around and hang 'em on the door. Knock on the door and run. You might put your name inside, but you'd run. You didn't want them to catch you at it."

In 1932, *The Post Star* called attention to a variation in the custom, giving advice to the young people: "If your doorbell rings



Glens Falls, 1942. *Look Magazine*—Glens Falls Hometown USA Collection. Courtesy of the Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library.

Mildred Saunders. She was sick with the whooping cough, staying with her grandparents in Fort Miller. Her uncle, Major Curtis Betts, flew a large plane from Champaign, Illinois, circling the hamlet several times before dropping a May basket safely in the front yard.

May baskets also became a lively business in the region, with the handmade creations being sold by organizations as fundraisers. They were also found in a variety of the stores and sold by private individuals. As early as the 1880s, and well into the 1950s, newspapers advertised May baskets made and sold by churches (Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist, Friends, Methodist) and volunteer/service organizations (Sons of Veterans, Order of the Eastern Star, Girl Scouts, Glens Falls Hospital Guild).

Stores were also involved, selling the raw materials needed to make the baskets (including the colorful tissue and crepe papers), from places like Empire Stationery at 24 South in 1918, or Russell and Wait at 122 Glen in 1925, or Vaughn Sporting Goods in 1964. Businesses also sold peanuts, popcorn, hard candies, and jelly beans, specifically to fill the May baskets from places like Scott's Sons at 18 Ridge in 1915, or Dolan's Quality Candy Shop at 43 South in 1923. Sometimes, stores allowed

tomorrow, lose no time in answering it, because it probably means that an admirer has left a May basket hanging on the knob. It has been said by good authority, that the donor, after ringing the bell, will make a hasty retreat, but not to any great distance, because the recipient is supposed to catch him or her, as the case may be, and deliver a reward for the gift, which, so the custom goes, is a kiss."

Indeed, some of the May baskets were more special than others. Marie Herrick of Schuylerville told me, in 1989, of one in particular from an admirer that she still remembered: "I remember one I received. And that was a long time ago. It was from Kilmer Myers. He lived over here in the white house on the hill. It was an ice cream container. And inside of it there was a cup. And in the cup, there was all these pretty little flowers and a vine that came up out of it, and candy all around it. I can remember that."

In 1947, the newspaper reports a memorable delivery of a May basket to

## MAY BASKETS

200 May baskets, umbrella, box, doll and other styles  
5c each.

May basket paper, 2 sheets for 1c or 12 for 5c.

Paper for the umbrellas, 2 for 1c.

Crepe paper, 5c a roll. Come in and we will show you  
how to make the umbrellas.

# RAE SIMS

THOMPSON BLK. SOUTH ST.

Advertisement. *Post-Star*, Glens Falls, New York, Monday, April 28, 1913.



Advertisement. *Post-Star*, Glens Falls, New York, Tuesday, April 17, 1923.

organizations to sell May baskets on site, or they'd have their own line of May baskets to sell. The Baptists used Robinson Hardware on Ridge Street in 1916. Scott's Sons sold ready-made baskets for 5 cents each in 1915; Fowler's for 19 and 29 cents each in 1952; CVR Discount House at 114 South, 2 for 45 cents.

Over the years, the newspapers also noted May Baskets for sale by individuals: Miss Helen Scott at 108 Ridge Street in 1911, and Mrs. L. G. Boynton at 3 Thompson Avenue in 1930. A 1947 headline states, "Woman Has Made 1000 May Baskets," telling the story of Mrs. Frank Aubrey at 11 Griffin Ave., who "has been the center of this May basket industry for this village... supplying stores in Glens Falls, Hudson Falls and Fort Edward... [turning] out May baskets of original and unusual designs and shapes, no two alike." In 1955, it was reported that 82-year-old Mrs. George Grover made 800 May baskets, with 40 of them going to Texas to begin the custom there. And well into



Seniors making May Baskets, Moreau Community Center, South Glens Falls, New York. Photo courtesy of the Folk Art Collection, Crandall Public Library.



Four photos from slides by the author of a May Basket workshop for the series, *Growing Up in the North Country*, held at Crandall Library, Spring 1991.

the 21st century, numerous articles name Nickie Piscitelli of Hudson Falls as the queen of May baskets, for making thousands every year and selling them from her grocery store and at places like Boston Candy Kitchen.

By 1950, a “May Basket problem” seems to have arisen in the region. An advertisement from Ridge Book Shop, 228 Glen Street: “May Baskets must be hung the evening of May Day which is Thursday of this week and for May Baskets just the right size, design and price, we

suggest Hallmark Baskets which can be made in a jiffy. They are the answer to the May Basket problem and are priced at 50c for a package of five.”

An editorial in *The Post-Star* on May 1, 1950, lays out the issue as they saw it, stating “May Day has lost some of its charm and most of its blushing thrills.”

Time was, and the middle and older generations recall it with regret, when May Day was a sentimental occasion and didn’t cost anything. One gathered a bunch of wild flowers... the posies

were fixed up with some ribbons or maybe a doily, and this creation was surreptitiously hung on the best beloved’s doorknob. The offering bore no identifying markings and one did not linger after hanging it but one could hope that the party of the second part was peering from behind the shelter of the parlor curtains.

But nowadays, ...the May basket is getting to be quite as much of a problem as the Christmas card... hanging the May basket is quite a process. First there must be a list of all from whom baskets were received last year

plus a score of new friends and school acquaintances. Then, if mother does not go downtown and buy the works ready-made she must get an idea after which she purchases the materials necessary for its execution. Comes then the manufacturing process and for a week, wherever the family walks or sits, it crushes May baskets... The wild flower has yielded to crepe paper, peanuts, jelly beans, popcorn, lollipops and such like, and in some neighborhoods the contents must be identical because there will be comparisons made.

Though I've been told of some small-scale family or neighborhood May Basket activity during the 1950s onward, the tradition seemed to disappear as a large scale children's activity in the region.

But then about 1984, the Seniors of the Moreau Community Center began making May Baskets in a big way, to raise enough money to buy a new refrigerator. Members like Effie Lyons, Ruth Jenkins, and Blanche Hopkins were behind the effort. These folks first practiced the custom of making and delivering May baskets as kids and then taught their own children. Over

30 years later, this effort had grown, with the group making thousands of baskets and umbrellas to sell. In 2017, Stewart's Shops donated 1,200 milk cartons toward their efforts. One year they ran out of milk cartons and used Pepsi soda cups to make up the difference. They raise thousands of dollars every year, the money is then donated to various community organizations and events.

In the 1990s, I asked the Moreau Seniors to share the May basket tradition, and for a number of years, these seniors agreed to teach a new generation of children as a part of our workshop series, *Growing Up in the North Country*. We also purchased an assortment of their May Baskets and Umbrellas for our Folk Art Collection. These May Baskets were on display through October 23, 2021, at the TAUNY Center in Canton, New York, in the exhibition, *Folk Arts All Around Us*, guest curated by Todd DeGarmo, showcasing our Folk Arts Collection. ▼

*First published by the author on April 28, 2021, for the Blog of the Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library (www.folklifecenter.com).*

## For more information:

May Baskets and Umbrellas by the Moreau Seniors, Folk Art Collection, The Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

"May Baskets" in Todd DeGarmo Folklife Research Files, The Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, New York.

May Basket workshop slides by Todd DeGarmo, *Growing Up in the North Country*, Spring 1991.

*Life in a Mill Town*, by Todd DeGarmo. Ballston Spa, NY: Brookside, 1990.

*The American Girls Handy Book: How to Amuse Yourself and Others*, by Lina and Adelia Beard, 1887.

# NYF Mentoring Grants

**New York Folklore is pleased to offer grant funds through our Mentoring and Professional Development Program.**

The grant program facilitates the acquisition of knowledge or skills in traditional arts through short-term and ongoing consultancies, folk artist mentoring, and professional development exchanges. Short-term technical assistance may also be provided to organizations, folklorists, and community scholars who are documenting and presenting New York State folklore and folk arts.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. While funding is not guaranteed, the NYF is happy to answer any questions or to provide assistance as needed during the application process. For additional mentoring information and applications, visit our website, [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org), and click on "Services," then on "Mentoring for Artists & Organizations." You can also send an email to [info@nyfolklore.org](mailto:info@nyfolklore.org), or call our business office, 518-346-7008.

# One of the Most Pleasant Places: Prabin Bhat and B-Hat's Curry

BY CAMILLA AMMIRATI

Northern New York's Tug Hill is a little shorter than the Himalayas, to say the least. Not far from the foot of that plateau, however, at the edge of downtown Watertown, New York, I was fortunate to sit down recently with Prabin and Saranga Bhat of B-Hat's Curry House for a lovely visit, sharing some of their favorite Nepalese flavors.

Prabin and Saranga are both from Nepal's hilly middle region, between the Himalayas to the north and the Terai region to the south. About 15 years ago, after finishing a year in college in Kathmandu, with his BS in Physics, Prabin came to the United States to study nursing in Nebraska. In 2010, he had the opportunity to join the US Army, which brought him to the US Army base Fort Drum, in Watertown.

Throughout Prabin's six and a half years serving as a combat medic, during which time he was also dubbed B-Hat by his Army compatriots, he not only continued cooking many of the foods he'd grown up with, but would often share the dishes he made. Meanwhile, he was gaining a range of skills through his military experience. These skills, paired with the ways he'd connected with others through food all along, would soon pave the way for new endeavors, meeting a different kind of community need and interest. As he says, he became motivated to open the restaurant "for mainly two reasons: a niche market and my friends' love for the curry dishes I used to bring to work at Fort Drum." Indeed, just a couple weeks after his last day in the Army, he opened the doors of B-Hat's Curry House, where he continues to share those dishes while working alongside Saranga and his father Govinda, who also brought many years of experience as a restaurant cook and a lifetime of making much of what is on the menu.

B-Hat's Curry House is one of a number of veteran-owned eateries in the area,

## Kukhurako Masu (Chicken Curry)

Shared by Prabin Bhat

### Ingredients:

- 5 lb. whole chicken, bone-in (with liver, heart, and gizzard for traditional taste), cut in 1" by 1" cubes
- 5 tsp. mustard oil
- 1 tsp. each cumin seeds, fenugreek seeds, cloves, and cardamom, two cinnamon sticks, and three bay leaves
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 tsp. turmeric powder and salt to taste
- 4 tsp. each fresh garlic, ginger, and green chili paste
- 2 tsp. each cumin powder, coriander powder, and meat masala (can use garam masala, curry powder, or another meat masala mix)
- 2 medium-size tomatoes, chopped
- Several grams of finely chopped fresh cilantro

### Instructions:

Heat the mustard oil in a large size iron saucepan (Karahi) until steam is observed arising out of the oil.

Add the cumin and fenugreek seeds, cloves, cardamom, cinnamon sticks, and bay leaves, stirring them carefully until they turn dark brown.

Add chopped onion and stir the onions until they turn medium brown.

Drop in the chopped chicken, and add turmeric powder and salt to taste.

Stir the chicken frequently (about 20 minutes) until all the water evaporates from it in medium heat.

The chicken should turn light brown and get sticky on the pan.

Add garlic, ginger, and green chili paste and cook until the paste gets brown (about 5 minutes). Gently stir the curry frequently to ensure the chicken pieces do not break.

Add the cumin, coriander, and meat masala, and gently mix and cook them for another 3 minutes.

Add the chopped tomatoes and cook them until a thick gravy results. At this point, a cup of water can be added for extra gravy.

Finally, the kitchen must smell like one of the most pleasant places. The last step is to sprinkle the chopped fresh cilantro on top and let it rest for a few minutes, then serve it with white rice and daal (lentil).

*Note: If you don't like bone-in meat, use the boneless chicken thigh meat. Do not use the chicken breast meat since it lacks that authentic and deep flavor. Also, traditional Nepalese chicken curry is made out of young roosters. They take a little longer to cook, but the overall flavor of the curry is unrivaled*



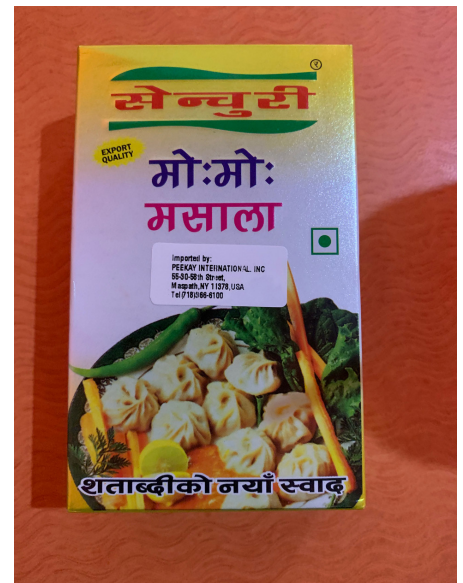
Chicken Curry Platter: A platter including Kukhurako Masu, daal, rice, and a daikon pickle. Courtesy of Prabin Bhat.

from favorite taverns on snowmobile/ATV trails around Jefferson and Lewis Counties, to restaurants and cafés featuring cuisines from around the world. B-Hat's is unique

locally, though, in sharing Nepalese and north Indian traditional foods. Born and raised amid what he describes as the family, friend, and village community-oriented



B-Hat's Curry House, Watertown, New York. Photo by the author.



Spice Center: MoMo Masala spice mix box. Prabin sources most spices, along with items like chickpea flour and other kinds of grams, directly from Nepal and India, both to find the needed quantities and to create the authentic depth of flavor they want to share with their customers. Photo by author.

culture of his home there, Prabin grew up cooking with his parents, grandparents, and others in his family. Much of what they ate came from their farm or that of a family member, or from close by in the community—from their garden vegetables to the rice his grandfather grew, to the ghee they would make from the butter from their buffaloes' and cows' milks. Prabin recalls that when he was growing up, they said the only two things they had to buy were kerosene and salt.

These days, running the kitchen requires different kinds of sourcing. The food is also shared in different ways, with an extensive menu, including some items (like the creamy kormas) adapted to American tastes, and the restaurant setting departing from many of the daily and seasonal rhythms that Prabin grew up with—whether it's mealtimes, cooking meat more sparingly, or saving certain dishes for special occasions. And many of Prabin's current customers come to the table from backgrounds different than his own.

Still, sharing food through the restaurant involves a lot of family, community, and cultural connections, from the family

recipes on the menu—often cooked up by Govinda—and their shared work in the business, to the ways the space serves as a gathering place. Thanks largely to Fort Drum, there is a small South Asian community for whom the restaurant offers an

important culinary and cultural connection. Alongside other longtime locals, B-Hat's is also a go-to spot for groups from the Army base for their own dining, holding a meeting over a meal, or catering. Soldiers and their families often gravitate to it as a friendly

spot—and for some, a culturally more familiar one, whether because of their own heritage, experiences abroad, or the diverse dining options they've been accustomed to elsewhere. Prabin also notes that the restaurant is a big draw for vegan diners, as well as for many members of the LGBTQ community who find it to be a welcoming space. Especially in light of the challenges of the last few years, Prabin deeply appreciates the connections he's built with so many in the community, as “the customer relationship is something that has kept us afloat during these rough times.”

From their generous energy in welcoming visitors, to the spice and savor of dishes that warm diners in many ways at once, it's clear that being able to stop in at B-Hat's Curry House helps keep the community afloat. Prabin notes in the traditional Kukhurako Masu (chicken curry) recipe, shared here, that once you have fully fried and simmered the ingredients into their full flavor, you'll know you're just about done, because “the kitchen must smell like one of the most pleasant places.” B-Hat's Curry House is a pleasant and delicious place indeed. Should you find yourself in Watertown, be sure to stop by, and don't skip the MoMo! ▼



Talking with Prabin and Saranga over a plate of MoMo. On my visit, Prabin and Saranga kindly shared some MoMo—Nepalese steamed chicken dumplings (vegetable MoMo are also on the menu)—a dish important to Prabin, along with a delicious onion tomato chutney, a steaming cup of chi, and a taste of chana masala. Made with a specially imported spice mix to get the right flavor, MoMo are Prabin's favorite “tiffin.” He explained: “Tiffin is a very uncommonly used word in America despite the fact that it is an English word that simply means snack between lunch and dinner. In Nepal, a traditional breakfast is composed of only a cup of tea. Since people usually don't eat breakfast, they would rather eat their lunch (*khana*) at around 9 a.m. A tiffin (*khaja* in Nepali), if one can afford it, is served around 2–3 p.m. And the dinner (*khana*, or *bhujia* if you are of higher class) is served around 7–8 p.m. I grew up eating popped corn or soybean or corn nuts as my tiffin until I went to college in Kathmandu, where MoMo became our new tiffin around the same time...They are very delicious, believe me. Usually, I don't brag, or trash talk about any foods because they are all delightful for [all who enjoy them], but Nepali/Indian foods do have, I would say, the best flavor in the world.” Safe to say, the MoMo are now at the top of my list as well! Photo by author.

Camilla Ammirati lives in Canton, New York, where she teaches in the First-Year Program and is Faculty Co-Director of the Sustainability Program at St. Lawrence University. Over



the previous several years, she was honored to learn about New York's North Country while serving as the Director of Research and Programs at TAUNY (Traditional Arts in Upstate New York). From her childhood as part of a big Italian American family, to her graduate work on domestic space and national belonging, to more recent adventures folkloring in northern New York, foodways have been an important part of her interests, and she is excited to continue exploring and sharing the rich and varied food cultures of the area here. Photo courtesy of the author.



# My Menstruation Ceremony

BY JAN HANVIK

I was an ordinary, middle class, Catholic Midwesterner in Minneapolis until the Selective Service System notified me that I had a high number and would soon be drafted to be trained to join the US invading forces in Vietnam. I would later become a pacifist Quaker, but at that time, I knew I had no skills or temperament for war, so I escaped to Mexico with a then University of Minnesota girlfriend.

Whereas my church, family, and government wanted to send me across the Pacific to fight for a soon-to-be proven unjustifiable cause, Mexico—having been invaded more than once—knew what invasion and colonization were and gave me refuge. While hitchhiking the country, I was taken in by a middle class Mexican family—Félix Vargaz Báez, originally from Puebla, of Spanish–French

descent, comptroller general of a tobacco factory, tall, elegant, and what one might imagine of a Spanish grandee, who relaxed after a day at the factory, listening to European classical music on his record player. Mamá María Luisa Velasco Arroyo de Vargas, originally from Oaxaca, of Spanish–Zapotec descent, a small businesswoman, short, dark, rotund, an expert teacher of how to dicker for the best mole prices and ingredients in the Indigenous food market in Oaxaca. Marilu later told me I was the reincarnation of her second born son, Alejandro (of a total of eight children, uncannily like the eight in my Minnesota family), who died at the age of two or three days, probably from the cold in their then poorer house on the high slopes of the Toluca volcano. (Except for the loss of the oldest, Jorge, to COVID-19 in September

2022, and the youngest, Adolfo, some years ago, I remain “brother” to María Esther, Raúl, Cruz, Raquel, and Judith, and “brother-in-law” and “uncle” to many others.)

When you are adopted, you remain tied together to your new family. I still am, and my adoption was in approximately 1972. All of my acceptance by and experiences with Mexico, Mexicans, and Indigenous colleagues and friends, and my fluency in Spanish, stem from those literally life-saving experiences, and from mutual love.

Juana Flores—Joan Flowers—is my sonic harmonization teacher at the Tiendita Verde—Little Green Shop—in Pátzcuaro, Mexico. My friend Abdiel, a choreographer and competitive artistic pole dancer, took me to Tiendita Verde for lunch. Surrounded as it was by extensive lawns and flower beds, the sad emptiness of the mostly locally sourced and organic restaurant and food shop made me fantasize about organizing an international Call for Choreographers to stage dances in the gardens. Diners and shoppers would benefit; artists would benefit; the owners would benefit.

The owners were smart enough to stage other kinds of events in the restaurant and gardens, including sonic harmonization. I had no idea what it was, but for 75 pesos—about US\$3.75—I wouldn't lose much. In fact, I gained. Juana is 40ish, small, *mestiza*, not overweight but comfortable with her curves, jolly, indomitable. Whether she had one student or five, it was the same to her. When her mother died, I tried to console her, but *her* passing fit into Juana's broader view of life. She brushed away my concern, saying, “I'm ok!” In sonic harmonization, we sat cross-legged, lifting our arms up to the sky, or heaven, gathering in positive spirits or a positive feeling, bringing our arms down across our centers, all the while inhaling and slowly exhaling deeply. For



At Lake Pátzcuaro, so important to the P'urhepecha, on one of the islands where the menstruation ceremony was held, Juana sets up, with the important red wine bottle. All photos by Juana Flores.



Spilling the wine, representing menstrual blood, onto the earth.

most of the one-hour session, we simply lay comfortably on blankets or yoga mats in the bamboo-framed treehouse, above the restaurant, and breathed—or slept—while Juana ran a round felt mallet around the edge of a series of bronze bowls—Nepalese, I think—which emitted an eerie, whining, keening sound.

Very few others attended. Attending sometimes was the portly, graying curtain and pillow maker, Gris (“grees,” for Griselda), from whom I ordered brightly colored, locally woven, traditional cotton pillow covers for my twig patio furniture. Once in a while, her husband came, too. They held an open house lunch every Tuesday, to which I was invited,

and which I regret never attending. I don’t think anybody else attended either. They were so informal. Although I greeted everyone with hello and goodbye every Thursday, between 5 and 6 p.m., I never became close to anyone. So, I was surprised when Juana announced that my “balancing” male energy, along with that of “Mr. Gris,” was required at the fall equinox menstruation ceremony, to be held Tuesday, September 22, 2020, on Yuñuén Island of the Indigenous P’urhépecha people, in the heart of sprawling Lake Pátzcuaro.

Juana, when she hears that I am writing my impressions of the ceremony, is delighted, and sends me notes about the most important things to remember about it.

Importante es en luna llena Este Domingo es un buen momento para ese ritual !!

*Fuego, agua, tierra aire Los elementales honrado a la Luna.*

*Mujeres y hombres vestidos de colores claros ! Velas, Flores, incienso !!!*

*Recuerda que se hace una fogata la gente entra descalzas y la corona se pone enfrente de cada participante con una velita en el centro que al encenderse significa la luz de la Luna después se colocan las coronas y se inicia la meditación con sonidos de cuencos! O instrumentos armónicos Inicamos con respiraciones medias mano derecha en el ombligo izquierda corazón respiraciones que conecten con el momento y el espacio que mi energía se una a la de la luna, la luna llena es para agradecer por todo lo vivido en un ciclo se puede decir estoy completo estoy en paz y en armonía plena.*

Most important is the full moon!

Fire Water Earth Air. The elementals honored the moon. [Open to interpretation.]

Men and women dress in pale light colors. Candles! Flowers! Incense!!! [She’s very emphatic!]

Remember that *you* make a bonfire. The people enter barefoot. A crown of flowers is placed in front of each participant with a little candle in the center that, when you light it, signifies the light of the moon. Then, everyone puts on their crown and begins the meditation with sounds of the bowls! Or other harmonic instruments. We begin with half breaths, neither deep nor shallow, with the right hand on the navel and the left on the heart. The breaths connect this moment and the space that our energy unites to the energy of the full moon. This is to express thankfulness for all that we have lived through in this cycle of the moon. It is to say—I am complete. I am in peace and in complete harmony.

I wasn’t sure I would go, and I wasn’t sure I *wouldn’t* go. As usual, Juana’s communication and organizational skills were a bit lax. She rarely and unmethodically advertised her sonic harmonization sessions, then was surprised that no one came. The day of the menstruation ceremony, she would pass by my house en route to the dock. Around the appointed time, she texted that she *wouldn’t* pass by my house, but would meet me at the dock at Ukaz, to leave by ferry for the island at 5 p.m. I had no idea where that was, nor

how far away from my house, nor how to get a taxi. My assignment also was to find and bring a bottle of red wine. I was soon to find out what for. But at 4:40 p.m., or so, I found a local minivan bus, called a *combi*, from my remote house to a busy street, asked a taxi driver if he knew what Ukaz was, and was on my way.

Around 5:30 p.m., I arrived at Ukaz to find Juana, six or seven other women, and the other male energy, Mr. Gris, peacefully lounging dockside. Around 6 p.m., I guess, we boarded a low-in-the-water ferry that had room for

about 50 passengers, for a peaceful, humming glide out to the island. We clambered up a long but gently sloping cement runway to the peak of the island, past bougainvilleas, a cemetery, tiny pastures with a cow or two, and everywhere, extraordinary views of the volcano-ringed lake.

At the top of the ramp, a family with wheelbarrows greeted us to carry our bags the rest of the way to a nearly completed, two-story concrete home that belonged to a friend of Juana. Why couldn't they have met as at the *bottom* of the ramp, I wondered. Nervous

about such proximity to strangers during the COVID-19 pandemic, I found my own way farther up the hill to an unoccupied ecotourism center managed by the P'urhépecha people, who have occupied the lake's islands and surrounding lands for centuries.

A local family prepared plates of beans and tortillas for us. Beer was forbidden as inappropriate for a spiritual ceremony, but with Juana's usual relaxedness about formalities, we passed a few around.

At the time that the menstruation ceremony was to begin, we all took our mats and blankets to the unfinished concrete balcony of the house, with 360-degree views. Juana had a small bonfire going. She played the bowls. She put crowns of marigolds on our heads. We drank water out of plastic cups, water that had been purified *in* the singing bowls. I was reluctant to drink the water, in which various cups by people fairly unknown to me had been dipped, and set my glass down by my mat without drinking.

To almost imperceptible candlelight and flashlights, we later filed down a narrow cement staircase to the tiny backyard. We were each given a small plastic cup, into each of which Juana poured a small amount of red wine, which I had successfully managed to pick up en route. We crouched down. With our hands, we dug a small hole in the earth underneath our squatting legs, poured the wine into the hole, covered it up again, and rose. We placed the cups down, linked arms around each other's backs, and leaned backward, with all our weight and worries released—trusting that the group's female energy, balanced by about 15 percent male energy, presumably, would prevent any, or all of us, from falling. It worked!

Then it was time to head upstairs to a communal picnic, drinking all the wine and beer we wanted.

Toward 2 a.m., under the full moon, I headed alone to my cabin on the crest of the island at the ecology center. Around 7 a.m., I was awakened by rough, chopping sounds. I thought that was odd, as there was, to my knowledge, no one else staying at the center. (I found out later a young couple and their four- or five-year old daughter were at



Red wine is offered up, normally to the full moon.



The menstruation ceremony.

a nearby cottage.) I went out on the balcony. Just below it was a man who appeared to be in 60s or 70s, with a wrinkled face, wearing work clothes, chopping away at vegetation at the edge of the steep slope down to the lake. At an ordinary hotel, a worker might have thought not to do this at 7 a.m., outside the only occupied cottage on the property, but I didn't feel like arguing or complaining—or being a gringo. I was on P'urhépecha lands. Let me learn P'urhépecha ways.

I greeted the man and thanked the universe for the beautiful day. I said to him that I had been worried, walking back home alone in the dark at 2 a.m., earlier that

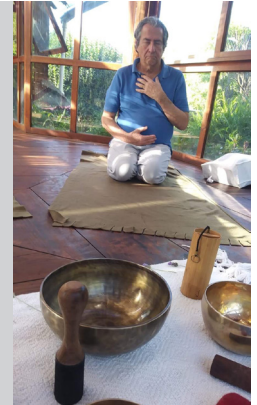
morning. “No!” he said. “We’re on an island for a reason! Bad people who want to come to the island, they drown!” He seemed very confident of his safety, which I was glad to hear, given the vast unsafety so many millions of humans live with every day.

I was chosen. I didn't push my way in anywhere. In ways unexpected, when I wafted into my first sonic harmonization session with Juana, I also wafted into unlimited spheres of global harmonization.

I was struck by the gardener's matter-of-factness. He *knew* and he *knows* that no violence will come to the island. Just as Juana and the other women *knew* and *know* that my male—albeit, “foreign,” that

is, non-Indigenous, non-Mexican, non-P'urhépecha—energy was the correct counter-balance to their female energy. Our balanced energies still needed to be harmonized with the equinox to build women's strength and community strength on the island of Yuñuén, the town of Pátzcuaro, the state of Michoacán, the country of México, and the planet. ▼

Jan Hanvik (he, him) holds a BFA in Dance from City College of the City University of New York, and an MA from New York University's Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies. He has twice been a Fulbright Senior Scholar, in El Salvador in dance, and in Argentina and Uruguay in Arts Management. For 30 years, he was Executive Director of three not-for-profits dedicated to multicultural exchange. In 2018, the Indigenous P'urhépecha ecotourism center Patzingo, in Michoacán, Mexico, named him Ambassador to share their values with the world. *Photo:* Jan Hanvik, experiencing a sonic harmonization event, in the “treehouse” of the Tiendita Verde, Pátzcuaro, Michoacán. Photo by Juana Flores.



The participants, seven women, and two men to balance the female energy, in the menstruation ceremony.

# Portrait of an Artist: *Ellen Fjermedal*

BY NILS CASPERSSON

*I*t was in my fingers!” Ellen Fjermedal explained. Ellen, a demure, but determined and spry elder, started drawing when she was a child in Arendal, on the south coast of Norway. Now living in Victor, New York, she has a studio and display area at home where she paints *rosemaling* (Norwegian) or *kurbits* (Swedish) decorations. “The Swedish curves are bolder than the Norwegian, sometimes with animals,” she explained, “and I am self-taught. Sometimes I see fjords, valleys, and water in what I paint. Other times, vintage flowers.”

Ellen noticed a unique visual comparison between centuries-old Norwegian *rosemaling* designs, antique southwestern Mexican furniture designs, and then, more contemporary chip carving done by her late husband, Syvert. While separated by time and miles, the various native patterns are all remarkably similar with distinctive flourishes, scrolls, and s-curves, done more often by itinerant craftsmen and furniture makers. Beyond just function, the designs show a crossover of decorative desire using indigenous materials, also called folk art. These are contemporary

elements combined with traditional needs for embellishment and character.

Using strictly oil paints, traditional colors, and then a varnish finish, Ellen paints delicate asymmetrical roses, petals, and scrolls that decorate functional items, including wood and tin plates, shelves, cradles, wooden shoes, and a wide variety of boxes, other furniture, and Jul ornaments (for the Christmas holiday season as observed in Scandinavia). “My ancestors introduced *rosemaling* as a way to decorate walls, ceilings, and handmade furniture.”



Ellen’s paints are of traditional colors—reds, blues, oranges, pale white—often reflecting unique combinations of available organic materials to originally produce the paint. Household items and long Scandinavian winters gave the painters plenty of time to practice, experiment, and perfect their art. *All photos courtesy of the author.*





A most characteristic painting technique of dual complimentary colors on the brush at the same time has been perfected by Ellen. Close inspection of her most delicate work reveals no brush overs and instinctive, but calculated single floral strokes and curves where two to three colors interact.

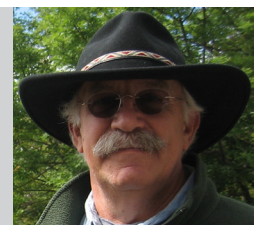
Early 17th–18th-century Swedish *kurbit* (gourd) decorations reflect symbols of hardy vegetables, sometimes of Biblical legend, including flowering pumpkins and squash. *Rosemaling* (flower painting) was also popular in agrarian southern Norway during the 1700s to the late 1800s. In central Sweden, it developed around Lake Siljan, Dalarna. Traditional colors came

from local raw materials. For example, rust red, also called Falu red, was a by-product of copper mining in Falun, Sweden. Linseed oil from flax, a popular herb found in southern Scandinavia, mixed with a variety of natural pigments created a paint that would not trap moisture that caused flaking and decay.

As an artist, Ellen is very prolific. She had a successful fine arts career in New York City, eventually moving to Victor to be closer to family. Her home is very carefully utilized to show her fine art paintings from the American Southwest, New York City, and her Norwegian home, as well as a steady group of *rosemaling/kurbits* items.

She shows her work at Scandinavian holiday events in Jamestown, New York, and Rochester, New York, and at the Vasa Scandinavian Festival in Budd Lake, New Jersey. ▼

Nils R. Caspersson is a retired New York State teacher with a background in folk arts studies, particularly Swedish/Scandinavian. He also writes for *Nordstjernen*, a Swedish-American newsmagazine from New York City. Photo courtesy of the author.



# Artists and the Waterfront

BY NANCY SOLOMON

Over the years, I have met some amazing photographers and artists who, like myself, are captivated with the South Shore bay houses of Long Island. One of those people was artist Dan Pollera, who passed away in March 2022. I first met Dan in the 1990s, when I saw his paintings of the bay houses at the Sea Horse Gift Shop in Freeport. Eventually, we connected and we began working together. Before becoming a painter, Dan was a charter boat captain, a passionate fisherman, and a clam digger. He spent years working and playing on the South Shore, from his canal home in Baldwin, and later, at his summer house in East Quogue. His wife Nancy was also a passionate fisherman, and they shared many of their “trophy” on Facebook. Dan was an expert cook, and he shared his clam chowder recipe with me. He also shared his fluke and striped sea bass, gifts he gave to me and his friends.

Over time I shared with him the history of some of the houses he was painting at his request, since he wanted to know more about the people who owned the homes and the traditions they carried on. These included the Goodwin bay house, the Sheehan-Van Wicklen bay house, the Stenzel bay house, and the Dilg bay house. By the early 2000s, his work was well-known, and he gained quite a bit of notoriety. Dan was good friends with the owners, and he was happiest when he could stop by their homes while he was out fishing.

Dan’s work is now part of the collections of the Parrish Museum, Guild Hall, and the Long Island Museum at Stony Brook. I’m proud to say that I was involved in the Long Island Museum acquisition. Oftentimes, when we would post a photo of one of his paintings, people would say what an amazing photograph it was. When I told them it was

a painting and not a photograph, they were astonished. Each year, Dan donated one of his prints that we could raffle, in support of our work. Dan was also a board member of Long Island Traditions and was always available for us. He helped transport filmmakers Barbara Weber and Greg Blank while they filmed *A World Within a World: Bay Houses of Long Island*. Dan was very generous to people in the community and often fed area wildlife, including swans and other visiting wildfowl. He was equally supportive of fellow artists and photographers, who shared his passion for the water and Long Island’s maritime culture.

Another artist who we admire is Kathy Herzy of West Islip, who has painted numerous scenes of traditional maritime activities, including clamming, birdwatching, waterfowl scenes, and traditional boats and fish houses. Her husband Gil and her son



The Passalacqua Bay House was destroyed by Superstorm Sandy. Painting by Daniel Pollera.





“Twins Off Fire Island” by Mark Nuccio, 2022

Chris are active recreational clammers and fishermen. Like Dan Pollera, Herzy has painted bay houses and fishing structures in the Town of Islip, where there are approximately 30 bay houses. Herzy’s drawing of a local bayman was also the inspiration for a baymen’s statue that stands at Argyle Park in Babylon Village. She also owned a bay house on Captree Island in the Town of Islip, which gave her a front row seat to life on the bay.

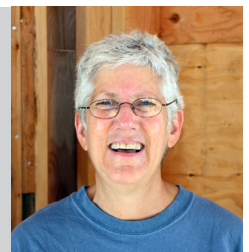
Mark C. Nuccio of Bellmore is a retired teacher, poet, writer, and artist. Mark has been writing poetry since 1967. His first chapbook, “Connecting Tides” was published in 2002, followed by “A Winter Prayer” (2003), “This Broken Day” (2005) and “Salvaging Hope,” a collection of 118 poems (2017). He reads his poems at many local poetry gatherings and writes a monthly article for *Boating World Magazine*. Mark is an

accomplished artist, using graphic images of sea life in oil paints. Much of Mark’s work is influenced by the beauty, history, and preservation of the maritime culture on Long Island. In recent years, Long Island has become a seasonal home to whales, seals, and other marine mammals. Mark’s work captures their beauty in multi-color formats, using local landmarks like the Fire Island lighthouse for context. He grew up near Jamaica Bay, where he spent his childhood, immediately after school. He remembers bay houses, bungalows, and swimming in Jamaica Bay. There were hawks, muskrats, and other wildlife. “It was a different way of life.” In 1999, Mark and his wife Linda purchased a historic 18th-century home on Oak Island, a barrier island in the Town of Babylon, that is accessible only by boat. The house was originally owned by the Ketcham family, who moved it to its current location. He

also enjoys painting bay houses, sand dunes, shipwrecks and the natural landscapes, baymen at work, and other traditional activities. Mark’s drawings frequently accompany his articles in *Long Island Boating World*. His work is in the collections of the Smithsonian and the Library of Congress.

All of these artists sold their pieces to ordinary people that inspired them. We thank them for sharing their work with us. ▼

Nancy Solomon is Executive Director of Long Island Traditions, located in Port Washington, New York. She can be reached at 516/767-8803 or [info@longislandtraditions.org](mailto:info@longislandtraditions.org).



# Redwork Embroidery and the Suffragist Tea Cozy Project

## *Why Redwork?*

BY TISHA DOLTON

*M*y favorite color is, and always has been, red. Being one of four siblings, we each had an assigned color to tell our stuff apart, whether it was Tupperware dishes, toys, or snow pants. My color was red. To this day, it is still my favorite color.

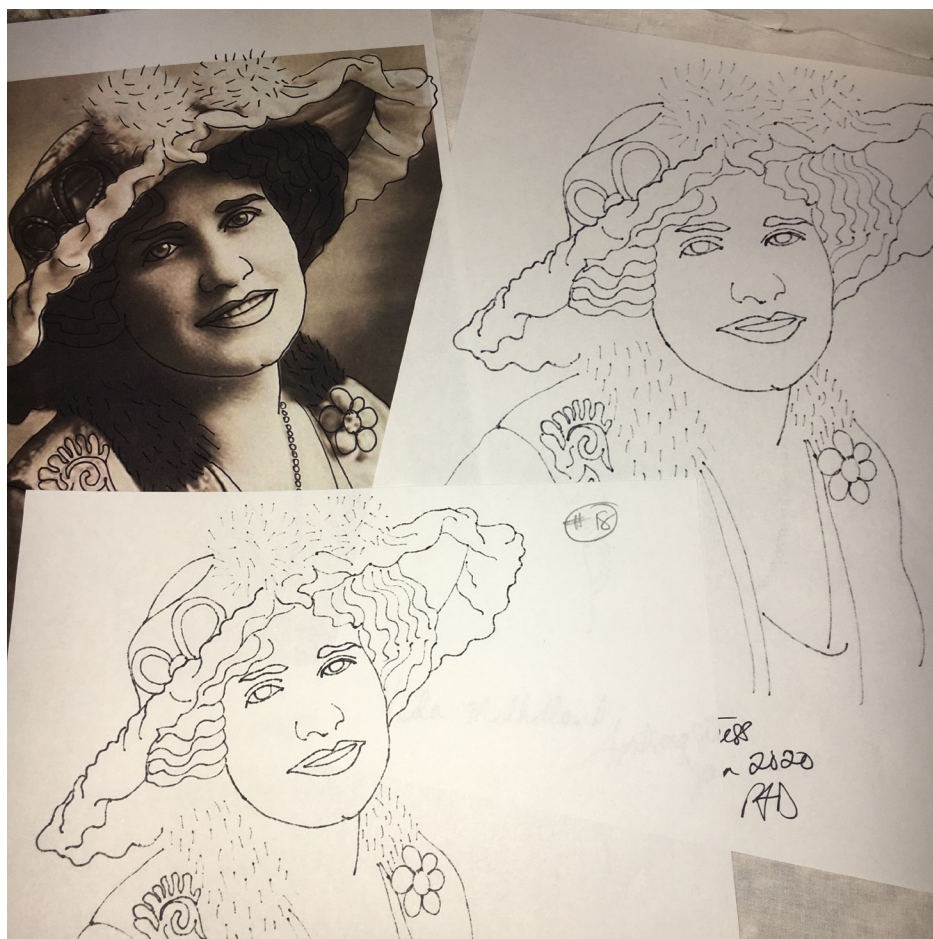
In 1998, I taught myself to embroider while working at Saratoga National

Historical Park in Stillwater, New York. I was a seasonal park ranger for the summer, and it was my first history job after graduating from SUNY–New Paltz. I needed an 18<sup>th</sup>-century activity to keep myself occupied while sitting at the Neilson House, waiting for visitors to chat with about the battles and rural life in upstate New York,

during pre- and post-Revolutionary War times. I was young and green, and embroidery gave me a way to connect with visitors, especially women.

In 2001, I discovered redwork embroidery. Redwork quilts were experiencing a renaissance at the time, with quilter Alex Anderson publishing *Shadow Redwork with Alex Anderson*, and various fabric companies creating reproduction fabric lines to complement the embroidery. Initially, I was drawn to it simply because red is my favorite color, but redwork is more than just embroidery rendered in red floss. Sometimes called Turkey redwork after the red dye that came from Turkey and India in the mid-18th century, redwork developed as a specific style of surface embroidery after a colorfast red dye in the late 19th-century became widely available.

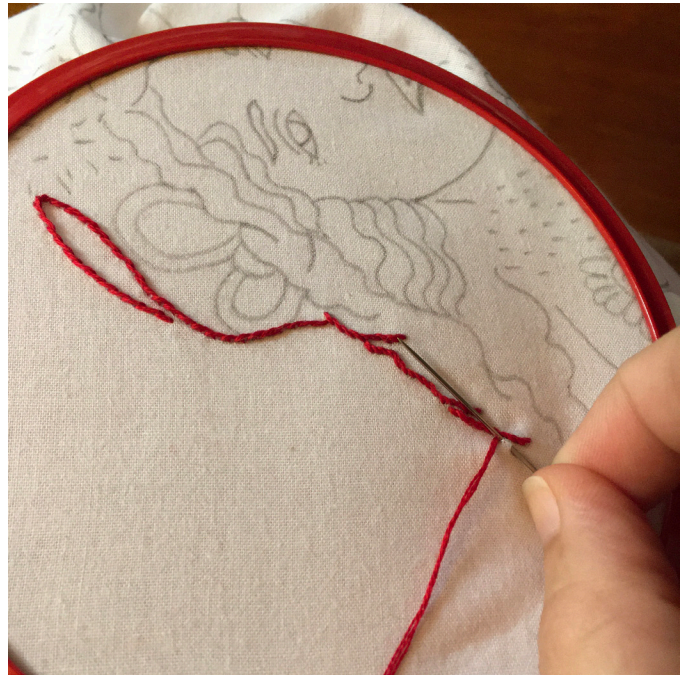
According to Deborah Harding in her book, *Red and White: American Redwork Quilts*, “[d]uring the last quarter of the nineteenth century, decorative surface embroidery on practical household linens came into vogue in America. Influenced by exhibitions at the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia, this form of needlework replaced... stitchery on canvas. The term *art needlework* was used to describe this trend and to distinguish it from plain sewing” (Harding, 2000, 10). Redwork quickly became one of the most popular forms of art needlework, because it only required some red thread, a bit of white cotton or linen fabric, and knowledge of a few basic stitches—stem or outline stitch, lazy daisy, and French knot—to create something lovely



Locating an image to use to create the pattern was a deciding factor in which suffragists are represented in my tea cozy project. This image of Vida Milholland by Ira L. Hill Studio is part of the National Woman's Party records at the Library of Congress. All photos courtesy of the author, except as otherwise noted.



Using a lightbox and pencil, the pattern is transferred onto white cotton muslin.



Using a stem stitch to begin embroidering Vida Milholland's hat.



Tools of the trade—I use a 4 inch spring hoop, size 9 embroidery needle, cotton muslin, and DMC cotton floss #321.



Close up of stem stitches from the underside of a portrait.

for your home. Redwork patterns were readily available from all the fashionable ladies' magazines and were easy to transfer onto hand towels, aprons, napkins, pillowcases, quilts, and more. Classic imagery included farm animals, plants and flowers, buildings, letters, and portraits of famous people.

Looking for a more creative outlet than just embroidering the sampling of classic designs readily available, I searched the Internet for inspiration. When I saw the embroidered portraits being created by an artist named Jenny Hart, I decided to combine the fine art portrait with redwork and

produce my own patterns. The first portrait I designed was based on a photograph of me at 13 months old. Not a natural or skilled sketch artist, the technique I developed to make my portraits was fairly straightforward: scan an image, print it out on paper, draw over the copy with a thin



Finished embroidered portrait of Vida Milholland. The Milhollands owned an estate called Meadowmount in Lewis where they spent summers. She and her more famous sister Inez Milholland Boissevain both worked with Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party. Vida, a trained opera singer, sang at meetings and picketed the White House as a "Silent Sentinel." After the passage of the 19th Amendment, Vida worked for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom with her partner Margaret "Peg" Hamilton. She and Peg are buried in the family plot in Lewis Cemetery, Essex County, New York.

Traditional Arts in Upstate New York in Canton hosted the exhibition for Women's History Month in March 2023, and featured three additional suffragists from Long Island and St. Lawrence County. I have completed three more embroidered portraits of New York State suffragists and have at least 12 more patterns ready to go. I am continually looking for new suffragists to feature.

### Why Tea Cozies?

The Suffrage Movement also had strong ties to tea. The planning of the 1848 Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention began over tea. The women used the Boston Tea Party as a model, using "no taxation without representation" as a rallying cry. The Woman's Suffrage Party of California even sold Equality Tea as a fundraiser, charging 75 cents for one pound of tea.

Because the Suffrage and Abolition Movements were confronting long held societal views, concerning which people are citizens and which citizens have the right to vote in our government, there was backlash and opposition. One of the many arguments against women voting was the idea that a woman's place was in the domestic or private sphere, while the public sphere belonged to men. Just look at a popular suffrage song of the day...

Sharpie to create my pattern, trace it on fabric using a pencil, then stitch away.

### Why Suffragists?

I began studying the Women's Suffrage Movement and the songs of that movement over 20 years ago. Over the last decade, my research led me to the many local women who were active in this cause of "Votes for Women!" The year 2020 marked the centennial anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment that granted women the right to vote. What better year to celebrate these (mostly) unsung heroines?

I applied for and received a grant from my local arts council, Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council (LARAC), which administers artist grants for New York State

Council on the Arts (NYSCA) in Warren and Washington Counties.

The focus on suffragists from upstate New York was a conscious decision that I made, based on my own research and desire to highlight lesser known people within the movement. I was inspired to put faces to the over 70 names I had uncovered in meeting notices and articles in Warren County newspapers by creating embroidered portraits of suffragists throughout New York State. So far, I have embroidered six Warren County women. The centennial 2020 exhibition at the Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls, *Equali-tea: Suffragists Tea Cozies in Redwork*, included 42 suffragists from around the state.

This is far from an exhaustive representation and is still an active project.



The batting inside the tea cozies is Warm & Natural 87.5% natural cotton, 12.5% polypropylene scrim.



Interfacing is added to the back of the embroidery to give the quilted tea cozy more structure.



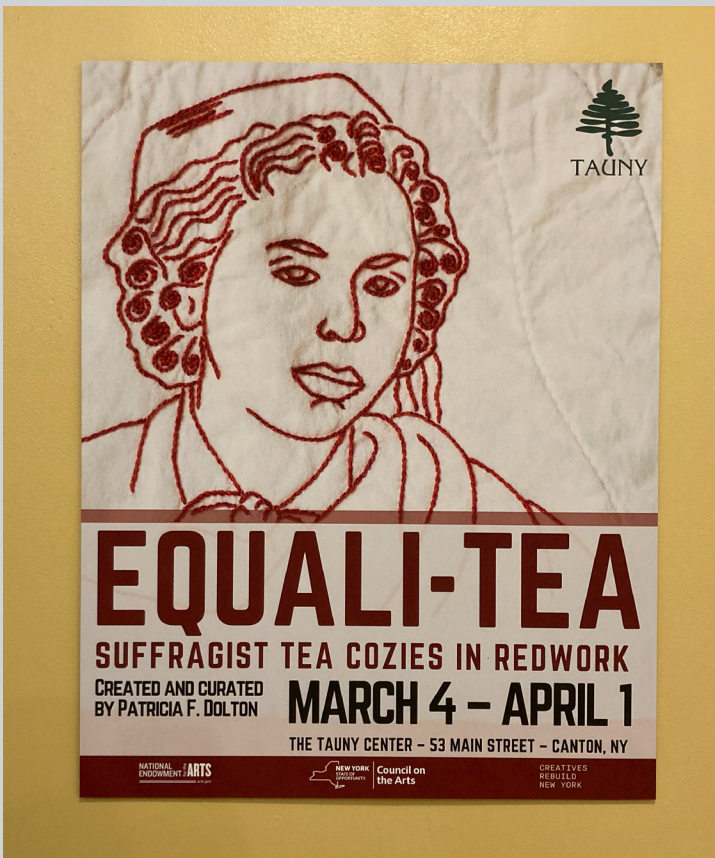
The backing fabric for the first batch of tea cozies is this vintage bicentennial fabric that my sister found at a shop in California. It quotes the US Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.



I enlisted the help of my mother, Tamaris, to construct the tea cozies once the embroidered portrait was complete. She has been sewing since she was a little girl in 4-H.

*Equali-tea: Suffragists Tea Cozies in Redwork, a Suffrage Centennial Exhibition by Tisha Dolton* opened in October 2020. Since Crandall Public Library was still closed to visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the exhibit was extended through August 2021, and an online exhibit was created. <https://www.crandalllibrary.org/folklife-center/folklife-gallery/past-folklife-exhibits/equali-tea-suffragist-tea-cozies-in-redwork/>





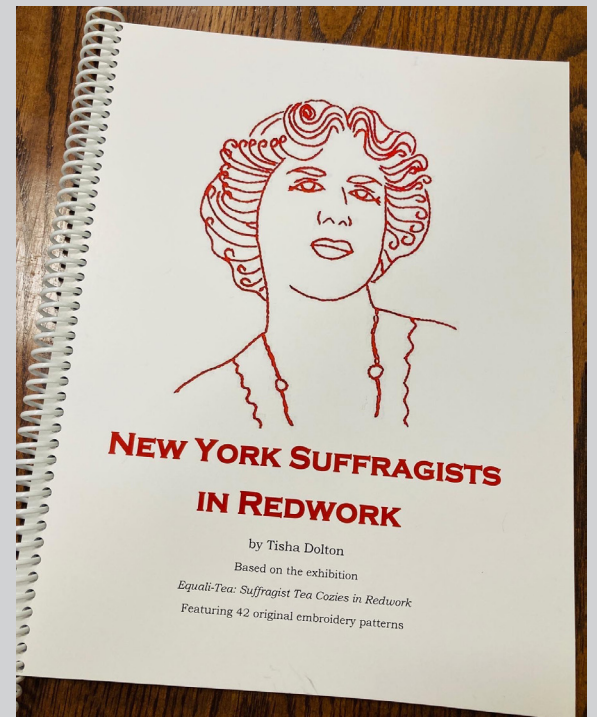
Exhibition poster from Traditional Arts in Upstate New York from March 2023, featuring M. Edmonia Lewis, a sculptor of African, Haitian, and Ojibwe descent, born in Rensselaer County, recently featured as the 45th stamp in the Black Heritage series by the United States Postal Service.



Suffragists of color on display at TAUNY. *Back row (left to right):* Susan Frank Douge, Julia A. J. Foote, Hester C. Whitehurst Jeffrey, Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, M. Edmonia Lewis. *Front row (left to right):* Sarah Sandford Smith, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, C. Mary Douge Williams, Helen Appo Cook.



Showing off the two newest tea cozies featured in the TAUNY exhibit: St. Lawrence County suffragists Helen Rich of Richville and Marion Sanger Frank of Ogdensburg. Photo by Mathilde Lind for TAUNY.



My book, *New York Suffragists in Redwork*, published by Warren County Historical Society, 2022. It's a combination exhibit catalog and embroidery guide with patterns and biographies of the 42 suffragists featured in the centennial exhibition.



Completed embroidered portrait of Elizabeth "Betty" Wakeman Mitchell. This Washington County suffragist ran for the New York State Assembly in 1918, with her two children campaigning at her side. Unfortunately, she lost in the primary election.



Trunk show style presentation of redwork tea cozies with reproduction "Votes for Women" tea pot originally designed by J. Maddock & Sons for suffragist Alva Vanderbilt Belmont in 1914, and Oliver Pluff & Co. commemorative Suffrage Centennial tin from 2020.

**Keep Woman in Her Sphere** (1882)

[Lyrics: Experience Estabrook, Tune: *Auld Lang Syne*]

I have a neighbor, one of those

Not very hard to find,  
Who know it all without debate,  
And never change their mind.  
I asked him "What of women's rights,"  
He said in tones severe—  
"My mind on that is all made up,  
Keep woman in her sphere."

The Temperance Movement was also popular among suffragists, who believed that drunkenness was a major cause of abuse against women and children. Susan B. Anthony was active in the cause before devoting herself to suffrage in the 1850s. Many Glens Falls suffragists were active in the Warren County Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Teetotalers like Anna Murray and Celia Shippey Murray

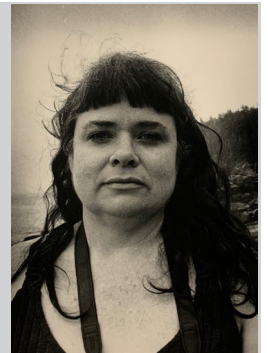
might prefer tea to alcohol, but the word teetotaler is derived from an emphasis on being totally abstinent.

Works of art such as "The Dinner Party" (1979) by Judy Chicago, and "Famous Women Dinner Set" (1932–34) by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant have used this idea of the domestic sphere to create provocative art to rewrite women back into history. By using the domestic art of hand embroidery to feature mostly unknown suffragists on covers used to keep tea pots warm, I am following in the footsteps of those artists before me. ▼

**References**

Harding, D. 2000. *Red & White: American Redwork Quilts*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.  
Ira L. Hill Studio, N.Y.C. *Vida Milbolland*. United States New York, ca. 1916. [to 1920] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mmmpp000129/>.

Tisha Dolton was born in 1974, and raised in Washington County, New York. She studied Vocal Performance at Adirondack Community College (later SUNY Adirondack), earned a BA in American History from SUNY New Paltz and an MS in Information Science from the University at Albany, SUNY. Dolton served as the appointed Public Historian for the Town of Greenwich, New York, from 2003 to 2019, and is currently Librarian/Historian at the Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls, New York. She serves as a Trustee of the Warren County Historical Society and is co-founder and chair of the Celebrating Suffrage in Greater Glens Falls Committee, which creates and promotes suffrage and women's history events in the region. Photo by Jude Dolton.



# A Banjo Story

BY DAN HUBBS

I started playing the banjo because of Freddie Laker. I was working as a landscaper when I heard about his \$100 dollar flights from New York to London. This was in 1978. I was 19 years old. My mother's good friend's parents lived in Reading, England. I could stay with them, if I wanted. My father told me his mother—my grandmother—would be in Ireland. I wasn't sure about Ireland, but I thought, I'll go to England. So, off I went. No food on the flight, I carried a paper bag with a peanut butter sandwich. I figured out how to take the train to Reading.

You'll see that certain, seemingly unrelated events had to happen, had to fall into place to inspire my banjo playing.

I was welcomed and well fed in Reading. I had a good time. I attended the "Picnic" at Blackbushe music festival in Hampshire, where Dylan and Clapton and others played. (There was a punk band playing outside the gate, protesting corporate music.) I hitchhiked down to London. I got picked up by a truck driver, and we had this conversation:

"Where you headed, Lad?"

"To London."

"Whereabouts in London? It's a big place."

"I'm not sure. Is there like a central downtown area?"

"Here's what you can do. I'll drop you at the tube and take it to Victoria Station."

"Ok. That sounds good."

"Yeah, that's pretty central, like."

No such thing as cell phones, of course, at this time. I had a folding map that I unfolded against a railing at the top of the stairs out of Victoria Station. I'm not sure what I was looking for. The green parks, the streets, and neighborhoods were complete mysteries. It wasn't long before a guy responded to my



My grandmother, Nora O'Connor, and my father on boat from Ireland in 1930s. All photos courtesy of the author.



baffled look and offered suggestions. Turned out he was American, a graduate student in English, from Stony Brook University.

"You know that Dylan song where it goes, 'I'm going back to New York City, I do believe I've had enough?' Well, I've been traveling for a while, and I'm heading back."

He directed me to a hostel, and we talked about where he'd been, where I should go.

"Well, I might go to Ireland," I told my new friend.

"No, you have to go to Ireland," he said. "Haven't you read James Joyce?"

"My grandmother's going to be visiting. She grew up there."

"Are you kidding me? You have to go to Ireland. Really. You never know when you'll get a chance again. And you have relatives. Man, you'll love Ireland."

So, based on this conversation, I decided I had to go to Ireland. After a few days in London, I took the train and the boat over to Cork.

Walking off the boat, carrying my pack, heading into town, an older gentleman fell in beside me.

"Good day to you, son," he said, "Where are you off to?"

"I'm visiting," I told him. "My grandmother is from County Kerry."

"Is she?"

"Yeah. I'm going to Abbeyfeale."

"Why, you're not visiting at all," he said. "You're home!"

"Oh," I said. "Thanks."

I spent the night in Cork at a bed and breakfast, which was a room with a bed in a family home. I sat watching TV with Mom and the kids, sipping on a glass of stout. In the morning, I was out hitching again. Got picked up by a woman who had owned an Irish bar in Brooklyn and had retired back to Ireland. Being 19, and a bit scatterbrained, more interested in reading and music and art than in the world in front of me, I lost the scrap of paper with the phone number of the family in Abbeyfeale. In a little town along the way, I found myself in a phone booth, running my finger down the list of O'Connors. There were many O'Connors in that book, many, many O'Connors to choose from. I started dialing.



Cousin Eileen O'Connor, Ray Hubbs, and Uncle Patrick O'Connor singing in the kitchen.

Somehow, eventually, I got through to the right house. Funny thing, my American Uncle Jimmy picked up the phone.

"Who is this?" he said.

"Dan Hubbs, from America."

"Dan Hubbs? Really?"

"I'm Nora's Grandson."

"No kidding?" he said. "Hey, my nephew is on the phone," he said, to whoever was there.

"Jimmy Fawcett's nephew is on the phone!" someone yelled. "He's here in Ireland."

"That's not Jimmy Fawcett's nephew," my grandmother put in. "That's my grandson!"

I spent some time sitting on the curb in downtown Abbeyfeale, and Uncle Jimmy came and collected me and took me to the family farm. This is the house my grandmother, one of 13 kids, grew up in. My Uncle Tadhg was still running the dairy farm, still milking the cows, putting up the hay. The

house was on a road across from the River Feale outside of the town of Abbeyfeale. Aunt Julia came running down the walk to kiss me, and I was welcomed with handshakes and pats on the back and poteen and dinner. And that first night, there was music.

I grew up on suburban Long Island, and the music I heard and listened to came courtesy of the music industry; it came over the radio and was found at the record store. I was a crazed fan. My friends were crazed fans. We saved our caddying money and dishwashing money to buy singles and albums, which we sat around listening to. We read the covers and admired the artwork. We shared and swapped what we couldn't afford. Albums were lost and albums were gained in this bartering system, and knowledge of songs and bands and musicians was of utmost importance. There was teenage pride in knowing and caring about music, about the right music. By this time, I had built a sizable collection of the

Beatles, Rolling Stones, Doors, Creedence Clearwater Revival, and so on. I even took guitar lessons for a while and was surprised and confused that what I was playing from *Mel Bay's Modern Guitar Method, Grade 1* didn't sound anything like what I heard on records. I spent some time playing the melody notes of *The Song of the Volga Boatman*. The melody of the *Volga Boatman* was not what I had in mind. In any case, this is the background I brought with me to Abbeyfeale, Ireland.

I will add that, sometimes at family gatherings, my Uncle John would break into song. He would belt out *Don't Tread on the Tail of Me Coat*, and *Finnegan's Wake*, and a few others. My father owned a few Clancy Brothers albums. I heard the Clancy Brothers *Sing of the Sea* and *Isn't It Grand Boys* every so often from the family record player. My Uncle John played bagpipes, too, and marched with the Ancient Order of Hibernians at Saint Patrick's Day parades in New York City and elsewhere.

It was my first night, staying at the farmhouse, and after a few pints of stout and a sip or two of local *poitin* (poteen), there was singing. It began, as it always seems to begin, like this:

"Uncle Paddy, give us a song."

"Oh well, I couldn't."

Oh, go on, give us a song."

"My throat's a bit dry just now."

"Get Paddy a small whiskey. Or is it *poitin*, you'd be needing?"

"I'll take just a small whiskey, for lubrication, so."

"Ah, of course you would."

"Dan, do you need another stout?"

"Sure."

"Good man, yourself, then."

So, when the time was right, when the energy was right, and the hesitation was overcome, Uncle Paddy stood up, cleared his throat and sang. He sang:

I went down to Galway Town  
To seek for recreation  
On the seventeenth of August  
My mind being elevated  
There were passengers assembled  
With their tickets at the station

My eyes began to dazzle  
And they off to see the races  
With me whack  
Fol the doe  
Fol the diddle  
Idle aye

Everyone listened intently to the words and the lovely trills and his earnest expressive demeanor. There was encouragement mid-song: "Good man, yourself." "Good man, Paddy." There was a circle of aunts and uncles and American visitors in attendance. A few others had songs that night. Aunt Peg, from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, offered *The Wild Colonial Boy*. But Paddy was the real singer, with a seemingly endless store of songs, most of which I had never heard. All the same, I was delighted and moved. We drank and listened and talked. I heard about cousins in Germany and uncles in the Bronx, and I tried to piece it all together and remember who was who. As my grandmother was one of thirteen, there were many people to discuss and to hear about.

Having turned up, unexpectedly, out of nowhere, so to speak, I got my share of attention and love. My cousin Eileen, in particular, befriended me and helped me understand who was who. I heard the sad story of Tadhg's and Julia's son, who had drowned in the river across the street. His sister, who was present at the tragedy, was living in London.

I was told there would be a proper "sing song" at the local pub, before all the Yanks headed back to the States.

Over the next few days, I was ferried around Tralee and Dingle in fine fashion. Uncle Paddy drove some of us down to Brandon. Uncle Jack O'Brien had an elderly aunt who lived in a small cabin above the sea. They had never met, but she teared up on learning that Jack was her sister's son and that he had come back from America

and had dropped in to say hello. She didn't know much English, but invited us into her humble home and offered us tea. The cabin had a swept dirt floor, a few chairs by an open turf fire, and a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the wall. From up there, you could see the black fishing boats—*currachs*—out in Brandon Bay. Jack and Peg invited me to join them on a bus trip around the Ring of Kerry. A few of us drove up Brandon Mountain and walked Conor Pass. In Dingle we found the Holy Stone and drank a few glasses of stout while a fiddle player offered jigs and reels.

We visiting Americans helped Uncle Tadhg build haystacks. Our efforts notwithstanding, our stacks left much to be desired. "Yankee stacks!" Uncle Tadhg said, laughing. He got them straightened out.

The last night arrived, and I found myself at a local pub with my new friends and family members. My grandparents and American aunts and uncles were flying out the next day, and I had decided to take the boat from Cork to Le Havre and to see Paris on the cheap.

The pub closed at 10 p.m., as per Irish law. The publican looked outside, to make sure no police were about, he said, and then locked



Uncle John Hubbs, Pam Hubbs, and Michelle Hubbs, singing in the kitchen.



Aunt Julia and Uncle Tadgh O'Connor in Abbeyfeale.

the door. He ushered the crowd into a back room where chairs were arranged in a circle.

Here were cousins, aunts and uncles, neighbors, Sister Bega (one of my grandmother's sisters), a priest, etc. A man played a jig on a concertina, stomping his foot to keep time, and listeners spoke to him, offering encouragement to help him along. When he finished, the woman sitting next to him sang a sweet sad song. It may have been *The Bard of Armagh*. Next came a young woman who recited a poem. The stage, as it were, was moving, person to person, coming closer. To brace myself, I drank deep from my glass of Guinness. Next in line was the priest who had an acoustic guitar. He played a fingerpicking pattern and sang a song. Most everyone joined in on the chorus. It may have been *A Nation Once Again*, if memory serves.

Soon enough it was my turn, and all eyes were on me. I did what most Yanks would do in this situation and begged off.

"You said you knew some guitar chords," Eileen protested.

"I'm not good," I said.

"Dan," Eileen said, "It doesn't matter how good you are. Play a song, play anything. Join in."

"Yea, but ..."

"Share something. Be part of it, like."

She grabbed the priest's guitar and put it in my hands. I looked around, I took another gulp of stout.

"I kind of know a Bob Dylan song," I mumbled.

"Lovely," Eileen said.

After a few seconds of blank panic, the chords came back to me. The G, the A minor and the C, all the way through. The same chords in the verse and the chorus. And I sang, "Clouds so swift, the rain won't lift, the gate won't close, the railings froze . . ." I had the distinct feeling that this particular song (*You Ain't Goin' Nombere*) was not the best choice for this audience. But I pushed it along and sang as much as I remem-

bered. When I was through, I got pretty much the same reaction that everyone else got:

"Good man, Dan."

"Very good, indeed."

And so on.

Then it was the next person's turn, and my fumbling performance receded into the past. It was part of the whole, nothing more. It wasn't wonderful, it wasn't the end of the world. It wouldn't make me famous, or wealthy, or cause women to love me. It wasn't about being extraordinary. It was about being part of the night's activities of sharing and expressing things that might not otherwise be expressed. It was part of a not untypical night in rural County Kerry in 1976. However, it was a special night for one American who had been encouraged and included and made to feel part of the community.

The night went along and drew to a close, as these things do. Next morning was the time for goodbyes. I was driven to Cork with my backpack and caught the boat to France, and so on and so forth.

It was a few years later, during a difficult time for me, when I was pretty much lost, that I bought a banjo. I was unsure about a lot of things on the day I walked into Lark Street Music in Albany, New York, and saw a banjo that was hanging on the wall. I didn't know what to do about a career or a job, and I didn't know what to do about finding a partner and maintaining a relationship, but I felt there was something promising in that instrument. I had a pocket full of crumpled dollar bills from working as a bartender. I spread the bills out on the counter and

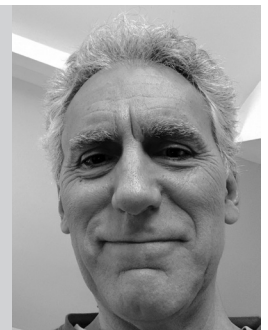
walked out with the banjo and an instruction book—and a feeling that things were going to be okay.

Over the years, I've had the good fortune to play with fiddle players and string bands. I've played in libraries and schools and bars and senior centers. I've played at a wedding and at a funeral, and for friends and for family gatherings. I play a few Irish songs and tunes, but mostly I play in the American folk tradition, derived from African and European songs and techniques. (I learned that my maternal grandfather's brother played banjo. That side of the family were people of color from Barbados.) I've been inspired by string bands and banjo players who recorded in the 1920s, by the *Anthology of American Folk Music* (Folkways, 1952), by country blues, musicians, semiprofessional and amateur, including Wade Ward, Blind Lemon Jefferson, the Clancy Brothers, the Carter Family, etc. Yet, I know, that I never would have gotten past the notion that music was made by talented celebrities, without the experience of those nights in Abbeyfeale, Ireland, back in 1978.

When my grandmother, Nora O'Connor, passed away in 2001, she left me a little money. She left me, in fact, enough to buy the banjo I still play. It's a Bart Reiter Special, a good sounding, well-made banjo. I've learned, and I'm still learning, how to play it. When I pick it up, I think of my grandmother and of the family farmhouse still standing in County Kerry, and my first visit back "home." That visit changed my life. ▼

Dan Hubbs is a librarian, an old-time style banjo player, and a songwriter. His book of poems, *Downtown Super Tells All*, based on his years working as a building superintendent in

Manhattan, was published in 2020. He has performed at Caffè Lena, Skidmore College (Solomon Northup Day celebration), Great Camp Sagamore, and schools and libraries in Saratoga Springs and the Adirondacks. Photo courtesy of the author.



# Reciprocal Magic: When a Folklorist Meets a Sideshow Talker

BY STEVE ZEITLIN

Just recently, I received an email from David Bloodgood, whom I had heard from—as a carnival pitchman might say—not just 5 years ago, not 10 years ago, but more than 45 years ago. It was way back in 1979. At the time, David was running a costume photo booth at carnivals, when he saw an ad in an entertainments magazine called *Amusement Business*. The ad had been placed there by myself and the folks at the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife; we were looking for old-time medicine show performers. He responded, suggesting we contact his father Fred, who worked from 1928 until 1939, as a medicine show doc throughout Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas. He also worked as a carnival “geek” show pitchman in the North during the off-season. A geek show featured a seemingly deranged man who would bite off the head of a snake or a chicken as part of the show.

David Bloodgood's email read: “I doubt that it will come as a surprise to you to know that my father, Fred Foster Bloodgood, considered you to be one of the most important

people in his life. As he might have said: ‘I will always measure time first from the period before I knew you, and then everything that came thereafter. . . ? Now, as I myself reach nearly 80 years of age—which is around the time he began to resurrect the med show and tent show performances—I have come to realize what a remarkable gift it is to have some part of your early life acknowledged, honored, and re-lived as you enter old age. You brought him great happiness, and you validated his pride in a part of his life that, both when experienced originally and for many years thereafter, was demeaned and disparaged by many people. That is an amazing gift. One that you shared freely, graciously, and often patiently. Thank you.’”

While it was deeply gratifying to hear that the programs that we worked on together had such a positive impact on Fred, I was also led to reflect on the rich impact that Fred Bloodgood had—and continues to have—on my life. Fred talked poetry. The many letters he wrote to us were poetry. I write poetry as a daily practice, and from Fred Bloodgood, I



The Geek, 1950. All photos courtesy of Fred Foster Bloodgood/City Lore.

have gathered a wide variety of imagery and ideas that informed my own poetry.

Fred was once described as “a master jeweler in the timeless language of the pitch.” He was fond of stating the pitchman's credo:



Fred Bloodgood performing his medicine show pitch for the documentary *Free Show Tonite*, 1980.

“Never, never use one word when four will suffice.” The medicine shows were always presented “free, gratis, and for nothing.” A sucker for alliteration, he presented “glittering galaxies of gorgeously gowned girls” and featured, among others, “Tillie Tashman, that teasing, tantalizing, tormenting, tempestuous, tall, tan torsotwister from Texas.” I certainly consider him one of the most inspiring, incandescent, irreplaceable, inventive, and absolutely inimitable (as Fred might say) collaborators in my life.

I recall a program officer at the National Endowment for the Humanities once advising me that for my grant proposals, I should go easy on the superlatives to describe our programs. Fred reveled in superlatives and hyperbole. Superlatives and hyperboles were his phrasing of choice. All of his attractions were billed from the bally platform as “the most interesting thing you’ve seen in all your life.” From Fred, I learned the power of the pitch, how to use language to engage and hold an audience—whether I am doing a workshop or writing a grant proposal. Fred taught me to understand a friend’s sardonic description of life in our country: “No matter where we start off in American culture, we always end up in sales.”

Fred, like other sideshow artists, used similes to compare the outrageous antics of their attractions with the mundane, everyday experiences of their audience. He described the wounds inflicted by “venomous reptiles” on his beleaguered geek, a local drunk who was paid to bite off the head of a chicken or a snake: “You will see the blood course from those wounds, just as you’d pour water from a glass.” Standing on a raised platform in front of the geek show tent, he’d announce:

When I throw that live chicken, you see  
me now holding,  
Down deep into that steel-bound cage,  
You’re going to see a most amazing change  
come over the old woman.  
The eyes will dilate, the pupils glow just  
like two red-hot coals of fire.  
You’ll hear her emit just one long, soul-  
searing scream,  
And then she’ll leap clear across that steel-  
bound arena,  
Catch that bird between those massive  
jaws,  
Bite off the head with those long and  
tusky teeth.

And then, ladies and gentlemen,  
You’ll see her suck, drain, and draw  
Every drop of blood from that bleeding,  
throbbing, quivering, pulsating body,  
With the very same relish as you or I  
Would suck the juice of an orange.  
It’s one of the most disgusting,  
One of the most repulsive,  
Yet, I’ll say one of the most interesting  
sights  
You’ve seen in all your life.

The first program in which we featured Fred at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival was the 1979 Medicine Show. The next year, we brought him back to perform in American Talkers, a program that featured carnival sideshow pitchmen, street criers, and auctioneers. Fred performed his pitches for the Geek Show, and two other pitchmen, John Bradshaw and his mentor, Bobby Reynolds, represented carnival sideshows. John’s girlfriend, Diane, played the role of the woman who lay in the sword box while John appeared to cut her into pieces, by thrusting “steel blades” into the box. Diane, however, arrived a day late for the festival, so my wife Amanda, who went on to write her dissertation about sideshow talkers, street criers, and auctioneers, had to play the part of “Serpentina, who twists and turns her body around those sharp steel blades like a giant snake or reptile.”

We brought Fred back to the festival for a third time as part of our Celebration of the American Tent Show, which included Chautauqua performances, Toby Comedy Shows, Melodramas, and even old-time magicians, Ken and Roberta Griffin, who performed large-scale magic tricks such as levitation, a stunt also known as “The Floating Lady.”

Fred was not only a consummate poet of the pitch, but someone who spoke in conversation with a wry humor, expressed in a gracious, old-fashioned, poetic vernacular. He was dear to me, not only because I reveled in his art and in his presence—but also because he brought out poetry in me, inspired some of my favorite poems. For myself, a key way of giving life meaning is through poetry—both poetry that I chronicle in the voices of those I work with as a folklorist and in the poetry I write—so often inspired by those voices.



Fred Bloodgood with the author’s son, Benjamin Zeitlin, 1981.

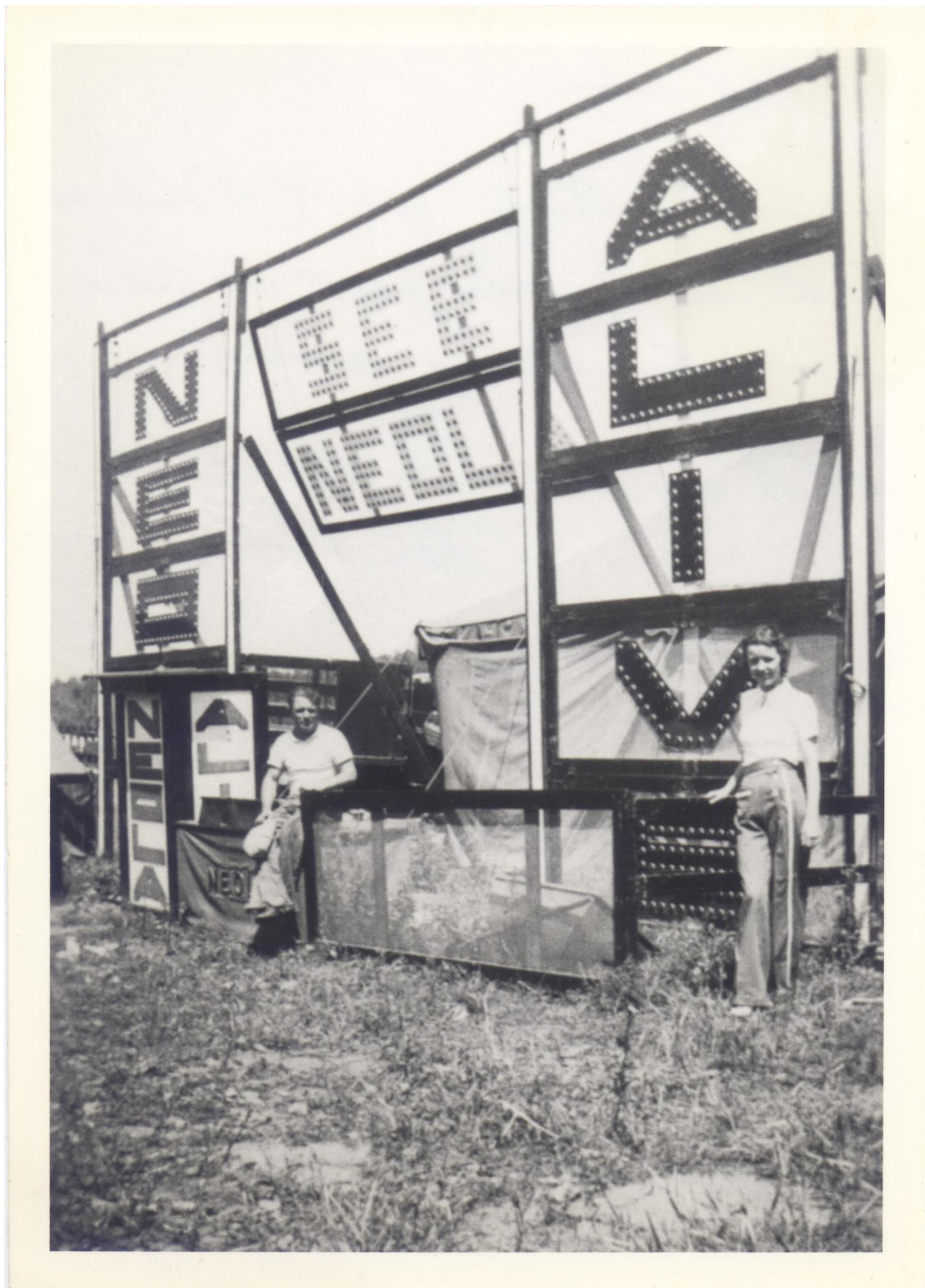
Just a year after the Smithsonian festivals with Fred, when my son was born via C-section, I wrote:

When they sawed Amanda in half  
And pulled a rabbit from the hat  
The magician said,  
“It’s a boy, it’s a beautiful boy,”  
Who five years later asked his dad,  
“If it’s a trick,  
Is there no such thing as magic?  
Only tricksters, no magicians?”  
And can it be that life  
is all we know of miracles?

Many years later, now in my 70s, as I faced open-heart surgery, images from those days came back to me, as I pondered my own mortality.

### Learning to Live with Spirits

Upon my death,  
I bequeath to each of you who loved my  
disappearing soul—  
a magician’s cloak—to conjure me in  
memory.  
Proceed with a light touch—  
tip your hat, wave the cloak across the  
table—  
like a bouquet of roses, my recalcitrant  
spirit reappears,  
leaving the audience of mourners aston-  
ished, hushed.  
Invoke our favorite punch lines  
with a magician’s sleight of hand.  
Levitate a memory till my spirit lingers  
in the air



The set up for Fred Bloodgood's Geek Show. The Geek was named Neola because the sound of those vowels would, according to Bloodgood, carry long distances up and down the midway.

(the secret to the trick is that we loved each other so, so much).  
 Though the swords of death skewer the sword box,  
 My spirit lies curled around the blades, untouched.

For myself, and for the artists with whom I've collaborated, both folklore and poetry play key roles in the process of meaning creation. My hope is that the work I've done has inspired the people that I've worked with, as much as it has inspired me. I hope it has brought out their creativity, as much as it has

brought out mine. I never ran away to join the circus, but I felt like I did when I worked with Fred Bloodgood.

When you communicate deeply with kindred spirits across difference, there is indeed a reciprocal magic that ricochets back and forth. Being a folklorist has given me the opportunity to collaborate and connect deeply with folks, such as Kewulay Kamara, a Sierra Leonean epic poet; Marjorie Eliot, who offers free jazz concerts in her living room; Moishe Sacks, Rabbi, baker and homespun philosopher; and Tony Butler, a poetic and philosophical

homeless man who lived in the subways. Meeting and bonding with people drastically different from ourselves can inspire us in unexpected ways.

I think of Fred each time we run a public program at City Lore, the nonprofit cultural center I direct on New York's Lower East Side. When I stand at the door wondering if we'll be able to attract an audience—when the crowds are not necessarily flocking—I often think of Fred, who would stand in front of the gathered crowd on carnival midways, holding a chicken in the air to attract his audience, then saying, "We are going to feed the geek this chicken you see me here now holding, whether one of you comes, all of you come, or none of you come."

Fred and I had a running joke that every few years, I'd bring him out of retirement to perform his pitches "one more time, with feeling." Each time Fred performed for us, he would address the audience by saying, "Here, we are presenting what conceivably may be the last, the final medicine show that the world will ever know. The quaint rhetoric you hear will vanish, like the medicine show people themselves, vanish into a thousand yesterdays." We cannot bring it back, he would end, quoting the poet Kahlil Gibran, "to cancel half a line."

The phone in my office rang in 1997, and Fred's wife, Mary, told me that Fred had passed away. There would be no more medicine shows and no more Fred Bloodgood. He had stepped out of retirement for the last time. I stood, closed the door of my office, and wept. ▼

Steve Zeitlin is the Founding Director of City Lore. His latest book is *JEWels: Teasing Out the Poetry in Jewish Humor and Storytelling*. You can watch Fred Bloodgood's medicine show pitch in the documentary *Free Show Tonite* at [Folkstreams.net](http://Folkstreams.net). Part of this column was developed for a Botkin Lecture at the Library of Congress, "The Poetry of Everyday Life: Reflections of an Urban Folklorist." Photo by Amanda Dargan.



## FROM THE FIELD: CAPITAL REGION



*This From the Field Feature is courtesy of New York Folklore Community Field Worker, Edgar Betelu. He has over 25 years of experience as a public sector folklorist in New York State. A native of Argentina, he is a record producer and owner of Sunnyside/Circular Moves. Edgar is currently conducting fieldwork in the Capital District and Hudson Valley for the Upstate Regional Project. Since late 2021, he has been working with immigrant and refugee communities in the Capital Region. Photo courtesy of the author.*

New York's Capital Region and Upstate are home to an increasing number of Karen who have settled in the area since the 1990s, commonly, as refugees escaping political violence and persecution in Myanmar (previously called Burma). Thanks to immigration and refugee organizations today, it is estimated that around 5,000 Karen call Albany and the Capital Region home.

As part of my fieldwork in the region, I have had the opportunity to meet several members and artists of the Karen community. In August 2021, I was invited to the Wrist Tying Ceremony, which is held annually in different cities of New York State. Last year, the event took place in Rensselaer, New York, and was attended by members of large Karen communities from Utica, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse, among others.

The annual Wrist Tying Ceremony is a centuries-old tradition that typically takes place in August. It is secular in nature and celebrates the cultural identity, tradition, and bonds within families and the Karen community. The ritual also serves as an expression and wish for the spiritual and physical well-being of a person.

During the event, elders of the community tie red and white threads around participants' wrists and place cooked sticky rice, sugarcane, leaves, and bananas in their hands, while reciting words calling on the spirits to act graciously, bring good health, and ward off evil.

Last year, the event was a wonderful and festive social gathering held in the field behind the Gethsemane Karen Baptist Church in Rensselaer. It was a hot summer day, and the rain threatened to spoil it, but fortunately only a few drops came down, and the sun finally came out. There were lots of people. Entire families, from grandparents to young children. Men and women walked around the grounds, sat to chat, laugh and eat. A group of men rolled betel nuts in leaves to chew. Everyone wore the traditional colorful *longyi*.

There was also lots of delicious food and cooking. Fish, vegetables, and several soups. I had a delicious bamboo soup with vegetables on top and shrimp. There were also dance groups and young children performing traditional Karen dances alongside musicians. I had the opportunity to meet Pinya Aung, a Tenaku harp player and his wife Ehsue Aung, who is a dancer. They are both very active in the community and one of the earliest families to arrive in the Capital region in the early 2000s. During the last two years, I have had the pleasure to continue to work with the community through presentations and workshops. In a couple of weeks, I have been invited to participate in a Karen Soccer tournament with teams from the Capital Region and other cities upstate. Happily, I was told I could participate with the elder teams. I am very much looking forward to the sporting event, although I believe I will be found closer to the food stands.

*This From the Field feature was first published August 30, 2022, at <https://nyfolklore.org/from-the-field-capital-region/>*

This year the Wrist Tying Ceremony took place in Syracuse on September 3, 2022.



Karen Wrist Tying: Attendees at the Karen Wrist Tying Ceremony in 2021. Photo courtesy of Edgar Betelu.

## FROM THE FIELD: MOHAWK VALLEY



*This From the Field feature is courtesy of New York Folklore Staff Folklorist Anne Rappaport Berliner. She received her MA in Folk Studies from Western Kentucky University in 2018. Since late 2021, she has been working with beekeepers in the Mohawk Valley. Photo courtesy of the author.*

The Mohawk Valley has a rich history of beekeeping. Moses Quinby, an important figure in beekeeping history, lived and worked in the valley. Today, there are Mohawk Valley beekeepers carrying on the legacy. Many are members of the Southern Adirondack Beekeeper Association, an important group in the area. However, anyone who is anyone will tell you that Carl Jurica was the center of a tight knit beekeeping community.

Carl was a lifelong beekeeper in Johnstown, New York. He passed away just a few weeks after I interviewed him in October 2021. His legacy lives on through his mentees, students, friends, and of course, his bees. In addition to Carl's community, I recently started interviewing beekeepers in other parts of the Capital Region, "BEE" they backyard or commercial keepers. I have learned about bees themselves, and of course, tried lots of honey. The dark honey—called wildflower, produced by bees in the fall is my favorite.

If you spend more than a few minutes talking to a beekeeper, you will hear them talk about their "girls," aka the bees! Most

bees in a hive are female—no matter their job—nursing, gathering, or building. It is unlikely you will find keepers who don't talk to their "girls." Experienced beekeepers can tell how the hives feel based on their sound and behavior. Conversation between the bees and their keepers are common!

When a bee leaves their hive in search of food, it returns to its hive by recognizing the visual attributes of its home. Because of this, beekeepers often paint their hives bright colors. I have seen rainbows of hives as well as individual images. One of my favorite hives is in the keeper's home.

The bees naturally found their way into the house, and the keeper fitted the hive with glass cover so it can be viewed from the inside!

I'm hoping to continue expanding my interviews past the Mohawk Valley and into the greater Capital Region. I have been asked by many of the folks I meet if I'll ever keep bees, and though I'm not ready yet, I get the feeling it is just a matter of time. I do love honey!

*This From the Field feature was first published May 20, 2022, at <https://nyfolklore.org/from-the-field-mohawk-valley/>*



Bee Hives painted by Carl Jurica. Photo by Anne Rappaport Berliner.



Carl Jurica shows off a smoker, invented by Moses Quinby in the Mohawk Valley in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Photo by Anne Rappaport Berliner.



## FROM THE FIELD: ROCHESTER



*This From the Field Feature is courtesy of Hannah Davis, the founding director of Flower City Folk and a professor of practice in the Rochester Institute of Technology's School of Individualized Study. Learn more about this project's progress on Instagram at @flowercityfolk and Facebook at [www.facebook.com/flowercityfolk](http://www.facebook.com/flowercityfolk). Photo courtesy of the author.*

Downtown Rochester is undergoing major changes, and Monroe County's new folklife program, Flower City Folk, is documenting the process.

Since 2014, local government has worked toward removing the Inner Loop, a sunken highway encircling our urban center. When it was constructed, this roadway created a physical divide between bustling residential neighborhoods and the stores, businesses, restaurants, and schools that local community members relied on. Now, community members are working to reunite those spaces.

The development is happening slowly, quadrant by quadrant. Its southernmost quadrant, where ground broke in 2014, now features a major expansion of the Strong Museum, several new apartment buildings, and improved infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians. These changes bring a mix of praise and ire from community members. Some appreciate these glossy updates; others are dismayed by their exclusivity. The apartments are too expensive for the people who most need

additional housing options, they say. "Who asked for that?" someone wondered aloud to me.

The next stage of redevelopment will happen in nearby South Marketview Heights. Hinge Neighbors, an organization founded by artist Shawn Dunwoody and activist Suzanne Mayer, is trying to ensure that this stage is more collaborative and community-oriented. To document community members' experiences and desires, as well as the neighborhood itself, Hinge Neighbors contracted a cultural resource survey from The Landmark Society of Western New York and Flower City Folk. We've been specifically tasked with conducting oral history interviews.

In the year and a half that's passed since we began this work, I've met with dozens of people to discuss their experiences. Opinions differ, but everyone speaks with fondness about this special place. They recall growing up with yards full of fruit trees, working and going to school with close friends and family, and delighting in the small joys that a close community offers its members—like congregating at a local bakery's backdoor with friends in hopes of getting a free cookie. They

also agree that construction of the Inner Loop, compounded by economic decline in the '70s and '80s, changed the neighborhood. This redevelopment, they say, is an opportunity to make things right.

Official plans for redevelopment are still in flux, but we're honored to collaborate with community members to bring about positive change.

*This From the Field feature was first published January 3, 2023, at <https://nyfolklore.org/r-r/>* ▼

Are you a New York  
State folklorist or  
community scholar?

We would love to  
publish your

"From the Field."

Email Anne

Rappaport Berliner at  
[arappaport@nyfolklore.org](mailto:arappaport@nyfolklore.org)  
to be featured.



Hannah Davis interviews Tony Apollonio, a longtime resident of South Marketview Heights, as a part of an ongoing effort to document the stories and experiences of community members affected by the development of the Inner Loop. Photo by Arturo Hoyte.

# Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival, 2022

**BY ANNE RAPPAPORT BERLINER, NYF STAFF FOLKLORIST  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN HOEHN**

The 2022 Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival was a spectacular sequel to the first festival hosted in 2021. We were thrilled that Mohawk Valley-based photographer Kevin Hoehn made the trip to Albany to photograph our event. There he found the crafts, arts, music, and dance from the communities who have made a home from New York's Montgomery to Columbia Counties.

The festival welcomed back veteran participants: Altin Stoja, an iconographer; Latifa Ali Mohammad, who creates spectacular embroidered arts; the Desi Trio, a band of Pakistani immigrants; Ismail Arbab, a rug weaver and jewelry maker—all of whom have made Albany County their home.

In addition to old favorites, new to the festival was a foodways demonstration tent that featured Karen, Congolese, and Dominican food. Pictured opposite is Albany's Santa Cabrera cooking Dominican empanadas.

Staying true to the festival's name, new artists joined us from farther afield, along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. Pamela Badila and her family are community pillars in Hudson, New York. At the festival they displayed their numerous talents, such as beadwork, painting, and storytelling. Jake Krohn, a farrier and blacksmith joined the festival from Amsterdam in the Mohawk Valley. Other new artists included Sarah Bachinger, who is the founder of *Pysanky for Peace*, and Tatiana Gjergji Benack of *Noteworthy Resources*, who lead the crowd in a participatory dance from Albania.

The festival is a microcosm of the communities and artists that New York





Folklore supports. If you were to look at the festival from a bird's eye view, you could imagine faint lines creating a spider-web of connections.

Huguette Kasongo, who fried up delicious Congolese Samosas is the wife of 2021 festival performer Patrick Kasongo of Wa Lika. Altin and Tatiana connected over their shared Albanian heritage. At the 2023 festival, another Albanian introduced to us by Tatiana will be demonstrating at our food tent. She also happens to be Altin's cousin!

In 2023, we hope that these imaginary webs continue to tangle, as we further our reach and deepen our connections with the communities along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. ▼











# NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS GRANTS



Back row, left to right: Anshu Chandra, Veena Chandra, Techung, Zelda Hotaling, Ellen McHale, Edgar Betelu, Latifa ali Muhammad, Aurelius John, Daniel Walayat, Shaman Raphael, Saurav Bavdekar, Devish Chandra. Front row, left to right: Efthimios (Altin) Stoja, Jorida Lakaku, Tim Doherty, West Hill Refugee Welcome Center representative, Quill Harrison, Fabiana Chiu-Rinaldi, Anne Rappaport Berliner. All photos courtesy of New York Folklore.

New York Folklore recently announced \$225,000 in grants from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). These funds are the result of 21 successful applications submitted to NYSCA by New York Folklore on behalf of folk and traditional artists in the Capital Region.

New York Folklore hosted an awards reception to celebrate this great achievement by folk and traditional artists in the region on February 23 at The Linda, WAMC-Albany's public radio network's Performing Arts Studio. The celebration featured food representing the grantees heritages.

New York State Council on the Arts and Governor Kathy Hochul were represented by NYSCA member Laudelina Martinez and by Fabiana Chiu-Rinaldi, NYSCA's Program Director for Folk Arts.

Artists and organizations were funded in three categories this year: Apprenticeship Grants, Support for Artists, and Support for Organizations. *Apprenticeship Grants* are a foundational tool in the field of folklore and folk arts in New York State. Through this program, master artists take on one or more apprentices to pass on their skills and knowledge. Apprentices can be other community members or a member of their own

family. *Support for Artists* funds creative commissions to individual artists. This relatively new category has allowed a greater number of artists access to NYSCA funding. *Support for Organizations* funds general operating expenses for organizations with an arts focus.

As a support and service organization, New York Folklore's work in fiscal sponsorship and grant assistance are a large part its mission. New York Folklore is thrilled to support this cohort of artists and organizations in 2023. The support is made possible by NYSCA, with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.



# Grantee Spotlights

**Zelda Hotaling** was raised in the Native American tradition of the Haudenosaunee, on the Kahnawaka Mohawk reservation in Canada. For more than 40 years, she has lived in Rensselaer County, where she works out of her home studio. Her project, Sacred Dream Circles, funded through an Individual Artist Grant, will result in the creation of three large-scale works of arts resembling dreamcatchers.

**Zorkie Nelson**, originally from Ghana and currently residing in Schenectady, received both an Individual Artist Grant and an Apprenticeship Grant. As a master of Ghanaian drumming, he will teach two apprentices his art. His Individual Artists Grant will fund the creation of A Pan African Orchestra for New York's Capital Region.

**The West Hill Refugee Welcome Center (RWC)** in Albany, New York, received funding to carry out arts programming at their community center. They offer a variety of services and programs, and RWC is a community hub of learning and cultural discourse. RWC is a frequent partner of New York Folklore.



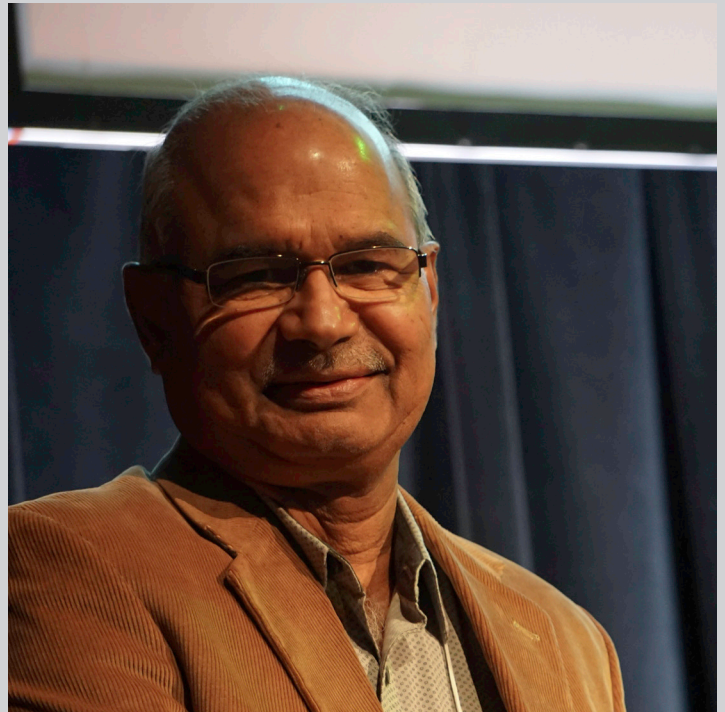
Zelda Hotaling with New York Folklore Executive Director Ellen McHale



Zorkie Nelson



Shaman Raphael



Aurelius John

## **Full List of Grantees**

### ***Apprenticeships***

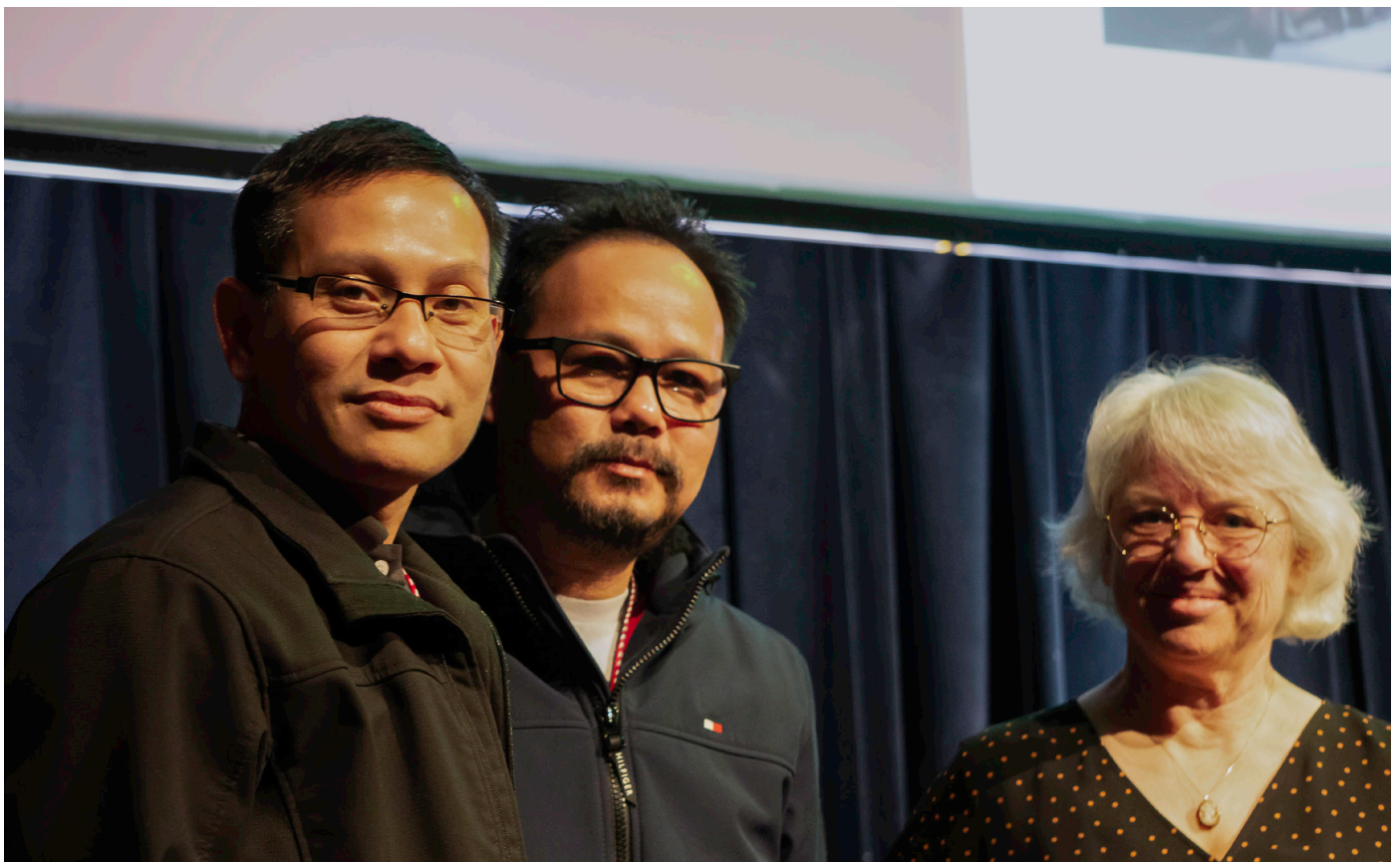
- Devesh Chandra, Master; Saurav Bavdekar, Apprentice. Indian Classical Music
- Efthimios (Altin) Stoja, Master; Jorida Laraku, Apprentice. Greek Iconography
- Tashi Sharzur, Master; Tenzin Norbu, Apprentice. Tibetan Traditional Music
- Veena Chandra, Master; Vibhava Ranade and Anshu Chandra, Apprentices. Indian Classical Music
- Zorkie Nelson, Master; Elizabeth Fo Fo Niiquaye and Patience Lamptey, Apprentices. Ghanaian Drumming
- Master; 2 Apprentices. Kochi Dress Making (names redacted for privacy)

### ***Support for Organizations***

- Guyana Cultural Association of New York
- West Hill Refugee Welcome Center

### ***Support for Artists***

- Aurelius John, Pakistani Music: Bansuri, Dholak, Dhol, and Tabla
- Daniel Walayat, Vocal Pakistani Music
- Devesh Chandra, Indian Classical Music
- Dvonne Faulks, African American Hair Braiding
- Latifa ali Muhammad, Afghan Embroidery
- Ehsue Aung, Karen Dance
- Pamela Badila, African Folktales and Stories
- Pinya Aung, Karen Tenaku Harp
- Shaman Raphael, Pakistani Music: Ghazal and Harmonium
- Veena Chandra, Indian Classical Music Sitar
- Zelda Hotaling, Native American Healing Arts
- Zorkie Nelson, Ghanaian Musician
- Quill Harrison, Solo Exhibition and Public Mural



Devesh Chandra, Saurav Bavdekar, and Ellen McHale



Tim Doherty and Omid Ali, West Hill Refugee Welcome Center



Latifa ali Muhammed



Karen community representatives Ling Yone and Saw Dabu for award grantees Pinya Aung and Ehsue Aung



Jorida Laraku and Efthimios (Altin) Stoja



Anshu Chandra and Veena Chandra



Techung (Tashi) Sharzur and Ellen McHale

# In Memory of John Michael Vlach June 21, 1948—October 30, 2022

[Editor's Note: This obituary was posted on Indiana University's Facebook page (and elsewhere), and the University gave us permission to reprint it here and provided the photo.]

John Michael Vlach was born at the Kapiolani Hospital in Honolulu, Hawaii, to Billie Katherine Kauio-kamo'ono-hu Wond and Richard Reed Vlach on June 21, 1948—the summer solstice, which Billie Katherine was fond of reminding John was the longest day of the year. John moved with his family to Alaska when he was a young boy and to various locations in California, where his father worked as a structural engineer on maritime bridges and piers, until the family settled in Berkeley, California. John attended the School of the Madeleine and served as an altar boy. He made frequent visits to his Tutu (grandmother) and cousins in Hawai'i and to his Czech family's renowned farmland in Stanislaus Valley, California.

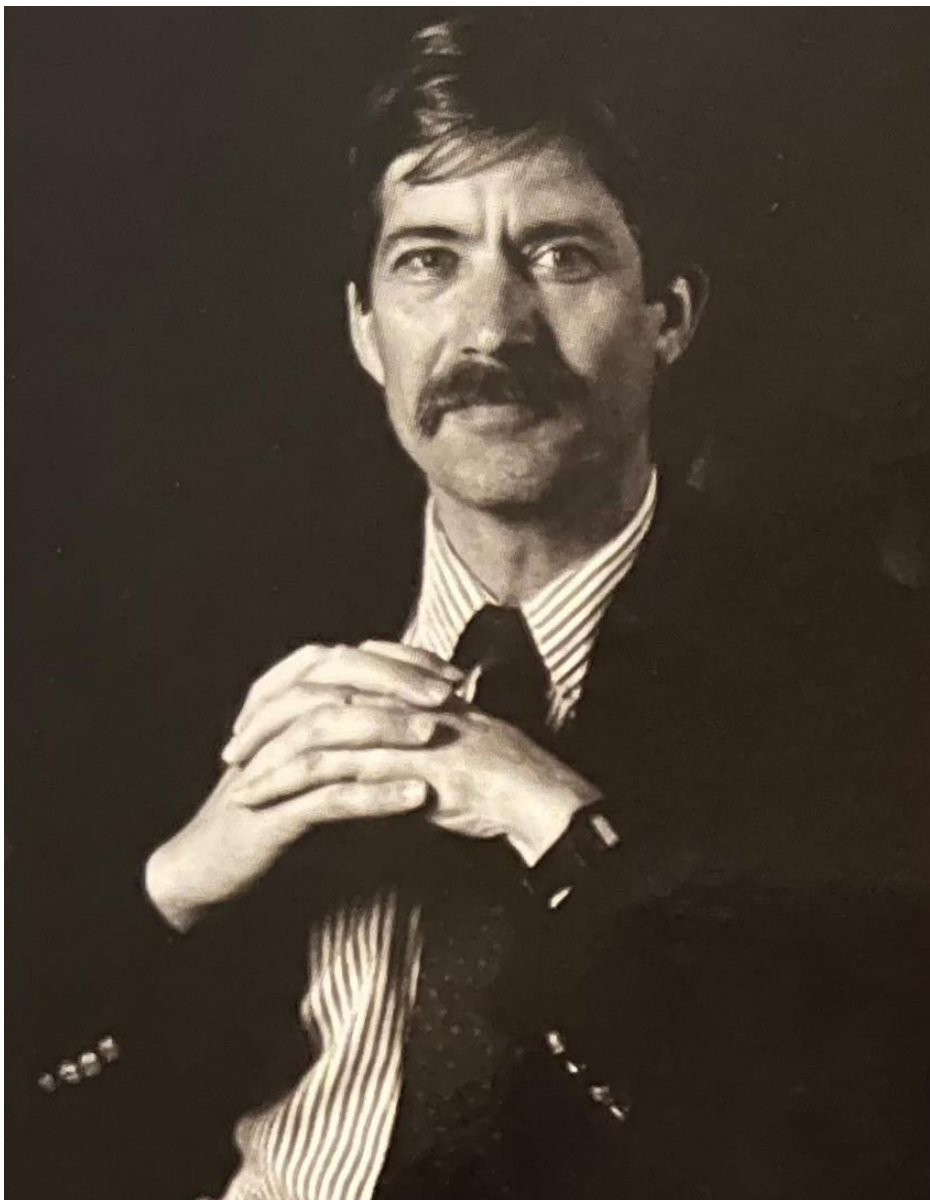
In the late 1960s, while an undergraduate at the University of California at Davis, John was inspired by the cultural transformation taking place around him and seized the opportunity to study abroad in Ghana. He served as a research assistant to his anthropology professor Daniel J. Crowley, who had been paralyzed by polio and needed a strong companion to push his wheelchair through Togo, Senegal, Mali, Liberia, Haute-Volta (now Burkina Faso), République du Dahomey (now Benin), Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, and The Gambia. Valuing athletics throughout his life, John was a wide receiver for the UC Davis football team as a walk-on. After obtaining his BA in 1970, he moved on to Indiana University to focus on folklife studies with mentors Warren Roberts and Henry Glassie.

John received his PhD from Indiana University in 1975, where he was part of the Folklore Institute and where he mentored and cajoled classmates to complete their dissertations. His own was on the West African roots of the shotgun house, a uniquely African American architectural form, whose transmission he traced from West Africa, through Haiti, into New Orleans, and up the Mississippi River, where its simple construction made it the housing style of choice for workers of limited means. He mobilized others to draw attention to African folklore with a volume he edited for Folklore Forum titled, *Studies in Yoruba Folklore* (1973), to which he contributed "The Functions of Proverbs in Yoruba Folktales." Indicating a future path in American Studies as well, he also produced a groundbreaking study of the newly identified American genre of "anti-legends" in an article for *Indiana Folklore*. As a graduate student, he won, with co-author and classmate Howard Marshall, the American Folklore Society's award for best article by a student for the publication of "Toward a Folklife Approach to American Dialects" in *American Speech* (1973).

Early in his career, John was elected as a Fellow of the American Folklore Society, a group that recognizes the field's leading scholars. His folklore scholarship alerted academics across the social sciences and humanities to the power of cultural expression in our lives. He was especially effective in the areas of art and architecture, helping scholars and the public appreciate the significance of America's folklife. Many of his published studies continue to be required reading for university courses. John's professorships took him to the University of Iowa, the University of Maryland,

and the University of Texas at Austin, before he settled at George Washington University for 32 years, for which he served as director of its Folklife Program, chair of the American Studies Department, Director of Graduate Studies, and Professor of American Studies and Anthropology. Clad in his trademark blazer, blue jeans, and cowboy boots, he taught students of American studies, folklore, anthropology, and museum studies, including some who went on to become founding curators at the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture or worked at other institutions across the country.

Throughout his career, John insisted on the merit of studying the cultural contributions of people who came to America in slavery and on recognizing the artistry and agency they exhibited in the landscape and everyday objects they created, from agricultural field patterns and dwelling styles to basketry and quilt-making, to blacksmithing and creative, yet functional pottery known as "face jugs." John wrote books and curated exhibitions on the folk material culture of the African diasporas, including *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (1978); *Charleston Blacksmith: The Work of Philip Simmons* (1981); *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (1993); *By the Work of Their Hands: Studies in Afro-American Folklife* (1991), and *The Planter's Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings* (2002). He received the Fred Kniffen Prize for Best Book on North American Material Culture for his final book: *Barns* (2003), a regional survey of barn types in the United States, analyzing images throughout the collections of the Library of Congress. He gained renown for his broad-based work on folk art and



John Michael Vlach

architecture, including the sweeping volumes *Plain Painters: Making Sense of American Folk Art* (1988) and with Simon J. Bronner, *Folk Art and Art Worlds* (1986, 1992), and with Dell Upton, *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. In these volumes, he emphasized the importance of community context and the concept of tradition. He also authored or contributed to numerous books, articles, and anthologies on African American folk arts and crafts, folklore, and cultural history.

John was a leading expert on folklife, American material culture, vernacular architecture, and historic preservation. In addition to his regional areas of focus in the Southern United States, the Caribbean, and West Africa, he developed a late-in-career interest in the history of Capitol Hill, where he lived for 40 years. He enjoyed giving tours of the alley dwellings

on the Hill and served on the District of Columbia's Historic Preservation Review Board. He also participated in the Capitol Hill Village Overbeck Oral History Project and served as an adviser to the National Council for the Traditional Arts. He was in great demand as a speaker and museum consultant throughout the country but limited his travels so that he could participate in family life.

At home, John was a dutiful husband and father who showed his love through acts of service, whether that was spending a Sunday watching the Washington football team while ironing his daughters' school uniform shirts for the week, or serving as the driver on call for their cross-town commutes for the school carpool, ballet classes, or basketball practice. To his wife's delight as a fellow historian, and to his daughters' dismay, he was known for

detouring on road trips through the South to photograph old barns or to explore ruins of slave dwellings and freed Black towns. John was an avid runner, completing the Marine Corps Marathon in his 50s and continuing his tradition of running or taking miles-long walks, even during his initial struggle with young-onset Alzheimer's. And ask anyone who saw him at his daughters' weddings in recent years: He could dance!

John retired in 2013, when his disease made it impossible for him to continue teaching. George Washington University established the Horton-Vlach Fund to honor John and his colleague James Horton for "their extraordinary research and teaching legacies." The Office of Alumni Relations organized a celebration of John's career on February 28, 2013, with 50 of John's former students and colleagues honoring him. The Vernacular Architecture Forum bestowed upon him, later that year, its Henry Glassie Award for lifetime scholarly achievement in vernacular architecture studies.

He was cared for at home with love and commitment for many years by his wife Beverly and with the assistance of caregivers—primary among them, his caregiver for eight years, Pamela Drakes-Shepherd, who jollied him along and kept him active well beyond anyone's expectations, and Bilikisu Badmus, who provided weekend coverage. John spent the final six months of his life receiving memory care at the Residences at Thomas Circle, where nurses and care professionals provided dedicated round-the-clock assistance and where John's family and companion dog Chesley made regular visits. John was surrounded by family in his final days and hours.

John is survived by his wife Beverly Branman and daughters Kate Vlach (Jon Ettinger) and Molly Vlach (Kory Cosenza), all of Washington, DC; brother Stephen Vlach and nephew RJ Vlach of Yosemite, California; and a host of cousins, in-laws, friends, and former students. John was predeceased by his parents, toddler brother Paul, and sister-in-law Laurie Vlach. A celebration of John's life is planned for June 2023, when John would have turned 75. Memorial contributions may be made to the Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation. ▼

# A Tribute to John Vlach

BY NANCY SOLOMON

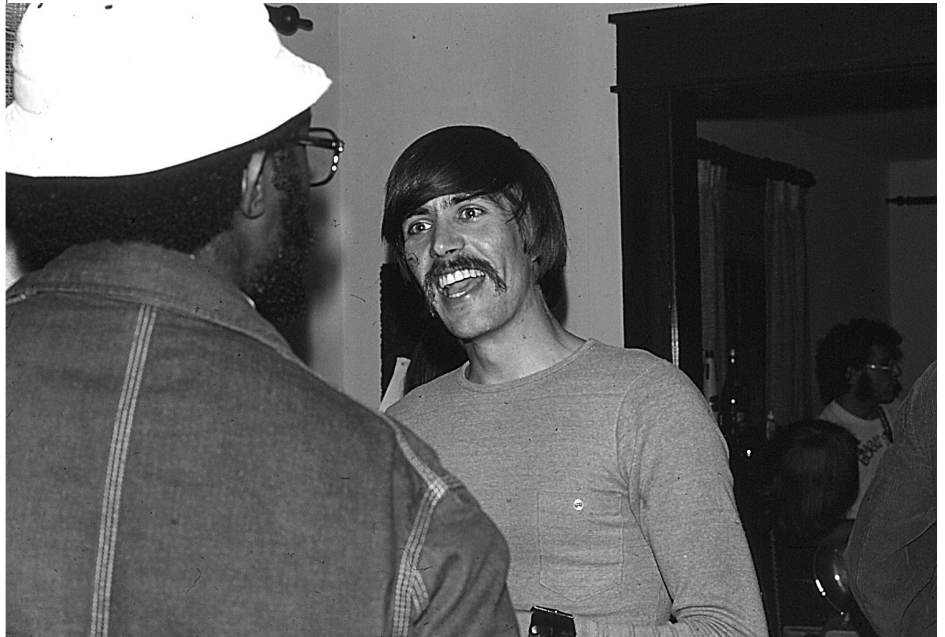
In 1981, I began my Master's degree in Museum Studies at George Washington University (GWU). I took an introductory course in American Studies with Pete Mondale, who assigned a book that would change my life: *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* by Larry Levine. When I asked Mondale where I could read more books like this, he introduced me to John Vlach, the new folklorist that the department had just hired. John had just written *Charleston Blacksmith* about Phillip Simmons, an African American blacksmith in Charleston. I was immediately sold on this professor, since my brother was a blacksmith and I had worked at a museum on Black women's history in Washington, DC (The Bethune Museum) prior to starting my Master's degree. And, then I learned what folklorists do. Later than year, I changed my degree concentration to American Studies so that I could take some courses with him.

John taught us so many important things for folklorists, including the importance of listening deeply during interviews, so that you could develop a relationship with the person you are interviewing. He also stressed the importance of giving back, that your research was for the community, not just for your paper or project—that your work depended on gaining trust, not just by promises. And the more people working on a project, the better project it would be. One experience stands out in my memory—measuring a tobacco barn.

In my final year, while working on my thesis, John invited me to join his vernacular architecture class on a field trip to Prince George's County in Maryland, where there was a mid-19th-century tobacco barn. When we arrived, I parked on what seemed to be level ground and proceeded to join the students. John asked if I could show them how to measure the barn, so that we could produce a measured drawing later in the class. Having spent the last several months doing drawings of workers' houses in western Maryland for my

thesis, I welcomed the chance to examine other vernacular architecture forms and to work with other people, too. As we finished measuring beams and braces, one task remained—determining the elevation. Back in those days, the only way to get the height was to climb up to the peak. Using the crib

as a ladder, I pulled the tape measure up, when one of the cribs collapsed underneath. Fortunately, there were a lot of tobacco leaves on the barn floor, which cushioned my landing. John stood there laughing, later saying I had earned my credentials as a student of vernacular architecture.



John Vlach and Bill Wiggins at a party hosted by Vlach in Autumn, 1972, in Bloomington, Indiana. Photo courtesy of Howard "Rusty" Marshall.



John Vlach with blacksmith Phillip Simmons [second from the right] at the 1982 Smithsonian Festival, with Simmons' apprentices, Silas Sessions [left] and Ronnie Pringle [right]. Photo courtesy of Howard "Rusty" Marshall.



Feeling confident that I had learned something that day, I later discovered that my car was not on solid ground. John asked all of the students, especially the ones who needed rides home, to help push me out of the mud. Such acts let me know how deeply John cared for his students.

Another life-changing experience was working with Phillip Simmons, the Charleston blacksmith. The summer of 1982 was the first year for the National Heritage Fellowships awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Phillip Simmons was in that first group and was asked to demonstrate on the National Mall in July. John asked if I could assist him with the introductions of visitors, who also came to Washington that summer, to Phillip and his apprentices. Throughout those hot summer days, I learned how wonderful it is to form lasting relationships with the artists we work with, as I saw John attending to Phillip and his apprentices. The invitation also introduced me to the festival world, both the good parts and the bad parts.

In classes and numerous discussions in between, John always helped us explore our passions, introducing us to other folklorists and scholars, and supporting our work. Cramped in a tiny office at GWU, John always had his door open and encouraged us to work with each other. I made some very dear friends at GWU and continue to value their friendship today. That is because John nurtured us, as we supported him. When I began exploring working full-time as a folklorist, it was John who suggested I go to New York, where he said, “lots of things are happening there.” From that suggestion, I have grown to love my home state and the great folklorists who work here, including my GWU classmate, Todd DeGarmo. I shall miss John dearly and will always treasure the years we had together. I send my love to Beverly and his daughters, who shared him with us unconditionally. ▼

*Nancy Solomon is executive director of Long Island Traditions, located in Port Washington, New York.*

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

*Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* 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. We encourage contributions of original articles, news items, photographs, and any other materials relating to folklore and folklife in New York State for possible inclusion in *Voices*.

### 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, especially if it relates to some aspect of life in New York State. Articles on the theory, methodology, and geography of folklore are also welcome, as are purely descriptive articles on 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 at [tdegarmo@sals.edu](mailto:tdegarmo@sals.edu). Unsolicited reviews and proposals for reviews will be evaluated by the editor and by outside referees where appropriate. 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 *Merriam Webster’s College Dictionary* for questions of spelling, meaning, and usage, and avoids gender-specific terminology. It is also available online at <https://www.merriam-webster.com>.

### Footnotes

Endnotes and footnotes should be avoided; incorporate such information into the text if possible. Endnotes can be included minimally, at editor’s discretion. 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 US English. Foreign language terms (transliterated, where appropriate, into the Roman alphabet) should be italicized.

### Publication Process

For initial submission, email submission is preferred; send materials to the Editor, Todd DeGarmo, at [tdegarmo@sals.edu](mailto:tdegarmo@sals.edu). Alternatively, mail materials to Todd DeGarmo, *Voices* Editor, New York Folklore, 129 Jay Street, Schenectady, NY 12305.

Copy should be emailed as a Microsoft Word file, double-spaced, with all pages numbered consecutively. Submission using alternative text programs or PDF should be discussed with editor before submission. Google docs should be downloaded as MS word files by author to email. Text should include captions and photo credits, and a short bio (2-4 sentences) of the author. Tables should be typed in text, not as images. Figures, maps, illustrations, and photographs should be emailed as separate files (.jpg or .tifs at least 300 dpi or higher resolution for print). Unsolicited copy and/or materials cannot be returned.

Materials are acknowledged upon receipt by the editor. The editor, associate editor, and an anonymous reviewer read manuscripts. For accepted manuscripts, the associate editor will contact the author for approval of copyedited material. Once approved, New York Folklore will contact the author for permission to publish. The author is responsible for obtaining permissions for any photographs included.

Unless indicated, New York Folklore holds copyright to all material published in *Voices*. For article reprint for publication permissions, please contact New York Folklore’s business office, 518-346-7008, or by email, [info@nyfolklore.org](mailto:info@nyfolklore.org).

Authors receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their contribution appears and may purchase additional copies at a discount.

# Join or Renew your New York Folklore Membership to Receive *Voices* and other Member Benefits

## For the General Public

*Voices* is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal, published twice annually. Join New York Folklore 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 Gallery special exhibits and NYF-sponsored key events. Members receive a discount on NYF Gallery items.

## For Artists and Professionals

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

Mentoring and Professional Development  
Folk Artists Self-Management Project  
Folk Archives Project  
Consulting and Referral  
Advocacy  
A Public Voice

## Membership Levels

### Individual

\$ 50.00	Basic Membership
\$100.00	Harold W. Thompson Circle
\$150.00	Edith Cutting Folklore in Education

### Organizations/Institutions

\$ 75.00	Subscriber
\$100.00	Partner
\$150.00	Edith Cutting Folklore in Education

Please add \$20.00 for non-US addresses.

**For payment, choose the option that works best for you:**

**Use our website, [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org)**

**or mail a check to us at 129 Jay St., Schenectady NY 12305;**

**or call the NYF business office, 518-346-7008, to pay with a credit card over the phone.**

# Thank You, New York Folklore Supporters!

## *Individuals*

John and Lynn Aber, Pauline Adema, Camilla Ammirati, Christopher Archer, Richard Axt, Eric Ball, Kathryn Bamberger, Robert Baron, Edward J. Barry Jr., Carolyn Bennett, Dan Berggren, Robert Bethke, Elizabeth Bevars, Paddy Bowman, John Braungard, Warren F. Broderick, Mary Brusoe, Lizabeth Buckley and David Boyle, Beverly Butcher, Karen Park Canning, Roshni Caputo-Nimbark, Tony Carlone, Susan Casler, Leona Chereshnoski, Varick A. Chittenden, William Clements, Helen Condon, Lorraine Cox, Hannah C. Davis, Todd DeGarmo and Nancy Scheemaker, Alden (Joe) Doolittle, Leila Durkin, Dolores N. Elliott, Aurelia Fernandez, Wanda Fischer, Ellen Fladger, Barbara Frackiewicz, Sean Galvin, Jill Gellerman-Pandey, Stephen Gencarella, Robert Godfried, Nancy Groce, Kathryn Grow-McCormick, James Hall, John and Lucy Halstead, Eric Hamilton, Lee Haring, Susan Hengelsberg, Joseph C. Hickerson, Rosemary Hill, Jery Huntley, Mira C. Johnson, Maria Kennedy, Robert J. Kent, James Kimball, Joseph Kwiatkowski, Mackenzie Kwok, Alice Lai, Michael Leach, Laura Lee, Joan Studer Levine, Peggy Lynn, Amanda Magnetta Ottati, Ruby L. Marcotte, Elena Martínez, Sarah McConnell, John J. McEneny, Ellen E. McHale, Nancy McHale, Isa-Kae Meksin, Daniel M. Milner, Aaron Paige, Daniel Peretti, David J. Puglia, Stanley and Christina Ransom, Linda Rappaport, Dennis Reed, Vicie Rolling, Paul Rosenberg, Dave Ruch, Betsy Sandberg, Nick Santora, Jessica Schein, Sandor Schuman, Joseph Sciorra, Mary Michael Shelley, Cindy and Robert Skala, David B. Smingler, Emily Socolov, Nancy Solomon, Lorraine Steffens, Phillips Stevens, John Suter, Beth Taylor, Dare Thompson, Elizabeth Tucker Gould, Kay F. Turner, Thomas van Buren, Michael Vandow, Brenda

Verardi, Roland Vinyard, William Walker, Daniel Franklin Ward, George Ward, Sherre Wesley, Patricia Wilcox, Donald Williams, Lynne Williamson, Kevin Wilson, Robert J. Wright, Heidi Yarger, Steven Zeitlin and Amanda Dargan.

## *Institutions/Organizations*

American University, Arizona State University, Arts Council for Wyoming County, ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes, Arts Mid-Hudson, Association for Cultural Equity, Bloomsburg University, Brooklyn College, Brown University, Caffè Lena, Catskills Folk Connection, Cayuga County Community College Library (SUNY), Cleveland Public Library, Colorado College, Columbia University, Crandall Public Library, Duke University, East Meadow Public Library, Elmira College, Elsevier Science Bibliographic Databases, Florida (NY) Public Library, Gannett Tripp Library, George Mason University, Grupo Cultural Latinos En Rochester, Hartwick College, Harvard College, Hofstra University, Indiana University, Library of Congress, Miami (Ohio) University, Michigan State University, Mid Country Public Library, Museum Association of New York, New York University, Newberry Library, Ohio University, Onondaga County Public Library, Penn State University, Princeton University, Roxbury Arts Group, Inc., Saugerties Public Library, Skidmore College, St. John's University, St. Lawrence University, Stanford University, Syracuse University, Union College, University of Bern, University of Chicago, University of Houston, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, University of Oregon, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, University of Rochester, University of Toronto, University of Virginia, Utah State University, Utica University Library,

Vale Cemetery Association, Vassar College, Western Kentucky University, Winterthur Library, Yale University, Zalucki and Halstead LLP CPAs.

## *Donors and Supporters*

Pauline Adema, Judith Ashcroft, Karen Park Canning, Alden (Joe) Doolittle, Joseph Kwiatkowski, Colleen McHale O'Connor, Linda Rappaport, Jessica Schein, Amy Skillman, Kay F. Turner, Roland Vinyard, Daniel Franklin Ward, Donald Williams, Kevin Wilson.

## *Funders*

New York State Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Humanities New York, Schenectady County Initiative Program, William G Pomeroy Foundation, Price Chopper's Golub Foundation, Stewart Shop's Holiday Match, Discover Albany, Blackbaud Giving Fund

New York Folklore thanks the people and organizations that supported our programs and publications in 2022. Your help is essential to our work. If your local library is not listed among the institutional subscribers here, please urge them to join.

# Voices

129 Jay Street, Schenectady, NY 12305  
(518) 346-7008 • www.nyfolklore.org

Nonprofit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Albany, NY  
Permit #751

ISSN 0361-204X



9 770361 204003



## LOCAL LEARNING

**Local Learning envisions a nation of lifelong learners who understand traditional arts and knowledge as critical tools for transformative solutions to the complex challenges of today's world.**



**Learn with us!**  
Culture, Community, and the  
Classroom workshops and school  
residencies

**Read and Share with us!**  
*Journal of Folklore and Education*



**Join us!** To build a more equitable and inclusive world, learners of all ages must purposefully develop the skills embedded in folklife methods to explore local knowledge, thereby recognizing one another's humanity while learning more about themselves and their communities. <https://locallearningnetwork.org/values>

