

## II. STORIES OF SUPPOSED GHOSTS

12. *Ghost Chains*

Told by Jack Bruton.

There was a haunted house, and at the same time each night a noise was heard. It sounded like a chain being dragged up and down the stairs. The mystery was solved by a brave man. The man slipped up to a window when he heard the dreadful noise. As he shined the flashlight on the stairway he saw a 'possum with a steel trap on his foot. The 'possum was slowly making his way up the stairs.

13. *Cow as Ghost*

Told to Jack Bruton by Mrs. Jack Bruton.

A lady I know quite well told me this story and claims it to be true.

The family had just finished their supper when one of the children started screaming and pointing to the door. There was something white standing there, and before their eyes it began to move. Everyone was afraid to go see what it was. After a while one of the men of the house got the shotgun and went to investigate the ghost. The ghost turned out to be the milk cow. The cow had a sheet hung on her horns, which proved she had been to the clothesline, not trying to scare anyone.

14. *Ghost Shadow*

Told to Jack Bruton by Deana Durham.

This incident was told to me by my aunt and is supposed to be quite true.

There was a cowboy staying at a ranch by himself, and the place was supposed to be haunted. The man was awakened in the middle of the night by the wind, which was blowing very hard. The door of his room was open, and a shadow of a gun and hand kept flashing on the door. The boy was scared and grabbed his gun and shot at the shadow everytime it showed itself on the door, but it kept coming back. After he had emptied his gun, he decided to find out what it was. Having reloaded his gun, he went outside and found that the gun shadow was a deerskin with a horn, nailed to the outer wall, and the wind was flapping it back and forth, throwing its shadow on the door.

15. *Ghost Answer*

Told to Dorris Olsen by Mrs. W. L. Jones.

One dark night as a drunk man was on his way home, he fell into a sunken grave beside the road. He was so drunk that he just stayed there. A few minutes later two men came riding by, and they stopped, and one man pointed to the sunken grave and said, "The meanest man in the world is lying there."

The drunk man in the grave raised up and said, "You're a big liar. I am not the meanest man in the world." The other two men started to run; and then when they came to their senses, they found that they were five miles away from home.

16. *Ghost Grip*

There was a funeral to be held one morning. They had brought white gloves to put on the dead man. No one would volunteer to put them on as they were all afraid. Finally a woman volunteered. She opened his hand to put the glove on him. His hand closed over her hand in a clasp. She believed he was still alive. She screamed and ran out of the room. The lady remained insane for the rest of her life.

## III. STORIES OF CURSES

17. *Girl Cursed to Crawl Like Snake*

Told by Esther Zimmerly to Barbara Stirling and Burdie Caldwell.

A lady in Socorro, when a girl of fourteen, got mad at her mother and slapped her. Her mother said that from the time of her death till her daughter's death, her daughter would never walk but have to crawl like a snake. This lady is still alive and goes around in a wheel chair.

18. *Death Alley*

Told by Mrs. Mires to Burdie Caldwell and Barbara Stirling.

Death Alley is now called Garfield Avenue. It got its name because of the many illegal hangings there. At one of these particular hangings the man said, "I place my curse on Socorro for this illegal hanging, and as long as anyone of you are alive this town will never prosper."

19. *Paralysis*

Told in Spanish to Marion Esquivel by E. E. Esquivel.

A man gave his son a whipping once for having done something wrong. Then the boy took out his knife and was about

to strike at his father when he found out he couldn't move his arm. His arm stayed in the air and the ground swallowed him up to the waist. They tried very hard to dig him out. Men from all around came to pull him out but without success. They called the priests and archbishops to come and pray for him. Everyone had given up hope. Then the boy himself promised that if he was to come up again he would go around and preach to the whole world and tell them about his experience and give advice to all.

20. *Dead Man Clings to Murderer*

Told to Barbara Stirling and Burdie Caldwell by Esther Zimmerly.

A boy and his father had a quarrel, and the father got mad and struck the boy. The boy swore he would get vengeance. He followed his father to work the next night. When they were quite a ways out of town, the boy picked up a rock and killed his father. In order to hide his crime he put his father over his shoulder and proceeded to take him and dump him in the river. When he got there he tried to free himself of the body but could not. His father's dead body clung to him. The boy had heart failure and died.

21. *Man Sees Skirts*

Contributed by Marion Esquivel.

A man who used to "step out" on his wife all the time decided that he would go out regardless of what his wife said about it. He said that no pair of skirts was going to tell him what to do. On the way that night everywhere he looked he could see a pair of skirts in front of him. He finally had to turn back.

#### IV. TALL TALES

22. *Homing Ducks*

Contributed by Michel Harriet.

A man once went to Las Cruces and bought some duck eggs. Then he came back to Socorro and had a hen hatch them. When the ducks got big, they flew back to Las Cruces to live.

23. *Lost Watch*

Contributed by Michel Harriet.

Once a man driving on a wagon to Kansas lost his watch. Six months later he came back on the same road and saw the watch lying on the road. He picked it up, and it was still running.

24. *Lost Watch*

Contributed by Michel Harriet.

Once a man lost his watch in a haystack. He looked for the watch, but he could not find it. Then he turned his pigs in to the hay, and one of the pigs found it and brought it to him.

25. *Snake Grows Back Together*

Contributed by Michel Harriet.

There was a man in this town that claimed this to be true. He saw a snake and cut it in half. Then he put one half into a hollow log. A year later he came back by the log and saw the same snake had grown back together and was much larger than before.

26. *Hoop Snake*

Told to Billie Caldwell by H. Peterson.

Once upon a time a hoop snake and a bull snake were having an argument about which one could run the fastest. They started to race. The hoop snake grabbed his tail in his mouth and made a hoop out of himself. He started to roll, and the bull snake started to run. There was a big army wagon at the bottom of a dry creek. When the hoop snake got there, he undoubled and stuck into the axle. He injected so much poison that in two minutes the wheel wouldn't roll.

27. *A Bear for a Mule*

Told to Jack Bruton by Michel Harriet.

Many years ago a man was headed for Kansas, and one night he hobbled his riding mule. Before daylight he went to his mule and rode on the way. When daylight came he found that he was riding a big bear.

28. *Up to the Ankles*

Contributed by Jack Bruton.

One time there were two Dutchmen hunting squirrels. They shot one in a tree, but it hung on some branches, and so one of the men climbed up the tree and fell out. The other ran to a nearby farmhouse to borrow a shovel. The farmer asked him what he wanted with the shovel. The Dutchman told him that his friend fell out of a tree and went ankle deep into the sand.

"He should be able to get out by himself if he went only up to his ankles," said the farmer.

"But sir," replied the Dutchman, "he went in head first."

*29. Reverse Grinding of a Pig*

Told to Jack Bruton by Michel Harriet.

Once a man decided that he would like to have sausage; so he killed a pig and ground it. After doing so, he decided he didn't like the sausage. So he just put it back into the grinder. After turning a few turns backward, out jumped the squealing pig.

*30. How to Catch Bears Without Weapons*

Contributed by Charlie Reynolds.

First get a bear to chase you and wait until he is about to catch you. Then turn around and kick him on the chin. When he opens his mouth in pain, you just run your hand through his throat and get hold of his tail. Then give a big jerk and turn him wrong side out. He is then skinned and dressed, and you still have your life.

Caution: Don't try this unless you are experienced at it.

*31. Duckhunting*

Told to Tom Crespin by Paul Downs.

Paul was always getting left without any ducks at duck season because he was late about going hunting and everybody else had killed all the ducks off. He thought that he would fool everybody this time; so he went down to the flats where there were lots of marshes and water. The weather was just right; so he sat down and hid.

He had very light birdshot and a double-barrel shotgun. He shouldn't have been hunting ducks with such light ammunition. All at once a duck came gliding in to land. He was anxious to get it; so he cut loose with both barrels. He hit the duck broadside. It didn't kill the duck, however, because it turned and flew back across the river which was very narrow at that point. On the other side another hunter saw it and cut loose with his gun, making the duck come back to Paul's side. He shot at it again, but still he didn't kill it. It just glided back to the other side. They played tennis with that duck for about an hour, until there was only a feather going back and forth.

Socorro High School

Socorro, New Mexico

# FOLKLORE OF THE HOME FRONT

By HOWARD H. PECKHAM

World War II began producing its folklore even while the war was being fought. Three examples of "home-front" folklore came to my attention in southern Michigan. Doubtless, they were duplicated in other parts of the country.

## 1. *The Specter of Additional Rationing*

As one item after another had to be rationed during the war, fear grew that eventually clothing would be rationed by coupons, as it was in England. From time to time the government denied that such rationing was contemplated, but little credit was given these statements. In the fall of 1944, a story reached a neighbor of ours in Ann Arbor that a friend of a friend living in Bloomfield Hills had lost her grocery ration book. She had made application for a new one, but received instead through the mail an entirely new book designed for clothes rationing! Here was positive evidence that the government was preparing to restrict the sale of clothing. The story gained such circulation in the Detroit area that a radio newscaster denied the whole yarn in his broadcast, the next night after the story reached us.

(I heard this same story about the same time, but the locale was Youngstown, Ohio.—The Editor)

## 2. *The War Monger Attacked*

This story was retold every few months, with a different setting. The first I heard concerned a group of women in a Detroit bakery. One of them remarked that she hoped the war would last a lot longer because she was earning more money than she ever had in her life. Whereupon one of the other customers purchases a lemon cream pie and throws it in her face. Later, I heard the same remark attributed to a worker at the Willow Run Bomber plant, whereupon one of his fellow workers knocked him down. Another time, the incident was reported to have happened on a Detroit bus, and the speaker was struck.

(I imagine that everyone has heard at least one variant of this story. The only one I recall, but which I heard a number of times is the one in which the war monger makes her statement on a bus. The driver puts her off—with strong remarks.—The Editor)

### 3. *The Accuser Rebuffed*

This incident was reported as having happened by a Detroit newspaper columnist, but it bears all the aspects of folklore. A woman boarded a crowded street car in Detroit and found herself standing next to a young man of draft age. After looking him over, she remarked that she had a son who had enlisted and was now fighting in Italy. As this produced little response, she asked loudly: "Why aren't you in uniform fighting for your country, instead of riding around town safely?" At this the young man turned on her. "Did your son fight at Salerno? Then ask him to look around and see if he can find the arm I lost there." Then he pulled the cord to get off and revealed one empty sleeve tucked into a pocket.

Indiana Historical Bureau

Indianapolis, Indiana

(Mr. Peckham has asked me to add similar stories that I have heard. I can think of only two others at the moment. The first is the one about the young lady on the streetcar whose escort seemed overly solicitous, placing her cigarette in her mouth, lighting it for her, etc. Finally he did something uncommon—wiping her nose, I believe. At this another occupant—you know the type—snickered and made an audible remark. The young man then took the muff from the young lady's arms, revealing only stumps. He explained. "That's what the Japs did in a prison camp."

The second is also about a prison camp atrocity. I heard this from some of my pupils in Muncie, Indiana, very soon after Pearl Harbor. That was the only time I heard it, but Mrs. Baughman heard it in the closing days of the war, from an acquaintance in Bloomington.

A mother here in the United States heard from her son who had been captured by the Japanese in the very early stages of the war. His letter contained a glowing account of life in the prison camp. He praised the food, the quarters, the guards, and the Japanese in general. At the end of the letter was a request for her to save the stamps on all of his letters, since he wanted to have them for souvenirs when he returned. The mother steamed off the stamp and discovered a message written in the tiny space below the stamp: "They've cut my tongue out."

We hope that readers will send in variants of these stories and examples of other war folklore before they are completely forgotten.—The Editor)

## NOTES

Readers are invited to participate in this department by using it as a clearing house for folklore information of all kinds, to report variants of stories or songs or other material given in preceding issues, or to discover from other readers variants of unpublished lore that has been collected or remembered.

### FOLKLORE FROM RUSHVILLE, INDIANA

By A. L. GARY

1.

An aged justice of the peace held a trial; and after the evidence was in, the attorneys were discussing about the amount of time they wanted for the argument. The squire said, "You can take all of the time you want, but I'm writing my decision now."

2.

A young lawyer had his first client who wanted to know if a certain farm had a mortgage on it. The lawyer made a trip to the farm and reported that he didn't see any sign of a mortgage on it.

3.

A teacher in a country school directed her pupils to wipe their feet before coming into the schoolhouse. One boy took the order literally. He took off his shoes and wiped his feet, and put his shoes on and went into the schoolhouse.

4.

Continual rains caused grumbling among the farmers. One philosophical farmer said, "Boys, I have always noticed that this time of year if rain gets five minutes the start on you, you can't stop it to save your life."

5.

A country debating society was held in a district schoolhouse. The chairman thought they were killing time. He said, "If this thing doesn't stop, it's going to close."

6.

A lady president of her society entertained a motion. She said, "All in favor of that motion stand up or sit down."

7.

When natural gas was discovered in this community about 1890 and all farms were supplied with it, the housewives were



distressed over not having ashes to make lye for soap. One lady, better informed than the others, said, "Oh, that's all right; we can use consecrated lye."

## 8.

A man and his wife were calling on a neighbor and arose to leave, saying, "We must go," then stopping to gossip further, then saying, "We must go," until a young son was exasperated and said, "Are you going now or are you going to wait and go now?"

## 9.

A boy in the country had company. He heard a train whistle. He said, "There's the train; its a freight or passenger, one or the other; I can tell by the whistle."

Rushville, Indiana

## HOOSIER DIALECT QUERY

By CAROLINE DUNN

An inquiry recently came to the Indiana Historical Society Library from the *Chicago Tribune*, through Chester W. Cleveland, editor of the *Magazine of Sigma Chi*, asking what historical background we could give for the Indiana idiom "chincy" which they were led to believe meant stingy. We did not find the expression in any of the Indiana word lists here (We do not have Paul G. Brewster's two articles in *American Speech*, 14(4), Dec. 1939, pp. 261-268; and 16(1), Feb. 1941, pp. 21-25). Nor had most people whom I asked ever heard the expression. However, two librarians attending a summer course given by the State Library immediately recognized it. Mrs. Nelle N. Holder, Dugger, says that "chincy" is an expression coming to her from her childhood, as a person stingy and selfish. She heard it around Green County. The other, Miss Helen Hayes, Clinton, has heard it around Clinton, with same meaning but slightly different pronunciation, "chinchy". The expression is listed in Harold Wentworth's *American Dialect Dictionary*, (1944), p. 110, with listings from Virginia, Arkansas, and Southern United States.

William Henry Smith Memorial Library

Indianapolis, Indiana

## NOTES AS I READ

*(Hoosier Folklore, Vol. V, No. 4; Vol. VI, No. 1)*

By GRACE PARTRIDGE SMITH

The last two issues of *Hoosier Folklore* have reached me here in Washington, D. C. I have read each number with interest and am now transcribing to paper the mental notes I made while going through these pages. Thinking such a report may be enjoyed by your readers, I jot down below items apropos of some of the articles contained in the issues indicated above, thereby accepting your editor's invitation to report variants of songs, stories, and other material given in preceding issues. I begin with Volume V, Number 4 as follows:

## 1.

"Some Turkish Folktales," set down by Turkish students at Indiana University shows what a wealth of traditional tales may be gleaned from a project such as that initiated by Professor Jansen. Similar student responses elsewhere have, I know, added materially to the instructor's collection of stories and superstitions. A comparison of the tales about the Hodscha Nasreddin, reported by the students in question, with a standard text<sup>1</sup> shows clearly the many changes that occur in stories told again.

I should like to contribute variants for Number 17 ("Happiness") on page 145 of the same article. This is the luck-bringing-shirt motif (N 135.3). For variants: Esthonian and Livonian by Dr. J. Hurt and Oscar Looerits respectively, but I have not had the opportunity to examine them. Further, C. Fillingham Coxwell, *Siberian and Other Folk Tales* (London, 1925) 844-845 ("The Tsar and the Shirt"—after V. Lafeen); Hans Christian Andersen, "Lykken's Galocher"; John Hay, *The Complete Poetical Works of John Hay* (Boston, 1916) 52-56 ("The Enchanted Shirt"); Edwin Markham, *The Shoes of Happiness and Other Poems* (Garden City, 1915) 9-29 ("The Shoes of Happiness").

## 2.

In the article by W. Edson Richmond, "The Collection of Proverbs in Indiana," there is an appeal for help in gathering

<sup>1</sup> Albert Wesselski, *Der Hodscha Nasreddin*, 2 vols. (Weimar, 1911). Cf. also Reinhold Köhler, *Kleinere Schriften*, 3 vols. (Weimar, 1938) I, 481-509.

together that state's proverbs for representation in a dictionary of proverbs projected by the American Dialect Society. I am taking this opportunity to report that many of Indiana's pithy expressions, proverbs, similes, and the like are now reposing in the files of the Folklore Division in the Library of Congress. This unedited material is included in the leftovers from the WPA Federal Writers' Project which was abandoned in 1941. The material is now available in its permanent repository and he who runs may read. Your Society should certainly delegate someone to copy these bits.<sup>2</sup> You may be interested in a few examples I have noticed in the files:

- a. Thick as three in a bed and one in the middle.
- b. Sour as whiggy.
- c. Awkward as a cow with a crutch.
- d. Boasters are cousins to liars.
- e. One hour today is worth two tomorrow.

3.

On page 163 (same issue) is a note, "A Question of Weather Lore," in which the contributor mentions what he considers an inconsistency in my article, "Folklore from 'Egypt'" (*Hoosier Folklore*, June, 1946). One or two examples of "inconsistencies" in folklore that I have happened upon recently seem to me to indicate that the folk have no set forms for their sayings and superstitions, but pattern them by experience. Note the following contradictions:

a. In Norfolk, Virginia, they say that if you see the new moon through leaves over your *right* shoulder, your luck will be bad; if you see the same moon in a clear space and over your *left* shoulder, make a wish and it will come true. (Reported by a Worker in the Federal Writers' Project; filed in the Folklore Division of the Library of Congress. This excerpt used with permission).

b. In France, in the maritime provinces, the folk beliefs concerning the time of death differ. Cf. Paul Sébillot, *Le Folk-Lore des Pêcheurs* (Paris, 1901) 62: "En Basse-Bretagne, les malades souffrent plus à la mer montante qu'à tout autre moment et c'est alors qu'il meurt le plus de gens; une croyance

<sup>2</sup> This suggestion is made with the approval of Dr. Duncan Emrich, Head of the Folklore Division of the Library of Congress, and examples are given with permission.

opposée existe aux environs de Saint-Malo; lorsqu' un pêcheur est malade, il attend le reflux pour mourir."

c. In her "Nebraska Snake Lore" (*Southern Folklore Quarterly*, September, 1946), Dr. Louise Pound reports (p. 159) "It is good luck to kill the first snake you see in the spring," and "It is good luck *not* to kill the first snake you see in the spring." And (p. 171) "If you kill a snake, it will not die until *sundown*;" "If you kill a snake, it will not die until *sunrise*." The italics are mine.

## 4.

I pass on to the issue of March, 1947. There is much of interest in the article, "Folklore at a Milwaukee Wedding." I take the space to jot down a few remarks on items in this report:

a. The story of the soldier in the graveyard (p. 5) is, of course, not solely German, for variants are reported from other lands. For some time, I have been collecting versions of this particular story. Some of your readers may wish to add the following to their own lists if they do not already have them: Dr. Bertram, *Sagen vom Ladogasee*, Helsingfors, 1872 (page reference not available); Marie Bonnet, "Le Fuseau" in *Revue des traditions populaires*, XXVII (1912) 80ff.; Otto Busch, *Nordwestthüringer Sagen* (Mülhausen, 1926) 32,179; Charles Neely, *Tales and Songs of Southern Illinois* (Menasha, Wisc., 1938) 64-67. A story, "The Cemetery Path," appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, November 29, 1941. In later issues of this periodical, several persons reported the story—one, from Argentina; two others, from Kentucky.

b. "The Wrong Man Thrown Off" (p. 10) reminds me of a song popular in the mid-1890's, entitled, "Put Me Off at Buffalo," sung in vaudeville by the Dillon Brothers. The song and the story are built on the same idea. The text is reprinted in *Lost Chords* by Douglas Gilbert (New York, 1942) 234-235. It is amusing to compare the two. The last line of the song is, "I've put the *wrong* man off the train at Buffalo."

## 5.

Returning, in closing, to the December, 1946, issue, the author of the article, "The Hanging of Sam Archer," suggests that a number of ballads on the crimes and tragedies enacted in Indiana might be salvaged with time and energy. At long

distance, I am keeping this in mind as I examine the WPA material from the Indiana Project in the hopes I may find such ballads there. So far, I have not completed the search. The amount of balladry in this file is a fair omen for such discovery.

Washington, D. C.

### THE TALKING HORSE

By BERNARD COHEN

Contributed to Mr. Cohen, November, 1945, by Ernie F. Postlewaite, who heard it from Bud Granger, a member of the San Francisco Seals, a professional baseball club.

The Dodgers were playing an important game with the Giants. First the Dodgers and then the Giants were in the lead. "Lippy" Durocher was walking back and forth. After all, it was almost the end of the season, and every game counted more than percentages showed. About the seventh inning, with the score tied, a horse strolled up and tapped Durocher on the shoulder. "Hey, Lippy," he said, "why don't you send me in? I can bat." Durocher glanced up and snarled, "Go away and don't bother me. I'm having enough troubles."

Now it was the last half of the eighth inning, and the Dodgers went out in the field. One of the players made an error, and the Giants scored again. Finally the Dodgers came to bat. It was their last chance, and Durocher had reached a state of bad nerves. The horse came trotting up again. "Come on, Lippy; let me go in. What can you lose? The chances aren't very good and I am." Durocher showed his teeth in a snarl. "You irritate me. Go peddle your milk like a good boy." The horse sadly walked away.

The first man up flied out and Durocher became desperate. He stood up and yelled at the horse, "Hey you, come over here! You might as well try it." The horse came trotting out and stepped up to the batter's box. The first pitch was low and wide for a ball. The second was a perfect pitch, and the horse took a swing at it. He connected, full force, and the ball flew into the stands for a home run. Durocher started jumping up and down, and waving his arms. "Run, you fool; don't just stand there." The horse turned around and laughed. "Don't be silly. If I could run, I wouldn't be playing baseball."

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

## CADENCE COUNTS

There have been several replies to a query by Frances J. Baughman about cadence counts (see *HF* 6:78). These replies indicate that the counts are widespread and varied.

## Illinois

Left—  
 Left—  
 Left my wife in  
 Starving condition and  
 Nothing but johnnycakes  
 Left—  
 Left . . .

From Eva H. McIntosh, Carbondale, Illinois.

## Minnesota

Left! Right! Left—Left—  
 I left my wife  
 And seventeen children  
 In starving condition  
 With nothing but  
 Johnnycake left.  
 Was I right—  
 Was I right when I left?  
 I left my wife, etc, *da capo, ad inf.*

From Leslie Dae Lindau, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado, who heard it about thirty years ago.

## Indiana

## 1.

Miss Caroline Dunn learned this one in a Girl Scout troop about the time of World War I.

Left, Left  
 Left a wife and forty-six children.  
 Don't you think that I had a  
 Right, right?

## 2.

This one Miss Dunn learned from Sue White, who remembers it from high school days, four or five years ago.

Left, Left  
 I left my wife and twenty-one kids  
 Back home in bed in a starving condition  
 Without any gingerbread  
 Left, Left.

First I hired her  
 Then I fired her  
 Then, by golly  
 She left,  
 Left, left . . .

## 3.

About this one Miss Dunn remarks: "We liked this one for keeping step and regarded it as a little wild because of the 'swear words' in it."

Keep step, keep step,  
 Keep step, gosh darn it, keep step.  
 You've got it, now keep it,  
 Don't lose it, doggone it,  
 Keep step, doggone it, keep step.

From Miss Caroline Dunn, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

## 4.

Paul G. Brewster says he remembers using this one during the first World War. The "hayfoot, strawfoot," he adds, comes from Civil War days when green country recruits often did not know their right feet from their left. The drill sergeants had them tie hay to their left feet and straw on their right feet.

Hayfoot, strawfoot  
 Belly full of bean soup  
 Left—  
 Left—  
 Left my wife  
 And fourteen children.  
 Did I do right—  
 Right—  
 Right when I left?

From Paul G. Brewster, Bloomington, Indiana.

## ABOUT THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

By ERNEST W. BAUGHMAN

At the time of the recent Hoosier Folklore Society meeting, Mr. David S. McIntosh, one of our regional editors, remarked that there are stories still current about the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt. I remembered a few, and we began comparing notes.

I remember now that in the summer of 1945 I learned with some surprise and some amusement that there was considerable speculation about the cause of death and even some speculation as to whether the late president was even dead at all.

Probably the wildest story of all was that President Roosevelt and Adolph Hitler were hiding out together in some remote section, in South America I believe, and that when they had all their arrangements made, they would return and by surprise take over the whole world.

Another supposition, emanating from Denver, Colorado, concerned an artist who was working on the portrait of the President just before the time of his death. "Now this artist was a Russian, and the whole thing was a plot engineered by Stalin!"

Herbert Hamilton, of Muncie, Indiana, when I asked him about the situation, replied that there were several rumors circulating in the U. S. Army in Bavaria, where he was stationed in 1945. One was that the President had committed suicide. This was usually explained by his disappointment over betrayal by Russia. Another story was that he had actually died several months before the announced date of death and that his place had been taken by a double. Evidence for this theory was that his radio voice for the few months before the death announcement had sounded unlike that of the President and that his coffin had not been opened for inspection during any of the time his body lay in state.

The story Mr. McIntosh had heard was an elaboration of the suicide theory—that several days before his death he had gone to the highest mountain in the vicinity of Warm Springs and had sent everybody away for awhile, saying he wanted to be alone with his God. "Maybe he took a pill up there and it didn't work till a couple of days later."

This summary is enough to show the speculation in some quarters about an event of great importance in an over-



wrought world. This material could probably be analyzed to prove any number of things. It is not at all surprising, I think, that these rumors should have been current of a man about whom partisan feeling assumed the proportions it did. Here we have the beginnings, at least, of a Roosevelt death legend. How widespread is it at the present time? How many other stories were current? This might be a fertile field of inquiry. Let us know what you have heard or what you are able to find out.

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

### SAFETY PINS FOR PEELING ONIONS

By CAROLINE DUNN

Lucille Murphy is a colored woman who prepares the suppers for the Indianapolis Portfolio Club. One evening this winter she asked if one of the committee members could let her have a safety pin. Some minutes later another of the committee commented on the fact that Lucille seemed able to peel and cut up the onions without any discomfort, and Lucille said, "I've got the safety pin between my teeth. That is the reason I asked for one. The onion goes to the eye of the safety pin instead of to my eyes." She said that the eye of a needle would do the same thing but that she preferred a safety pin!

William Henry Smith Memorial Library

Indianapolis, Indiana

(Mrs. Eva H. McIntosh tells me that she has heard that holding a match between the teeth when peeling onions is also a help.—The Editor)

### MEASURING FOR SHORT GROWTH

By C. O. TULLIS

I wonder whether readers of *Hoosier Folklore* have heard of "measuring for short growth." I should like to know more about it. This tradition seems to have been used around the Kokomo and Marion sections of the state—perhaps others.

Certain persons could measure a child who seemed stunted in growth; then some sort of ritual was done to cause the child to reach normal size.

Rensselaer, Indiana

(Can some of our readers enlighten us on the process? What exactly is done for the child who has the "short growth" or, as you may know it, "the go-backs"?—The Editor)

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Adventures of a Ballad Hunter*, John A. Lomax. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947. 302 pages. \$3.75.

*The Adventures of a Ballad Hunter* is a book to tax one's superlatives. I read it at one sitting one August night when the temperature was so high that I had a fan playing on me the whole time. I have an idea that many people will read the book at one sitting. And the book was not especially designed to be read in this manner. It is consciously episodic, but it is a wonderful book, often dramatic, often moving.

John Lomax has a sure touch for setting a scene, for filling in background details, for telling a story. The book is full of quick, vivid pictures. The story is a personal one, but it is much more than a personal story. It contains many stories—of song collecting; of cowboys; of certain songs, of Negroes in penitentiaries, in work gangs, in their own homes; of mountain singers; canallers; of sea chanteys; and many more. It is the story of hard work, disappointment, thrilling discovery, and triumph.

In a most readable preface Mr. Lomax says:

All my life I have been interested in the songs of the people—the intimate poetic and musical expression of unlettered people, from which group I am directly sprung. In my boyhood we sang songs around our fireside on winter evenings in a home where the library consisted of *Pilgrim's Progress* and the Bible. At work and at play folk songs were my mental food. I began early to set down the words; later the music also. And now the Library of Congress houses records of more than ten thousand tunes placed there by my son, Alan, and myself. . . .

The reader will find herein no theories about ballad origins or parallels. That task is for others. I have merely taken some pictures from my files and rearranged them in story form.

In the first four chapters, "Boyhood in Bosque," "College," "Hunting Cowboy Songs," and "Twenty Years Interim," the personal story of Mr. Lomax looms larger than in the rest of the book. The remainder deals mainly with the actual collec-

tion of the songs and with the background of the collecting. The texts of many of the songs are included also. There is, however, a personal thread running throughout the book. One of the most interesting sections to me was a series of excerpts from letters, written to friends during collecting expeditions for material for *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (115-127). These are on-the-spot personal accounts of how he and his son, Alan, lived and worked. A listing of the remaining eight chapters gives an idea of the scope of the book: "American Ballads and Folk Songs," "Penitentiary Negroes," "Iron Head and Clear Rock," "Alabama Red Land," "Burials, Baptizings and a Penitentiary Sermon," "Chanteys, Ballads, Work Songs and Calls," "Some Interesting People," "Melodies and Memories."

The story of Mr. Lomax's early ballad collecting—how he burned his first collection after being told by an English professor at the University of Texas that the songs were "tawdry, cheap, and unworthy," how he was later encouraged by Barrett Wendell and George Lyman Kittredge of Harvard, and how for years he fought an almost losing fight for recognition of the beauty and value of the American folk song—is too well-known to need further summary here. Mr. Lomax tells the story well. It is surprising how much of the history of the collecting of American folk songs is included in Mr. Lomax's story.

Indiana University

Ernest W. Baughman

*Folk Songs of Old Vincennes*, edited by Cecilia Ray Berry.  
Chicago: H. T. Fitzsimons Company, 1946. 95 pages. \$2.00.

Sometime around the year 1727, Francois-Marie Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes and a native of Montreal, founded by royal commission a trading post which for many years was known to the French simply as *le poste du Ouabache* and to Anglo-Americans (since the French spoke merely of going "*au poste*") as *Opost*. It is in honor of the sesquicentennial of the capture and annexation of that trading post, known today as Vincennes, Indiana, by the United States of America that Cecilia Ray Berry has edited *Folk Songs of Old Vincennes*, a collection of thirty-eight French folk songs of all types.

The volume is the work of many hands. The general editor, Cecilia Ray Berry, "collected and harmonized" the melodies.

Anna C. O'Flynn, principal of the old "Frenchtown" grade school in Vincennes, collected the texts which were in turn translated into English by Frederic Burget and Libushka Bartusek. Professor Joseph Medard Carrière contributed an introduction to the whole and head- and tail-notes to each song. The result is a book of more popular than scholarly appeal, but a book well worth examination by anyone interested in the folklore of the United States.

It is to be regretted that the notes to each song are not more complete than they are. For example, there appears to be no recognition of the fact that *La Chanson des Métamorphoses* (pp. 42-43) and *J'ai fait une maîtresse* (pp. 64-65) are but different variants, at least so far as the texts are concerned, of the same song, and that both are very closely related to *The Fause Knight Upon the Road* (Child Ballad 3), a song which appeared dead in the British Isles when Professor Child did his collecting at the end of the nineteenth century but which has been found in at least six different texts in America in recent years. Neither is there any indication given as to whether the songs contained in the volume represent all of the French folk songs collected in Vincennes or merely a selection of some few at the whim of the editors. Lack of information of this type is an annoyance as well as a hindrance to an understanding of the importance of the book.

On the other hand, Mr. Burget points out in the preface that "The purpose of publishing these songs is to perpetuate in some manner the folk lore of the oldest French territory now part of our country." The lack of scholarly apparatus, no matter how much it is regretted, by no means subtracts from this expressed purpose, a purpose which is accomplished by the well printed melodies, the carefully transcribed texts, and the admirable translations of the thirty-eight songs which appear in the volume. *Folk Songs of Old Vincennes* is a valuable contribution to the too slight library which records the non-British folklore of the United States.

Indiana University

W. Edson Richmond

# FOLKLORE NEWS

By ERNEST W. BAUGHMAN

## NEW MEXICO FOLKLORE ACTIVITIES

The New Mexico Folklore Society held its annual meeting in Santa Fe, June 28, 1947. Prof. Ralph S. Boggs, University of North Carolina, spoke on "Folklore and Folklorists" at the morning meeting, held in the Laboratory of Anthropology. Two singers of folk songs entertained at the luncheon meeting in the La Fonda Hotel. Mrs. Jenny Wells sang American mountain songs, and Arai sang European songs in Flemish, Dutch, and French. At the afternoon meeting in the Art Museum there were Indian and Spanish tales and Indian and Spanish singing. The society plans to sponsor meetings at various centers of interest over the state throughout the year.

## NEW MEXICO FOLKLORE RECORD

*The New Mexico Folklore Record*, Volume I, 1946-47, edited by Prof. T. M. Pearce, was distributed at the society meeting. This is an impressive annual publication in mimeograph form. The first volume contains forty-one pages of mainly Spanish and Indian materials. The two-dollar membership entitles one to a copy of the publication. Address: Prof. E. W. Tedlock, Secretary-Treasurer, New Mexico Folklore Society, The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

## THE WESTERN FOLKLORE CONFERENCE

The Western Folklore Conference was held July 10 to 12, at the University of Denver, Denver, Colorado. The conference was in charge of Prof. Levette J. Davidson, University of Denver. Papers were given by J. Frank Dobie, Louise Pound, Kate B. Carter, Velma Linford, Caroline Bancroft, and Ernest E. Leisy. There were discussions, by various participants, of current research and publication and of folklore organizations. A Western singing school was conducted each afternoon by Prof. N. L. McNeil, University of Houston.

On Friday, July 11, the Colorado Folklore Society was organized. Prof. Levette J. Davidson was elected president.

## ILLINOIS FOLKLORE SOCIETY

The Illinois Folklore Society was formed December 4, 1946, at Carbondale, Illinois, with twenty-eight charter members. The group has had three meetings in 1947.

## ILLINOIS FOLKLORE

*Illinois Folklore*, Volume I, Number 1, October, 1947, appeared in August. There are articles by Tina M. Goodwin, Grace Partridge Smith, David S. McIntosh, Lelah Allison, and Una Keeling. The magazine is most ably edited by Jesse W. Harris, Department of English, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois. Congratulations to our sister organization!

Membership, which includes a subscription to *Illinois Folklore*, is one dollar. Dues should be sent to Miss Tina M. Goodwin, 409 West Monroe Street, Carbondale, Illinois.

PROJECT FOR MICROFILMING AMERICAN NEGRO  
NEWSPAPERS TO 1900

Under a grant from the General Education Board the Committee on Negro Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies has sponsored a project for locating and microfilming files of American Negro newspapers from the earliest date down to 1900. The project is directed by Dr. Armistead S. Pride, Director of the School of Journalism at Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri. The Library of Congress is cooperating in the project by doing most of the work of getting the files ready for the microfilm cameras and doing the actual photographing, and by supplying positive copies of the microfilms to institutions and persons desiring to purchase them. The project has located, in the collections of 70 institutions and individuals scattered throughout the country, files of 250 Negro newspapers established in the United States during the 19th century. These files are expected to total 120,000 pages which will be reproduced in approximately 172 100-foot rolls of microfilm. About half of the work has been completed. The film already made, representing about 60,000 newspaper pages, can be had for about \$600 complete. They may be secured from the Photoduplication Service of the Library.

It is hoped later to publish a list of all the newspapers copied in the program, with a key showing the libraries in which each is located.

The newspapers copied to date include the following:

*Washington Bee* (Washington, D. C., 1882-1922)

*Colored American* (Washington, D. C., 1894-1900)

*Washington Leader* (Washington, D. C., 1889-1890)

- New York Freeman* (New York, N. Y., 1884-1887)  
*New York Globe* (New York, N. Y., 1883-1884)  
*New York Age* (New York, N. Y., 1887-1900)  
*Indianapolis Freeman* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1888-1916)  
*Afro-American Sentinel* (Omaha, Neb., 1896-1900)  
*Enterprise* (Omaha, Neb., 1895-1898)  
*Iowa Bystander* (Des Moines, Iowa, 1896-1900)  
*Louisianian* (New Orleans, La., 1870-1887)  
*La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans* (1864-1870), daily  
 newspaper printed half in English, half in French  
*L'Union* (New Orleans, La., 1862-1864), predecessor of  
*La Tribune*  
*Huntsville Gazette* (Huntsville, Ala., 1881-1894)  
*Portland New Age* (Portland, Ore., 1899-1907)  
*Richmond Planet* (Richmond, Va., 1885-1900)  
*Cleveland Gazette* (Cleveland, O., 1883-1945)  
*Broad Ax* (Chicago, Ill., 1895-1927)  
*Wisconsin Weekly Advocate* (Milwaukee, Wis., 1898-1906)  
*Trenton Sentinel* (Trenton, N. J., 1882-1884)  
*People's Advocate* (Washington, D. C., 1876-1886)  
*Illinois Record* (Springfield, Ill., 1897-1900)  
*Ram's Horn* (New York, N. Y., 1847)  
*Pine and Palm* (Boston, Mass., 1862)  
*Colored Tennesseean* (Nashville, Tenn., 1865)  
*Pioneer Press* (Martinsburgh, W. Va., 1890)  
*Golden Rule* (Vicksburg, Miss., 1900)  
*Ohio Falls Express* (Louisville, Ky., 1891)  
*Black Republican* (New Orleans, La., 1865)  
*Charleston Advocate* (Charleston, S. C., 1867)  
*Rights of All* (New York, N. Y., 1829)  
*Colored American* (Cincinnati, O., 1866)  
*South Carolina Leader* (Charleston, S. C., 1865)

Information and Publications Office      Library of Congress

#### NOTICE OF WORK IN PROGRESS

The Committee on Research in Folklore, of the American Folklore Society, annually publishes in *The Journal of American Folklore* a list of folklore projects which are in progress. The writing of books, monographs, special studies, library research, and field collecting are included. Folklorists are requested to send information on their current activities to Herbert Halpert, Murray State Teachers College, Murray, Ky.

The Committee on Research in Folklore

## ANNUAL MEETING

The tenth annual meeting of the Hoosier Folklore Society was held Saturday, August 15, at the Union Building, Bloomington, Indiana.

President Margaret Sweeney opened the meeting and appointed a nominating committee to report at the evening session. This committee included Mrs. Ross Hickam, Miss Nellie M. Coats, and Mrs. Clara Mae Mathely.

The afternoon program was as follows:

"Visiting Other Folklore Societies," Ernest W. Baughman, Indiana University.

"A Collection of Folk Song Recordings made in Jeffersonville, Indiana," Miss Margaret Sweeney, Jeffersonville, Indiana. Recordings played were "The Butcher Boy" and Child Ballads Nos. 20, 40, and 84, most of which were sung by Mrs. Shope, of Jeffersonville.

"Techniques in Storytelling," William Hugh Jansen, Indiana University.

"The Relation of Iraqi Literature to Folklore," Nahidh Jadir, Iraq.

"The Indiana State Library and Folklore Activities," Miss Nellie M. Coats, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

"The Indian Folktale: Its Formal Openings and Closings," Dr. Erminie Voegelin, Indiana University.

At the evening meeting, following the dinner, the report of the nominating committee was made to reelect the 1947 officers, in accordance with the society custom of retaining each group of officers for two years. The officers for 1948 will be:

President: Miss Margaret Sweeney  
Vice-President: Miss Nellie M. Coats  
Secretary-Treasurer: Mrs. William Hugh Jansen  
Editor: Ernest W. Baughman  
Associate Editor: William Hugh Jansen  
Regional Editor: David S. McIntosh  
Regional Editor: Ivan Walton

Following the election of officers, Mr. Herbert Halpert gave a program of English and American folk songs, with the audience aiding in several of the refrains. There were songs



also by Mr. and Mrs. David S. McIntosh, by Nahidh Jadir, and by Dean John W. Ashton.

The address of the evening was given by Dean John W. Ashton, Indiana University, on the subject, "The Vitality of American Folklore."

Following the program, the secretary of the society was delegated to write a report of the meeting to Dr. Stith Thompson, now in Caracas, Venezuela. The members present affixed their signatures to the letter, which was written on the original stationery of the Hoosier Folklore Society.

The Editor

## HOW MANY MORE SHOPPING DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS?

This suggestion may seem early, but the December number will probably not reach you in time to carry the announcement. The suggestion is that you give memberships in the Hoosier Folklore Society for Christmas this year.

There are always those people difficult to buy gifts for. There are those people on whom you may not want to spend more than two dollars. Then there are those people for whom you may not want to buy anything, but for whom you feel you must buy something. Then there are those people who don't need anything and who probably wouldn't use the usual gimcracks if they got them. And then, most important of course, are those people for whom *Hoosier Folklore* would be a genuine pleasure.

If you feel that two dollars is not enough to spend on a certain person, you can give a two- or three-year membership. In giving *Hoosier Folklore*, you can be reasonably certain that your gift will not be duplicated by three or four other people.

In fact there seems to be any number of reasons why *Hoosier Folklore* is a fine idea for a Christmas gift.

And remember the combined offer of *Hoosier Folklore* and *The Journal of American Folklore*—only five dollars!

Give yourself a Christmas present too.

Address: Mrs. Wm. Hugh Jansen  
729 East Hunter  
Bloomington, Indiana

## MEMBERSHIP IN THE HOOSIER FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Membership in the Hoosier Folklore Society is two dollars a calendar year. This is open to individuals, schools, and libraries anywhere in the United States. Members receive HOOSIER FOLKLORE, a quarterly for the publication of folklore of Indiana and neighboring states. Single copies may be purchased for fifty cents each.

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## JOINT MEMBERSHIP IN HOOSIER FOLKLORE SOCIETY AND AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Joint membership in the Hoosier Folklore Society and the American Folklore Society is available at a special rate of five dollars a year to Indiana residents and to Indiana schools and libraries. Individual members receive HOOSIER FOLKLORE, THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE and MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY as issued.

Institutional members (schools and libraries) receive HOOSIER FOLKLORE and THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE.

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Applications for membership and membership dues for 1947 should be mailed promptly to Mrs. William Hugh Jansen, Treasurer, Hoosier Folklore Society, 729 E. Hunter, Bloomington, Indiana.

Members are urged to secure new members for the society and to contribute manuscripts for publication.

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## STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS OF PERIODICALS REFERRED TO IN NOTES AND ARTICLES

CFQ =CALIFORNIA FOLKLORE QUARTERLY  
HF =HOOSIER FOLKLORE  
HFB =HOOSIER FOLKLORE BULLETIN  
JAFL =JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE  
MAFS=MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY  
NYFQ=NEW YORK FOLKLORE QUARTERLY  
SFQ =SOUTHERN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY