

Edith Fowke: Collecting Traditional Folk Songs in Rural
Ontario
1956-1964

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the rural Ontario fieldwork of song-collector/scholar Edith Fowke (1913 - 1996) in the 1950s and '60s. That fieldwork and the subsequent published results formed the foundation of Fowke's nationally and internationally recognized career. This survey adds fresh data to the existing published information about the duration and methodology of her field research and supplements current information pertaining to aspects of her life story. The focal point throughout is Fowke's search for folk songs in the Peterborough area, which impacted her entire life and oeuvre.

A combination of field and literary research formed the basis for this study. The rural field research included interviews with Peterborough area singers recorded by Fowke and descendants of singers who recall Fowke's visits to their homes. Research at the Canadian Museum of Civilization provided access to Fowke's field recordings and business correspondence, which was supplemented with information from the listing of fieldwork recordings stored at the York University Library. Data were provided by people like folksinger Merrick Jarrett, who worked on Fowke's radio broadcasts and song-collector Philip Thomas, who had a long association with Fowke. Folklorist Dr. Skye Morrison supplied information about Fowke's later years. These people also contributed pertinent personal letters, books and photos.

The literary research aspect required locating and reviewing all of the known books, articles, essays and recording liner-notes produced by Fowke. Canadian

Broadcasting Corporation archival material revealed details of her broadcasting career and the evaluation of printed articles about her helped fill informational gaps. The focus on Fowke's Peterborough area work yielded the data required for a substantive discussion of her collecting methodology and ongoing passion to document, analyze, and popularize Canadian folk songs. This discourse facilitates an understanding of Fowke's fieldwork and related experiences and its effect on her prolific publishing, teaching, and broadcasting career.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Edith Fowke as a Canadian song collector, scholar, and broadcaster, was a significant figure in folk music, nationally and internationally. Her scholarly writing and publishing on the topic of folk music and folklore brought her recognition from both the public and the academic community. Her radio programs, commercial recordings, and accessible songbooks made her known to the general public as a proponent and popularizer of folk songs. In spite of Fowke's three honorary university degrees, her admittance to the Order of Canada, and the fact that students continue to reference and acknowledge her contributions, the body of published work about Fowke and her fieldwork has been limited to date.

Edith Fowke's acceptance by the academic and folk music communities began to increase in 1956 when she purchased a tape recorder and drove to Peterborough County in Ontario to search for and record folk songs from rural inhabitants. The Peterborough area became a major site for Fowke's fieldwork. It is arguably the results of her successful field trips to this area between 1956 and 1964 that helped form the foundation of a song collecting career that brought Fowke international recognition. However, the details in print regarding Fowke's methodology, chronology, and interaction with individuals during these field trips are limited to Fowke's own commentary in her more reflexive essays. It could be argued that if her initial fieldwork had not been successful or even occurred, Fowke's contributions to the field of Canadian folk song and folklore

would have been restricted to radio programs, periodical articles, and edited songbooks. It was the results of her fieldwork that allowed her to move in other directions by providing the material for her initial Folkways recordings as well as the data essential to create her early acclaimed publications such as *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* (1965) and *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970).

Objective

The objective of this thesis is to show that Edith Fowke was an important and seminal figure in the folk song collecting movement through her work as a song collector, a popularizer of folk songs, and a scholar. This will be accomplished by adding fresh data to the existing published information available about the life and work of Fowke. The new data is a result of my ongoing research into Fowke's 1950s fieldwork in the Peterborough area and further inquiry into aspects of her life story. This research augments the limited amount of information available regarding Fowke's fieldwork techniques, much of which is found in her own published work. Supplementing the existing fieldwork information is important given the fact that Fowke's fieldwork activity is the basis for a great deal of the published work that garnered her domestic and international recognition.

This thesis combines the recent information with the older existing Fowke information. As a result it will allow readers to have one resource to access factual elements of Fowke's legacy, such as fieldwork techniques and perspectives, interaction with fellow collectors and researchers, publications and literary focus, and specific

aspects of her life story. This is preferable since the Fowke information to date has been spread-out amongst articles in specialized magazines, newspapers, chapters of books, and liner-notes of recordings. The diversification of Fowke's career complicates the situation. She authored, co-authored, edited, and co-edited more than 30 books, and contributed more than 100 articles to a variety of magazines and journals. (These are listed in Appendices B and C.) Fowke produced commercial recordings for Folkways Records and other recording companies, worked as a broadcaster for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and taught courses at York University, Trent University, and The University of Calgary. She served as a director or board member for a number of folk music organizations including The Mariposa Folk Festival and the Canadian Society for Traditional Music.¹

Fowke's seminal attribute emerged through her unmistakable passion for folk song research. Fowke taught university classes, where she informed and encouraged students. When teaching encroached on Fowke's time, she remarked that her research was continuing because her students were doing it (Fulford, 1974). Fowke wanted people to be aware of Canada's folk song heritage. Her radio broadcasts, recordings, and publications were meant to not only inform but to inspire.

To effectively demonstrate that Edith Fowke, as a song collector, popularizer, and scholar, was an important and seminal figure in the twentieth century folk song collecting movement, it was necessary to supplement the established knowledge about Fowke's life and work with more recently researched information collected for this thesis. The newer

¹ Fowke was a charter member of this organization, which began in 1956 as the Canadian Folk Music Society. It was renamed the Canadian Society for Musical Traditions in 1988 and became the Canadian Society for Traditional Music in 2001.

data augmented the current Fowke information in two specific areas: Fowke's Peterborough area fieldwork years and Fowke's life story. The following sections provide details and literature reviews for these two research areas.

Fowke's Fieldwork

Fowke's fieldwork in Peterborough County and the Ottawa Valley provided the basis for the voluminous published work that earned her international recognition. The details of this fieldwork, specifically her work in Peterborough County, and parts of the neighbouring counties of Hastings, Victoria, and Northumberland, have been discussed on a very limited basis. Fresh information will complement the existing data concerning Fowke's Peterborough County fieldwork and better situate it within the information produced by other North American field researchers who were her contemporaries. Fowke was a patient researcher with a passion for studying text and history. It naturally followed that she was able to effectively locate singers and document folk songs that until the mid-1950s were not known to exist in Ontario. Fowke's fieldwork methodology allowed her to effectively access and record competent rural Ontario folk singers. She researched successfully in small rural communities, which are typically suspicious of outsiders. In spite of the fact that she herself recognized her lack of musical training, she successfully conducted her field recording work. She overcame that impediment by building effective relationships with musically literate collaborators who helped her to transcribe the field recordings and produce books and articles.

Fowke began her fieldwork in 1956 and summarized her song collecting

perspective by saying: “I’m judging more from texts than from tunes: I don’t trust my judgement on tunes because I tend to rate a poor tune by a good singer better than a good tune sung by a poor singer” (Panagapka and Vikar, 2004, p. 75). Fowke embarked on the song collecting portion of her career with no formal training and very few points of reference outside of a good knowledge of the work performed by earlier North American song collectors. By her own admission, Fowke’s fieldwork methodology was established through trial and error, driven largely by her literary background. She made approximately 2,000 field recordings (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 7) but less than 20% of these recordings were transcribed and published in books and/or released commercially on vinyl long-play recordings.

Still, Fowke’s fieldwork yielded results that brought her international recognition. She may be considered the last of the notable Canadian song collectors and is situated amongst the most important North American folk song collector-scholars of the twentieth century. Fowke’s textual approach to fieldwork resulted in a methodology that was different from other North American collectors, yet, her results are prolific, accurate, and welcomed by portions of the academic community involved in folklore and ethnomusicology as well as folk song enthusiasts in general.

Literature review – Fowke’s Fieldwork

The Peterborough area fieldwork, which began in 1956, forms the foundation of Fowke’s career as a song collector, but it is the least documented aspect of her work. Two theses at the master’s level (Caputo, 1989) and (Herget, 2001) are based on Fowke’s song

collection but neither has a focus directly on her rural fieldwork. Caputo's York University thesis revisits the recording and analysis of children's songs and rhymes collected by Fowke in Toronto city schools. Herget's University of Calgary thesis analyzes the folk song performance style of selected Peterborough area singers recorded by Fowke. It provides a useful list of Fowke's Peterborough area informants but contains few details of the methodology used to collect the songs.

The March 16, 1958 issue of the *CBC Times* devotes several paragraphs to Fowke's Peterborough area fieldwork. However, it concentrates on singers and songs with little mention of methodology other than the fact that Fowke was using a tape recorder. In the 1960s, scholars such as Ives and Wilgus briefly mention her fieldwork in reviews of her work and there were brief references to Fowke's field research in the early issues of *Newsletter of the Canadian Folk Music Society* (Ives, 1961; Wikgus, 1962; *Newsletter* 1965, 1966). In the 1950s and 1960s, the most revealing information relative to Fowke's Peterborough research methodology came from Fowke herself. In the liner notes of her first 1958 Folkways recording *Folk Songs of Ontario* (FM4005), Fowke mentions that she began to devote a portion of her time to fieldwork in the fall of 1956, utilizing a tape recorder to record 400 songs (Fowke, 1958). In the liner notes of her 1961 Folkways LP (FM4052), *Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties*. Fowke states:

With very few exceptions, the songs I've collected in the last three years have come from men who worked in the woods in their youth, or from men and women who learned them from their fathers, uncles, or grandfathers who in their turn had

gone to the shanties...All of the songs were recorded in 1957 and 1958, in the homes of the singers. (Fowke, 1961, pp. 2-3)

One of the more informative writings by Fowke is a 1966 essay, “Folk Songs of Peterborough.” In this work, Fowke describes how she came to the Peterborough area in 1956 and found her first informants, Michael Cleary and his daughter Mary Towns in the hamlet of Douro. Fowke describes the geographic and social character of the area and discusses several of the songs she recorded. She mentions methodology only briefly but provides enough firm dates, informant names, and area locations to facilitate serious follow-up research. Fowke wrote this essay in a reflexive narrative style that allows some insight into her early work. Unfortunately the essay never reached a national audience. It is found only in a Peterborough area book, *Peterborough: Land of Shining Waters, An Anthology* (1967), that was created as a local centennial project.² Fowke's subsequent articles and books briefly mention her Peterborough area fieldwork but add little to the information found in the Folkways album liner notes and the “Folk Songs of Peterborough” essay.

A 1978 article, “Interview, Edith Fowke”, written for the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* by Fred Weihs, Jon Bartlett, and Rika Ruebesaat contains some details of Fowke's early song collecting. Based on an interview with Fowke, portions of the article are similar to Fowke's narrative in the “Folk Songs of Peterborough” essay. The article quotes Fowke as she acknowledges her early fieldwork in Peterborough County and

² Fowke's original typewritten manuscript of “Folk songs of Peterborough” is located in the Trent University archives (accession number 92-1016).

identifies people, places, and dates. Unfortunately there is little information about her methodology.

Biographical articles about Fowke by Lyn Harrington (1970) in *Canadian Author and Bookman*, Robert Fulford in *The Toronto Star* (1974), and Betty Donald (1975) in *Profiles*, provide highlights of Fowke's career but none discuss her Peterborough area work in detail. Fowke's career is also discussed in York University professor Carol Carpenter's (1979) book *Many Voices: A study of Folklore Activities in Canada and Their Role in Canadian Culture* and Queen's professor Ian McKay's (1994) book *Quest of the Folk*. Neither publication looks at Fowke's early fieldwork. Obituaries published after Fowke's death in 1996 by Val Ross in *The Globe and Mail* and Vera Johnson in the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* provide interesting biographical content but no details of Fowke's early fieldwork.

A 1997 *University of Calgary Gazette* article referenced Fowke's early song-collecting methodology stating that she was: “in the lumbering camps in the wilds of northern Ontario in the '40s and '50s persuading the rough and tumble labourers to sing their traditional songs ... into her microphone”(p. 19). This statement is inaccurate. Fowke never collected in a lumber camp or in northern Ontario, and did not collect in the 1940s. This misinformation is repeated in the publication *Songs of the North Woods: As sung by O.J. Abbott and collected by Edith Fowke* (2004), by Laszlo Vikar and Jeanette Panagapka.

The article “What ordinary people do is important, Edith Fowke's life and publications” in the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* (Kirby, 1998) is a Fowke

biography with some details of Fowke's Peterborough area collecting and early informants such as Michael Cleary and Mary Towns. A rough chronology of Fowke's fieldwork is established and her basic methodology is discussed in this article, which partially presents Fowke from the perspective of an informant's family. A more recent biography is found in *The Early Years of Folk Music: Fifty Founders of the Tradition* (2010) by David Dicaire, who presents a concise biographical sketch of Fowke. Although he mentions she performed much of her fieldwork in the Peterborough area, there are no details regarding her collecting methods.

Edith Fowke's Life Story

Introduction

This dissertation presents details of Edith Fowke's life that will enhance understanding of her methodology, perspectives, and attitudes. Factual data will be separated from the erroneous data about her career time-lines and research methodology that exist in a few of the current published articles. The life story will allow readers to situate Fowke's fieldwork years within her larger body of work. For example, it reveals that Fowke was not a focused lifetime song collector. She was a part-time researcher who conducted the majority of her song collecting fieldwork in a nine-year period. These fieldwork years influenced the remainder of her life by first providing enough initial material for her commercial recordings and songbooks and later for the ongoing magazine and journal articles that continued well into the 1990s. Fowke's writing focus moved during her career from folk songs to folklore and back again. Her teaching career

had three distinct phases and her radio broadcasting career covered parts of four decades.

I have opted to refer to this research area as “life story” rather than “biography.” A biography is written by a historian, who is attempting to explain his subject's life personality, and influence. A biography leaves little doubt as to the identity of the author (Titon, 1980, p. 281). A life story is simply a person's story about his/her life and what he/she feels is significant. It is a story of personal experience (ibid, p. 276). In assembling Edith Fowke's life story, I utilize existing biographical material but I attempted to let her own voice, through her printed work and documented interviews, speak for her wherever possible. To fill some informational gaps, I inserted the voices of those who personally encountered Fowke, such as Skye Morrison, Merrick Jarrett, and Marcelle Mundell.

Literature review – Fowke's Life Story

There is no comprehensive biography of Fowke available in book form. A few biographical sketches are found in edited books and magazines as well as in *The Canadian Encyclopedia of Music*. The first substantive summary of Fowke's life appeared in 1974 in the book *Profiles*, published by the Canadian Library Association. Prepared by Betty Donald, of the Etobicoke Public Library, this four page biography details some of Fowke's youthful days in Saskatchewan as well as her education and her involvement in western Canadian politics. It mentions her move to Toronto, a few of her publications, and her CBC radio show. Her Peterborough area research is acknowledged along with her work at York University. This profile of Fowke provides only minimal detail concerning her activities but does contain dates and establishes a useful

chronology.

After Fowke's death in 1996, obituaries in the *Globe and Mail* and *The Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* made general mention of Fowke's best known publications, her song-collecting work, her teaching career, and CBC broadcasting. In 1996, *The Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* published an article titled "Fowkelore" authored by folksinger Vera Johnson who came to know Fowke as a close friend. Johnson's personal portrait of Fowke is a narrative filled with anecdotes of dinner parties, vacations, house concerts, and relationships. It is a touching and informative insight into Fowke's character and perspectives and, although it only discusses a portion of Fowke's life, it provides details that are not available anywhere else. Canadian folklorist Sheldon Posen (1996) prepared a Fowke obituary for the *Folk Music Journal* that outlined her important publications as well as her teaching and broadcasting career. Posen wondered if any future Canadian folklorist could ever take her place with respect to prolific output, authority, and conviction to principle.

The article "What ordinary people do is important, Edith Fowke's life and publications" in the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* (Kirby, 1998) is an attempt to create a comprehensive Fowke biography by extracting pertinent information from existing biographies and articles about and by Fowke and then incorporating my initial 1998 research into Fowke's Peterborough area fieldwork. It includes some aspects of her fieldwork and broadcasting work that are not mentioned in other published work. Although it has gaps in its information, it provides a reasonable biographical framework.

Songs of the North Woods: As sung by O.J. Abbott and collected by Edith Fowke (2004) by Lazlo Vikar and Jeanette Panagapka is essentially a song book that contains a biographical element, which was excerpted and printed in the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* as “Edith Fowke: Reflections” prior to the release of the book. The article discusses Fowke's publications, radio work and teaching as well as her early collecting. Unfortunately, it still perpetuates the misconception that Fowke travelled to northern Ontario lumber communities to record songs directly from lumbermen.

The most recent biographical sketch of Fowke was written by David Dicaire and included in *The Early Years of Folk Music: Fifty Founders of the Tradition*. Dicaire's biography is comprehensive in that it touches on all aspects of Fowke's career including writing, broadcasting, teaching, song-collecting, and involvement with music societies. It is a good overview that provides an overall sense of Fowke's prolific work output but lacks many details. *The Canadian Encyclopedia of Music* has continually featured a Fowke biography and the most recent is similar to Dicaire's work, although more condensed. It covers all aspects of Fowke's career but does not reveal a lot of detail. *The Canadian Encyclopedia of Music* biography cites most of the same articles that I have mentioned in this section as information sources.

Research Methodology

Approach to Research

When conducting my initial research in the Peterborough, Ontario area in 1998, I utilized the concept of following the footsteps of Edith Fowke. I not only followed Fowke's footsteps to verify her research, but I was also looking for additional information that would provide a better sense of the places, people, and times within which she moved. I followed her initially to the P. G. Towns General Store in Douro in 1998 and from there moved on to encounter a few of the same people that she had interviewed. Memories of Fowke still remain in the rural area around Peterborough. Her name is still overheard in conversations at the Towns store and in discussions at the Trent Valley Archives.

The concept of following the footsteps of Fowke moves beyond simply meeting and talking to Fowke's informants and working associates. It involves participating and interacting with the community and the people. When I resumed my research in 2005, I followed Fowke's footsteps to the Peterborough home of Vera Keating, one of her first informants. Keating welcomed me graciously in the same way she probably welcomed Fowke. In 2006, I spent a few days with folksinger Merrick Jarrett and spent time listening to his singing, just as Fowke had done in the 1950s. In 2008, I brought the musical drama, *Fowke Tales*, to the stage of the Douro church hall.³ This is the same stage where Fowke had many of her local informants perform in the 1950s. In 2010, I attended a Douro Christmas kitchen party that Fowke had once been invited to, but

³ I co-wrote the musical/drama *Fowke Tales* in 2007, with novelist Janet Kellough and fiddle-player Zeke Mazurek. It tells the story of Edith Fowke coming to Peterborough County and befriending her first major informant, Mary Towns. *Fowke Tales* had an extended run in a barn at Peterborough County's Lang Pioneer Museum. More details about the production are provided in Chapter 6.

declined. More recently in 2011, I visited the home behind the P. G. Towns General Store and had lunch in the same kitchen where Fowke made her first recordings. Just as Fowke interacted and networked with the people from whom she obtained information, I continued with the same approach. Many of the area citizens are personal acquaintances and I frequently travel along the same rural roads and stop at the residences where Fowke visited.

Primary Research Informants

This project would not have been possible without input from a small group of people who were directly associated with Edith Fowke. The data retrieved from publications, manuscripts, and letters provided the framework for the research but living persons provided the firsthand information to support the arguments. The details of how I came to know each of these individuals are relevant to this study, therefore, I have included the following profiles.

Michael Towns

Michael Towns has been my most important informant for the past ten years. I met Michael Towns on a February afternoon in 1998 when he was the proprietor of the P. G. Towns General Store in Douro, Ontario. That meeting was a key moment in my quest for knowledge about the Peterborough County folk song culture and I have included details of it later in this chapter. Michael Towns is the son of Mary Towns who was one of the very first singers recorded by Edith Fowke. His clear recollections of Fowke and her ongoing friendship with his mother provide the foundation for my research. Mr.

Towns also told me about other individuals in the Peterborough area who had personally encountered Fowke, such as Marcelle Mundell, Vera Keating, and Anne Sullivan.

Michael Towns is a musician who strayed from his folk music roots to play piano with a number of local jazz and blues ensembles. As we came to know each other, we realized that we had often worked with the same musicians. I have been to the Towns home on many occasions since 1998 to play music and enjoy refreshments. We spent considerable time together talking about music and local history over breakfast at local restaurants. However, as my project was progressing, I felt the need for a formal meeting to review and confirm the verbal information and quotes provided by him for this thesis and ask permission to use two of his photos and a letter that was sent to his mother by Fowke. Michael Towns and I met the afternoon of August 17, 2010 to discuss and finalize his contribution.

Merrick Jarrett

Merrick Jarrett was a popular Ontario folk-singer who often worked on radio in the Toronto area in the 1950s. His work included a number of appearances on many of Edith Fowke's CBC programs. Jarrett was a performer at the first Mariposa Folk Festival and subsequently shared festival stages with names such as Gordon Lightfoot, Ian and Sylvia, The Travellers, and Joan Baez. Later on, he taught traditional folk music courses at University of Waterloo's Conrad Grebel College. I met Merrick Jarrett in June of 2006, when his daughter called me and asked if I would be interested in meeting him. Jarrett knew of me because I had mentioned his name in the initial article I wrote about Fowke

that appeared in the 1998 edition of the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*. He was visiting his daughter in Peterborough and asked her to locate me. I met with Jarrett at his daughter's home the mornings of June 27, 28, and 29, 2006. He provided details about his work with Fowke and recalled the good working relationship they had. I made notes when he spoke but found that Jarrett was really more interested in playing music. While I played my banjo he played guitar and sang. He encouraged me to play through my entire bluegrass and folk music repertoire as he played along. The three days were mostly music but when he spoke about Fowke, I carefully made notes. Merrick Jarrett died in December, 2006.

Vera Keating

Vera Keating was one of Edith Fowke's first informants. Fowke recorded both her fiddle playing and her singing at Keating's Peterborough home in March of 1957. Keating's singing was included on Fowke's 1958 vinyl recording *Folk Songs of Ontario*. Michael Towns of Douro, who was aware of my research interest in Fowke, suggested I contact Mrs. Keating to obtain more information. I hesitated because I was in the early stages of the doctoral program at Carleton and had not established a formal research focus. However, since Mrs Keating was 91 years old and might not be available in two or three years time, I decided to call her and arrange a meeting. At the time, I viewed this contact with Keating as an extension of my independent research rather than part of my academic endeavours. On the afternoon of May 19, 2005, I met Mrs Keating at the same Peterborough home where she welcomed Edith Fowke. We talked for most of the

afternoon, shared a pot of tea with biscuits, and listened to some music. Keating was clear in her recollections of Fowke and I made extensive notes as she spoke. Shortly after our visit, Keating's health began to fail and she moved to a retirement/nursing facility. I attempted to arrange more visits but she was no longer able to have visitors outside of her immediate family. Keating died in July, 2012, but my notes of our meeting remain intact and useful. After her death I contacted family members to make them aware of my research and her contributions.

Dr. Skye Morrison

Dr. Morrison was a friend and associate of Edith Fowke. She met Fowke when she was a doctoral student in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania. Her academic supervisor was Dr. Kenneth Goldstein, who was a good friend of Fowke. Fowke visited Goldstein several times a year and that is when Dr. Morrison, who often stayed at Goldstein's home, became acquainted with her. They became friends and the friendship continued when Dr. Morrison returned to Canada to teach at Sheridan College and Concordia University. Dr. Morrison was one of the people who helped catalogue and pack Edith Fowke's books and manuscripts after her death.

I met Dr. Morrison in August of 2010 when she contacted me to assist her in the creation of a musical element for the production of a historical pageant she was writing for the village of Hastings, Ontario Founders Week. Dr. Morrison learned about me through local friends who attended my traditional music workshops at Peterborough County's Lang Pioneer Village Museum and had seen the musical drama *Fowke Tales*. Dr.

Morrison wanted to know if I could help her do something similar for her pageant. We met daily during the week of August 13, 2010 to work on the pageant. I agreed to help her in exchange for her perspectives on Edith Fowke, which I carefully noted as we worked. It was a perfect arrangement. Dr. Morrison and I have remained friends ever since. On the afternoon of December 16, 2011, we met specifically to review her perspectives of Fowke that would be included in this thesis.

Marcelle (McMahon) Mundell

I have known Marcelle Mundell casually for many years. She is a Peterborough area singer whom I have heard on many occasions. Our first meeting occurred when she was recording at a local studio approximately 25 years ago. I was called by the music producer and contracted to play pedal-steel guitar on a few of her tunes. At the time, I had no idea of Mundell's connection with Edith Fowke and she had no idea of my interest in Canadian traditional music history. In September of 2008, Marcelle Mundell attended a performance of my production *Fowke Tales*. She approached me afterwards and told me that she had been recorded by Edith Fowke in the 1950s and was mentioned, along with her father Dave McMahon, in Fowke's book *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*. She told me she had a copy of the book signed by Edith Fowke as well as a copy of the master's thesis by Herget, done at the University of Calgary. We talked briefly on several occasions after September 2008 at local social gatherings. However, it was not until the afternoon of September 24, 2010 that we formally sat down at her kitchen table to discuss her recollections of Fowke. We talked about her and her father's interaction with Fowke

for several hours and I carefully took notes. Marcelle Mundell is always ready to discuss Fowke's visits to her family's farm.

Anne Sullivan

Anne Sullivan is the daughter of Fowke's informants, Tom and Maggie Sullivan. She is not a musician or a singer but she does take pride in her parents' relationship with Edith Fowke. Sullivan's mother Maggie was featured on Fowke's first Folkways recording. I came to know Anne Sullivan through the Towns family. In April 2009, while shopping at P.G. Towns General Store, I was informed by Michael Towns' son-in law that Anne Sullivan would like to meet me and discuss Edith Fowke. I met Anne Sullivan the afternoon of April 22, 2009 at a Lakefield, Ontario restaurant. Her recollections of Fowke were limited but they were also very clear. Sullivan was concerned about recordings that Fowke made of her mother and asked if I could get a CD of the first Folkways album that included her mother. Sullivan appreciates her parents' musical abilities and their connection with Edith Fowke. She wanted to be sure they were included in my research and thus wished to talk with me. Sullivan was surprised to learn that Fowke had recorded her father's fiddle playing.

Research Thoughts

Since few details of Fowke's extensive fieldwork were ever documented, questions remain. How did Fowke locate, acquire access, and record so many folk singers in the Peterborough area? What was her recording, editing, and transcribing

methodology? What was her relationship with the singers and their families? How did Fowke decide which songs would be published and/or released commercially on vinyl albums? How did she categorize and file her tapes? Did her field-recording methodology change as she progressed?

In most of the literature pertaining to Edith Fowke, there is, with one exception, no mention of the fact that Fowke's field recording work, including her fieldwork in the Toronto schools, was essentially limited to a nine-year period (1956-1964) and the vast majority of the research done in the Peterborough area occurred between 1956 and 1960. The exception is my article that appeared in the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* (Kirby, 1998). When researching my article I carefully made a list of all the songs and singers included by Fowke in her books and articles. Fowke normally included the date of the recordings she referenced in her published work. There are some holes in the information but there is enough evidence to conclude that Fowke performed the majority of her entire folk song fieldwork between the years 1956 and 1964. Her fieldwork was a part-time activity that was quite often limited to weekends. Song collecting was only a part of a very busy schedule for Fowke, who, at the time, was also hosting a weekly radio show, writing books and articles, producing commercial recordings, travelling to the United States and Britain to meet with folk music enthusiasts and performers, and working on committees for the Mariposa Folk Festival and The Canadian Society for Traditional Music.

Researching the Fieldwork

My research on the life and work of Edith Fowke has been ongoing, on a part-time basis, for the past twelve years. My first published biography of Edith Fowke (Kirby, 1998) remains the foundation for my work since it provides enough accurate time lines to allow me to organize my subsequent research appropriately. In 2007, I co-wrote a theatrical musical production titled *Fowke Tales*, which tells the story of the friendship between Edith Fowke and her informant, Mary Towns. I selected the traditional music for the production from Fowke's songbooks and recordings and arranged it in a contemporary style. *Fowke Tales* premiered in Peterborough County in September 2007 with six performances over six consecutive nights.⁴ Descendants of informants who had sung some of the selected songs came to the production and introduced themselves to me. They told me of Fowke's visits to their homes and the pride their parents and grandparents had when Fowke recorded them.

Thus the detailed study of Fowke's fieldwork began with the few individuals who had attended *Fowke Tales* and who invited me to meet with them again and discuss their recollections of Edith Fowke. I followed up by meeting with Fowke informant Marcelle McMahan Mundell, and informant descendents, Anne Sullivan, and Mary Eileen Towns. I visited Michael Towns on several occasions as well as the oldest Fowke informant, Vera Keating. Although I created a set of questions, I generally encouraged the informants to provide their own recollections of Edith Fowke. I began by asking them how Fowke contacted the family and enquired about the visits of Fowke to their home (or relative's

⁴ *Fowke Tales* has been performed publicly 21 times as of December, 2011.

home) to record songs.⁵ Then I would ask how Fowke persuaded her informants to sing and how did she make them feel comfortable. Did she exclude specific material? What was her recording equipment like and how did she set it up? Were others present when Fowke recorded singers? Finally I asked whether or not informants and/or their families received copies of the books and albums they participated in and whether Fowke maintained contact with them over the years? All of these questions were answered succinctly and several anecdotes regarding Fowke were also offered.

In conjunction with interviewing members of informant families, I acquired copies of the liner notes that Fowke had written for the record albums produced for Folkways Records. Again I focused on the albums that featured Peterborough area singers such as *Folk Songs of Ontario* (Folkways FM4005) and *Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties* (Folkways FM4052). I noted recording dates and names along with information that Fowke wrote about her collecting methods. Magazine and journal articles written by Fowke during her song collecting years contained enough information for me to establish names, dates, and locations. I did the same with books that contained song transcriptions that had emanated from her Peterborough research such as *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*, *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*, and *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs*. One result of this research was a list of Peterborough area informant names, locations, and dates that they were recorded. This list grew as my research moved to the field recordings located in the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Herget's 2001 thesis and a catalogue of Fowke's field recordings located

⁵ Ethnomusicologist Jeff Todd Titon (1997) advocates participant conversation as a research tool. He suggests participants be readily allowed to control the conversation and digress from questions if they choose. The more comfortable they become the greater the quantity of information provided (p. 89).

at York University permitted me to complete the informant list and establish a field recording chronology, which is included in Appendix A.

In 1960, Edith Fowke made copies of many of her field recordings and sent them to the National Museum⁶ in Ottawa to be archived. In the summer of 2011, I travelled to the Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives and listened to 98 tunes from Fowke's field tape recordings,⁷ specifically focusing on recordings from the Peterborough area. These recordings along with Fowke's accompanying typed notes and transcriptions are a tangible record of Fowke's early fieldwork. They provide a sampling of Fowke's work as they range from pristine recordings of good singers to recordings by singers who cough, hesitate, and forget, to recordings filled with background noises such as closing doors, babies crying, children playing, and footsteps. Overall, these recordings are an accurate and documentable opening to the past.

Miscellaneous evidence of Fowke's work was located incidentally as I researched. For example, Peterborough participants gave me copies of private correspondence that Fowke had directed to her informants. I located some of her business correspondence in The Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives while researching her field recordings. An informant family provided rare photos of Fowke. I tracked down two original typewritten Fowke manuscripts, one at Trent University and the other at the Peterborough

6 This institution was known in 1927 as The National Museum of Canada. In 1957, it was divided into two branches: Natural History Branch and the Human History Branch, which contained archaeology and ethnology divisions. In 1968, The National Museum was transferred to the National Museums of Canada Corporation and the Human History Branch became the National Museum of Man. In 1986, it was renamed the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC).

7 A list of these recordings is found in Appendix E. The Edith Fowke Fonds at the University of Calgary contains materials from 1927 to 1999. As of 2012, it is only partially catalogued and it does not contain all of the field recordings.

Museum and Archives. Two books that once had been owned by Fowke with her handwritten notes in the margins, came into my possession. Overall, the total research package of written, audio, and personal evidence provided the data necessary to effectively document and discuss Fowke's Peterborough area field research.

Edith Fowke is of interest to me because she began her song collecting career very close to my home. Subsequent to my 1998 *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* article about Fowke, I accumulated Fowke related information, which includes Fowke letters, photos, and articles given to me by friends who knew of my interest in Fowke's career. I became acquainted with a few people who associated and worked with Fowke such as folk singer Merrick Jarrett, folk song collector Philip Thomas, and folklorist Skye Morrison. Casual conversations with these individuals gave me a sense of Fowke's character and perspectives. I presented a paper that focused on Fowke's Peterborough area song-collecting at a joint meeting of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music and the Society for American Music in 2000. At that time I was an independent Fowke historian determined to learn more about Fowke whom I saw as a larger figure in Canadian folk music than any article had portrayed to date.

Researching Text

My initial task was to read and make notes from all of the printed sources that contained biographical sketches of Fowke. The next task was to locate and read every article (and review) written about Fowke and her work, regardless of the title or the purpose, and note every snippet of biographical information folded into the text. This was

followed by searching all of Fowke's written work, including record album liner-notes, academic papers, essays, reviews, and unpublished manuscripts to extract every piece of available autobiographical information. The text search helped to construct a reasonably detailed chronological event outline. The outline was supplemented by credible information from individuals who worked with Fowke, as well as Fowke informants and descendents of informants. Finally, Fowke letters and business correspondence given to me or located by me were utilized to fill informational gaps where possible. The resulting Fowke life story (Chapter 3), although only 15,000 words in length, is accurate and detailed enough to allow readers to fully comprehend the complexity of Fowke's career and understand where Fowke's fieldwork fits within the context of her life and career.

Reviewing the Objective

Fowke presents a dilemma to scholars who attempt to place her into a specific academic discipline. Her background was unique because she blended a formal education in English and History with self-education in the area of folk song and folklore. Fowke's song-collecting fieldwork was an on-the-job learning experience and she had limited musical experience and aptitude. She was considered a song-collecting amateur by some academics and a learned scholar of folklore and/or ethnomusicology by others. It was important for this research to reveal a vision of Fowke that was substantive enough to argue that she was an important and seminal figure in the folk song collecting movement through her work as a song collector, popularizer of folk songs and a scholar.

Fowke was aware of the arguments that questioned her place amongst song collectors, folklorists, and/or ethnomusicologists. Pauline Greenhill (2003) writes in the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* that Fowke felt rejected by academic researchers and writers because she did not have a degree in folklore or ethnomusicology. She was further conflicted because some ethnomusicologists viewed her as a “popularizer” of folk music while some folk music fans viewed her as a narrow “purist”. According to Greenhill, the opposing viewpoints upset Fowke to the point that she actually attempted, later in her career, to produce writing that might please both sides (pp. 1-9).

When Fowke began her fieldwork in 1956, she had independently acquired a working knowledge of English-language ballads⁸ and altered variants; she was familiar with the work of song collectors such as Cecil Sharp, Helen Creighton, Elizabeth Greenleaf, and Marius Barbeau. Unlike these collectors, however, Fowke did not spend long lengths of time in the field when collecting. She did not have a lot of time to spend with any one singer and the result was a methodology that seemingly deviated from the academic norm. Fowke explained this in a 1978 interview published in the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin*:

... my technique was, I suppose, trial and error. I never had the problems they talk about in all the books about collecting, you know, where you have to spend a week getting to know the singer before you suggest that you want to record his songs. I never had that problem. Of course I hadn't the time. I wasn't collecting on a year-round basis. I was collecting on weekends, and would go to a singer and

⁸ At this point, a ballad can be generally defined as an orally transmitted song that tells a story.

tell him what I wanted. Sometimes they'd say, "Oh I don't sing anymore – my voice is no good", you know, try to put me off like that and I'd say, "Well, sing one song ... some old song". I'd tape it on a tape recorder, and play it back to them and they'd sing everything they knew. And nine times out of ten it worked like that. I think the secret was that they realized I was interested. (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 8)

Scholarly reviews of Fowke's published work did not question her research methods, they focused on her subsequent published work and this is where the divide is found. For example, folklorists such as Richard Dorson (1958), Edward Ives (1961), Ellen Steckert (1973), and Kay Stone (1979) criticize elements such as the absence of cultural connection, substance, and balance in Fowke's work. Contrarily, scholars like folklorists Kenneth Goldstein (1959), Horace Beck (1967), William Hugh Jansen (1967), and ethnomusicologist William Mann (1971) praised characteristics in her work such as the accessibility and historical detail.⁹ Is it possible that the contrasting reviews of Fowke's work from a scholarly perspective reflect the changing undefined boundaries and understanding of the folklore and ethnomusicology disciplines? As mentioned earlier in this chapter, ethnomusicology changed during the 1950s and 1960s, Fowke's fieldwork years. With regard to folklore, Sheldon Posen (1996) comments that "Canada and the study of folklore changed a great deal during Edith Fowke's life. Some might say that her vision became passé" (p. 276). Understanding and arguing Fowke's place as a song collector and popularizer is simply a by-product of the required research. The chapters in

⁹ Details of the reviews of Fowke's publications by these and other scholars are found in Chapter 9.

this thesis combine established data with recent data to allow a vision of Fowke's life and work through a fresh lens.

Chapter Layout

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter introduces Edith Fowke and her achievements. It explains the informational deficiency that exists regarding Fowke's Peterborough area fieldwork, which formed part of the foundation of her career. It discusses the biographical and methodological information about Fowke that is spread in small pieces amongst dozens of books and articles. The chapter outlines the research objectives of this thesis, which is to document and discuss Fowke's Peterborough field research, formulate and present Fowke's life story, and situate Fowke as a song collector within the folk song collecting movement. Finally, it details my research approach and introduces a few key informants.

Chapter 2 – Folk Song Scholarship: An Overview

This chapter provides an historical overview of folk song collecting, along with the academic disciplines of ethnomusicology and folklore. It explores the differences and similarities of these movements while discussing the methodologies and perspectives of a few of the key individuals involved in each. The intent of this chapter is to provide readers with enough theoretical background to compare the traits of Edith Fowke's collecting and publishing with the work of predecessors and contemporaries. This is essential in order to understand the arguments to be made that Edith Fowke was a unique

song collector and popularizer.

Chapter 3 – Edith Fowke and The Song Collectors

This chapter explores Edith Fowke's personal connections with the folk song collectors, folklorists and scholars discussed in Chapter 2. It explains how Fowke was influenced by the work of individuals such as Francis Child, and Malcolm Laws, who categorized song texts, and Marius Barbeau, Maude Karpeles, and Helen Creighton, who collected songs in the field. Her personal connections with Ivy League folklore scholars like Kenneth Goldstein and Skye Morrison are included. Fowke's personal perspectives on song collecting and popularization in Canada are explained relative to the work of other North American collectors.

Chapter 4 – Literature Review – Published Work about Edith Fowke

This chapter examines the limited writing about Fowke's life and work that is found in a wide variety of magazines, journals, and newspapers. There are no books about Fowke; her life and work is summarized in bits and pieces in an array of short articles and news briefs that cover a 60 year period. The review of these small published pieces reveals some of the misconceptions and contradictions about her career and fieldwork that have been perpetuated over time.

Chapter 5 – Edith Fowke's Life Story

This chapter brings together all of the available Fowke biographical information from various printed sources with the data collected from my research. As much as possible the story is told through Fowke's own recollections in her articles and interviews. It moves from her youth and education in Saskatchewan to her involvement in politics. Her work as a folk music programmer for CBC radio is covered along with her Peterborough and Ottawa Valley fieldwork, her publications, vinyl albums, and involvement in the Mariposa Folk Festival and The Canadian Society for Traditional Music.

Chapter 6 – *Fowke Tales*

This chapter details the creation of the musical-drama *Fowke Tales*, which was designed to provide an entertaining history lesson to the public by bringing the 1950s Peterborough area field trips of Edith Fowke to the stage. *Fowke Tales* was created by novelist Janet Kellough, musician David “Zeke” Mazurek, and myself. The production opened in September 1977 in a makeshift theatre at Lang Pioneer Village Museum in Peterborough County, twelve miles from the place where Fowke began her song collecting career. Photos and newspaper reviews of the production are included along with details of the creative and staging process. An audio recording of the production is included as Appendix F.

Chapter 7 – Peterborough Area Fieldwork

This chapter contains an evaluation of Fowke's initial field research in the Peterborough area. Her methodology is examined, beginning with her ability to locate informants and persuade them to sing for her. Her recording, note-taking, tape-editing and song cataloguing techniques are discussed. Perspectives and recollections of Fowke's informants and informant descendents are included. A chronology of her field trips is presented along with visual samples of her song transcripts and written communications with her informants. This chapter also considers the Peterborough area fiddle music recorded and catalogued by Fowke. An audio documentary that contains excerpts from Fowke's field recordings is included as Appendix G.

Chapter 8 – *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* – A Case Study

This chapter is a “case-study” analysis of one of Fowke's more important printed song collections, *Lumbering Songs of the Northern Woods* (1970). This assemblage of lumbering songs was derived directly from Fowke's field collecting. It reflects Fowke's perspectives on text and her inclusive interest in both traditional and locally composed songs. The foreword, page layout, song selection, informant information, song history, and musical analysis are examined and critiqued. Detailed examination of this book uncovers Fowke's mature publishing style, which will help readers transition to the next chapter.

Chapter 9 – Literature Review – Edith Fowke's Published Work

This chapter examines Fowke's published work from 1948 to 1996. It includes her political writing and first articles on the topic of folk songs. Fowke's collaborative song-books with Richard Johnston, Alan Mills, and Joe Glazer, as well as the liner-notes she prepared for her commercial vinyl recordings, are reviewed. Books and articles that include Peterborough area songs are discussed. The chapter mentions Fowke's books of children's songs and rhymes along with her books on Canadian folklore. Page samples are provided as well as reviews, favourable and unfavourable, by various writers, in an assortment of publications.

Chapter 10 – Summary and Conclusion

This chapter brings everything together by first demonstrating how the thesis objective has been met. The fieldwork methodology and life story chapters are summarized and reviewed with a view to supporting the content and dispelling some of the misinformation about Fowke's life and work that has existed over the years. The chapter brings pertinent information from all the chapters together to support an informed argument that effectively situates Edith Fowke and her accomplishments relative to the work of other major North American song collectors. It shows how the Peterborough area fieldwork had a dramatic impact upon the knowledge about folk song in Canada. As well, it demonstrates how that fieldwork provided the basis for the establishment of Edith Fowke as one of the major song collectors of the twentieth century. Edith Fowke did not consider herself a music scholar or formal researcher but she did want her research to be

recognized. She never moved away from her initial objective, which was to find ways of making Canadians aware of their folk song heritage, whether it be through radio broadcasts, commercial recordings, or publications, and she worked her entire career to accomplish this.

CHAPTER 2

COLLECTING FOLK SONGS: AN OVERVIEW

In order to understand Edith Fowke's place within the song collecting movement, it is beneficial to review some of the historical benchmarks relative to folk song collecting, particularly the twentieth century developments. This history is complex because folk music and folk songs were collected by individuals who were associated with one or more parallel cultural study movements that evolved during the century. First, there was the constantly evolving scholarly discipline of ethnomusicology that promoted the systematic collection and analysis of folk songs and music within their cultural context. The second was the emergence of influential groups of folk song and folklore collectors who focused on collecting and classifying folk traditions and occasionally popularizing the material they collected.

These movements intertwined during the twentieth century as members of each interacted and reviewed each others' work. Some of this interaction and critiquing affected Fowke, who always considered herself as a "collector" of traditions and even conceded that she was a "popularizer." However, some scholars viewed her work as that of an ethnomusicologist, who should adhere to established ethnomusicological practices when conducting fieldwork and publishing the results. They criticized her somewhat unfairly because, in reality, a comparison of Fowke's methodology relative to what is, or was, considered standard ethnomusicological fieldwork practice is difficult. This is due to the fact that ethnomusicology, as a scholarly discipline, has been in a state of constant change over the past century, and as the discipline changed, the perception of Fowke's

work changed. Fowke rejected ideas that she was part of any scholarly discipline but some of her activities projected the opposite message. She taught at a university, contributed articles to publications such as *Ethnomusicology* and *Ethnomusicology in Canada* and worked with academic personalities such as American folklorist Kenneth Goldstein and Canadian anthropologist Marius Barbeau. Nevertheless, the argument remains that it makes sense to view Fowke, not as an ethnomusicologist or a folklorist, but as a member of the adventurous group of song researchers who went into the field with the thought of collecting material from the people in order to bring it back to the people through popularization.

Early Perceptions of Ballads

The collecting of orally transmitted ballads (folk songs that tell stories) was initially influenced by individuals involved in the study of European folklore. In the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, European intellectuals increasingly believed that peasant traditions, valuable survivals from a pre-industrial age, should be collected and preserved before they vanished (Titon, 2003, p. 76). The romantic nationalistic vision of folklore at the time was cultivated in Germany by individuals such as Johann Gottfried von Herder and the Grimm brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm. They instigated the early attempts to arrange, classify and interpret pieces of superstitions, songs, dances, and stories of the folk, who in their view, included the primitive and illiterate as well as the sophisticated (Wells, 1950, p. 126). With regard to folk songs specifically, these early scholars had a tendency to become pre-occupied with the

historical dimensions of the songs, particularly their origins (Myers, 1993, p. 36).

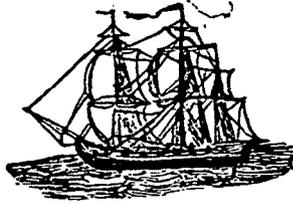
The German scholars promoted the notion that folk music was a natural, instinctive, and spontaneous expression of peasant soul, composed collectively. Ballads were antique texts surviving in an oral tradition. Anglo scholars such as Scottish folklorist Andrew Lang and English poem historian William John Courthope argued against this “communal” paradigm by stating that folk ballads were inventions of individual composers. American ballad scholar and collector Phillips Barry put forward the theory of “communal re-creation,” which supported the concept that ballads were individually composed by singers who voiced the sentiments of their community by remodelling the texts of songs handed down by tradition. As the songs entered oral tradition and were enhanced by variants, they achieved ballad status (Myers, 1993, p. 37)

One of the significant contributions to the assembling and classification of ballads in the late nineteenth century was the work of Francis James Child (1825-1896), who was a professor of English at Harvard University. Child studied English language texts to compile the lyrics (and lyric variations) for 305 ballads. Child did no fieldwork, but collected his material from manuscripts of many different countries, literary texts and even lyrics quoted in plays (Oliver, 2003, p. 43). These ballads told stories that dated from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century and had been circulating around Europe through storytellers and family networks. The inherent speech patterns of many individual ballads were retained when the texts were written. Child concentrated on the song texts and presented some 50 melodies when he published his findings in the five volumes of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* from 1882 to 1898. The ballads,

simply numbered from 1 to 305, were organized by Child according to the subject matter. For example, book one contains ballads involving superstitions and book two concentrates on tragic love ballads. The collecting of Child ballads in the field was popular with folk song collectors in the early twentieth century who started tracing the movement of these songs from Britain to various places in North America such as the southern United States, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and (as discovered by Edith Fowke) Ontario, Canada.

Child loosely defined his categories to bring together similar songs and variants. The categories include: Ballads about superstitions of various kinds including stories of fairies, elves, ghosts, popular heroes; Tragic love-ballads; Other tragic ballads; Love ballads not tragic; Ballads of Robin Hood and his followers; Ballads of other outlaws and feuds; Historical ballads relating to characters and/or events; Miscellaneous ballads including the humorous and satirical. The Child catalogue influenced many early twentieth century folk song collectors to view ballads as printed static texts (Myers, 1993, p. 36). Until the publication of the Child catalogue, it was argued by collectors that ballads depended on oral transmission to survive (Wells, 1950 pp. 5-6; Myers, 1993, p. 36).

As mentioned, the publication of the Child catalogue provided specific song texts for collectors to go into the field and try to find in surviving oral music cultures. However, many collectors focused solely on the Child collection and associated variants while ignoring other printed texts during their fieldwork. This included the broadside, which was one of the most popular sources of song text from the sixteenth century



THE CRUEL
Sea Captain
 AND
NANCY OF YARMOUTH.

John Harkness, Printer, Church-Street, Preston.

It is of a sea Captain in Yarmouth did dwell,
 He courted young Nancy, a comely young girl,
 Because she was handsome with her rolling black eyes,
 Pretty Nancy of Yarmouth all the world could surprise.

One day she was walking in a shady green grove,
 So melodiously singing her sweet songs of love,
 Her voice charmed the small birds, young Edward was near,
 Then to Nancy of Yarmouth young Edward did steer.

Good morning, my fair one, young Edward did say,
 I have just received orders for London straightway,
 Be constant to your Edward who is constant you know,
 So be lured pretty Nancy with young Edward to go.

They started for London—pretty Nancy did cry,
 Saying farewell sweet home, then tears rolled from each eye,
 Pray be true to your Nancy— I'll be constant, said he,
 If we safe reach famed London then united we'll be.

They arrived in London to his friends the next day,
 Those words pretty Nancy was heard far to say,
 I have jewels to entice me, and diamonds so fine,
 But the honour of Nancy more brilliant shall shine.

Three months had pass'd over when Edward did say,
 I am called to the ocean, I will boldly obey,
 So yield to my embraces you shall ne'er be my wife,
 Or Nancy of Yarmouth I will end your life.

A cup of strong poison on the table did stand,
 And a bright barrell'd pistol he held in each hand,
 Now yield or drink poison, he loudly did cry,
 Pretty Nancy of Yarmouth then consented to die.

That instant pretty Nancy she turn'd with a frown,
 She seized both the pistols, and knock'd Edward down,
 Lay there, cruel creature—pretty Nancy she said,
 You may take your strong poison, still Nancy's a maid.

She pack'd up her clothing, to her friends she did go,
 And told them that Edward had used her so,
 Then she gain'd their forgiveness—was beloved as before
 So it's best to be virtuous, if you're ever so poor.

The Great Lock-out
 OF
Miners
AT BARNESLEY.

NEW SONG :

**"The South Yorkshire Miners
 shall Never Despair."**

Tune—Nil Desperandum.

Kind Souls of Old England pray listen awhile,
 We are all "Lock-outs" in great distress,
 We have lately travelled many a mile,
 Yet trouble and care have grown no less ;
 But whatever our lot, 'mid hunger and care,
 Sing "The South Yorkshire Miners shall never despair."

We're fighting for rights, that are justly our due
 For the dangers we all undergo.—
 Give the workman fair-play, then no one will rue
 That he claimed what was right, I know.
 So brave every trial and every care,
 For "The South Yorkshire Miners shall never despair."

At last, when this troublesome Lock-out is o'er,
 And our children have plenty of bread,
 We then shall remember our true friends of yore,
 Who kindly supported us, and said
 Stick up for your rights, lads, and have what is fair,
 For, "The South Yorkshire Miners shall never despair."

"A fair day's wage for a fair day's work."

* These Sheets are Sold to MINERS ONLY, at Whitham's, New Street

Figure 2:1 Copies of early nineteenth century broadsides: Ballad on the left has a romantic text while the one on the right deals with a labour situation.

These illustrations are located on page 52 and page 78, respectively of M. Vicinus
Broadsides of the Industrial North (1975).

through the nineteenth century. Broad­sides, which sold for a penny or less on the street, were sheets of rough quality paper with a ballad text in the form of prose or poetry printed on one side. The subject matter included romance, chivalry, murder, and current events, such as labour unrest (Vicinus, 1975).

Some early collectors tended to reject broadsides because songs about labour disputes or government misdoing did not fit their romantic, nationalistic image. Even if the subject matter was more romantic, broadside ballads might still be shunned because they were considered to be a mass produced popular music, but this was not always the case. If the text seemed appropriate, certain collectors would include compositions of the print vendors in their collections as authentic traditional songs (Shepherd, 2003, p. 44).¹⁰ The illustration (Figure 2:1) contains copies of two contrasting nineteenth century broadsides. The “Cruel Sea Captain” became part of the oral tradition while “The Great Lock-Out of Miners at Barnsley” did not.

Early Twentieth Century Theories

The discipline known as ethnomusicology, which can be loosely defined as the study of music in its cultural context, expanded in the twentieth century. Similar to the folk music collecting movement, ethnomusicological practice focuses on living music traditions outside the limits of Western (European/Classical) Art Music, such as Anglo-American folksong, blues, jazz, and Native American music. Musicians and singers learn

¹⁰ Child obtained some ballad texts from selected printed broadsides in his search for the “pure” ballad. In Chapter 3, it will be demonstrated that Edith Fowke collected songs in rural Ontario that had entered oral tradition but could still be connected directly to known broadsides.

this music orally, retain it without written scores, and often perform it in a spontaneous manner. While some instrumentalists learn to play this music by notation, they more often use the notation as a guide around which to improvise. Most of the first ethnomusicological researchers used a strict anthropological approach, which separated fieldwork research from objective analysis. However, one of the discipline's ongoing characteristics over the past 200 years is the fact that it always seems to be in a state of change. Retired ethnomusicology professor Mervyn McLean (2006) writes: “Ethnomusicology remains a divided and directionless discipline, though a highly active one” (p. 76). Predictably the firm lines dividing fieldwork and analysis would eventually become grey.

University of Illinois professor and ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl (1992) argues that two publications from 1885 helped to define the early development of the study of music from a cultural perspective. The first was *Origin, Method, and Goals of Music Science* (1885) by Guido Adler, a Viennese music scholar. Adler argues that the cultural and historical aspects of wide varieties of music can be studied in parallel, by systematically analyzing and comparing the tones, rhythms, and instrumentation. According to Nettl, Adler’s work is the first to set out an entire discipline, providing subdivisions, beginning with the division into historical and systematic branches (p. 375). The second publication *On Musical Scales of Various Nations* (1885) by the English scholar Alexander Ellis is a comparative study of musical pitch. Ellis outlines a system of pitch measurement that divides the musical octave into 1200 equal units, which makes possible objective measurement of non-western music scales; it facilitates the cross-

cultural comparison of tonal systems. Both *Origin, Method, and Goals of Music Science* and *On Musical Scales of Various Nations* were helpful to researchers, who were comparing music from different cultures. This research spawned a discipline that came to be known as “comparative musicology.”

The Phonograph

The development of phonograph and wax cylinder technology in the 1880s by Thomas Edison and Emile Berliner enabled researchers to take recording devices into the field and record traditional music in its cultural setting. One of the first documented field recordings took place in 1889 when researcher Jesse Walter Fewkes used the phonograph to record the aboriginal music of the Passamaquoddy culture in the northeast United States. Francis Densmore, and Alice Fletcher were other collectors, who recorded Native American songs on wax cylinders. Béla Vikár began recording Eastern European folk songs on wax in 1896 and composer/scholar Béla Bartók used an Edison machine to record folk singers in rural Hungary, Romania, and Transylvania. In Canada, Alexander Cringan recorded Haudenosaunee songs on wax cylinders in the 1890s. Canadian Marius Barbeau had collected more than 8,000 French-Canadian folk songs and 5,000 melodies on wax cylinders by 1915 (Carpenter, 1979, p. 240). Many of the European field recordings were housed at the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv, which was founded in 1900 by German scholar, Carl Stumpf. The Archive of American Folk Song at the Smithsonian Institution became the home for most North American field materials including much of the Canadian documentation, also held by the Museum of Man, now known as the

Canadian Museum of Civilization.

University Connections

Ballad researcher Francis James Child was a professor at Harvard University, which became one of the important centres for early North American folk song scholarship. George Lyman Kitteredge (1860-1944) was a Harvard associate of Child. He developed an interest in Anglo-Scots ballads and encouraged his students to pursue the study of folksong. One of Kitteredge's students was Nova Scotia-born Roy Mackenzie, who conducted one of the first field trips to Nova Scotia to manually collect folk songs. The result of this field research was the publication, *Quest of the Ballad* (1919). Harvard professor Charles Seeger also had a major interest in American folk music but he was a theorist and stayed away from personal fieldwork (McLean, 2006, p. 36). Seeger seemed capable of reconciling the disciplinary boundaries between song collecting and ethnomusicology. He encouraged the collecting of American folk song generally, and collectors with a Harvard connection, such as Alan Lomax specifically.¹¹ Seeger was involved in the formation of the Society for Comparative Musicology¹² in 1933 with the help of scholars such as George Herzog who was a student of Franz Boas at Columbia University.

Anthropologist Franz Boas, through his teaching at Columbia University, advocated a methodology for ethnomusicologists that involved strict, systematic

¹¹ More details regarding Lomax's collecting follow on page 50.

¹² The Society for Comparative Musicology was the forerunner of the Society for Ethnomusicology, which Seeger was also involved in establishing.

fieldwork followed by objective laboratory analysis and third person ethnographic writing. One of his students, George Herzog, a German-born linguist, ethnologist, musicologist, and folklorist followed the Boasian methodology in his research of Native music in the United States in the 1930s. Herzog was comfortable in the field and in the laboratory and could resolve any conflict between the two. Until the mid-1940s, the discipline for studying music within its cultural context was still known as “comparative musicology,” although scholars constantly argued over the definition. Helen Roberts, another student of Franz Boas, provided a short and understandable definition of comparative musicology, defining it as “studies that deal with exotic music as compared with one another and with that Classical European system under which most of us were brought up” (Myers, 1992, p. 6).

Song Collecting post World War II

By the 1950s, scholars were studying the music of different cultures in various ways, often ignoring the methodology used in earlier comparative musicology. David McAllester (1916-2006) earned his doctorate (1949) under Herzog at Columbia University. From 1947 to 1986, McAllester taught anthropology and music at Wesleyan University. His major study, *Enemy Way Music* (1954) was the first to analyze the musical aesthetics of a North American Native culture and reflect on group values about their own music. In 1955, McAllester was involved in the formation of the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM), which enabled people to come together and discuss the discipline, argue and share ideas, and converse on the subject of methodology. Although

the term “ethnomusicology” replaced the term “comparative musicology,” arguments over the definitions continued. Subsequent to the formation of SEM, three scholars with different perspectives produced publications, which explored the theory and methodology of ethnomusicology. Although each of the three, Merriam, Hood, and Nettl viewed the discipline from a different perspective, there were common threads.

Alan P. Merriam (1923-1980) played the clarinet in jazz bands. He obtained a B.A. in music from Montana State University and began studying for a master's degree in music at Northwestern University. He switched his academic focus when he became interested in anthropology as it applied to music and started studying under Melville Herskovits, a student of Boas. In 1950 he researched the music of the Montana Flathead Indians in the field. Merriam preferred to record real on-site performances rather than those in artificial settings such as an interview or recording studio. Detailed in his publication, *Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians* (1967), he observed subtle changes of performances over time. Merriam taught anthropology at Northwestern University and later at Indiana University. He conducted fieldwork on the music of the Plains Indian Nations and adhered to the established methodology of anthropology; that is gathering the information on the music in the field and then objectively studying it in a university setting. He understood that there may be significant differences in perspective between the cultural insider and the field working outsider.

Merriam detailed his approach to ethnomusicology in *The Anthropology of Music* (1964). He defined ethnomusicology as the study of music in culture and outlined areas of study that were essential to the discipline. These included: the instruments used in the

music performance; the role and status of the musicians in the culture; the history of the music; the function of the music in the culture; and the creative elements of the music. He advocated a three-part model of music to facilitate the study of music in a systematic manner. The first component is the sound of the music, which includes the scales, rhythms, timbre, dynamics, and instruments related to the music. The second component is the culture's concept of music, which includes transmission, training, the place of the music in the society, and what is deemed music and what is not. Merriam's third component of music is behaviour, which includes the physical actions and reactions of the musicians and the listeners. He always advocated two basic procedural steps when researching music in its cultural context: systematic field study followed by objective analysis away from the field. He criticized laboratory-based comparative studies where he felt cultural facts were applied only to support theories.

Mantle Hood (1918-2005) had a degree in music composition from the University of California at Los Angeles and experience as a performing musician. He conducted extensive fieldwork in Indonesia and Africa and believed that fieldwork and study could not be separated; they had to be viewed as one. In order to study music effectively, he felt it was necessary to participate in the music. When conducting fieldwork in Java, he learned to play the rebab, a traditional instrument of the area. Hood felt this experience provided credibility to his discussions of musical skill, style and demeanour. His approach was bi-musicality — the ability to learn to play and comprehend a musical instrument from another culture while maintaining the instrumental skills from his own culture. Mantle compared it to bilingualism, the ability to function effectively in two

languages.

In his book, *The Ethnomusicologist* (1971), Hood portrays the ethnomusicologist as an intense and passionate analyst, a person with Western-music training, writing skills, and the ability to meld field and laboratory methods into a single unit of study. He argues that researchers need to prepare for fieldwork by studying and obtaining an understanding of the culture they are about to enter. They must learn to be careful, always having patience and respect for the subjects. Hood advocates the use of filming and audio recording in the field, careful notation of instrument playing techniques, and the accompanying physical movements. To be effective, Hood felt that an ethnomusicologist must be interdisciplinary, proficient as a musician, historian, sociologist, journalist, sound engineer, archivist, and filmmaker.

Born in 1930 in Czechoslovakia, Bruno Nettl earned his Ph.D. in 1953 at Indiana University while studying with Herzog. His fieldwork took place in Iran, India, and among the Blackfoot Confederacy in Montana. Nettl produced *North American Indian Styles* (1954), which reviewed writings published before 1954. He taught ethnomusicology and anthropology at the University of Illinois. Nettl's interests include North American folk music, and urban folk music. He sees ethnomusicology as an interdisciplinary field of study within which fieldwork is a necessary element.

Nettl authored *Folk and Traditional Music of the Western Continents* (1965) and *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Issues and Concepts* (1983). Like his mentor, George Herzog, Nettl initially felt that fieldwork and lab-work (analysis) should be separate. For many years he advocated the comparative approach to ethnomusicology, arguing that one

can only absorb the music related information from a new culture by comparing it to that which is already known. He emphasized the comparative relationships between musical structure, social structure, and cultural values. In 1992, Nettl argued that evolving technologies have not lessened the value of the comparative approach. Nettl writes:

... the degree to which it is possible to do comparative work ... and to understand a musical system outside of one's own culture is a major issue of debate.

Techniques, methods, and technologies – recording, video recording, computer applications – have played a major role. An interest in shifting the focus of the field from the examination of static forms to the understanding of processes characterized ethnomusicology in the 1980s. (Nettl, 1992, pp. 376-377)

Although Nettl advocated a strict anthropological approach for many years, he remained acutely aware of how ethnomusicological methodology can change. More recently Nettl appears to be comfortable with the emergence of a more reflexive approach that makes the fieldwork experience as important as the subsequent analysis. In 2008, he wrote the following in the “Foreword” of *Shadows of the Field*:

... beginning in the late 1970s and snowballing by the 1990s, authors of book-length ethnographies made the fieldwork process increasingly part of the discourse ... we have come a long way in understanding how much the process of fieldwork affects the final outcome and how important it is for the reader to get a

sense of the relationships the author developed in the field. Everything that comes later – analysis, interpretation, theory – depends on what happened in the “field.” (Nettl, 2008, p. ix)

Song Collecting: Preservation, Romanticism, and Popularization

The structured academic fieldwork methods of Merriam, Hood, and Nettl are a direct contrast to the passionate arbitrary song collecting methods of a group of collectors who also went into the field with the intention of effectively researching folk music within a culture. These collectors, like their academic cousins, were well educated, but they had a different take on music research. They tended to focus primarily on song texts and considered the performers, the performance, and the cultural connections secondary. Beginning in the late nineteenth century and continuing throughout the twentieth century, a plethora of these song collectors with varied motivations and perspectives spread out across North America searching for Anglo American folk songs. In the early part of the twentieth century, there was an urgency among collectors to collect ballads before they were contaminated by external societal influences and instrumental music (Whisnant, 1983, p. 54).

English song collector Cecil Sharp travelled to the United States and the Appalachian Mountains in 1916 to search for the same songs that he had collected earlier in the English countryside. Sharp, who had a music background, was not an ethnomusicologist; he was a song collector, who viewed English folk songs as a product of small rural communities and he wanted to collect and preserve them before they

became tainted by the expanding industrial society. He felt folk songs were part of the foundation for English nationalistic thought and advocated for them to be taught in English schools. With three trips to the southern Appalachians¹³ he collected close to 1600 folk songs in areas that he felt were away from economic change. On his first trip, he collaborated with Olive Dame Campbell, a schoolteacher who had acquired an interest in folk ballads and had noted some while visiting some of the southern settlement schools. Campbell was an inclusive song collector who noted not only Child ballads, romantic ballads, and religious songs but also some of the locally composed ballads. This contrasted with Sharp, who excluded any form of popular song and religious music in his collecting. He was disposed to collecting what was to him “all that is native and fine” (Whisnant, 1983, p. 118). Nevertheless, the two collaborated on the book, *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, which contained songs collected by Sharp and some songs collected by Campbell. The book was edited by Sharp's assistant and co-researcher Maude Karpeles.

Maude Karpeles travelled with Sharp to the United States on his second trip to the southern Appalachians in 1917. Karpeles and Sharp travelled the region together for several months to note songs by hand from rural singers (Figure 2:2). The anonymous orally-transmitted ballad was the main object of their field research. Karpeles made more song collecting trips to North America after Sharp's death in 1924. For example in 1929, she spent time in Peterborough County, Ontario¹⁴ before going to Newfoundland.

13 The southern Appalachian Mountains run through the states of West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama.

14 The importance of Maude Karpeles in this history is the fact that she and Fowke came to know each other. Karpeles represents a link between Cecil Sharp and Edith Fowke. As will be discussed later, it is possible that Fowke was influenced by Karpeles to search for folk songs in the Peterborough area.



Figure 2:2 Cecil Sharp and Maude Karpeles note a song from a southern Appalachian singer

Located on page 39 of E. K. Wells *The Ballad Tree: A study of British and American ballads: Their Folklore Verse and Music* (1950)

Elizabeth Greenleaf from Vassar College travelled to rural Newfoundland in 1928 to manually document folk songs. She was joined in 1929 by a second Vassar student Grace Mansfield, who helped her notate the songs that were collected. Their research resulted in the publication *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland* (1933). The fact that Greenleaf and Mansfield were folklore students at Vassar influenced their strict third

person objective approach. The study of folk culture at Vassar was directed by Martha Beckwith, who had a PhD from Columbia, where she studied under German-educated anthropologist Franz Boas. Folklore was studied with an item-centred approach, whereby tales and songs were seen as local products that had survived from an earlier age. Folkloristic study of music continues to be pursued through the time-honoured methods of fieldwork, recording, and the study of texts and music (Titon, 2003, p. 77).

The romantic vision of the folk ballad was also held by Helen Creighton (1899-1989), who travelled her native province of Nova Scotia from the 1920s through the 1960s searching for songs and stories. Creighton was inspired by the song research of Harvard student Roy Mackenzie. Like Sharp, she had a romantic vision of folk songs and tended to exclude songs that she felt were inappropriate. Creighton first documented the song lyrics of her informants by hand and then learned the song melodies by playing them on a melodeon she carried with her. Later in her career Creighton purchased a tape recorder to record her informants. Creighton was a popularizer; she hosted a folk song program in the 1930s on CHNS radio in Halifax and encouraged some of her informants such as Finvola Redden to perform publicly (Davies, 2002). It has been argued that Creighton's educated, privileged, and urban background, caused her to be oblivious to historical, cultural, and racial facts. Similar to Cecil Sharp and the earlier collectors, Creighton's collecting was couched in the belief that there were havens of unspoiled folk in Nova Scotia but they were fast disappearing (Smith, 2001, p. 148). When Creighton began her collecting in the early 1930s, the "Child canon" approach still dominated research. Creighton sent the songs she collected to the English Folksong Society who

classified them variously as "good and worthy of publication" and "genuine, but better variants known elsewhere." To her credit, Creighton ignored the classifications and published songs of both categories (Robbins, 1993, p. 69; Robbins, 1992).

At the same time other American song collectors had different motivations. First there was John Lomax, the son of a Confederate veteran of the American Civil War, and father of Alan Lomax. Lomax spent his youth in Texas where he became interested in cowboy songs. He went to Harvard to earn a master's degree and while there, he became acquainted with folk song scholar George Kittredge, who like his predecessor, Francis Child, considered English and Scottish ballads as the songs to be pursued and collected. Lomax took the view that folksong studies should not be so limited and with some support from the university, began collecting cowboy folk songs from newspapers, scrap-books and manuscripts he received after distributing circulars requesting songs. After the publication of his book, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (1910), Lomax began lecturing about his ballad work, with the help of his sons, John Jr. and Alan. In 1932, Lomax was named Honorary Consultant to the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress (Hart and Kostyal, 2003, p. 20).

John Lomax's son, Alan, studied philosophy at the University of Texas and, like his father, attended Harvard. In 1933, he joined his father on the initial field trips to gather folk songs for the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress. They started by using a Dictaphone recording machine to record songs sung by sharecroppers and prisoners in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. These were areas of collecting that collectors such as Sharp, Karpeles, Greenleaf, and Creighton would never

have considered. The earlier collectors sought the romantic and pure and ignored songs based on the topics such as crime, war, racism, and labour. John and Alan Lomax obviously had a different view of folk music than previous collectors. Dena Epstein (2003) commented that “songs recorded in prison work-camps of the southern states were lineal descendents of the nineteenth-century worksongs, but, since genteel nineteenth-century collectors did not frequent prisons, we may never know what was sung there before the new breed of collectors led by John Lomax appeared” (p. 176).

From 1937 to 1942, Alan Lomax was Assistant in Charge of the Archive of Folk Song of the Library of Congress to which he and his father and numerous collaborators contributed thousands of field recordings. Lomax also had an interest in oral history and recorded interviews with many of the same musicians that he recorded musically including, Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly (Huddie Leadbetter), and Muddy Waters. He was an acquaintance of folksinger Pete Seeger, who had been an intern at the archive. Lomax produced recordings, concerts, and radio shows in the U.S and in England. He was an influential collector and popularizer. It could be argued that he was, in part, responsible for the folk music revivals both in the United Kingdom and North America because of his influence with important folk singers such as Pete Seeger and his personal connection with carriers of the folk song tradition such as Guthrie and Leadbelly.

All of these music researchers and song collectors tended to have their own perception of fieldwork. Nettl, Merriam, and Hood retained their anthropological objective approach, but others like Helen Creighton, who had some basic formal education in folklore and folk music, created their own approach, which although

successful, has been criticized by some scholars as overly subjective. The objective/subjective arguments have been addressed with the emergence of the reflexive concept of fieldwork, which enables scholars to better define where they are situated within their research area and adapt to societal change. Professor of ethnomusicology at the University of California, Timothy Cooley writes:

The shift in ethnomusicological method from a modern era science paradigm toward more experimental forms of fieldwork is in part a response to changing world orders... Fieldwork in ethnomusicology has kept up with these changes, but the ethnomusicological literature on fieldwork has not. (Cooley, 1997, p. 11)

Edith Fowke and Helen Creighton were not trained anthropologists; they were song collectors who recorded singers in the field, and later transcribed the music and the text. They did not participate in the music and were not a part of the culture that produced the music, but they were present when the music was performed. Could it be argued that Fowke and Creighton did not fully comprehend the cultural aspects of their informants' performances because they were not participating in the music? Possibly, but being strictly an observer did not impede them from documenting the performance. Creighton, unlike Fowke, would attempt to replicate the performance afterwards, using her melodeon to recreate the melody.

Overall, the observe and record fieldwork approach of Fowke and Creighton in the 1950s and 1960s was similar to the approach of Sharp, Greenleaf, and Lomax.

However, twenty years later in the 1980s, the reflexive approach to fieldwork began to become the norm. One practitioner of the reflexive methodology is Brown University professor, Jeff Todd Titon. When Titon set out to study the work of American blues musician Lazy Bill Lucas, he did so as an ethnomusicologist and a musician. Titon, an accomplished guitar player, participated in the music, socialized with the musician, recording and making notes throughout. He viewed Lucas as a living part of the culture. Titon (1997) writes: “Fieldwork is no longer viewed as observing and collecting (although it surely involves that) but as experiencing and understanding music. The new fieldwork leads us to ask what it is like for a person (ourselves included) to make and to know music as lived experience” (p. 87).

Titon's approach embraces some aspects of Hood's earlier methodology since it requires the researcher to be capable of participating in the music that he/she is studying. He takes the additional step of positioning the researcher/author within the published narrative that discusses the results of the research. Titon's methodology is dependent on a continuing self-awareness during research and the ability to include a research narrative in the data. For years, there have been ongoing arguments regarding fieldwork and the techniques required to conduct it effectively. As time changes, so does culture. The concept that elements of culture can be collected before they disappear or change radically is not practical. Anthropologist James Clifford argues that in the twentieth century cultural differences are not stable. He writes that distinctions are simultaneously being destroyed and created. Cultural diversity is not waning; one diversity is being replaced by another (Clifford, 1988, pp. 13-17). Titon (2003) argues: “Decades ago,

North American academic (that is university-trained) folklorists gave up the notion that there is a separate group of people, 'the folk,' rural and illiterate, whose survivals from an earlier age must be preserved and studied" (p. 77).

In studies of culture, the distinct separation between fieldwork and analysis is no longer clear. Barz (1997) observes: "What ethnomusicologists do in the field is not totally separable with what they do out of the field, yet much of the focus in ethnomusicological writing and teaching until now has centered around analyses and ethnographic representations of musical cultures instead of the rather personal world of the understanding, experience, knowing, and doing of fieldwork" (p. 205). Cooley (1997) writes that the original fieldwork was motivated by a fear that native cultures were vanishing. The conception of fieldwork as the collection of data to be analyzed in the laboratory persisted through to the 1950s. Since then, fieldwork and analysis changed and the two distinct perceptions of ethnomusicology surfaced, represented by Alan Merriam and Mantle Hood. It follows that researchers could consider rejecting the concept that human culture is objectively observable.

The Reflexive Approach

The reflexive writing associated with ethnomusicology is, in part, intended to make published work more accessible. Tilton's *Powerhouse for God: Speech, Chant, and Song in an Appalachian Baptist Church* (1988) is an example of such a publication. The book contains a complete and unique insight into a mountain culture that views the music, prayer, and teachings of the church as a focal point of its existence. For an eight-

week period in the summer of 1977, Titon lived amongst the members of the church. He ate with them, played music with them, visited with them, and attended all of their church services. He describes this entire experience, from his personal viewpoint, in a narrative style while still presenting a scholarly analysis of the music and the culture. Titon balanced the scholarly and the personal narrative effectively to create a book that was both accessible and informative. More recently in an essay, Titon reflected on the fieldwork methodology that he first used in the 1970s. He argued that the effectiveness of the reflective research experience permits the researcher to engage or “visit” the informant as an equal that allows both to become part of the narrative. Titon writes:

Visiting means treating others with respect, care, modesty, courtesy, exchange, and reciprocity. It means establishing a sound and hopeful relationship before “getting down to purpose,” ... Visiting, friendship: these are the products of a music-making epistemology, and they ground fieldwork in a musical being-in-the-world. They implicate music not language (talk, writing), as the basis for knowing people making music. (Titon, 2008, p. 38)

The dilemma of the researcher-participant is further emphasized in an essay by Neil Rosenberg of Memorial University. The essay “The Devil in the Back Seat” was published in *Fields of Folklore, Essays in Honor of Kenneth S. Goldstein* (1995).¹⁵ In this essay, Rosenberg, a fine banjo player as well as a scholar, discusses a particular field-trip that he embarked on to locate and record a particular New Brunswick singer whom he

¹⁵ Kenneth Goldstein, an American folklorist, is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

understood knew a large number of lumbering songs. Rosenberg's contact to the singer was a previous informant, a fiddle-player who had access to local musicians. This fiddle-player offered to have Rosenberg meet and possibly record the singer at a backwoods party. One condition of the introduction to this singer was that Rosenberg bring his banjo along. Rosenberg writes:

I travelled to the party by car with Frank (the fiddle-player) and two others, a younger guitarist named Pete and an older man named Walt who was a step-dancer and played just enough fiddle to keep the music going when Frank took a break. En route a bottle of rum was produced from under the front seat and passed around. Conversations developed into a story telling session ... I made a mental note of these personal experience narratives ... When we reached the party, it was already in full swing. The old singer ... was there but he was quite drunk and would sing no more than one or two verses of any song ... I was not able to document (any part of his performance) ... because as a musician I was obligated to help provide the music for the entire evening's worth of singing and dancing ... Such was the uproar that even if I had been free and the singer able to perform coherently, I could not have made a recording ... I didn't really mind that the evening's music required me to spend virtually all of my participant-observer time as a participant. Our obligations to the people we study often must be met by providing useful services for individuals upon demand. Such services are usually worth the trouble; in this case when I returned to record the singer the next day

(the singer) greeted me cordially and commented on the previous night's music. I recorded a substantial number of his songs. (Rosenberg, 1995, pp. 246-247)

Contemporary views of music and place

Alan Merriam viewed the discipline of ethnomusicology as the study of music in its cultural context. Martin Stokes (1997) argued that this perspective could be altered. Music might actually be the element upon which cultures were formulated and defined. In a contemporary sense, “the social and cultural worlds that have been shaped by modernity ... would be hard to imagine without music” (Stokes, 1997, p. 3). Stokes writes:

The musical event, from collective dances to the act of putting a cassette or CD into a machine, evokes and organizes collective memories and presents experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity. The “places” constructed through notions of difference and social boundary. (ibid)

Stokes (1997) feels that music remains socially meaningful since it provides means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries that separate them (p. 5). He goes on to argue that without understanding local conditions, languages, and contexts it is still difficult for a researcher to understand meanings and context related to the music relative to its connection with the communal culture (pp. 6-7). Titon

(2008) reminds researchers that music was once objectified, collected, and recorded in order to be transcribed, and transcription facilitated analysis and comparison. Fieldwork is no longer viewed principally as observing and collecting but as experiencing and understanding music (p. 25).

The study of folklore achieved a new understanding in the late twentieth century, which permitted folklorists to contribute to the study of popular music forms (folk, blues, zydeco, bluegrass) in North America. In the 2003 edition of the *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, Titon explains that “Folklore-as-performance (which included customs and material culture as well as those aspects of folklore that would be recognized as 'performed') paid particular attention to performer (folk artist or tradition-bearer) and audience, and to the rules (community aesthetics) by which folklore performances proceed (p. 77).” Titon goes on to state that the folkloristic study of popular music at the beginning of the 21st century is coming closer to approaches of an ethnomusicology and cultural studies perspective. Regardless of the changing definition of folklore, folklorists continue to pursue their studies through time-honoured methods of fieldwork, recording, and the subsequent study of texts and music (p. 77).

Reconciling folk song contamination

The peasant traditions, valuable survivals from a pre-industrial age, should be collected and preserved before they vanished (Titon, 2003, p. 76). Throughout this discussion, reference has been made to the fact that collectors and folklorists felt some urgency to record folk songs before they became permanently altered by external

influences. Cecil Sharp concentrated on collecting from areas that were remote from economic change because he wanted to preserve songs before they became tainted by the expanding industrial society. Sharp ignored instrumental music. Whisnant (1983) explains that in the Appalachian region there was an urgency on the part of collectors such as Sharp to record ballads before they were contaminated by growing local music elements such as banjos and guitars (p. 54). University of North Carolina professor, Robert Cantwell writes that Sharp was enamoured by the Appalachians in a romantic sense. He felt he had discovered a lost aristocracy. Cantwell explains:

Sharp wrote of Kentucky “I don't think I have ever seen such lovely trees and wildflowers.”... The people, he thought, were “just exactly what the English peasant was one hundred or more years ago,” except that, having owned their own land for three or four generations, “they are freer.” (Cantwell, 2003, p. 239)

Preservationist folklorists and song collectors were initially uneasy with popular music trends because they felt the mass appeal and commercial motives would supplant folk music. As a result, as a group, they either ignored popular music or viewed popular music as a contaminated product, but one in which folk elements could be discerned and rescued. Inevitably, these folklorists gave up the notion that there is a separate group of people, 'the folk,' rural and illiterate, whose culture had to be preserved and studied. They came to understand that rural folk singers in remote areas could not only read, but could write-out the lyrics to ballads. Folklorists also came to the realization that some rural

fiddle players could actually notate and read music (Titon, pp. 76-77).

All of this makes sense in retrospect because popular song and balladry were intertwined in England and North America from the mid eighteenth century onward.

Oliver (2003) points out:

It is likely that the earliest collectors were themselves singers, while the printers of broadsides, ballad sheets, songsters and chapbooks were among the first publishers of traditional songs. Their street literature was certainly known to the earliest song collectors, who sometimes included the simple compositions of such printer-vendors in their song collections as authentic traditional songs. (p. 44)

A statement made by Maude Karpeles in 1918 about the modern influences in southern Appalachia now seems contentious. She wrote: “The region is no longer the folksong collectors paradise, for the serpent, in the form of the radio, has crept in, bearing its insidious hill-billy (sic) and other 'pop' songs” (Cantwell, p. 240). Ironically, it was the radio that was partially responsible for the folk song revival of the late 1940s and early 1950s that would, to some extent, rejuvenate Karpeles' career. Concerning the modernity of folk music and balladry, music journalist Nick Tosches (*Rolling Stone, New Yorker*) writes that street balladry, the roots of traditional American music, was popular music. He argues that street balladry did not really die at the end of the nineteenth century. Its centre became America, instead of Great Britain and its form of publication became phonograph records, instead of broadsides (Tosches, 1977, p. 17).

It can be argued that radio and recordings have actually become the means for keeping traditional music alive. For example Child ballad 200, a song about a high-born lady who leaves her lord and land for the love of a gypsy, is one of the songs that came to America from Britain in the nineteenth century. The song accumulated some alternate titles along the way such as “The Gypsy Laddie,” “Gypsy Davy,” “Black Jack David,” and “Black Jack Gypsy.” It underwent some lyric changes to suit various situations. Paramount Records released a version in 1929, sung by Professor and Mrs. I. G. Greer under the title “Black Jack Davy.” Cliff Carlisle recorded the song for Decca Records in 1939. The Carter Family recorded a version for Okeh records in 1940 (Tosches, 1977, p. 18). Alan Lomax recorded folksinger Woody Guthrie singing it the same year. The song even became part of the rock revolution when it was recorded in 1956 by rockabilly singer Warren Smith, who copyrighted it under his own name (Tosches, 1977, p. 8). The Smith recording (Figure 2:3) was made in Memphis at the Sun Recording Service, which at the time was recording Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Johnny Cash. In 2007, I included a version of the song in my musical/drama *Fowke Tales*.¹⁶

16 It should be noted that most musicians involved in the mid-1950s form of rock music, including myself, learned orally, because sheet music for the majority of this material was unavailable. We would place a recording on the turntable and play it over and over until we could play the guitar parts and phrase the vocal to match the recording. If a recording was not available, we would be more patient and attempt to learn the song or instrumental piecemeal by listening to radio or jukebox play of the tune. I still learn music in this manner. From my perspective, oral transmission remains alive.



Figure 2:3 A tangible connection between Child ballads and mid-1950s rock

Located on page 9 of *Country: The Biggest Music in America* (1977) by N. Tosches

Fowke: scholar, collector, and popularizer

The historical outline of the evolution of folk song collecting provides sufficient background against which Fowke's collecting perspectives and fieldwork techniques can be compared. It is acknowledged that Fowke went into the field and recorded a body of Ontario folk songs, which would likely have never been heard if she had not persisted in her belief that there was an Ontario folk song tradition. There is no question that Fowke's volume of work is impressive and important. There are some scholars, who applaud and endorse her efforts. Others feel that Fowke's focus on the text and history of folk songs impeded her ability to effectively investigate the connection between the songs and the rural culture that nurtured and preserved them for more than a century. The

ethnomusicological construct of studying the structure of traditional music and defining its place within a culture was difficult to apply to Fowke because she was a collector and popularizer. She understood that songs were collected in part to be analyzed, but more importantly to her, they were also to be made available publicly to all Canadians. Initial efforts along these lines will be explored in Chapter 3.

Fowke was astute enough to recognize that aspects of methodology used by earlier collectors could be helpful. For example, she was familiar with the field trips of Cecil Sharp, who networked to locate singer/informants during his field trips in southern Appalachia. Sharp stayed at the home of Olive Dame Campbell, who introduced him to informants and helped him build a collecting network. In the Peterborough, Ontario area, Fowke did the same thing by first recording and then befriending Mary Towns, who guided her to local informants and facilitated her networking. Conversely, Fowke rejected the narrow definition of folk songs advocated by Sharp, Karpeles, and Creighton. She readily included locally composed songs, songs of labour unrest, and even bawdy songs in her collecting. If she felt a song was good, she wanted a recording of it, regardless of the subject matter. Fowke used a tape-recorder to collect songs in the field, similar to Helen Creighton and Alan Lomax. Fowke, as a popularizer, adapted the Alan Lomax model of collecting in that she made many of her field recordings available commercially to the general public. Fittingly, several of the Lomax and Fowke recordings were produced through Folkways Records of New York City. Just as Lomax promoted the recordings and personal appearances by some of his informants such as Huddie Ledbetter (Leadbelly) and Woody Guthrie, so did Edith Fowke with her singer/informants such as

Tom Brandon and O.J. Abbott.

Fowke was a collector who utilized materials she recorded in the field along with selected manuscripts to build her collection. During her research, Fowke found manuscripts in handwritten song books that came into her possession. In some cases handwritten ballads came to her in the mail from acquaintances. Unlike Sharp and Karpeles, Fowke had no problem with ballads sung with instrumental accompaniment. Folksinger Merrick Jarrett, who worked with Fowke on CBC radio, told me that Fowke was comfortable having him play guitar when he was singing, as long as he enunciated the words correctly and did not change them. With respect to instrumental music, Fowke came to understand that it was embedded in Ontario rural culture and therefore felt compelled to deal with it. The result was that she recorded fiddle music in the Peterborough area and was involved in the production of a fiddle album for Folkways Records. Fowke was an inclusive collector and her mission was simple. Bring the music of the people back to the people.

CHAPTER 3

EDITH FOWKE AND THE SONG COLLECTORS

The previous chapter outlined some of the historical interaction between the academic disciplines of ethnomusicology and folklore, and the practice of folk song collecting. The discussion included the contributions of a few specific researchers, who each in their own way sought and documented songs and melodies, which were assumed not to have been written down when created and had survived through oral transmission. This chapter explores Edith Fowke's connections to some of the individuals involved in the aforementioned areas of study. Accordingly, a discussion of what they were actually trying to collect and understand would be helpful.

Defining Folk Music

Bohlman points out that the IFMC (International Folk Music Council) was created in 1947 to assist in the preservation, dissemination, and practice of folk music of all countries.¹⁷ It provided a forum for conflicting views of folk music and IFMC members discussed the definition of folk music for years. Bohlman argues that it is pointless to apply a common definition of folk music to cover, for example, Europe, North America, and the Middle East. Such a definition would also have to include folk music from rural and urban communities as well as working and middle class communities, and other socially separate groups (Bohlman 1988, xv-xix).

In 1955, Karpeles rendered a definition that was acceptable to the IFMC and

¹⁷ The IFMC changed its name to the International Council for Traditional Music in 1981.

related to the English tradition. She defined folk music as a “music that has been submitted to the process of oral transmission. It is the product of evolution and is dependent on the circumstances of continuity, variation and selection” (Karpeles, 1955, p. 6).¹⁸ According to Bohlman, such a definition does not acknowledge the fact that folk music could be viewed in a changing world as a variable that is better defined by considering the elements of collection, classification, canonization, and popularization. These elements are changing and Bohlman argues for the acceptance of external influences and the importance of the individual folk musician as an agent of change and creativity. He advocates recognizing external influences and their link to internal change. As well, he calls for an end of the idealization of the folk of the past and the emphasis on trying to rescue its survival. Instead, embrace the changes and reformulate our canons of folk music and recognize the new texts that change has provided (Bohlman 1988, xv-xix). Bruno Nettl offered the following detailed definition of folk music in *Folk and Traditional Music of the Western Continents* (1965). Nettl writes:

Defining folk music is not an easy task. Several criteria can be used, and each, applied alone, is unsatisfactory. The main one is the transmission by oral tradition. Folk music is not, in its native setting written down. As a result it develops variants, and the original form of a song is rarely known. Folk music may originate anywhere but it is normally created by untrained, nonprofessional musicians, and performed by singers and players with little or no theoretical

¹⁸ Karpeles' definition reflects some of the thought regarding folk music in the mid twentieth century when Edith Fowke was beginning her fieldwork.

background ... folk and non-literate cultures do have a music history; they allow their music to change, their compositions to be altered, and their repertory to be turned over. Folk music is frequently associated with other activities in life, but it also serves as entertainment. And most important, folk music is the musical expression of a whole people or a tribe, or a significant portion of a culture; folk song must be performed and accepted in order to remain alive – which is, of course due to our first characteristic, oral tradition. (Nettl 1965, pp. 13-14)

In 2008, Bohlman updates his perspective on the ongoing changes in folk music and fieldwork. He observes that throughout the history of folk music, folk song scholarship has most completely represented the past. A folk song comes into existence in the past, assuming authority through claims made for its age and timelessness. However, certain types of change are predictable and are really not those of the past. Fieldwork as a research method brings the researcher into touch with the present reality of the music. The fieldworker's observations and notes are made in the present and he/she must carefully consider the boundaries between the past and present (Bohlman, 2008, p. 248-259 and 258). Bohlman simply emphasizes that folk music is in an ongoing state of flux and field research and analysis must always take this into consideration. As will be shown, Edith Fowke dealt with the varying elements of folk music in her own creative manner.

Edith Fowke and the Ballad Tradition

As discussed previously, eighteenth and early nineteenth century collectors initially concentrated their folk song search on songs that fell into the broad category of ballads, which are songs that tell a story in uncomplicated verse and tune. Ballads fall within Nettl's definition because their origins are generally not attributable to any single person and they relied on oral transmission to remain alive. Edith Fowke's interest in ballads likely evolved from her interest in stories and poems that began in elementary school and continued through university. Her master's thesis focused on the nineteenth century English poet and novelist George Meredith (Ross, 1996, p. A18).

Fowke considered the story the object of the search and Canadian ballads with English, Scottish, and Irish origins contained plenty of stories that ranged from tragic love to the supernatural. To recognize older ballads that had already been documented and categorized by subject matter, Fowke became acquainted with the collection of English and Scottish ballads by Francis Child and the broadside ballads catalogued by Malcolm Laws. She also studied the work of folklore and folk song collectors such as Helen Creighton, Marius Barbeau, Kenneth Goldstein, Maude Karpeles, and Alan Lomax. Fowke likely used their collective experiences as an educational precedent when she set out to collect folk songs in rural eastern Ontario. She was a novice collector when she began her fieldwork, but she was well prepared to recognize older folk songs by listening to the text and noting the song structure. This was crucial during her early fieldwork because it helped her recognize a ballad sung by Peterborough area singer Mary Towns as a variant of a well-known British broadside (Figure 3:1). Fowke recorded

the ballad during the spring of 1957 on one of her first field trips and, at the time, she understood that she had made an important discovery.



Mrs. William Towns

A fair maid walked in her father's garden,
A gentleman he was passing by,
He stepped up to her and kindly viewed her,
Saying, "Lady, lady, won't you fancy me?"

"To fancy you, a rich man of honours,
A rich man of honours you seem to be,
You might have fancied some rich young lady,
With plenty of servants to wait on thee."

"It's look over yonder at that fine castle,
With windows around it on every side,
I'll make you mistress of that fine castle
If you'll consent, love, and be my bride."

"Oh what care I for your fine castles,
Or what care I for the stormy sea,
What care I for your gold and silver
If my dear Willie sails home to me."

"Oh since you say that your love's a sailor,
Oh since you say that your love's on sea,
Perhaps he is dead or else he is drowned,
And the stormy ocean may be his grave."

"Now if he is dead I do wish him happy,
And if he's alive he'll sail home to me.
'Tis for his sake I will never marry
Till my dear Willie sails home to me."

He put his hands into his pocket,
His fingers they being neat and small,
He drew a ring that was broke between them,
And when she saw it, 'twas down she fell.

"Stand up, stand up, my pretty fair maid,
Stand up, stand up, and unto me,
For I've brought home both gold and silver,
And the stormy ocean to cross no more."

"If you be Willie, you looks deceives me,
Your very features seem strange to me.
Seven long years makes an alteration,
'Tis seven long years since you sailed from me."

A Fair Maid Walked in Her Father's Garden
(Recorded in Douro, Ontario by Edith Fowke)
From the liner notes of *Folk Songs of Ontario*
(Folkways FM4005)



THE SAILOR'S RETURN

As a fair maid walked in a garden,
A brisk young sailor chanced to spy,
He stepped up to her thinking to have her,
And said fair maid can you fancy I.

You appear to be a man of honour,
A man of honour you appear to be,
How can you impose on a poor woman,
Who is not fit your servant to be.

If you are not fit to be my servant,
I have a sincere regard for you,
I would marry and make you a lady,
For I have servants to wait on you.

I have a true sweetheart of my own,
It is seven years since he was gone,
And seven years more I will wait for him,
For if he's living he will return.

'Tis seven years since your lover left you,
I'm sure he's either dead or drown'd,
If he's living I love him dearly,
If he's dead with glory he's crown'd.

When he perceived her love was loyal,
It is a pity true love should be cross'd,
Says he I am thy poor and single sailor,
Who has often on the ocean been toss'd.

If you are my poor and single sailor,
Shew me the token you gave to me,
For seven years it makes an alteration,
Since my true lover has parted from me

He pull'd his hand out of his bosom,
His fingers being long and small,
Saying here's the ring we broke between us
When she saw it down she did fall.

Then he lifted her up clasped in his arms,
And gave her kisses one two and three
Saying I am thy poor and single sailor,
Who is just returned to marry thee.

The Sailors's Return
(Original Broadside from England
Broadsides of the Industrial North
M. Vicinus on page 31.

Figure 3:1 A British broadside variant recorded in the Peterborough area

Fowke and Child Ballads

Child ballads were a logical research focus for Edith Fowke because she was comfortable working with song lyrics and subject matter. Like Francis Child, Fowke majored in English at university and tended to identify and categorize songs according to the subject matter revealed in the lyrics. Fowke came to know the Child catalogue and if she recognized a song she was collecting, or had collected, as a Child ballad or a variant of a Child ballad, she would note the local name of the song along with the Child ballad reference number. This was similar to the practices of previous collectors such as Cecil Sharp, Maude Karpeles, and Elizabeth Greenleaf. For example when Fowke recorded Joe Kelly of Downers Corners, Ontario in the late 1950s singing a song called “The Golden Vanity,” she noted both the song title and the fact that it was “Child 286.” She went on to write that Kelly learned the song from his father who worked in a lumber camp and mentions another version of the song that she recorded from O.J. Abbott (Fowke, 1958, p. 8). While Fowke collected and categorized ballads of all types and origins, she appeared to view herself for a period of time as a serious collector of Child ballads and specifically referenced her collection occasionally. The following is an excerpt from a 1963 Fowke article printed in *Midwest Folklore*:

The Child ballads in my collection include sixteen titles, of which five have been recorded more than once, making a total of twenty-five. In the list below the Child titles are followed by the title used by the singers. Most of the titles are quite widely represented in North America but [the following] five are sufficiently rare

to be worth considering in some detail.

#4 Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight (The Dapherd Gray)

#12 Lord Randall (Henry My Son)

#17 Hind Horn (The Old Beggarman) ...

#76 The Lass of Roch Royal (Lord Gregory)

#81 Little Musgrave and Lord Barnard (Lord Banner's Wife)

(Fowke, 1963, p. 125)

As outlined on page 36, Child arranged ballads in groups according to similar song texts.. The ballads in Child's collection include: ballads about superstitions of various kinds including stories of fairies, elves, ghosts, and popular heroes; tragic love-ballads; other tragic ballads; love ballads not tragic, ballads of Robin Hood and his followers, ballads of other outlaws and feuds; historical ballads relating to characters and/or events; and miscellaneous ballads including the humorous and satirical. The ballads in Child's collection have a unique characteristic, which makes them discernible from broadside ballads. A broadside ballad tends to consistently emphasize the first person's perspective while a Child ballad is more impersonal in that it is most often presented from a third person's perspective, even though the text could include large sections of purported dialogue. Fowke relished the pursuit of information relating to song lineage and Harvard professor Child's catalogue was a useful research tool for her. Another scholarly catalogue that Fowke came to use extensively in her research and writing was a catalogue of broadside ballads developed by George Malcolm Laws Jr.

Fowke and Broadside Ballads

Vicinus (1975) argued that broadsides, sheets of paper with prose or poetry written on one side, may have been the most widespread form of written literature from the beginning of printing to the end of the nineteenth century. They were the chief reading matter of the poor and were sold on the street in Great Britain and later North America. Broadside sales were a lucrative business for printers who hired hawkers to sell the sheets for a penny or halfpenny, a price that rarely varied through the centuries.

As mentioned previously, the broadside stories tended to be presented from a first person perspective. Many of the ballads begin with the standard phrases of "Come all ye" or "As I went out one day." They were normally sung to the popular tunes of the day, which could often have a wider range than the older ballads. Many broadside ballads came to North America from Great Britain through oral transmission and many broadsides published by North American printers also entered oral tradition. The regularity of line length and rhyme in conjunction with singable tunes made many of these ballads a recognizable component of American popular music.¹⁹

George Malcolm Laws Jr., one of the major broadside scholars, was born in 1919 in Philadelphia. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Pennsylvania. Laws' interest in ballads led to his dissertation on American balladry. In 1942 he began teaching in the university's English faculty and continued to research American and English ballads. His main contribution to scholarly work on balladry

¹⁹ Standard line length and syllabic continuity in conjunction with harmonic patterns based on the 1st, 4th, and 5th notes of the scale are basic elements of the American blues, country, and popular music that evolved in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s.

consists of four publications on the topic: *Native American Balladry* (1950, revised 1964), *American Balladry from British Broad-sides* (1957), *Anglo-Irish Balladry in North America* (1962) and *The British Literary Ballad* (1972). Along with discussion regarding ballads and lists of ballads, these publications reveal a central feature of Laws work, which is an alpha-numeric cataloguing system based on ballad subject matter, origin, and story outcome.

Laws' system of coding folk songs consists of a letter of the alphabet followed by a number. The letter indicates the subject matter and the origin of the song. For example, the letter A denotes a North American war ballad while J indicates a war ballad that was derived from a British broadside. The song numbers chronologically follow the letter, beginning from #1 followed by the title: for example: J 7 The Dying Soldier, J 8 The True Paddy's Song. This basic method of bringing together similar ballads allowed Laws to compile a catalogue, which not only covered broadside ballads but also dealt with other ballads that had broadside characteristics or were derived from broadsides. The following are the ballad categories as given in Laws (1957):

Ballads in American Balladry and broadsides printed in the United States:

- A - War Ballads
- B - Ballads of Cowboys and Pioneers
- C - Ballads of Lumberjacks
- D - Ballads of Sailors and the Sea
- E - Ballads About Criminals and Outlaws
- F - Murder Ballads
- G - Ballads of Tragedies and Disasters
- H - Ballads on Various Topics
- I - Ballads of the Negro

Ballads in American Balladry derived from broadsides printed in Britain:

J - War Ballads

K - Ballads of Sailors and the Sea

L - Ballads of Crime and Criminals

M - Ballads of Family Opposition to Lovers

N - Ballads of Lovers' Disguise and Tricks

O - Ballads of Faithful Lovers

P - Ballads of Unfaithful Lovers

Q - Humorous and Miscellaneous Ballads

Fowke and Ballad Research

Edith Fowke utilized the Laws and Child catalogues when she researched and composed her folk song articles and publications. The catalogues were a good fit for Fowke's focus on song text and origin and eventually she created her own hybrid cataloguing system, loosely based on Laws system, when cataloguing her own field recordings. The following paragraph from "British ballads in Ontario,"²⁰ published in *Midwest Folklore* demonstrates her knowledge of ballad lineage:

This article is designed to give a preliminary survey of the British ballads recorded from oral tradition in Ontario over the past six years, pending more complete publications of texts and lyrics with tunes in book form. It will include three check-lists: (1) of the Child ballads, (2) of the broadside ballads listed in Laws' *American Balladry from British Broadsides*, and (3) of other British ballads

²⁰ This article, based on Fowke's rural Ontario fieldwork was written just as the fieldwork aspect of her career was declining. It follows the release of several commercial recordings based on her fieldwork but precedes her books on the topic. This article is discussed further in Chapter 8.

not listed by Laws; it will also give the texts of a few rare or unusual versions of Child ballads, and of some of the broadside ballads not hitherto reported in North America. (Fowke, 1963, p. 133)

Fowke's understanding of ballad form and content expanded beyond the Laws and Child collections as she continued her research. By the 1970s, she was able to authoritatively discuss ballad history, variants, singers, and collectors. She comprehended the idiosyncrasies of the categorization and numbering systems used by various collectors. The following endnote regarding the song "Lost Jimmy Whelan" reflects all of this expanded knowledge. Fowke writes in *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs*:

This lament inspired by the death of Jimmy Whelan was widely sung in Ontario, and it spread throughout the Maritime Provinces, Michigan, Maine, and Wisconsin. In addition to the versions Laws lists (NAB 150), Manny found it in New Brunswick (263), and Peacock in Newfoundland (385). Robert Walker and Mary Dumphy sing traditional versions on Folkways FM4001 and FE 4075 ... This ballad is almost certainly adapted from an older British one: *The Blantyre Explosion* in A. L. Lloyd's *Come All Ye Bold Miners* (129) is a relative, but the ancestor has not been identified. The tune is one commonly used for *The Lass of Glenshee*. (Fowke, 1973, p. 199)

Fowke was capable of recognizing and discussing singing styles, song structures, and song texts. She could readily recognize a ballad that she had never encountered before. In another of her meticulous notes from *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs*, Fowke discusses “The Footboy,” a ballad that she recorded from Emerson Woodcock of Peterborough. Fowke writes:

This ballad is puzzling: I have been unable to find it in any traditional collection in either Britain or North America, or in any broadside collection. It contains elements suggesting various known broadsides: the father who tries to prevent his daughter marrying a servant is common in ballads of “Family Opposition to Lovers”, and the device of planting items on the lover so he can be accused of robbery occurs in such songs as *William Riley* (M10),²¹ *Henry Connors* (M5) and *Mary Acklin* (M16). But in none of these is the lover hanged: at worst he is transported or imprisoned, although usually his sweetheart manages to free him ...The form and style of *The Footboy* seem closer to the popular ballads than to the broadsides. It uses a common ballad metre and a type of repetition more often found in older ballads. The fact that the lover is hanged also suggests that it dates from an earlier period than in those which he is transported, and the term “footboy” for a young manservant has a medieval flavour: it was in common use at the time of Shakespeare but had largely disappeared by the nineteenth century. (Fowke, 1973, p. 216)

21 Fowke uses Laws' category and song numbers under the assumption that the reader understands the Laws' system.

Fowke and Folklore

Fowke's ballad expertise enabled her to mix comfortably with a variety of scholars, whose interests included both folk song and folklore. Fowke appreciated the straightforward research perspectives of American educated folklorists like Kenneth Goldstein, MacEdward Leach, and Edward Ives. One of her first influential friends with a corresponding outlook was folklorist Kenneth Goldstein.

Kenneth Goldstein

Edith Fowke met Dr. Kenneth S. Goldstein (1927-1995) in 1954 in a Greenwich Village record shop. Goldstein was familiar with Fowke's book *Folk Songs of Canada* (1954), which was the topic of conversation when they first met. At the time Goldstein was a market researcher and analyst for a New York publishing company but he was also involved in folk music through his work as a music director with the Stinson, Folkways, and Riverside recording companies. Goldstein had conducted some field research in 1951 using a tape recorder to collect songs in upstate New York. From 1952 to 1957 he spent his summers collecting songs in western North Carolina with the exception of 1955 when he travelled to eastern Massachusetts.

Goldstein and Fowke became lifelong friends and working associates. There is little doubt that they talked at length about fieldwork long before Fowke ventured into the field. They shared similar perspectives because Goldstein, like Fowke, was interested in song and story texts. As well, he was a popularizer who collected folk songs and then made them available publicly through commercial recordings produced by the companies

with which he was involved. In 1959 and 1960 he travelled to Scotland on a Fulbright Scholarship to collect the song and story traditions of the lowland Scots. In 1963, Goldstein became the first Ph.D. in folklore and folklife to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania where he became the chairman of the Department of Folklore and Folklife for 19 years. One of Goldstein's contributions to folklore scholarship, outside of his collecting and recording, was his book, *A Guide for Fieldworkers in Folklore* (1964), which was based on his doctoral dissertation.

The book was published ten years after Goldstein first met and befriended Edith Fowke. It reflects some of the common Fowke/Goldstein thoughts on the topic. For example, Goldstein constantly refers to the fieldworker throughout *A Guide for Fieldworkers in Folklore* as a “collector.” In turn throughout her career, Fowke consistently referred to herself as a “collector” rather than a scholar. Goldstein includes a section in his book on the selection of supplies and equipment for fieldwork, including tape recording equipment (Goldstein 1964, pp. 41- 44). Fowke's husband Frank recalled that prior to her collecting fieldtrips in the mid-1950s, she visited Kenneth Goldstein in Philadelphia and returned with a tape recorder, presumably one Goldstein had selected for her (Panagapka, J. & Vikar, L., 2004, p. 81). Goldstein acknowledges the influence of Fowke in the “Foreword” of his book, *A Guide for Fieldworkers in Folklore*:

I wish to acknowledge help in the preparation of this work given to me by my friends and colleagues in folklore ... I have no doubt appropriated some of their concepts ... if they recognize certain ideas as being unmistakably theirs, I hope

they will forgive me for the seemingly silent appropriation I have made of those ideas. In this respect I wish especially to thank Vance Randolph, MacEdward Leach, Herbert Halpert, Harry Oster, Hamish Henderson, A.L. Lloyd, Frank Hoffman, Ellen Stecjert, Bruce Buckley, Alan Lomax, Edith Fowke, and Ed Cray. (Goldstein, 1964, p. xvii)

Goldstein's status within the American folklore community allowed Fowke access to the commercial recording contacts that she needed to produce her first vinyl folk song recordings and publishers who would consider her manuscripts. Fowke's desire was to popularize the songs that she had recorded in the field through a commercially available recording. Alan Lomax had pursued the same goal and Goldstein had worked with him. Goldstein encouraged Fowke to become a member of the American Folklore Society. His interest in folklore likely enhanced Fowke's interest in the topic and contributed to her decision to move away from song collecting in the late 1960s. The friendship between Fowke and Goldstein lasted until Goldstein's death in 1995. By then, Fowke was too ill herself to attend his funeral and asked her friend Dr. Skye Morrison to attend the proceedings in her place. Fowke acknowledged Goldstein's influence in the obituary she wrote for the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin*:

Ever since I met him, Kenny has been an important influence in my life. He encouraged my collecting, writing that my informants were “among the best traditional singers to be heard anywhere on this continent.” He suggested projects

for me, gave me helpful advice, and kept me up to date about new books and records and developments in folklore ... I doubt whether I could have done as much as I have without his help and encouragement. (Fowke, 1996, p. 24)

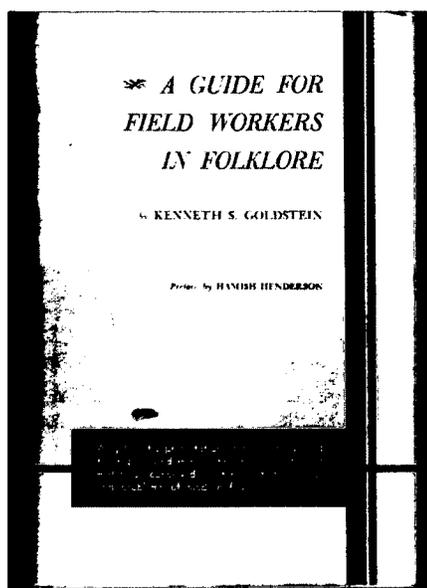


Figure 3:2 Fowke's copy of Goldstein's book with his inscription to her inside the front cover (Courtesy: Skye Morrison)

MacEdward Leach

American folklorist MacEdward Leach (1897-1967) visited Newfoundland shortly after it became part of Canada and was one of the first researchers to visit the island since Greenleaf and Karpeles. To my knowledge, Edith Fowke never worked with Leach, but she knew of his field trips to Cape Breton and Newfoundland that began in 1950. Leach, who taught at the University of Pennsylvania, had an approach to fieldwork that contained an element, which Edith Fowke would later emulate. Horace Beck, one of

Leach's students and fieldwork associates pointed out that Leach was able to find unique informants in the field because he relied on establishing contacts through community work rather than using names of possible "good informants" provided by his academic colleagues (MacEdward Leach Website (2012) www.mun.ca/folklore/leach/biography). The tape recorder had become an essential tool for folklore researchers when Leach collected in Atlantic Canada. Folklorist Neil Rosenberg made the following comments regarding Leach's trips to Newfoundland. Rosenberg (1994) writes:

MacEdward Leach of the University of Pennsylvania spent the summers of 1950 and 1951 in Newfoundland. Today his 41 hours of tape recordings from those summers are the oldest extant sound recordings of folksongs performed by Newfoundland outport singers. And they reflect the ongoing interest of American folklore scholars in Newfoundland. But from Leach's collection only a few texts found their way into print while a small number appeared on a 1966 Folkways album. Leach's activity had little public impact in Newfoundland or the rest of Canada. (p. 61)

Beverly Diamond of Memorial University, who worked on the MacEdward Leach website that is quoted on the previous page, noted that Leach revealed very little information about his informants. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, this was also an ongoing criticism of Fowke's work. Diamond writes the following about the Leach website: "It was clear that the most incomplete dimension of the website were the singer's

biographies. People were valued less than the songs themselves by many collectors of Leach's generation, but of course people matter most to the singers' families and friends” (Diamond, 2007, p. 9).

Fowke and the Newfoundland Song Tradition

MacEdward Leach's research followed an interesting period in Newfoundland song research, which resulted in Newfoundland folk songs becoming a part of Edith Fowke's *Folk Songs of Canada* (1954). Between the time of the 1920s fieldwork of Greenleaf, Mansfield, Karpeles and the post confederation research by Leach and others, the Newfoundland folk song void was filled by Gerald Doyle. Doyle was a St. John's businessman, who used free copies of his song book, *Old Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland* (1927), to promote his sales of cod liver oil and other patent medicines. Doyle collected song texts from friends and associates for his book, which he handed out to customers, schools, and community organizations. In the late 1930s, Doyle and musician friend, Robert MacLeod, took summer trips to the northeast coast of Newfoundland on Doyle's yacht to collect song texts. Doyle and MacLeod simply enjoyed singing songs, while playing the piano, and having a few drinks. Doyle updated his book in 1940 and although he and MacLeod were not serious scholars, many of the songs they published became part of the popular Newfoundland folk song canon including “Jack was Every Inch a Sailor,” “I's the B'y,” and “Lukey's Boat” (Rosenberg, 1994, pp. 59-60).

The connection between Fowke and Newfoundland began when two Toronto composers, Howard Cable and Leslie Bell travelled to Newfoundland to learn some songs for a CBC broadcast commemorating Newfoundland's entry into confederation. They encountered MacLeod, who taught them a few of the songs from the Doyle song book. Several of the songs were sung on the national CBC broadcast welcoming Newfoundland and shortly afterward, Leslie Bell's choral group recorded "I's the B'y." This opened the door for the recording of Newfoundland songs by non-Newfoundlanders like Alan Mills and Ed McCurdy. In Newfoundland, Doyle began to produce his own recordings of his songs by various groups and distributed them gratis, the same as the song books. The National Museum suddenly felt the need to research Newfoundland folk songs and dispatched Margaret Sargent to Newfoundland in 1950 and Kenneth Peacock in 1951 to document songs. Peacock recorded over 700 songs on his field trips, including songs from Doyle's associate Robert MacLeod. Peacock's research was published in the three volumes of *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports* (1965).

Neil Rosenberg (1994) writes that this overlapping repertoire of Newfoundland folk songs was useful to CBC broadcaster, Edith Fulton Fowke, who in the early 1950s began a regular weekly national CBC program from Toronto of folk music on records and included Newfoundland recordings (p. 62). Rosenberg goes on to mention that Fowke and Richard Johnston also felt the need to include a number of Newfoundland folk songs in their 1954 book *Folk Songs of Canada*. By the time the book was published, 22 of the 77 songs had Newfoundland origins (six from Doyle, six from Peacock, three from Karpeles, three from Greenleaf, two from Newfoundland writer Arthur Scammell and

two from composite sources). Fowke's collaborator on the book, Richard Johnston, explained the preponderance of Newfoundland (and Quebec) material in the book by saying that he consulted Leslie Bell, whom he regarded as the best authority he knew on Canadian folk music on account of his 1947 trip with Cable.²² Bell told him not to worry about anything west of the Quebec-Ontario border because there is not anything there. This thinking possibly moved Fowke and Johnston to consider Ontario as an area for folk song research (Rosenberg, 1994, p. 63). It is evident that Fowke, through her CBC radio broadcasts and her book, *Folk Songs of Canada* contributed to the popularization of Newfoundland songs and the subsequent nationwide perception of the province's song heritage.

Marius Barbeau

The European-based Canadian folk music tradition actually began in the early seventeenth century when folk songs from the north of France were performed in New France settlements such as Port Royal. The extent of this early folk music was revealed in the 1930s when Marius Barbeau reflected on the more than 4,000 French-language folk songs with another 3,000 versions of texts that he had recorded on his field trips in the areas of Quebec City and the Gaspé. He estimated that 95% of these songs originally came to North America between the years of 1608 and 1673 (Keillor, 2006, p. 57).

Canadian-born Marius Barbeau (1883-1969) was a graduate of Laval University and a Rhodes Scholar. He was working as an anthropologist for the museum branch of

²² This collecting trip was not particularly scholarly. According to singer Robert MacLeod, Cable and Bell visited his home and collected songs in the "proper fashion." They got some very good manuscripts from his singing after everyone had enjoyed some Hudson Bay rum (Rosenberg, 1994, p. 58).

the National Geographic Survey when he conducted his first fieldwork between 1911 and 1912 among the First Peoples Huron-Wendat/Wyandot around Quebec City and in Oklahoma, mostly collecting stories and songs. In 1914-1915, Barbeau carried out three months of fieldwork in the largest Tsimshian village, Lax Kw'alaams (a.k.a. Port Simpson) in British Columbia, Canada. His interpreter and collaborator was the Tsimshian hereditary chief, William Beynon. Barbeau continued his research in this area with further trips in 1923-24, 1927 and 1929 that included the Nisga'a of the Nass River Valley. Barbeau also conducted brief fieldwork with the Tlingit, Haida, Tahltan, and Kwakwakw'wakw (Kwakiutl).

Barbeau produced numerous monographs and essays based on his recordings during his lifetime, but much of his material, particularly on First Nations, has never been published. His data have been recognized as the most complete body of information on the social organization of North America's First Peoples. Today his extensive collection, including his recordings, resides at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. In 2005, the Audio-Visual Preservation Trust of Canada declared Marius Barbeau's radio broadcasts, television broadcasts, and ethnological recordings to be a masterwork. Barbeau collected both aboriginal songs and French-Canadian folk songs throughout his career, eventually accumulating approximately 13,000 texts, 8,000 with melodies.

Barbeau's influence on Edith Fowke was more subtle than Kenneth Goldstein's since her association with Barbeau was more formal. Fowke met Barbeau through Richard Johnston, her collaborator on *Folk Songs of Canada* (Panagapka & Vikar, 2004,

p. 85). She was present with Barbeau at the formative meetings of the Canadian Folk Music Society in the mid-1950s and continued to meet and correspond with Barbeau through the 1960s. Fowke summarized the effect of Barbeau on writers and researchers in a 1969 obituary in *The Journal of American Folklore*. She writes:

French-Canadian folktales, songs, art, handicrafts, and architecture, and English-Canadian songs ... A prolific writer and completely bilingual, he (Barbeau) published some fifty major books, as many more pamphlets and monographs, and some seven hundred articles in over a hundred different periodicals ranging from scientific journals to popular magazines and daily papers. Far from being an ivory-tower scholar, he spared no effort to preserve and promote folklore in as many ways as he could. In addition to his scientific works he wrote a number of books designed for the general public, and he encouraged other writers to use his materials. However busy he was, he always found time to answer the many people who wrote him for information and to receive cordially the many others who visited him at the Museum or his Ottawa home. (Fowke, 1969a)

More of Fowke's Connections

Edith Fowke was initially connected to the National Museum in the 1950s through her association with folk song researchers, Marius Barbeau and Kenneth Peacock, both of whom were employed by the Museum. These men had solid musical backgrounds and were involved, along with Fowke, in the formation of the Canadian

Folk Music Society in 1956. However, Fowke also had a desire to make a formal connection with The National Museum. In 1960, she negotiated with the Museum's Dr. Carmen Roy to have selected copies of her field recordings, on reel-to-reel tapes²³, placed in The Museum archives. Fowke was compensated financially for the tape recordings and the accompanying notes and transcriptions.

In New Brunswick, American-born Louise Manny developed an interest in the history and songs of the Miramichi district of New Brunswick, where she lived. She came to know Lord Beaverbrook (William Maxwell Aitken), who wanted her to record and document lumbering songs in rural New Brunswick. In 1947, he provided the funding and arranged for Reginald Wilson, a Miramichi-born, Rutgers/Dartmouth educated musicologist to work with her. The result was the establishment of the Miramichi Music Festival in 1958 and the publication *Songs of the Miramichi* (1968), which was developed from Manny's recordings. (This publication followed Fowke's *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* (1965), based on her field recordings.) One of the musicians who worked with Manny to check the musical transcriptions for *Songs of the Miramichi* was Norman Cazden from Massachusetts. A few years later, Cazden worked with Edith Fowke and wrote the musical analysis for Fowke's book, *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970).

Fowke shared a common methodological thread with Canadian researchers such as Barbeau, Creighton, Manny, and Peacock in that they all researched and documented living ballad traditions and did not simply focus on static texts. Fowke maintained a

²³ During my research, I listened to many of these tapes, specifically those of Peterborough area singers. The findings are discussed in Chapter 6. Portions of these tapes are also included in the audio documentary, Appendix G.

business-like relationship with all of the major song collectors like Creighton, Peacock, Karpeles, and Lomax as well as some other collectors like Philip Thomas from British Columbia and Barbara Cass-Beggs of Saskatchewan. For the most part the interaction between Fowke and the others was cordial; however, her relationship with Nova Scotia song collector and publisher Helen Creighton was often strained. They appeared to remain friends, but their differences led to some interesting interactions and confrontations. In order to better understand how the differing views of the two affected their collecting and writing, the following section examines some of the similarities and differences in the Creighton/Fowke relationship.

Edith Fowke and Helen Creighton

Although Fowke sometimes disagreed with the selective collecting of Helen Creighton (1899-1989), she admired Creighton's collecting ethic and the published results that included both folk songs and stories. In 1985, Fowke and Carole Carpenter discussed Creighton's collecting perspectives in *Explorations in Canadian Folklore*. Fowke and Carpenter write:

Helen Creighton began collecting folksongs in her native Nova Scotia in 1929 and in the succeeding years she garnered over four thousand songs, of which some seven hundred have been published in six major books ... She has also collected folktales and superstitions, particularly those dealing with the supernatural and has chronicled them in *Bluenose Ghosts* and *Bluenose Magic* ... Following in the

footsteps of Roy Mackenzie, Dr. Creighton was overjoyed to find the wealth of songs still alive in the Maritimes and she wrote colourfully of the many fascinating singers she recorded. As Professor John Robins of Victoria College noted in the preface to her first book: “There is an academic, clinical approach to folk-songs, and there is a sentimental approach, maudlin, or mocking as the case may be, but the ideal is a combination of the scientific and the sympathetic, and that is one that Miss Creighton has shown.” (Fowke & Carpenter, 1985, p. 105)

It is evident that Fowke thought very highly of Creighton despite the fact that their backgrounds and perspectives were quite different. Helen Creighton was born into a comfortable upper-class urban family in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia in 1899. Edith Fowke was born into a struggling working family in rural Lumsden, Saskatchewan in 1913. Creighton grew up to embrace conservative political views while Fowke accepted the Saskatchewan socialist views of Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) founder J. W. Woodsworth. Not only did their backgrounds differ, their interests as youths differed. Fowke was interested in books from an early age and studied literature and history at the University of Saskatchewan. She was first a schoolteacher before becoming a magazine editor in the late 1930s and 1940s. Creighton enjoyed music when she was young. She attended Halifax Ladies College and received a diploma in music from McGill University in 1915. Inspired by the folk song books of Roy Mackenzie, Creighton began travelling and collecting folk songs in 1929. Fowke began her collecting career 27 years later in 1956.

Both Creighton and Fowke had radio programs, which featured folk songs. They shared an interest in song texts and saw the literary aspects of songs as something to be studied and understood. However, they differed when it came to transcribing the melodies of the songs that they recorded. Creighton's musical background allowed her to comprehend melodies. She initially took a melodeon on her field trips in order to determine and note the melody of the song that she was collecting. On the other hand, Fowke, with no musical training, was unable to produce music notation to accompany the lyrics during her field trips. She had to seek musical collaborators, afterwards, to assist her in the transcribing of the melody.²⁴

Although they were friendly to each other, their differences in political and collecting philosophy caused Creighton and Fowke to clash publicly during Fowke's career. One such dispute arose over Fowke's collection of labour and protest songs, which Creighton felt were communistic and subversive and should not be collected.²⁵ Creighton restricted her research mainly to her home province of Nova Scotia and her conservative values were often reflected in the songs she collected and those she rejected. She was a selective collector, who preferred to concentrate on romantic material that she considered authentic to the region. As a result, she discarded protest songs and many locally composed songs. Creighton was very territorial and saw Nova Scotia and to a certain extent, New Brunswick, to be her exclusive area.

Fowke, on the other hand had a very different outlook. She was raised in rural

²⁴ The majority of the studied folk songs were sung and recorded without any instrumental accompaniment and because of the age of many informants, the melodies were difficult to discern at times. The significant difference between scholars such as Goldstein and Fowke versus Creighton was that the latter had the musical background to note the melody at the time of the recording or shortly thereafter.

²⁵ Further details of the exchange between Fowke and Creighton on this topic is found in Chapter 9.

Lumsden, Saskatchewan and the rural experience in Canada requires people to work together. The positive by-product of this background was Fowke's acquired ability to connect with people both socially and in the workplace. She met and befriended singers of all backgrounds and collected folk songs of all types, including romantic, protest, locally composed, imported, and bawdy songs. Fowke viewed all of Canada as her collecting territory. She travelled across the country, never hesitating to go where her research took her, all the time building an extensive social network. Fowke's highly successful career and large body of published work can be, in part, attributed to her social skills that began in her formative years in Saskatchewan. Chapter 5 presents Edith Fowke's life story, which provides more details about her early life and her ongoing struggle for recognition as a folk song collector and popularizer.

CHAPTER 4

PUBLISHED WORK ABOUT EDITH FOWKE

This chapter discusses the published work about Edith Fowke. It is an important focus since such published work is rare. This is unusual for a Canadian who is so widely recognized both nationally and internationally, and who authored a significant number of important books and articles. When I compiled the Fowke life story found in Chapter 5, I needed to first locate and review as much writing about Edith Fowke as I could in order to establish a starting point. It was not easy. Not only is there very little written about Edith Fowke, the majority of what is available is found in “hard to locate” limited circulation journals and magazines. There are a few articles in major newspapers, but these primarily discuss particular Fowke books and/or her recent activity at the time. I eventually found enough published material about Fowke to piece together an initial biographical framework. The preliminary framework enabled me to then focus my research to fill the informational gaps and clarify the significant elements of Fowke's life and work. Fortunately Fowke was a prolific writer and as she crafted her books and articles, she revealed enough fragments of autobiographical information to allow me to establish accurate timelines and verify or discard speculative information.

Detailed published articles about Fowke are sparse compared to the amount of literature she produced due to Fowke's desire to keep her private life and personal activity separate from her career. In my research, I became aware of information about Fowke's personal life that she did not want made public and decided not to include it. She was a

respected yet intimidating individual; she was very focused and intense. Perhaps these traits effectively discouraged those who considered writing about her in detail. In the end, Fowke was successful in keeping her private life under cover and in creating a public persona for her lecturing, radio, and written work. More literature about the life and work of Edith Fowke has emerged since her death than existed throughout her long life and working career. Nevertheless, the final result was a lacuna of biographical information available for any writer to formulate a major article or book.

Published Work about Edith Fowke (1954-1995)

Ottawa Citizen

In spite of her impressive volume of work from 1949 to 1970, Fowke received relatively little mention in major newspapers or journals. The following illustration is a rare newspaper article from 1954 that provides some basic details about Fowke and her work at the time. The piece, written by Canadian Press staff writer John Tracey, was clipped from the *Ottawa Citizen* and placed in a personal scrapbook by Canadian folk singer Tom Kines.²⁶ Although the article is titled “Maritimes and Quebec Lead in Song,” it is actually a review of the Fowke and Johnston publication *Folk Songs of Canada*.

What makes this review different from most other reviews of *Folk Songs of Canada* is that it is found in a major Canadian newspaper. As well, it is one of the first known published pieces to provide a thumbnail biography of Fowke. It mentions her educational background in Saskatchewan, her marriage and move to Toronto, and her

²⁶ Tom Kines was a nationally known Ottawa based folk singer. His substantial collection of folk music books, manuscripts, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, tapes of radio programs, vinyl records, music industry business correspondence, printed programs from musical performances, and unusual musical instruments was given to Carleton University by the Kines family after Tom Kines death in 1994.

Maritimes And Quebec Lead In Song

By John Tracy

Canadian Press Staff Writer

TORONTO — A former Prairie school teacher who believes Canadians have a great national heritage of folk songs has teamed up with an American-born musician to prove it.

The result is *Folk Songs of Canada* (Waterloo Music Company, Ltd.), a collection of 77 songs ranging from *A la Claire Fontaine* — sometimes called the unofficial anthem of French Canada — to the cowboy's *Bury Me Not On The Lone Prairie*.

Its authors, Edith Fulton Fowke and Dr. Richard Johnston, call it the first comprehensive collection of Canadian folk songs. Mrs. Fowke's *Folk Song Time* has been a CBC trans-Canada network feature from Toronto since 1949. Dr. Johnston, who came here from Chicago seven years ago, now is professor of music at the University of Toronto.

Met Toronto Group

Mrs. Fowke, who got her MA in English at the University of Saskatchewan in 1932, became interested in folk songs after she gave up school-teaching in her native Saskatchewan and came east with her husband, engineer Frank Fowke.

She used to meet in Toronto with a group of European immigrants to sing folk songs. As interest grew, the Fowke collection of folk songs outstripped all others in their record library.

The idea for the book came when listeners began asking for works on Canadian folk songs. Mrs. Fowke and Dr. Johnston began the task two years ago.

They drew heavily on previously published regional collections such as those of Helen Creighton, writer of *Songs and Ballads of Nova Scotia*, and the collection of Marius Barbeau in the National Museum.

Dr. Johnston, who has frequently appeared on the CBC as critic, commentator, conductor, arranger and composer, devised the musical accompaniments for the songs. He regards the collection as one which should spark the interest of all who want to know more about "this fabulous country."

He points out that folk singers for the most part need no accompaniment. But he has provided simple piano accompaniment.

"They are adaptable for the ordinary joe in his living room," said Dr. Johnston. "I arranged the music so anyone can play it on his parlor piano."

Many Eastern Songs

For the authors there was danger their collection would be swamped with songs from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia for they regard these provinces as producing a richer harvest of folk song than Ontario and the West.

The same was true of Quebec whose early settlers brought from France the first and largest stock of Canada's folk songs.

Ontario songs, like the mournful ballad of Jim Whalen, were sung by roving lumbermen who carried them to Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The authors found some Ontario songs in American collections.

Mrs. Fowke found the export of songs was reversed on her native prairies. Because the Canadian west was settled somewhat later than corresponding regions of the United States, westerners tended to borrow their pioneer songs from across the border.

Like French Canada's songs, many Canadian folk songs have come from mother countries. The Irish poet, Thomas Moore, wrote the words for a Canadian Boat Song. Negroes, escaping slavery in the pre-civil war U.S., brought Auction Block to Canada.

Figure 4:1 1954 Edith Fowke article

(Courtesy: Kines Collection, Carleton University)

work as a CBC broadcaster specializing in folk songs. The review adds that Fowke was part of an informal folk song singing group and had a strong desire to collect folk music recordings. It goes on to mention a few facts about Fowke's collaborator Richard Johnston and provides some information about the *Folk Songs of Canada* (1954) contents. Details about Fowke are not abundant in the review but there are enough to introduce Fowke to an interested segment of the population, which included folk singer Tom Kines.

CBC Times

The weekly *CBC Times* magazine²⁷ occasionally mentioned Edith Fowke's radio program, "Folk Song Time." In July 1950, reference was made to her "on-air" use of John Lomax's Library of Congress folk song recordings, supplemented by material loaned to her by folk singers such as Alan Mills, Ed McCurdy, and Burl Ives (*CBC Times* 3 (2) p. 5). In 1958, a *CBC Times* article titled "Folk Song Time: Edith Fowke's Newly-found Songs of Old Ontario," explains that Fowke would be "airing" tape recordings of Ontario folk singers on her upcoming programs. Fowke's Ontario recording field trips and singers Mary Towns of Douro and George Hughey of Peterborough are mentioned. The article goes on to explain:

²⁷ The *CBC Times* appeared from 1948 to 1969 as a weekly magazine that listed the programs to be broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation networks. In addition to the schedules, it included anonymous articles about various programs. A complete set of these magazines is located at the library of Queen's University.

Although most people had assumed there were few folk songs to be found in Ontario, she (Fowke) has been delighted, she says, with the variety and quality of the ones she has come across. These include many old ballads from England and Ireland, some sea songs that found their way inland through the lumber camps, some songs that drifted up here from the States and a number of local Ontario ditties. (*CBC Times*, 1958, March 16-22)²⁸

Journals and Bulletins

Most of the known published work about Fowke by others written between 1954 and 1970 is limited to specialized publications such as *Western Folklore*, *The Journal of American Folklore*, and *Ethnomusicology*, which ran reviews of her recordings and books.²⁹ These reviews of Fowke's work tended to focus directly on the product with limited mention of Fowke's background and perspective. At times, however, these reviews contained bits of information that inadvertently revealed something about Fowke. In addition, *The Canadian Folk Music Bulletin*³⁰ began appearing irregularly in July, 1965. Often this publication would print news about the activities of members of the society, which included Edith Fowke. The small pieces of information from various reviews and news jottings over the fifteen-year period, in aggregate, provide enough data for interested researchers to get a sense of Fowke and her folk song focus.

²⁸ A copy of this article can be found at the Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives, Accession # FO-C-21.

²⁹ Fowke herself often contributed articles and reviews to these publications.

³⁰ This publication was known initially as the *The Newsletter of the Canadian Folk Music Society*, then *The Bulletin of the Canadian Folk Music Society*, and finally *The Canadian Folk Music Bulletin*.

The following excerpts from some of the reviews, for example, tell readers that Fowke worked in the broadcast industry and was actively collecting songs in rural Ontario. Charles Haywood, in his review of *Folk Songs Of Canada* casually mentions Fowke's radio work in a non-related sentence. He writes: "... Fowke, well-known for her folksong programs on the CBC network ..." (Haywood, 1955 p. 372). Kenneth Goldstein's review of the Folkways recordings *Folksongs of Ontario* provided information about Fowke's collecting. Goldstein writes: "Mrs. Fowke is one of the few Canadian fieldworkers to pay serious attention to Anglo-Canadian materials outside of the maritimes (sic) ... Most of the recordings included in this album come from the region of Peterborough, some ninety miles northeast of Toronto" (Goldstein, 1959, p, 169). Edward Ives (1961) in his otherwise negative review of *Canada's Story in Song* (1960), mentions "Mrs. Fowke's fine collecting work in Ontario" (p. 274).

D.K. Wilgus adds more information about Fowke's fieldwork and its significance in his review of the Folkways recording *Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties*. Wilgus writes:

From the collection of Edith Fowke comes another useful field recording of Canadian folksinging, *Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties* ... Edith Fowke's production fills a number of gaps in available material and again demonstrates that the era of valuable collection is not over. The excellent performers on the album, who ranged in age from 30 to 84 document further the Irish-American woods tradition and its tenacity. (Wilgus, 1962, p. 278)

The newsletters/bulletins printed by The Canadian Folk Music Society offered brief details about Fowke's work, beginning with the very first issue in July 1965. In the section titled "Activities of Members," the *Newsletter of the Canadian Folk Music Society 1* (1) reports that Edith Fowke is continuing to collect Ontario songs with the accent on lumbering songs. It goes on to say that she is preparing for a projected book to be titled *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* to be completed by year's end (p. 5). The next *Newsletter of the Canadian Folk Music Society 1* (2), published in October 1965, in a section titled "News Jottings" mentions that Fowke is doing a series of programs about "Songs of Work and Protest" for the CBC. The programs are on Tuesday evenings 7:00 to 7:30. The same issue of the newsletter reports that Fowke is working with Richard Johnston on a second volume of *Folksongs of Canada* and she also represented the Canadian Folk Music Society at the meeting of the American Folklore Society in Denver (p. 11). News about Fowke was presented in small amounts from issue to issue. Sometimes only a single sentence was available as in the *Newsletter of the Canadian Folk Music Society, 3*, which reported that Fowke received \$900 from a Canada Council grant that enabled her to complete *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (p. 30).

The information about Fowke provided through the specialty publications from 1955 to 1970 by writers other than Fowke seems almost insignificant. It is necessary to look at the information in its entirety to acquire an understanding of what other writers felt was important about Fowke the person and her ongoing work. These intermittent and

brief snippets about Fowke help put a few pieces of the Fowke biographical puzzle together.

Canadian Author and Bookman

Wider recognition of Edith Fowke in print began in 1970 when she received the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians Book of the Year Award, a bronze medal, for her book *Sally Go Round The Sun* (1969). In appreciation of Fowke's award, Lyn Harrington, secretary of the Canadian Authors' Association,³¹ wrote an article about Fowke that was published in the 1970 autumn edition of the association's journal, *Canadian Author and Bookman*. The article, "She Merits Her Medal," offers the first biographical sketch about Fowke. It gives a few details about her Saskatchewan roots and her move to Toronto with her husband. There is a discussion of some of Fowke's publications such as *Folk Songs of Canada*, *Songs of Work and Freedom*, *Canada's Story in Song*, and most particularly *Sally Go Round The Sun*. In the article, Harrington mentions Fowke's article in *The Canadian Forum* and her editing of John Robin's "Paul Bunyan" stories. There are comments about the décor of Fowke's home and some mention of her personal interests such as reading mystery stories, going to the movies, and singing folk songs (Harrington, 1970). Harrington's article is one of the very few that provide a look at Edith Fowke, the person.

³¹ Nova Scotia song collector, Helen Creighton was a member of the association when this article about Fowke was published.

Toronto Star

In 1974, Edith Fowke received her first honorary degree from Brock University “in witness of her skill and perseverance in collecting folk songs of Canada and thus contributing to a greater awareness of our heritage” (Donald, 1975, pp. 71-72). Shortly after Fowke received the honour, columnist Robert Fulford of the *Toronto Star* wrote the article, “The pleasures of the folksong collector,” which appeared in the June 1, 1974 edition of the paper. Fulford begins the article with a discussion about the field recordings of Ottawa Valley singer O.J. Abbott. Lyrics of some of Abbott’s songs are listed along with Fowke’s comments about the songs. He goes on to mention Fowke’s radio work, her latest book *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folksongs* (1973), and her early collecting in the Peterborough area. Fulford says about the area: “Per capita, it seems to have had more old folksingers than anywhere else in the country.” He goes on to detail Fowke's position in the English department of York University where she teaches three courses related to folk songs and folklore. Fulford says that Fowke has reduced her song collecting activities but, according to her, she is making her students do the collecting. The article points out that Fowke acknowledges she is self-taught in the areas of folk song and folklore. He writes that she has embraced her honorary doctorate because over the years she has often been referred to as Doctor Fowke and had to disclaim it, an action she no longer has to take (Fulford, 1974, p F5).

Profiles, Edith Fowke

The 1974 *Toronto Star* article by Fulford was interesting, but did not provide much more information about Fowke than the 1970 Lyn Harrington article in the *Canadian Author and Bookman*. The first significant biographical piece written about Edith Fowke was presented to readers in the book *Profiles*, edited by Irma McDonough and published by the Canadian Library Association in 1975. Betty Donald of the Etobicoke Public Library contributed the chapter about Edith Fulton Fowke. Although the chapter is only four pages in length, Donald presents an informative profile of Fowke.³² She discusses Fowke's youth and early adult days in Saskatchewan, and names some of the individuals that influenced her along the way. There are details about Fowke's political involvement with the CCF political party, her early career at CBC radio, and her song collecting in the Peterborough area. Donald provides some details about Fowke's folk song books and mentions the names of a few of Fowke's collaborators. The profile provides information about Fowke's teaching position at York University and her honorary degree from Brock University. In concluding the article, Donald, who indicates that she knew Fowke personally, provides some personal insights about Fowke. Donald writes:

The Fowkes are theatre-goers. Edith Fowke likes the smaller theatres, those strong on dedication to acting and subject, particularly Canadian subject (sic), less

³² This profile is the first to provide the chronology necessary to confirm dates and establish time lines associated with Fowke's career. It contains information not found previously in print, such as the fact that Fowke was one of two sisters, and details about her teaching position at York University.

concerned with slick staging. She was very happy to find that James Reaney³³ had used her version of the old harvest song “The Barley Grain for Me” twining it through the action ... When I first met Edith Fowke, I was captivated by her relish for life in general and her own work in particular. That hasn’t changed. (Donald, 1975, p. 72)

Quill and Quire

In May of 1977, the literary magazine *Quill and Quire* recognized the fact that Edith Fowke had been collecting folk songs for twenty years. In an informative article titled “Twenty years of folk song collecting,” author David McFadden provides some details of Fowke's first field trips to the Peterborough area. Mary Towns and her father Michael Cleary are mentioned, but the Towns Store or the hamlet of Douro are not. McFadden (1977) writes that Fowke knew immediately that she was “in business” when she heard Mary Towns sing “A Fair Maid Walked in Her Father's Garden,” a broadside ballad that was more than 100 years old (p. 5). McFadden discusses Fowke's published work and perspectives on the popularization of folk music. Fowke says: “According to the popularizers I'm a purist, but the real authentic folklorists criticize me for putting out songs in popular editions” (p. 8). Fowke is portrayed as organized and focused. McFadden mentions that Fowke has her tapes all filed away neatly in the recreation room with copies in the archives at York University (ibid).

³³ Reaney was an Ontario born poet, writer, and theatrical director. He received his doctorate in 1958 and taught theatre studies at the University of Manitoba and the University of Western Ontario.

“Interview, Edith Fowke”

In 1978, the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* published a ten-page article titled “Interview, Edith Fowke.” The article is based on an interview of Edith Fowke that was conducted in Toronto, by Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat with a preface by Fred Weihs.³⁴ This article offers a second detailed view of Edith Fowke's life and work that complements the previous 1975 biographical article by Betty Donald. It corroborates much of the data in Donald's 1975 work and fills in some of the information gaps with Fowke's own detailed perspective on major events in her career. *The Folk Music Bulletin* article begins with a preliminary section written by Weihs who details Fowke's achievements to date. The introductory section is followed by eight pages of questions asked by Bartlett and Ruebsaat and answered by Fowke, who first responds to questions about her radio career and then about her first book *Folk Songs of Canada* (1954). After this, the discussion turns to Fowke's song-collecting fieldwork and its beginnings in the Peterborough area. Fowke's response to a question about her early discovery of folk songs in the Peterborough area included details of her first recording session. These details were the catalyst that allowed me to focus my research and uncover the information about Fowke that provides the substance of this dissertation. The question to Fowke was “What was your first lead?” (Weihs, et al, 1978 p. 5). Fowke's response on the beginnings of her fieldwork was as follows:

34 Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat have researched and performed folk songs in Canada and the U.S. for more than 30 years. They have contributed to and been editorially active in the publishing of *Canada Folk Music Bulletin*, and are long time active members of the *Canadian Society for Traditional Music*. and Ruebsaat also prepared teaching kits on Canadian folk songs to be used in schools. Fred Weihs is a folk-musician who contributed articles to the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* in the 1970s and 1980s.

A friend of ours who had a summer cottage at Peterborough told me that there were people up there who reminded him of hillbillies³⁵ in the Appalachians. I started by spending a weekend there. I went to the chap who wrote a local history column in the *Peterborough Examiner*. I told him what I was after, and asked him if he knew any oldtimers (sic) who were interested in songs. He hadn't heard of any, and neither had the President of the Peterborough Historical Society, but he sent me to William Towns. Mr. Towns was interested in local history, and ran the general store at Douro about fifteen miles outside Peterborough. When I told Mr. Towns what I wanted, he said, "My wife's father sings some of the old songs." So I went into their house – it was behind the store.³⁶ That was our first recording session, and his wife, Mary Towns, is also on my records—a very fine singer. Her brother also sang some. They told me of some others around Peterborough that they knew of, and the people whose names they gave me gave me other names. For two or three years I'd keep going out to Peterborough, usually just at weekends³⁷ – I wasn't getting any Canada Council grants to spend months there or anything. (Weihs et al, 1978, pp. 5-6)

35 It is surprising that Fowke in 1978 included a reference to "hillbillies" in her response. She had completed her fieldwork by that time with the knowledge that the majority of her informants were middle to upper-class individuals who owned homes, farms, and businesses.

36 The importance of this response by Fowke is that she named storekeeper William Towns as her first contact and the village of Douro as the place where she began field recording. No other article written about Fowke provided these details. Since I live close to the Towns General Store, I focused my Fowke research on Douro Township. I contacted members of the Towns family at the general store to verify the story and ask for their recollections. The details are discussed in chapters 5 and 7.

37 Fowke reveals that she collected songs mainly on weekends. This fact was largely unknown but is important when comparing Fowke to other Canadian collectors such as Creighton who collected continuously for periods of time.

To my knowledge, until I included this information in an article for the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* (1988), few writers had given this detailed explanation of how Fowke began her fieldwork. Fowke herself only revealed the events relating to her first recording a few times in print. Her response to the question in this interview is critical when compared to other explanations she provided about her fieldwork beginnings, which are very general in comparison.

Overall, “Interview, Edith Fowke” presents candid remarks by Fowke about key events in her career that are not found elsewhere. For example, she describes succinctly how she came to know O.J. Abbott through a letter sent to her by Abbott’s daughter who saw Fowke talking about Ontario folksingers on a Toronto-based television show. Abbott, who lived in the Ottawa Valley, was one of Fowke’s most prolific informants. When asked for her definition of “folk music,” Fowke replied: “If it's in oral tradition, it's folk music. The songs I was getting from traditional singers, they weren't learning them from print. They weren't learning them from records. They had learned them orally, so that age is not the prime criterion” (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 7).

Fowke does not mince words in this article as she discusses some of the conflicts she had with various people and some of the decisions she made. She explains how her fieldwork and research methodology differed from established practices.³⁸ This interview reveals why she felt it necessary to create edited songbooks, and outlines her involvement in The Canadian Folk Music Society. This 1978 *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* article is one of the better pieces published during Fowke's life and career because it provides a

³⁸ A discussion of her fieldwork approach compared to others will occur in Chapter 7.

significant quantity of biographical information, personal perspectives, and details about her fieldwork. From this point forward to her death, the writing about Fowke tends to focus more on her published contributions and her views on folk music scholarship.

Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and Their Role in Canadian Culture

Carol Carpenter of York University recognized and discussed the contributions of Edith Fowke in the book, *Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and Their Role in Canadian Culture* (1979). This book is a detailed inclusive history of Canadian scholarship in the areas of folklore and folk music. The first chapter of the book, "The pattern of folklore activities in Canada," discusses the contributions of song collectors such as Marius Barbeau, Helen Creighton, Louise Manny, Kenneth Peacock, and Roy MacKenzie. Edith Fowke is identified as the most prominent collector of Anglo-Canadian folklore in Ontario, particularly of folk songs. In this initial chapter, Carpenter focuses on Canadian regionalism and the scholars and collectors that worked within specific regions. She concludes the chapter with an argument that explains the success of regional collectors such as Creighton in Nova Scotia, Manny in New Brunswick, and Fowke in Ontario. Carpenter writes: "The single most powerful determinant pattern of Canadian folklore and its study has been the Canadian settlement pattern, which resulted in development of delineated and identifiable entities, usually regional and often ethnic, within the country" (Carpenter, 1979, p. 112).³⁹

³⁹ In Chapter 7, the settlement pattern of the Peterborough area will be examined in order to explain the wealth of folk songs found there.

Carpenter goes on to point out that prominent song collectors such as Fowke, Creighton, Barbeau, and Manny first received honorary degrees from educational institutions located in the regions where their primary research was undertaken. Carpenter makes more references to Fowke in the ninth chapter of *Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and Their Role in Canadian Culture*. This chapter, titled, "Whither and Why, strength needs and directions," makes the argument that traditional instrumental music has been studied less than may have been expected. It is considered less culturally distinct or pure by some researchers and often seen as a hybrid. As well, studying instrumental music requires a significant degree of music knowledge along with instrumental technique. Fowke had no musical training and Creighton's musical background was limited. Neither Creighton nor Fowke had a strong interest in recording and analyzing instrumental music, although Fowke did record some fiddle music, probably on contract for Folkways Records or to place prospective informants at ease.

In *Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and Their Role in Canadian Culture*, Carpenter positions Fowke's contributions within the larger context of folklore activity in Canada. She treats Fowke as a peer of collectors such as Barbeau, Creighton, and Manny. However, she writes that Fowke researched folk songs from an external viewpoint that is outside the tradition she was studying. Carpenter also states that Fowke's two children's song books, *Sally Go Round the Sun* (1969) and *Ring Around The Moon* (1977), are aimed at a popular audience and are not very scholarly or analytical. Carpenter adds that the *Sally Go Round The Sun* audio recording is one of the few recordings specifically devoted to Canadian children's material.

“A passion for folksongs and plain English”

In 1982, Clyde Gilmour wrote this article for the *Toronto Star*. He provides some general background information about Fowke's career and home life before moving on to focus on Fowke's passion for folk songs and her desire to make them accessible to the public. He points out that Fowke is direct in her views and expresses her contempt for “Fakelore.” She defines this as “the bastardization of folk materials for commercial profit” and feels folklore can be presented in forms that appeal simultaneously to experts and the general public. Gilmour adds that she sturdily “pooh-poohs” members of her profession who use technical jargon and ponderous phraseology in discussing simple things (Gilmour, 1982, p. F7).

Canadians All 5: Portraits of Our People

This 1985 book by Terry Angus, Doris Cowan, Janet Grant, and Greg Sass includes biographical portraits of twenty prominent Canadians such as Sir Wilfred Grenfell, Margaret Atwood, Terry Fox, etc. Edith Fowke is profiled on pages 46 and 47 along with a photo on page 45. The article provides a broad biographical overview that briefly mentions her fieldwork, a few of her publications, her radio shows, and her teaching at York University. The article mostly focuses on her recording of O. J. Abbott. A couple of the passages in the article are interesting, including the following:

The Fowkes were hooked on folk songs. They began by just buying records, and before long their collection had grown to such an extent that they had to move from their apartment in Toronto to a house in East York. Frank constructed bookshelves and cabinets for what soon became the largest private collection of folk-song records in Canada, with songs from every province and from all around the world. From this collection, Edith drew her material for *Folk Song Time*, an hour's review of folk music she did for the CBC. (Angus et al, 1985, p. 47)

***Continuity and Change in Canadian English-Language Children's Song:
A Replication and Extension of Edith Fowke's Fieldwork 1959-1964***

Caputo's 1989 MA thesis focuses on the generation of a second group of recorded data to be compared/contrasted with the original data produced by Fowke twenty-four to twenty-nine years earlier. In 1988, Caputo visited the grade three classes in six of the same schools that Fowke had visited more than 20 years earlier. She recorded the songs and rhymes of the children in the same manner as Fowke. Caputo compared her findings with Fowke's initial research utilizing variables such as socio-economic background of the performers, gender and age of the performers, song structure, and song function. She effectively provided insights into Fowke's approach to recording children's song and her ability to encourage spontaneous singing. Caputo's thesis also provided the date and place information that allowed the school recording sessions to be situated accurately within Fowke's fieldwork chronology.

“Fowke on folk: Leading expert on Canadian folklore”

In 1990, the *Ottawa Citizen* published this biographical article by Ruth Latta. The article provides detailed highlights of Fowke's collecting, publishing, and broadcasting career. There is little fresh information with the exception of Fowke's comments on how her husband has supported her over the years (Latta, 1980, p. H4).⁴⁰ A year later Latta wrote “The Story behind Edith Fowke” for *Today's Seniors*. The article is similar to the previous *Ottawa Citizen* article in that it reviews important aspects of Fowke's career. However, it is written for senior readers and adds Fowke's thoughts about aging. Fowke, who was 76 at the time, says: “Don't think of yourself as old. Keep doing the things that you are interested in” (Latta, 1991, p. 23). Fowke also points out that it may be necessary to adjust as you get older; she found it necessary to cut back on her teaching load at York University in order to find more time to write books.

The Quest of the Folk

Historian Ian McKay of Queen's University made one of the more interesting references to Fowke's perception of folk music in his book, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (1994). In this publication, McKay takes a critical look at the work of the well-respected and well-known Nova Scotia song collector Helen Creighton. In doing so, McKay makes some interesting observations about the relationship between Creighton and Fowke. He writes that it was only logical that there would be territorial disputes amongst song collectors. The fact that Fowke defined her field as all of Canada seemed to have angered Creighton

⁴⁰ The comments regarding Frank Fowke are found in Chapter 5, *Edith Fowke's Life Story*.

by not deferring to Creighton's claims to control all Nova Scotian materials. In addition, the conservative Creighton was suspicious of the ideology of Fowke who revealed an interest in songs of political and industrial protest, and bawdy songs. According to McKay, Creighton viewed radicalism, labour unions, and social protest with horror. When Fowke sent her a copy of her book *Songs of Work and Protest*, Creighton reacted by sending Fowke a letter outlining her disagreement with the book. Creighton considered these folk songs to be communist propaganda that had no place with good folk songs that reflected the lives of simple, clean living, politically neutral folk. The bad feelings that Creighton had about Fowke were exacerbated when Fowke played a recording of a Creighton collected song on her CBC radio program without permission or payment. Creighton assumed she had property rights over her song collection and wrote Fowke and the CBC to protest (McKay, 1994, pp. 139-151).

Published Work about Edith Fowke (1996-2010)

Obituaries

After Edith Fowke's death in March of 1996, there were obituaries by several notable writers published over the subsequent months. Neil Rosenberg of Memorial University wrote his recollections of Fowke for the popular magazine *Sing Out!*. American storyteller Robert Rodriguez wrote his thoughts for *The Canadian Folk Music Bulletin*; he said: "It is hard to imagine our world, and especially Canada, bereft of her presence and all that her life and work entailed" (Rodriguez, 1996, p. 23). Fowke's long time British Columbia associate Philip Thomas also remembered Fowke's life in the

Canadian Folk Music Bulletin. Thomas wrote that he came to know Fowke when he corresponded with her about song selections for her radio programs and observed: “In a period of over 45 years, Edith Fowke progressed from being an MA-in-English, writer, and editor, with a fresh awareness and delight in folk songs to becoming one of the foremost folklorists in the English-speaking world.” Thomas included a commentary on the Edith Fowke versus Helen Creighton issue. He wrote:

One way to define a person is to contrast that person’s actions with those of another. Helen Creighton’s work left us wondering what songs her informants loved [but] she rejected. Edith’s approach to folk song collection was considerably more inclusive. Creighton believed in ghosts: Edith believed in people. (Thomas, 1996, p. 23)

The Globe and Mail

In Canada’s national newspaper at the time, *The Globe and Mail*, Val Ross (1996) eulogized Fowke in the column “Lives Lived.” Ross summarizes Fowke’s life from the early days in Saskatchewan to CBC radio days to the fieldwork in Ontario. Ross writes the following about Fowke’s perspectives on fieldwork: “When Mr. Barbeau, Ms. Creighton, and Ms. Fowke first ventured into folklore, they set their own rules, editing or rewording material to make it more accessible. For this they were criticized by later purists. ‘What a lot of nonsense!’ Ms. Fowke told *The Globe and Mail*. ‘I am criticized because I am a popularizer; which is apparently a bad thing. But I feel, if I collect from

the folk, I should return to the folk” (Ross, 1996, p. A18).

“Fowkelore”

The most extensive memoir of Fowke’s life and work was authored by folksinger Vera Johnson who had been a friend of Fowke since 1951. Johnson wrote the article, “Fowkelore,” in 1995 based on material from her personal diaries. The *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* intended to publish this work as a tribute to Edith Fowke while she was alive; unfortunately, it did not go to print until after her death. Johnson’s recollections in “Fowkelore” provide insights into Edith Fowke’s life and work that are not found anywhere else in print. She writes about Fowke’s home life and mentions one of Pete Seeger’s singing performances at Fowke’s home. Johnson reveals facts about Fowke’s trip to New York to meet American folksinger Burl Ives and his wife Helen, and her visits to Britain to attend a meeting of the International Folk Music Council and visit Cecil Sharp House. The Johnson article is a personal narrative, complete with anecdotes about dinner parties, vacations, house concerts, and relationships. As the lengthy article concludes, Johnson writes from a folksinger's perspective: “ I know Edith has been a great help to folksingers and collectors all across Canada and elsewhere. She is still stretching out a helping hand to us through her books, her articles, and her records, and it is a process that goes on and on. Thank you Edith, on behalf of all of us” (Johnson, 1996, p. 16).

The University of Calgary Gazette

As mentioned in Chapter 1, *The University of Calgary Gazette* featured the Fowke article, “Gift to library fortifies folk heritage” in April, 1997, after learning that she had bequeathed her collection to the University. The article quotes Lois Choksy, head of the Department of Music, as saying the following about Fowke:

She looked like a china doll; someone who should have been serving tea in a drawing room – yet this is the same lady who was in the lumbering camps in the wilds of northern Ontario in the ‘40s and ‘50s, persuading the rough and tumble labourers to sing their traditional songs (even their bawdy songs) into her microphone ... (Choksy, 1997, p. 19)

Unfortunately this statement is misleading and to date has never been rectified in print and possibly is still considered valid by some scholars. To repeat the argument I detailed in Chapter 1, there is no evidence Fowke ever recorded in a lumber camp. She never wrote about any lumber camp fieldwork in any of her publications. There is no mention of informants who worked in lumber camps during her fieldwork. The list of the informants and songs upon which Fowke based her published work and lectures is comprised of individuals that Fowke recorded in their homes.⁴¹ She writes about her lumbering song recordings in the liner notes of her 1961 Folkways LP (FM4052),

Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties. Fowke states:

⁴¹ A list of Fowke's Peterborough area informants and where they were recorded is provided in Appendix A. There is no indication of an informant being recorded in a rural agricultural or lumber industry setting.

With very few exceptions, the songs I've collected in the last three years have come from men who worked in the woods in their youth, or from men and women who learned them from their fathers, uncles, or grandfathers who in their turn had gone to the shanties ... All of the songs were recorded in 1957 and 1958, in the homes of the singers. In some you will hear background noises: a phone ringing (in "Hogan's Lake"), children crying (in "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks"), and doors closing (in "Bill Dunbar"), and in several the tap of the singer's foot as he marked time to his song. (Fowke, 1961, pp. 2-3)

Fowke did not collect songs in the 1940s as the article states; she was living in Toronto and working as an editor of political magazines during those years. As I mentioned previously, Fowke's collecting began in 1956.⁴² The reference to "northern Ontario" can be misleading; Peterborough County is part of eastern Ontario, although some people living along the shores of Lake Ontario may consider Peterborough to be in the north. After tracing the Ontario field trips of Fowke, I will argue that Fowke never travelled farther north than Peterborough County or The Ottawa Valley to record singers. With regard to bawdy songs, Fowke was interested in them and specifically encouraged informants to sing them at times. Fowke's research and published work on the topic of bawdy songs is discussed in Chapter 9.

42 In two unpublished, undated manuscripts (*Folk Songs of Peterborough*, Trent University Archives accession# 92-1016; *Ontario and Its Folksongs*, Peterborough Museum and Archives, unnumbered) Fowke clearly states that her field recording trips began in the autumn of 1956.

“What ordinary people do is important, Edith Fowke’s life and publications”

In 1998, I researched and wrote a biography of Edith Fowke that was published in the 1998 *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*. I was first able to piece together a chronology of events in Fowke’s life with data from the articles reviewed earlier in this chapter. I then started to fill the informational gaps by contacting a few people who knew and worked with Fowke including Philip Thomas, Kenneth Peacock, Jay Rahn, members of the Towns family, and descendents of Fowke’s first informants.

My article, “What ordinary people do is important, Edith Fowke’s life and publications” in *Canadian Journal for Music* provides an accurate basic chronology of events in Fowke’s career along with a few details where she conducted her work and with whom she worked. It also dispels some misunderstandings about how and where Fowke conducted her work. During my research for this 1998 article, I was able to follow the footsteps of Edith Fowke through portions of eastern Peterborough County because I live close to where Fowke did much of her field-recording and know some of the families that Fowke visited. Consequently, much of the information found in this article provides the foundation for the life story given in the next chapter.

***Towards an Understanding of Canadian Traditional Song Style Through
Analyses of Descriptive Transcriptions Using Field Recordings Made by
Edith F. Fowke in the Peterborough Area of Ontario During the Years
1957 to 1959***

This 2001 University of Calgary MA thesis by Sheri Herget analyzes the Anglo/Celtic traditional song performance style through twenty-one performances by ten Peterborough area singers recorded by Edith Fowke between 1957 and 1959. For each

recorded performance, Herget prepared a descriptive notation to reflect the style of the original vocal performance followed by a prescriptive notation with the stylistic elements eliminated. She also prepared a rhythm pronunciation transcription for each song showing the rhythmic placement of vowels and consonants by the performers. Herget's work effectively summarizes the elements of language and rhythm that define the Peterborough County traditional singing style. Although her analysis is not directly relevant to this study, "Appendix D" of her thesis provides a detailed list of Fowke informants including all the Peterborough area informants, not just those used in her analysis. (Herget based her work on selected recordings of Dave Doherty, Jimmie Hefferman, Bill Hughey, Vera Keating, Bob McMahon, Dave McMahon, Marcelle MacMahon, Martin Sullivan, Geraldine Sullivan, Emerson Woodcock.)

"Radical? Feminist? Nationalist? The Canadian Paradox of Edith Fowke"

Pauline Greenhill of the University of Winnipeg wrote an insightful article about Edith Fowke. Titled "Radical? Feminist? Nationalist? The Canadian Paradox of Edith Fowke," it was published in the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* (2003). Greenhill connects Fowke's involvement in social movements early in her literary career and her desire to be inclusive in her folk song collecting. She did not modify or censor lyrics of songs that discussed social or labour issues. Fowke did not consider herself as regional, although her fieldwork was concentrated in central and eastern Ontario. Instead, she considered herself Canadian and attempted to include songs from all parts of the country and a variety of ethnic backgrounds in her edited song books. Greenhill writes that Fowke felt rejected

and unappreciated by the discipline of folklore/ethnology in Canada. Fowke concluded that this was, in part, because she did not have a degree in folklore. Greenhill writes that Fowke, in spite of her strong opinions and direct nature, craved respect from both academics and folkies and was upset by contrary opinions that had her labeled as a “popularizer” by academics and a “purist” by folk music fans. To try and satisfy both sides, Fowke compromised later in her career and as a result her academic work became narrower and more restrictive (Greenhill, 2003, pp. 1-9).

The 2003 Greenhill article makes the point that Fowke is likely best recognized by Canadians for her edited books of Canadian folk songs and her two collections of Canadian children’s rhymes and folklore. In contrast, Greenhill argues that Fowke’s international recognition by folklorists and ethnologists is linked to her field collections of traditional song texts, notably the two resulting books *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* (1965) and *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970) (Greenhill, 2003). Greenhill’s observations support the argument that Fowke’s fieldwork formed the basis for her subsequently successful career in teaching and publishing.⁴³

Songs of the North Woods: As sung by O. J. Abbott and collected by Edith Fowke

This 2004 publication about Edith Fowke and her work is written by Laszlo Vikar and Jeanette Panagapka. *Songs of the North Woods: As sung by O. J. Abbott and collected by Edith Fowke*, released by the University of Calgary Press, contains 66 songs

⁴³ I presented a paper on Fowke’s fieldwork at the 1998 meeting of the Canadian Society for Traditional music at the University of Winnipeg. I met Pauline Greenhill there and we discussed Fowke’s field collecting at length.

that Fowke collected from Ottawa Valley singer O.J. Abbott. The melody line and lyrics are presented for each of the songs and there is an interesting song analysis section. For the most part this book is not unlike some of Fowke's songbooks. Apart from the songs and musical analysis, the book contains a significant amount of text. There is an introduction by Lois Choksy, Professor Emeritus, University of Calgary, with prefaces by both Vickar and Panagapka, biographical sketches of Edith Fowke and singer O.J. Abbott, comprehensive interviews with Edith Fowke's husband Frank and Richard Johnston who first collaborated with Fowke in 1954 on *Folk Songs of Canada*, and a bibliography of Fowke's published work. Once again, this book, like the 1997 article from the *University of Calgary Gazette* implies that Fowke travelled to northern communities to record folk songs. In addition Frank Fowke is quoted as saying that his wife's field trips began in 1953. As mentioned before, this information is incorrect. There is documentation that provides overwhelming evidence that she began her song collecting at the homes of Peterborough County informants in 1956. This material, which includes Fowke's own accounts of her early collecting, will be presented in Chapter 7.

The Early Years of Folk Music: Fifty Founders of the Tradition

The most recent publication to include an Edith Fowke biographical sketch appeared in 2010. *The Early Years of Folk Music: Fifty Founders of the Tradition* by David Dicaire⁴⁴ is a book that contains biographical sketches of influential persons such

⁴⁴ Dicaire is an author who has specialized in writing books that contain succinct biographies of individuals from various fields of music. Previous books include *Blues Singers: Biographies of 50 Legendary Artists of the early 20th Century* and *The First Generation of Country Music Stars: Biographies of 50 artists of the early 20th Century*.

as Cecil Sharp, Francis Child, John Lomax, Charles Seeger, Woody Guthrie, and Burl Ives. The biography of Edith Fowke is found in the section titled “Folk Around the World.” She is listed in the “Table of Contents” as “Edith Fowke (1913-1996), Canadian Folklorist.”⁴⁵ Others included in the same section are “Bela Bartok (1881-1945), The Hungarian Ethnomusicologist” and “Buddy McMaster (1924-), Dean of Cape Breton Fiddlers.”

The four-page biography of Fowke outlines her prairie roots and education, her connection to the CCF political party, and her eventual move to Toronto. Dicaire writes that Fowke researched the roots of Canadian folk songs throughout the 1940s.⁴⁶ He writes she was a “tireless worker, who gathered hundreds of songs with impressive skill and ability” (p. 158). Guelph, the Peterborough area, and the Ottawa Valley regions of Ontario were her primary collecting areas.⁴⁷ Fowke's national radio shows “Folk Song Time” and “Folk Sounds” were the means by which Fowke was able to continue to promote Canadian folk songs and the singers who performed them. Dicaire mentions Fowke's role in the founding of the Canadian Folk Music Society (CFMS) and establishment of the *Canadian Folk Music Journal*. Dicaire covers all of the important elements of Fowke's career including her key books and articles in many publications. He includes a mention of her academic career at York University. Overall this recent

45 Dicaire, like many authors and scholars, sees Fowke as a folklorist.

46 This can be misleading since her formal interest in folk songs was first revealed in her 1949 article in *The Canadian Forum*. Her radio program began the same year. It is possible Fowke was accumulating folk song recordings throughout the 1940s and conducting informal research as a hobbyist but there was nothing published until 1949.

47 Peterborough, Toronto, and the Ottawa Valley were Fowke's primary collecting areas. To my knowledge she made only a few visits to the Guelph Area.

succinct biography is informative and interesting enough to allow casual readers to grasp a factual sense of Fowke's substantive contribution to Canadian folk music scholarship.

CHAPTER 5

EDITH FOWKE'S LIFE STORY

Edith Fowke's early life in Saskatchewan and subsequent years of literary involvement in politics provided the basis for her views on social issues and interest in the lives of what she called “ordinary” Canadians. Her move to Ontario in 1938 was the first of a number of events that eventually caused her to move away from politics and engage in the study of folk song. Fowke's strong literary background was the catalyst for a research and writing career that she may not have foreseen when she left the West. Many of Fowke's publications are mentioned in this chapter, but more detailed discussions of Fowke's publications are found in Chapter 8, which is the analysis of her book *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970), and Chapter 9, which is the literature review of Fowke's published work.

The existing articles by an assortment of writers, outlined in the previous Chapter 4, provided enough basic data to create an outline of Fowke's story. However, in order to let Fowke effectively speak for herself, excerpts of autobiographical content were added from her own work. This was effective since portions of her essays, published articles, and books, intermittently and perhaps inadvertently, revealed much about her recollections and perspectives. To further augment Fowke's life story, pertinent thoughts from a few people who knew her personally are included. This informative group includes folk singer Merrick Jarrett, folk song collector Philip Thomas, folklorist Dr. Skye Morrison, folklorist and song collector Kenneth Peacock, Fowke informant

Marcelle McMahon, Fowke informant Vera Keating, Anne Sullivan, the daughter of Fowke informant Mrs. Tom Sullivan, and Michael Towns, the son of her informant Mary Towns.

The Saskatchewan Years

Edith Margaret Fulton was born on April 30, 1913, one of two daughters born to William and Margaret Fulton.⁴⁸ The Fultons had emigrated from Northern Ireland and settled in Lumsden, Saskatchewan, a town of five hundred people located on the Qu'Appelle River northeast of Regina. William Fulton worked as an oil distributor and provided a middle class home for the family. Edith Fulton as a young girl had a love for books and reading. She read everything she could get her hands on. Unfortunately, in the 1920s, Lumsden did not have a public library and there were not a lot of books available. Therefore, Fulton had to be satisfied with reading books borrowed from neighbours and friends. The Methodist minister's wife loaned her books as did her schoolteachers. Later, Dr. Carlyle King of the University of Saskatchewan became a memorable and inspiring influence on Fulton. When she was at home in Lumsden he kept her supplied with good books, three or four at a time, all through each summer (Donald, 1975, p. 69).

By the time Edith Fulton reached her tenth birthday, she was a member of the Torchbearer's Club, a group associated with the nearby city newspaper, the *Regina Leader-Post*. The Torchbearer's Club enabled amateur writers and artists to have their work published in a magazine, which was distributed with the Saturday edition of the

⁴⁸ Fowke does not mention a sister in any of her writing. To my knowledge, this fact did not appear in any articles about Fowke with the exception of the brief 1975 biography written by Betty Donald, an employee of the Etobicoke Public Library, who knew Fowke personally.

newspaper. Over a period of approximately six years, she had pieces of her poetry and fiction printed in the publication (Johnson, 1996, p. 15). In the 1920s, Edith Fulton displayed no enthusiasm for folk song and folklore, but she did keep books filled with autographs and verses written by her childhood friends. Years later she utilized the four autograph books that she had kept since the 1920s in her publication, *Folklore of Canada* (1976). Fulton took an honours English and History program at Regina College and then the University of Saskatchewan. In 1933, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

The same year, the political party, which had evolved out of a union of prairie farmers, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), held its first national convention in Regina. From an early age, Edith Fulton was interested in social issues, policies of the CCF, and its prominent leader J.S. Woodsworth. She became an active member of the party for the next twenty years. For several of those years, she served on committees and edited newsletters (Donald, 1975, p. 69-70). It is possible that her work with the CCF stimulated her interest in writing about the people for the people

Edith Fulton taught school for a couple of years after receiving her B.A. During that time she maintained her interest in politics and the CCF party. After her brief stint as a teacher, she returned to the University of Saskatchewan to pursue a Master's degree in English. Fulton graduated with her M.A. in 1937 (Donald, 1975, p. 69). Her interest in English literature was evident at the time since her Master's thesis focused on nineteenth century English poet and novelist, George Meredith (Ross, 1996, p. A18). She sums up this period in her life in the following manner:

I taught for a year in a two-room country school – all the subjects for all the high-school grades – and now I can't imagine how I did it. The area was in the drought belt and everyone was on relief. My salary was supposed to be \$400; I actually got \$200 plus board. My best memories of that year are of the square dances held in the school. ... The next year I went back to Saskatoon, took my master's in English, and began working for the Western Extension College which provided teaching aids to rural teachers. (Fowke, 1997, p. 39)

Writing and Broadcasting in Toronto

In 1938, Edith Fulton became Edith Fowke when she married Frank Fowke, an engineering graduate with an interest in music (Ross, 1996, p A18). Frank obtained an engineering job in Ontario the same year and the couple moved to Toronto. Edith Fowke continued to work as a freelance writer and editor for a number of years. Between 1937 and 1944, she was the Editor of the *Western Teacher* and from 1945 to 1949, she was the Associate Editor of the *Magazine Digest* (Edith Margaret Fulton Fowke - Biographical Notes, 1996, p. 18). In the late 1940s, Fowke continued her interest in political and social affairs through involvement with the CCF, Citizen's Forum, Friends of Overseas Students, The Co-operative Committee for Japanese Canadians, and the Woodsworth Foundation (Johnson, 1996, p. 7). In 1948, she edited the book *Toward Socialism: Selections from the Writings of J.S. Woodsworth*.

Edith Fowke had taken a casual interest in folk songs after her move to Toronto. However, in 1949, a more serious side of Fowke's interest in Canadian folk songs came to

light when she wrote an article on the topic. It appeared in *The Canadian Forum*, a monthly journal of literature and public affairs. Fowke was serving on the editorial board of the magazine at the time. After this first folk music article, she continued her involvement in editing material of a political and social nature throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s. Fowke edited the magazine *Food For Thought*, a publication that dealt with issues of adult education (Donald, 1975, p. 70). In 1951 she authored the book, *They Made Democracy Work: The Story of the Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians*, based on her personal experience with the committee. Fowke worked on other committees such as the CCF Women's Committee where she helped draft the proposed equal pay legislation that, although not successful, did stimulate debate and eventual changes in labour law. Fowke explains her perspective in the following manner: I was a feminist before there was such a term. I remember writing a skit in the form of a radio broadcast, pointing out all of the inequalities women faced, and staging it at Woodsworth house (Fowke, 1997, p. 40)

In the early 1950s, David Lewis and the Steelworkers became a significant influence within the CCF, helping to vote out many of the people who had been running the committee programs. Although Fowke was re-elected to a committee position on the CCF Provincial Council, she felt her time in politics was at an end. She fought verbally with David Lewis who, according to Fowke, called her a dangerous woman. Somewhat discouraged and disillusioned, she moved on to direct her energy to the study of folk music and folklore (Greenhill and Tye 1997, p. 40; Johnson, 1996, p. 7). In a 1977 interview with David McFadden, Fowke referred to her "spat" with David Lewis and the

union boys. She said: “ A real blow-up, I'm really grateful to David Lewis. Without him I'd probably be wasting my time with the NDP. Instead I'm having more fun with folk singing” (McFadden, 1977, p. 8).

Fowke's interest in folk music started on a casual basis in the '40s. In the short film, *Edith Fowke 2000: Folk Alliance International Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient*,⁴⁹ Fowke's husband relates that the couple had a phonograph in their home during the war years and he encouraged her to listen to the folk song recordings that they purchased at the time (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSoKR6wiEOs>). Their collection grew slowly and included recordings of American folk singers such as Josh White, Burl Ives, and Dyer-Bennett (Weihs, Bartlett, & Ruebsaat, 1978, p. 4). Around the same time, Fowke and her husband joined a folk singing group in Toronto comprised of English, Austrian, and Canadians. Fowke writes: “The sociologist Martin Lipset, who spent a couple of years in Toronto, played us some Library of Congress folksong recordings and I was hooked” (Fowke, 1997, p. 40). These recordings further sparked her interest in folk songs and her collection of records grew significantly. In 1949, Fowke made her record collection available to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) for use on a program called “Folk Song Time.” In the formative days, CBC hosts, using scripts provided by Edith Fowke, narrated the shows. The first programs were one half hour in length and were a direct result of Fowke approaching Harry Boyle⁵⁰ at the CBC

49 In 1999, I contributed some of my research data and photos to assist in the making of this film. My name is included in the credits.

50 Boyle started as a farm news broadcaster at CKNX radio, Wingham, Ontario. He later became an executive producer at the CBC. Boyle had a reputation for helping people that he found interesting enter broadcasting. (Stewart, 1985, pp. 130-132)

and persuading him that it was time for a weekly folk music show (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 5; Donald, 1975, p. 70).

Fowke relates: "... at the beginning I was simply doing the radio shows with records, but in doing the scripts, I had to find out about the background of the songs. I kept chasing to the library and that got very wearisome, so I started building up my own collection of folk song books" (Weihs, et al, 1978, p. 5). The folk song shows evolved into a documentary format with the folk song recordings used as a linking narrative.⁵¹ John Robins, who previously worked with song collector, Helen Creighton, in the Maritimes helped Fowke prepare the narratives for the broadcasts. Robins was an English professor at the University of Toronto. He had worked in lumber camps as a young man and developed a passion for folk music and folklore that was contagious. Carpenter (1979) concludes that Robins was a major influence upon Edith Fowke's eventual involvement in the study of Canadian folk song and story (p. 50).⁵²

51 Edith Fowke's husband Frank recalls that she needed the job at the CBC since editing work had become scarce. He said that she began at the CBC on a series of three month contracts (Panagapka & Vikar, p. 80).

52 Robins also played a major part in the emergence of song collector Helen Creighton as an author. Creighton had many songs on paper but little confidence in dealing with them. In a lucky train of events, her membership in the Canadian Authors Association led her to ballad scholar John Robins, a professor of English at Victoria College, University of Toronto. He made available a workroom for her at the college and his own reference library, and coached her in writing head-notes (Posen, 2012, p. 141).

Figure 5:1 Edith Fowke's broadcasting career on CBC radio

Compiled from holdings in the Edith Fowke Fonds, University of Calgary, CBC Archives, Toronto, and *CBC Times* held at Queen's University, Kingston.

***Folk Song Time* – 1949-1964**

A weekly program of folk songs and commentary varying in length from fifteen minutes to one hour. For the first few years, Fowke scripted the programs and CBC announcers read the text. Fowke began narrating the programs circa 1952.

The folk music recordings used were from Fowke's personal collection.

Until 1957, the majority of the recordings aired were of American singers.

Canadian commercial recordings, including those produced by Fowke, were more prominent after 1958.

Fowke's regular CBC radio program "Folk Song Time" occasionally changed in length and/or time-slot.

A small sampling of the *Globe and Mail* radio listings and *CBC Times* revealed the following information about the varying times and length of Fowke's Sunday afternoon broadcasts:

The two home stations were CJBC (CBC Dominion Network) and CBL (CBC Trans-Canada Network)

July, 1950 – 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. - CBL
 September, 1950 – 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. - CBL
 September, 1951 – 4:00 to 4:30 p.m. - CBL
 September, 1952 – 1:00 to 1:15 p.m. - CJBC
 September, 1956 – 1:00 to 1:15 p.m. - CJBC
 September, 1957 – 1:00 to 1:15 p.m. - CJBC
 July, 1958 – 1:00 to 1:15 p.m. - CJBC
 September, 1958 – 1:00 to 1:15 p.m. - CJBC and CBL
 September, 1959 – 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. - CJBC
 September, 1962 – 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. - CBL

***Folk Sounds* – 1964-1974**

A weekly program similar to *Folk Song Time* continued under a new name.

Special programs created by Fowke (Scripted and narrated by Fowke unless stated otherwise)

1952 – *A Man and a Maid* – A series of programs based on courting songs. The vocals are by Merrick Jarrett and Joyce Sullivan. 18 weeks from June 5 to September 25

1954 – *Animal Fair* – A series of programs featuring children's songs.

1955 – *Songs to Grow On* – A second series of programs featuring children's songs.

1955 – *Legends of West Africa* – [9 radio scripts] October 12 to December 7.

1956 – *Singing family of the Cumberland's* by Jean Ritchie, adapted by Fowke.

1956 – *Cowboy Songs of the Old West* – A children's program of ballads features the vocals of Merrick Jarrett.

1956 – *Songs of the Sea*, a series of programs featuring folk songs sung by Alan Mills.

1956 – *O' Canada: A History in Song*, a series of programs featuring historical songs sung by Alan Mills.

- 1956 -1958 – *Song History of Canada* (the same as the preceding with a change of name)
- 1956 – *Audio* series.
- 1956 – *Assignment* series – *Folk songs in disguise*, a program of newer songs using traditional melodies.
- 1957 – *Australian Bush Songs* – A children's song series features the vocals of Merrick Jarrett.
- 1957 – *Legends of Indonesia* – A children's series that features the vocals of Alan Mills. May 8 to July 3.
- 1957 – *Ride with the Sun* series
- 1957 – *Assignment* series – A program of lumbering songs recorded by Fowke features her field recordings.
- 1957 – *Assignment* series – *Folk songs in disguise*. A program about old tunes with new lyrics.
- 1957 – *Assignment* series – A program featuring a musical quiz prepared by Fowke.
- 1957 – *Assignment* series – A program of Canadian prison songs collected by Fowke features her field recordings.
- 1957 – *Assignment* series – A program of folk songs by the CJON (St. John's radio) Glee Club. Scripted by Fowke, narrated by Tony Thomas.
- 1957 – *The Yellow Briar* by Patrick Slater, adapted by Fowke
- 1957 – *Assignment* series – A program of New Year's Eve folk songs.
- 1958 – *Assignment* series – A program of songs about May Day, scripted by Fowke but narrated by CBC personalities Bill McNeil and Marian Barrett.
- 1958 – *Assignment* series – A program of Irish folk songs collected in Canada by Fowke.
- 1958 – *Assignment* series – A program of soldiers' songs from World War II.
- 1958 – *Assignment* series – A program of recorded songs about drinking, smoking, and gambling.
- 1958 – *Assignment* series – A program of songs about carnivals, Mardi Gras, West Indies, French Canada.
- 1963 – *Folk Elements in Music* – A CBC school series
- 1964 – *Learning Stage* series – *Folklore and Folk Music* series.
- 1965 – *CBC Metronome* series – *O.J. Abbott*, a program of recollection and music of the Ottawa Valley singer.
- 1965 – *CBC Metronome* series – A program discussing folk music history, part of a *Canadian Music* series.
- 1966 – *Songs of Social Protest*
- 1966 – *Songs for Today and Tomorrow*. 6 scripts. January 27 to March 10.
- 1966 – *The Balladeers* series.
- 1966 – *The Best Ideas You'll Hear Tonight* series – *Travelling Folk of the British Isles* seven-week series.
- 1967 – *Best of Ideas* series – *Money Sings*, a series of programs featuring songs about wealth and poverty.
- 1967 – *CBC Metronome* series – *A Century of Song*, a series of programs tracing the history of Canadian folk songs. *The Travellers* were one of the featured folk groups in this series.
- 1968 – *Best of Ideas* series – *The Gallows Tree*, a program of folk songs about the hanging of legendary murderers.
- 1968 – *CBC Metronome* series – *Mariposa*, a program featuring folk-festival performers interviewed by Fowke.
- 1971 – *CBC Tuesday Night*, March 23rd: Dr. Marius Barbeau: A Tribute to a Canadian pioneer.
- 1974 – *Offbeat* series – *Folk Traditional*, a program of Ottawa Valley folk music.
- Undated series for CBC International – *Canadian Folk Songs*, *Songs of the Sea*, and *Songs of the Miners*.
- Undated series – *Songs from the Canadian Lumberwoods*, 4 scripts.
- Miscellaneous programs for CBC, 1955-1967 – *Songs on Canada's Birthday*, *The Lore and Legends of Yuletide*, *Christmas Songs from Many Lands*, and *Carols of Many Lands*.

“Folk Song Time,” which varied in length from 15 minutes to a half hour, ran on CBC radio every week until 1963.⁵³ Fowke created all the scripts and some time in the 1950s began doing the narration, taking over from the CBC host announcers. After 1963, the program name was changed to “Folk Sounds” and the show continued to 1974. The majority of the music played on the show in its early years originated in the United States. Fowke tried to give Canadian singers and songs preference but there were few available recordings by Canadians, singers Ed McCurdy and Alan Mills were exceptions. In addition to the regular weekly broadcasts, Fowke started other folk song programs in a series format. There were series of children’s programs, lumbering song programs, and sea song programs (Weihs, et al, 1978, p. 5 ; *The Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, Edith Fowke, 2011). (See Figure 5:1 for a synopsis of Fowke’s CBC radio programs.) Fowke’s regular weekly broadcasts depended on commercially available vinyl recordings. However, when she produced a series of programs based on specific themes, she used Canadian folksingers who specifically pre-recorded the songs for each series at the CBC studios. This is an important element of these programs because it permitted Fowke to become familiar with members of the folk music community personally. Fowke was a very effective social networker, a trait that would serve her very well throughout her career. Initially she worked with and became friends with Canadian folk singers such as Alan Mills and Merrick Jarrett. Through them she came to know American folk singers like Burl Ives, Pete Seeger, and Joe Glaser all of whom entertained her as a house-guest. Fowke even came to know the influential Harvard ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger

⁵³ The significance of having a weekly program on CBC radio in the early 1950s was that it was broadcast to a coast to coast audience. Radio was so popular at the time that the CBC operated two nationwide networks, the Dominion Network and the Trans Canada Network (Stewart, 1985, p. 97).

(Johnson, 1996, p. 8).

The following chart (Figure 5:1) summarizes Fowke's contributions to CBC radio. It contains information regarding her regular weekly broadcasts as well as the special programs and series she created for the network. It was compiled from the list of holdings in the Edith Fowke Fonds, University of Calgary, CBC Archives, Toronto, *Globe and Mail* radio listings, and the *CBC Times* archive located at Queen's University, Kingston

In June of 2006, I spent some time with the folksinger Merrick Jarrett who worked with Edith Fowke on several of her radio programs. Jarrett explained that the broadcasts with which he was involved had a specific theme selected by Fowke. Typical themes included courting songs, lumberjack songs, cowboy songs, and Australian bush songs. Fowke would create the narrative around the theme and Jarrett would sing the songs appropriate to the narrative. Although he could suggest certain songs, Fowke always made the final decision regarding what would be included. Once the songs were selected, Jarrett told me that his vocal performances for the show were always taped beforehand. Fowke would sit in the control room and listen carefully, never hesitating to stop the taping if she deemed he was altering the lyrics without informing her. He told me that she was always serious and very direct when she was working.

Merrick Jarrett was a veteran Toronto radio vocalist. He started with CHUM radio in 1946, later moving to CFRB radio and finally CKEY. He appeared on radio programs and local stages with prominent folk music performers such as Pete Seeger, Lee Hayes, Burl Ives, Richard Dyer-Bennett, Alan Mills, and Oscar Brand. Jarrett regularly associated with these singers and told me, in fact, Fowke came to meet and befriend many of these individuals because he introduced her to them (M. Jarrett, personal

communication, 2006).⁵⁴

The CBC radio broadcasts were the catalyst that led Edith Fowke into researching the origin of folk songs. She felt that it was necessary to know the background of the songs, particularly Canadian songs, and she wanted to pass this information on to her listeners. Her goal was to make her programs informative, interesting, and musical. She spent many hours of research at the library and purchased a substantial number of books. Her research led her to the conclusion that there was a limited quantity of historical material available on Canadian folk music. As her radio program, "Folk Song Time," gained popularity in the early 1950s, listeners began writing and asking where they could get copies of Canadian songs for singing purposes. Fowke felt the current books by Barbeau, Creighton, and Mackenzie could not satisfy this demand. She determined that a singing book containing Canadian songs with background information for each song could fill the void (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 5; Donald, 1975, p. 10).

Fowke collaborated with composer/educator Richard Johnston⁵⁵ to create *Folk Songs of Canada*, a collection of seventy-six Canadian folk songs in 1954. The book was an immediate success, so much so that Waterloo Music produced a second printing less than a year later. An accompanying record album followed. *Folk Songs of Canada* on vinyl was produced for the Waterloo label under the musical direction of Richard

54 For three afternoons in June, 2006, I visited Merrick Jarrett at his daughter's Peterborough home. We played music and talked. Jarrett had a passion for folk music and its history. He enjoyed his career as a folk singer and a teacher of folk music history. He also enjoyed working with Edith Fowke. Jarrett died in December, 2006.

55 American born and educated Richard Johnston (1917-1997) began teaching at the University of Toronto in 1947. He was a prominent composer, conductor, editor, folklorist, music-critic, and educator. He advocated the Kodaly system of music education with its focus on folk song. He became a Canadian citizen and was a member of The Order of Canada. Many of his papers and manuscripts are found at the University of Calgary library.

Johnston. It featured solo vocalists Joyce Sullivan and Charles Jordan singing a selection of songs from the book, accompanied by vocal chorus, guitar, and piano. This recording was seen by Fowke as another effective way to bring Canadian folk music to the public and she featured it on her radio show.

A few months after the initial release of the book *Folk Songs of Canada*, Fowke made a trip to New York City to purchase more folk recordings for her collection. She was in the Stinson record shop in Greenwich Village when the owner introduced her to Kenneth Goldstein. Goldstein made his living, at that time, as a statistician for a publishing company but his hobby was folklore and folk music. He was a producer of folk recordings, and had worked with prominent American folk singers such as Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston, and Leadbelly. Goldstein was quite informed about folk music publications and surprised Fowke by letting her know that he had enjoyed her efforts in *Folk Songs of Canada*. They became life-long friends instantly and it was through Goldstein that Fowke became a member of the American Folklore Society. As a record producer, Goldstein was instrumental in connecting Fowke with Folkways Records and facilitating the production of her commercial recordings. Furthermore, he used his literary connections to help get her books published in the United States. This establishment of a permanent connection with the American folk music and folklore community was of considerable help to Edith Fowke in subsequent years (Fowke, 1996a).

The work involved in the creation of *Folk Songs of Canada* led Fowke to the realization that there was very little folk music in print that had originated west of

Quebec. She was aware of much of the Anglophone and Francophone material that had been collected to that time in Canada and began to consider the concept that there may be some songs west of Quebec that had never been collected (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 5). One of Edith's earliest friends and associates in folk music was Philip Thomas, a British Columbia song collector, composer, teacher, and singer. In response to an email inquiry⁵⁶ I made about some of the early thoughts that Edith Fowke may have had on song collecting, Mr. Thomas replied:

Collecting, in the field, was something that Edith had considered doing from those early years. Edith, as I understand it, was initially, primarily a popularizer of folk song ... She truly believed that folk songs reflected lives of the people who sang them, and that assertion, which she scripted in the introduction to her weekly program CBC Folk Song Time, gave them a cultural pedigree to be honoured. I believe that the publicity given her both through her broadcasts and through the publication of her first book (*Folk Songs of Canada*), led people to tell her of relatives and acquaintances who sang. I do not know how she started collecting, but rather than searching singers, it is likely she was given leads to singers.

(P. Thomas, personal communication, 1998)

⁵⁶ I contacted Philip Thomas, song collector/scholar and long-time associate of Edith Fowke, by email in the winter of 1998 when I was first researching Fowke's life and publications. He was gracious and descriptive in his responses to my questions. In October of 1998, we met and talked at the annual conference of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music at the University of Winnipeg. We met for the last time in Toronto in 2000 when we played some music at an evening jam session associated with the Canadian Society for Traditional Music annual conference. Thomas died in 2007.

Song Collecting in Peterborough County

Edith Fowke's song-collecting career began in the autumn of 1956 when she purchased a high quality tape recorder and started to make regular road trips to record folk singers in Peterborough County, which is located 90 miles northeast of the city of Toronto. However, Fowke was not the first song collector to visit the area. In July of 1929, Maud Karpeles, British song collector and close associate of Cecil Sharp, came to Montreal by boat. Karpeles subsequently took a train to Peterborough and travelled by road to Lakefield where she stayed in a comfortable hotel for a couple of weeks and visited some local fiddle players and folk singers. She noted some melodies and songs by hand before moving on to search for music in Vermont. Karpeles wrote that she wished she had more time to spend in the Peterborough area but had to adhere to her travel schedule (Gregory, 2003).

Fowke's decision to research folk songs in the Peterborough area may have been influenced by a number of clues. Her first clue would have been the visit of Maude Karpeles to the area. Fowke was likely aware of the Karpeles' 1929 field trip to Peterborough and Lakefield (also known locally as North Douro) and the subsequent published results. In addition, Fowke came to know Karpeles sometime in the mid-1950s and Peterborough may have been a topic of discussion. Fowke's second clue may have been the fact that Peterborough County, in the 1950s, was still recognized as a significant Ontario lumbering area. Fowke had done enough research into folk songs by 1956 to understand the rich history of songs spawned specifically by the lumbering industry. The third clue could have been the Peterborough area settlement history. Fowke's principal interest in the 1950s was English language songs that originated in Canada and songs that

had travelled from the British Isles. She was probably aware that Peterborough County was known as an area where a successful planned Irish immigration had taken place in 1825. The name of the city and the county is a tribute to the government official, Peter Robinson, who organized the immigration. The likelihood that the immigrants might have brought a folk song culture with them could have also been the clue that first brought Maude Karpeles to the area and subsequently stimulated Fowke's interest.

In the autumn of 1956, Edith Fowke began her song-collecting in the hamlet of Douro, at the P. G. Towns General Store. In researching the beginnings of Fowke's Peterborough area fieldwork, I found three versions of how Fowke came to start her work in Douro. Each account reveals something about Fowke's approach. In a 1996 interview published in *Songs of the Northern Woods*, Fowke's husband Frank relates:

It was about 1953⁵⁷ when we went to Nova Scotia on a holiday and looked up Helen Creighton. We'd seen Creighton's book ... By this time Edith was thinking about doing some collecting so in the fall she visited Kenneth Goldstein in Philadelphia and came back with a tape recorder. Later that fall she decided to try some collecting ... she was pretty sure that Peterborough would be the best place to collect songs. We knew a man who worked in the local newspaper in Peterborough, but he couldn't help us any so we went to the local priest. We told him what we wanted ... he gave us the name of several people who he thought would help us. One of them was a Mrs. Town (sic) who ran a general store not far

⁵⁷ The year 1953 quoted by Frank Fowke is incorrect. There is sufficient evidence from Fowke's subsequent writing and my interviews with the Towns family to conclude the year of the initial field trip was 1956.

from Peterborough, and she was a big help to us. (Panagapka & Vikar, 2004, pp. 80 –81)

A second version of the story comes from the 1978 interview published in the *Canadian Folk Bulletin*. Edith Fowke recalls that in 1956 she had a friend who had a cottage in the Peterborough area. He had mentioned to Fowke that some of the people in the area reminded him of the rural people in the Appalachians. Acting on this lead, Fowke contacted the individual who wrote the history column for *The Peterborough Examiner* newspaper and asked if he knew anyone who sang older songs and he replied that he did not. Fowke then contacted the Peterborough Historical Society. The president of the society told her that Mr. William Towns of Douro was a man known to be interested in local history (Weihs et al, 1978, pp. 5-6).

The third account of how Fowke came to know the Towns family is outlined in an eight-page manuscript located in the Trent University Archives. The manuscript is an essay, which appears to have been written by Fowke around 1965. In this work, titled *Folk Songs of Peterborough*, she gives a slightly different version of the story. Fowke writes that she was spending a weekend with friends in the village of Millbrook. She was interested in some of the area history and the possible existence of folk singers. Her host, Spencer Cheshire, took her to see Nick Nichols, who wrote articles for *The Peterborough Examiner*. He was interested in the county history and gave Fowke some names of persons to contact. One of the names was William Towns of Douro (Fowke, Trent University manuscript #97-1016).



Figure 5:2 P. G. Towns General Store, Douro, Ontario (Courtesy:Michael Towns)

Neither Fowke nor her husband reveal any other names that she was given other than William Towns and his wife Mary. However, other names that she likely received initially were Michael Cleary (William Towns' father-in-law) and Mrs Jack Keating (Vera Keating) of Peterborough. The one consistent element in all versions of the story is that members of the Towns family are identified as the first recorded informants in her folk song collecting career. The following account of Fowke's first field trips is compiled from information taken from her own writing combined with the information that I gathered in my conversations with Michael Towns, son of her informant, Mary Towns, and Fowke informants, Vera Keating and Marcelle Mundell. I argue that it is likely the

most accurate version of events.⁵⁸

Fowke's field trips began when somebody at *The Peterborough Examiner* newspaper responded to her inquiries about area folk singers and directed her to the hamlet of Douro and store proprietor Mr. William Towns. One autumn weekend day in 1956, Fowke and her husband Frank drove to Douro in the eastern part of Peterborough County and parked in front of the large P. G. Towns General Store. Fowke entered the store and asked for the proprietor, William Towns. When he identified himself, Fowke asked him if he knew anyone that sang old songs. Towns replied that both his wife, Mary and his father-in-law, Michael Cleary sang old songs. He introduced them to Fowke that same day. Shortly after they met, Fowke asked if they would sing some songs for her. They agreed and invited Fowke to the family home, which is located directly behind the store on the same property. Fowke asked her husband to carry her heavy tape recorder from the car to the house. She set up the tape recorder on the kitchen table and asked Michael Cleary and Mary Towns to sing. Fowke was very impressed with the results and the variety of material. Cleary and Towns sang ballads that Fowke recognized as variants of Child ballads and broadsides that she could trace back to the nineteenth century. There were variants of lumbering songs that she recognized from the Maritime collections of Helen Creighton and Kenneth Peacock. In addition, there were local songs about local events that had taken place up to a half-century earlier. Fowke was quite excited about her discovery, especially when Mary Towns volunteered to tell her about and direct her to other folk singers in the area. She noted names and directions and on subsequent

⁵⁸ This account of Fowke's early field trips may be somewhat speculative but it is based on information from a variety of sources, including Fowke manuscripts and conversations with Fowke informants and informant descendents. I reason that there is enough common, non-conflicting data, to construct an accurate narrative of events.

weekends began to travel about the township recording and documenting songs.

Comparing the experience to finding gold, Fowke had found a living oral folk song tradition. She subsequently wrote: "Luck was with me for the first area I tried was Peterborough, some ninety miles northeast of Toronto, and there it soon became clear that I had struck a very rich lode" (Fowke, 1965, p. 1)

During the early days of her song collecting Edith Fowke became more aware of the fact that Peterborough County had been at the centre of a flourishing lumber trade in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Every little district in the Peterborough area had its own lumber mill. In her writing, Fowke attributes the survival of the Ontario folk songs to the culture of the lumber camps. After initially recording the songs of Michael Cleary and Mary Towns, Fowke started to focus more on collecting songs either from men who worked in the woods or from men and women whose fathers, uncles, and grandfathers had gone to the lumber shanties (Fowke, 1961, p. 1).

In December 1956, after the initial recordings at the Towns household, Fowke conducted another recording session in Douro that included Mary Towns and Michael Cleary as well as singers John Cleary and Tom Cavanaugh. After that Fowke did no collecting in the Peterborough area until early March of 1957 when, in a two week period, she recorded songs from Michael Cleary and Mary Towns in Douro, Tom Sullivan, Ray Sullivan and Mrs. Tom Sullivan in Lakefield, Maggie Sullivan, Ed O'Brien, Mrs. Tom O'Brien, Frank Cleary, Jimmie Heffernan, and Vera Keating in Peterborough; and Bill Crowe in Warsaw. When Fowke went to a home in the south side of the city of Peterborough to record folk songs sung by Vera Keating, she was possibly following the

directions of Mary Towns or Keating may have been one of the original names provided by *The Peterborough Examiner*. Using directions provided by Mary Towns, Fowke later recorded John Leahy on the original farm that had been given to the family when they came to Douro as part of the Irish immigration in 1825. When John sang for Fowke, he sang both the older Irish folk songs and the more contemporary songs that told of the lumberjacks and life in the woods. Mary Towns also directed Fowke to the farm of Dave McMahon, another local farmer with an extensive repertoire of songs.⁵⁹

McMahon was born in 1903 and was of Irish descent. He was raised on a Douro Township farm and when he was young, he spent his winters in the lumbering shanties where he learned a lot of songs. Fowke recorded him at his farmhouse. McMahon's daughter, Marcelle told me that Fowke was intense as she recorded her father in the living room while her husband Frank patiently sat on the front porch of the farmhouse, enjoying the view. After visiting Dave McMahon's farm, Fowke went across the road to his brother Bob's farm to record more songs.

Edith Fowke's methodology was straightforward. She constantly networked with her known informants to locate possible further informants. Her practice was to go to the homes of potential informants, knock on the door and introduce herself. Then, she explained her mission to record and preserve folk songs and would ask if they knew any. If they answered in the positive, Fowke then asked permission to bring her tape recorder into their homes and record their singing. When she requested her informants to sing into

⁵⁹ A Peterborough area informant recording chronology is found in Appendix A. It was created from the York University list of Fowke field tapes along with information from Herget's (2001) MA thesis. It is not complete but it provides a basic pattern to illustrate Fowke's field trip planning, which is discussed further in Chapter 7.

her tape-recorder, she was encouraging, patient, and always polite.⁶⁰

Once underway with her fieldwork, Fowke was relentless. She moved from home to home on weekends throughout 1957 into 1958, making her way through the entire Peterborough area folk music community, meeting and recording prolific informants. In addition to the informants mentioned Fowke recorded Tom Brandon, Dave Doherty, Jim Doherty, Jim Harrington, Joe Kelly, George McCallum, Martin McManus, Mrs. Hartley Minifie, Minnie Molloy, Leo Spencer, Martin Sullivan, Mrs. Margaret Ralph, Joe Thibadeau, and Emerson Woodcock. Over a nine year period, Fowke's list of Peterborough area informants contained seventy- seven names.⁶¹

Fowke proved herself capable of handling a multitude of projects at the same time. For the remainder of 1957 while concentrating on her fieldwork in the Peterborough area on selected days, she also worked on her radio shows. From July to September with the assistance of folk singer Alan Mills, Fowke produced a series of CBC programs titled *The Song History of Canada*. At the same time Fowke and Mills considered collaborating on a book with a similar title. From October to December, 1957, Fowke and Mills worked on a second series of radio programs titled *Songs of the Sea* (Johnson, 1996, p. 9). Her collaborative work with Richard Johnston resulted in the 1957 release of their book, *Folk Songs of Quebec*. In the midst of all this, Fowke still found time to travel to the Ottawa area and record the individual who would become one of her best known

60 Fowke's informants, Marcelle Mundell and Vera Keating, and informant descendants, Michael Towns and Anne Sullivan described her recording demeanour. Discussion about Fowke's fieldwork and her interaction with informants and their families is found in Chapter 7.

61 To my knowledge, Fowke never made a comprehensive list of her Peterborough informants, but she did note their names and locations when including their songs in publications. A complete list of the Peterborough informants is found in Appendix A.

informants, O. J. Abbott.

O. J. Abbott

Edith Fowke's fieldwork in the Peterborough area evidently came to the attention of some individuals at CBC television. It is likely that Fowke discussed her work on her CBC radio show. Probably other people at the CBC were listening because sometime in the spring of 1957, Fowke was asked to be a guest on CBC television. She appeared on *Tabloid*,⁶² which was a CBC-TV Toronto based early-evening news and talk show. During her appearance, Fowke spoke extensively about the hundreds of folk songs she had found and recorded in the Peterborough area. One of the interested viewers of that show was Mrs. Ida Dagenais, the daughter of O.J. Abbott, an Ottawa area man with a large repertoire of folk songs. Dagenais wrote a letter to Fowke at the CBC after the airing of the program to tell her about her father. Fowke answered the letter and asked Dagenais to send the titles of some of the songs that her father sang. When Fowke received a list of song titles from Dagenais she became very interested in recording Abbott. She decided to travel to the Ottawa area to meet him in the summer of 1957 during her husband's vacation time (Weihs et al. 1978, p. 6).

Fowke and her husband drove to Ottawa and visited O.J. Abbott at his home in Hull (now Gatineau), Quebec. At the time, Abbott was an 85-year-old retired paper mill employee with a singing voice that was still strong and clear. Better still, he had retained a large number of songs that he learned while working on farms and lumber camps along

⁶² *Tabloid* was one of the first current events television talk shows produced by CBC Toronto. It was on the air from 1953 to 1960. It was produced by Ross McLean and hosted initially by Dick MacDougal. It featured one of the first Canadian female broadcaster/interviewers Joyce Davidson as well as flamboyant weatherman Percy Saltzman.

the Ottawa River in the 1880s and 1890s. In a week at Abbott's home, Fowke recorded 84 songs. Abbott became one of Fowke's most prolific and best known informants (Fowke 1965, pp. 11-12; Panagapka, & Vikar, 2004, pp. 78-79, 82-83).

Notley Place

Edith Fowke's home was her principal workplace. Her “ranch style” house at 5 Notley Place in the East York section of Toronto was located in a cul-de-sac and overlooked a ravine at the back. When Fowke and her husband moved there in 1953 the location was suburban, but by the 1990s the city had grown around it. Fowke remained at the dwelling for the remainder of her life. She worked from a desk in her study, which according to Lyn Harrington was “stacked from broadloom to ceiling with books on folklore of North America and the British Isles, plus a touch of Russia and Australia” (1970, p. 7). In 1996, folksinger Vera Johnson described Fowke's dwelling as a “dream house” (1996, p. 8)

Fowke was not a recluse, she had many friends with similar literary and political interests such as authors Margaret Laurence and June Callwood, and University of Toronto literary scholar Northrup Frye. Fowke's friends from the folk music world included American song collector and popularizer Alan Lomax, Canadian folk song researcher Marius Barbeau, and prominent folk singers like Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie, whom she visited in a New York hospital shortly before his death (McKay, 2002, p. D2). Fowke was always ready to entertain her friends and regularly hosted gatherings of folk music enthusiasts. Vera Johnson reveals that Fowke's Notley Place home would

also become a venue for the occasional impromptu concert. She tells of one such event with folk singer Pete Seeger.

In January 1954 we went with the Fowkes and our friends Norman and Gloria Newton to a Pete Seeger concert. His singing was wonderful, his banjo playing fantastic, and the warmth of his personality spread out from the stage. Two nights later at Notley Place we had a chance to assess his performance off-stage, and he was just as real and loveable. With him were members of a folksong group, and the singing went on and on. Pete was still there when we left at 2:00 a.m. He was getting soggy with beer and disinclined to catch his plane at 5:00 a.m. But I think he made it. (Johnson, 1996, p. 8)

Kenneth Peacock, a prominent Canadian song collector, recalled Fowke's Notley Place residence in a personal letter sent to me in February 1998. Mr. Peacock wrote:

I saw and spoke with Edith many times at meetings of The Canadian Folk Music Society, usually held in Ottawa. She always seemed to be asking me about some project or other. These discussions also occurred in Toronto at her home at 5 Notley Place. I remember one particular afternoon before dinner, looking out the back window to see a male pheasant in full plumage strut across the lawn, having emerged from the ravine below. I was particularly interested in this area because when I was a teenager we used to bike in this country area and toboggan and ski

in the winter. It was the site of the Woodbine Golf Course, and here was Edith living on it! (Peacock, personal communication, 1998)

The Notley Place home of the Fowkes was also home to a pair of Basenjis dogs in the 1970s and early 1980s. David McFadden wondered why a lover of folk music would choose to own two African barkless dogs, Sherry and Adam. He said they might have been barkless but they did a lot of growling when he visited Fowke to interview her (1977, p. 5). A few years later, Clyde Gilmour writes: “The Fowkes are fond of their steadfast and affectionate dog Sherry ... She is a Basenji and almost never barks. The breed however is not voiceless and can eagerly yodel a few 'yelps' of welcome” (1982, p. F7). (Unfortunately Sherry's son Adam was run over by a car while chasing a cat.)

Fowke's relaxing activities were very basic. Reading remained high on her list of activities. Her favourite genre was mystery fiction and she could not get enough of it. Fowke particularly enjoyed mysteries written by Adam Hall, Desmond Bagley and Victor Canning. She enjoyed science fiction film and television productions such as the Star Trek series. A breakfast of bacon and eggs was great and an Irish Cream after an evening meal was welcome (Gilmour, 1982, p. F7).

Since Fowke worked from home, all of her working material was in the house. This included her recordings, transcripts of radio shows, manuscripts, correspondence, and a substantial collection of books on the topics of folk song and folklore. Fowke gave a few books to the University of Calgary Special Collections prior to her death. She also made arrangements to leave her entire collection to the University of Calgary after her

death. It was then that the enormity of her personal collection stored at the Notley Place house was revealed. More than 1,000 books were packed and delivered to the University of Calgary along with 150 field recordings (approx 2,000 songs) and the manuscripts, and correspondence. Fowke's husband Frank prepared the materials for shipment to Calgary with help from Skye Morrison, a professor at Sheridan College (Morrison, personal communication, 2012).

Frank Fowke

Dr. Skye Morrison told me that Edith Fowke's husband Frank was quietly supportive of his wife's work throughout her career. He understood his wife's independent and feisty nature and never interfered with her research and writing (Morrison, personal communication, 2012). Frank Fowke accompanied his wife on her early field trips and carried the tape recorder. In a 2004 interview, he said that the first tape recorder was too heavy for his wife since it weighed almost forty pounds. "When Edith got a lighter tape recorder that she could carry around by herself she often went out on her own and I didn't know so much about the later collecting" (Panagapka & Vikar, 2004, pp. 82-83). Fowke appreciated her husband's calm demeanor. Ruth Latta writes:

She is grateful for her husband's support over the years. "I have been lucky in my husband," Fowke says, "Frank has always been very supportive, even with regard to household chores, and has never resented my work. I feel that he has been pleased about any recognition I have received." (Latta, 1990, p. H4)

Folkways Recordings 1958-1964

During the first couple of years of her part time field research, Fowke accumulated a significant number of field recordings. Her next step was to find a way to use the recordings to make her research public. Folk song scholar/collector Philip Thomas explained to me that Edith Fowke was initially considered by many as a popularizer of Canadian folk song. It was therefore natural for her to use her radio programs to bring the songs to the listening public. In 1956, Fowke had been involved in the production of the *Folk Songs of Canada* recording with Richard Johnston and played selections from it on her radio program. Building on that experience, she decided to find a way to make the best of her field-recordings available for public consumption as well as radio airplay. To do this, Fowke entered into an agreement with Folkways Records of New York to produce a commercial long-play vinyl recording (LP) compiled from the best of her field recordings. Fowke prepared a booklet of extensive liner notes to be included with the LP. This added an important literary element.⁶³

⁶³ Fowke's decision to use her field recordings in the production of commercial recordings rather than begin with a book or a series of articles may have been made because she did not have the musical background to transcribe the songs into music notation and include them in a book. She was capable of writing comprehensive liner notes about the singers and the literary aspects of the songs (The liner notes are reviewed in Chapter 8.). The inclusion of these notes along with the selected field-recordings in a commercially available package validated her research and made it public.



Figure 5:3 Cover of Edith Fowke's first Folkways album (FW 4005)

[This album was produced from Fowke's field recordings. Fifteen tracks feature Peterborough area singers Mrs. Mary Towns, Mrs. Margaret Ralph, Mrs. Jack (Vera) Keating, Mrs. Tom (Maggie) Sullivan, Mrs. Hartley Minifie, Martin McManus, Tom Brandon, Joe Kelly, Jimmie Heffernan, and Martin Sullivan. The remaining four tracks feature O. J. Abbott from the Ottawa Valley, and Loyis Murrin and Lamont Tilden from Toronto. The liner notes from this album are discussed in Chapter 9 and the field recording aspects in Chapter 7.]

Fowke's friendship with Kenneth Goldstein, a producer with Folkways Records of New York, was the connection that enabled her to produce a series of commercial recordings, mastered totally from selected field-tapes. The first record album in the series was *Folk Songs of Ontario* (Folkways FM4005), released in 1958 when Fowke's fieldwork was at its peak. This recording was followed in 1961 by two LPs, *Irish and*

British Songs from the Ottawa Valley, sung by O.J. Abbott (FM 4051) and *Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties* (Folkways FM4052). *Songs of The Great Lakes* (Folkways FM4018) was released in 1964. Each recording has as accompaniment, a booklet of comprehensive notes prepared by Fowke.

In addition to the four Fowke recordings released by Folkways Records of New York, Fowke's field-recordings were used to produce the 1963 recording, "*The Rambling Irishman*" *Tom Brandon of Peterborough Ontario Canada* (FSC-10), released by Folk-Legacy Records of Sharon, Connecticut. Folk-Legacy Records is a small company founded by American folk-singer Sandy Paton along with folk music enthusiasts, Lee Haggarty and his sister Mary. The company was initially established in 1961 specifically to make good field-recordings of authentic traditional artists available to the general public. Collectors with tapes of such artists were urged to contact the company.⁶⁴

It is interesting to note that Fowke had the ability to produce impeccable recordings from a technical perspective. Many of her field recordings sound like studio recordings, even by today's standards.⁶⁵ Her recording skills did not go unnoticed. In 1960, Folkways records released an album of Canadian fiddle music featuring Toronto-based fiddler Per Norgaard and his four-piece band, recorded by Edith Fowke. To my knowledge Folkways #FW8826, *Jigs and Reels*, was the only instrumental commercial recording with which Fowke was ever involved. Since Fowke expressed little interest in

⁶⁴ This information came from page 32 of the 1963 booklet prepared by Edith Fowke for inclusion with the Folk-Legacy LP "*The Rambling Irishman*" *Tom Brandon of Peterborough Ontario Canada*. As of 2010, Folk-Legacy Records continued to release folk-music recordings although studio recordings are now the norm.

⁶⁵ Samples of Fowke's field recordings can be heard in the audio documentary attached as Appendix G.

instrumental music, it could be assumed that Folkways contracted her to record these fiddle tunes and prepare the liner-notes. Outside of the liner notes for this recording, Fowke does not mention this particular recording or any of her Peterborough area recordings of fiddle music anywhere else in her published work.⁶⁶

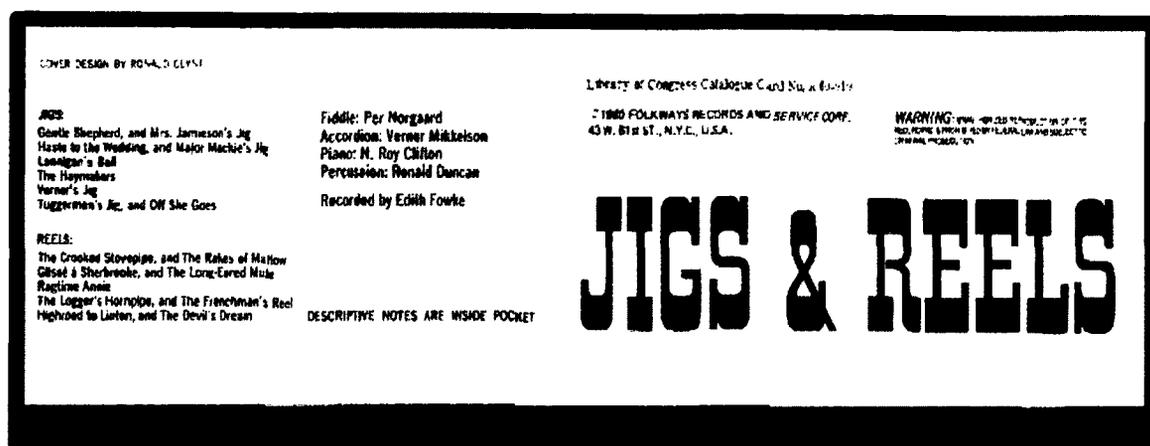


Figure 5:4 Fiddle album recorded by Edith Fowke, released as *Jigs and Reels* by Folkways (FW8826) in 1960.

Although it has been decades since the release of Fowke's Folkways and Folk-Legacy recordings, there is no indication how commercially successful they were or how many were actually produced. The recordings can still be found on the shelves of assorted campus radio stations and music libraries. The detailed liner note booklets that accompanied the recordings were never reprinted in books or magazines although the notes for Folkways recordings FM 4005, 4018, 4051 and 4052 are currently available for free download on the Smithsonian Folkways website (www.folkways.si.edu). It can be

⁶⁶ Further discussion of Fowke's recordings of fiddle tunes is found in Chapter 7.

argued that the recordings did raise Fowke's profile in the folk music community since in the years immediately following the release of the recordings, Fowke began contributing articles to traditional folk music magazines such as *Hoot, Sing and String*, and *Midwest Folklore*. Her radio shows continued and she was included on the advisory board of a group seeking to start a major central Canadian folk festival.

Mariposa Folk Festival

Given Fowke's desire to popularize Canadian folk song, it was fitting that she became involved, from the beginning, in the creation of what would become one of Canada's major folk festivals. The Mariposa Folk Festival was named after the fictitious town of Mariposa, which was known through the prose of Canadian humorist, Stephen Leacock. Leacock had a home in Orillia, Ontario and the town seemed to inspire his writing. The Orillia Chamber of Commerce was searching for a summer tourist attraction and settled on the idea of a folk music festival in 1960. An advisory board was established that included Edith Fowke, Ian Tyson, Estelle Klein, Ted Schaefer, Ed Cowan and Ruth Brown, who would become the president of the festival.⁶⁷

In August of 1961, Orillia hosted the first festival, which was successful enough to warrant subsequent festivals in 1962 and 1963. Unfortunately the 1963 festival was marred by rowdy crowds and vandalism, which caused Orillia to discontinue its involvement. The festival had made its mark with the folk music community and rather

⁶⁷ James Porter (1991) points out that folk festivals grew out of the 1930s folk song revival spearheaded by the Seegers and the Lomaxes. Fowke was obviously influenced by these developments as she was a personal friend of Pete Seeger, who according to Porter, was central in re-igniting interest in this "rural" music among "city folk" (Porter, 1991, p. 123). Fowke was also a colleague of Canadian-born Oscar Brand who began his "Folk-song Festival" program on New York public radio in 1945 and was on the board that established the Newport Folk Festival in 1959.

than fold, the festival moved. It went to Maple for 1964, Innis Lake for 1965, '66, and '67, then Toronto's Centre Island from 1968 into the 1990s. The Mariposa Folk Festival always presented many of the current major music personalities including Canadians such as Ian and Sylvia, Joni Mitchell, and Gordon Lightfoot and Americans such as Bob Dylan, Doc Watson, and Bill Monroe. However, since Edith Fowke was influential in the initial Festival planning, she was able to arrange festival appearances by some of the Ontario singers that she had discovered during her fieldwork, including O.J. Abbott, Tom Brandon, John Leahy, Vera Keating, and Mary Towns.

Fowke remained true to her convictions that traditional Canadian songs should be heard by Canadians. Published reviews of the Mariposa performances by Fowke's informants are rare. The following one from a column in *Sing Out!* magazine is revealing. It describes the appearance of Fowke, a couple of her informants and other musical friends at The Mariposa Folk Festival at Innis Lake in 1966. Columnist Israel Young writes:

At one p.m. in a corner of a field, an hour was devoted to the background of Canadian music, with Edith Fowkes (sic) weaving Tom Kines, Tom Brandon, LaRena Clark, Mrs. Townes (sic) into the narrative with their songs. At one point Mr. Brandon was drowned out by a practising rock group and he couldn't bear to start again. And suddenly it was all over anyway and it was so easy to be missed. And most people missed it. A dreadful misuse of directed energy had taken place. I just didn't feel I had a Canadian experience. The Festival Comm. (sic) has

simply got to allow traditional music on their big concerts. (Young, 1966, n.p.)⁶⁸

A more optimistic observation of a performance by Fowke informants at Mariposa is found in a local Peterborough book, *The Children of the Settlers*. It describes the appearance of Fowke informant, John Leahy at the festival on the Toronto Islands in 1969 (see photo: Figure 5.5). Author Michael Diamond writes:

John and several others from Douro were invited to appear ... in 1969. The invitation was by Mrs. Edith Fowke, an expert in the field of folksongs. It was the farthest John had ever travelled away from home in his lifetime. Gathered at the Festival was an assortment of musicians, singers, hippies, yippies and back to earth types ... John stepped up to the stage. In his clear voice and Irish brogue he sang a song about the frogs croaking in the marshes and the tree toads a'whistling for rain. A silence descended on the crowd as they listened intently to the words of a song they had never heard before.⁶⁹ Enchanted by its story, they demanded he sing another and another. Being well educated in music they understood that here before them was a living link with Ontario's past, someone unique who had preserved the songs and stories of the shantyboys. (Diamond, 1985, p. 160)

68 At the time Young wrote this column he was based in Greenwich Village where he operated a folk-music book and record shop. The comment, from his American perspective, about a “Canadian experience” is interesting.

69 The song referred to is “Johnny Murphy.” It was originally recorded by Fowke at Leahy's Douro home in 1958. It contains the lines: “The frogs in the marshes was croaking, and the treetoads were whistling for rain, And the partridge around me were drumming on the banks of the Little L'eau Pleine.” Fowke said Leahy was the only Ontario singer she found who performed this song (Fowke, 1970, p. 100).



Figure 5:5 1969 Mariposa Festival workshop stage: Fowke with three Peterborough area singers: L to R, John Leahy, Vera Keating, Edith Fowke, Mary Towns, and Barry O'Neil (Michigan) (Courtesy: Michael Towns)

Canadian Folk Music Society

In the mid-1950s, Edith Fowke was involved, along with Maude Karpeles, and Marius Barbeau in the formative meetings of the Canadian Folk Music Society.⁷⁰ Barbeau enlisted Fowke as one of the original directors. The Society was initially launched in 1956 under Barbeau's leadership as a branch of the International Folk Music Council (IFMC). Membership from the beginning was a mix of academics and non-academics. In

⁷⁰ Established in 1956 as the Canadian Folk Music Society, the society was renamed in 1988 as the Canadian Society for Musical Traditions/Société Canadienne pour les Traditions Musicales. The English name was changed to the Canadian Society for Traditional Music in 2001.

1957, the Society became autonomous but remained connected to the IFMC. It helped organize the 1961 IFMC meeting in Quebec City. Apart from the meetings, one of the important functions of the Society was the intermittent publishing of the *Canadian Folk Music Society Newsletter*, which began in July, 1965. The *Newsletter* evolved into the non-academic *Canadian Folk Music Society Bulletin* when a second publication, the academically oriented, *Canadian Folk Music Journal*, emerged in 1973 under the editorship of Edith Fowke. Fowke edited this publication until her death in 1996 (Weihs et al, 1996, pp. 9-10).

Editing the *Canadian Folk Music Journal* was an extremely important element in Fowke's career. She saw it as an opportunity for Canadian scholars and others to have their articles and essays published. In the first issue of the publication Fowke wrote the following in the "Foreword:"

For some time now the Canadian Folk Music Society has been hoping to publish a journal which would provide an outlet for scholars who are collecting and studying Canadian folk music. Up to the present the only outlet for such articles has been the journals of American folklore societies, the International Folk Music Council, and the Society for Ethnomusicology. This first issue of our own journal has been made possible by grants from the Ontario Arts Council and the Mariposa Folk Festival, and to them we express our thanks. (Fowke, 1973, p. 2)

Fowke was not selective regarding the readership of the journal articles, she wanted them to be inclusive. She said: "These articles will be as varied as possible in the hope of appealing to both the folk music specialist and the non-specialist reader. We shall try to cover as many different aspects of Canadian folk music as we can" (Fowke, 1973, p. 2). Fowke wanted to close the gap between folk music scholars and the folk music enthusiasts and performers. She felt that the *Canadian Folk Music Journal* could help bring these groups closer and encouraged individuals from all backgrounds to submit articles. In every edition of the *Canadian Folk Music Journal* during her time as editor, Fowke authored an Editorial Notes⁷¹ section to introduce readers to not only the articles in the publication but to the backgrounds of the contributors. According to York University professor Jay Rahn, Fowke relished her role as editor and very efficiently altered submitted texts to make them more accessible. Rahn writes:

As the *Journal's* editor, Edith tried to serve others' thoughts in a similarly direct and vivid manner. "Tried" is perhaps not quite the right word. Often within a few hours of receiving an article, even of great length, she already had tightened its prose considerably, frequently by as much as a third. A deletion here, a substitution or transposition there: such apparently effortless alterations time and again transformed the wordiest contributions into an easier, more concise style, and most important, freed up costly space for items that might have been delayed or never published at all. With comparable ease, Edith would go to her

⁷¹ From 1973 to 1978, the introductory section authored by Fowke was the "Foreword." From 1979 to 1996 it was titled "Editorial Notes." The final "Editorial Notes" was authored by York University professor Jay Rahn as a tribute to Edith Fowke.

overflowing bookshelves (or more recently, her computer), returning moments later, triumphantly clutching a more precise reference or the answer to a troubling question of content. (Rahn, 1996)

Children's Songs and Games

In 1959, Fowke started to invite children between the ages of six and nine into her Toronto home where she asked them to sing songs that they sang while they were at play: clapping, ball- bouncing, and skipping. She gathered the children around the tape recorder and recorded them as they sang. Another approach used by Fowke to record children's songs required her to ask various elementary school principals for permission to enter the schools and record. When talking to the principal, Fowke asked specifically to work with grade three classes where the children were eight or nine years old. She concluded after some experience this group of children knew the most songs. Fowke recorded at eight different city schools for her fieldwork in order to get a cross-section of songs of children from different economic backgrounds. When she recorded in the schools she set up a tape recorder at the front of the classroom and asked the children to gather around her and sing the songs they used during play. Fowke wanted the singing to be spontaneous without any prompting. After the singing session was over, she took time with the children to get clarification as to what activity each song was meant to accompany. Fowke conducted her recording sessions with children between 1959 and 1964, the same years she was recording in the Peterborough area⁷² (Caputo, 1989, p. 36)

⁷² Fowke's husband worked in Toronto during the week. She remained in the city with him, working on her radio program, children's recordings, and other writing projects. Fowke's Peterborough area field trips were weekend ventures and her husband normally accompanied her. This likely explains why Fowke did not record the songs of children in the rural schools.

Fowke's collection of tapes of children singing was stored for several years before she used them as the basis for a publication. Her first book based on the collection was *Sally Go Round the Sun: Three Hundred Children's Songs, Rhymes, and Games*. It was released by publisher McClelland and Stewart in 1969, ten years after Fowke began collecting children's songs. Her delay in using the material to create a publication may be partly due to the fact that Fowke needed to find a collaborator to help her transcribe the song melodies. Secondly, it is possible that Fowke was just too busy working in other areas to find time to work on a publication.

Travels and Friendships

Edith Fowke's self-imposed workload between 1956 and 1965 was impressive. It included record production, radio broadcasting, writing and publishing, recording children's songs in Toronto, recording folk songs in the Peterborough and Ottawa areas, and working on the committees of a folk-festival and a national folk music organization. She demonstrated an ability to work tirelessly and effectively but she still found the time to travel and nurture friendships with individuals within the folk music community. The social aspect of Fowke's character enabled her to eventually move freely within the folk music hierarchy and associate with people who could help her further her career.

In 1958, Fowke found time to holiday in the British Isles with her husband. There she became acquainted with folklorists and singers such as Hamish Henderson, Albert Lloyd, Ewan McCall, and Peggy Seeger⁷³ (Fowke, 1990, p. 297). Immediately upon

⁷³ Seeger later helped Fowke notate some of her field-recordings. It is possible on this visit Fowke made Seeger aware of her Ontario recordings and her need to have a collaborator with a musical background.

returning from Britain, Fowke started working with American folk-singer Joe Glazer on a collection of protest and work songs. This was paralleled by her collaboration with Canadian folk-singer Alan Mills on a book version of their radio series *Canada's Story in Song*. At the same time Fowke began to contemplate a publication based on songs sung by Canadian children. The before-mentioned recording of children's songs in Toronto followed shortly thereafter (Johnson, 1996, pp. 9-10).

Her recording of children began in 1959 as Fowke was completing the writing projects with Joe Glazer and Alan Mills. The books *Songs of Work and Freedom*⁷⁴ and *Canada's Story in Song* would be published in 1960. In the summer of 1959, Fowke travelled to British Columbia to visit her old friends, song collector Philip Thomas and folk singer Vera Johnson. A year later in the summer of 1960, Fowke and her husband travelled to the United States to visit with friends and associates in the American folklore and folk music communities including Ben Botkin, Alan Lomax, and Kenneth Goldstein. In 1961, Fowke and her husband visited Mexico and Trinidad (Johnson, 1996, pp. 10-11). Simultaneously, Fowke continued with her radio broadcasts and ongoing literary contributions to journals and magazines.

After the Fieldwork

Near the end of her fieldwork period, Fowke did a brief stint of collecting in western Canada. She was attending in Winnipeg the Annual Conference of the Canadian Authors' Association when a friend, Nancy Drake, offered to take her to the home of a folk song-singing family. On the evening of 24 June 1966, three members of the

⁷⁴ This book was reprinted in 1973 as *Songs of Work and Protest*.

Anderson family sang twelve songs for her to record. As she later wrote in a 1975 article for the *Canadian Folk Music Journal* those songs represented an interesting variety of the type of folk songs found in Canada. The collection included one Child ballad, three British broadsides, two lumbering ballads, two English children's songs, three American country and western songs, and one local song (Fowke, 1975, p. 35).

As Fowke's field trips began to decline, she continued to write articles and essays based on her fieldwork. These appeared in American and Canadian publications such as: *Western Folklore*, *Midwest Folklore*, *Canadian Literature*, *Sing and String*, *Hoot*, and *Alberta Historical Review*. Between 1961 and 1966, seventeen of Fowke's articles and essays were published. (See the chronological listing provided in Appendix C.) Her prolific writing during this time may have been the result of an increased confidence provided by the work associated with the release of her Folkways recordings and accompanying notes and her expanded knowledge of folk song texts and lineage.

Fowke continued writing articles and essays based on her fieldwork for the rest of her life eventually producing at least one hundred published articles and essays⁷⁵ relating to folk songs. Each was written in a direct accessible manner suitable for all readers and appeared in a wide variety of publications, scholarly and non-scholarly. Fowke remained focused on her desire to make her folk song research accessible to the public as a whole including scholars, folk song performers and fans. She continued to advocate the accessibility of folk song and story to the general public, considering them to be the folk about whom the songs and stories were written.

⁷⁵ I continue to search for articles and essays written by Fowke. As of December 2011, I have located 100. They are listed in Appendix C – Articles by Edith Fowke.

Edith Fowke's varied career carried on vigorously after she completed the bulk of her fieldwork in 1965. During the fieldwork years, Fowke's broadcasting career had continued uninterrupted as she created original folk music radio programming for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). In 1965, she created a series of radio programs for the CBC based on her 1960 book, *Songs of Work and Freedom*. In 1966, she created seven folk music episodes for the CBC-FM network program, *The Best Ideas You'll Hear Tonight*. The series was based on the field recordings that Fowke made of singer LaRena Clark. Coinciding with the radio broadcasts, Fowke worked with Topic Records, based in Great Britain, to release a LaRena Clark vinyl album titled, *A Canadian Garland: Folk Songs from the Province of Ontario*.

Edith Fowke continued to enjoy the company of folk-singers, folk song enthusiasts, and folk song collectors. This was evident in her ongoing friendships with Canadian folk-singers such as Merrick Jarrett, Vera Johnson, Oscar Brand, and Alan Mills, and international folk personalities like Peggy Seeger, Pete Seeger, and Ewan McCall. In the mid to late 1960s, Fowke continued to be actively involved in the Canadian Folk Music Society and the American Folklore Society. On at least one occasion, she attended The International Folk Music Council meeting in Scotland.

In 1971, Edith Fowke joined the English Department of York University in North York to teach folklore as an associate professor. This gave her an opportunity to educate people about Canadian folk song and folklore. Fowke cherished the opportunity to teach these subjects formally. Carol Carpenter writes about Fowke's official brief to a Canadian government commission to bring folklore scholarship into Canadian institutions of

learning. Carpenter writes:

In her brief to the Symons Commission on Canadian Studies (1972-1974), Edith Fowke argued strongly for the institutionalization of folklore studies since such studies have a unique importance in any nation's scholarship, and have been neglected in Canada. The general academic community and the wider populace remain largely ignorant of the nature or value of folklore studies, according to Mrs. Fowke. ... In his report *To Know Ourselves* (Ottawa, 1976), Commissioner Symons specifically recommended the establishment of many more folklore courses throughout the nation. (Carpenter, 1979, p. 419)

Honours and Continuing Work

In the 1970s, the long awaited formal recognition of Edith Fowke's contributions to North American folk song and folklore scholarship began. In 1974, Fowke became a Fellow of the American Folklore Society. The same year she received her first honorary doctorate from Brock University in St. Catherines, Ontario. Fowke commented on her doctorate in an interview with Robert Fulford of the *Toronto Star*. She is quoted as saying: "I'm rather pleased about it ... In this field I am entirely self-taught but in the (United) States at conventions, they assume everyone has a doctorate so they keep calling me Dr. Fowke. Now I won't have to disclaim it" (Fulford, 1974, p. F5).

In October of 1975, Fowke received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. This degree was unique in that Trent University is located within six miles of the Towns General Store where Fowke began her

song collecting. In the citation given at the convocation, Professor Alan Wilson recognized the local aspects of her work when he said: “Edith Fowke's most original work as a collector lies, of course, in her adopted province of Ontario, particularly in the Peterborough area, for which we have special reason to honour and thank her” (*Trent Fortnightly*, 1975).

During that same autumn of 1975, Fowke presented an evening lecture series at Trent University on the topic of folklore and folk song. She also continued teaching three courses at York University. As lecturing and teaching dominated her time Fowke made the comment that she had to cut back on her song and story collecting. She said that her research was continuing, however, she was now making her students do it (Fulford, 1974, p. F5). Fowke was meticulous in organizing and archiving her collection of field recordings. In the 1970s, the majority of Fowke's field recordings were stored at York University. The details of the collection are listed in *Edith Fowke Tapes No. 1 – No. 95 Prepared By York University Libraries June, 1972* (York University – Fowke Collection Inventory #FO 368). The listing details the contents of 95 tapes, which contain 2,229 field recordings by Edith Fowke along with 44 recordings by other people for Fowke. Fifteen of the tapes are edited and assembled by song type, resulting in some duplication of recordings. The remainder of the tapes listed appear to be the original raw field recordings. All the tapes list the song title, the informant's name, and the recording location. The dates provided range from the day, month, and year to simply the year. Since Fowke did very little song collecting after 1972, this listing likely contains the majority of Fowke's field recordings.

In 1976, Edith Fowke's change in research and writing focus was evident with the release of her book *Folklore of Canada* by McClelland and Stewart. The book contained a variety of folk tales, riddles, and legends accumulated and edited by Fowke. Fowke made personal appearances to speak about and promote the publication. A memorable incident occurred during this promotional period when Fowke appeared as a guest on the CBC national radio program, *Morningside*, hosted at the time by Maxine Crook and Harry Brown.⁷⁶

The first part of the interview went well as Fowke answered some soft questions posed by Crook about Canadian folklore and its inclusion in the curriculum of Canadian universities. Fowke followed her answers with a reading from *Folklore of Canada*. After the reading, tension entered the interview as Harry Brown, a Newfoundlander, confronted Fowke about the ten pages of Newfie jokes that had been included in her book. Mr. Brown argued that Fowke was perpetuating a stereotype. Fowke responded that she was merely collecting a tradition and he should take the time to read the introduction of the section more carefully in order to understand the context within which the jokes appeared. At this point, Brown became more hostile, he began raising his voice and referring to her as "Miss Fowke." Fowke very calmly stood her ground and repeated her point in a straightforward and polite manner. The argument went unresolved but Fowke's calmness under verbal attack made her seem totally in control of the situation and the winner of the argument, if a winner could be declared. The audio tape of this exchange remains as a permanent record of the powerful, yet subtle determination that Fowke

⁷⁶ I located the tape of this radio program in March 1998 at the CBC radio archives in Toronto. It is identified as Fowke, E. Interview with Maxine Crook and Harry Brown, *Morningside* tape #761117-9 on 770223-9. I listened carefully twice to the tape and noted my impressions of the exchange between Fowke and Brown.

exhibited (CBC Radio Archives tape #761117-9 on 770223-9).

In 1977, McClelland and Stewart released Fowke's book *Ring Around the Moon*. This book, a collection of songs, riddles, and rhymes for children from six to eleven years of age, was a sequel to *Sally Go Round the Sun* released ten years earlier. By the mid-1970s, Fowke felt that she had enough of publishing folk song books and decided to direct her research interest even more towards the study of folklore (Fowke, 1990, p. 298).⁷⁷

In 1978, Fowke became a Companion of the Order of Canada. It was a very good fit for her because she not only contributed to Canadian folklore and folk song scholarship but she always attempted to have her research and writing include all of Canada. Although Fowke conducted the majority of her fieldwork and writing activity in Ontario, she was not a regionalist. Her recognition of Canada is reflected in both her writing and her lecturing because, when possible, she would acknowledge the contributions to Canadian folk song and folklore from all the provinces, territories, both official languages, and the relevant cultural diaspora..

In the late 1970s, Fowke's interests included both folklore and a newly-found interest in music education. She had become familiar with the work of Hungarian composer, song collector, and music educator, Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967). Kodaly created a method of teaching music to children that was successfully adapted for use in public schools. Kodaly's approach to music education was child centred, based on teaching, learning and understanding music through the experience of singing, giving

⁷⁷ Fowke revealed this information in a 1989 conference paper "Collecting and Studying Canadian Folk Songs" that was published in 1990 as a chapter in *Ethnomusicology in Canada*.

students access to the world of music without the technical problems involved with learning an instrument. He also advocated the use of each country's own folk song material. Fowke, who always advocated the inclusion of Canadian folk song in musical education programs took the opportunity to become involved in the Kodaly summer music programs at the University of Calgary in the early 1980s.⁷⁸

In 1982, Edith Fowke received her third honorary doctorate from York University and in 1983 she became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. In 1984, she was given an honorary life membership in the Canadian Folk Music Society. The same year, Fowke left her permanent position as an instructor at York University although she continued to teach a single course on ballads and folk songs for a while afterward. In 1985, she received the Vicky Metcalf award for her body of work related to Canadian children's publications.⁷⁹ In 1986, she received her fourth honorary doctorate from the University of Regina.

Fowke concentrated on folklore in her published books throughout the remainder of the 1980s and into the 1990s with works such as *Explorations in Canadian Folklore* (1985) with Carole Carpenter, *Tales Told in Canada* (1986), and *Canadian Folklore* (1988). Her final folklore publication was *Legends Told in Canada* (1984), which was published by The Royal Ontario Museum. However, Fowke never did venture very far from her folk song roots. Her final book on the topic of folk songs was also released in

⁷⁸ Richard Johnston had become Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Calgary in 1968 and was probably instrumental in getting Fowke involved in the program. Fowke was a natural fit for the Calgary Kodaly program since it focused on Canadian folk songs rather than instrumentally based music.

⁷⁹ The Metcalf Award included a large cash prize. Other winners of this award include noted authors, Farley Mowat and Robert Munsch.

1994 by The University of Calgary Press. The book, *A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark*, was co-authored by Fowke and music professor Jay Rahn of York University. As in all of her previous folk song publications, Fowke with no formal training of music theory and structure needed to work with a individual who had a music background.

In February of 1998⁸⁰ I visited Rahn at his Toronto home to discuss his experience working with Edith Fowke to create the book, which was based on the song tapes of LaRena Clark, a prolific Ontario singer, originally from the Lake Simcoe area. Fowke recorded her in the 1960s after she moved to the Ottawa area. Clark was an exceptional informant. Rahn indicated she possibly knew more than 600 folk songs in their entirety. He told me that Edith Fowke would bring him a half-dozen taped songs at a time every couple of weeks and he prepared the musical notation for each song, adhering exactly to the taped performance. Rahn recalled that Fowke continually asked if he thought that the songs were good. He worked with Fowke on the layout of the text and the musical notations in the book and became aware of how accurate she wanted the page layout and page-turns. Accessibility and ease for the reader was foremost in her mind. Rahn confirmed that Fowke was a perfectionist regarding her publications and how they looked; she also had little tolerance for delays and missing print deadlines.

During the 1990s Fowke contributed a series of articles to the *Encyclopedia of Music inCanada*. The majority of the articles were vignettes on particular Canadian folk songs such as “The Jones Boys,” “The Red River Valley,” “The Black Fly Song,” etc. She

⁸⁰ At this time I was in my final year at Queen's University and was working on my first independent study regarding the work and publications of Edith Fowke.

continued writing until her death in March, 1996. In that year's edition of the *Canadian Folk Music Journal*, Professor Jay Rahn reflected on Fowke's outlook on life and her passion for the written word:

In my experience, Edith preferred talking about friends, colleagues, bridge, mysteries, organizations, and projects she liked and admired to conversing about herself. She seldom mentioned her health, except to express vague but pointed annoyance with her recent illnesses, and almost never described her own strengths or weaknesses. As the single exception I can recall, she volunteered often in her later years an unprompted opinion that seems best to characterize her relationship to the Journal: in her own words, Edith was "a damn good editor!" (Rahn, 1996)

In her final essay, published after her death, Fowke revealed the following information:

On my computer I have manuscripts on a couple of slight books: *Sing for Your Supper: A Folksong Cookbook* and *Black Cats and Shooting Stars: Canadian Superstitions and Folk Beliefs*, for children. So far they haven't found publishers. And I'm currently working on two books: one with Ken Goldstein of bawdy songs from Newfoundland and Ontario, and one of Canadian women's songs with Beverlie Robertson – as I noted, I was a feminist before there was such a term. (Fowke, 1997, p. 45)

CHAPTER 6
FOWKE TALES

Edith Fowke was comfortable with being labelled a “popularizer,” but according to Greenhill (2003), she also wanted some respect from academics, whom she felt used that label in a disparaging manner. After studying Fowke's various projects at length, I would argue that her personal perception of “popularization” was significantly different from those who criticized her. She honestly wanted to bring folk music to the ordinary people, a group that she considered important.⁸¹ Fowke said that if she collected from the folk, she should return to the folk (Ross, 1996, p. A18). Her social democratic background allowed her to readily identify with her informants. It is likely that Fowke interpreted “folk song popularization” as taking the songs she collected and putting them into a tangible structure that could be consumed by the public in some manner, such as a book, a recording, or a radio program. Fowke eventually received remuneration for her efforts but that was not her initial motivation, she simply wanted to inform people. Her teaching skills along with her sensitivity to cultural and social issues provided her with a genuine desire to make Canadians aware of their cultural riches. Fowke was enthusiastic because “popularization” to her meant informing and teaching.

⁸¹ Fowke saw “ordinary people” as being the common working people (farmers, lumbermen, merchants, tradesmen, and homemakers) of a society or region that represent a traditional way of life. These people understand and practice the customs, beliefs, and artistic endeavours typical of that society.



Figure 6:1 Playing music for the visitors at Peterborough County's Lang Pioneer Village
**Musicians left to right – Jim Yates (guitar), Allan Kirby (myself-banjo),
 “Zeke” Mazurek (fiddle)**

Introduction to *Fowke Tales*

A comprehension of Edith Fowke's desire to inform through folk songs was the catalyst that sparked the creation of *Fowke Tales*, a musical-drama that tells the story of Fowke's discovery of an oral folk song tradition in Peterborough County. My initial thoughts about the need for such a production came to me in the summer of 2006, when I was working at the Peterborough County owned and operated, Lang Pioneer Village Museum, which is located about 15 kilometres south of Douro on the Indian River. I was entertaining visitors to the village with songs and banjo tunes from the late nineteenth and

early twentieth century and explaining, when possible, the origins of the melodies and the lyrics. Songs from the various printed Fowke collections were part of the fare, especially those that had been collected in the immediate area. I obtained this position because a member of the Lang Village staff had attended a lecture that I delivered on Edith Fowke and Peterborough music for a night school adult education group a year earlier. There was not much interest in my presentation because only five people attended, but the musical message did get back to Lang Village. The administrator contacted me and after several meetings, the decision was made to introduce a traditional music component through workshops and live entertainment.

While playing music at Lang Village during the summer of 2006, I came to realize that very few people, including most local residents, knew about Edith Fowke's song collecting in the area. Those that recognized Fowke's name thought that she was a folk music expert long before she visited Peterborough County. Nobody I encountered knew that Fowke began her song collecting in the hamlet of Douro.⁸² More surprising to me was how uninformed individuals were about local music in a general sense. One local resident told me that the Maritimes had such a great music tradition and it was unfortunate that Ontario never had one.⁸³

This was one of several incidents that prompted me to consider the need to bring the story of Edith Fowke and her Peterborough area connections to area residents in an effective manner. My answer seemed to come from Fowke's own construct of

82 I was surprised by my experience. It made me consider how to relate this history more efficiently than telling two, three, or four people at a time.

83 This is a personal anecdote, which was not collected scientifically under the ethics provision. Therefore, I did not mention the individual's name but I feel the story makes a point and chose to keep it in the text.

popularization, which was to make people aware and inform them through music performance. I used this concept as the basis for formulating the idea of a musical-drama, which could bring the story of Edith Fowke's Peterborough field trips to an accessible performance venue. I established that the name of the production would be *Fowke Tales*. However, I needed a script, a performance venue, actors, musicians, and financing. The remainder of this chapter explains the series of events that brought this musical-drama from concept to successful performance.

The Script

The script for *Fowke Tales* needed to be understandable to individuals of all ages and it had to be an attention-sustaining mix of dialogue and traditional music, both vocal and instrumental. I was not sure how to create such a script but I carried the idea in my head for a few months. In the fall of 2006, I was playing banjo with a bluegrass band at a show in Wellington, Ontario. By coincidence, I knew one of the contracted sound technicians, Rob Kellough, and asked him if his wife was still writing historical novels. He answered in the affirmative and also mentioned that she had recently become involved in storytelling. I told him my thoughts for an Edith Fowke musical drama and asked if his wife would be interested in working with me.

Janet Kellough contacted me a couple of weeks later and we arranged to meet and discuss the feasibility of bringing the Fowke story to the stage. At our first meeting, Kellough suggested that we tell the story through the recollections of Mary Towns, the early Fowke informant. By doing this, we eliminated the need for an actor to interpret

Fowke's mannerisms and dialogue and replaced them with the characteristics and dialogue of Mary Towns, for whom we had factual references. I knew that Towns and Fowke remained very good friends throughout Fowke's career, therefore, the ongoing aspects of her work could be credibly related through Towns' perspective. Establishing Mary Towns as the main character also allowed us to use the P. G. Towns General Store as the setting throughout the production. Kellough then suggested that the dialogue could be enhanced at times if it was underscored by appropriate instrumental music. To help us do this, Kellough and I turned to a mutual friend, Zeke Mazurek, a seasoned fiddle player. He spent some early musical days with the Oshawa Symphony before becoming a founding member of the country-rock band Prairie Oyster, and then touring Europe with the Sneezy Waters' stage production, *Hank Williams: The Show He Never Gave*. Mazurek had already underscored several of Kellough's storytelling presentations, and I regularly worked with him in a couple of musical ensembles.

Mazurek brought his knowledge of theatrical music scoring to the *Fowke Tales* project, and worked with Kellough to create the appropriate musical underscoring for key portions of the dialogue. He then helped me to select appropriate songs and melodies from the various Edith Fowke collections. One of the basic ideas of the project was to present to the audience a representative cross-section of Fowke's collected material from broadside ballad variants to lumbering songs, to children's games.⁸⁴ It took a couple of months for Kellough to produce a script and for Mazurek and myself to create an initial list of songs to be included. Since the story would be delivered by Kellough playing the

⁸⁴ The creation of *Fowke Tales* required us to review most of Fowke's song collections to extract material that we felt was both representative and accessible for a general audience to understand and enjoy.

part of Mary Towns, we felt it important to approach members of the Towns family and receive their permission for Mary Towns to be represented by Kellough and for the store to be used as a set. The Towns family readily granted permission, but stipulated that no “foul” language be included in the script. The Towns family also made available, for the stage set, some of the store's vintage items such as signs, posters, and barrels. While Kellough, Mazurek, and myself were creating the script and reviewing the musical elements for the production, we determined that two more musicians were needed to polish the production. We approached two individuals, Angus Finnan and Jim Yates, who sang and played a number of different musical instruments. Both were experienced and knowledgeable traditional folk musicians and they agreed to participate in the initial performances for a modest fee.

The completed script indicated the sections of dialogue to be underscored. The composition of the underscoring was established at the weekly rehearsals, which began in July 2006. The rehearsals were needed to establish the final list of songs and hone the arrangements to suit the story and the on-stage actions. Contemporary arrangements of traditional folk songs were created to hold the interest of a crowd that would be familiar with the current folk music custom of singing songs to instrumental accompaniment. The following page (Figure 6.2) is a page from the current *Fowke Tales* script.

to be true, but Mary Towns wasn't exactly sure just what sort of old songs this woman was after.

"Oh," she says, "do you mean like "What a Friend We Have in Jesus?" that's an old song and it was written by a fella lived not too far from here -

TRINITY: Chorus of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS, ALL OUR SINS AND GRIEFS TO BEAR
WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO CARRY EVERYTHING TO GOD IN PRAYER
O WHAT PEACE WE OFTEN FORFEIT O WHAT NEEDLESS PAIN WE BEAR
ALL BECAUSE WE DO NOT CARRYEVERYTHING TO GOD IN PRAYER

JANET That's not really what I'm looking for, says Edith. You see I I'm thinking of old folk songs, maybe something you heard from your grandparents. I write for the CBC. A program called "Folk Song Time". Everybody at the CBC says there's no folk music in Ontario, and I want to find out whether or not that's true.

Everybody knows that newspapers and the CBC always tell the truth, so if they say it, it must be so, right?

Don't count on it, said Edith.

Mary was a little doubtful about the whole thing. Oh she knew lots of songs, but as she said, there were the songs she could remember singing when she was a youngster and those came from Ireland and England, and then there were the songs the men used to sing out in the woods where they working, and of course she could remember all the songs she sang when she was a girl, skipping or bouncing a ball, but everybody sings those, don't they?

The point is, they don't, said Edith. At least in Toronto they don't. Is there any way you'd sing some of those old songs and let me record you doing it?

Well sure, says Mary. But let me go get my father, he knows even more than I do.

Great, says Edith, I'll get the machine.

The machine turned out to be the biggest, most complicated looking tape recorder Mary had ever seen. Poor Edith could barely drag it into the store, and by the time she'd fiddled around and set it up and got it going and tested it a few times to make sure it was recording, Mary had got her father settled in a chair and ready to play.
(LITTLE BIT OF BUSINESS WITH AL)

Now, says Edith, pointing a microphone at them. Could you just state your names for the record?

(Whispers) I'm Mary Towns of Douro.

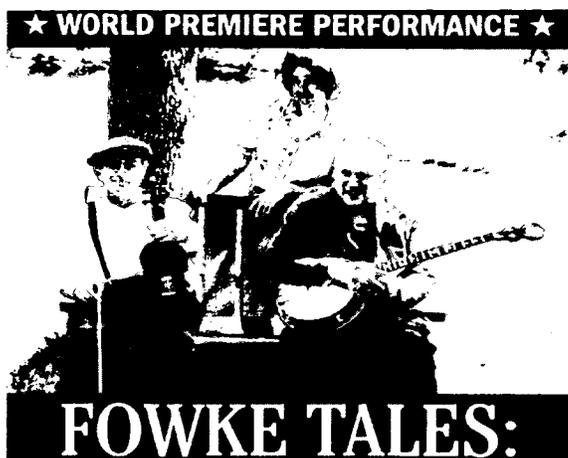
Speak into the microphone, says Edith.

(Clears throat - louder) I'm Mary Towns of Douro.

The Business Plan and the Venue

Kellough, Mazurek, and I applied for a Canada Council Grant to help us finance the staging of the production at Lang Pioneer Village, but we were unsuccessful. We rapidly moved to the alternative plan, which was to present a viable business plan to representatives from Lang Pioneer Village. The plan was designed to persuade the management to stage *Fowke Tales* in one of the existing barns on the village property, and then sell enough tickets to cover all of the costs and retain a small profit for the village. The costs included compensating Lang Village personnel to set up a box office for reserved ticket sales, remove displays from the barn, move a wagon stage into place and set out borrowed and rented chairs in a theatrical configuration. Lang personnel would also usher attendees and serve refreshments on performance evenings. Staging costs included the rental of a sound and light system, compensation for the sound technician and the cast members. It was estimated that these costs would be in the \$6,000 to \$7,000 range for a five-day run.

The first meeting with Lang management was held after the first draft of the script was finished. At the first meeting, Kellough and I proposed six performances with the first being a dress rehearsal that would be open only to village personnel, sponsors, and invited guests such as the County Warden, and the Provincial Member of Parliament. The dress rehearsal would take place on a Tuesday evening and be followed by the five-day performance run, Wednesday through Sunday. Complimentary tickets would be available for the local media and members of the Towns family, who supported and helped us with the project. Ticket prices would be in the \$15 to \$20 range and if 80% of the 120



★ WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCE ★

FOWKE TALES:

One Woman, 72 Road Trips, CBC Radio,
and the Rest is Peterborough County's
MUSICAL HISTORY.

*Created by and featuring:
Janet Kellough, Al Kirby & "Zeke" Mazurek with
Aengus Finnan and Jim Yates*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

5 DAYS ONLY!

**Lang Pioneer Village Museum
September 12th to 16th
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

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*The compelling story of Edith Fowke who
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★ ★ ★ STARRING ★ ★ ★



JANET KELLOUGH is a storyteller and author whose speciality is bringing Ontario's history to life. She has written and performed in stage productions such as "Exile - The United Empire Loyalist Story"; "Survivors of War/The Women Left Behind"; "The Prize"; "Good Night Sweetheart" and "Tales From the Wellington Dump", among others. In 1999 with assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts she released the spoken word recording "Swear On My Mother's Grave". She has authored two novels, "The Palace of the Moon" and "The Pear Shaped Woman" and the semi-fictional "The Legendary Guide to Prince Edward County". "The Palace of the Moon" is currently being featured in a serialized form on "The County Podcast" and Janet is now working on her third novel, a 19th century murder mystery. As a journalist her photographs and articles have appeared in newspapers across eastern Ontario.

ALLAN KIRBY plays banjo, guitar, and dobro and enjoys a blend of folk, country, blues, bluegrass, and jazz. Allan has a B.A. in music from Queen's University and a M.A. Ed from St. Francis Xavier University. For the past 30 years he has taught music privately and played on recordings. He also played guitar and pedal-steel guitar with Washbeard Hank, Dennis O'Toole, Jon Piper and Matchbox; and banjo with the bluegrass band McCormick. Allan recently collaborated on several CD projects and released a solo CD.



DAVID "ZEKE" MAZUREK has been a professional violinist for over 35 years, enjoying the music of all cultures. He has toured with or been a member of such internationally recognized groups and entertainers as Sylvia Tyson and Great Speckled Bird, Stringband, Prairie Oyster, Willie P. Bennett and Sneezy Waters to mention just a few. Zeke has performed in concerts, festivals, folk clubs, on radio, TV and movies across Canada, the US and Europe. He has released three CDs and is currently working on a fourth.

AENGUS FINNAN is a Canadian troubadour whose story-style songs have earned him international acclaim, numerous awards, and the honour of shared stages with the likes of Garret Rogers, James Keelaghan, Stephen Fearing, Valdy, Beth Nielsen Chapman, Tish Hinojosa, Lennie Gallant and John Renbourn. In the five short years since first singing on the street corners of his hometown he has been invited to perform on Baffin Island, at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, at music festivals across North America and at clubs in Japan and Australia.



JIM YATES plays guitar, banjo, mandolin, and harmonica and has a passion for traditional folk music and an interest in jazz guitar. He played with folk music ensembles such as Late For Dinner and The Piper's Hut. Jim was an organizer of Cobourg's popular folk music series, "Folk At The Forum." He played guitar and mandolin in bluegrass bands Buck and Loose Change and McCormick and recently played on several recording projects, including solo albums by Steve Hogg, Greg Hibbs, Zeke Mazurek and Allan Kirby.

Figure 6:3 Handout given to all summer visitors to Lang Pioneer Village in 2007

[The text reference to 72 road trips (my rough estimate of Fowkes field trips), CBC radio, and Peterborough County's musical history was added by Lang personnel to emphasize the fact that this was an exciting local story that deserved attention.]

available seats were sold each evening, all expenses would be covered and a small profit realized. After reviewing the plan, Lang management agreed to stage the show. They responded rapidly to the need for serious advertising by printing several thousand cardboard advertising flyers to be handed out to all village visitors during the summer of 2007. The flyer (Figure 6:3) generated significant interest well ahead of the performances and was one of the keys to the success of *Fowke Tales*.

The Songs

Approval from Lang Pioneer Village to move ahead with the project resulted in a concentrated attempt to arrange and rehearse the selected songs. As the performance dates approached, Kellough and I felt that it was important for audience members to understand the origin of each song in *Fowke Tales*. Therefore, a list of the songs and their local connection was placed in the centre of the programme that was handed to the audience upon entry to the makeshift theatre. The following illustration (Figure 6:4) is a copy of the original song-list. The theme of the show is explained in the top left corner, followed by the songs, in order of performance, with an explanation of the origin of each.

<p style="text-align: center;">Fowke Tales</p> <p>In "Fowke Tales" Mary Towns recalls how the visits of Edith Fowke stirred her musical memories of Peterborough County and brought the past back to life. Mary remains in the 1950s and 1960s but the songs and melodies take her and audience very gently back in time.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Music – ACT 1</p> <p>Pallet On The Floor <i>A traditional North American folk-song that was sung differently in different regions.</i></p> <p>The Blarney Stone <i>Edith collected Tom Brandon of Peterborough singing his own version of this old Irish folk song.</i></p> <p>Temperance Reel – <i>Traditional fiddle tune.</i></p> <p>Sally Greer <i>Edith recorded Martin McManus of Peterborough singing this version of the song about a shipwreck in The St. Lawrence River in 1841. The McManus version was included in Folk Songs of Ontario, an album released by Folkways Records, New York City in 1958. The master copy of the recording is stored in the Smithsonian archives, Washington D.C.</i></p> <p>Scarborough Settlers Lament <i>Edith documented several versions of this song. It was one of a few songs she found with Scottish origins, credited to Highland Scots that settled in Cape Breton Nova Scotia and Glengarry, Perth, and Scarborough Townships in Ontario.</i></p> <p>Farewell to MacKenzie <i>Edith found that the lyrics for this song were composed in April 1832 in Markham, Ontario by a supporter of William Lyon Mackenzie (Leader of 1837 rebellion). Mackenzie had just left for England to meet King William IV with a petition outlining the grievances of rural inhabitants.</i></p> <p>Anti-Rebellion Song <i>The lyrics to this song were printed in the Cobourg Star in February of 1838, a few months after the Mackenzie rebellion.</i></p> <p>Blind Mary (instrumental) <i>An 18th century melody, composed by Turlough O'Carolin (1667-1737) who was a blind Irish harpist.</i></p> <p>Maggie Howie <i>Edith recorded Mrs. Tom Sullivan of Lakefield, Ontario singing this song. The recording was also included in Folk Songs of Ontario.</i></p> <p>Smash the Windows/Father O'Flannigan <i>Traditional Irish jig – great for step-dancing.</i></p>	<p>Gypsy Davey (Child #200) <i>This song is a North American variant of one of the oldest Scots/Irish ballads documented by Harvard professor Francis Child.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">INTERMISSION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Music – ACT 2</p> <p>Whisky Before Breakfast – <i>Traditional fiddle tune</i></p> <p>The Cobbler – <i>A traditional Irish fun song.</i></p> <p>Iroquois Lullaby – <i>A song published by Edith Fowke and Allan Mills in 1960.</i></p> <p>Children's Game songs – <i>recorded by Edith in the early 1960's.</i></p> <p>The Weaver <i>Edith documented variations of this song from Vera Keating of Peterborough and O.J. Abbott of Hull Quebec. This version, filled with double entendre, is based on the variant that Abbott learned in 1890 from an Ottawa Valley farmhand.</i></p> <p>The Shantyboy's Alphabet <i>This song was known to have many versions and melodies. Edith documented this version in 1958 in Peterborough from the singing of Emerson Woodcock.</i></p> <p>River Driver <i>Recorded by Edith in Douro in 1958. the chorus was sung by John Leahy. The verses are from recordings that Edith made of Jim Harrington from Ennismore and Martin Sullivan from Nassau.</i></p> <p>Johnny Doyle <i>A song about a logging accident, one of many recorded by Edith throughout Ontario.</i></p> <p>The New Limit Line <i>Recorded in 1964 by Edith from the singing of Bob Thibadeau, Bobcaygeon, Ontario</i></p> <p>Trans Canada Highway <i>A song about Prime Minister R.B. Bennett's depression make-work project. Edith recorded Tom Brandon of Peterborough singing this song.</i></p> <p>Johnson's Hotel <i>A song about the Peterborough Jail. These verses were originally documented in Peterborough by Edith from the singing of Mrs. Tom Sullivan and John Condon.</i></p> <p>Big Dance in Douro <i>From a 19th century British Broadside that was adapted to whatever location the singer happened to be in.</i></p> <p>Mason's Apron/Devil's Dream <i>Traditional fiddle tune – great for step-dancing.</i></p>
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Figure 6:4 Copy of the song-list from the first performance of *Fowke Tales*

The First Performances

A few weeks prior to the performance date, Kellough, Mazurek, and I added a distinctly local element to the show by adding a young group of four local step-dancers. Their teacher, a member of the internationally known family fiddle/dance group "Leahy," was enthused that the "Peterborough County Steppers" were invited to perform in a musical/drama that might be seen by a significant number of people. Mazurek rehearsed the dancers and was confident that their presence might bring more customers to the

performances. The temporary theatrical space was ready for the September 11th dress rehearsal and advance ticket sales for the subsequent five performances were quite good.

The dress rehearsal went very well. There were some sound and lighting issues to work on, but the selected audience, which filled 50% of the seats, responded extremely well to the production. In fact many of the dress rehearsal audience members returned the following night with friends. Prior to the premiere performance on Wednesday September 12th, I was interviewed by a reporter from CHEX-TV the local Peterborough CBC television outlet. It gave me a couple of minutes to outline the career of Edith Fowke, specifically, her folk song collecting and the connection to the Peterborough area.⁸⁵ I concluded that I did well with the interview because it was aired later that night, along with some visual excerpts from *Fowke Tales*, as one of the lead stories on the 11:00 p.m. news.

The premiere performance was very close to being sold out, which was surprising because the weather had turned quite cool and the barn had no heat. The music and dialogue went well and the cast's enthusiasm created an old time party-like atmosphere for the audience. The standing ovation at the end erased the remainder of the uncertainty that Kellough, Mazurek, and I felt about the show. Two important events, which solidified the status of *Fowke Tales* in the area, occurred after this first performance. The first was the fact that nine members of the Towns family attended the performance and were excited about the show and the way that Mary Towns was portrayed.

85 This is another instance, where I sensed I was following in the footsteps of Edith Fowke. She would never turn down an opportunity to inform the public about Canadian traditional music.

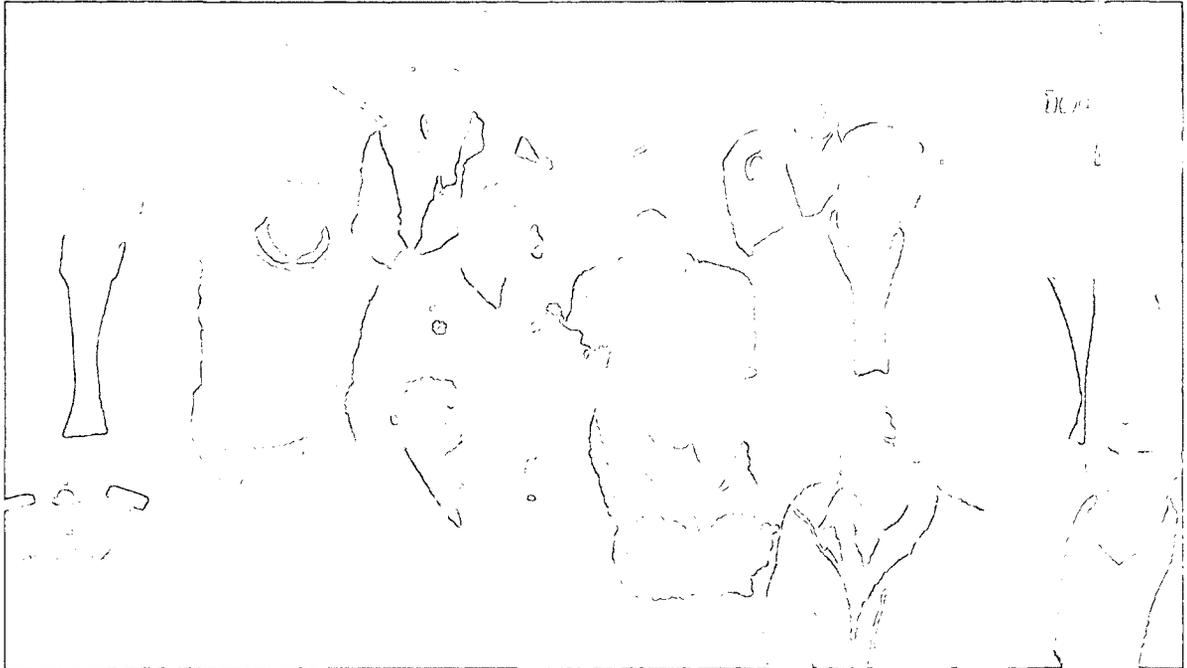


Figure 6:5 *Fowke Tales* cast and the Towns family after the premier performance
September 12, 2007

I'm first on the left in the back row and Zeke Mazurek is third from the left in the back row. Janet Kellough, who plays Mary Towns in the production is fourth from the left in the centre row flanked by Mary Towns' daughter, Mary Eileen Towns-Holland, third from the left and son Michael Towns, fifth from left. Towns' grand-daughter Michelle is directly in front of her father.

The endorsement of the Towns family was crucial to the success of the remaining performances because the word quickly spread that this was a “must-see” production for area residents. Members of the family returned to watch the show again, bringing with them additional friends and neighbours. My Fowke research was also aided because Marcelle Mundell-McMahon was one of those who was brought to a subsequent show. She approached me to let me know that she was a Fowke informant, a fact I had not realized, because I knew her as Marcelle Mundell and did not know her maiden name was McMahon. The second important occurrence related to the premiere performance

was the published review of the production in the next day's *The Peterborough Examiner* by Dennis O'Toole, a freelance reviewer, who attended the first performance. This positive review, along with the Towns family endorsement, assured us of virtual sell-outs for the remaining four performances.

LEISURE

THE EXAMINER/THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER, 13, 2007

Journey through folk music of the past

The rafters rang at Lang Pioneer Village last night for the world premiere of "Fowke Tales (One Woman, 72 Road Trips, CBC Radio, and the rest is Peterborough County's musical history)," a tribute to the labour of love that was the life's work of Edith Fowke.

She was the largely unsung but not forgotten ethnomusicologist who collected the rich motherlode of traditional songs and new world ballads that were the true stuff of legend.

The play, written by Janet Kellough, Alan Kirby and David (Fidlin' Zeke) Mazurek, was warmly received by a near capacity crowd comforted in sweaters and shawls against the cool autumn air.

Based on the friendship that developed between Mary Towns (of the Douro dry goods clan) and Mrs. Fowke, the play takes one back in time to the field recordings made



MUSIC
REVIEW
DENNIS
O'TOOLE

in the old general store (that stands remarkably unchanged to this day) in the Irish settlement just east of town.

Kellough's portrayal of Mary Towns is the centrepiece of the performance, and her narrative weaves the songs and anecdotes into a piece of whole cloth guaranteed to

pluck the heartstrings of anyone raised in these parts and invites all to share in the rich heritage of farming, logging and pioneering spirit that was still very much alive in the 1950s.

Alan Kirby shines (on banjo, guitar and vocals) as Pa Towns, ably assisted by Aengus Finnan on gui-

tar, bohdran (Irish drum) and vocals, Jim Yates (guitar and vocals) and the wonderful Mazurek as the ever-present and indispensable fiddler.

From the moment Mary brings in the washing (to the strains of CBC radio folk programming) and meets the integral (but not visible) Edith Fowke, the play unfolds as a seamless recollection that celebrates the worth and wealth of the common people.

Many of my people lie beneath the sod in St. Joseph's cemetery, and I can rest assured that they rest in peace with such fond tribute paid to their neighbours and kin as is done in this production. History and humour, murder and rebellion, hungry immigrants laid to rest at sea and on the arduous route here that was the lot of those that carved out Peterborough County; "Fowke Tales" has it all, and plenty.

Part of the 40th anniversary celebrations of Lang Pioneer Village, this play is a marvelous trip back in time, and highly recommended to all fans of music and history. Come early and stroll the grounds, bring a warm wrap (and maybe a cushion; it's not a 'soft seater'), and prepare to be well and truly entertained.

The four talented young dancers of the Peterborough County Steppers (Ashley Lemoire, Kaleigh Watts, Ari and Julie Vowles) help to wrap each of the two acts, adding percussive energy to the rousing musical stew.

"Fowke Tales" plays until Sunday at 7 p.m. (www.langpioneervillage.ca or call toll-free 1-866-289-5264 for ticket info).

Alan Kirby hosts a workshop on traditional music for banjo and guitar Sept. 24-28.

Dennis O'Toole is a freelance reviewer for The Examiner.

Figure 6.6 First night review of *Fowke Tales* published in *The Peterborough Examiner* the day after the premier performance

O'Toole (2007) writes:

From the moment that Mary brings in the washing (to the strains of CBC radio folk programming) and meets the integral (but not visible) Edith Fowke, the play unfolds as a seamless recollection that celebrates the worth and wealth of common people ... Many of my people lie beneath the sod in St Joseph's cemetery and I can

rest assured that they rest in peace with such fond tribute paid to their neighbours and friends as is done in this production. History and humour, murder and rebellion, hungry immigrants laid to rest at sea and on the arduous route here that was the lot of those that carved out Peterborough County. “Fowke Tales” has it all, and plenty. (p. C1)

O'Toole's review allowed me to reflect on what I had originally set out to accomplish, which was to entertain and inform. I felt that, as a group, we were successful in presenting the story and the music in a manner which would have received Fowke's approval. The tangible aspect of the week's events was the fact that the remaining four nights saw very few empty seats even though the weather was cool and wet. The final performance at Lang Village, Sunday September 16, 2007 was completed in front of an enthusiastic overflow crowd. From the perspective of the staff at Lang Pioneer Village, as well as Kellough, Mazurek, and myself, *Fowke Tales* was a financial and an artistic success. After the run at Lang Village, the production would be performed seventeen more times in various locales and venues. The most recent performance was December 30, 2011 in Milford, Ontario at the Mount Tabor Playhouse in front of a large enthusiastic audience. As will be discussed at the end of this chapter, the cast members and some songs have been altered over the subsequent years, but the script remains the same.

The *Fowke Tales* CD

The sound technician, Rob Kellough, recorded all of the Lang Village performances on an audio disc through the sound-board. After listening to a few of these recordings, a decision was made to select some of the better performances to create an audio CD, which would be representative of the show. This CD could be available for sale at future performances and could possibly be used as a promotional demo recording for parties interested in booking and staging the show. A copy of the resulting CD, *Fowke Tales: Live at Lang* is attached as “Appendix F.”⁸⁶ The recording not only provides a sense of the energy of the production, but it demonstrates how some of Fowke's collected material was re-arranged by the *Fowke Tales'* creators to appeal to contemporary audiences.

Song Arrangements

Contemporary audiences are acclimatized to folk singing with instrumental accompaniment, therefore, all of the tunes with one exception have accompaniment of some kind. The various combinations of fiddle, guitar, banjo, and bodhran gave each song a unique personality. For example, the song “New Limit Line” was collected by Fowke from Bob Thibadeau of Bobcaygeon, Ontario. It is from Fowke's *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* and contains 15 verses, which Mazurek and I thought would take too much time to perform in their entirety. We wanted to include “New Limit Line” because it was an example of a local song that Fowke collected, but we also needed

⁸⁶ To get a sense of the story as well as the atmosphere of the Lang performances without listening to the entire CD, the reader could listen to tracks 18 through 22.

to make it shorter and more interesting. Therefore, Mazurek and I selected five verses that articulated the essence of the story and gave the song an uptempo arrangement. In *Fowke Tales*, I sing “New Limit Line” along with Aengus Finnan as a duet in a loose vocal arrangement to simulate logging camp singing. Mazurek and I add fiddle and banjo breaks to maintain audience interest and give the song a bluegrass flavour.⁸⁷

Lumbering songs were Fowke's focus for a while and we included several more. Jim Yates sang about the mutilation and drowning of “Johnny Doyle”⁸⁸ on the Moose River. I combined verses from three of Fowke's Peterborough informants, Jim Harrington, Martin Sullivan, and Jim Harrington, to create “River Driver,”⁸⁹ which is a pastiche designed to give the audience a sense of the local lumbering culture.

Kellough, Mazurek and I kept in mind that lumbering songs were only a portion of Fowke's collecting interest. To show song collectors' interest in ballads named by Child, we included a version of the ballad “Gypsy Davey” (Child #200)⁹⁰, which featured the entire cast. Aengus Finnan delivered a superb version of “Scarborough Settler's Lament,” which Mazurek and I took from Fowke's *Folk Songs of Canada* and re-arranged in a key suitable for the singer. One of the pivotal songs in the production told of the gruesome nineteenth century axe murder of Maggie Howie of Napanee, Ontario. Kellough, Mazurek, and I determined that a murder ballad had to be included simply because Fowke had collected so many. We did not concern ourselves with political

⁸⁷ “New Limit Line”, track #18 on the *Fowke Tales* CD

⁸⁸ “Johnny Doyle”, track #17 on the *Fowke Tales* CD

⁸⁹ “River Driver”, track #16 on the *Fowke Tales* CD

⁹⁰ “Gypsy Davey”, track #10 on the *Fowke Tales* CD

correctness⁹¹ as we took the text directly from the version of the song that Fowke collected from Mrs. Tom Sullivan of Lakefield. Kellough prepared a script that explained the circumstances of the murder, the trial, and the aftermath. Kellough's superior storytelling skills were blended with a guitar underscore and vocalized verses to produce a six and half minute version of "Maggie Howie," which preceded a turn in the production from the serious aspects of life to the more light-hearted.⁹²

To give some of the humour a local perspective, I arranged a "talking blues" version of "Johnston's Hotel,"⁹³ which is a song about the Peterborough County jail that Edith Fowke collected from various local residents. It is an entertaining song filled with local recollections from a time when the jail was under the jurisdiction of Peterborough County Magistrate Dalton Johnston. Tom Brandon was another of Fowke's popular informants. In 1963, Fowke produced a commercial vinyl recording of his singing titled *The Rambling Irishman: Tom Brandon of Peterborough*, which was released by Folk-Legacy records (FSC-10). Mazurek and I determined that the song "Trans Canada Highway,"⁹⁴ from the Brandon recording would be a good fit for the show. The song is a satirical review of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett's depression-era make-work project. It is historical, humorous, and sung to the tune of the American folk song "The Wabash Cannonball." Jim Yates sang the song while Mazurek and I inserted liberal

91 The text of this ballad contains very graphic details regarding the murder of Maggie Howie.

92 "Maggie Howie", track #8 on the *Fowke Tales* CD. To get a sense of the change in mood, listen to tracks #8 and #9.

93 "Johnston's Hotel", track #20 on the *Fowke Tales* CD

94 "Trans Canada Highway", track #19 on the *Fowke Tales* CD

amounts of fiddle and banjo in the background. The blending of radically different songs and dialogue allowed the cast to keep focused and interested in providing the audience with ongoing changes in mood and song content.

When Zeke Mazurek and I selected and arranged the songs for *Fowke Tales*, we wanted to bring the audience a total sense of Fowke's diverse interest in songs. The inclusion of a bawdy song in a subtle manner was a task that we approached carefully because *Fowke Tales* was a family show. We needed a song with clever double-entendre that could have one meaning for perceptive adults and a totally different meaning for others. We decided on the *The Weaver*, which Fowke collected from O.J. Abbott.⁹⁵ The words for the song are innocent and it would take a perceptive adult to grasp the song's actual meaning. I sang the song with guitar, fiddle, and bodhran accompaniment. Only a few in the audience ever picked up on the substance of the lyrics, something I think, Edith Fowke would have enjoyed.

Children's Games and Ethnic Jokes

Fowke's research into children's songs and games was a significant component of her career and had to be recognized. Kellough, Mazurek, and I took a gamble when we scripted the children's games portion of *Fowke Tales* because we designed it as an audience participation component. We inserted it into the second act after the audience had a chance to relax and absorb the atmosphere of the production. Kellough stepped out of character and worked directly with the audience members in a humorous and personal

95 "The Weaver", track #13 on the *Fowke Tales* CD

manner, which resulted in the segment working well every time. The following sample (Figure 6:8) from the games portion of the *Fowke Tales* script provides a better understanding of how this was designed.

JANET: When Mary thought about, she realized Edith was right. Even when kids play, there's a rhythm to it. I mean, just think about little girls skipping, or little boys bouncing a ball, or children clapping hands. There's a rhythm to it, and it's the same rhythm. (BOUNCES BALL)

I bet it's been a long time since some of you folks have played a clapping game - so let's give it a try. Everybody turn to the person next to them, find partner and we'll just do a simple clap. So it goes Clap, pat, clap, pat. (Mike, Pat, Mike Pat) Now those of you who are really good can try something fancier if you like, and those of you who are rhythmically disadvantaged can just clap on the downbeat, but I hope you realize you're just plain no fun!

Okay, let's give it a try. Clap, pat, clap pat etc.

Alouette-a, smoke a cigarette-a
Chew tobacco, spit it on the floor
In comes Nancy, spank her little bumbo
Ouch!Ouch!Ouch! Don't you do it anymore!

No, don't do it anymore! You're supposed to stop there. You have to listen to the words! Let's try it again...

Figure 6:7 Excerpt from the children's games portion of the *Fowke Tales* script

The most delicate topic that we included in *Fowke Tales* was Fowke's collection of ethnic jokes, particularly "Newfie" jokes, which she included in her book *Folklore of Canada*. To do this we re-created a portion of the CBC radio broadcast of the program "Morningside," where host Harry Brown, a Newfoundlander, argued that Fowke was perpetuating a stereotype by including such jokes in her book and Fowke argued that she was only collecting a tradition (CBC Radio Archives, Tape reference #761117-9 #770223-9). The radio interchange was audible to the audience as they watched Mary Towns listening to it on the radio. The CBC segment was followed by Mary Towns

recalling Fowke's interest in local ethnic jokes. The ethnic joke segment was presented in good taste and the audience, many of whom were descendents of Peter Robinson's Irish immigration, thoroughly enjoyed it. Kellough, Mazurek, and I have never received a complaint about it. The following excerpt from the *Fowke Tales'* script (Figure 6:9) reveals some of the conversation.

Impact of *Fowke Tales*

After the first performances at Lang Village in the autumn of 2007, *Fowke Tales* continued in 2008 with appearances at the Showplace Theatre in Peterborough and a special performance in the village of Douro. The show then appeared in Picton, Cobourg and Port Hope. The Port Hope appearance in February 2009 was the last with Zeke Mazurek, who died the following year after a brief illness. After his death, Kellough and I put the production away for a while. In 2011, I was informed by the Lang Village management team that they had acquired an Ontario Arts Council grant to revive the play. Kellough and I were asked if we could do it again.

Because there was sufficient funding available, we decided to try it again with a slightly different approach to the music. We replaced Mazurek's underscoring with vocal underscoring and additional vocals by the singing group Trinity, Jeanette Arsenault, Kim Inch, and Renie Thompson, from Prince Edward County. To compensate for Mazurek's fiddle music, we added the songs "Thyme is a Pretty Flower" from Fowke's La Rena Clark collection and "Poor Little Girls of Ontario" from Fowke's first Folkways record album.

HARRY: This is CBC Radio I'm Harry Brown and You're listening to "Morningside" We're here today with Edith Fowke, who has just released a new book called ""folklore of Canada". Edith, I'm sorry I have to take exception to one of the sections in this book. You've included ten pages of Newfie jokes. Well, I'm a Newfoundlander and I don't find them funny. Don't you think you've perpetuating a stereotype?

EDITH: Well, Harry there's a real tradition of the Newfie joke in Newfoundland itself and they're told by Newfoundlanders. I think the whole point is to prove that they can take a joke. You have to understand the context.

HARRY: Well, Miss Fowke, I don't think you need a context for prejudice!

EDITH: Well, Mr. Brown all I'm doing is collecting a tradition that's very much alive and well in Newfoundland. Whether you find it politically correct or not, the tradition exists. I don't think you can call it prejudice when the joke is told on themselves.

HARRY: I beg to differ. I find them offensive.

EDITH: I'm sorry you feel that way, but I stand by what I wrote.

HARRY: That's our show for today, thank goodness. This is Morningside and you're listening to CBC Radio, coming up is the national news and weather from our local affiliates (fade out)

JANET: Mary really didn't understand what the problem was. She couldn't see any difference between Newfie jokes and Irish jokes and Lord knows there have been plenty of those told, she said to Edith.

Really? Said Edith. Can you remember any?

Sure says Mary, there's the one about the two Irishmen coming out of a pub one night, and one of them looks up at the sky and says - 'Now is that the sun or the moon up there?' and the other one says, "By golly I don't know - I'm a stranger in these parts meself."

the Irishman who walked into a bar with a pig under his arm. "Where'd you get that?" says the bartender. "I won him in a raffle," says the pig.

Edith laughed.

Or, what do you find on the bottom of Irish beer bottles? Open other end.

What do you find on the top of Irish beer bottles. See other end for instructions.

Or, my favourite - What's red, white and blue and floats upside down in Rice lake? - An Englishman caught telling Irish jokes!

Figure 6:8 Ethnic joke portion of the *Fowke Tales* script

(Based on a 1976 CBC radio "Morningside" Program)

The script remained the same but Kellough delivered it mainly as a storyteller from a third person perspective, stepping into Mary Town's character only a couple of times. There was some choreography in the new production but no traditional step dancing element. To let the Lang Village audiences know that it was not quite the same production as in 2007, *Fowke Tales* was renamed *Fowke Tales Revisited* for the Lang performances in September, 2011. It reverted to its original name when it was performed in December at the Mount Tabor Theatre in Milford, Ontario. The revues remained positive. The following is a portion of the revue posted on the "County Live" website after the September 2011 dress rehearsal performance held in Picton:

SEPTEMBER 2011 – The historic Macaulay Heritage Park Museum was the ideal setting for toe-tapping history lesson. A full house enjoyed a dress rehearsal of the incarnation of 'Fowke Tales' – the story of Edith Fowke's search for Ontario's folk heritage. It provides the distinct flavour of original songs that reflect local history – logging songs, ballads, children's songs – seamlessly intertwined in a heartwarming package of stories and even some dancing ... Original cast members Kirby, Kellough and Yates knew they could never re-create the rich contributions by master violinist Mazurek, but decided the show was too important to shelve and instead, re-worked it to include more vocal music performed by 'Trinity' (Jeanette Arsenault, Kim Inch and Renie Thompson). The special sneak preview at Macaulay was held before the show goes to performance at Lang Pioneer Village in Keene ... on Fri. The show will return to The County in December at

Mount Tabor. (<http://countylive.ca/blog>, accessed September 14, 2011)

For the past 14 years I researched and wrote about the life and work of Edith Fowke. The concept of following in her footsteps would not have been complete if I had not thought to create *Fowke Tales*, which provided me with an avenue to both popularize my own research and continue popularizing Fowke's research. The production forced me to work with all of Fowke's song collections in a "hands-on" manner and contemplate the significance of public performances the same way she may have done. A very significant result of the production of *Fowke Tales* was renewed interest in Fowke's work and the opportunity to meet with actual informants and their families. This impact made it feasible to explore her Peterborough area fieldwork in depth.

CHAPTER 7

PETERBOROUGH AREA FIELDWORK

Edith Fowke was consumed by a desire to study folk songs and folklore. She was a unique researcher, following parallel career paths, each with its own distinct purpose. Fowke was first a popularizer of Canadian folk songs and stories with a desire to bring them to the Canadian public through radio, recordings, and print media. She was also a serious literary researcher, pursuing, documenting, and analyzing folk song texts and song lineage. Although this dichotomy of being a researcher and a popularizer at the same time confused some scholars, Fowke had no difficulty resolving her seemingly divergent pursuits. She was relentless in her search for Canadian folk songs with a desire to make them known publicly. Fowke was as comfortable with singers as she was with documenting and analyzing song texts. Her ability to meet and befriend performers, her natural rural charm, and ability to network socially gave her entry to secluded musical communities. Fowke's most important accomplishment may be that she discovered and documented a rural Ontario folk song culture, which could have disappeared with few knowing it was ever there.

When Fowke discovered the wealth of folk songs in the Peterborough area, she often attributed it to good luck, but at other times she credited her detective work. From 1956 to 1964, Fowke travelled the back roads of Peterborough County and parts of adjoining Hastings, Northumberland and Victoria counties recording folk singers and fiddle players. Her fieldwork was conducted on a part-time basis as time allowed, yet the

Figure 7:1 Map of Peterborough area in 1955 (Ontario Motor League)



Peterboro was a common 1950s short-form for Peterborough. The hamlet of Douro, where Fowke began, is located northeast of the city. From Douro Fowke generally conducted her initial fieldwork at homes in an area within Douro-Dummer Township bordered by South Dummer, Warsaw, Centre Dummer, McCracken's Landing, Youngs Point, Lakefield, Nassau Mills, Peterborough, and Jermyn. Nassau Mills, once a thriving lumber mill community, no longer exists. It was razed to make way for Trent University. Fowke also recorded in the Springville and Fraserville area, southwest of Peterborough and Ennismore northwest of Peterborough.

results of that work initiated a long and successful career, which was diverse, authoritative, and influential. Figure 7:1 is a road map from 1955. It shows the communities as Fowke would have found them in 1956. An explanation of the key locations is in the notes beneath the illustration.

Fowke's Peterborough fieldwork experience remained an integral part of her fibre. In 1981, she returned to Peterborough to present a paper at the Kawartha Conference. Fowke appeared with three of her Peterborough folk song informants, Mary Towns, Vera Keating, and Tom Cavanagh. This group performed folk songs to complement Fowke's commentary. The transcript of Fowke's paper reveals that she talked specifically about her collecting in the Peterborough area and reasoned why the area's folk song culture had remained intact for so long. Fowke's early fieldwork could not have been summarized more succinctly than through the following passage from the transcript:

A side effect of the late nineteenth century lumber boom in the Kawarthas is the rich legacy of folk songs ... My first recording of Ontario folk songs was done in Douro where I was introduced to Michael Cleary, father of Mrs. Mary Towns, one of the singers here today. Mr. Cleary was then, in the fall of 1956, 81 years old, but he passed on to Mary ... many of the songs he had learned in the lumber camps many years earlier ... The Irish settlers had a special talent for singing ... and it is because of this that the Peterborough area is a fruitful one for the collector of folk songs. In particular, the many descendents of the Peter Robinson immigration who settled in rural areas around Peterborough were far enough away

from the main industrial parts of the province to resist the influences of the more thickly populated urban centres and thus their traditions remained intact, passed on from generation to generation on quiet family evenings or ... community social gatherings. In fact the songs she sang and passed on, were not necessarily Irish songs. Their repertoire included old British ballads, music hall ditties, love songs, sea shanties and ... popular songs ... which were frequently transposed to include local place names and references that made them their own.

(Fowke, 1981a, p. 173)

Peterborough County

Was it just luck, previous knowledge, or a combination of factors that convinced Edith Fowke to begin her search for folk songs in Peterborough County? It is possible that Fowke may have been aware of a folk song tradition in the Peterborough area through her association with British song collector Maude Karpeles. Fowke and Karpeles were both involved in the formative meetings leading to the establishment of the Canadian Folk Music Society in 1956, which was the same year Fowke began her fieldwork. Karpeles had visited the village of Lakefield in Peterborough County in the summer of 1929 looking for folk songs. In her opinion that visit was not successful but she noted her trip in some personal letters and did document five songs by Peterborough area singer Mrs. Ida Ruttle. The transcriptions of these songs were published in Britain in the 1930 *Journal of the Folk Song Society* (Gregory, 2003; Peacock, 1969, p. 78).

Fowke only wrote some general notes about Karpeles' collecting in the 1954 publication *Folk Songs of Canada* (1954). Perhaps she did not know about Karpeles' Peterborough area fieldwork when she began collecting but she did acknowledge it later in her career. She mentioned it briefly in the article "Anglo American Folksong: A Survey" that was published in *Ethnomusicology* in 1972. Fowke writes: "Maude Karpeles picked up a few (folk songs) in Peterborough, but Ontario was still largely virgin territory when I began collecting in 1957" (Fowke, 1972b). Apart from Karpeles and Fowke, another music scholar, Niles Puckett, performed fieldwork in the Peterborough/Lakefield area.⁹⁶ Between 1958 and 1963, Puckett recorded an assortment of fiddle tunes, local ballads and altered British broadsides while summer vacationing in the Bobcaygeon area, west of Peterborough. His Ontario recordings and transcriptions were initially stored in the Cleveland (Ohio) Public Library but after his death the collection was moved to Memorial University. Interestingly, Puckett collected many of the same songs as Fowke from the same informants during the same time period (Doucette, 1975).

Fowke did not mention Puckett in any of her literature and none of the research participants I talked to had any recollections of him. Was it possible that Karpeles' 1929 trip influenced Puckett to collect songs in the Peterborough area as well as Fowke? It seems unusual that three collectors would visit an area on a "hunch" that there were songs to be collected. There is no evidence to indicate otherwise. Compared to Fowke, Karpeles collected only a few songs in the Peterborough region. According to the analysis done by Doucette (1975), Puckett recorded 123 different songs and 57 instrumental tunes

⁹⁶ Puckett was best known for his studies of African American life in the southern United States. See Puckett (1926).

but his focus was different from Fowke. Although he recorded some broadsides, Child ballads, and local songs, Puckett also collected songs from 1940s and '50s popular culture. His intent was possibly to document the area's existing music tradition. Unfortunately Puckett died in 1967 with none of his Canadian field recordings available on a commercial vinyl disc or any of his transcriptions published.

It may never be known how three folk song researchers determined that Peterborough County, Ontario was a region ripe for song-collecting. There are clues, however, throughout county history. One just needs to comprehend the county's past to reason out the possibilities for research. Fowke reflected on her Peterborough County beginnings in an essay published in *"For what time I am in this world" Stories from Mariposa* (1977). She writes:

Peterborough was settled in 1825 by Peter Robinson who brought over a group of Irish colonists. And it's from the descendents of those Irish settlers that I got the largest number of Ontario songs. That's where I started collecting. Mrs. Mary Towns and her father were the first traditional singers I recorded. That whole county – Peterborough and the villages surrounding it – is probably the richest area in folk song in Ontario. And that is largely because the descendents of the first settlers are still living there ... the Irish have many more songs than the English or Scottish. They really dominate the folk song tradition in this province. One reason is that most of the Irish are Catholic while most of the Scots were Protestant. The Protestants thought that secular songs were sinful, that you should

only sing hymns: whereas the Catholic attitude seemed to be, well, if you went to mass, after that you could do what you liked. (Fowke 1977b, p. 35)

Peterborough County Folk Song Lineage

This discovery of orally transmitted folk songs in Peterborough County, Ontario by an interested person from outside the area may be considered an important event in folk music scholarship. However, within the county, the oral music tradition was an accepted part of the culture from the 1820s well into the twentieth century. By most accounts, learning songs in the oral tradition was fun. In 1977, Mary Towns, one of Fowke's first informants, provided a vivid insight into Ontario's rural oral tradition:

It was so nice in the winter with the fire on and the lamp lighted with us around the table to do our homework and my father singing away with perhaps his feet up on the front damper of the wood stove. Then maybe some relatives or friends would drop in for a while, which made a real little party of singing, and always a nice cup of tea and lunch before they left. We so often sang on the sleigh in the winter going visiting. My father told us many times that when he was young they would go, a group on a wagon or sleigh and when they arrived to the house, they would not have a song finished. They mostly always finished it before anyone got off the wagon or sleigh. (Towns, 1977, p. 38)

The facts surrounding the Peter Robinson immigration and the key individuals involved explain why Peterborough County and parts of the adjoining counties became so rich in folk song and story. In 1822, the British government decided to undertake an experimental emigration scheme to alleviate the distress in the south of Ireland caused by overcrowded conditions, poverty, and unemployment. Britain was particularly concerned with the rising crime rate in the area along with the possibility of a rebellion. The British Under-Secretary of Colonial Affairs, Robert Wilmot Horton, wrote Sir John Beverley Robinson, the Attorney General for Upper Canada, and asked him to appoint a suitable man to oversee a planned emigration. The man had to be a Canadian since he was to accompany the settlers from Ireland to Canada and help them establish themselves on their land. Sir John selected his older brother, Peter Robinson, who at the time was a member of the Upper Canada parliament. In the spring of 1823, Peter Robinson travelled to County Cork, Ireland to begin his recruiting campaign. The conditions were very straightforward. The head of each family that emigrated to Upper Canada received a ticket for 70 acres of land which he was to clear and cultivate. If the land was cultivated within three years, the head of the family would receive a deed and an option to purchase another 30 acres for 10 pounds. If it was not cultivated, he had the option of paying rent (Bennett, 1987, p. 6).

Peter Robinson chose emigrants that had no assets or capital whatsoever. They had to be paupers. He also imposed an arbitrary age limit of 45 years or less, although some exceptions were made to this. The final result was that just over 2,500 men, women and children were chosen for the emigration. The first small group crossed the ocean in

1823 and settled near present-day Ottawa. The majority of the Irish emigrants were in the second group, which left Ireland in May of 1825. Throughout that month, 2,024 men, women and children were loaded onto nine ships that set sail for Canada. The month long voyage was difficult for the pioneers who were confined to small narrow bunks in the holds of the ships. They were not allowed on deck for the entire trip. They were sick and exhausted when they docked in Quebec, Lower Canada in June. By the end of July they had been moved to Kingston, Upper Canada. They camped there for a few weeks and were organized into various groups. In August, 1825, the settlers travelled to Cobourg, Ontario by steamboat and then north to Rice Lake by ox cart. The final leg of the trip was by rowboat from Rice Lake to a place on the Otonabee river where they disembarked. This place on the Otonabee River would be named Peterborough in 1826 in honour of Peter Robinson. He supervised land allocation to the settlers, the distribution of provisions for their first winter in the woods, and assistance for building their first homes (Bennett, 1987, p. 6).

These settlers arrived in Canada with few worldly possessions, but they carried with them an abundance of folk songs and stories. When Edith Fowke recorded the songs of John Francis Leahy in 1957, she was recording the results of a Canadian oral tradition that reached back four generations to his great-great-great-grandfather Michael Leahy. Michael was one of the few immigrants of 1825 who exceeded the arbitrary 45-year-old age limit. He was 56 years old when he came with his family to Peterborough County. He was selected, in spite of his older age, because he had considerable agricultural experience, having been a tenant farmer. As well, his family was considered to be of fine

character. They had toiled in Ireland for the Earl of Kingston who, after renovating his estate, wanted to be rid of his tenants (Diamond, 1985, pp. 29-30).

The Robinson settlers cleared their land in Peterborough County and adjacent Victoria County. Their new farms soon enabled them to live in considerably more comfort than they were used to in Ireland. As the families grew, more farms were acquired. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the settlers were part of a very well established and respected Peterborough County farming community. Working patterns emerged. For example, John Leahy, born in 1865, a great-grandson of the pioneer Michael Leahy grew naturally into the farming life in Peterborough County. He was an entrepreneur, selling beef, eggs, poultry, milk, and vegetables throughout most of the year. In the winter, however, he worked in the nearby lumber camps. It is probable that it was during his time in the lumber camps that John Leahy learned a significant number of shanty songs. These songs complemented the older Irish ballads as part of the Leahy family oral music tradition (Diamond, 1985, p. 108).

Fowke's Major Collecting Connections

I: The Towns Family

Edith Fowke's song collecting in Peterborough County began in the autumn of 1956 in the hamlet of Douro, at the P. G. Towns General Store. According to an interview with McFadden (1977), Fowke stated that she and her husband drove to Peterborough and went to the office of *The Peterborough Examiner*. There she spoke to the local history columnist who referred them to Mrs. Mary Towns and her father Michael Cleary

(McFadden, 1977, p. 5). As detailed in Chapter 3, she recorded Cleary and Towns in the kitchen of the Towns home, located directly behind the store. Mrs. Towns, who had a clear distinctive voice sang two songs that Fowke recognized and included on her first Folkways record album, “What is the Life of a Man Any More than Leaves” and “A Fair Maid Walked in her Father's Garden.”

Forty-two years after Fowke first visited the store in Douro, I went to the same place. I drove there in February 1998 with my original intention of following Fowke's footsteps and looking at things the way Fowke did. The hamlet of Douro is somewhat out of the way, in Douro Township, east of the city of Peterborough. No major highways pass through the hamlet, or immediately close by. The county road into the hamlet is virtually free of traffic. St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church and the large P. G. Towns General Store still dominate the hamlet. When there, one can easily get the feeling that the place has changed very little over the last century. When I entered the store on that February day in 1998, I encountered the building's rustic and friendly atmosphere. I asked a lady who was stocking one of the shelves if I could speak to Michael Towns and was immediately taken to an office at the rear of the store.

Michael Towns, the son of William and Mary Towns, was the store's proprietor at the time and seemed very busy with paperwork. However, he took time to speak to me after the female clerk introduced us. I explained that I was researching the life and work of Edith Fowke. Michael was very friendly as we talked about Edith Fowke. Throughout our conversation, he occasionally called out greetings to his customers, addressing each

one by name.⁹⁷ When I asked Michael Towns about Fowke and her relationship with his mother, he readily related stories about her visits to the store to record his mother, Mary Towns, and his grandfather, Michael Cleary. He sensed that Fowke and his mother became true friends over the years. Fowke became a regular visitor to the Douro store and he recalls many of the visits being social; it was a big family event where the best silverware was on the dinner table and all family members had to be on their best behaviour.

The reason for the return visits by Fowke to the Towns' home was because Mary Towns was Fowke's gateway to the local singers. She talked to dozens of local residents every day and knew all that was going on locally. It is probable that Mary Towns told residents about Fowke's search for songs and then in turn told Fowke about the availability and willingness of certain residents to be contacted and recorded. As well, if Fowke wanted a local singer to perform at Mariposa or another event, she would contact the person through Towns. For example, the letter shown in Figure 7:2 asks Towns to ascertain if John Leahy could perform at Mariposa.

Michael Towns mentioned that his mother was a fine fiddle player, but Fowke appeared to have little interest in her fiddle music. In fact, Fowke did have an interest in fiddle music and recorded a number of Peterborough fiddlers. Perhaps the perception that

⁹⁷ Since that first meeting with Michael Towns in 1998, we have become friends. We share a common passion for history and music. We play music together and often have lunch or breakfast to talk about history and he provided me with some photos from his vast collection for this work. Michael Towns told me that his parents never allowed gossip in the store and the result was an immense local respect for the Towns family and their business. Michael Towns' daughter Michelle and her husband Chris Coons now operate the P. G. Towns General Store. The atmosphere is unchanged, customers continue to be greeted by name and groceries are automatically carried to cars. The post office in the store is not a franchise; it was established in 1883 and remains one of the smallest post-offices in Canada. The store proprietor is the postmaster with the authority to apply the Douro postmark. The store remains a general store where one can purchase a fence-post, a box of cereal, a pound of nails, or a freshly baked loaf of bread. It is one of the largest independent rural general stores remaining in Canada.

EDITH FOWKE
5 NOTLEY PLACE
TORONTO 16, ONTARIO

June 3, 1971

Dear Mary:

Would you like to come to Mariposa again this year? It's being held on July 9, 10, 11, and if you could come in on the Saturday we'd be glad to have you sing at one or two of the workshops.

You might also check to see if John Leahy would like to come.

If you can make it, we'll let you know the times of the workshops a bit later.

We're going off for three weeks' holidays tomorrow, but drop me a line by the time we get back on June 26.

I hope you and your family are keeping well.

All the best wishes,

Edith

**Figure 7:2 Letter from Fowke inviting Mary Towns and John Leahy to Mariposa
(Courtesy: Michael Towns)**

Fowke was not interested in fiddle music remains because she did not transcribe, or release commercially, any of the fiddle tunes she recorded in the area between 1957 and 1960. As well, Fowke's approach indicated she was interested in, above all things, the lyrics of the songs, the stories they told, and the lineage of the songs.

II: Vera Keating

I visited Vera Keating in May of 2005 at the home where she lived for more than 60 years, located in an older residential neighbourhood of Peterborough. Mrs. Keating told me that Edith Fowke just showed up at her door one afternoon, introduced herself and asked about old folk songs.⁹⁸ Fowke became quite interested when Mrs. Keating said that she remembered some songs that she had learned from lumbermen when she lived in the Coe Hill area of north Hastings County, an area where the lumbering industry flourished in the early twentieth century. Mrs. Keating told me that Fowke immediately went to her car and retrieved a large tape recorder, which she brought into the house and set up in the living room. Fowke encouraged her to sing a couple of songs and Keating elected to sing “The Weaver” and “The Wintery Winds.” The recordings of these songs were included on the 1958 Folkways album, *Folk Songs of Ontario* (1958). When Keating offered to sing a few more songs, Fowke politely declined and said she was pleased with what she had recorded.

Vera Keating was an accomplished fiddler who had won 28 trophies at various fiddle contests. She did not recall that Fowke recorded her playing the fiddle. A

⁹⁸ According to the Edith Fowke list of tapes at York University, this occurred on March 12, 1957.

recollection she did seem to have was that Fowke asked several times where she could find the homes of Michael Cleary and Mary Towns. Mrs. Keating had known Michael Cleary and his daughter Mary for many years since they all played fiddle. She seemed to think that she gave Edith Fowke directions to Douro but she could not recall for sure. My conclusion is that Fowke possibly obtained Mrs. Keating's address from someone at *The Peterborough Examiner*, along with the names of Mary Towns and Michael Cleary. This would be consistent with the narrative Fowke wrote in the afore-mentioned Trent University manuscript.

Vera Keating emphasized that Fowke remained very polite throughout the visit and she followed up by inviting her to sing at one of the Mariposa festivals. Fowke also sent her a copy of the vinyl recording *Folk Songs of Ontario*, which contained the two songs that she had sung in the initial recording session. Keating was a well-known figure in Peterborough music circles, primarily because of her fiddle playing.⁹⁹ She worked as a secretary for many years in one of the city's most prominent industries, Quaker Oats. I have little doubt that somebody working at *The Peterborough Examiner* would have known about her and directed Edith Fowke to her home. However, Keating never really understood how Fowke found her house that afternoon.

I was impressed by the interesting story Keating told me about her life and music. It was another insight into the Peterborough area's ability to preserve music. Keating was the daughter of a lumberman and the tenth of eleven children. Her ancestors were part of the Peter Robinson immigration. Keating's grandfather worked on the railway in the mid

⁹⁹ Fowke did record two of Keating's fiddle tunes, possibly on her initial visit or a subsequent visit. The tunes, "Pigeon on the Pier" and "Devil's Dream" are still on Fowke's field recordings and to my knowledge have never been transcribed.

nineteenth century. His work took him from the Peterborough area northeast 60 miles to the Ormsby/Coe Hill area of northern Hastings County. He worked there with horses, dragging logs from the woods to be loaded onto rail cars and moved south. Keating's father, Peter Monaghan, sang folk songs and played the fiddle. He taught her to play the fiddle when she was quite young and by the time she was a teenager, she was playing at community halls and house parties along with a brother and a sister who were also fiddlers. Sometimes, Keating would earn two or three dollars a night for her playing, a significant amount of money for a young person in the 1920s. In addition to teaching her the violin, Keating's father taught her to sing many of the folk songs that he had learned over the years from his father and local lumbermen. Keating later became aware of the fact that some of these songs could be dated back to the nineteenth century British Isles. She explained to me that she sang folk songs that she had learned from her father who in turn had learned them from his father. The songs had moved orally through the generations of the Monaghan family, originating in Ireland.

Keating told me that they did not have a radio in their home until the 1930s but they did have a "wind-up" phonograph, some musical recordings, and a pump organ, which she played on occasion. In the evenings, she learned her music from her father in the oral tradition and was continually singing and playing the fiddle with her siblings. According to Keating, music and song was an essential element of family and community life in the 1920s around Ormsby and Coe Hill. She recalled house parties where young men would sit on the floor along the walls of the home and sing songs a cappella. Many of these songs they had learned from their fathers, who worked in the woods as shanty

boys.¹⁰⁰

Keating met her husband Jack who was also a violinist at one of the local community parties. After their marriage they moved to Peterborough in the 1940s where they found work, bought a home, and raised a family. Vera Keating continued to play the fiddle until her death in 2012; her memory remained good throughout her life and she remembered many of the songs her father taught her. She was a direct link to rural Ontario's musical history. Her story revealed the important connections between music and community culture in rural settlements.

I was somewhat surprised that Fowke had not included more of Keating's story in the liner notes of *Folk Songs of Ontario* (1958) because her narrative exhibited such a strong bond between music and community culture in a sparsely populated rural area of eastern Ontario. Investigating links such as these is precisely what many ethnomusicologists seek. Fowke simply wrote in the liner notes: "Mrs. Keating, who was born Vera Monaghan and lived near Ormsby, some fifty miles north-east of Peterborough, learned her song (sic) from her father" (Fowke, 1958). Fowke seems to have been more focused on song texts at the time. From her view, she recorded an important vocal performance in Keating's home and was pleased that the texts were complete. She could then compare song texts with the Child and Laws catalogues to establish lineage and document variants. Her liner notes for the vinyl recording *Folk Songs of Ontario* reveal

¹⁰⁰ Keating's mother, Rose Monaghan, stayed at home and looked after the 11 children. Although she was deaf and speechless due to an encounter with scarlet fever, she was educated in Belleville at the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, where she was enrolled in 1877. Ormsby is an isolated rural community far from main highways. The Monaghan family lived on a small farm where they kept some cattle and chickens. They had horses, which Keating's brothers and father would use to pull freshly cut logs from the woods to the railway siding. Keating often would go with her sisters deep into the woods and cook meals for the men in the lumber camps.

her perspective. Fowke writes the following about Keating and the song, “The Wintry Winds:”

While it resembles other tragic ballads of the nineteenth century, this particular ballad is rare in North America. The only version reported was collected by Mackenzie in Nova Scotia under the title “The Fatal Snowstorm”. He relates it to a Pitts broadside at Harvard, but the broadside does not seem to me to be the same song. Both Nova Scotia and the Ontario versions are more likely to have come from Ireland. (Fowke, 1958, p. 9)

Text-based analysis was Fowke's preferred focus at the time. However, Fowke surprisingly recorded a couple of Keating's fiddle tunes, possibly around the same time as the initial vocal recording session. Fowke, who was sensitive to informants' feelings, may have recorded Keating's fiddle playing in order to make her comfortable enough to move on to singing. This is somewhat supported by the fact that Fowke used Keating's singing performances on the Folkways vinyl recordings while the tapes of Keating's fiddle tunes were stored and never released on any album nor transcribed for publishing.

III: The Sullivan Family

According to Edith Fowke's notes in the book *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*, she recorded Martin Sullivan in June of 1957, about eight months after she first began her song-collecting. Herget (2001) noted that he sang at least five songs

for her at his home (p.228), which Fowke indicated as located in Nassau, Ontario. This settlement was also known locally as Nassau Mills because of the lumber mills located there in the early part of the twentieth century. The settlement, which was on the border of Douro Township and the city of Peterborough, is now the location of Trent University but some remnants of the mills and other buildings remain on the university property.

When Fowke located Martin Sullivan, he was working on a farm near Nassau in Peterborough County. He recalled songs from his winters in the lumber camps for Fowke when she recorded him in the summer of 1957. One of the songs recorded was “The Railroad Boy,” which was included in Fowke’s 1958 Folkways record album. Sullivan sang other songs such as “Bill Dunbar” and “Maggie Howie,” the latter having a family connection because Sullivan’s sister-in-law also knew a version.

Martin Sullivan was the son of a well-known local fiddler, “Old” Tom Sullivan. His brother Tom, was also a fiddler and it seems that Edith Fowke, around the same time she recorded Martin Sullivan, found her way to the home of Martin’s brother Tom in the village of Lakefield.

I have no evidence of Tom Sullivan ever singing any songs for Edith Fowke, but he did play the fiddle and she recorded twelve of his fiddle tunes. Tom was an accomplished fiddler and fiddle teacher who had composed a number of original fiddle tunes. As was the case with Vera Keating, the question arises again. Why did Fowke, an avid student of song texts, record fiddle tunes, which were stored away, never to be notated or analyzed? The answer may be the same as in the Keating recordings.¹⁰¹ Fowke

¹⁰¹ After studying Fowke’s life and work, the existence of fiddle tunes on her field recordings seems out of place relative to the overall textual focus of her research. Since I know the stature of the Douro area fiddle tradition along with the fact that Fowke never used the recordings to my knowledge, I offer a possible explanation as to why Fowke recorded them.

wanted her informants to feel comfortable and possibly by recording Tom Sullivan's fiddle tunes she gained access to his wife Geraldine who knew a number of the older songs that Fowke was pursuing. When Fowke recorded Geraldine Sullivan she gathered several songs for her collection including another version of “Maggie Howie,” the song also sung by Martin Sullivan. “Maggie Howie,¹⁰² and two more selections from the Geraldine Sullivan session, “The Indian's Lament” and “Johnston's Hotel” were included on Fowke's 1958 vinyl recording *Folk Songs of Ontario*.

In the larger picture, Martin Sullivan and Mrs. Tom Sullivan were not major contributors to Edith Fowke's collection but the family name was of specific interest to me. In 1929, during her stay at a hotel in Lakefield, British folk song collector/scholar Maude Karpeles wrote that she encountered a fine fiddler named Michael Sullivan and noted a few of his melodies (Gregory, 2003). I thought it would be interesting if a family connection could be made between the work of Maude Karpeles and Edith Fowke. I had the opportunity to try and make this connection on April 22, 2009 when I drove to Lakefield to meet Anne Sullivan in a village restaurant.

Anne Sullivan is the daughter of Tom and Geraldine Sullivan. She told me that she readily recalls Edith Fowke visiting her family home on a couple of occasions and her mother singing into the tape recorder. She said that she was really too young to recall specific details of the sessions but she did tell me that her mother suffered from a goitre on her neck. This made singing difficult for Mrs. Sullivan and she was often exhausted

102 “Maggie Howie” is the tale of a gruesome axe murder that took place in Napanee, Ontario in 1887. Fowke recorded at least three different versions of this song but chose Mrs Sullivan's for the recording. I learned a version based on Mrs. Sullivan's text, added a narrative segment and included it in *Fowke Tales*. It is track #8 in Appendix F, which is the CD *Fowke Tales: Live at Lang*.

after singing. Nevertheless, Edith Fowke was persistent and obtained some good quality recordings from Mrs. Sullivan. Thus the inclusion of three of her recordings on the first Folkways album. Anne Sullivan could not offer more information about Edith Fowke. She did, however, discuss the musical background for some of the other Edith Fowke informants within the family, including Martin Sullivan, Tom Sullivan, and Mrs. Tom O'Brien. When I asked about Michael Sullivan of Lakefield, the individual Maude Karpeles mentions in her writing, Anne replied that she never had heard of a Michael Sullivan. I was disappointed since I was hopeful that I could establish an informant connection between Maude Karpeles and Edith Fowke.

IV: The McMahan Family

Marcelle McMahan Mundell was the youngest Peterborough area singer recorded by Edith Fowke.¹⁰³ She was thirteen years old when Fowke recorded her at the family home on a Douro Township farm. Mrs. Mundell recalls how gracious Mrs. Fowke was. Edith Fowke initially came to the McMahan family farm to record Dave McMahan (Marcelle's father). Dave McMahan was born in Peterborough County in 1903 and worked in lumber camps as a teenager, driving a team of horses as well as working as a sawyer. When he married in 1935, he settled on a farm in Douro Township. McMahan learned some of his songs in the lumber camps and others from his grandparents. He

¹⁰³ I have known Marcelle McMahan Mundell as a singer for many years. When I worked as a studio musician in the late 1980s, I played steel guitar on one of her country music recordings. At that time I knew very little about Edith Fowke. It is ironic that more than 20 years later I am a researcher speaking with Mrs Mundell about her deep musical roots and connection with Edith Fowke. She was very forthcoming with her recollections of Fowke, which are detailed, clear, and credible.

liked to sing his songs in the evening after the farm work had been done and often took time then to teach his songs to his daughters.

During my research, I spoke to Mrs. Mundell twice about her and her father's experience with Edith Fowke. Our first conversation was in February, 2010 when she was in Florida and we spoke by telephone. Our second conversation took place in September, 2010 when I drove to speak to her and her husband at their rural home. Mrs. Mundell's recollections of Edith Fowke are crisp and clear. She told me that Fowke and her husband Frank visited the McMahon farm several times to record. They arrived always on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, and always left around 7:00 p.m. It was a big event when she visited and Mrs. Mundell related that Fowke particularly enjoyed her mother's homemade lemon meringue pie and there was always one waiting for her.

Fowke first visited the McMahon farm in March 1957 after being directed there by members of the Towns family. Mrs. Mundell recalled that Fowke's husband drove on all of the visits. The reel to reel tape recorder¹⁰⁴ was set up in the living room and Fowke carefully noted the singer's name, the date, and the name of the song in a stenographer's notebook. Fowke took care to make sure that names were spelled correctly. When Fowke started to record, she did not stop and if the telephone rang, the sound of the ringing was recorded on the tape. During the recording sessions Fowke's husband Frank patiently sat on the front porch of the farmhouse admiring the scenery.

Fowke was very persistent, always wanting the entire song and if either of the

¹⁰⁴ Mundell told me that her mother once remarked that Edith Fowke was very lucky to be visiting in 1957 since the farm did not have electricity until October 1956. She said if Fowke had come a year sooner she could not have plugged in her tape-recorder and there certainly would not have been a fresh homemade lemon meringue pie for her to consume.

McMahons had trouble remembering a verse, she would encourage them to do their best to remember. Mrs. Mundell thought at times the energy used to recall lyrics caused some stress to her father. She recalls that he once said that “Edith Fowke has enough of my songs. The next time she comes, I’m going to hide.” Apparently her father was slightly miffed that Fowke always arrived during the day and took up his time when his crops were the priority; singing was something that was to be done in the evening hours after the farm work was done.

Fowke recorded a dozen or so songs from Dave McMahon, in the living room of the McMahon farmhouse. Two of the songs, “Soo St. Mary's Jail” and “Sir Charles Lapier,” were transcribed and included in Fowke's 1965 book *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*. McMahon also sang a song he had composed about the drowning of a local boy. The song, “Vince Leahy,” attracted Fowke's attention. She later transcribed the lyrics and included the song in her 1970 book *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*. Marcelle Mundell recalls singing three songs for Fowke: “Driving Saw Logs on The Plover River,”¹⁰⁵ “The Irish Soldier Boy,” and “Sir Charles Lapier.” It was her recording of “Sir Charles Lapier” that Fowke included on the vinyl recording *Ontario Ballads and Folksongs* (Prestige International, INT 25014). Mrs. Mundell recalls how excited she felt when selected by Fowke to record. It made her feel so important and gave her the confidence to continue singing – something she has done all her life. Her father's songs were so important to her that she has passed them on orally to her children to continue the tradition. Mundell told me that one of the high points in her association with

¹⁰⁵ Marcelle Mundell told me that she had a lot of difficulty recalling the lyrics to this song but Fowke persisted until they had to give up. Eventually Fowke would get the remainder of the lyrics from Mundell's uncle Bob McMahon who had the farm across the road.

Fowke was the \$25 she received in a Christmas card in appreciation for her willingness to be recorded. She said that for a teen-ager in rural Ontario in the 1950s, it seemed like a fortune. Fowke was usually appreciative and ensured families received copies of the books and recordings that featured them.

For Mr. & Mrs. Dave McMahon
with thanks for your cooperation
Edith Fowke

Figure 7.3 Edith Fowke's inscription to the McMahons inside the cover of *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* given to them as a gift
(Courtesy: Marcelle Mundell)

Mundell told me that the biography of her father and the transcriptions of his songs in Fowke's 1965 book *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* made the family feel proud and important. The Dave McMahon biography (Figure 7:3) is much more complete than the biographical sketches of Mary Towns, Vera Keating, and Maggie Sullivan that appear in the liner-notes of the Folkways recordings even though all were recorded in 1957. Fowke's approach to informant biographies seemed to change over time. The Folkways liner notes from 1958 and 1961 contained minimal biographical sketches of the singers while the *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* included

more substantial biographies of the informants.¹⁰⁶ For example, in this biography of Dave McMahon, Fowke included titles of some of his repertoire including, where appropriate, the Laws catalogue number. She has provided family information, noting relatives of McMahon that were also her informants. Fowke then observed that each of these singers had specific repertoires with very little overlapping of content. Here she has ventured to explain that situation and why an informant has chosen to retain only certain songs. In McMahon's case, Fowke has presumed that only certain songs retained their appeal to him.

¹⁰⁶ Fowke received some criticism by reviewers for the sparse biographies in the Folkways Records liner-notes. This possibly encouraged her to expand the biographical element in *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*. The specific liner-note and book reviews are discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

DAVE McMAHON

Dave McMahon has been a farmer all his life, and spent many winters working in the lumbercamps when he was a young man. His grandfathers on both sides of his family came to Ontario from Ireland, and he learned songs from both of them.

Mr. McMahon was born in 1903 in Otonabee township, and was raised on a farm in Douro township just across the road from his present farm, about six miles east of Peterborough. He first went to the lumberwoods the winter he was seventeen, and continued to go each year until he was twenty-five, and then went back the odd year after that. Those eight winters were spent mainly in camps between Pickerel River and French River along the east shore of Georgian Bay, in from Parry Sound, MacTier, and Pakesley. He usually drove a team in the camps, but also rolled logs and worked as a sawyer, using the old-fashioned cross-cut saw. He also worked on the river drives a couple of springs. In 1935 he married, and has since lived on his farm near the village of Douro, leaving it occasionally to work at carpentry, on road construction, or on threshing gangs.



The McMahons provide a good example of the interlocking of families — and singers — in the Peterborough area. Dave's brother, Bob, who lives across the road from him, knows a number of lumbering songs. Dave is a second cousin of Leo Spencer, his grandmother having been a Spencer. Mrs. McMahon was a Heffernan, and her brother, who has also sung for me, is a cousin of Jim Doherty, while her sister is married to John Leahy, another Douro farmer who knows quite a few songs.

Somewhat surprisingly, there is little overlapping in the repertoires of these men: occasionally one has learnt a song from another, but on the whole the songs they now remember are different. As far as I can discover, this is not because they feel that a song belongs to a particular singer: it is rather that each man now remembers only the songs that particularly appealed to him, although in earlier days he knew and sang many more. Thus none of the other Peterborough singers knew "Sir Charles Lapier," "Borland's Groves," "The Soo St. Mary's Jail," or "Dr. Pritchard," which Dave remembers. Other songs he has sung for me are "A Handful of Maple Leaves," "Killarey's Pride," "Lost Jimmy Whelan" (C 8), "Judge Martin Duffy," "Transported for Mail Robbery" (L 15), "Will O'Riley" (M 8), and "Vince Leahy," a song he composed himself about the drowning of a Peterborough boy.

Mr. McMahon learned "Sir Charles Lapier" from Bob Allen, a second cousin, who sang it after he came back from World War I, having apparently picked it up overseas. "Borland's Groves" came from his Grandfather McMurray, who had learned it in the lumbercamps. "Soo St. Mary's Jail" he learned in a lumbercamp in 1921 from a man named Herb King.

Mr. and Mrs. McMahon have four daughters, and the youngest, Marcelle, has picked up some songs from her father and her uncle. When she was fourteen she sang in perfect traditional style the version of "Sir Charles Lapier" heard on Prestige/International INT 25014.

Figure 7:4 Dave McMahon biography

page 115 of *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*.

Fowke's Networking

As far as I can determine, the McMahan family and the nearby Towns family were two Peterborough County families that Fowke visited on a number of occasions.¹⁰⁷ I suggest that one important reason that Fowke returned to socialize with these families was that they were well connected with the community and able to direct her to potential informants. Mary Towns directed Fowke to John Leahy, Dave McMahan and his family, and possibly Vera Keating. The McMahan Family was connected through marriage to singers Jim Doherty, Leo Spencer and Jim Heffernan. Dave McMahan's brother Bob was also a singer. The McMahans pointed Fowke in the direction of these singers and more. Jim Doherty in turn directed Fowke to John Cleary, Mrs John Jordon, and Mrs. Ellen Conroy. Doherty worked at the General Electric plant in Peterborough as did singer Emerson Woodcock. It is possible that Doherty told Fowke about Woodcock and it definitely was Woodcock who directed her to Tom Brandon, who became one of her best known area informants. The pattern continued as Fowke moved from singer to singer in the Peterborough area, patiently developing a social network as she moved from home to home.

It is impossible to reconstruct Fowke's Peterborough district network and detail all of the connections. However, enough evidence of the network remains to conclude that Fowke rarely recorded anyone that she had not been introduced to or directed to by someone else. There appears to be no evidence that Fowke would just knock on someone's door. Fowke came to know and befriend well-connected and trustworthy

¹⁰⁷ Fowke stayed connected socially with these families during and after the fieldwork. Fowke sent copies of her books and recordings to all her informants but visits of a social nature were limited to a few. Both Michael Towns and Marcelle McMahan-Mundell told me of the memories they have of Edith Fowke eating Sunday dinner at their homes.

people in the music community. She was gladly received into their homes and because she was welcome in their homes, she was automatically freely permitted into others. The fact that she was “from away” was never an issue. If the Towns and the McMahons welcomed her, then everyone would accept her. Fowke's “good-luck” began the day she walked into the Towns General Store.



Figure 7:5 Douro in late winter, Towns General Store is on the right

(Photo: A. Kirby)

The Field Recording

Thus far I have limited the discussion to Fowke informants with whom or with whose descendants I have been able to speak to personally. The result is some interesting first-hand perspectives regarding Fowke's methodology relative to locating and speaking to possible informants and then recording them. At the beginning of this chapter there are also excerpts of comments by Fowke on her fieldwork, taken from her more reflexive writing and speaking. The majority of Fowke's informants in the Peterborough area have died, and with the recollections of the few families I have mentioned, there is little

recollection of Fowke as a person. Other informant families are aware that their relatives were Fowke informants and have the Folkways recordings and/or the books pertaining to their family contribution, but their knowledge of Fowke and her work is limited.

Outside of the first-hand observations by informants and informant family members, I found the most reliable source of information regarding Fowke's fieldwork methodology to be the field recordings themselves. Fortunately, Fowke was pro-active and arranged a way to make her field recordings available to researchers through the National Museum Archives (now the Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives). In the spring of 1960, Fowke began to edit and make copies of her field recordings, including those from the Peterborough area. She grouped the recordings into categories such as: Lumberjack songs and ballads, tragic lumberjack ballads, Ontario tragic ballads, and British ballads of unfaithful love, etc. Fowke then dubbed the recorded songs onto 30-minute tapes. Each tape contained complete individual songs, and sometimes short songs and song fragments were included. Fowke sent these 30 minute tapes to the National Museum Archives in Ottawa where they were numbered and filed under the supervision of Dr. Carmen Roy.¹⁰⁸ When I visited the Museum of Civilization Archives to listen to Fowke's recordings, I focused on Fowke's Peterborough area recordings. Over two visits I listened to 98 individual field recordings made between 1957 and 1961.¹⁰⁹ I noted each singer's delivery and obvious background noises while following the lyrics that Fowke had typed and sent with each tape.

¹⁰⁸ Roy and Fowke arranged this 1960 transfer of copies of her field recordings to the National Museum by letter. Fowke negotiated and was paid for each of the 25 tapes that she sent to the museum.

¹⁰⁹ Fowke's numbering and identification system for these tapes is explained in Chapter 10. Several songs I listened to were transferred to CD, by the Museum at my request, and used in the audio documentary, Appendix G.

The first thing that is evident is the wide range of singing ability that Fowke encountered. Excellent singers such as Mary Towns, Vera Keating, Tom Cavanaugh, Jim Heffernan and Tom Brandon sing with confidence and without missing a word. There is no hesitation as they sing verse after verse with clarity. Other singers struggle with their voices and the words. George Hughey's delivery is off-key and the words of his songs are difficult to comprehend. Martin Sullivan sings well, but he hesitates and talks to himself as he searches for the right phrase. Leo Spencer sings with difficulty; his voice exhibits strain and his volume level is so low that the words are hard to comprehend. Fowke does not provide the ages of the singers but as I listened it seemed that it was the older sounding male singers that struggled when being recorded. One of the unique characteristics of traditional Irish singers is that they speak rather than sing the last word or phrase of the song to indicate the ending. The spoken ending is evident several times on these recordings amongst both male and female singers.

Another characteristic of many of these recordings is the extraneous sounds. For example, George McCallum likes to tap his foot loudly as he sings and George Hughey clears his throat often. Fowke is heard in the background prompting Bob McMahan when he hesitates during the singing of "The river through the pines." Michael Leahy sings "Maggie Howie" as children play and a baby cries in the background. Emerson Woodcock sings "Harry Dale" to the sound of a radio in the distance and Mrs. Ireland sings "Barbara Allan" as loud footsteps move back and forth. Fowke was not a perfectionist when it came to her field recording. She likely kept everything she recorded and edited later. When assembling these tapes for the museum archives, Fowke selected

a cross-section of singers, songs, and recording quality. Perhaps she wanted researchers to comprehend what she encountered as she entered informants' homes to record. The blend of silence and household sounds, vocals of mixed quality in an assortment of keys, poorly and well-enunciated lyrics, provide an authentic auditory journey to the past. Fowke is heard prompting and encouraging singers as they struggle to deliver a song because she wants to make her informants as comfortable as possible. At all times, she remains very patient, but persistent. The respect seems mutual between singer and researcher. Fowke accepts a song fragment from an informant as graciously as she accepts a complete polished performance.

Overall, listening to these tapes allows me to first conclude that Fowke was a competent sound technician.¹¹⁰ She was interested in singers with all types of voices and a wide variety of songs. Not being a perfectionist for the overall quality, but instead gratified to have yet another song or rendition to add to her collection, she always seemed genuinely pleased when voicing an opinion on a performance. Often Fowke would encourage her informant and never hesitated to gently prompt a singer during a performance if she sensed he/she was hesitating and beginning to forget words and melody. She wanted singers to be comfortable and enjoy the process as much as she did. Fowke selected the best field recordings for her Folkways records, but she also kept and referred to all of her less than perfect recordings.¹¹¹ They provided material for her

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Wise, the curator I was working with at the Museum of Civilization, told me that the Fowke collection of field recordings is equal to and in most cases superior to any of the other field recordings in the archives. He said that she really knew what she was doing with her tape recorder.

¹¹¹ The audio documentary, Appendix G, demonstrates Fowke's recording methodology along with the variable vocal skills of her informants.

magazine and journal articles and eventually her books. Fowke carefully edited, categorized, copied, and archived her field tapes. These recordings were the foundation of her career, and she took care of them.

Editing the Recordings

When Edith Fowke started her field recording in the Peterborough area in 1956, she had been working at CBC radio for approximately seven years. During that time, she became familiar with audio tape editing techniques such as cutting, splicing, and dubbing. Merrick Jarrett told me that when he worked with Fowke, she pre-produced her shows. She would record his vocals beforehand and then splice the best “vocal takes” into a single audio tape that was used as she narrated the broadcast. It is also likely that at times Fowke would also tape her commentary and splice it into a complete show tape. Putting complete shows on a single tape was common practice at the time because it was easy for a broadcast operator to set up and run.¹¹²

Fowke used many of her field-recordings on her radio show and would have access to a production studio at the CBC to edit her tapes. Regardless of where she did her editing work, Fowke knew what she was doing. In a 1960 letter to Dr. Carmen Roy at the National Museum, Fowke makes passing mention of her editing skills. She writes, “I don't think it will be too much work for I'm fairly well used to cutting and splicing tapes for my records and programs. I splice together the songs I want to include, and then have the whole tape dubbed” (Fowke, 1960a).

¹¹² I worked at a commercial radio station in Peterborough between 1986 and 1993. During that time, like all announcer-operators, I became familiar with tape editing techniques, which required cutting, splicing, and dubbing reel to reel tapes utilizing two high-quality tape recorders set up in a production studio. It is probable that Fowke had access to a similar space and equipment at the CBC.

There is no way of knowing how Fowke edited her original recordings relative to what was discarded and what was retained. It is known that when she negotiated the deal with the National Museum to archive some of her original recordings, she arranged the songs by type on each tape. Tapes are labelled with the appropriate category selected by Fowke. The categories are “British Ballads,” “Child Ballads,” “Lumberjack Songs and Ballads,” “Tragic Lumberjack Ballads,” “American Murder Ballads,” “Ontario Tragic Ballads,” “British Ballads of Unfaithful Love,” “British Ballads about Sailors,” “British Ballads of Crime and Criminals,” “Gaelic Tunes,” “Fiddle Tunes,” “British Broadside Ballads of Lover Disguises,” “British Broadside Ballads of Family Opposition to Lovers,” and “Humorous Broadside Ballads.”¹¹³

The tape archives in Fowke's home may have been organized in a similar manner. Fowke developed her own categorization system, loosely based on the classification guide of broadside scholar Malcolm Laws. She also categorized her songs in the majority of her books and it would seem logical that she may have used the same system in her own archives. Fowke's arrangement with the National Museum to archive portions of her tape collection was largely motivated by a desire to ensure important segments of her field recordings would be kept safely. It was also, in part, motivated by a desire to have “some official connection with the Museum” (Fowke, 1960b).

By accessing and listening to Fowke's field recordings, an ongoing question about Fowke's collection is partially answered. Why was only 15 percent of Fowke's approximately 2,000 field recordings (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 8) apparently transcribed and

113 There were other categories established by Fowke that pertained to children's rhymes and mariner ballads of the Great Lakes and the Atlantic. I focused my research only on the categories that contained Peterborough area recordings.

published in books and/or released commercially on vinyl long-play recordings? Part of the answer is the song duplications found in the archives along with the cataloguing of song fragments. Fowke often recorded the same song from several informants. For example, in the Museum of Civilization Archives there are three versions of “The farmer's son and the shantyboy” by O.J. Abbott, George Hughey, and Emerson Woodcock; three versions of “Barbara Allan” by Vera Keating, Maggie Sullivan, and Phyllis Zimmerman; and three versions of “The Yorkshire Bite.” There are also recordings of song fragments such as a very short “Harry Bail” by Minnie Malloy as opposed to the same song in its entirety by Emerson Woodcock listed as “Harry Dale.” Even though one is a fragment of the other, both are listed as songs. Similarly George Hughey offers a portion of “Yorkshire Bite” compared to a complete version by Mrs. Lamont Tilden.

In calculating the percentage of Fowke's field recordings used in her books or articles, one cannot simply count the song titles in all her books and articles and divide it by 2,000. The song titles in her books can refer to more than one version of a song. For example in her book *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970), Fowke prints the lyrics from the Joe Thibadeau version of the song “Bill Dunbar.” In the subsequent notes she discusses variants she collected from other singers, including Emerson Woodcock, Maggie Sullivan, and Martin Sullivan. In another instance in the same book, Fowke includes the lyrics from Leo Spencer's version of “The Cold Black River Stream,” which is followed by a discussion and inclusion of a song fragment of the same song collected from George McCallum. Under the title “Turner's Camp” in *Lumbering Songs from the*

Northern Woods, Fowke includes both the Emerson Woodcock version and the Leo Spencer version in their entirety. In fact, the percentage of recorded material used by Fowke in her publishing is more than 15 percent it is probably closer to 40-50 percent due to her extensive references to various versions of the same song.¹¹⁴

Fowke's recordings for the Folkways label were comprised of field recordings. Listening to the tapes, it is apparent that some singers are very good. It is easy to comprehend why Fowke selected songs by Tom Brandon, Jim Heffernan, Vera Keating, and Mary Towns for her first Folkways record album. Although other recorded performances were good and clear, they were not of commercial quality. The field recordings remain a mixture of perfect and not-so-perfect performances. As Fowke edited and spliced her way through her field tapes, I suspect that she would have been limited to only seven commercial record albums drawn directly from the field recordings because of the number of acceptable vocal performances.

Fowke and Fiddle Tunes

I encountered a pleasant surprise at the Museum of Civilization Archives when selecting the archived tapes for listening. Fowke had included a tape of fiddle recordings by Peterborough players in the collection. The fact that she recorded instrumental fiddle performances by Peterborough area musicians is not widely known. To my knowledge, Fowke, never had any of the fiddle performances notated for inclusion in books or

¹¹⁴ The 15 percent figure is based on information that Fowke volunteered in a published interview (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 8). She stated that she only published 300 songs from the approximately 2,000 recordings she made. It is evident that Fowke did not give herself or her published work credit for the inclusion and discussion of song variants and song fragments.

articles. The recordings are reasonably well done, although there is heavy foot tapping¹¹⁵ on several of the tunes and some issues with varying volume on others. This fiddle tape may be of interest to Peterborough area music historians when they learn of its existence. The fiddle culture has deep roots in the Peterborough area and it is possible that Fowke recorded the fiddle tunes for the purpose of making informant families feel comfortable with her when it came time to record folk songs and/or to gain access to specific informants. There is also the possibility that Fowke developed an interest in instrumental music.

In Chapter 5, reference was made to her recording and liner-notes for an album of fiddle music, *Jigs and Reels* (1960), Folkways FW8826. The possible reason that Fowke recorded this album was the fact that she had become very proficient operating a tape recorder and that would not have gone unnoticed by Folkways. Being a small speciality label of largely folk music, the company had limited recording production means. The discovery of a competent recording engineer who would take on projects beyond one's own major field was a bonus.

The group that she recorded for Folkways was a four-piece Toronto based ensemble led by fiddler Per Norgaard. Fowke discussed speed, tempo and timing in the liner-notes as well as the origin of many of the tunes. These notes with their reference to specific musical aspects seemed to indicate that Fowke had a moderate interest in the music. While the Peterborough fiddlers were recorded in their area homes, the Norgaard group was recorded at an unnamed Toronto location. The Norgaard recording was

¹¹⁵ Although it may sound intrusive to casual listeners, foot tapping is an acceptable performance practice that enables fiddlers to keep time when playing without guitar or piano accompaniment and is desired by dancers when no other accompaniment than the fiddle occurred.

released commercially, but the Peterborough recordings were archived by Fowke and apparently not used for any project. Fowke submitted a list of the fiddle tunes (Figure 7:6) to the National Museum (Canadian Museum of Civilization) in 1960 along with her edited tape of the Peterborough area fiddlers.

<u>TAPE 12</u>	<u>FIDDLE TUNES</u>
FO 12 - 106	The Pigeon on the Pier played by Mrs. Vera Keating, Peterborough
107	The Devil's Dream "
108	The Maple Leaf Two Step Mrs. Doris Tarkington and Jim Heffernan, Peterborough
109	Tom Sullivan's Hornpipe Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
110	The Country Waltz "
111	The Fisher's Hornpipe "
112	Coming Through Burleigh "
113	The Pigeon on the Pier "
114	McLeod's Reel "
115	The Norwegian Waltz "
116	The Peek-a-boo Waltz "
117	The Shannon Waltz Ray Sullivan, Peterborough
118b	The Dawn Waltz "
119	The Hill Lily Reel "
120	The Sailor's Hornpipe "
121	The Old Box Stove Jig "
122	Mrs. Scully's Favorite Tune Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
123	The Crooked Stovpipe "
124	The Londonderry Hornpipe "
125	Paddy on the Turnpike "

Recorded by Edith Fowke, 1957 and 1960

Figure 7:6 **Edith Fowke's typewritten list of fiddle tunes, Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives Accession# FO-A-12**

A Part-time Collector

In her own writings, Fowke did not refer to her fieldwork as a weekend activity or to details of her methodology. During an interview, Fowke explained that one singer would tell her about another singer and they in turn gave her more names. Thus, she kept going out to Peterborough, usually just on weekends (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 6). The fact that Fowke considered herself a part-time song collector has never been taken into consideration, to my knowledge, in any discussion of her fieldwork. The usual characteristic of fieldwork is for the researcher to spend a considerable length of time, at least several weeks or more, “in the field.” Fowke's irregular collecting schedule¹¹⁶ explains how Fowke was able to effectively carry on with other career pursuits while at the same time pursuing folk singers on the back roads of Peterborough County. During the years the fieldwork was being conducted, Fowke continued her regular radio programs, recorded children's songs in Toronto schools, edited the book *Lumbering with Paul Bunyan* (1960), worked with Joe Glazer to edit *Songs of Work and Freedom*, and with Alan Mills to edit Canada's *Story in Song* (1960).

Fowke worked tirelessly from home during the week on these activities and travelled to Peterborough on weekends or days when her husband Frank was available. Fowke's husband had a career, to which he was committed, as an engineer during the week. In an interview published in 2004, Frank Fowke explains his involvement on the field trips: “I had to go along to carry the tape recorder ... Edith couldn't even lift it off the floor so I had to carry it around.” In the same interview, Frank Fowke indicates that

116 A chronology, of Fowke's field trips to the Peterborough area is found in Appendix A, which illustrates her part-time collecting schedule..

the field-trips had to coincide with his availability. He said the following about the first field trip to record O.J. Abbott: “That summer we took my two-week holiday and went up to Ottawa and Hull to look up O.J. Abbott” (Panagapka and Vickar, 2004, p. 82). When Fowke obtained tape recorders that were successively lighter (McFadden, 1977, p. 5), her husband did not make all of the trips. She began to travel the rural roads on her own. With that in mind, *Hoot* magazine offered the following image of Fowke in August of 1963:

On most spare weekends for the past seven years, Mrs Fowke has loaded a portable tape recorder and a bottle of whisky (an essential ice-breaker) into her battered Peugeot and driven through the farmlands of southern and central Ontario hunting for old singers and older songs. She's found plenty. Since 1957 she's taped about a hundred wildly authentic singers and transcribed almost two thousand songs for posterity. (Anon, *Hoot 1*, 1963 – clipped article – Canadian Museum of Civilization accession # FO-E-5)

Fowke's Apparant Intentions

When Fowke began her field research in the autumn of 1956, she did not know what she would uncover nor how she would state or make public her results. Her goal to that point appears to have been to produce song books designed for singing such as *Folk Songs of Canada*. Fowke wanted Canadians to embrace and enjoy songs that were part of their musical heritage. She said:

I like folk songs. I enjoy them. I thought they should be better known. I suppose there's a missionary zeal. I think it's natural, if you find songs you like, you want your friends to hear them. And then I got into it - you see my background is English, not music - I was interested in the texts. I was interested in the history of the songs, where they came from, what they reflected. (Weihs et al,1978, p. 9)

Fowke's perspective did not change throughout her career. Bringing the songs and the stories of the people to the people was her goal. When she started her field research she was not worried about finding a collaborator to transcribe the melodies. Fowke was a CBC broadcaster, already bringing folk songs to the public. It made sense to her when she first recorded Peterborough area singers, to edit the tapes and use them on her radio program, and that is exactly what she did. The *CBC Times* wrote the following in March of 1958:

This Thursday at 6:30 p.m. *Folk Song Time* is presenting a different type of program. Instead of drawing on records as usual, Mrs. Edith Fowke is planning a whole program made up of songs she recorded on tape during various field trips through Ontario. Since she got a tape-recorder in the fall of 1956 she has been searching for people who still remember the songs that were sung in the days before radio and TV discouraged non-professionals. (*CBC Times, March 16-22, 1958*)

At this time, Fowke had been researching in the field about 18 months with most of her field recording being done between March and September of 1957. The use of the field tapes for broadcast on the CBC in March 1958 also coincided with Fowke's editing of the tapes to send to Folkways Records in New York. In a letter dated April 24, 1958 to Marius Barbeau, Fowke writes:

I've sent Folkways material for two records chosen from the songs I've been collecting and I think they're coming out this summer. One is "British Songs from the Ottawa Valley" sung by Mr. O.J. Abbott of Hull, who is 84. The other is a miscellaneous collection of "Folk Songs of Ontario" - - half local songs and half of British origin, by a variety of singers. (Fowke, 1958, Canadian Museum of Civilization accession # FO-H-1-55)

The O.J. Abbott recording was not released until 1961, but the album *Folk Songs of Ontario*, Folkways FM005, which features 15 songs by Peterborough area singers, was released later in 1958. It was a product of Fowke's desire to bring Canadian folk songs to the people through radio and recordings and she demonstrated that her field recordings were a good vehicle to use. It was not until 1960 that Fowke used transcriptions from her field recordings in a book. *Canada's Story in Song* is a collaborative songbook created by Fowke and folksinger Alan Mills that contains 73 songs, 19 of which were taken from Fowke's field research. The book is intended for a popular audience and is compatible with Fowke's perceived role as a popularizer of Canadian folk songs.

Fowke was publicizing her field research but the target audience was not an academic one. To connect with a more serious assemblage, Fowke corresponded with Dr. Carmen Roy at the National Museum in 1960 and arranged for a collection of her field recordings to reside in the archives for use by students and scholars. This gave Fowke a connection with the museum, and it gave her fieldwork some official status. It was not until 1965 that a book, *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*, based solely on her fieldwork was released, ten years after she first recorded in Peterborough County.

Fowke used her intuition and common sense to determine in what projects she would become involved. To try to gain some acceptance from the academic community she changed her approach somewhat, but her full recognition within that community remained tentative. In discussing her approach to informants versus an academic approach, Fowke pointed out that she said did not have weeks to get to know her informants like full-time collectors, Fowke said:

I was collecting on weekends and I would go to a singer and tell him what I wanted. Sometimes they'd say, "Oh, I don't want to sing any more – my voice is no good", you know try to put me off like that and I'd say, "Well, sing one song . . . some old song." I'd tape it on the tape recorder, and play it back to them and they'd sing everything they knew. And nine times out of ten it worked like that. I think the secret was that they realized I was interested. I really did value their songs and it was so unusual to have anybody interested in the old songs. Time after time they say you have to establish rapport with the singer – on

social occasions, and all that. I never found it necessary. (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 8)

Fowke and the Others

It is possible that because of her rural prairie background and socialist outlook, Fowke did not require long periods of time taken by most fieldwork researchers to establish rapport within a community. The evolution of fieldwork methodology relative to the study of music in its cultural context as discussed in Chapter 1 has seen the emergence of a less-restrictive methodology. The concept that fieldwork and data analysis must be separate entities is no longer the rule. The idea that human culture is objectively observable has been challenged, and the reflexive approach to research, where the researcher becomes part of the narrative, is accepted. Fowke, with no formal education in folklore or ethnomusicology related more to the fieldwork methodology of individuals like Alan Lomax, Kenneth Peacock, and Helen Creighton. Nevertheless, Fowke was a well-educated individual with a significant knowledge of folk song history when she began her fieldwork in Peterborough County. She used information readily available to her and as she moved along, she developed and adapted her networking and recording methods. When Fowke began researching in the Peterborough area, she immediately discovered through her early informants, a repertory of folk songs that had flourished in the district for a century without being documented. For Fowke, the songs were there for the taking in the mid-1950s, a time when the area contained a living traditional music community that had not yet been replaced by popular music influences.

Fowke's approach was not unlike that of other researchers who preceded her. She

simply went into rural Ontario with a tape recorder searching for singers. Folklorist Kenneth Goldstein was a friend and associate, who guided Fowke along the way. Peggy Seeger and later Norman Cazden worked with her on the transcriptions of her Ontario field recordings. She corresponded with scholarly collectors Marius Barbeau and Kenneth Peacock during her collecting years. In fact, she did not do anything radically different in the field than Helen Creighton or Louise Manny. Her acquired knowledge of folklore and ethnomusicology may have been different than other researchers in the beginning but her accumulated knowledge, volume of work, and length of career now places her amongst them. In fact Fowke's constant use of publishing, teaching, broadcasting and commercial record producing to make her research known sets her apart from many.

Chapter 8

Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods – A Case Study

This chapter provides an analysis of Edith Fowke's *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970). Careful examination of this publication is important for the discussion about Edith Fowke's research in the Peterborough area. A significant portion of the song transcriptions in the book come from area informants between 1957 and 1964.¹¹⁷ It was at a time in Fowke's career when she slowly began to move away from her field recordings as source material for her writing. As one of Fowke's important books relative to her 1950s field research, the book is similar to Fowke's *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* (1965) in that it is mainly based on her Ontario field recordings. Fowke said that *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* came into being because she found that she had a significant number of lumbering songs left over after writing *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*. One of her reasons for assembling them into a publication was to provide a vivid description of working life in the woods during the late nineteenth century (Weihs et al, 1978 p. 12).

Discussion of *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* contributes to an understanding of Fowke's methodology because it was created directly from her raw field recordings and subsequent transcriptions. It demonstrates how she focused on basic song texts and their variants. The inclusive nature of Fowke's collecting comes across as local songs specific to the Peterborough area are included alongside better known traditional

¹¹⁷ There are 80 song transcriptions in the book of which 61 (76%) were taken from field recordings made by Fowke between 1957 and 1964. Of these 61 transcriptions, 46 (75%) were provided by Peterborough area informants.

ballads. This inclusiveness was evident throughout her fieldwork simply because she never turned away from a compelling story regardless of the subject matter or context. *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* shows how Fowke carefully categorized songs according to the theme of the text, provided explanatory notes for each, and listed the name of each song informant along with the month, year, and the geographical location where he/she was recorded.

Fowke needed a collaborator to notate and analyze the song melodies for her song books. For *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*, she selected composer Norman Cazden. The Fowke and Cazden publication was released in 1970 by the University of Texas Press as part of the American Folklore Society's Memoir Series. The illustrations for this analysis are taken from the original 1970 publication. Much later, in 1985, the book was published in Canada by New Canada Press in a slightly revised edition. Subtle changes were made to some of the song origin information, but the most evident change that Fowke made for the 1985 Canadian version is the addition of a "Foreword" and a subsequent section titled "Folksongs as a Reflection of the Shantyboys' Life."

Fowke used the "Foreword" to discuss some interim research that allowed her to further clarify the origins of a few specific songs. She also used the "Foreword" to explain why the American version of the book preceded the Canadian: "As that press did not have a Canadian distributor, few Canadians had a chance to read it. This was unfortunate for all the songs were collected in Canada and it is the only book devoted entirely to our lumbering songs – a group that ranks second only to songs of the sea in our stock of folksongs composed in Canada" (Fowke, 1985, p. xi).



LUMBERING SONGS from the Northern Woods

by EDITH FOWKE
Tunes Transcribed by Norman Cazden

PUBLISHED FOR THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY BY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, AUSTIN & LONDON

Figure 8:1 Original 1970 dustcover for *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*

Fowke included the “Folksongs as a Reflection of the Shantyboys' Life” section in the Canadian version to provide readers with an insight into lumber camp culture. It is a reprint of an article that she prepared for a Festschrift honouring Horace Beck, an American folklorist who specialized in occupational folklore. The remainder of the Canadian version is identical to the original American version.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ I could not detect any differences other than the added introductory sections. The additional research that Fowke conducted on a few songs is mentioned only in the “Foreword” of the Canadian edition. The page numbers, song numbers, notation, text, and notes appear to be identical in both editions.

Summary of Contents

The 1970 edition of *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* begins with a table of contents followed by a page of acknowledgements and a map of Ontario. Next is an eight-page introduction by Fowke, followed by a twelve-page analysis of the song tunes written by Norman Cazden. This is followed by 205 pages of songs. The table of contents indicates 65 song titles. However, the book actually contains 80 song transcriptions since thirteen of the 65 songs have two or more versions included. The songs are grouped into five categories; Shantyboys at Work, Death in the Woods, The Lighter Side, The Shantyboy and His Girl, and L'Envoi. Three pages of brief biographies of the singers follow the songs. The book ends with a bibliography and an index of song titles and first lines.

For each song, the text of the first verse and the melody line is provided, transcribed from the singer's taped performance by Norman Cazden. Fowke supplements the notation with the name of the song, the singer's name, place of residence, along with the month and year of the transcribed performance. This is followed by the complete song text, taken from the field recording by Fowke. The next section gives brief details of the song's characteristics and history. A reference list indicates the location where a copy of Fowke's field recording tape can be found as well as the location of similar song texts. Finally, the tune relatives section indicates the location of texts sung to a similar tune. Reference and/or tune relative sections are included for 81% of the songs. The following Figure 8:2 illustrates the typical layout of the songs in the book.

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60. Driving Saw-Logs on the Plover (dC 29)

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). It features a melody with various rhythmic values and includes fingerings (1-3) and breath marks (v). The lyrics are written below the staff, with some words in italics. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 1, 5, 11, 14, and 18 indicated.

The lyrics are: *The riv - er flow'd her might-y banks one evening last July. The moth - er of a shan - ty - boy, and dole - ful was her cry. Say - ing "God be with you, John - ny, al - though you're far a - way, To drive saw - logs on the Plov - er, and you'll nev - er get your pay."*

Sung by Bob McMahon
Peterborough, Ontario October 1959

1. The river flowed her mighty banks one evening last July.
The mother of a shantyboy, and doleful was her cry,
Saying, "God be with you, Johnny, although you're far away,
To drive saw-logs on the Plover, and you'll never get your pay.
2. "Johnny, I gave you schoolin', and I gave you a trade likewise.
You need not be a shantyman if you'd taken my advice.
You need not roam from your dear home to the forest far away
For to drive the lonesome river, and you'll never get your pay.
3. "Oh, you'd be better to stay up on the farm and feed the ducks
and hens,
To drive the sheep and pigs each night and put them in their pens.
Far better for you to help your dad a-cut his corn and hay
Than to drive those logs on the Plover, and you'll never get your
pay."

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4. So an old canoe came floating all on the quiet stream,
And peacefully it glided like some young lover's dream.
A youth crept out upon the banks, and this to her did say:
"Oh, mother dear, I jumped the job and never got my pay.
5. "Now the boys called me a sucker and a son of a gun to boot.
I said to myself, now Johnny, it's time for you to scoot,
So I stole a canoe and I started all on my merry way,
And now I am at home again and nary a cent of pay."
6. So all young men take this advice before you leave your home:
Be sure you kiss your mother before you leave your home.
Far better for you upon the farm for half a dollar a day
Than to drive the lonesome river, and you'll never get your pay.

Rickaby gives the only previous text of this ballad. He got it from the author, Mr. W. N. Allen, who headed it "A Doleful Ditty, by Shan T. Boy." Rickaby says it was composed in 1873 and had some currency in Wisconsin, though it never won the popularity of Mr. Allen's other song, "The Banks of the Little Eau Pleine." The Plover, like the Little Eau Pleine, is a tributary of the Wisconsin River. These verses were obviously inspired by a British broadside, "The Crimean War" (J 9), which also features a conversation between a mother and son.

Bob McMahon's tune, similar to the one Rickaby gives, is Irish and has been used for many songs in both Ireland and North America.

REFERENCES

PRINTED. Laws, *NAB*, 261 (Rickaby, 89-91; reprinted in Carmer, 173-174, and Sandburg, 396-397).
RECORDED. National Museum, FO 19-181 (McMahon).
Cf. "The Crimean War," Laws, *ABBB*, 132-133.

TUNE RELATIVES

Brown IV, 341. Creighton and Senior, 78. Doerflinger, 113, 222. Edwards, 29. Fowke and Mills, 92. Galvin, 50. Gardner, 231, 261, 399. Grainger, no. 239. Ives, *NEF* 5 (1963), 15. Joyce, *OIFM*, nos. 13, 624. Leach, 186, 198. Manny, 82, 122, 140. Peacock, 620, 942. Randolph I, 32, 36. Rickaby, 89. Wilson, 21-22 (nos. 11 and 11a-11e), 43 nn.

Figure 8:2 Typical song layout in *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970)

Pages 204 and 205

Norman Cazden's Contribution

Pianist and composer Norman Cazden, transcribed the songs from Fowke's field tapes. Cazden had studied at the Juilliard School of Music and Harvard University, where he became interested in musicology through Charles Seeger. Cazden was experienced in the preparation of musical transcriptions from field recordings. He had worked with New Brunswick folk song collector Louise Manny and New Brunswick born and fellow

Julliard School graduate Reginald Wilson in the preparation of the musical notation for their 1968 book *Songs of Miramichi* (1968).

Norman Cazden summarizes his transcription methodology in a twelve-page section titled “Notes on the Analysis of Traditional Song Tunes.” Cazden describes the difficulties encountered when transcribing tunes precisely from tape to staff notation. He explains how singers fit their text into melodies, often altering the melody to fit the words. The fact that the singers were erratic relative to established time signatures and melody caused Cazden to write the following about the transcription process: “(it) is akin to the taking down of words from oral dictation. The result must be understood as a generalized melody line reflecting some compromise or averaging of detailed differences between stanzas” (Fowke, 1970, p. 13).

To make the transcriptions useable to readers and musicians, Cazden altered the key signature. He explains: “Many of the tunes have been transposed to a pitch level that is at once simpler to read and in a more common vocal range for most voices” (ibid). Figure 8:3 demonstrates his methodology. The first treble clef indicates the original key signature and the beginning note from the recording, which in this case is the key of A flat (four flats) and a beginning note of E flat. The second treble clef indicates the key signature used when transposing the tune. In this case he selected the key of F (one flat). Although Cazden was familiar with recent collections (such as the Louise Manny collection he worked on) and the practice of setting the original tunes arbitrarily to keys that make them easier to read and compare, he was not totally comfortable with the process. He writes: “Such reduction of all tunes to a uniform range and keynote I believe

is neither as helpful nor as justifiable as intended ... I fear it may mislead the unsuspecting reader seeking tune relationships (p. 14).” Cazden also discusses the difficulty of attempts to apply the concept of modes to traditional song melodies. He argues: “today that modal scheme mystifies rather than clarifies the cultural history which the study of traditional song ought rather to document (p. 15).”¹¹⁹ In short, his transcription method results in a semi-descriptive approach. A generalized form has been derived from the repetitions and no attempt has been made to indicate major changes from verse to verse.¹²⁰

60. Driving Saw-Logs on the Plover (dC 29)



Figure 8:3 A typical beginning of Cazden's transcriptions taken from page 204 of *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970)

¹¹⁹ It was common practice for folk-songs to be transposed to keys that were mainly on the staff. The most common key used when transposing was “G,” which is the tonal centre.

¹²⁰ Much of Herget's thesis (2001) discusses the difficulty of providing transcriptions of orally transmitted music. She decided to provide three types for each of the 21 songs she transcribed from Fowke's field tapes: prescriptive, descriptive, rhythmic.

Review of Cazden's Contribution

Cazden's analysis of the music is complex and it requires considerable reader concentration to navigate. The broader conclusion that can be taken from his analysis is the fact that the traditional folk songs sung by these lumbering men and their family members do not adhere well to formal music structures with respect to time signatures, standard scales, or verse length. For example, beats are often added and/or dropped, verses are elongated, the melody line can vary slightly from one stanza to the next, and performances of the same song are rarely the same. Although this assessment of the songs appears to be problematic for Cazden, it is readily accepted by traditional, orally-trained musicians.¹²¹ The musical training that Cazden received had as its base the notated European canon, commonly referred to as classical music. That musical tradition has been passed on largely through a fixed notated form, although that has to be brought to realization through a musical performance. Nevertheless the notated version has commonly become the objectified composition. Cazden's approach to this orally-transmitted music seems to be similar. He has expressed frustration by not being able to fit each song into a preconceived pattern. He did not seem to understand that musical performances, particularly from the oral tradition, are constantly in a state of change.

¹²¹ As an orally trained musician with decades of experience, I have no difficulty adapting to extended bars, irregular phrasing of lyrics, or improvisational key changes during performances. It is an accepted fact that a folk singer may alter his/her vocal key and timing from performance to performance. These changes can range from subtle to extreme.

Song Groupings

The majority of Fowke's song books group songs relative to textual content. In *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*, the various categories are arranged according to the number of song titles within each. The first category is "Shantyboys at Work" with twenty-six titles. Next is "Death in the Woods" with seventeen titles and then "The Lighter Side" with eight titles. "The Shantyboy and His Girl" and "L'Envoi" have seven titles each.

Shantyboys at Work (pp. 25-92)

This first group of 26 songs deals directly with life in the lumber camps. Many aspects of the occupational culture are described, from stories about the travels to the camps, the meals, the accommodations, the socializing, the individual skills, and finally, how the work was done. Songs like "New Limit Line" and "The Chapeau Boys" include the names of real people such as Pat Gregg, Ned Murphy, Bob Orme, Pat Breck, Jim White and Harvey Johnson. Most of the songs are eight to fifteen verses long. They describe the day to day duties, sometimes generally as in the "Lumberman's Alphabet" and sometimes specific to a location and a particular crew such as "The Camp at Hoover Lake," "MacDonald's Camp," and "Turner's Camp." In her notes on "MacDonald's Camp" Fowke uses the expression "moniker song" to refer to songs that name all the men in the crew and describe their jobs (Fowke, 1970, p. 70).

This group of songs documents a way of working life. The first-hand nature of the texts is invaluable in understanding an industry that was essential to the commercial

survival of central Ontario in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Lumbering was unregulated at the time and employed unique individuals with a wide variety of skills. “The Lumbercamp Song” sums this up with the following verse:

There's the farmer and the sailor, likewise mechanics too.
Takes all kinds of tradesmen to form a lumbering crew.
The choppers and the sawyers, they lay the timber low;
The swampers and the teamsters, they draw it to and fro. (Fowke, 1970, p. 35)

As mentioned previously in contrast to many of her contemporaries who focused more on the collection of older English ballads, Fowke delighted in collecting songs that contained texts of a local Ontario nature. Due to her more inclusive views on folk songs as compared to most of her predecessors, she did not hesitate to collect and publish songs that identified local people and places. In the “Shantyboys at Work” section, Fowke provides two sets of lyrics for the song “Turner's Camp.” One set of lyrics is from the singing of Peterborough's Emerson Woodcock and the other from the singing of Leo Spencer of Lakefield. Woodcock localized the song while Spencer sang the song as it came from Michigan. The difference is evident from the outset of the song. The following is a comparison of the lyrics from the first verse of each version:

Emerson Woodcock verse

From the town of Kinmount
 I chanced to stray away,
 And I landed up at Gooderham
 At eleven o'clock next day

Leo Spencer verse

It's from the town of Saginaw
 That I have strayed away,
 And I landed in a town called Clara
 About eleven o'clock next day

(Fowke, 1970, pp. 45-46)

Figure 8:4 is included to clarify Fowke's use of the terms "shantyboy" or "shantyboys" throughout all of her published work. The English "shanty" comes from the French word "chantier" which means "work area." The lumbermen (shantyboys) slept and ate in the camp shanty which often housed up to fifty men. There were few windows because the men worked outside from before sunrise to after sunset. Most shantyboys worked and slept in the same clothes for weeks at a time. The fact that the shantys were well ventilated because of the cracks between the logs was likely advantageous. (Strickland, 2003, n.p.).

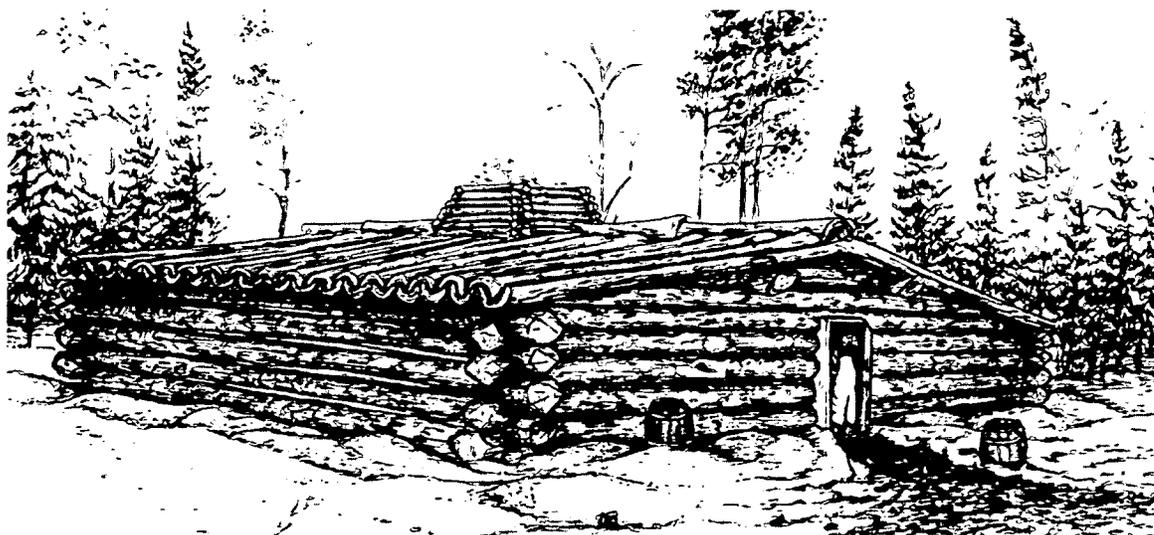


Figure 8:4 Lumber camp shanty with the cook standing in the doorway

(Kerrigan, 2003, n. p.)

Death in the Woods (pp. 93-156)

The 17 songs in this grouping detail some of the typical tragedies that took place in the woods. Lumbering was a dangerous business in the nineteenth century. Records are sparse, but it is known, for example, that in 1846 alone, 130 men died on the 20 tributaries of the Ottawa River (Strickland, 2003). The main cause of death was drowning or crushing injuries suffered while trying to clear log jams which were a regular occurrence at the time. Fowke uses songs such as “Johnny Stiles,” “Johnny Doyle,” “Jimmy Whelan,” “Jimmy Judge,” “Johnny Murphy,” and the “Jam on Gerry’s Rocks,” to relate these stories of death.

Many of the tragic songs travelled to Ontario from Canada’s east coast or from the woods of Michigan. Fowke notes how they were accepted into Ontario’s lumbering song

tradition as the names of the victims and the locations of the incident were changed to suit specific situations. Because Fowke readily recorded locally composed songs that could be considered outside of the tradition, she was able to include two tragic songs, which are unique to the Peterborough area and reveal compelling stories. The songs, “Vince Leahy” and “Bill Dunbar,” provide details of two well-known and well-liked Peterborough area residents who drowned locally. In the notes that accompany the song “Bill Dunbar,” Fowke uses a somewhat reflexive narrative to provide the background information. By asking questions of informants, she gathered contextual background, which she then presented as follows:

This local Ontario ballad has enjoyed considerable popularity throughout the Peterborough region. It describes a tragedy that happened in 1894: Bill Dunbar and Bob Cottingham of Kinmount were drowned when their sleigh broke through the ice at Gannon’s Narrows in Pigeon Lake as they were returning from attending ice races in Peterborough. The two men are buried in the Kinmount cemetery. Dunbar’s grandson, Leon Wright, still lives in Kinmount and has in his possession the mitts mentioned in the song. Mossom Boyd, for whom Dunbar worked, was the first man to settle in the Sturgeon Lake region: he was a very successful lumberman who died in 1833 ... Both Joe Thibadeau and Emerson Woodcock say the song was composed by Dave Curtin, a lumberman and “walking boss” well known in the 1890s. Most of the former shantyboys in and around Peterborough knew or have heard of the ballad: in addition to Thibadeau

and Woodcock, I have it from Martin Sullivan of Nassau and Mrs. Tom Sullivan of Lakefield. All have the same eight stanzas, showing only minor verbal differences and all change Bob Cottingham's name to "Cunningham". The tunes vary somewhat; Mr. Thibadeau's is related to "Brennan on the Moor" and Mr. Woodcock's to "The Wild Colonial Boy." (Fowke, 1970, pp. 144-145)

When transcribing the ballads from the original recordings, Fowke took care to ensure that the text remained unchanged. She did not censor her text in any way. If details of the death were graphic in the recording, they remained so in the text. The texts of the songs, "Johnny Stiles" and "Johnny Doyle," describe the gruesome deaths of individuals in log jams. The text from the tenth verse of "Johnny Stiles" reads: "For his flesh it hung down in large ringlets, in pieces the size of your hand" (Fowke, 1970, p.108). The text from the seventh verse of "Johnny Doyle" reads: "His flesh it was cut into ringlets, not a piece left the size of your hand" (Fowke, 1970, p.109). Apart from the graphic nature of the text, the similarity of the song texts reinforce the concept that songs about death, which travelled by oral transmission, were applied to specific situations in various locations. In this case, Fowke found both songs in the same location, the city of Peterborough, sung by Emerson Woodcock and George Hughey, respectively. She grouped them together under the title "Johnny Stiles" in the "Death in the Woods" section.

Songs that focused on women who lost husbands, sons, or boyfriends in the woods presented another common theme for "Death in the Woods." The Peterborough

area song “River through the Pine,” and its Quebec variant the “Town of Brandywine” tell the same story of lost love with slightly different texts. “The Cold Black River Stream” tells of the death of Peterborough resident Jimmy Corcary on the Black River. Fowke includes two versions of the song, as sung by Leo Spencer of Lakefield and George McCallum of Grafton. The fact that two distinct versions of this tragic Ontario song survived led Fowke to acknowledge the fact that elegiac ballads were able to become established in local Ontario traditions (Fowke, 1970, p. 149). Near the end of the “Death in the Woods” section is “Young Conway,” a song about a shantyboy who was killed in a brawl. Fowke writes that she has three versions of the incident which occurred in Renfrew, Ontario. Fowke's texts, which were collected in Peterborough, Hull, and Arnprior are very similar. She concluded that this was a widely known song even though it seemed to be of a local nature (Fowke, 1970, p. 141).

The Lighter Side (pp. 157-179)

The idea of shantyboys taking some time away from the woods and going to town for a few drinks and other entertainment is a theme found in four of this group of eight songs. Inevitably, the shantyboy spends all of his money on alcohol and women and sadly has to return to the lumber camp to make some more. Examples of this theme are found in “When the Shantyboy Comes Down,” which was collected by Fowke from Jim Doherty of Peterborough, and “The Backwoodsman,” which was collected from Calvin Kent of Haliburton. When shantyboys travelled to the camps early in the season, they tended to party all along the route. The song, “Conroy's Camp,” has this theme as does

the two versions of “How We Got Up to the Woods Last Year” that Fowke included in this section. Lumbermen also spent some of their free time engaging in horse-drawing contests, where teamsters competed to see whose team of horses or oxes could skid the most logs. Peterborough's Tom Brandon provided Fowke with the song “The Little Brown Bulls,” which described an ox skidding contest and the side betting activity. The following is an excerpt:

“Oh no,” said Bull Garden, “that you never can do,
Though your big spotted steers are the pets of the crew
I have twenty-five dollars and that I will pull
When you skid one more log than my little brown bulls.”
(Fowke, 1970, pp. 168-169)

The Shantyboy and His Girl (pp. 181-200)

This is a seven-song section that deals with the love life of a few selected lumbermen. One of the best known of these traditional songs, “Jack Haggerty,” was collected by Fowke in 1962 from Tom Brandon of Peterborough. It tells of the affair between Jack Haggerty and Anna, a blacksmith's daughter from Flat River, which is in Michigan. Fowke mentions that she recorded four versions of this song in Ontario and each used different names for people and locations. This group of songs reflect some sadness and regret, but no tragic songs are included. “Gatineau Girls,” “No My Boy, Not I,” and “The Roving Shantyboy” are typical of the songs. There is some double-entendre

in the lyrics of these songs but it is so subtle that none could be considered bawdy songs. The following example is the third verse of “The Roving Shantyboy,” which Fowke recorded from LaRena Clark.

And she'd become more comical, and eagerly I'd press
 With something more than modesty, to this I must confess.
 I courted her on winter's nights; with me she did comply.
 Then I was away by the first of May like a roving shantyboy.
 (Fowke, 1970, p. 197)

L'Envoi (pp. 201-215)

Fowke titled this section, “L'Envoi,” which is a term that comes from the French, ‘envoi,’ that means to summarize or advise in the case of poetry or literature.¹²² The section contains seven compositions with brief, seemingly incomplete, and detached verses that act as a summary of the overall lumbering theme conveyed in the previous 200 pages. The seven songs reflect the thoughts of career lumbermen, who are aging as they constantly move from place to place to harvest trees. The first song in the section is “I Am a River Driver” which is a song fragment that Fowke collected in Douro from John Leahy. McEdward Leach and Kenneth Peacock documented more complete versions of this song in Newfoundland. Fowke considered it to be a rare song when she recorded it

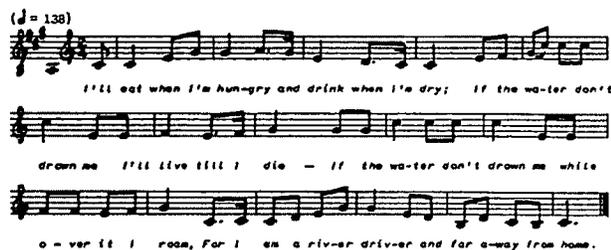
¹²² Literal translation from French defines l'envoi as a dispatched parcel but in the context of poetry or literature, l'envoi can refer to detached verses at the end of a literary text that serve to reinforce the text's message and convey advice.

and felt it important enough to include in this collection. The lyrics summarize lumbering life and perspective in a succinct manner. I used this fragment as a chorus in a folk song medley that I arranged for *Fowke Tales* and more recently the Newfoundland folk-rock group Great Big Sea used this fragment in their song, “River Driver,” which also includes some of the Peacock and Leach verses. Figure 8:5 demonstrates how Fowke dealt with specific song fragments.

203

59. I Am a River Driver

(♩ = 138)



I'll eat when I'm hun-gry and drink when I'm dry; If the wa-ter don't
drown me I'll live till I die - If the wa-ter don't drown me while
o-ver it I roam, For I am a riv-er driv-er and far a-way from home.

Sung by John Leahy
Douro, Ontario November 1958

I'll eat when I'm hungry and drink when I'm dry;
If the water don't drown me I'll live till I die—
If the water don't drown me while over it I roam,
For I am a river driver and far away from home.

This fragment was all John Leahy could remember of a rather rare song reported only from Maine and Newfoundland. The hero of the Maine version worked six months on the drive before reaching Quebec, where he met his Molly. The song obviously descended from the same British song as “Jack of Diamonds,” “Rye Whiskey,” and “The Rebel Soldier.” Kittredge identified this ancestor as “The Forsaken Girl.” The tune has been used for a Pennsylvania miners' song, “Down, Down, Down.”

REFERENCES

PRINTED. Eckstorm, 61–62. Peacock, 759–760. For a note on related songs, see Cox, 279.

TUNE RELATIVES

Kidson, 100. Korson, 364.

Figure 8:5 Page layout for “I Am a River Driver” from page 203 of *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970)

A few of the other fragmented songs in this final grouping include “The Opeongo Line,” “Save Your Money While You're Young,” and “Driving Saw-Logs on the Plover.” Each one reflects the perspectives of career lumbermen on finances, family, and other general “pros and cons” of a life spent in the woods. “The Raftsmen's Song” which Fowke collected from LaRena Clark has particular poetic phrasing. She placed this song appropriately in the final section and mentions the fact that the imagery of the final lines are similar to cowboy songs that describe “the last round-up in the sky” (p. 214). The following are the poetic last lines of “The Raftsmen's Song:”

When word comes through for a timber crew for the river beyond the skies,
 They'll ride the slide through the Great Divide, coming clear into heaven's snyes.
 (sic)Those old raftsmen will be happy then with the Lord to pay their fee
 As they sing their song as they sail along on the river of eternity.
 (Fowke, 1970, p. 214)

Notes on the Singers

In this final section,¹²³ Edith Fowke provides a thumbnail biography of each of the thirty-four singers that are represented in this book. She did not provide comprehensive profiles for these informants, but this was not uncommon. Diamond pointed out that people could be valued less than the songs themselves by collectors (2007, p. 9). That is not to say that Fowke did not like or respect her informants, but her focus was the song

¹²³ This is the final section of text in the book. It is followed by the “Bibliography” and an “Index of Song Titles and First Lines.”

texts. It should also be noted that she prepared more extensive biographies for her earlier book, *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*, which included songs from many of the same informants. Nevertheless, in *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*, Fowke included brief biographies. Her biography of Emerson Woodcock, one of her important Peterborough informants, is an example. Fowke writes:

Emerson Woodcock was born on a farm near Kinmount in 1899 and began working in the lumberwoods (sic) when he was fourteen. From 1913 to 1921 he spent every summer in the woods. Next he worked in lumber mills around Kinmount for six years, and in 1927 moved to Peterborough, where he worked for the General Electric Company until he retired in 1964. (Fowke, 1970, p. 219)

The Reviews

The early reviews were very complimentary. In 1971, William Malm reviewed the book for *Ethnomusicology*, the official journal of the Society for Ethnomusicology. Malm wrote that Fowke presented a succinct but informative history of the early timber industry of Canada. She provided useful commentaries on the relation of each song to the American and Canadian lumber industry as well as comparing the songs to variants in other collections and recordings (Malm, 1971). W. H. Hutchison, a history professor at Chico State University, wrote in *Forest History*:

Meticulous scholarship is the hallmark of this work devoted to the songs of the shantyboys of the Ontario woods. This hallmark is stamped most deeply into both the songs collected orally and into the musicology with which Mr. Cazden has enhanced the basic folklorish work of the author. The result is a whole with which all concerned can take full measure of satisfaction. (1971, p. 29)

A couple of years later, folklorist Ellen J. Stekert of Wayne State University took into consideration ongoing changes in the discipline of folklore when she reviewed the book in *The Journal of American Folklore*. Stekert writes:

A generation ago this representative compilation of sixty-five lumbering songs from Edith Fowke's extensive fieldwork would have been regarded as among the best of published collections. But times have changed, and today this work represents a fine example of North American folksong scholarship of the first half of the twentieth century, sparkling in its own right but lacking documentation with which to answer the queries of emerging folklorists ... One cannot but wish to hear the singers who sang for Fowke talk about the songs, the singing of them, and what the songs meant to them. Unfortunately, historical background cannot substitute for cultural data. Fowke must be defended, however, by pointing out that she never intended to present the cultural context of the songs. But she must be faulted if she feels the material on record is sufficient. (Steckert, 1973, p. 79)

The final printing of *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* was the Canadian edition in 1985. This was followed by a review of the book in the *Folk Music Journal* 5 (3). Folklorist Julia C. Bishop indicates that those interested in the background of the songs in the book will be disappointed by Fowke's introduction to the collection. She makes the point that the introduction describes the development of lumbering in central Canada, but “despite its interpolation of a vivid first-hand account by one of her main informants, remains too general to elucidate the songs' rich frame of reference” (Bishop, 1987, p. 372).

Pauline Greenhill (1987) writes: “Most of Fowke's lumbering song collection comes from Ontario. This province's Anglo urban residents perceive it as a centre of urbanization, mass communication, and modernity – in fact the very antithesis of anything conducive to folklore's existence. Anglo Canadians have never been particularly eager to recognize their own folk culture” (p. 144). She mentions that Fowke found that her informants were singing songs they had not sung for twenty, forty, or sixty years and concludes that as early as 1963, folksinging was not a living tradition in Ontario (ibid). Greenhill goes on to argue that Fowke 's aim was to not to demonstrate the maintenance of folk culture, but to record the survivals of a remembered tradition among those who participated in its heyday (p. 145).

Summary

Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods is a book that reflects Edith Fowke's fieldwork period since it is composed, with one exception ("The Opeongo Line"), entirely of song texts from her field recordings. The commercial publishing of the book was consistent with Fowke's desire to popularize her collected songs by making them available to the public. *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* gave her the means to demonstrate her impressive knowledge of folk song lineage and text, but it also marked a turning point in her research. After the publication of the first edition, she did little fieldwork and began to move away from using the original field recordings as the basis for her writing. Two years later, Fowke produced *The Penguin Book of Folk Songs* (1973) which would be the last book to use transcriptions from her field recordings to any extent for the next 20 years.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ This book contains 82 songs, 30 of which were taken from Fowke's field research.

CHAPTER 9

LITERATURE REVIEW – EDITH FOWKE'S PUBLISHED WORK

Chapter 8 contained a detailed analysis of *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*, which is one of Edith Fowke's important folk song books. However, it is only one of more than 30 books that she wrote, co-wrote, and edited between 1948 and 1996. (A chronological listing of these books is provided in Appendix B.) Fowke was a prolific writer who also contributed more than 100 articles to journals, encyclopedias, magazines, and newsletters. She wrote chapters for edited books, liner notes for commercial recordings, and essays for special academic publications. (A chronological listing of these appears in Appendix C.) Fowke's published work contributed significantly to international folk song and folklore scholarship. It also revealed much about Edith Fowke, the individual. In turn, the reviews of Fowke's published work reveal how others perceived her and her place in folklore. This chapter fills a few remaining informational gaps and can be melded with contents in Chapter 5 (Fowke's Life Story) and Chapter 7 (Fowke's Peterborough Area Fieldwork).

This chapter looks at some of the articles, which Fowke wrote for journals and magazines, and the liner notes that she prepared for her commercially produced vinyl recordings. This review of Fowke's work is arranged chronologically rather than by publication type in order to facilitate an understanding of the ongoing changes in Fowke's writing style and research interests as her career developed. The chronological structure clarifies the connections and disconnections between her fieldwork and her published

work. Fowke's work is reviewed in three sections. The first section looks at her published work prior to her fieldwork, the second section reviews the work produced during her fieldwork years (1956-1964), and the third section of this review chapter considers her work subsequent to her fieldwork years. The focus of the discussion is Fowke's published work that is connected to her fieldwork, but portions of her other published work are recognized and discussed to provide some perspective of where her fieldwork based writing is situated within her overall body of work.

Edith Fowke's Published Work (1948-1955)

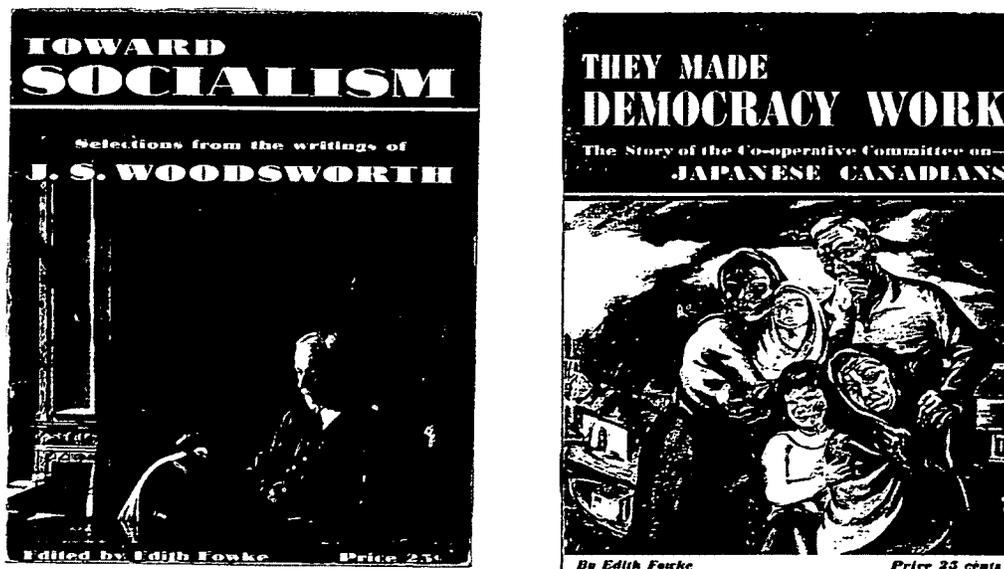


Figure 9:1 Edith Fowke's early publications reveal a social-political agenda: *Toward Socialism* (1948) and *They Made Democracy Work* (1951)

Toward Socialism: Selections from the Writings of J.S. Woodsworth

In 1948, Edith Fowke edited the first commercially available book that bore her name. The Ontario Woodsworth Memorial Foundation published the book, *Toward Socialism: Selections from the Writings of J.S. Woodsworth*, which comprised forty-eight pages and sold for twenty-five cents. At the time the book was published, Fowke was actively involved with the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) party. The book came out in paperback form and consists of fifteen essays by the founder of the CCF, J.S. Woodsworth. Fowke, as editor of the publication, wrote the Foreword.

The Canadian Forum

In 1949, while serving on the editorial board of *The Canadian Forum*, Edith Fowke wrote her first article on the topic of Canadian folk songs. *The Canadian Forum* was a Toronto-based monthly journal that generally focused on political and social issues but reserved space for articles dealing with literature and the arts. Fowke's article, which appeared in two parts, is the first printed indication that she was interested in folk music and had knowledge of Canadian academic researchers and song collectors. The first part of Fowke's article appeared in the November 1949 issue of *The Canadian Forum*. The weakness of this first folk song article by Fowke is that she does not support her material with specific references.¹²⁵ Fowke uses a narrative style throughout that tends to romanticize some details. For example, in the introductory section of the article, she

¹²⁵ Throughout this article, Fowke provides no bibliography, no direct references, and no footnotes to support the accuracy of the material. However, in the text, she mentions the publications, *American Primitive Music* by Frederick Burton, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland* by Elizabeth Greenleaf, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Nova Scotia* by Roy Mackenzie, and Helen Creighton's *Songs and Ballads of Nova Scotia*, but no direct references are ever listed.

writes:

Canadian ballads spring from varied and colorful sources: from the French-Canadian habitants who sang as they cleared their farms along the St. Lawrence and the coureurs-de-bois who sang as they paddled across Canada's mighty waterways; from the pioneer settlers who brought to the new world all the ballads of England, Scotland, and Ireland; from the sailors and fishermen of our maritime provinces who sang as they ran up the sails or pulled in the nets.

(Fowke, 1949, p. 177)

The introductory section includes a brief discussion of United States folk music and how the same genres of music exist in Canada. She moves on to discuss native music, its social context and characteristics. She refers to the music as Indian Music and discusses the fieldwork of American ethnomusicologists Alice Fletcher, and Frederick Burton, who researched in native communities during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Fowke quotes Fletcher and Burton throughout. For instance, Fowke writes: "As Miss Fletcher put it, 'In his sports, in his games, when he wooed, and when he mourned . . . the Indian sang in every experience of life from cradle to grave'" (Fowke, 1949, p. 177).¹²⁶ Yet she does not indicate the source of this quotation.¹²⁷ Following the introductory section, Fowke writes about the work of Helen Roberts and Diamond Jenness, and the ongoing studies of First Nations' music in the Canadian Arctic between

126 This quote is actually from Fletcher, A. (1900/1995). *Indian Story and Song from North America*. Introduction by Helen Myers. Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press. p. 115.

127 The lack of references to source material is problematic since Fowke quotes dates that are not accurate. For example, she indicates that Fletcher began her fieldwork in the 1860s, when, in fact, she did not begin her fieldwork until 1882.

1913 and 1918. Fowke begins her discussion by writing:

Songs also play a considerable part in the life of the Eskimos. The best account of Eskimo music is given by Helen H. Roberts and D. Jenness who recorded songs of the Copper Eskimos as part of the research carried on by the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918. They had their difficulties, for the Eskimos, who had never seen a phonograph before thought a spirit was reproducing their words and were quite nervous at first about singing into the machine. (Fowke, 1949, p. 178)

This paragraph, for which no references are provided, reveals the inaccuracies in this 1949 article; Roberts was not part of the group that recorded in the Arctic. Roberts worked with Jenness after the fieldwork was complete.¹²⁸ Fowke goes on to detail Eskimo dance-songs and the Eskimo dance house, which she identifies as the centre of social life. She describes the dance styles and remarks that “Eskimo songs are longer and more varied than Indian songs” (Fowke, 1949, p. 177). She quotes Helen Roberts as saying: “The beauty and melodic richness of Eskimo Songs is remarkable in a people who live in a land where there seems so little to inspire them” (Fowke, 1949, p. 178).

Fowke concludes part one of this *The Canadian Forum* article with a section

128 The results of this co-operation was the important publication, Roberts, H. H., and Jenness, D. (1925). *Songs of the Copper Eskimo. Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-18, 14*. Ottawa: F. A. Ackland, Printer. This has been a very influential book upon Canadian composers and I suspect that Fowke had her own copy or certainly had consulted it in a library. Because it mainly consists of musical transcriptions with text and elaborate musical analysis, its content was probably difficult for Fowke to follow but she would understand its significance. See also Keillor, E. (1995). Indigenous Music as a Compositional Source: Parallels and Contrasts in Canadian and American Music. In T. McGee (Ed.). *Taking a Stand: Essays in Honour of John Beckwith* (pp.185-218). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 192-194.

dealing with French-Canadian songs. Fowke discusses the song collecting of Marius Barbeau, and the social context from which many of the most popular French-Canadian folk songs emerged. She discusses specific songs such as “Le Canadien errant,” “Petite roche de la haute montagne,” and “Vive la Canadienne.” Barbeau’s research of French Canadian folk songs in the early twentieth century seems to provide the basis of this discussion. Fowke quotes him on a number of occasions. For example, she credits Barbeau with the statement that the French “were still fond of evening gatherings devoted to song, the dance, and old time conviviality” (Fowke, 1949, p. 178).¹²⁹

The second part of Fowke's article appeared in the December 1949 issue of *The Canadian Forum*. Fowke begins by discussing Elizabeth Greenleaf’s experience with orally transmitted songs in Newfoundland in the 1920s. She quotes some of Greenleaf’s recollections such as: “While I was eating, Uncle Dan Endacott offered to sing me a song. I listened without particular interest, until it dawned on me that he was singing a real folk song, one handed down by oral tradition” (Fowke, 1949b, p. 201).¹³⁰

Fowke moves on to discuss Maude Karpeles’ two visits to Newfoundland in 1929 and 1930, when she noted more than 200 songs by hand. Fowke is consistent in her style as she uses quotes from Karpeles to tell the story but the source material for the quotes is not revealed. One quote attributed to Karpeles is: “My quest seemed a strange one (to the informants), particularly when I had disposed the idea that I was not on the stage or an agent of a gramophone company” (Fowke, 1949b, p. 201).

129 Fowke does not reveal the source of this quote but points out that Barbeau conducted his research on behalf of the National Museum of Canada.

130 Unfortunately Fowke makes no reference to where she obtained the Greenleaf quotes although she mentions Greenleaf’s 1933 book, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*.

In the next section of the article's second part, Fowke details the work of Roy Mackenzie and Helen Creighton in Nova Scotia. Fowke begins by talking about Roy Mackenzie's knowledge of Scottish songs in Nova Scotia. This is followed with a brief biography of Helen Creighton, paying particular attention to Creighton's early song collecting around Halifax and Devil's Island. Fowke focuses on one of Creighton's most prolific informants, Ben Henneberry, and the story text of some of the songs that he sung, such as "The courtship of Willie Riley," "The farmer's curst wife," and "The Quaker's courtship."

Fowke then comments about folk songs in central and western Canada. She writes: "Ontario and the west have produced no such rich store of folk songs as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. However, Ontario has yielded a considerable stock of lumbering songs, which spring from the days when great hordes of shanty boys were cutting their way through the great forests of Canada and the United States" (Fowke, 1949b, p. 202).¹³¹

Fowke points out that lumbering songs have no boundaries and can travel freely from the United States to Canada and back. She mentions the lumbering songs "Jim Whalen," "The Jam on Gerry's Rock," "The Hanging Limb," and "Ye Maidens of Ontario," and discusses the lyrics of each. The section on lumbering songs is followed with a short reference to songs from western Canada. Fowke writes: "On the prairies, the most famous folk song is "The Red River Valley," which was imported from the States."¹³²

¹³¹ Fowke assumed at this time that Ontario did not have a significant folk song tradition. She also excluded New Brunswick.

¹³² Fowke later reversed her statement that the "Red River Valley" was a folk song imported from the United States. In 1964, she argued that it was a Canadian folk song that originated in Manitoba circa 1870. See Fowke, E. (1965). "The 'Red River Valley' Revisited," *Western Folklore*, 13. 163-172.

Other common folk songs such as “Old Dan Tucker,” “Billy Boy,” “Froggie Went A-Courting,” “Old King Cole,” and “Frankie and Johnny” are widely sung in the west but no collector has uncovered a store of ballads to compare with those of eastern Canada (Fowke, 1949b, p. 202).

The final paragraph of the article reflects Edith Fowke’s perception that folk singing is in decline. She argues that film and radio have become prominent in Canadian culture and that songs which have been preserved through generations of loneliness and hardship could disappear. She asks readers to support radio programs that feature folk songs and write the National Museum of Canada to request a copy of a small songbook titled *Come A-Singing* that contains 30 Canadian folk songs.¹³³

The Canadian Forum two-part article indicates that in the late 1940s, Edith Fowke had some understanding of Canadian folk song history and early Canadian researchers. Much of the article is based on quotations from Canadian folk song researchers yet Fowke does not provide any bibliographic references to indicate her sources. Nevertheless it may have been the first piece in a national publication that made readers aware of the early Canadian song collectors. Her article reveals her increasing passion for Canadian folk songs but it is soft on substance and tends to be written in a somewhat romanticized style.¹³⁴

133 Marius Barbeau edited this small book for the National Museum of Canada, Ottawa. It is Bulletin No. 107. It was first available in 1947.

134 Fowke's use of a soft romantic writing style in *The Canadian Forum* article contrasts with the serious direct writing style normally found in her writing. She possibly modified her style to include a broader audience.

They Made Democracy Work

Fowke's next publication, *They Made Democracy Work: The Story of the Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians* (1951), marked a literary return to her interest in social and political issues. It is a small 32-page paperback book. Fowke wrote the entire text based on her personal knowledge of the committee and its history. Similar to her first published work on J.S. Woodsworth, this book was published in Toronto and sold for twenty-five cents. This publication marked the end of Fowke's writing that dealt strictly with cultural and political issues. A year after this book was published, Fowke formally left politics due to her altercation with David Lewis referred to previously. Her political activity became private but her social views would still be apparent at times in her future writing.

Fowke's writing style in *They Made Democracy Work: The Story of the Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians* shows command and direct knowledge of the subject. It contrasts significantly with the writing style found in the *Canadian Forum* article on folk music. Fowke displays her strong interest in social justice in this book. Her detailed and passionate writing is directed at a politically savvy audience in an attempt to set the record straight about an aspect of Canadian social history. For example, Fowke writes:

Because they usually came to Canada with very little capital, and because many professions were closed to them, the Japanese Canadians worked mainly at fishing, logging, farming or unskilled labor ... As a group they were noted for

thrift, cleanliness, and honesty, and they were conspicuously industrious and intelligent. Unfortunately their very virtues were the cause of much of the antagonism against them. Their industry and intelligence caused the people of British Columbia to regard them as an economic threat. Because employers used them as cheap labor, workers feared that their own standard of living would be imperilled, and when they began to trade they incurred the hostility of the middle classes. (Fowke, 1951. pp. 2-3)

Folk Songs of Canada

In April of 1954, *Folk Songs of Canada* was published by Waterloo Music, one of Canada's major music publishers during this period. This songbook was co-edited by Edith Fowke and Richard Johnston. Fowke prepared the text while Johnston made decisions on the presentation of the music. According to the book's "Foreword," the included songs were selected on the basis of their perceived popularity, the ease with which they could be sung, and the extent that they represented a particular aspect of Canadian history or life. Canadian versions of some American songs were also included. *Folk Songs of Canada* is designed as a singing book for wide public consumption.

The late Philip Thomas, who taught at the University of British Columbia and was one of Fowke's longtime friends and associates in folk music scholarship gave me the following summary of her reasoning. Thomas related that Fowke's background as a teacher and editor gave her the desire to be a journalist and her political experiences led her to believe that her advocacy of folk songs was politically important. In response to

people asking why there was no book of Canadian folk songs, she saw an open opportunity. As a result, she sought out a musician partner in Richard Johnston (Thomas, personal communication, 1998).

The collection of seventy-six songs in *Folk Songs of Canada* was taken from a variety of collections, authored by researchers like Greenleaf, Karpeles, Mackenzie, Creighton, etc. The book recognizes the sources of each selection on the second page of the publication, which is titled “Acknowledgements.” The following are examples of how the source material was acknowledged:

“Peter Amberley”, “The Quaker’s Courtship”, “The Bad Girl’s Lament”, and “Citadel Hill”, by permission from *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia* by Helen Creighton ... “Brave Wolfe”, “The Lumbercamp Song”, and “The Maid on the Shore”, from *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland* by Elizabeth Bristol Greenleaf and Grace Yarrow Mansfield, by permission Harvard University Press, Cambridge ... “She’s Like The Swallow”, “The Morning Dew”, and “Time to be Made a Wife”: from *Folk Songs from Newfoundland* by Maude Karpeles, by permission Oxford University Press, London ... “My Bark Canoe”: by permission from *American Primitive Music* by Frederick R. Burton.

(Fowke & Johnston, 1954, p. 2)

At the beginning of the book, there is a four page “Introduction” written by Fowke that provides a history of folk song in Canada and discusses the work of song

collectors, some of whose songs are included in the book. Fowke tries to be inclusive in her analysis, discussing the work of individuals such as Marius Barbeau, Elizabeth Greenleaf, Grace Mansfield, Maude Karpeles, Roy Mackenzie, Helen Creighton, Gerald Doyle, and Marius Barbeau. Fowke provides thumbnail biographical information about the contributing collectors, allowing readers to get a grasp of their history. For example, she refers to Barbeau as having “collected over seven thousand French-Canadian songs for the National Museum” (p. 9), and Roy Mackenzie of Nova Scotia who “tracked down many songs and published them in 1919 in a book called *In Search of the Ballad*” (p. 10). She writes: “Helen Creighton, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, was fascinated by the songs of her native countryside; her first book *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia*, appeared in 1932” (ibid). “Miss Maude Karpeles ... made two visits to the island ... She collected some two hundred songs ... and published thirty of them in a collection called *Folk Songs of Newfoundland*” (ibid). “Mr. Gerald Doyle of St. John's, Newfoundland has also done much to preserve his island's native songs, publishing small paperbound booklets, which have wide distribution” (ibid).

Fowke provides a brief insight into her thoughts about the possible existence of undiscovered folk songs west of the Ottawa River on the third page of the “Introduction.” She states: “No systematic collecting of songs from any region west of Quebec has yet been undertaken (p. 11). Fowke concludes the introductory section by explaining how she and Richard Johnston determined what songs were to be included in *Folk Songs of Canada*. Fowke writes in a more authoritative manner about the music than she did in her initial 1949 *Canadian Forum* article on the topic. The introductory essay

and the historical vignettes that accompany each song are detailed, informative, and accessible. For example in the “Introduction,” Fowke writes:

While the words and tunes for the songs given here have been based on traditional versions, a certain amount of adapting and editing has been done. Primary collectors rightly strive to reproduce as exactly as possible the versions they get from their singers, but such absolute fidelity is not practicable for a book intended to make the songs available to a wider audience. The traditional folk-singers have the gift of making the words fit the tunes, no matter how widely the verses may vary, but today most singers expect the words in each stanza to conform to a fairly regular metrical pattern. (Fowke & Johnston, 1954, p. 12)

For each song, *Folk Songs of Canada* provides music and lyrics along with an informative historical vignette. The songs are organized under ten titled categories. For example, the category, “Out of the Past,” includes songs such as “Brave Wolfe” and “Un Canadien Errant.” “Men of the Sea” contains among others “The Banks of Newfoundland” and “Lukey’s Boat.” In “Songs of Love” one finds “She’s Like The Swallow,” and “The Blooming Bright Star of Belle Isle.” The “In the Woods” section has songs such as “Peter Amberley” and “Jimmy Whalen.”

Richard Johnston prepared the musical notation for each song, selecting keys he considered conducive to group singing. The notation contains a melody, the lyrics, the piano accompaniment, and the guitar chord suggestion above the staff. In a section titled

“Notes on the Music” Richard Johnston writes: “The songs in this book have been cast in keys which make them comfortable for voices with a medium range ... However, in this, as in all other songs in the book, no key must be considered sacred; any song can be transposed to any key which makes it comfortable for your voice” (p. 14).¹³⁵ Because the songs were taken from other published collections and not transcribed from recorded performances, Johnston did not create the notated version of the tune. In some cases he regularized the prescriptive notation and then created a moderately easy piano accompaniment.

Fowke wrote the historical sketches that accompany the notation of each song. The sketches, ranging in length from a single paragraph to four or five paragraphs, reveal well-researched song origins as well as commentary on the song. For example for the song “Jim Whalen,” the first paragraph of a five-paragraph sketch reads:

“Jim Whalen” is the Ontario counterpart of the Maritimers’ “Peter Amberley”. His real name was James Phalen, and he was killed in 1878 on the Mississippi River of eastern Ontario, a tributary of the Ottawa. The tragedy occurred when two rafts of logs coming out of Cross Lake collided in the swift waters of Kings Chute, forming a dangerous jam. As the raftsmen worked to untangle it, Phalen slipped off a shifting log and the current pulled him under. It was an hour before his companions were able to get his body out of the raging river.

(Fowke & Johnston, 1954, p. 83)

¹³⁵ There was tension between Johnston and Fowke during the compilation of *Folk Songs of Canada*. Johnston recalls: “For a long time Edith and I barely tolerated each other—we’re both strong personalities but we needed each other. In the later years though, we became very good friends” (Vikar, L. & Panagapka, J., 2004, p. 87).

Fowke's writing in *Folk Songs of Canada* indicates a confidence with the folk song material that facilitated the use of the direct informative style, which was evident in her social and political writing. Although this was just her second printed work on the topic of folk music, it was significantly more informative and mature than her earlier 1949 effort in *The Canadian Forum*. *Folk Songs of Canada* was a success and Waterloo Music produced a second printing less than a year later in February 1955. A companion book, *Folk Songs of Canada: Choral Edition*, was also published in 1954 with a second printing in 1955. The folk songs were the same in the choral edition as in the original publication. The addition of choral arrangements, by Richard Johnston, enabled the songs to be sung by choirs of all types: church, school, amateur, and professional. This book made Canadian folk songs accessible to a wider more musical oriented group of people. Figure 9:2 illustrates a typical page from the *Folk Songs of Canada: Choral Edition*.

S.A.T.B.

MARY ANN

Dr. Marius Barbeau heard this unusual sailor's song at Tadoussac, Quebec, from Edouard Havington, who had been a *coureur-de-bois* with the Hudson's Bay Company. He had learned it from an Irish sailor around 1850. It is descended from the English song, "The True Lover's Farewell", and is closely related to "The Turtle Dove".

Slowly

1. Oh, fare thee well, my own true love, Oh,
2. Oh, yon-der don't you see the dove A-

fare thee well, my dear! For the ship is wait-ing; the wind blows
sit-ting on the stile? She is mourn-ing the loss of her own true

high, And I am bound a-way for the sea, Ma-ry Ann, And
love As I do now for you, my dear, Ma-ry Ann, As

I am bound a-way for the sea, Ma-ry Ann! Ann!
I do now for you, my dear, Ma-ry Ann! Ann!

(Piano accompaniment on page 142 of cloth-bound edition.)

Figure 9:2 Sample page from *Folk Songs of Canada: Choral Edition*

An accompanying record album followed. *Folk Songs of Canada* on vinyl was produced under the musical direction of Richard Johnston for the Waterloo label. It featured solo vocalists, Joyce Sullivan and Charles Jordan, accompanied by vocal chorus, guitar, and piano, singing a selection of songs from the book. At the time, Edith Fowke was involved in broadcasting and saw this recording as an effective way to fill a void and expose the public to Canadian folk music.

University of California, Berkeley professor Bertrand Bronson reviewed *Folk Songs of Canada* in *Western Folklore*. Bronson concludes that the book is attractive and honest, full of singable likable songs but he also uses Fowke and Johnston's own words to amplify the point that the book is intended for non-scholars:

Since the purpose is “folksy” rather than scholarly, the editors have adapted and edited both texts and tunes: “absolute fidelity is not practicable for a book intended to make the songs available to a wider audience.” The changes, we are told, are never “gratuitous”: that is, they do not invent but only combine what has somewhere been traditionally sung “by someone.”... The notes, though usually brief, contain a good deal of casual information on the history and currency of the songs. On the musical side, however, they yield next to nothing, contenting themselves most often with a descriptive adjective – “gay,” “catchy,” “delightful” – and giving no historical information as a rule. This seems regrettable.

(Bronson, 1956, p. 149)

In his review of *Folk Songs of Canada*, Professor Charles Haywood, Queens College, New York mentions a shortcoming of the book that Fowke and Johnston had already acknowledged in the "Introduction" :

Without minimizing the value of this compilation I must, nevertheless, caution the reader that the volume draws most of its contents from the maritime provinces, a good representation of French-Canadian tunes, less from Ontario, and a straggling few from the prairie provinces, and I have not been able to discover any from British Columbia, Yukon, or the Northwest territories ... While I do not believe the editors have given adequate coverage of their country's songs, there is enough in this collection to interest the student, teacher, and performer.

(Haywood, 1955, p. 12)

A follow-up project associated with *Folk Songs of Canada* was *Folk Songs of Quebec*, also edited by Fowke and Johnston. This book is similar in style to the original with Fowke providing a historical sketch for each song. The song's melody line is noted along with the lyrics in both French and English. *Folk Songs of Quebec* is composed of songs from French-Canadian collectors like Marius Barbeau, Luc Lacourcière and Ernest Gagnon. In *Western Folklore*, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) professor Philip Durham writes: "This rather slight book may not be of much immediate interest to western folklorists, but it should be of interest, for it is delightful ... forty-four of the best known and most singable French-Canadian songs, with piano accompaniments, guitar

chords, words in French and English, and informative notes” (1958, p. 301).

Edith Fowke’s Published Work – The Fieldwork Years (1956-1964)

Edith Fowke began her song collecting fieldwork in the Peterborough area in 1956. Much of the published work by Fowke from 1956 to 1964 is associated with her fieldwork focus. Fowke was a popularizer and so considered by associates such as Philip Thomas who explained that he considered “Fowke initially, primarily a popularizer of folk song ... she believed that folk songs reflected lives of the people who sang them, and that assertion ... gave them a cultural pedigree to be honoured” (P. Thomas, personal communication, 1998). She followed her popularization mission and produced commercial recordings with informative liner-notes that would be available to the public and then used her CBC radio program “Folk Song Time” to introduce them to a national audience.

The Folkways Liner-Notes

In 1958, Folkways Records and Service Corporation of New York City Folkways released Record Album No. FM4005 *Folk Songs of Ontario*. The album contains 20 folk songs sung by Ontario singers, including Mary Towns, Vera Keating, Maggie Sullivan, O.J. Abbott, and Tom Brandon, recorded in the field by Edith Fowke. The ten-page liner-note pamphlet contains lyrics to each song along with Fowke’s extensive notes about each song. These notes, which often resemble short essays, provide background information on each singer, the history of the song and commentary on the song’s

evolution. The liner notes are more extensive than the historical vignettes in *Folk Songs of Canada*. They are written in a reflexive narrative style and demonstrate that Fowke had attained a working knowledge of English and North American folk song history, both generally and pertaining to specific songs and song styles.

At the beginning of the liner-note pamphlet there is an informative introductory essay in which Fowke first discusses her decision to research folk songs in the Peterborough area:

It was generally assumed we had few folk songs and that it was too late to find the ones that existed because Ontario is our most highly industrialized province.

However, when I get [sic] a tape recorder in the fall of 1956, I decided to do a little scouting, and uncovered enough traditional material to indicate that the only reason so few Ontario songs were known was that no particular effort had been made to find them ... I've recorded over four hundred traditional songs and the number would have been greater if I could have spared more time for collecting.

(Fowke, 1958, p. 2)

Fowke then provides details about the nineteenth century Irish immigration to the Peterborough area. She talks about the individual singers she discovered, and the origins of the songs they sung. There is also discussion of the geography and the rural way of life in Peterborough County. Fowke explains how she selected the specific songs for the album. She writes: "This record gives a sampling of some of the Ontario songs. I've tried

to pick one's (sic) that were of interest in themselves as well as representative of the different types to be found here" (Fowke, 1958). Fowke seemed pleased with the unique characteristics and the variety of songs that she recorded in her early collecting. She found her informants not only sang Child Ballads and altered versions of British Broadside Ballads catalogued by G. M. Laws (1957), they also sang a wealth of folk songs about purely Ontario events. Fowke writes:

Most of the well known lumberjack songs are to be found here, as well as a few that are peculiar to Ontario. In addition to the lumberjack ballads composed here, there are other local Ontario songs describing murders, accidents, or other events of interest to the ballad makers. Often songs, which came from overseas, have become acclimatized and acquired local references. (Fowke, 1959, p. 2)

SIDE II--BAND 2

"THE GOLDEN VANITY" (Child 266)
Sung by Joe Kelly, Downer's Corners

This ancient tale is widely popular in Ontario as well as in many other parts of North America. At least two different versions of it circulated in this province: the one given here seems to have been the most popular, but I've also recorded another called "The Green Willow Tree".

The song dates back at least to the days of the first Queen Elizabeth: one early copy cited Sir Walter Raleigh as the cruel captain. This Ontario version follows the ancient pattern very closely except for the last two verses which were added by someone who felt the wicked captain shouldn't get away with his treachery. This particular form seems to be known only in Canada, but several American variants reveal the same desire to punish the captain: Belden quotes one in which the boy's ghost returns to haunt him, and Shoemaker gives one in which the crew throws him overboard.

Joe Kelly, a cousin of Vera Keating, also comes from Crosby and learned this song from his father. Mr. Abbott of Hull, Quebec, sang a very similar version, which suggests that it circulated in the lumbercamps.

For comparative references see British Traditional Ballads in North America, p. 153.

There was a gallant ship in North America,
She goes by the name of the Golden Vanity.
She was to be taken by the Turkish Commune
For to sink her in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
For to sink her in the lowlands low.

The first to come on board it was the cabin boy,
Saying, "Captain, what'll you give me if that ship I will
"Gold I will give you, my daughter for your bride, destroy?"
If you'll sink her in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
If you'll sink her in the lowlands low.

The boy took an auger and overboard went he,
The boy bent his breast and he swan away to sea,
He swan till he came to the Turkish Commune
For to sink her in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
For to sink her in the lowlands low.

Three holes the boy bored, three holes the boy bored twice,
While some were playing cards and the others were shooting dice.
How their black eyes they did jingle as the water it poured in
And she sank in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
As she sank in the lowlands low.

The boy bent his breast and back swan he,
He swan till he came to the Golden Vanity,
Saying, "Shipmates, pick me up, for I'm going with the tide,
And I'm sinking in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
And I'm sinking in the lowlands low.

"Pick you up," said the captain, "For that I shall not do,
Kill you or drown you, I'll do it with a will.
Gold I'll not give you, nor my daughter for your bride,
But I'll sink you in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
I will sink you in the lowlands low."

The boy swan around unto the other side
And there he most pitiful did cry,
Saying, "Shipmates, pick me up for I'm going with the tide,
And I'm sinking in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
And I'm sinking in the lowlands low.

His shipmates picked him up, and there on deck he died,
They rolled him in his hammock for it being long and wide,
They rolled him in his hammock and they lowered him in the
And he sank in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands, tide,
And he sank in the lowlands low.

About three weeks after this, the day being calm and clear,
A voice from the heavens did reach the captain's ear,
Saying, "Captain, dearest captain, you've been mighty cruel
And I'll sink you in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands/to me,
And I'll sink you in the lowlands low.

The captain was amazed, he didn't know what to do,
The captain was amazed when his mainmast broke in two,
His mainmast broke in two and she leveled with the tide,
And she sank in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
And she sank in the lowlands low.

SIDE II--BAND 3

"A FAIR MAID WALKED IN HER FATHER'S GARDEN"
Sung by Mrs. William Towns, Douro

The lover who returns in disguise to test his sweetheart's love and then reveals his identity by producing the ring they had broken between them is one of the most popular and long-lived of all folk themes. Literally dozens of different songs have been woven on this simple plot, from "King Horn" to "John Riley", from "The Dark-Eyed Sailor" to "The Plains of Waterloo".

This particular example has turned up in many parts of the United States and Canada under such titles as "The Pretty Fair Maid", "The Single Sailor", or "The Broken Token". Other versions parallel the Ontario story closely except that most North American versions speak of a sailor or a soldier instead of a gentleman, and omit the old-world reference to castles.

Incidentally, I was puzzled by Mrs. Towns' pronunciation of "gentle" until I heard Jeannia Robertson, the great Scottish folksinger, pronounce it the same way in the same song: a convincing proof that Mrs. Towns' version has its roots far back in British tradition. She learned it from her father, Michael Cleary, who was the first traditional folksinger I recorded. He died early in 1957 at the age of 82.

For comparative references, see American Balladry from British Broadside, # 42 and A Guide to English Folk Song Collections, p. 55.



Mrs. William Towns

A fair maid walked in her father's garden,
A gentleman he was passing by,
He stepped up to her and kindly viewed her,
Saying, "Lady, lady, won't you fancy me?"

"To fancy you, a rich man of honours,
A rich man of honours you seem to be,
You might have fancied some rich young lady,
With plenty of servants to wait on thee."

"It's look over yonder at that fine castle,
With windows around it on every side,
I'll make you mistress of that fine castle
If you'll consent, love, and be my bride."

"Oh what care I for your fine castles,
Or what care I for the stormy sea,
What care I for your gold and silver
If my dear Willie sails home to me."

"Oh since you say that your love's a sailor,
Oh since you say that your love's on sea,
Perhaps he is dead or else he is drowned,
And the stormy ocean may be his grave."

"Now if he is dead I do wish him happy,
And if he's alive he'll sail home to me.
'Tis for his sake I will never carry
Till my dear Willie sails home to me."

He put his hands into his pocket,
His fingers they being neat and small,
He drew a ring that was broke between them,
And when she saw it, 'twas down she fell.

"Stand up, stand up, my pretty fair maid,
Stand up, stand up, and unto me,
For I've brought home both gold and silver,
And the stormy ocean to cross no more."

"If you be Willie, you looks deceives me,
Your very features seem strange to me,
Seven long years makes an alteration
'Tis seven long years since you sailed from me."

Figure 9:3 Sample liner note page from *Folk Songs of Ontario Folkways FM4005*

In the third paragraph upper-right Fowke identifies Mary Towns' father Michael as the first traditional folk-singer she recorded.

Fowke's liner-note essay is informative, detailed, and indicates that she had become a knowledgeable researcher. Her reflexive writing style enables readers to get a sense of her personality and methodology. By 1958, little had been written about Edith Fowke, by herself or anyone else. In view of this, these liner notes were important at the time since they provided the first biographical insights about Fowke. Fowke decided to include no lumbering songs on the *Folk Songs of Ontario* recording. In her introductory liner-note essay, she explains that this group of songs would be featured on a subsequent vinyl album. Three years later in 1961, two albums were released, Folkways Album No. FM4051, *Irish and British Songs from the Ottawa Valley: Sung by O.J. Abbott*, and *Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties*, Folkways 4052. The latter album contains 18 lumbering songs featuring mostly Peterborough area singers and like the 1958 album, the tracks are from Fowke's original field recordings and the liner-notes are extensive. There are detailed notes about each song and singer along with the song lyrics and another introductory essay. The essay that Fowke composed for the notes in this album is even more reflexive and informative about her research than the introductory essay found in the notes of her first recording.

In this second essay, Fowke discusses the lumber industry in the Peterborough area and its connection with local farmers. More importantly, she reveals that she recorded the songs in the homes of the singers between 1957 and 1958. Overall the liner-notes indicate Fowke maintained a friendly relationship with her informants and was pleased with the results of the recordings they made.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Fowke acknowledges in these liner notes that her field recordings were done in informants' homes. The perception that Fowke recorded songs in outdoor vocational settings such as lumber camps and farms is inaccurate. This separates Fowke's methodology from that of other Canadian song collectors, such as Helen Creighton and Kenneth Peacock, who did record singers on location, outdoors.

Throughout her career, Edith Fowke produced little literary work in a reflexive style. On rare occasions she did write herself into the narrative and a very small portion of that deals with her fieldwork perspectives and methodology. The fact that the liner notes she prepared for her first Folkways recordings are reflexive and focus directly on her fieldwork makes them exceptional. They provide a window to the past through which readers can view Fowke as a researcher in the field. These liner notes were never, to my knowledge, reproduced in any book or article. However, they have been recently made available for computer download by Smithsonian-Folkways. They remain alone as unique and important pieces of Fowke's published work relating to Ontario folk song. Fowke's associate Kenneth Goldstein reviewed the *Folk Songs of Ontario* recording in *Midwest Folklore*:

Fowke is one of the few Canadian fieldworkers to pay serious attention to Anglo-Canadian materials outside of the maritime provinces and in Ontario she has found such an enormous quantity and variety of songs, and singers, that she herself admits surprise ... Mrs. Fowke's informants are among the best traditional singers to be heard on this continent. A succinct set of historical and bibliographical notes rounds out this fine production. (Goldstein, 1959, p.169)

D. K. Wilgus of Western Kentucky State University reviewed Fowke's second album, *Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties*, in *The Journal of American Folklore*. Wilgus indicates that the recording is a useful recording of Canadian

folksinging and there are excellent performers on the album. He argues that several of the songs are of true Irish-American origin and others are in a United States western style, not solely the Canadian origin that Fowke claims. Wilgus goes on to point out that the notes lack a literary connection between the songs and the singers. He writes: “to the unusually full notes should have been added more information concerning the performers, of whom only O.J. Abbott has been adequately introduced” (Wilgus, 1962, p. 278). This criticism by Wilgus is the first of many that comment on Fowke's tendency to focus on song text and history while often neglecting the connections between the songs, the singers, and the community that preserved them.

Logging with Paul Bunyan

Throughout her career, Fowke would often work on two or three projects simultaneously and the late 1950s and early 1960s were no exception. There is not enough information available to determine the time period during which the research and writing for each project was done. Publishers' official release dates are known but release of a publication may occur long after the manuscript had been prepared and approved. For example, in 1957, when Edith Fowke was focusing on her song-collecting fieldwork, Ryerson Press of Toronto released the Fowke-edited book, *Logging with Paul Bunyan*, a series of stories about the fictional lumberman, written by John Robins. However, Fowke actually may have been working on this book as early as 1952. That was the year that John Robins died and his widow turned all of his Paul Bunyan manuscripts over to Fowke who edited the stories, giving many of them a Canadian setting. She produced ten

stories from the Robins manuscripts for this book and wrote the “Foreword” before turning it over to the publisher.

Logging with Paul Bunyan is significant in that the subject matter deals with lumbering, which became a theme in much of Fowke’s work. In addition, it demonstrates Fowke's ongoing interest in texts relating to folklore and folk-tales. The original author of this series of Paul Bunyan stories, John Robins, was a University of Toronto English professor, who was a close acquaintance of Edith Fowke. Fowke found out that Robins had worked, as a young man in Ontario lumbering camps. It was while in these camps that he listened to the Paul Bunyan stories told by the lumbermen and took the time to write them down. In addition, Fowke learned that Robins had also collected some square dance calls and made a list of fiddle tunes during his lumbering days. It may have been the knowledge of Robins’ brief informal fieldwork that influenced Fowke to consider doing the same thing. After Robins’ death, Fowke inherited all of Robins personal writings. It is possible that Robins' manuscripts along with Fowke’s working relationship with him impacted her decision to pursue fieldwork in general and focus on folklore and folk song aspects of the lumber industry specifically.¹³⁷

Folklorist Richard Dorson of Indiana University reviewed *Logging with Paul Bunyan* in *Western Folklore*. His criticism was harsh:

Collectors of Paul Bunyan books ... will find here another curiosity. The late John Robins delivered radio talks on “Logging with Paul Bunyan”... After his death

¹³⁷ In her 1979 publication, *Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and their Role in Canadian Culture*, Carol Carpenter writes that “Robins was instrumental in Edith Fowke's involvement in folklore” (p. 50).

these scripts were turned over ... to Edith Fowke (who could not determine if the stories were ever published). She stirred this brew to produce the ten tales in this book. Further, she has added a short introduction and some notes which apparently are intended to bolster her credentials ... she still claims a Canadian folk basis for Bunyan but her only evidence is a quotation from E.S. Russenholt, who says he heard the tales in 1909 ... The stories themselves are set down in a folksy first-person vernacular replete with coy exaggerations and sprinkled with Canadian references. (Dorson, 1958, p. 289)¹³⁸

Songs of Work and Freedom

In 1960, Fowke completed two writing projects that she had been working on for some time. Her focus on these projects paralleled her Ontario fieldwork activity but since she was collaborating with individuals she knew from her broadcasting career, it is likely a good portion of the research for these projects preceded her fieldwork. The first of the two projects saw Fowke collaborating with Joe Glazer, an American-born and educated folk singer who wrote and sang labour songs. In 1960 Roosevelt Press of Chicago published their book, *Songs of Work and Freedom*. This songbook contains 100 folk songs dealing with topics such as unions, strikes, working conditions, economic depression, and segregation. The songs are grouped under eleven different headings such

¹³⁸ This excerpt from Dorson's review of *Logging with Paul Bunyan* is included because it possibly reflects how Fowke was perceived by the academic community in the 1950s. Professor Dorson was an influential figure in the discipline of folklore and at the time of this review was Director of the Folklore Institute at the University of Indiana. Fowke was seeking some recognition from the academic community and this negative review might have been a set-back. However, Fowke did respond some time later when she wrote: "I emphasized that Paul Bunyan tales were in oral tradition before they were commercialized and mistakenly termed fakelore by Richard Dorson" (Fowke, 1997, p. 43).

as “Solidarity Forever,” “Down In A Coal Mine,” “Hard Times in the Mill,” etc. Glazer wrote ten of the songs and edited the remainder. For each song, he provided the lyrics, basic melody line, guitar chords, and piano accompaniment. Fowke contributed the detailed historical context and social commentary for each song. She was likely quite comfortable writing about labour and protest because of her political background and involvement in social issues. However, when the book was released, Nova Scotia song collector Helen Creighton who considered songs about labour conflict and unions not to be folk songs, became quite vocal and stated publicly that the book was subversive and communist-based. She was appalled that Fowke produced such a work.¹³⁹

Negative reaction to the book was not limited to Creighton's remarks. UCLA professor Ed Cray, when he was a graduate student in folklore and ethnomusicology, reviewed *Songs of Work and Freedom* in the October 1960 issue of *Western Folklore*. Focusing on his perceived union slant of the book, Cray writes:

There is that tendency to generalize; the union is equated with the working class. All labor songs are songs of protest, the authors would have us believe, though the possible levels or types of protest are all but completely ignored. And again, there is a strong desire to wrap these songs in a mantle of authenticity. Mrs. Fowke is too fine a scholar to insist on the traditional status of all their songs. Instead, Mrs. Fowke, or Glazer, or both, attempt to make the songs traditional

¹³⁹ Queen's University professor Ian McKay in *The Quest of the Folk: Anti-modernism and cultural selection in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia*, discusses the differences between Helen Creighton's idyllic romantic vision of folk songs and Fowke's “matter-of-fact” interpretation of songs. To Creighton, songs that detailed working conditions and union activity were seditious. She condemned Fowke's work on the topic (McKay 1994, p, 147).

within the labor movement – which many decidedly are not ... The book is designed for a popular market, but Mrs. Fowke has added historical notes to all the songs ... Yet, again, the programmatic intent of what can only be termed union propaganda has dimmed what might otherwise be a valuable addition to the scholar's library – in spite of the frankly popular appeal the book has ... Somehow or other, the equation of protest with union has strongly slanted the contents of the book ... what could have been a substantial book still remains another of the many programmatic items with some valuable material and responsible documentation. (Cray, 1960, pp. 285-286)

In 1963, Dena Epstein, a music librarian and historian reviewed *Songs of Work and Freedom* in the Music Library Association publication *Note*. Contrary to Cray's review, Epstein points out the book's union slant in a light-hearted manner:

[This is an] eminently usable collection of workers' songs, edited by Edith Fowke, Canadian folklorist,¹⁴⁰ and Joe Glazer, long an enthusiastic advocate of group singing in trade unions and currently Education Director of the United Rubber Workers, AFL-CIO. In the hope that folk songs could enliven some otherwise dull union meetings, Mr. Glazer proposed the compilation of this book, which was five years in the making. (Epstein, 1963, p. 409)

140 Fowke is consistently referred to as a folklorist, not an ethnomusicologist, by scholars.

Canada's Story in Song

The second book published in 1960 was *Canada's Story in Song*, a song book created by Fowke and folk singer Alan Mills based on their collaborative 1956 radio series. Helmut Blume wrote the piano accompaniments and Bram Morrison provided the guitar accompaniment. This book is similar in format to Fowke's first song book *Folk Songs of Canada* and contains seventy-three songs. There are songs from the collections of people such as Marius Barbeau, Helen Creighton, Gerald Doyle, and Louise Manny. What makes *Canada's Story in Song* a unique publication is the fact that for the first time in a song book, there are songs from Fowke's Ontario field research, nineteen in total.

Alan Mills transcribed the nineteen songs from Fowke's field tapes for inclusion in the publication. Fowke explains in the "Introduction," that Mr. Mills made every effort to approximate the natural flow of the song as faithfully as possible within the sometimes restrictive measures of musical accompaniment. She explains that traditional singers sing in a free style that adapts the melody to the words (Fowke, 1960, p. ix). As in previous books, each song is shown with the lyrics, basic melody notation, piano accompaniment and guitar chords. The songs are grouped in chronological chapters beginning with "Before the White Man" followed by "The Discovery of Canada," then "Voyageurs and Missionaries," etc. There are fourteen chapters in all; later chapters include: "War Against the United States," "The Country Grows," etc. Fowke explains the historical and cultural context for each song in the literary notes found at the beginning of each chapter. A few years later, Fowke expressed the opinion that songs composed during certain periods of history could give listeners a clear impression of what it was like during a specific time

period providing a more vivid image than any historical account. She said that she specifically designed *Canada's Story in Song* as a songbook that would facilitate the teaching of history and social studies.¹⁴¹

Canada's Story in Song received positive reviews. W. G. Lamont of Bellevue, Washington reviewed the book for *Western Folklore*:

Here is a song collection deserving a place in the homes and study rooms of North Americans on both sides of the border. It should become as familiar as its predecessors by Boni, Lomax, and Ives have become on this side of the line. The explanatory notes by Edith Fowke are authoritative and interesting, making a coherent social history of Canada from its beginnings to the present. The text shows the diversity and richness of Canadian heritage as it integrated songs of Indian, French, English, Scottish, and Irish background into a unity that could only happen in North America. (Lamont, 1962, pp. 56-57)

English researcher and composer Patrick Shuldham-Shaw reviewed *Canada's Story in Song* in the *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*. He writes:

... a series of popular songs which portray the history of the country far more vividly than the majority of history books. The idea is admirably carried out and the whole presentation is quite first rate. It should be invaluable to any teacher of

141 Fowke's edited songbooks group songs into specific categories or chapters. While chapter and category titles change from book to book, this characteristic is consistent. Fowke explains that she did not believe in publishing miscellaneous songs; there had to be a unity to tie them together (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 11).

Canadian history, but it should also have much wider appeal. Most of the songs are good of their kind, and even if the purists may condemn many of them as not being true folk songs, they still have a legitimate place in this collection.

(Shuldham-Shaw, 1961, p. 109)

One of the negative reviews of the book came from the University of Maine professor Edward Ives, who Lamont mentions in his review (above). Ives was involved in Canadian folk song research when he worked with song collector Louise Manny in New Brunswick in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Ives' review of Fowke's work is scathing and it is possible that Fowke felt uncomfortable about it since she knew Ives and had his published work in her literary collection.¹⁴² Furthermore, the review was in *The Journal of American Folklore*, published by the American Folklore Society, of which Fowke was a member. Ives writes:

... certain facts that not only make the book useless to folklorists but also make it hard for them to recommend it to those for whom it was intended: the folksong enthusiast, the educator, the person who wants "a good book of Canadian songs." Though the notes given on pages 219-222 are not always clear and complete, it appears that twenty-seven songs are published here for the first time, and it is these songs which will be of chief interest to the folklorist. Nineteen of them are from Mrs. Fowke's own fine collecting work in Ontario. I was able to check a few of the texts printed here against their originals on Mrs. Fowke's record,

142 I have the copy of *A Manual for Field Workers* by Ives that was once owned by Edith Fowke.

Folksongs of Ontario (Folkways FM4005), and I was disappointed to find as many alterations as I did. Take, for example, “The Indians' Lament”... collected from Mrs. Tom Sullivan of Lakefield, Ontario. Many phrases have been altered, a stanza has been added, and two stanzas have been fused into one (apparently to eliminate a reference to Texas and Maine) ... Clearly the book was not aimed at the folklorist, and the assumption seems to be that in order for folksongs to reach the “general public” they must be smoothed out, regularized, restored, and otherwise improved. Every time we “restore” or “improve” a folksong we are apologizing for it, and worse yet, we are misrepresenting tradition.

(Ives, 1961, p. 274)

Ives held a Ph.D. in folklore from Indiana University and later became a professor of folklore at the University of Maine. He carefully studied the links between culture and cultural expression and advocated accurate fieldwork recording and transcription. Ives opposed the concept of altering research findings and presenting them as authentic. He viewed the compromising of research to appeal to a wider readership as unscholarly and unnecessary. Ives was one of a few scholars who saw Fowke's fieldwork and subsequent published work as somewhat flawed.

Magazines and Periodicals

When Edith Fowke's fieldwork excursions diminished in 1964 and she curtailed the release of her vinyl recordings, her writing activity increased. For a time she focused

on magazines and periodicals in the United States and Canada, including *Western Folklore*, *Midwest Folklore*, *Canadian Literature*, *Sing and String*, *Hoot*, and *Alberta Historical Review*. Fowke was a regular contributor to these publications with articles relating to folk song structure and historical context, sometimes writing about specific songs and other times writing about groups or categories of songs.

An example of one of the magazine articles, authored by Fowke is “British Ballads in Ontario,” a substantial 30-page article found in a 1963 issue of *Midwest Folklore*, which was a periodical published several times a year by Indiana University from 1953 to 1964. Fowke explains in this article’s first paragraph that she is presenting a survey of British ballads recorded from oral tradition in Ontario over the past six years, pending more complete publication of song texts in book form. She used the following five folk song categories as a basis for this article: “Child ballads,” “Laws’ list of American ballads derived from British broadsides,” “British ballads not listed by Laws,” “unusual versions of Child ballads,” and “broadside ballads never reported previously in North America.” The article is based on Fowke’s Ontario fieldwork and discusses specific song lyrics, song lineage, singers, and social geography relative to the categories established by Fowke. She does not hesitate to write about her Ontario discovery:

It was generally assumed that few ballads had survived in what is now the most developed region of Canada. However, recent field recordings have shown that Ontario is scarcely less rich in song than the Maritimes and it contains some of North America's finest singers ... Every collector is tantalized by fragments of

songs once known and now forgotten, but on the whole the Ontario singers manage to provide complete and well-rounded versions. (Fowke, 1963, p. 134)

Between 1958 and 1965, Fowke utilized the liner notes from four vinyl albums, fifteen articles in various publications, and her nineteen songs found in *Canada's Story in Song* to present her fieldwork findings in literary form. By 1960, Fowke had accumulated enough recorded material and publishing experience to begin work on a book totally based on her Ontario fieldwork. She wanted to include musical notation in the book and required someone to work with her on the music transcriptions. She enlisted the help of Peggy Seeger,¹⁴³ a noted singer, song collector, and composer, whom she had first met on one of her trips to Great Britain. She also asked her American friend Kenneth Goldstein to work with her as a general editor on the project. Goldstein was no longer the hobbyist who Edith had met in a Greenwich Village record shop. He had completed his doctorate at The University of Pennsylvania and was teaching in the university's folklore department. His dissertation on folklore fieldwork had been published as *A Guide for fieldworkers in Folklore*. Another important element that Goldstein contributed to the project was his connection with Folklore Associates, Hatboro, Pennsylvania and he could ensure Fowke's book would be published.

¹⁴³ Peggy Seeger was born in New York City in 1935 and majored in music at Radcliffe College where she combined her formal music education with an interest in folk music and scholarly research. Her mother, Ruth Crawford Seeger, was a composer, researcher, and music teacher. Her father was Charles Seeger, the Harvard ethnomusicologist.

Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario

In early 1965, Folklore Associates of Pennsylvania released *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*. This is a scholarly songbook that is unique in format. The 62 songs were transcribed and documented exactly the way they had been recorded to tape by each informant and then grouped by singer. The “Foreword” by Kenneth Goldstein explains that the book is intended for two audiences: those who are interested in scholarly pursuits of folklore and singers who are searching for good songs to sing. Fowke’s six-page introduction provides a detailed history of folk songs in Ontario. She discusses the settlement patterns and the ethnic background of early immigrants, the growth of the lumbering industry in Peterborough County, the discovery of Child ballads and altered broadside ballads in Ontario, and finally how she selected the songs for the book

The book features ten singers, most of whom Fowke recorded in the Peterborough area including Tom Brandon, Jim Doherty, Dave McMahon, and Emerson Woodcock. The most significant singer in the volume is O.J. Abbott. The book contains 21 songs of this prolific Ottawa Valley singer that Fowke visited after learning about him from his daughter who contacted Fowke subsequent to seeing her on CBC television talking about folk song collecting. The song notations, prepared by Peggy Seeger, provide the melody line. No harmony notation or guitar chords are shown. Seeger explains her notation in a two-page introductory section, which includes interesting comments such as:

Many of these Ontario songs have no set meter or metrical pattern, but are free in tempo. They have a pulse rather than a strict rhythm. This pulse is governed by

the phrasing of words, by the subject matter of the song, by the type of melody, by the temperament and ability of the singer, and often as not, by the state of the singer's lungs ... Many of the melodies seem to waiver between major and minor, Mixolydian and Dorian and so on. To avoid ensuing complications in the notations, I have not adhered to the usual system of key signatures. I have put down in the signature only those sharps and flats which appear constantly, regardless of the actual key of the song. (Fowke 1965, pp. 7-8)

Each of the ten singers represents a book chapter that contains the singer's notated songs along with a list of the songs in the balance of his/her repertoire. There is also a biography of the singer, a pen and ink sketch representing the lyrics of one of the songs noted, and (with one exception) the singer's photograph. After the chapters for each singer, there is a section of notes where Fowke provides a detailed scholarly analysis for each song. The book concludes with an impressive six-page bibliography that lists the majority of the essential scholarly books required for the comprehensive serious study of British and North American folk songs.

In late 1965, Canadian publisher, Burns and MacEachern, published *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*, which received critical acclaim from a variety of scholars. One of the first reviews was written in 1967 by Horace Beck, Professor of Folklore at Middlebury College in Vermont, who provided an American perspective in the *Journal of American Folklore*:

By far the most important part of this excellent book is the addenda. Not only are we given complete biographical material on each singer and a thumbnail analysis of each song but the introduction has one of the best analyses of the roots of singing in the province that has been written. Miss Fowke traces the source of folksinging and concludes that the Irish influence is the dominant one in both the preservation of old songs and in the making of new songs. (Beck, 1967, p. 199)

British Columbia song collector, composer, and teacher, Philip Thomas summed up *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* as follows: “With its introduction, scholarly notes, bibliography, discography, and singer’s biographies, the book established Dr. Fowke as a major song collector and scholar, this is in addition to her role as a popularizer” (Thomas, 1978, p.12). York University professor Carol Carpenter felt that *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* was innovative for Canada because for the first time the folk songs were grouped according to the singer (1979, p. 51).

The key difference between this publication and the other Fowke publications to this point is the fact that Fowke provides detailed biographical sketches of her informants that not only include a discussion of the songs they sang but also gives a glimpse into informant life stories and the informant's place in the community. Her previous album liner notes gave an indication of informants' backgrounds but not in any detail. There are biographies in subsequent Fowke publications but with the exception of *A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark* none embrace the concept of informant life-story as an important element in their structure like *Traditional Singers and Songs*

from Ontario does.

Folklorist William Hugh Jansen, University of Kentucky, reviewed the book in *Western Folklore*:

It is an excellent selection and does present an exciting tradition. The ten singers are just as widely representative as are their 62 songs – coming as they do from different ethnic, social economic, and occupational groups with histories of varying antiquity ... Mrs. Fowke presents excellent informant notes, including a snapshot, for each of her ten singers. When possible, she indicates – very valuable data – the repertoires of her singers. (Jansen, 1967, p. 278)

British folklorist Peter Kennedy reviewed *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* in the *Folk Music Journal*. He mentions that seldom are the needs of the singer and the scholar satisfied in a song book but this book manages to do just that. The songs and the singers are featured giving “the whole collection a more human and dialectical quality.” Kennedy points out that Fowke had a challenge “to find worthwhile material in the apparently unpromising central area of Ontario” (Kennedy, 1967, p. 193).

Samples of the *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* page design are shown in the following illustrations: Figure 9:4 shows a singer's biography page. Figure 9:5 presents a typical song layout and Figure 9:6 shows the extensive notes for each song.

EMERSON WOODCOCK

Although Mr. Woodcock has been living in Peterborough for nearly thirty years now, he was born near Kinmount, some forty miles to the northwest, and it was there that he learned most of his songs.

Unlike most other singers in this region, he had a Scottish grandfather, but to balance that, his grandmother came over from Ireland. He was born on a farm near Kinmount in 1899, and began working in the lumbercamps when he was only fourteen. Even before that he had started learning songs, for he tells me that he found the words of "John R. Birchall" in the *Family Herald* about 1908, and picked up the tune from hearing the lumbermen sing it. Between 1913 and 1921 he spent every winter in the woods: three years south of Kinmount cutting timber, another year at Loon Lake in Haliburton, and then at other camps.

He married in 1920, and for a year he and his wife lived in the same house as Mr. and Mrs. Jim Brandon — Tom's parents. From 1921 to 1927 he worked in lumber-mills in Kinmount, and then in 1927 he moved to Peterborough where he got a job building kilns for the General Electric Company. He continued to work there until his retirement last year.

Mr. and Mrs. Woodcock had nine children, and their house was usually filled with visiting children and grandchildren. Several times when I was visiting them other members of the family have sung for me: their son Claude sang "The Bonny Young Irish Boy," their youngest boy, Larry, sang "Plantanio, the Pride of the Plains" (which he had learned from Tom Brandon), and their son-in-law, Hilton Mayhew, sang "The Death of Marion Parker" and several others.

Mr. Woodcock has a rather slow, deliberate, singing style, and he nearly always speaks the final phrase or the whole final line of his songs, where other singers who use this device speak only the final word or two. Unlike most of the other singers, he does not seem to have learned any songs from his parents, but he picked up a wide variety from the men with whom he worked.



Other Songs Mr. Woodcock Knows

The Backwoodsman	The Jovial Shanty Lad
The Ballet Girl	Judge Martin Duffy
Bill Dunbar (FM 4052)	The Ladies' Man
The Bottle of Grog	The Land Where the Green Shamrock Grows
By the Light of a Jungle Moon	Martin Brannigan's Pup
The Dunville Girl (H 14)	The Milwaukee Fire (G 15)
The Dying Soldier	Pat O'Brien
The Farmer's Son and the Shanty Boy	The Shantyman's Alphabet
The Footboy	Turner's Camp (C 23)
How We Got Back to the Woods Last Year	The Wexford Girl (P 35)
Harry Vale (C 13)	Wintry Winds (P 20)
Johnny Stiles (C 5)	Young Conway

Figure 9:4

Emerson Woodcock biography from

Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario (1965) page 123

50. JOHN R. BIRCHALL

Sung by Emerson Woodcock, May, 1962

Moderate, $\text{♩} = 144$



My name is John R. Birchall, and
that I'll nev-er de-ny. I left my wife in
Wood-stock in sor-row there to sigh. It's
lit-tle did I think when in my youth and
bloom I'd be ta-ken to the gal-lovs to
meet my fa-tal doom.

VARIATIONS:

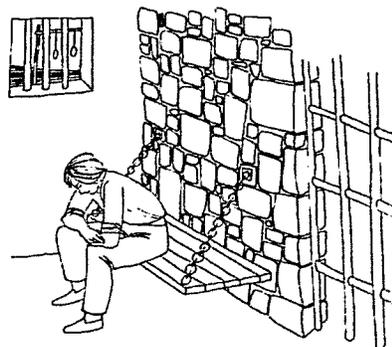


1. My name is John R. Birchall, and that I'll never deny.
I left my wife in Woodstock in sorrow there to sigh.
It's little did I think when in my youth and bloom
I'd be taken to the gallows to meet my fatal doom.
2. While running to Buffalo to make my escape,
The chief of police in Niagara Falls he nabbed me in my
chase.
He landed me in Woodstock jail where I was condemned to die
On the fourteenth of November upon the gallows high.

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JOHN R. BIRCHALL

3. Three cheers for lawyer MacKay who did so much for me;
Likewise to lawyer Blackstock who tried to set me free.
Sir John Thompson would not pardon me; I will tell you the
reason why:
Because he thinks I'm guilty and this day I am to die.
4. The day of my execution was a pitiful sight to see,
Two of my chums from Montreal took their last farewell of
Nov my song is nearly ended and I hope I've offended none,
And if I have come tell me before I will be hung.
5. My wife she came to see me the night before I died.
She threw her arms around me and bitterly she cried.
She said, "My dearest husband, I fear that you shall die
For the murder of Frederick Benwell upon the gallows high.
6. At eight o'clock next morning I knew my doom was sealed,
So I gathered up my courage, determined not to yield,
And when these words were spoken, those words, "Thy will
be done,"
The trap door it was lifted, and Birchall he was hung.



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Figure 9:5 Page layout for Woodcock's song "John. R. Birchall"

from *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* (1965) pages 126 and 127

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I thought this was a local Ontario song until I compared it with "The Albany Jail" in Norman Carden's article on "Catskill Lockup Songs." The first three stanzas of "The Soo St. Mary's Jail" parallel "The Albany Jail" almost line for line; the last three are quite different. "The Albany Jail," which Carden believes was composed by Jehila "Pat" Edwards, father of the singer, George Edwards, must have travelled to the northern Ontario lumbering camps where it was revised to describe an incident at Sault Ste. Marie, a city on the southeast point of Lake Superior. Lumbermen in the Soo tell me they have heard it sung in the camps near there, but Mr. McMahon's is the only complete version I have found. He learned it in the lumberwoods back in 1921 from a man named Herb King. The camp was at Washabene, in from Pakeney on Georgian Bay, some miles north of Parry Sound, so the verses had travelled some five hundred miles from Sault Ste. Marie, on top of the longer trip of the earlier song from Albany to northern Ontario.

Reference:

Carden: "Catskill Lockup Songs" (The Albany Jail).

49. JIMMY WHELAN (C 7). This ballad tells essentially the same story as the better-known ones about "The Foreman Young Munroe" (C 1) and "Johnny Doyle" (C 5), but unlike the other two, Jimmy Whelan's death can be pinned down to a definite time and place. Franz Rickaby gathered information showing that the hero's real name was James Phalen, and he was killed in 1878 on the Mississippi River of eastern Ontario, a tributary of the Ottawa River. The tragedy happened when two rafts of logs coming out of Cross Lake collided in the swift waters of King's Chute, forming a dangerous jam. As the raftsmen worked to unjam it, Phalen slipped off a shifting log and the current pulled him under. It was an hour before his companions were able to get his body out of the raging river.

King's Chute is a small white-water section of the Mississippi which contains two particularly rapid passages known as the Upper and Lower Falls. The McClellan mentioned in stanza 2 was Pete McLaren, a lumberman who operated in the Ottawa Valley for many years, amassing a large fortune and becoming a Canadian senator before he died in Perth in 1910.

One of Rickaby's informants said the song was written by John Smith of Lanark, a village near Perth. Although not as widely known as "The Jam on Cerry's Rocks," it has spread through Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Maine, and New Brunswick. Mr. Woodcock is the only one who has sung it for me, but the more romantic ballad of "Lost Jimmy Whelan" (C 8) is very common in Ontario.

References:

Laws *NAB*, 150 (Rickaby, 20-3; note, 194-5).
Record: Folkways FM 4092 (Woodcock).

50. JOHN R. BIRCHALL (E 26). This ballad recalls the most famous murder case in Ontario's history. In 1890 John Reginald Birchall was tried and hanged for the murder of Frederick C. Benwell, a twenty-five-year-old Englishman whose body was found in the Blenheim swamp in southwestern Ontario on February 21 of that year.

Birchall was himself an Englishman, the son of a clergyman and a former Oxford student, who had come to Canada some years earlier and settled in Woodstock where he won quite a reputation for himself in sporting circles as "Lord Somerset." When his creditors became troublesome, he left Woodstock and went back to England where he advertised for farm pupils. It was then the custom for well-to-do English families to send their younger sons to Canada to establish themselves on the land, and Birchall told Benwell's father that he had a well-stocked farm near Niagara Falls. That farm did not exist, but on the pretext of taking Benwell to inspect it, Birchall murdered him and left his body in the lonely swamp. When it was found

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and identified, the police discovered his relationship with Birchall, and established a strong chain of circumstantial evidence that led to Birchall's conviction at the fall assizes at Woodstock.

The trial aroused great interest throughout Ontario, and thousands massed in the market place in front of the town hall to see the prisoner. The *Toronto Globe* carried sixteen columns of news on the trial the day the defence counsel addressed the jury. After Birchall was sentenced to be hung, he wrote the story of his life for the *Toronto Mail* and the *New York Herald Tribune* to raise money for his wife. A booklet called "Birchall: The Story of His Life, Trial, and Imprisonment, as Told by Himself," and bearing the heading, "Woodstock Gaol, October 1890," went through many printings.

Such a celebrated trial naturally produced ballads, and this one, which was widely sung at the time and for many years afterwards, was obviously patterned on the American gallows ballad about Charles Guitreau who was executed in 1882 for killing President Garfield. It was usually sung to the tune of "Charles Guitreau," but Mr. Woodcock's is a little different.

The ballad is remarkably accurate: Birchall was hung on November 14, 1890. He maintained his innocence to the end, and his wife visited him in jail the night before the execution. His lawyer was George Tate Blackstock, who was assisted by Samuel C. McKay, K.C., and Sir John Thompson was the federal Minister of Justice who refused a reprieve. The Lord's Prayer was recited on the scaffold by Birchall's spiritual counselor, and the trap door was sprung at 8.29 a.m.—close enough to the eight o'clock mentioned in the ballad.

Most old-time residents of Ontario remember hearing this ballad, but few can sing it today. A number of texts survive in papers and manuscripts, and several singers know part of it, but the only other complete version I have recorded came from Lamont Tilden who learned it in his youth in Harrison in western Ontario. His is the more common form, but Mr. Woodcock's is probably closer to the original: the details of his second, third, and fourth stanzas have been dropped in most texts. The more general form also spread to the States where Miss Pound found it in Nebraska and Mrs. Burt in Utah. Their versions are somewhat garbled, and their notes contain several factual errors.

Another completely different song about Birchall also circulated in Ontario. John Gordon of Peterborough sang part of it for me in 1958, and his mother supplied a six-stanza manuscript copy that began:

"John Reginald Birchall was the name of this inhuman man,
Fred Benwell was his victim, he is numbered with the slain.
He lowered him into a lonely swamp and took his life away:
Two bullet wounds he did inflict, and left his body lay.

"To get away out of the place he thought it would be best,
Till link by link they made a chain which caused his arrest.
They lodged him in the Woodstock jail his trial for to stand
Before the judge and jury, the best ones in the land."

References:

Laws *NAB*, 189 (Burr, 228-9; Pound, 146).
Record: Folkways FM 4005 (Tilden).

The ballad has been printed fairly frequently in Canadian papers, but without documentation: for example, in the *Family Herald and Weekly Star*, November 20, 1940, and the *Globe and Mail*, January 26, 1962. A full account of the Birchall case is given in Volume 4 of *Famous Canadian Trials* by E. C. Guillet, Toronto, issued in typescript, 1944.

51. IN BRISTOL THERE LIVED A FAIR MAIDEN. The plot of this ballad is unusual: fathers object to their daughters' choice in a whole host of broadsides.

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Figure 9:6 History of the song "John R. Birchall" is detailed in the notes section

Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario (1965) pages 189 and 190

Edith Fowke's Published Work (1965-1975)

Later in 1965, after the release of *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*, Fowke edited another commercial publication produced by Folklore Associates of Pennsylvania titled *Sea Songs and Ballads from Nineteenth Century Nova Scotia*. The same year she paid tribute to her native province by developing a pageant designed to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Saskatchewan as a province within Canada.

Saskatchewan: The Sixtieth Year: Historical Pageant was a publication detailing a stage presentation that told the history of Saskatchewan in narration and song. The pageant, comprised of two acts separated by an intermission, was designed to be performed in schools and community centres. The provincial government made the pageant script available to all schools, community groups, and amateur theatre groups within the province.¹⁴⁴

“A Sampling of Bawdy Ballads from Ontario”

In 1966, Fowke established her reputation as a song collector/scholar with a liberal perspective by the release of an extensive essay titled “A sampling of Bawdy Ballads from Ontario” which was included in the publication *Folklore and Society: Essays in honor of Benjamin A. Botkin*¹⁴⁵ published by Folklore Associates of Hatboro, Pennsylvania. Fowke had always maintained a personal philosophy of not censoring the language of the songs that she collected during her fieldwork. She transcribed song lyrics

¹⁴⁴ The copy of *Saskatchewan: The Sixtieth Year: Historical Pageant* that I accessed at Queen's University Special Collections was partial. There was no indications of what songs were to be used.

¹⁴⁵ Botkin (1901-1975) was a noted American born teacher and writer. He published books on folklore and spent time as head of the Library of Congress folk song archive.

precisely as she heard them from her informants and did not attempt to mask the meaning of any song. It is, therefore, not surprising that she heard and recorded a number of songs with sexual innuendo. At the beginning of this essay Fowke writes:

Although I made no particular effort to find bawdy songs, I have taped a number of them in the course of my general collecting. The most interesting came from four singers, and as these four are of varying ages and backgrounds, their songs are surprisingly representative of the different types of bawdy ballads. They also illustrate the two main categories ... the erotic folksongs of the soil, and those of industrial cities, army barracks, and other unnatural human displacements.

(Fowke, 1966, p. 45)

In this substantial sixteen-page essay, Fowke first focuses on the rural bawdy ballads of O.J. Abbott from the Ottawa Valley and Tom Brandon from Peterborough, both of whom she recorded in her early fieldwork days. Fowke provides samples of the rural double entendre style of folksong sung by these men who had learned from farmhands and lumberjacks. She discusses the history and lyrics of a number of songs such as “The Keyhole in the Door,” “Derby Town,” and “Long Peg and Awl.” Fowke traced the origin of these songs back to Britain and compared them to similar songs collected by the English song collector Cecil Sharp in the late nineteenth century. Fowke comments on these rural bawdy songs by writing: “Still the mood is light-hearted and lusty, and the songs will offend none but the overly prudish” (p. 51). Fowke collected over a hundred

songs from Abbott and Brandon and indicates that bawdy ballads were a small part of the repertoire of these men. Regarding Abbott specifically, Fowke wrote that out of 120 songs she collected from him, only eleven might be called bawdy if the term is used very broadly to cover those songs in which sex is treated a little more freely than in songs published in most collections (Fowke, 1966, p. 45).

The discussion of rural bawdy ballads is followed by a discussion of more explicit bawdy ballads, which seems to indicate that Fowke searched specifically for such songs. She provides examples of explicitly sexual songs sung by Gordon Howard, a Toronto sports writer and broadcaster. Fowke writes that in May, 1960 she recorded nine songs from Mr. Howard, six of which were bawdy songs. (p. 53) The songs, which include “Boring for Oil” and “The Minister’s Trip to Heaven” are discussed from a historical and lyrical perspective. Fowke traces them back to nineteenth century American and British music halls.

Fowke includes the bawdy songs of a fourth singer in the essay. The singer, Woody Lambe, was a student at the Ontario Agricultural College (now the University of Guelph). In 1963, he was invited to the Fowke home where he sang, and Fowke recorded, his entire repertoire of what she termed “fairly modern” bawdy songs. Lambe had learned the songs at parties; nevertheless, Fowke again provides the samples of the lyrics in the essay along with some historical discussion. She was particularly interested in his obscene parodies of well-known songs like “The Twelve Days of Christmas” and “Four Nights Drunk.”

“A Sampling of Bawdy Ballads from Ontario” reveals that Fowke maintained an

ongoing connection with her rural Ontario fieldwork. The strongest part of the essay is her discussion of Tom Brandon's and O.J. Abbott's rural backgrounds and how it affected the choice of songs that they sung. "A sampling of Bawdy Ballads from Ontario" in the *Festschrift, Folklore and Society: Essays in honor of Benjamin A. Botkin* is Fowke's main published work on the topic. Fowke's liberal collecting interests and methodology may have surprised some of her informants and possibly made them uncomfortable. However, she was a determined collector who would not be deterred. She mentions in this essay that singer Tom Brandon altered the lyrics to a bawdy song so as not to offend her, but she noticed the deviation and corrected him.

More Folk Songs of Canada

The next publication that bore Edith Fowke's name was another collaboration with Richard Johnston. They reprised the *Folk Songs of Canada* concept one last time with the release of *More Folk Songs of Canada*. It was 1967, centennial year in Canada and this song book was released by Waterloo Music as a centennial project, complete with the official Canadian Centennial logo on the face page. The book contains 77 songs, all of which are grouped by various categories. In this book, Johnson and Fowke created some new categories such as "Fun and Nonsense" that contain songs like "Flunky Jim." "A Local Habitation" has songs like "The Miramichi Fire" and "The Soo St. Mary's Jail," and "The Prairie Métis" section includes "Riel's Retreat" and "Riel's Letter."

As in the original *Folk Songs of Canada*, the songs are selected from the collections of various Canadian collectors such as Kenneth Peacock, Helen Creighton,

Gerald Doyle, all of whom are recognized on an unnumbered acknowledgement page. The major difference between this book and the previous collaborations is that Fowke and Johnston include six songs from Fowke's collection. The acknowledgement for these songs reads: " 'The Gypsy Daisy', 'Barb'ry Allen', 'Farewell to Canada', 'The Jolly Raftsman O', 'The Spree', 'The Soo St. Mary's Jail': from *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* by Edith Fowke, by permission of Folklore Associates."

The "Introduction" in *More Folk Songs of Canada* is co-authored by Fowke and Johnston, who discuss the success of their first book and its ongoing usefulness to both singers and scholars. They talk about ethnic song origins and how they came to select the songs that are included. Finally, they emphasize the point that the book is a songbook, designed for singing. Fowke and Johnston write, "we want people to use our book, we have made minor changes in the words to make them easier to sing and have regularized the music where it varies from verse to verse. Otherwise we have adhered as close as possible to the traditional versions ... " (p. 8).

The page layouts in *More Folk Songs of Canada* are similar to the first Fowke/Johnston collaboration. The music notation contains the melody line, the piano accompaniment, and chord names above the staff. The lyrics are provided along with a comprehensive historical vignette written by Fowke. Overall *More Folk Songs of Canada* is similar in appearance (cover, typeset, and page design, etc.) to the two earlier Fowke/Johnston collaborations, *Folk Songs of Canada* and *Folk Songs of Quebec*. It is also the final book published by Waterloo Music in the Fowke/Johnston series.

Sally Go Round the Sun

The next project that Edith Fowke concentrated on became one of her most successful publications. Fowke won the Canadian Children's Librarian's Association book of the year award for *Sally Go Round the Sun*, a book of children's songs, rhymes, and games collected in Canada. Canadian publisher, McClelland and Stewart, published the book in 1969, ten years after Fowke began recording children's songs in Toronto. Fowke, who did not have children, became interested in children's songs in 1959 when she started to invite children between the ages of six and nine into her Toronto home and asked them to sing songs that they sang while they played at clapping, ball bouncing, and skipping. As indicated earlier, she placed the children around her tape recorder and recorded them as they sang. Fowke then moved on to elementary schools with her tape recorder, seeking permission from school principals to enter school classrooms and record. Fowke preferred to work with grade three classes where the children were eight or nine years old, a group that she had concluded, after her initial experiences, knew the most songs. Fowke recorded at eight Toronto city schools for her fieldwork in order to get an economic and cultural cross-section of children. Fowke's methodology was simple; she set up a tape recorder at the front of the classroom and had the children gather around her and sing the songs they used during play. She attempted to have them sing spontaneously with a minimum of prompting and always took time after the singing session was over to get clarification from the children as to what activity each song was meant to accompany (Caputo, 1989, pp. 36-38).

Edith Fowke's recordings of children's songs, supplemented by children's rhymes

and songs provided by adult friends and acquaintances, were the basis for the 1969 McClelland and Stewart publication, *Sally Go Round The Sun*. This book contains 300 children's songs and rhymes grouped into nine major categories: "Singing Games," "Skipping Rhymes," "Ball Bouncing," "Clapping Games and Songs," "Foot and Finger Plays," "Counting Out Rhymes," "Taunts and Teases," "Tricks and Treats," and "Silly Songs." Fowke took care to ensure that the layout of the pages, the convenience of the page turns, and the illustrations were designed to make them accessible for parents and children to learn, sing, and have fun with together. The academic aspects of the publication are moved out of the way, to a section near the end of the book. The "Notes, Sources, and References" section provides brief directions for playing the games for each song or song grouping. The source is noted whether it be from Fowke field recordings, other published sources, or a combination of each. *Sally Go Round the Sun* also contains a bibliography and an index of first lines.

Subsequent to the publishing of the book *Sally Go Round the Sun*, an accompanying vinyl recording of children's songs was released by RCA Recording Services exclusively for McClelland and Stewart Publishing. The recording features Canadian vocalists Kevin MacMillan, Betsy MacMillan, Karen Miflin, Nancy Moore, Chris Gerrard Pinker, and Karen Pinker singing a selection of songs from *Sally Go Round the Sun*, accompanied by guitarist Al Harris and pianist Mary Syme. The recording, also titled *Sally Go Round the Sun* contained 30 of the songs found in the book along with liner notes prepared by Edith Fowke. In the liner notes, Fowke takes the opportunity to reveal a little about her perspective on oral transmission of songs. In a

paragraph intended to educate the listener, she writes:

These rhymes don't come to children from their parents or teachers: they pick them up from other children, who in turn learned from the children before them, but they're constantly being reshaped by each new generation. If you hear a group of youngsters chanting verses that sound as though they've been made up on the spot, the chances are that they can be matched by similar ones dating back several generations – or several centuries. (Fowke, 1969, liner notes RCA T56666/7)¹⁴⁶

Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods

Edith Fowke's next publication, *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*, was published first in 1970 by the University of Texas Press, and is one of the important books in her publishing career since it relates directly to her 1950s fieldwork in Peterborough County. It is similar to her *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* in that it was based on her field recordings from the 1957 to 1964 time period. Fowke explained that *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* came into being because after completing *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* she had a significant number of lumbering songs left over and felt there was value in assembling them into a publication (Weihs et al, 1978). This publication was examined in detail in Chapter 8, where it was concluded that *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* is a book that sums up Edith Fowke's fieldwork period.

¹⁴⁶ Throughout her writing Fowke has a tendency to trace songs as far back in history as she possibly can. The last sentence of this liner note quotation reflects Fowke's ongoing perspective of folk songs in general, not just children's songs.

Canadian Vibrations

In 1972, The MacMillan Company printed *Canadian Vibrations*, which was edited by Edith Fowke with guitar chord arrangements by Bram Morrison. This songbook contains seventy songs with text accompanied by a melody line and guitar chords.

Canadian Vibrations is a bilingual songbook designed for singing with guitar accompaniment. The first thirty songs are contemporary songs, split evenly between English composers like Gordon Lightfoot, Ian Tyson and Joni Mitchell and French Canadian composers such as Raymond Levesque, Felix Leclerc, and Gilles Vigneault. Fowke includes brief biographical paragraphs in English and French for each composer along with comments about each song. The next thirty songs, again half English and half French, are from earlier in the century. This second group of songs includes only a couple of songs from Fowke's fieldwork collection. The vast majority of the songs are taken from the collaborative Fowke and Johnston books: *Folk Songs of Canada*, *Folk Songs of Quebec* and *More Folk Songs of Canada*. The next nine songs represent other Canadian groups including aboriginal peoples, as well as those from German and Ukrainian descent. The final song in the book is "O Canada," the Canadian national anthem that began as a French patriotic poem set to music by Calixa Lavallée, a French-Canadian-American musician. In *Canadian Vibrations*, Fowke presents a mix of Canadian folk songs: traditional and contemporary songs, in English and French, along with a small assortment of songs in First Nations languages as well as German and Ukrainian.

The mix of contemporary and traditional folk songs in this book, along with the inclusion of guitar chords indicates that Fowke was attempting to reach a younger

audience. If young people purchased the book to learn the contemporary, they would inevitably discover the traditional. In addition, the unique mix of material in both languages furthers the concept that Fowke wanted to eliminate any exclusivity. Considering her ongoing desire to popularize traditional Canadian folk songs, one can conclude that Fowke's selected contents in *Canadian Vibrations* are thoughtful.

The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs

A year later in 1973 another edited songbook, *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs*, appeared by Fowke. Keith MacMillan¹⁴⁷ was the music editor; he had worked with Fowke previously as the music editor on *Sally Go Round The Sun* and as the music director on the subsequent vinyl album. *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs* contains eighty-two songs with lyrics, melody line, and guitar chords shown for most songs. As always, Fowke groups the songs by category. In this book there are nine categories: "Echoes of History," "The Sea," "The Woods," "The Land," "Social Life," "True Lover," "Trials Of Love," "British Broadships," and "Ancient Ballads."

Fifty-two of the songs are from previous collections, including those of Barbeau, Creighton, and Doyle, and Manny along with some Fowke herself had published with Alan Mills and other singers. Thirty of the songs are transcribed from the field recordings made by Fowke between 1957 and 1964. Many of the songs selected from these recordings for *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs* appear for the first time in print in this book. They were recorded from Peterborough area singers such as Emerson

¹⁴⁷ Keith MacMillan is the son of the influential Canadian musician, Sir Ernest MacMillan. Keith trained as a scientist, but became involved in music. He was national director of the Canadian Music Centre (www.musiccentre.ca) and head of the Music Department at the University of Ottawa.

Woodcock and Dave McMahon, and Leo Spencer. In the back of the book, Fowke includes a section containing extensive notes for each song. The notes in this book focus on song origins and song structure. The background of the singers and how and why they retained these songs is not mentioned. For example Fowke writes about the song “The Ship's Carpenter,” which she recorded in 1962 from Leo Spencer of Lakefield as follows:

The girl betrayed and murdered is almost as popular a ballad plot as that happier tale of the lover returning in disguise. This one stems from *The Gosport Tragedy*, or, *Perjured Ship Carpenter*, a garland printed in London around 1750. Its thirty-five stanzas were later condensed into an eleven-stanza broadside known as *Polly's Love*, or, *The Cruel Ship Carpenter* of which Frank Kidson wrote in 1901: 'Few ballads are more popular with ballad printers than this. It is sung to different tunes throughout England'. (Fowke, 1973, p. 211)

The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs was released along with a companion record album *Far Canadian Fields* from the British based Leader Records (LEE 4057). The album contains sixteen of the songs from the book, produced from Fowke's field recordings. Dave Arthur, a British musician and writer reviewed the book and album in the *Folk Music Journal*. Arthur writes that the book “is aimed primarily at the singing market ... Miss Fowke has attempted to provide traditional texts which are singable without too much retouching ... meant to be a singing book not an academic study of Canadian folksong ... all in all a very successful project by Leader Records and Penguin

books” (Arthur, 1975, pp. 88-89). Although the previously mentioned review of *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs* was printed in a British publication, Fowke made the following comment in a 1978 interview. She said: “I found that my books weren’t being distributed in the States or Britain. There was a Penguin book of English Folk Songs, American Folk Songs, and Australian Folk Songs, so I thought, 'Well there should be a Canadian (Penguin) book'. Strangely enough, the major sale is in Canada, so it really isn’t doing what I hoped” (Weihs et al, 1978, p. 12).

Edith Fowke’s Published Work (1976-1996)

Folklore of Canada

Edith Fowke was now more than a decade removed from her intense folk song fieldwork. She was still contributing folk song articles to publications such as the *Canadian Folk Bulletin* and the *Canadian Folk Music Journal*. However, her research and writing focus began to change direction with her book *Folklore of Canada*, published by McClelland and Stewart in 1976. Fowke edited the book; she collected short stories, folk tales, riddles, urban and rural legends and selected folk songs from a variety of sources. The subject matter covers everything from shipwrecks and ghosts to food and local mysteries. She gathered the material from associates and from other folk collections. She includes square dance calls collected by John Robins, her late friend and University of Toronto professor. Fowke includes Marius Barbeau’s tale of “The Blind Singer” along with Helen Creighton’s “Anecdotes from Lunenburg,” “Eskimo Tales,” by anthropologist Franz Boas, and Newfoundland riddles documented by the 1920s song

collector/scholar Elizabeth Greenleaf. Fowke even includes autograph verses that she had collected as a child in Saskatchewan.

Fowke grouped her selected material to represent Canadian folklore from specific segments of Canada's population. The book's four sections are organized by ethnic group: "The Native Peoples," "Canadiens," "Anglo-Canadians," and "Canadian Mosaic." In every section, Fowke prefaces the stories with brief biographies of the authors, and carefully outlines the context within which the story should be read. Fowke emphasized context at all times but the inclusion of "Newfie" jokes in the book caused some controversy.¹⁴⁸

Folklore of Canada is a book that is recognized as the standard text in the broad world of Canadian folklore according to writer/scholar Philip Thomas (Thomas, 1978). Thomas' perspective was not shared by other reviewers. Folklorist Kay Stone writes:

The quality of the thirty-seven articles is uneven. Some are thorough analysis based on good material; others are interesting but unanalytic [sic] collections; a few are weak in both aspects ... I find it more useful to regard it [*Folklore of Canada*] as a colorfully stitched sampler with examples of designs from which one can move on to the more specialized works listed in the concluding biography. (Stone, 1979, p. 199)

¹⁴⁸ Fowke included 10 pages of "Newfie" jokes in the book. As mentioned in Chapter 5, she was confronted by CBC radio "Morningside" host Harry Brown during an interview and accused of perpetuating a stereotype. Fowke calmly responded she was collecting a tradition and suggested Brown read the introduction to the section more carefully to understand the context within which the jokes appeared (CBC Radio Archives, Toronto, tape reference #761117-9 / 770223-9).

Folklorist Richard Tallman reviewed *Folklore of Canada* in *Western Folklore*. He concludes:

One could have hoped for more in the first published anthology of Canadian folklore – a sense of time and history, of past and present, of growth and development, of regional diversification. What we get, however, is a workmanlike anthology of collectanea that is well worth its price, though lacking in any historical or theoretical framework. (Tallman, 1979, p. 234)

Ring Around The Moon

Folklore of Canada was followed a year later by *Ring Around The Moon*, another Edith Fowke book by the Toronto publisher McClelland and Stewart. *Ring Around The Moon* was a sequel to the very successful *Sally Go Round The Sun*. In the “Introduction” of this 1977 book, Fowke explains that it is designed for slightly older children and includes riddles, rounds, tongue twisters, answer-back songs, and verses about love and marriage. The material is from her tape recordings of Toronto school children supplemented with songs taken from the collections of Helen Creighton and Kenneth Peacock. She also included songs gathered from children of friends as well as children's songs recorded in rural Ontario during her fieldwork days of the 1950s and 1960s from informants like LaRena Clark, Tom Brandon, and Mrs. Arlington Fraser. Fowke's ongoing use of her rural field recordings indicates that they remained a reliable and useful source, but their inclusion may have also created the illusion that her fieldwork was

ongoing. There are 200 songs, riddles, and tongue-twisters in the book. Similar to *Sally Go Round The Sun*, the source notes regarding the songs and rhymes in *Ring Around The Moon* are at the back of the book, and out of the way. The text is easy to read and the page turns are convenient. The experienced American book illustrator, Judith Gwyn Brown, created the illustrations, which were designed to set the mood throughout.

Miscellaneous work

After *Ring Around The Moon*, Fowke focused more on research and writing related to folklore while retaining some interest in folk song. In 1978, she worked on a small publishing project with Saskatchewan-based music teacher/folk-singer Barbara Cass-Beggs to create the Canadian Folk Music Society publication, *A Reference List on Canadian Folk Music*. The next year, 1979, Fowke collaborated with York University professor, Carol Carpenter, to produce *A Bibliography of Canadian Folklore in English* and edited the book, *Folk Tales of French Canada*. The same year she wrote an article titled “In defence of Paul Bunyan” for *New York Folklore*. In 1980 Fowke revisited her collection of Paul Bunyan stories and edited *Paul Bunyan: Superhero of the Lumberjacks*, an updated version of the 1957 book.

In 1980, Edith Fowke wrote an essay on the Canadian short story “Blind McNair,” written by Canadian author Thomas H. Raddall.¹⁴⁹ The essay was included in the Memorial University *Festschrift, Folklore Studies in Honour of Herbert Halpert*.¹⁵⁰

149 Thomas Raddall (1903-1994) was a prolific writer of Canadian history and historical fiction. He received three Governor General's awards for literature.

150 Herbert Halpert (1911-2000) was an American-born and educated professor who established the folklore studies program at Memorial University in 1962.

Fowke was interested in the short story “Blind McNair” because it revolved around a wandering ballad singer and his participation in a ballad-singing contest. When Fowke read the story she noted that the lyrics quoted from the songs in the story were not from any other printed source she was aware of. She was curious enough about the history and texts of the songs found in the story “Blind McNair” to write a letter to author Thomas Raddall in Liverpool, Nova Scotia and inquire about the song origins (Fowke, 1981b, pp. 1-5).

Raddall responded to Fowke with a letter that explained how he came to know folk songs when he was at sea as a teenager. He wrote that in 1940, he persuaded Brenton Smith, the son of windjammer Captain William H. Smith, to write down some of the songs his father was singing. Raddall wrote that he also became aware of a small manuscript book of sea ballads once owned by nineteenth century sailor Captain Fenwick Hatt. Hatt’s son owned the book and would not part with it but allowed Raddall to make a typewritten copy. Raddall told Fowke that both these manuscripts were in the archives at Dalhousie University. Fowke subsequently travelled there to analyze them (Fowke, 1981b, pp. 1-5).

Fowke’s curiosity resulted in the creation of the book, *Sea Songs and Ballads from Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia: The William H. Smith and Fenwick Hatt Manuscripts*, edited and annotated by Edith Fowke. She edited both manuscripts and prepared an extensive analysis of each song. She argued that the Hatt manuscript contains the earliest Anglo-Canadian songs discovered to date, and the Smith manuscript is one of the largest collection of sea shanties to be found in Canada (Fowke, 1990, pp. 298-299).

In the soft cover book, the song texts and the accompanying analysis are assembled without any accompanying musical notation. *Sea Songs and Ballads from Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia: The William H. Smith and Fenwick Hatt Manuscripts* was released in 1981 by Folklorica Press of New York.

Edith Fowke's interest in folklore and children's songs became the dominant focus in her major publications over the next few years. *Riot of Riddles* and *Songs and Sayings of an Ulster Childhood*, co-authored with Alice Kane, was published in 1985. *Explorations in Canadian Folklore* with Carole Carpenter also appeared in 1985. *Tales Told in Canada* was published in 1986, and *Canadian Folklore and Red Rover, Red Rover: Children's Games Played in Canada* in 1988. Fowke's final edited book on the topic of folklore, *Legends Told In Canada*, was published by the Royal Ontario Museum in 1994.

Throughout the 1980s, Fowke continued to write folk song articles and essays for specialized publications such as the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* and *New York Folklore*. Several of these articles were still based on Fowke's fieldwork, which was twenty or more years old at the time. In 1994, more than a decade after her last major folk music publication, Fowke collaborated with York University professor Jay Rahn to co-author *A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark*, released by The University of Calgary Press. The book is based solely on the songs of LaRena Clark, a singer that Fowke recorded in the 1960s in Richmond, Quebec and later in the Ottawa Valley. *A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark* by Edith Fowke and Jay Rahn contains a brief biography of LaRena Clark and an analysis of her singing style.

Historical notes supplement each of the ninety-three songs, which are presented with their complete text, music, and guitar chords. Supplemental notes on the music and its sources are found in the latter part of the book, along with a complete list of LaRena Clark songs and recordings.

To complete this chapter, it is appropriate to mention an essay that Edith Fowke wrote a couple of years prior to the release of *A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark*. The Fowke essay is found in the book *Ethnomusicology in Canada*, which was published in 1990 by the Institute for Canadian Music and edited by Robert Witmer. The essay, "Collecting and studying Canadian folk songs," is the only autobiographical piece that Fowke ever wrote. In this essay, Fowke virtually gives a complete thumbnail sketch of her life in folksong and folklore beginning with her record collecting that led her to the CBC and her program "Folk Song Time." She talks about meeting Dr. John Robins in the 1950s and editing the Paul Bunyan storybooks, and then meeting Richard Johnston and editing the songbook *Folk Songs of Canada*. Fowke mentions her days collecting songs in Peterborough County and the resulting record albums and books. She recalls meeting Marius Barbeau and working with him on the executive of the Canadian Folk Music Society. Fowke names many of the singers she recorded and the influential people she met. She talks of her trips to Britain and the United States to hear singers and gather background information on songs. This autobiographical memoir by Fowke confirms many of the facts discussed in this thesis. Fowke appropriately concludes the essay by saying:

... So to borrow Helen Creighton's phrase, I've had an enjoyable life in folklore. I was lucky to start collecting when I did-when people like Mr. Abbott were still alive. It's harder to find singers like that now, except in Newfoundland. It's been a very rewarding career- people keep coming up to me and telling me how much they appreciate the work I've done, which is a lovely bonus for doing things I enjoyed. (Fowke, 1990, p. 299)

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis is to show that Edith Fowke was an important and seminal figure in the folk song collecting movement through her work as a song collector, a popularizer of folk songs, and a scholar. This was to be accomplished by providing fresh data to supplement the existing published information available about the life and work of Fowke. Much was known about Fowke's broadcasting and writing career but less was known about her "hands-on" experiences in the field with her folk song informants and their families. To address the absence of certain information and informed arguments regarding Fowke's fieldwork and life story, much of the research for this thesis focused on the Peterborough district of Ontario where Fowke began her fieldwork and established some lifelong friendships. In order to understand how she approached her fieldwork, its context has been shown in connection to her education and early literary career. It is then revealed how the results of that fieldwork impacted Fowke's writing for almost three decades.

Reviewing Fowke's Peterborough Research

The Reflexive Fieldwork Approach

In order to collect the data for this thesis, I utilized the concept of following in the footsteps of Edith Fowke. I discuss this in Chapter 1 and my approach was not dissimilar to that taken by scholars such as Titon and Rosenberg, whose recent reflexive techniques

are mentioned in Chapter 2. This is a newer, more personal approach to field research that not only assists the researcher to better understand his/her research focus, but allows readers to share in the thought process. As I followed Fowke's footsteps, I was able to determine where she went and whom she visited in the 1950s because I am a member of the Peterborough community that she visited. I chose to detail, in this document, my encounters with informants who provided me with key information that I could never have obtained elsewhere. These personal accounts were elaborated upon as I found specific documents. As a result I used both the text and the footnotes to articulate my various connections to the community I was researching. I tell how I came to create a stage production based on my research. By writing myself into the narrative, I have given readers an opportunity to fully understand and critique my field research methods as well as the validity of the data collected. Finally, respecting Fowke's desire to avoid heavy academic language, the text is meant to be accessible to all readers.

Findings and Conclusions

Edith Fowke began her fieldwork in the Peterborough area in the autumn of 1956 and continued, as time allowed, until 1965. Her methodology in the field was simple and effective, and gave her the basis for a career that was recognized nationally and internationally. My research focused on Edith Fowke's Peterborough area fieldwork and the results she gleaned from it over her long career. Discussion of this early fieldwork is essential because it was Fowke's first venture into the field and yet it provided information that she used for a significant portion of her published work throughout her

career. In Peterborough County, Fowke sat in the homes of her folk song informants and encountered, for the first time in her career, a living folk song culture that few knew existed. She personally experienced how songs and their variants were transmitted orally in rural Ontario. Fowke was able to begin comparing song-texts that she had discovered herself with those documented in the Child and Laws catalogues. She quickly became an authority on tasks such as locating and recording informants, transcribing songs, editing tapes and producing commercial recordings.

My personal knowledge of the geography and culture of the Peterborough area enabled me to locate and speak to the descendants of Fowke informants and two surviving informants themselves. I am personally aware of the fact that social networking remains an important part of the local rural culture. Therefore, it is easy for me to comprehend how Fowke's rural background and social networking skills enabled her to make her way down unpaved back roads to find family farms and important informants. She understood that she could make her informants comfortable by recording them in their own homes with friends and family present. Fowke was viewed as a member of the community because she regularly visited homes of community inhabitants and the visits were always cordial. Fowke never spoke poorly of anyone in public nor did she embarrass anyone. She encouraged her informants to perform publicly and be proud of their folk song heritage. All the while, Fowke systematically moved from informant to informant recording songs. The Fowke methodology is further explained through Appendix G which is an audio documentary that demonstrates the effectiveness of Fowke's field methodology by presenting a few of Fowke's actual field recordings, edited

and unedited, for judgemental listening. This assemblage of facts regarding her fieldwork dispel most of the prevailing misunderstanding.

Informants at Home and Informant Myths

As detailed in Chapter 7, Fowke recorded the majority of her informants in the comfort of their homes in the Peterborough areas and the Ottawa Valley. Outside of these areas, she utilized a variety of techniques to document songs. Fowke recorded some Toronto informants in their homes and invited other informants to her Toronto home to be recorded. She visited the University of Guelph to record bawdy songs. Fowke recorded a Manitoba family at the home of associate Nancy Drake in Winnipeg and recorded Captain Cates singing at the British Columbia home of associate and fellow-collector Philip Thomas. Lorne Gardner, an associate living in Sault Ste. Marie, sent her a tape of a lumbering song that he recorded from Reuben Beilhartz who lived in Bruce Mines, Ontario.¹⁵¹ The image of Fowke as a song collector visiting northern Ontario lumber camps that is perpetuated in occasional books and articles actually diminishes her accomplishments. In truth, the skills that Fowke used to locate and record so many willing informants in their homes in rural communities are superior because the folk song culture she collected was not readily obvious or accessible. As an outsider, she had to carefully uncover it to document it. A sample of a recent statement that could be deceptive is found in the *Songs of the North Woods* (2004). In "Preface II," Panagapka writes:

¹⁵¹ The song from this informant was included by Fowke in *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* possibly leading readers to think that she visited Bruce Mines.

She (Fowke) taught in the Kodaly Summer Diploma Program (University of Calgary) in the early 1980's. Classes were delighted by this diminutive lady always dressed in pink. The lady-like, fragile Edith Fowke the students saw was hard to reconcile with the image of the pioneering Edith Fowke who had been collecting folksongs in the field on reel to reel tape from lumbermen in backwoods logging camps. (Panagapka, 2004, p. xiii)¹⁵²

This statement can be misleading since in my research I have never found any evidence that Fowke ever recorded in a lumber camp. She recorded lumbering songs from retired lumbermen and their descendants in their residences. Her impeccable appearance and diminutive stature mentioned in the previous quotation along with her rural social skills actually helped her gain access to informants and their families who readily trusted her and welcomed her into their homes. Informants and their families were middle-class rural Ontario citizens with similar values and manners as Fowke. They instinctively perceived that she would do no harm and accepted her.

Researching Fowke's Field Recordings

Fowke accumulated field recordings of folk songs on reel-to-reel tape at a rapid rate during 1957 and 1958. She used some of these recordings initially to create record albums that were released commercially by Folkways Records of New York. She also used transcriptions of folk song texts from the recordings in articles she prepared for

152 This quote can also be found in Panagapka, J.(2002). Edith Fowke: Reflections, *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin*, 36 (3).

magazines and periodicals. Eventually, with the help of musically proficient collaborators to notate song melodies from her field recordings, Fowke produced books that received international acclaim such as *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*, *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* and *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs*.

Fowke edited and categorized her field recordings and, as detailed in Chapter 4, arranged for a quantity of her field tapes to be archived at the National Museum in 1960. This was important because it provided researchers access to her early recordings, which were nicely catalogued and organized by Museum archivists. Years later, shortly before her death, Fowke donated her collection of field recordings containing more than 2,000 songs to Special Collections, University of Calgary Library. Along with the tape recordings, Fowke also donated more than 1,000 books and numerous personal papers to the Library. In her will, Fowke left the copyright of the entire collection to the Writer's Union of Canada (TWUC). Present usage is limited as recordings can only be used to make transcriptions without having to pay a royalty on each item. Personal family papers are restricted (Gregory, 2002).

For my research purposes, the uncomplicated access to Fowke's early tapes provided by The Canadian Museum of Civilization (formerly the National Museum) enabled me to spend many hours listening to and analyzing the 1957-1960 field recordings of Peterborough area singers. A few of Fowke's field recordings, which the Museum staff transferred for me from tape to CD were used to create the audio documentary (Appendix G). This audio element is included to strengthen the understanding of Fowke's field methodology. While at the Museum, I was also able to

access Fowke's song transcriptions, index sheets, and pieces of her personal business communications. Figure 10:1 is a sample of one of Fowke's index sheets.

- TAPE FC 3 LUMBERJACK SONGS AND BALLADS
- T FO 3--21. THE LITTLE BROWN BULLS - sung by Tom Brandon, Peterborough, Ontario
- 7 22. JACK HAGGERTY - sung by Tom Brandon, Peterborough, Ontario
23. HOW WE GOT BACK TO THE WOODS - sung by George Hughey, Peterborough, Ontario
24. HOW WE GOT BACK TO THE WOODS - sung by Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough,
Ontario
25. CHAPEAU BOYS - sung by William Dennison, Toronto, Ontario
26. A JOLLY SHANTY LAD - sung by George Hughey, Peterborough, Ontario
27. JACK THE SHANTY LAD - sung by Martin Sullivan, Nassau, Ontario
28. THE SHANTYBOYS IN THE PINE - sung by Jim Harrington, Ennismore, Ontario
- T 29. THE JOLLY SHANTYBOY - sung by Michael Cuddihy, Low, Quebec
30. THE LUMBERMAN'S ALPHABET - sung by Sam Cartwright, Weston, Ontario
31. THE LUMBERMAN'S ALPHABET - sung by Mrs. Arthur Hewitt, Fraserville, Ontario
32. MICHIGAN-I-O - sung by George Hughey, Peterborough, Ontario
33. TURNER'S CAMP - sung by Bill Spencer, Lakefield, Ontario
- T 34. TURNER'S CAMP - sung by Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough, Ontario

recorded by Edith Fowke, 1957-60

Figure 10:1 Song index page, typed on an angle, sent by Fowke to the National Museum in 1960 along with a corresponding tape. It provides a sample of her numbering system at the time. (Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives Accession # FO-AT-3)

Fowke's Numbering System

Fowke's tape numbering and cataloguing system for her field recordings is difficult to understand because it changes several times to suit specific purposes and there are parallel systems. Fowke would often reference a specific recording in her magazine articles and end-notes. For song transcriptions found in her books, she used the song number in the book along with an arrangement of four capital letters that designated the publication. For example song number 61 ("The Weaver") in *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folksongs* would be referred to by Fowke as *The Weaver* (PBCF 61).¹⁵³ For the recordings found in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Fowke initially sent the tapes accompanied by a song list. The tapes were grouped by song type and Fowke assigned a Fowke order number (FO) to each tape (see Figure 7:1). The songs were numbered sequentially from the first tape to the 25th tape. For example, tape FO-AT-3 (Lumberjack Songs and Ballads) contains recordings 21 to 34.¹⁵⁴ Later in her career, possibly in the early 1990s Fowke established another Fowke Order Number (FO) system for each of her approximately 2,000 recorded songs, numbering them sequentially.¹⁵⁵

Listening to Fowke's Peterborough field recordings provided me with a perfect window into the past. I was impressed when I listened to Fowke's patient and determined

153 In addition to PBCF (*Penguin Book of Canadian Folksongs*), other Fowke designations included LSNW (*Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*), TSSO (*Traditional Singers and Songs of Ontario*) and RING (*Ring Around the Moon*).

154 The Canadian Museum of Civilization system currently uses FO to indicate Fowke Order and AT to indicate audio tape, followed by the tape number. It is difficult to determine exactly how the current numbering system used by the Museum archives was developed. It may have been Fowke's system, a collaborative effort between Fowke and Museum staff, or adherence to a system entirely designed by the Museum staff.

155 This entirely sequential system is referred to in Panagapka & Vikar, L. (Eds.) (2004). "*Songs of the north woods*" *As sung by O.J. Abbott and collected by Edith Fowke*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press.

guidance as she worked with the singers. As I continued to listen, I came to respect her ability to transcribe lyrics from singers who were barely intelligible to the ear. The recordings provide documentary evidence of the quality of many singers and their grasp of the songs they were performing. To sum up Fowke and her polite determination I include the following personal communication from Philip Thomas. In 1959, when Fowke still had her field recording mindset, Thomas introduced her to Captain C. Cates, a Nova Scotian who had sung for Helen Creighton. Thomas writes:

In the fall of 1959, Edith visited Vancouver and I arranged a taping of Captain C. Cates on my Webcor reel-to-reel machine. Edith was very much part of that evening encouraging Cates, a big man, with a heart condition to sing more and more despite the obvious concern of Mrs. Cates that he was in danger of overdoing it. That was an example of Edith's determination, placing in this case the collecting above anything else. She may have been aware of Cates' health problems, but she was surely ignoring Mrs. Cates' quiet anxiety ... I made Edith a copy of the tape made in my living room, but I think she wanted a more professional recorded tape. She somehow made arrangements with CBC to have Cates make another tape. (Thomas, 1998, personal communication)

Edith Fowke's Life Story

The Fowke life story in Chapter 5 was pieced together using bits of material from dozens of different pieces of published work. Dates and chronology are corroborated by at least two, and sometimes, three or more sources. The overview of her life story places her approach to fieldwork into context. In looking at Fowke's life, it seems that her ability to network socially was the key element in her success. It seemed to guide her from her early days in broadcasting, to her collaborations with musically competent individuals, to her fieldwork, her commercial recordings, and subsequent publications. Fowke's life was seemingly directed by the people with whom she came into contact. A second driving force in Fowke's life was her obsession with text. Fowke's literary background and interest in text moved her from the study of folk song to the study of folklore midway through her career. Her passion for folk stories was ongoing. My long conversations with Dr. Skye Morrison who was a working associate of Fowke made me aware of that literary focus. Morrison told me that in her experience, Fowke did not really exhibit any great liking or understanding of instrumental music. Tunes of folk songs were never as important to her as was the text of the songs she was collecting and studying. Morrison explained that Fowke had difficulty comprehending musical melody and would not record individuals singing in a party or community setting. She liked more intimate settings and needed to work one-on-one with her informants.

Fowke's Social Networking and Beyond

Fowke's networking began in her youthful days in Lumsden, Saskatchewan when she found individuals who would loan her books to read. She became part of a prairie political movement and honed her social activist skills while an editor of a political magazine. When Fowke moved to Toronto she came to know CBC radio producer Harry Boyle, who helped her begin her broadcasting career. Social networking was an essential part of her field research methodology and it helped her meet and associate with influential individuals who could assist her in advancing her projects. For example, while browsing through folk song recordings in a Greenwich Village record shop, she met record producer and folk song historian Kenneth Goldstein from the American Folklore Society. He provided Fowke access to Folkways when she produced her first recordings. Through Goldstein, Fowke would meet key individuals associated with the Folkways Recording Company, such as producer Moses Asch and singer and social activist Pete Seeger.

In Toronto, Fowke's involvement with social issues led her to a friendship with noted Canadian writer June Callwood. Clyde Gilmour, a music critic and writer with the Toronto Star was also a friend. Her position at the CBC enabled her to befriend broadcaster Max Ferguson and radio folk singer Merrick Jarrett. Jarrett would later collaborate with her on a number of radio programs and Ferguson helped her obtain prime airtime. Trips to Europe enabled Fowke to meet singers Ewan McCall and Peggy Seeger who would later help Fowke transcribe many of her field recordings. Through her involvement in The Canadian Society for Traditional Music, Fowke began a friendship

with Marius Barbeau, one of Canada's premier folk song scholars. It is possible that her friendship with Barbeau helped her meet key individuals at The National Museum.

Fowke's career path was influenced through her relationships with others along with her own intuition. Fowke did things her own way, following her personal interests and networking savvy. At times, she was determined and stern with her friends and associates but seemingly not as much with her informants. She enjoyed being around folk singers and was always ready to listen to a good folktale but she also had energy and an agenda. Her personal energy, political views, and social background bred her determination. Fowke was raised during the depression on the Canadian prairies. She acquired two university degrees in the 1930s, an exceptional accomplishment for a woman at that time. Then she taught elementary school, edited a political publication, and took interest in social issues. Her writing interests expanded to include folk songs and stories. Subsequently she hosted CBC radio shows, collected folk songs, taught university courses, and worked to establish organizations such as The Mariposa Folk Festival. Most importantly Fowke promoted the contributions to society made by those she called the "ordinary people," the working people. Her positive attitude and natural rural charm enabled her to enter the homes of folk singers in rural Ontario. Singers and their families trusted Fowke and were sympathetic with her belief that folk song and story needed to be heard and understood throughout Canada because it was an important link to the cultural past.

Throughout her collecting years, Fowke knocked on the doors of middle-class homes to find her informants. After discovering an informant, she asked about others who

sang folk songs. Fowke found her early informants simply through networking. As knowledge of her fieldwork spread, more people contacted her directly and suggested singers for her to seek. For example, she found one of her most prolific informants, O. J. Abbott from the Ottawa Valley, when his daughter contacted Fowke after learning of her search for Ontario folk singers on a CBC television show.

Researching Fowke's Life Locally

While assembling the Fowke biography, I considered many of the local anecdotes about Fowke that still circulate in the Peterborough area. She remains a small part of local conversation. It is possible to be in Towns General Store and hear a local citizen declare “I remember when Edith Fowke ...” An updated 1978 version of the locally composed book *Through The Years in Douro*, which is available in the Towns Store gift section recalls: “In 1961, Mrs. William Towns of Douro, at the invitation of Mrs. Edith Fowke, sang at a Folk Music Conference in Quebec City” (Edmison, 1978, p. 168). Fowke is still considered part of the local landscape. Many of the local stories circulating are about Fowke's rather erratic driving skills and the permanently visible marks her auto left on local buildings. Generally, Fowke is remembered, appreciated and respected locally. Her books, *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* and *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*, are found in many homes.

The negative aspects of Fowke's memory rest with some local informant descendents who feel that Fowke took advantage of family members when she recorded them. They feel that Fowke took songs to publish and/or include on commercial vinyl

recordings without compensating those that provided the songs for her. I considered using some of the local conversation on this topic, but even though there are aspects of truth to the stories, they are, in the final analysis, hearsay, which I did not include in this thesis. Later in my research, I came across some documentation in the Fowke files at the Canadian Museum of Civilization that documented a dispute between Fowke and the daughter of one of her informants. The point of contention was that the daughter wanted her father to be compensated for the use of his songs in specific books and recordings. In this case the dispute was actually documented but this situation needs to be considered in the context of accepted practice at the time and the details were not included in this work.

I made this decision because Fowke at the time was simply following an established procedure that prevailed in the 1950s and '60s, which allowed her and other Canadian song collectors such as Creighton, Manny, and Barbeau to appropriate and use folk songs from informants without compensating them monetarily. Ethics accreditation and informant compensation was not part of research protocol until much later in the twentieth century. Fowke did ensure that her informants received copies of the books and recordings that featured them, and she compensated them monetarily when they went with her to perform at various festivals (Figure 10:2). My discussions with all of those who knew Fowke told me that she was direct and to the point when arguing, but was never malicious. For herself, she wanted some monetary reward for her work along with acknowledgement from both the folk music and academic communities. Throughout her life, she appeared to remain a courteous and considerate individual.



284 AVENUE ROAD • TORONTO 7 • ONTARIO, CANADA • 922-4871

June 8, 1970.

Mrs. Jack Keating,
496 Brioux St.,
PETERBOROUGH, Ontario.

Dear Mrs. Keating,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this year's Mariposa. This is just a note to confirm your appearance in a workshop with Edith Fowke on Saturday, July 25, 1970, at 12:30 p.m..

Passes will be held in your name at the Press Booth on the festival grounds. There will be a \$50.00 honorarium presented to you for having joined us in this year's festival.

Thanking you again, we are

Sincerely yours,
MARIPOSA FOLK FESTIVAL

Estelle Klein

Estelle Klein
Artistic Director

EK:ms

Figure 10:2 Letter to Vera Keating confirming time and compensation for Mariposa Folk Festival appearance with Fowke. (Courtesy: Vera Keating)

Fowke as Popularizer, Collector, and Scholar

Edith Fowke, whether on her own, or after some discussion with Karpeles, discovered a living folk song culture in the Peterborough area of eastern Ontario that very few knew existed. This fact alone should place Fowke among the select group of North American field researchers and scholars. Fowke successfully used her social networking skills to locate and persuade rural inhabitants to participate in her research and sing their orally learned folk songs as she recorded them. She quietly melded into the Peterborough County community while she researched and conducted her fieldwork for almost a decade. This is similar to the methodology of scholarly researchers at the time. The commercial recordings and published material that Fowke produced from her Ontario fieldwork received considerable attention from noted folklore and ethnomusicological scholars including Barbeau, Peacock, Ives, and Halpert. The recordings and publications were also vehicles that Fowke created to popularize Ontario folk songs because her mission was to bring the songs of the people back to the people. The overlapping boundaries between the popularization of folk song and the academic disciplines of folklore and ethnomusicology make little difference to the reality of Fowke's discovery. It can easily be argued that she could be considered part of the academic community regardless of the discipline as well as a popular broadcaster, record producer, and writer.

The argument against Fowke's acceptance in the academic community seems to be primarily the fact that she firstly did not have a PhD and secondly her university degrees were in English, not folklore or ethnomusicology. It was Fowke herself who stated she felt discriminated against by Canadian academics, primarily academic

folklorists, because she did not have a degree in folklore. Many of the Canadian academics to whom Fowke referred were immigrants from the U.S. or Britain hired to teach in the Folklore department at Memorial University (Greenhill, 2003, p. 3). This may just be a perception on Fowke's part because I was not able to find any definitive published argument by anyone who stated that Fowke was not part of the academic disciplines of folklore and/or ethnomusicology. It is known that her musical background was minimal and criticisms of her published work tended to focus on the idea that she often failed to make strong connections between music and the community that performed it. Nevertheless, Fowke was made a Fellow of the American Folklore Society and was the first recipient of the Distinguished Canadian Folklorist Prize in 1978 awarded by the Folklore Studies Association of Canada. Greenhill argues: "Surely by most assessments such a distinct honour would offer an indication of the respect of the academics who formed the association" (2003, p. 4).

Fowke was already a successful broadcaster and editor of folk song books before she embarked on her folk song collecting field-trips. Although she had some interest in song melody and performance, it was the literary content and the lineage of the songs that motivated Fowke to collect more and more. She was totally conversant with the work of Child and Laws and enjoyed researching song lineage and comparing song variants. In fact, as demonstrated by her end-notes in *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs*, her working knowledge of ballad characteristics and history went well beyond the Child and Laws catalogues. Her notes are succinct and understandable. For example her end-note regarding the song "The Bonny Labouring Boy" collected from Leo Spencer of Lakefield

and published in *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs* is focused, detailed, and clear. Fowke writes:

This tale of the girl who loved *The Bonny Labouring Boy* provided the pattern for two native Ontario variants: *My Jolly Shantyboy* (Fowke LSNW 192) and *The Jolly Railroad Boy* (Folkways FM 4005). The original is not very common in North America: Karpeles (216) and Peacock (564) found it in Newfoundland and Gardner in Indiana (180). It was more popular in England, turning up in Surrey, Hampshire and Dorset (Dean-Smith 54 and Brocklebank 4). Both Henry (No. 576) and Hughes (IV 59) found it in Ireland. Harry Cox has recorded it on Folk Legacy FSB 20. It appeared on many nineteenth-century ballad sheets, and Mr. Spencer's text is close to a Such broadside given in JFSS I 206, except that in it the couple flee to Plymouth rather than Belfast. (Fowke, 1973, p. 211)

Fowke's limited music knowledge hampered her only to the extent that she needed to have individuals with strong musical backgrounds collaborate with her to interpret and notate song melodies for publication. She was quite capable of recognizing and discussing various singing styles, song structures, and song texts. As the previous example illustrates, Fowke's analysis of folk songs was to the point, detailed, scholarly, complete, and accessible. Her collection of scholarly books was immense and the knowledge seemed to be at her finger-tips. Fowke could readily present arguments effectively to knowledgeable individuals and she kept regular company with scholars like

Barbeau, Goldstein, and Peacock. How could she not be considered a member of academe?

Fowke was a popularizer who wanted to bring Canadian folk songs to Canadians. She wanted to inform them and make them aware of their cultural gift. Becoming a faculty member and teaching regular scheduled courses at York University was simply an extension of her desire to inform. She conducted an evening lecture series at Trent University to tell Peterborough area residents details of their local cultural heritage. Fowke taught in the summer Kodaly diploma program at the University of Calgary. Her reviews and articles regularly appeared in academic journals such as *The Journal of American Folklore*, *The Yearbook for Traditional Music*, and *Ethnomusicology*. She was the first editor of the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* which allowed her to disperse her own thoughts on aspects of Canadian folk music as well as encourage first time writers, academic and otherwise, to submit their research for publication. Fowke attended academic conferences and maintained a working relationship with members of academic organizations. Some of her most influential books such as *Songs of Work and Freedom* (Roosevelt University), *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (University of Texas Press), *Canadian Folklore* (Oxford University Press) and *A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark* (University of Calgary Press) were first published by academic publishers.

Perception is important and the aforementioned academic activity that Fowke appeared to be involved in could lead to the conclusion by undergraduates and many members of the folk music community that she was a scholar. Other groups seem to

remain divided on whether she was an academic researcher or simply a song collector and popularizer, neither really being a bad thing. In my own university experience, I found professors who viewed Fowke as a peer and others that seemed to take her work less seriously. Fowke was, in fact, all of the above, a focused song collector, popularizer, and a scholar. Unfortunately, the biggest dichotomy may have lived within Fowke herself. It possibly affected the work she produced later in her career according to Greenhill who alluded to Fowke's internal struggle in the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin*:

She [Fowke] evidently wanted her work recognized and legitimated on both sides, and perhaps here is the source for what I see as a compartmentalization of her work. Her academic work became more narrow and restrictive as she attempted to seek legitimacy in too often mutually contradictory locations. For a woman so opinionated and direct, she perhaps failed to recognize and foster her own intuitive understanding. And yet her insights shine through in much of her work, and her oeuvre stands as a consistent and informed commentary on both Canadian traditional culture and the disciplines it engendered.

(Greenhill, 2003, p. 7)

Fowke's Ongoing Influence and Importance

Unfortunately most of Edith Fowke's writings are out of print or difficult, in many cases, to obtain. Fortunately the website (www.yorku.ca/cstm) of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music, the organization for which Fowke did so much work from its

founding in 1965 until her death in 1996, makes her extensive contributions to its *Bulletin* and *Journal* readily available. Most of her books can still be found in libraries and personal collections and their contents inspire ongoing creative efforts like the music drama *Fowke Tales*. Ongoing activity based on Fowke's work continued in 2011 with the project, "Folk Songs of Canada Now," headed by Henry Adam Svec in London, Ontario, which resulted in a 23-track CD that contained recordings of songs from Edith Fowke songbooks by contemporary singers and musicians (<http://www.folksongsofcanadanow.com/songs.html>). Fowke's work also inspired Chinese-Canadian composer Tony Leung who used her *Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs* as a resource in the creation of his orchestral work, *Boundless Songs of Love*, which debuted in June 2012. Leung based his composition on Canadian folk songs, which he blended with musical arrangements of Chinese folk material (<http://s2.torontochineseorchestra.com/wp/>).

Further scholarly activity and research would help bring all of Fowke's work and influence into perspective. The following areas are ready for further study:

1. Herget (2002) effectively analyzed the performance style of ten Peterborough area singers, but other vocal performances from Fowke's Ontario field tape collection have not yet been examined. Fowke's recordings, which cover a variety of genres and extend from Ontario to Quebec, Manitoba, and British Columbia, are available for detailed examination. Only the children's songs have been effectively analyzed and compared twenty years later in the study by Caputo (1989).

2. The Peterborough-based research of American scholar, Niles Puckett, in the 1950s paralleled Fowke's work and the two researchers actually shared informants. The results and chronology of Puckett's work should be carefully documented and compared with Fowke's efforts.

3. Fowke was likely not that cognizant about the three areas of Ireland that have been identified as the origins of the Robinson settlers, but those disparate origins possibly influenced what songs were brought to Canada and that could be traced and researched in the Fowke corpus. This can be done by utilizing the list of Fowke tapes (*Edith Fowke Tapes No. 1 – No. 95 Prepared By York University Libraries June, 1972*), which connects each of the songs collected by Fowke with the song informant. The origin of the informant's family could then be traced by family name through the “The Ships List” (<http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/passengerlists/peterrobinsonindex.shtml>), which is a website that provides a list of the passengers on each of the Peter Robinson vessels and their Irish county of origin.

4. The 1929 visit of Maude Karpeles to the Peterborough area is a critical event that could be researched further through local family histories and archives. Further details on Karpeles' visit along with her subsequent writing activity relative to the trip may support the argument that Fowke initially focused on Peterborough County because of Karpeles' work.

5. Ontario's fiddle tradition remains vibrant. It would be appropriate for the Peterborough area fiddle tunes recorded by Fowke to be transcribed and made available in print to contemporary fiddlers.

6. It would be worthwhile to compare two of Fowke's publications, *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (1970) and *A Family Heritage: The Story of Songs of LaRena Clark* (1994). Fowke recognized LaRena Clark as her most prolific informant. These two books are pinnacles of the documentation resulting from her fieldwork collecting. Thus, a comparison would yield an analysis of Fowke's maturation as a researcher and analyst of folk songs over a 25-year period. Fowke ventured into the study of folklore in the intervening years and it would be useful to see how that change in focus affected her work.

7. Fowke's position in terms of gender studies could be analyzed through an essay that she prepared for Greenhill, P. & Tye, D. (Eds.) (1997). *Undisciplined Women: Tradition and Culture in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. Fowke's work is also referenced on pp. 29, 225, 246, 340, 493, and 526-7 in the Locke, Vaughn, and Greenhill, (eds.) (2009) *Encyclopedia of Women's Folklore and Folklife Volume I* (Westport, CT. Greenwood Press).

8. There is a probability that printed articles about Fowke, and by Fowke, have not yet been located and examined. The search for such printed work should be continued until the possibilities are exhausted and the catalogue can be labelled “complete.”

Conclusion

Edith Fowke was an important and seminal figure in the folk song collecting movement through her work as a song collector, a popularizer of folk songs, and a scholar. Fowke was energetic and prolific as she successfully undertook parallel careers in writing, teaching, field research, broadcasting, and record producing. Fowke was direct but honest in her business dealings and she truly believed that Canadian folk songs should be heard by Canadians. She worked her entire life to achieve this and retirement was of little interest. Fowke viewed her final illness of lung cancer in 1995 and 1996 as simply an inconvenience that interrupted her ongoing research and planned publications. She was patient, determined, and highly successful in her ventures. Edith Fowke's career attributes and perspectives need to be contemplated by historians, folk song scholars and more importantly, to her, folk music enthusiasts.

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Keating, V. (interview, May 19, 2005). Peterborough, ON

McMahon-Mundell, M. (interview, September 24, 2010). Warsaw, ON.

Morrison, S. (interviews, August 13, 14, 15, 16, 2010, December 18, 2011).
Hastings, ON.

Peacock, K. (personal communication, letter, February 9, 1998).

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Sullivan, A. (interview, April 22, 2009). Lakefield, ON.

Thomas, P. (personal communication, email, March 20, 1998).

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Douro, ON.

Appendix A – Edith Fowke's Peterborough area informants and fieldwork chronology

The following list of Fowke's seventy-seven Peterborough area informants was compiled from data found in the York University list of Edith Fowke field tapes, Herget's University of Calgary M.A. Thesis, Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives, and personal research.

Mrs. Bertha Baker – Norwood
Ida Bonham – Tory Hill
Tom Brandon – Peterborough
Orlo Brandon – Peterborough
Jim Brown – Marlbank
Art Carveth – Peterborough
Tom Cavanagh – Indian River
John Cleary – Douro
Michael Cleary – Douro
Frank Cleary – Peterborough
John Condon – Peterborough
Ellen Conroy – Peterborough
Martin Coughlin - Lakefield
Bill Crowe, Warsaw
Alex Craig – Kinmount
Ben Davis – Haliburton
Mrs Jack Davis – Haliburton
Jim Doherty – Peterborough
John Flanagan – Erinsville
Bill Gooley – Peterborough
Leo Gooley – Peterborough
Jim Harrington – Ennismore
Jimmie Heffernan – Peterborough
John Heffernan – Peterborough
Mrs. Arthur Hewett - Fraserville
George Hughey – Peterborough
Bill Hughey – Peterborough
Len Hughey – Peterborough
Mrs Jim Hutchinson – Lakehurst
Stanley Hutchinson – Bobcaygeon
Sarah Hutchinson – Buckhorn
Mrs John Jordon – Roblin
Frank Kearney - Peterborough

Vera Keating – Peterborough
Joe Kelly – Downer's Corners
Calvin Kent – Haliburton
Frank Leahy – Douro
John Leahy – Douro
Michael Leahy – Indian River
Mrs. Leahy Jr. – Indian River
John Lebarr – Peterborough
Nelson Lewis – Harcourt
Kathleen McAuliff – Ennismore
Hilton Mayhew – Peterborough
George McCallum – Grafton
Tim McGrath – Marlbank
Bob McMahon – Douro
Dave McMahon – Douro
Marcelle McMahon – Douro
Mrs. Hartley Minifie – Peterborough
Minnie Molloy – Coe Hill
Mrs. Emma Morrissey – Peterborough
Mrs. Ruth Morrissey – Peterborough
Ed O'Brien – Peterborough
Sam O'Brien – Peterborough
Mrs. Tom O'Brien – Peterborough
Cornelius O'Riley – Peterborough
Vince O'Toole – Peterborough
Robert Paul – Peterborough
Art Ralph - Peterborough
Maggie Ralph – Peterborough
Ron Sisson – West Guilford
Leo Spencel – Lakefield
Martin Sullivan – Nassau Mills
Maggie Sullivan – Peterborough
Ray Sullivan – Lakefield
Tom Sullivan - Lakefield
Mrs. Tom Sullivan (Geraldine) – Lakefield
Doris Tarkington – Peterborough
Vernon Tarkington – Peterborough
Joe Thibadeau – Bobcaygeon
Mary Towns – Douro
Dave Traynor – Buckhorn
Mrs. Dave Traynor - Buckhorn
Claude Woodcock – Peterborough
Emerson Woodcock – Peterborough
Larry Woodcock – Peterborough

Edith Fowke's Peterborough area field recording and informant chronology

This chronology of Edith Fowke's Peterborough area field trips is pieced together from information found in the York University list of Fowke tapes, Herget's University of Calgary M. A. thesis, and miscellaneous bits of information that I have accumulated. Fowke did not fully date all of her transcriptions. In some instances she provided day, month, and at other times she only provided month and year. In a few cases only the year can be found, which resulted in some Peterborough informants not being included. For example, Art Ralph, Martin Coughlin, and Frank Kearney are Peterborough area Fowke informants recorded in 1957 and 1958 but excluded in this listing because the precise month and day of their recording sessions are not known. It can be concluded that Fowke made more trips than the following chronology reflects. However, the chronology does provide a basic pattern for Fowke's Peterborough fieldwork. The chronology begins on December 2, 1956, but enough evidence has been presented to conclude that there was a previous recording session in Douro.

December 2, 1956 (Sunday) – Douro – Informants: Mary Towns, Michael Cleary, John Cleary, and Tom Cavanaugh.

March 2, 1957 (Saturday) – Peterborough – Maggie Sullivan, Ed O'Brien, and Mrs. Tom O'Brien

March 3, 1957 (Sunday) – Peterborough – Frank Cleary
Douro – Michael Cleary and Mary Towns

March 4, 1957 (Monday) – Lakefield – Tom Sullivan, Ray Sullivan, and Mrs. Tom Sullivan (Geraldine)

March 9, 1957 (Saturday) – Warsaw – Bill Crowe

March 12, 1957 (Tuesday) – Peterborough – Vera Keating and Jimmie Heffernan

March 15, 1957 (Friday) – Peterborough – George Hughey and Bill Hughey

June 1, 1957 (Saturday) – Douro – Dave McMahon

June 2, 1957 (Sunday) – Douro – Frank Leahy
Peterborough – Maggie Ralph, Sam O'Brien, and Ellen Conroy

June 16, 1957 (Sunday) – Norwood – Mrs. Bertha Baker
Nassau Mills – Martin Sullivan

June 17, 1957 (Monday) – Fraserville – Mrs. Arthur Hewitt

July 8, 1957 (Monday) – Peterborough – George Hughey

July 26, 1957 (Friday) – Peterborough – Emerson Woodcock and Larry Woodcock

July 27, 1957 (Saturday) – Peterborough – Emerson Woodcock and Frank Cleary
Peterborough – Mrs. Hartley Minifie

July 28, 1957 (Sunday) – Peterborough – Bill Gooley, Vernon Tarkington, and Doris
Tarkington
Lakefield – Leo Spencer

From Monday July 29 to Saturday August 3, 1957 Fowke recorded the songs of informant O.J. Abbott in Hull, Quebec. Fowke was taking advantage of her husband's two weeks of vacation (July 29 to August 9)

August 5, 1957 (Monday) – Coe Hill – Minnie Molloy

August 6, 1957 (Tuesday) – Peterborough – Cornelius O'Riley and Len Hughey
Ennismore – Kathleen McAuliff and Jim Harrington

September 21, 1957 (Saturday) – Downer's Corners – Joe Kelly
Peterborough – Emerson Woodcock

September 22, 1957 (Sunday) – Lakefield – Leo Spencer
Peterborough – Tom Brandon

November 23, 1957 (Saturday) – Indian River – Michael Leahy
Lakefield – Mrs. Tom Sullivan (Geraldine)
Peterborough – John Lebar

March 8, 1958 (Saturday) – Peterborough – Leo Gooley
Indian River – Michael Leahy and Mrs. Leahy Jr.

March 9, 1958 (Sunday) – Peterborough – John Condon and Art Carveth

August 8, 1958 (Friday) – Douro – John Leahy

November 1, 1958 (Saturday) – Tom Brandon and Orlo Brandon

October 17, 1959 (Saturday) – Douro – Dave McMahon, Bob McMahon, and
Marcelle McMahon

October 18, 1959 (Sunday) – Douro – John Cleary and Mary Towns

From 1960 to 1964, Fowke was heavily involved in the recording of children's songs and rhymes in Toronto elementary schools.

October 8, 1960 (Saturday) – Erinsville – Tim McGrath and Joe Flanagan

November 5, 1960 (Saturday) – Marlbank – Jim Brown

March 14, 1961 (Tuesday) – Grafton – George McCallum

August 5, 1961 (Saturday) – Peterborough – Tom Brandon

August 7, 1961 (Monday) – Marlbank – Tim McGrath and Jim Brown

August 11, 1961 (Friday) – Peterborough – Emma Morrissey

August 16, 1961 (Wednesday) – Douro – Marcelle McMahon

September 7, 1961 (Thursday) – Lakefield – Leo Spencer

May 18, 1962 (Friday) – Peterborough – Emerson Woodcock, Hilton Mayhew and
Claude Woodcock

August 9, 1962 (Thursday) – Grafton – George McCallum
Douro – Dave McMahon and Marcelle McMahon

August 10, 1962 (Friday) – Peterborough – Ruth Morrissey

September 11, 1962 (Tuesday) – Douro – John Leahy

August 8, 1962 (Wednesday) – Roblin – Mrs John Jordon

October 8, 1962 (Monday) – Peterborough – Vince O'Toole

August 11, 1962 (Saturday) – Peterborough – John Heffernan

October 10, 1964 (Saturday) – Lakehurst – Mrs. Jim Hutchinson and Joe Thibadeau

October 11, 1964 (Sunday) – Bobcaygeon – Joe Thibadeau and Stanley Hutchinson

October 12, 1964 (Monday) – Buckhorn – Sarah Hutchinson and Dave Traynor

Tory Hill – Ida Bonham

Harcourt – Nelson Lewis

May 18, 1965 (Tuesday) – Kinmount – Alex Craig

West Guilford – Ron Sisson

May 19, 1965 (Wednesday) – Haliburton – Ben Davis and Mrs. Jack Davis

May 20, 1965 (Thursday) – Haliburton – Calvin Kent

June 10, 1965 (Thursday) – Bobcaygeon – Joe Thibadeau

March 8, 1966 (Tuesday) – Peterborough – Tom Brandon

Appendix B – Books by Edith Fowke

Fowke, Edith, (Ed.).

- 1948 *Toward Socialism: Selections from the Writings of J.S. Woodsworth*. Toronto: Ontario Woodsworth Memorial Foundation.

Fowke, Edith.

- 1951 *They Made Democracy Work: The Story of the Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: The Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians.

Fowke, Edith, and Richard Johnston (Eds.).

- 1954 *Folk Songs of Canada*. Waterloo, Ontario: Waterloo Music Company Limited.

- 1954 *Folk Songs of Canada: Choral Edition*. Waterloo Ontario: Waterloo Music Limited.

- 1957 *Folk Songs of Quebec*. Waterloo, Ontario: Waterloo Music Limited

Fowke, Edith (Ed.).

- 1957 *Logging with Paul Bunyan*. Toronto: The Reason Press.

Fowke, Edith, and Alan Mills (Eds.).

- 1960 *Canada's Story in Song*. Toronto: W.J. Gage Limited.

Fowke, Edith, and Joe Glazer (Eds.).

- 1960 *Songs of Work and Freedom*. Chicago: Roosevelt University.

Fowke, Edith.

- 1965 *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*. Don Mills Ontario: Burns and MacEachern Limited.

Fowke, Edith (Ed.)

- 1965 *Sea Songs and Ballads from Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia*. Hatboro Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates.

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Fowke, Edith, and Barbara Cass-Beggs,

- 1966 *A Reference List on Canadian Folk Music*. Toronto: Canadian Folk Music Society.

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1967 *More Folk Songs of Canada*. Waterloo, Ontario: Waterloo Music Company Limited.

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Appendix E – Audio and Visual references

Edith Fowke Field Recordings accessed at the Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives: (Each recording was listened to and analytical notes prepared.)

Tape – Accession # FO-A-2

- “The Weaver” : Vera Keating, Peterborough, March 1957
- “Golden Vanity” : Joe Kelly, Downer's Corners, June 1957
- “Golden Vanity” : O. J. Abbott, Hull, July 1957
- “Fair Maid in the Garden” : Mary Towns, Douro, March 1957
- “Brave Wolfe” : Margaret Ralph, Peterborough, June 1957
- “Brave Wolfe” : William Drumm, Hamilton, April 1958
- “Fair Maid Courting” : Jim Doherty, Peterborough, July 1957
- “Fair Maid Courting” : Jim Heffernan, Peterborough, March 1957
- “Wintry Winds” : Vera Keating, Peterborough, March 1957

Tape – Accession # FO-A-3

- “The Little Brown Bulls” : Tom Brandon, Peterborough, September 1957
- “Jack Haggarty” : Tom Brandon, Peterborough, September 1957
- “How We Got Back to the Woods” : George Hughey, Peterborough,
March, 1957
- “How We Got Back to the Woods” : Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough,
July 1957
- “Chapeau Boys” : William Dennison, Toronto, May 1960
- “A Jolly Shanty Lad” : George Hughey, Peterborough, March 1957
- “Jack the Shanty Lad” : Martin Sullivan, Nassau, June 1957
- “The Shantyboys in the Pine” : Jim Harrington, Ennismore, September 1957
- “The Jolly Shantyboy” : Michael Cuddihey, Low, August 1957
- “The Lumberman's Alphabet” : Sam Cartwright, Weston, March 1957
- “The Lumberman's Alphabet” : Mrs. Arthur Hewitt, Fraserville, June 1957
- “Michigan-I-O” : George Hughey, Peterborough, March, 1957
- “Turner's Camp” : Bill Spencer, Lakefield, June 1957
- “Turner's Camp” : Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough, June 1957

Tape – Accession # FO-A-4

- “Johnny Doyle” : Bill Hughey, Peterborough, July, 1957
- “Johnny Stiles” : Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough, July 1957
- “Lost Jimmy Whelan” : Dave McMahan, Douro, June 1, 1957
- “Lost Jimmy Whelan” : O. J. Abbott, Hull, July, 1957
- “Lost Jimmy Whelan” : Martin Sullivan, Nassau, June, 1957
- “Peter Emery” : Leo Spencer, Lakefield, July 1957
- “Peter Emery” : Martin McManus, Peterborough, June 1957
- “Harry Dunn” : O. J. Abbott, Hull, July 1957

Tape – Accession# FO-A-8

- “The Dunville Girl” : Johnny Flanagan, Erinsville, August 1960
- “The Dunville Girl” : Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough, July 1957
- “Billy Dunbar” : Martin Sullivan, Nassau, July 1957
- “Bill Dunbar” : Mrs. Tom Sullivan, Lakefield, November 1957
- “Maggie Howie” : Martin Sullivan, Nassau, July 1957
- “Maggie Howie” : Michael Leahy, Indian River, November 1957
- “The Young Conway” : Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough, July 1957

Tape – Accession# FO-A-10

- “The Yorkshire Bite” : O. J. Abbott, Hull, July 1957
- “The Yorkshire Bite” : Mrs. Lamont Tildon, Harriston, May 1958
- “The Yorkshire Bite” : George Hughey, Peterborough, March 1957
- “Jack Donahue” : Mrs. Minnie Molloy, Coe Hill, August 1957
- “Jack Donahue” : O. J. Abbott, Hull, July 1957
- “Van Dieman's Land” : O. J. Abbott, Hull, July 1957
- “The Wild Colonial Boy” : O. J. Abbott, Hull, July 1957
- “The Wild Colonial Boy” : Tom Cavanaugh, Douro, December, 1956
- “The Wild Colonial Boy” : Dick Richardson, Napanee, August 1960
- “Transported for Mail Robbery” : Dave McMahan, Douro, November 1959

Tape – Accession# FO-A-12 (Fiddle Tunes – recorded in 1957 and 1960, specific dates are not noted)

- “The Pigeon on the Pier” : Vera Keating, Peterborough
- “The Devil's Dream” : Vera Keating, Peterborough
- “The Maple Leaf Two Step” : Mrs. Doris Tarkington, Jim Heffernan, Peterborough
- “Tom Sullivan's Hornpipe” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Country Waltz” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Fisher's Hornpipe” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “Coming Through Burleigh” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Pigeon on the Pier” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “McLeod's Reel” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Norwegian Waltz” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Peek-a-boo Waltz” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Shannon Waltz” : Ray Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Dawn Waltz” : Ray Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Hill Lilly Reel” : Ray Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Sailor's Hornpipe” : Ray Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Old Box Stove Jig” : Ray Sullivan, Peterborough
- “Mrs. Scully's Favorite Tune” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Crooked Stovepipe” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “The Londonderry Hornpipe” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough
- “Paddy on the Turnpike” : Tom Sullivan, Peterborough

Tape – Accession# FO-A-17

- “Lord Banner's Wife” Child 81: Harold Turner, Lennoxville, June 1957
 “Barbara Allan” Child 84: Vera Keating, Peterborough, March 1957
 “Barbara Allan” Child 84: Mrs. Tom Sullivan, Lakefield, June 1957
 “Barbara Allan” Child 84: Phyllis Zimmerman, Hamilton, August 1957
 “The Four Mary's” Child 173: Mrs. Isaac Ireland, Toronto, March 1958
 “The Gypsy Daisy” Child 200: O. J. Abbott, Hull, July 1957
 “The Wraggle Taggle Gypsies” Child 200: Tom Brandon, Peterborough,
 November 1958
 “Our Goodman” Child 274: Gordon Howard, Toronto, May 1960
 “The Farmer's Curst Wife” Child 278: Michael Cuddihey, Low, August 1957
 “The Green Willow Tree” Child 286: Stanley James, Weston, November 1957
 “The Wife Wrapt in Wetherskin” Child 277: Stanley James, Weston, May 1957

Tape – Accession# FO-A-19

- “The Farmer's Son and the Shantyboy” : O. J. Abbott, Hull, August 1957
 “The Farmer's Son and the Shantyboy” : George Hughey, Peterborough,
 June 1957
 “The Farmer's Son and the Shantyboy” : Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough,
 July 1957
 “Jack Haggarty” : Mrs. Gordon Clark, Richmond, November 1961
 “The Woodsman” : Tom Powell, Napanee, August 1960
 “Driving Saw Logs on the Plover” : Bob McMahan, Peterborough, October 1959
 “The River Through the Pines” : Bob McMahan, Peterborough, October 1959
 “Vince Leahy” : Dave McMahan, Peterborough, March 1957
 “Shannelly's Mills” : Mr. Taillon, Cornwall, August 1961

Tape – Accession# FO-A-20

- “Jam on Gerry's Rocks” : O. J. Abbott. Hull, August 1957
 “Jam on Gerry's Rocks” : Martin Sullivan, Nassau, June 1957
 “Jimmy Judge” : Jim Brown, Marlbank, November 1960
 “Jimmy Judge” : George McCallum, Grafton. March 1961
 “Harry Dale” : Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough, August 1957
 “Harry Bail” : Mrs. Minnie Molloy, Coehill, August 1957
 “The Cold Black River Stream” : Leo Spencer, Lakefield, August 1957
 “The Cold Black River Stream” : George McCallum, Grafton, March, 1961
 “The Grand River” : Johnny Flanagan, Erinsville, August 1960
 “Johnny Stile” : George McCallum, Grafton, March 1961

Audio References for Appendix G – Edith Fowke Audio Documentary:

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 Tom Brandon – Canadian Museum of Civilization – Audio reference # FO-A-3-21.
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 Martin Sullivan – Canadian Museum of Civilization – Audio reference # FO-A-3-27.
 Jim Harrington – Canadian Museum of Civilization – Audio reference # FO-A-3-28.
 Mrs Vera Keating – Canadian Museum of Civilization – Audio reference # FO-A-12-106.
 Tom Sullivan – Canadian Museum of Civilization – Audio reference # FO-A-12-112.
 Mrs Tom Sullivan – *Folk Songs of Ontario* – Folkways Records FM 4005 (side 1/ 9)

Commercial vinyl recordings produced by Edith Fowke utilizing field recordings:

Folk Songs of Ontario, Folkways FM4005
Jigs and Reels, Folkways FW8826
Irish and British Songs from the Ottawa Valley: Sung by O.J. Abbot, Folkways FM4051
Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties, Folkways FM4052
LaRena Clark: Canadian Garland, Topic 12T140
Ontario Ballads and Folksongs, Prestige International, INT 25014
Songs of the Great Lakes, Folkways FM4018
Tom Brandon of Peterborough, Ontario, Folk-Legacy FSC-10
Far Canadian Fields (Companion to Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs), Leeder
 LEE4057

Commercial vinyl recording produced by Edith Fowke with studio musicians and singers:

Folk Songs of Canada, Waterloo
Sally Go Round The Sun: Songs and Games of Canadian Children, RCA T56666/T56667
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