
FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

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The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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**Ormond Loomis on Drafting
*Cultural Conservation***

Omaha Pow-Wow

**Folk Art Meeting:
Program**

**New Finding Aid for Street
Cries and Carnival Pitches**



FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

a quarterly publication of the

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took on a concrete sense, meaning either a government building or (in the plural) the collections of documents in it. Most people today would say that an archive is a place that houses documents. They would then fall to disputing whether the word should be singular (the Archive of Folk Culture) or plural (the National Archives). I find the dispute oddly intriguing, for it seems to point to a lingering ambiguity, a tantalizing abstraction that shrouds the question of just what an archive is.

Everyone acquainted with the Folklife Center knows "the Archive"—launched in 1928 as the Archive of American Folk-Song and, after a half century, now affiliated with the Center as the Archive of Folk Culture. The Archive, most would say, is a collection of documents at the Library of Congress pertaining to folk culture. More knowledgeable users might add that most of the Archive's collections are American, and that in terms of documentary media the Archive is strongest in field recordings and manuscripts. Yet others could provide details of administrative organization, personnel, and prominent accomplishments over the years. But it is the nature of archives that concerns me here. Perhaps we can unravel the mysteries of definition by asking some simple questions about the Archive of Folk Culture.

Where is the Archive? In the Library of Congress, certainly; currently in room G-152 of the Library's venerable Jefferson building. But when I first visited the Archive in the mid-1960s to study early printed collections of fiddle tunes, I was brought a cornucopia of tunebooks to pore over; they were actually lodged in the stacks of the Music Division, which has curatorial responsibility for music publications in the Library, and whence they were carted out for my perusal. A couple of years later I brought in a batch of my own field recordings for the Archive to copy; the copying was actually done by the Recording Laboratory, and the tapes now repose in the

Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, which has curatorial responsibility for the Library's sound recordings. The Music Division and Recorded Sound used to be next door to the Archive and were connected administratively, which made it easier to imagine that the tunebooks and my field tapes were in the Archive; now those divisions are across the street in the Library's new Madison building. The fact of the matter is that the Library contains millions of books, manuscripts, photographs, sound recordings, films, and videotapes that pertain directly to folklife, and millions more of general relevance to the subject. If you think of an archive as the place where the stuff is, then the whole Library of Congress is a vast Archive of Folk Culture (with a lot of other stuff mixed in).

What is in the Archive? Formally speaking, the Library's curatorial divisions have the responsibility for preserving and tending the documentary sound recordings and manuscripts we all think of as the core of the Archive's collections. Copies of the originals in many cases have been made for use in the Archive Reading Room. To be sure, there is original material in the Archive proper—manuscripts, correspondence, ephemeral publications pertaining to folklife, and so forth—but compared to the quantity of original folklife material in other divisions, the Archive's curatorial holdings are rather small. What the Archive does have is a reading room where the public can work; an extensive bank of files, folders, indices, and other reference tools; and a staff to locate, acquire, process, and service folk cultural materials for the Library.

What is the Archive? The Archive, then, is not the room where the stuff is. That familiar image of the "dusty archives" with which we all entertain ourselves wholly misconstrues the nature of the Archive. It is not a collection of things, but a collection of people who manage and develop a collection of files that describe the things. A smaller

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

To the etymologist is reserved the pleasure of pondering certain exquisite cultural mysteries. Thus I was fascinated to discover, as I thumbed through sundry dictionaries, that the affixes *arch-* and *-archy*, and the words *archeology* and *archaic*, are related, and that all of them are related to the word *archive*. We may lay this mystery at the temple door of the Greeks, for whom the stem *arch-* was associated with the ideas both of beginning and of ruling. I do not mean to imply that we are governed by our origins, or that archives rule the world, but simply that the origins of that word *archive* are suggestively abstract. Early on, the stem

collection could perhaps bring the people, files, and things together in the same room, creating the kind of archive that fits the image. But with millions of items in every conceivable format, such an arrangement is impossible. It then becomes clearer that the essence of archiving is not possessing the things, but managing their control, access, and retrieval. In a word, the Archive is a nerve center.

The nature of an archive, then, is more abstract than most people might imagine. That fact is becoming conspicuous nowadays because of the technological revolution engulfing us all. Computers are not nearly so mysterious as some would have us believe—archives are much more mysterious, I would say—but they do seem to offer a new tool for organizing and retrieving large bodies of information. As we grow

accustomed to using them, we are finding that they are changing the flow of learning and study. In the process, our archives are likely to sustain revolutions we can now only dimly foresee.

Let me share one example. When I recorded fiddlers in the Upper South during the 1960s, I made simple logs of the recordings as I went. Later, as I accumulated more tapes, I invented simple cross-reference lists to help me locate different versions of the same tune, or different recording sessions with the same player. Then I brought the tapes to the Archive to be "archived"—that is, preserved and made accessible to other researchers. New accession numbers and log sheets were developed to correlate the original recordings and lists with the preservation tape copies in the Library's collections. But the archiving did not improve on the primitive means of access I had already cobbled together as a young enthusiast; it took new numbers, lists, and logs just to maintain the primitive access already created.

Now the Folklife Center is embarking upon a new field-research project in New Jersey, the Pinelands Folklife Project. Unlike my lonely individual research in the 1960s, it involves several researchers working simultaneously in the field. In the course of their work they will pair up, crisscross, visit the same people separately, and record events in various media, thus generating a vast and unwieldy corpus of data—hundreds of tape recordings, thousands of photographs, thousands of pages of manuscript fieldnotes, and the like. If such a corpus were created without careful organization from the project's inception, then turned over to be "archived," it would require thousands of hours of labor just to make the collection usable.

To address this problem, the Pinelands Folklife Project includes an experiment in collective fieldwork. We have acquired personal computers and developed a computer program which can be used by the researchers on a day-by-day

basis in the field. Fieldnotes, tape logs, and photographic logs are all entered into the computers and cross-referenced. At the end of the project the computer-generated floppy discs will be carted back to the Library and transferred into a bigger computer here. We are all waiting with bated breath to see if this experiment proves both workable in the field and useful later.

In effect, the archive is being created in the field. Or rather, it is being accumulated in the field after having been conceived and programmed at the Center by Jay Orr, Mary Hufford, and Carl Fleischhauer. In a sense, it is what we all should have been doing anyway; the computer provides a new excuse for doing old tasks well. But I sense that the computer may do more—that it may force us to restructure the flow and processing of knowledge in fundamental ways. It certainly helps us rethink our attitudes about what "the archive" is. And, like the Greek stem which is its etymological origin, the archive re-emerges as a supple abstraction, a mental system for organizing and preserving information from the past into the future.

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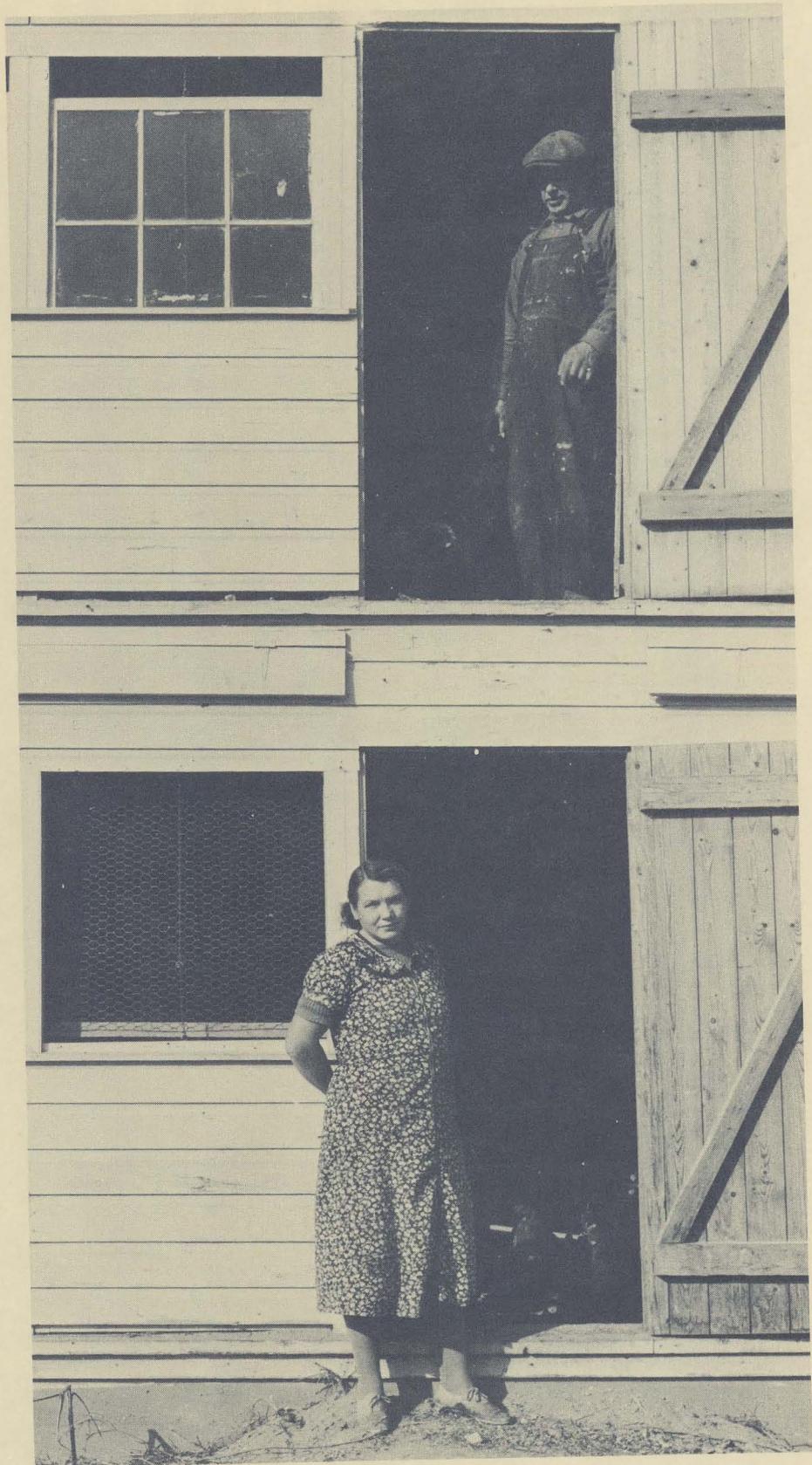


The Cultural Conservation Report Reflections on the Drafting Process

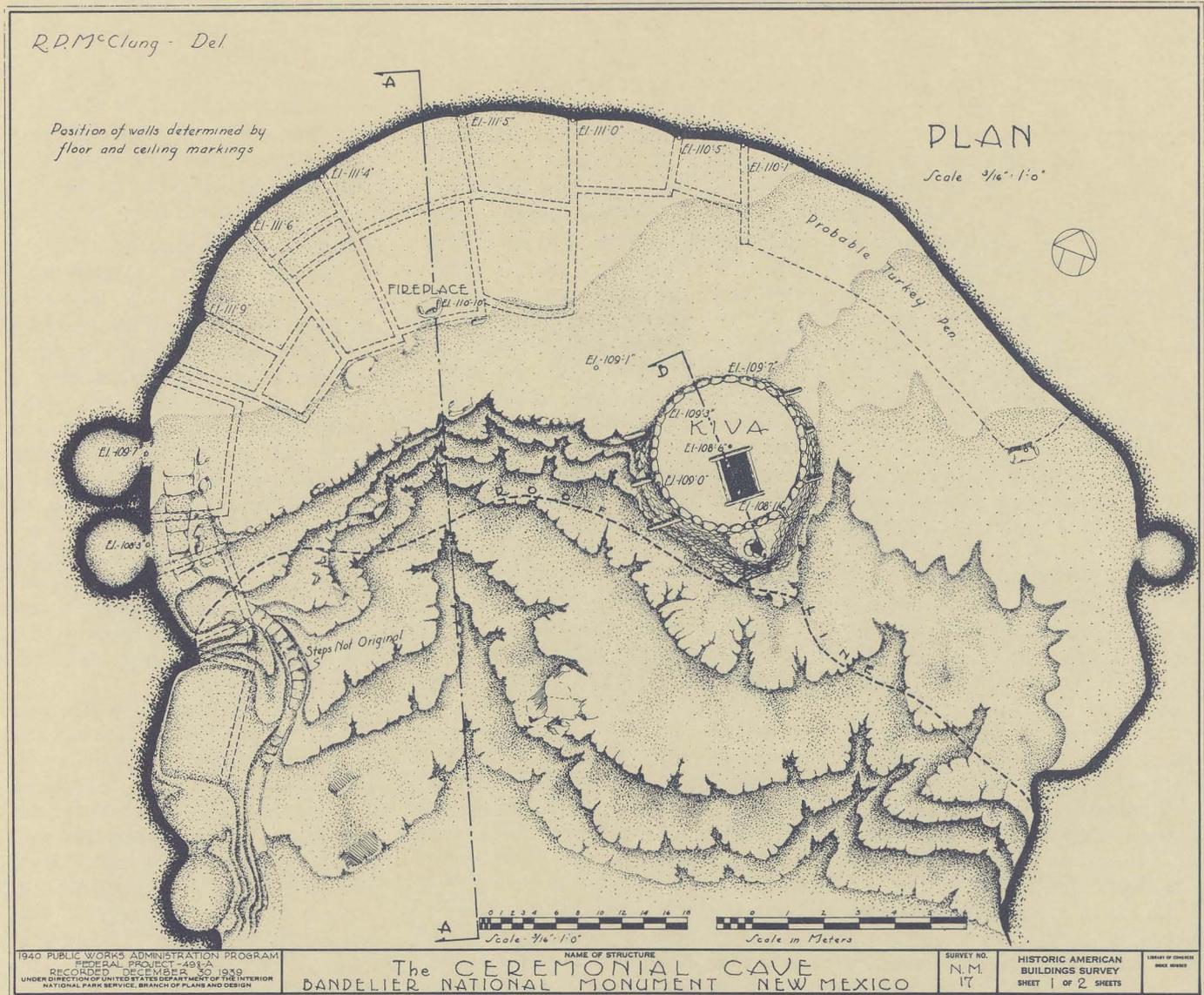
In December 1980 the President signed into law the National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-515). Among its provisions was one calling for preparation of a report to the President and Congress to be carried out by the American Folklife Center and the Department of the Interior on "preserving and conserving the intangible elements of our cultural heritage." An agreement outlining procedures for the report's production was drawn up and signed by the Folklife Center and the National Park Service in August 1981. Preparation of the report got under way and continued for over a year, through the late fall and early winter of 1982. The Secretary of the Interior forwarded the central findings and recommendations from the report to the President and the Congress on June 1, 1983 (see *Folklife Center News*, Vol. IV, No. 1, January 1981; Vol. IV, No. 2, April 1981; Vol. IV, No. 4, October 1981; Vol. V, No. 2, April 1982; and Vol. V, No. 4, October 1982).

The Folklife Center and the National Park Service are pleased to announce that *Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States* is now available. It may be purchased for \$4.50 from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Orders must be prepaid and reference made to stock number S/N 030-000-00148-6. In addition to its examination of means of preserving intangible features of the nation's culture, the 123-page publication includes a variety of contemporary and historic illustrations, a review of related legislation, activities and events, and a lengthy bibliography.

The Congress's 1980 request generated a broad array of compel-



August Vdal and his wife, Finns living in Canterbury, Conn., on their poultry farm in 1940. (Farm Security Administration by Jack Delano; Prints and Photographs Division)



A 1939 Historic American Buildings Survey site plan of the ceremonial cave at Bandelier National Monument, N. M. from Cultural Conservation. (Prints and Photographs Division)

ling ideas—thoughts that were pondered and discussed throughout the drafting process in meetings with the report's independent consultants, phone conversations, letters, and individual deliberations. Inevitably, not all of the ideas and facts discussed in the development of *Cultural Conservation* were treated in the final draft. The report was structured to touch briefly on a variety of topics, survey relevant projects, and summarize findings and suggestions. A number of subjects which were considered in the discussions that generated the report and which were eventually discarded as the draft evolved were

as interesting to cultural specialists who helped with the study as the material that appears in the final product. Since readers may now purchase copies of the report to determine its contents, I would like to use these pages to describe some of the pieces that fell aside during the drafting process and to sketch a few of the ideas that influenced the report's contents but were not fully articulated in the actual publication. Likewise, the illustrations here include some that appear in *Cultural Conservation* and others that were considered for inclusion.

Early on some consultants suggested including examples in

the report that illustrate the relevance of folklife to private industry. Another early suggestion was a study to assess the impact of the attention brought to bear on cultural traditions by folk festivals. Consultants raised the possibility of creating tax advantages for folk artists to continue traditional practices, or of employing people within the boundaries of a national park to help maintain the character of the area by continuing their established patterns of land use. Discussions also touched from time to time on the value of consolidating diverse federal offices and pro-

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Drafting Cultural Conservation

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grams that relate to cultural conservation under a single branch of the federal government.

People who followed the development of the report carefully will remember that the idea of a register, directory, or inventory of significant folk arts and artists was considered, but rejected. Too many consultants and correspondents felt that such a measure could, at least in the early development of cultural conservation consciousness, prove to be more of a handicap than a help.

Perhaps the most significant material that went unmentioned in the report were the models suggested by international examples. Many countries in Europe and Asia have established systems for recognizing and protecting significant areas of their cultural heritage. Despite their differences, the two basic models both the European and the Asian systems provide are, as a rule, integrated in programs for historic preservation, and are stimulating to contemplate in pondering the approaches our nation might follow toward the goal of cultural conservation.

The European approach stresses documentation and archiving. Most European nations have archives which contain information about virtually every subject related to traditional community life and values. These institutions have various bases and varying degrees of state support, some being located in universities, others attached to museums, and still others existing separately. The data in them comes from questionnaires completed by networks of local respondents, and often includes material on architecture and other tangible items, along with material on folksongs, tales, beliefs, and such intangible items. They provide the basis for cultural atlases, cultural histories, and preservation planning. Perhaps the best examples can be found in the Scandinavian nations, which, coincidentally, have been leaders in the field of

folklife or regional ethnology since the 19th century.

During one of the planning meetings with independent consultants for the report, Henry Glassie described the effectiveness of the European approach, exemplified by Irish efforts to preserve their heritage. Ireland has a major folklore archive, the Department of Irish Folklore at University College in Dublin, patterned after the Swedish archive, Dialekt-och Folkminnesarkivet i Uppsala. The archive and its field respondents have stimulated the recognition of Irish traditions and created a lasting record of the nation's folklife. Its work stands in contrast to the results of Irish laws requiring government employees to know Gaelic which, while intended to preserve the native language, have had relatively little effect on developing an active appreciation for and use of Gaelic.

The value of the European model has not escaped the attention of historic preservationists in the United States. In a section of his recent book *Historic Preservation* James Marston Fitch, one of the nation's leading architectural historians, describes with admiration the breadth of the Polish preservation system. Among other comments he notes that "a vast program for the protection of the traditional arts and crafts of the common people is under way. One of the world's greatest libraries of folk music has been created in Warsaw, a network of regional ethnographic museums has been established to display all the folk arts of each region, and a broad program for the regeneration of the crafts and the integration of the craftsman into modern life is being carried out." (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982, p. 386)

The Japanese "Law for Protection of Cultural Properties" contains a section on "Intangible Cultural Properties." It is the basis for the recognition of what have

come to be known in this country as "Living National Treasures." These treasures are people who, because of their outstanding mastery of an area of traditional knowledge and skill, receive special status and support from the state. The program established by this section of the law proceeds from the designation of "important items of intangible cultural properties," rather than from bestowing privilege upon important individuals. But it operates on the assumption that people are the best vehicle for knowledge. Literally, the people who receive recognition under the law are "holders" of the chosen traditions. A provision of the statute allows for removal of the honored status if a holder loses the ability to maintain the tradition. Other sections recommend training successors, call for public access to the tradition, and provide for documentation under set circumstances.

Begun in the wake of World War II, the Japanese system has already had considerable impact. The traditions that have been designated for protection include papermaking, textile dyeing, swordsmithing, puppetry, and pottery. Over 70 individuals have been identified as Living National Treasures. The system is admired and emulated in other Asian countries and has influenced the development in the United States of the National Heritage Fellowship program by the National Endowment for the Arts' Folk Arts Program.

While the thoughts and suggestions enumerated above could not be more fully explored within the dimensions of the cultural conservation report, they too may one day prove to be a source of inspiration as the concept of cultural conservation emerges in this country.

—Ormond H. Loomis

Dr. Loomis, Director of the Florida Folklife Program, coordinated the drafting of *Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States*.

The 153rd Annual "Original" Omaha Tribal Pow-Wow



The Host Drum: "Drum" is used to name both the instrument and the singers who surround it. The Omaha Pow-wow Committee's own group of singers, referred to as the "host drum," performed in alternation with two other ensembles from the region. Often, onlookers—like the woman shown here—would tape the music.

In mid-August Dorothy Sara Lee, Director of the Center's Federal Cylinder Project, and Carl Fleischhauer traveled to the Omaha Indian Reservation in Macy, Nebraska to attend the 153rd Annual "Original" Omaha Tribal Pow-Wow. They were there to present to the Omaha Tribal Council tape copies of cylinder recordings of Omaha music made in the early years of this century by Francis La Flesche, himself an Omaha Indian, and Alice Cunningham Fletcher (see *Folklife Center News*, Vol. IV, No. 1, January 1981, and Vol. VI, No. 2, April-June 1983). The Omaha cylinder recordings are among those that have been duplicated onto preser-

vation tape through the efforts of the Federal Cylinder Project, initiated in 1979. Their visit also provided an opportunity to observe, photograph, and record a Native American pow-wow.

Joining them for presentation of the tapes and documentation of the pow-wow was Maria La Vigna, formerly on the Federal Cylinder Project staff, who has worked extensively with the music of Native American cultural groups in the West. She is currently preparing notes for the Center's LP and cassette recording of Omaha cylinders. Her visit to the pow-wow gave her an opportunity to collect material for the notes and put the historical recordings in contemporary

context.

As Dorothy Lee's field-note entry for August 12, her first day at the pow-wow, attests, they are complicated presentations:

This was my first reservation pow-wow (I had attended urban events in Minneapolis) and there was a great deal to take in. Although many people sat and watched from the stands, this was not strictly a spectator event. There were many layers of activity, many ways it seemed of looking at the organization of time and space within the event, many different ac-

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Omaha Pow-Wow

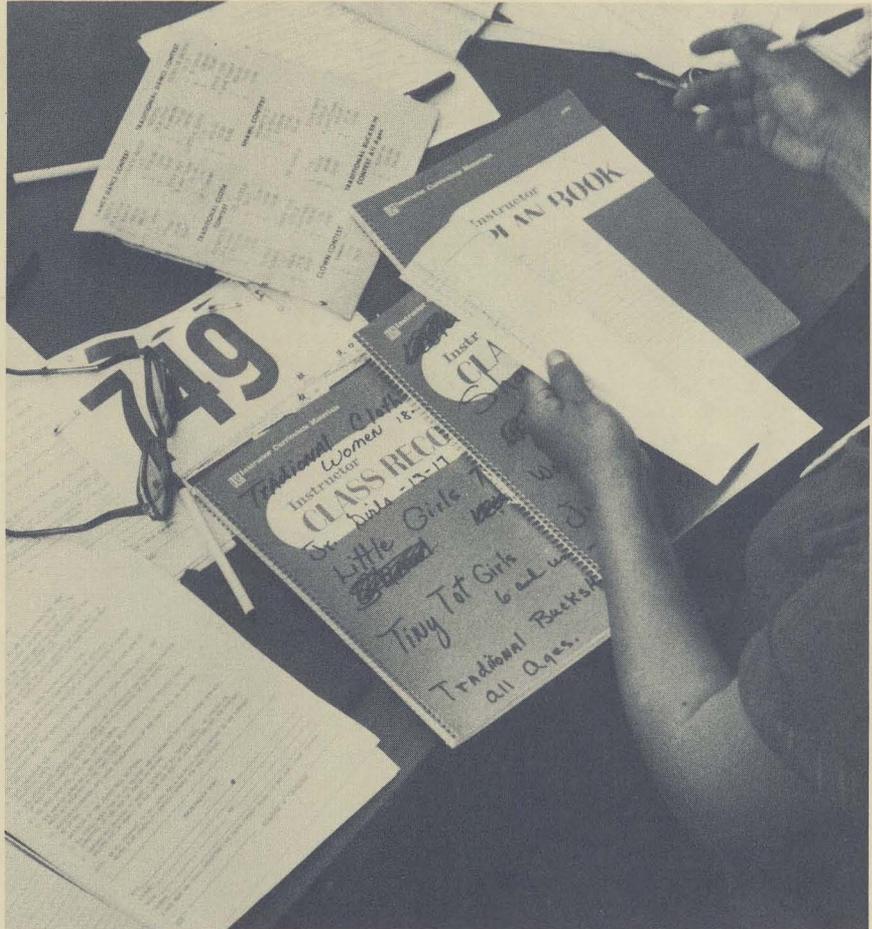
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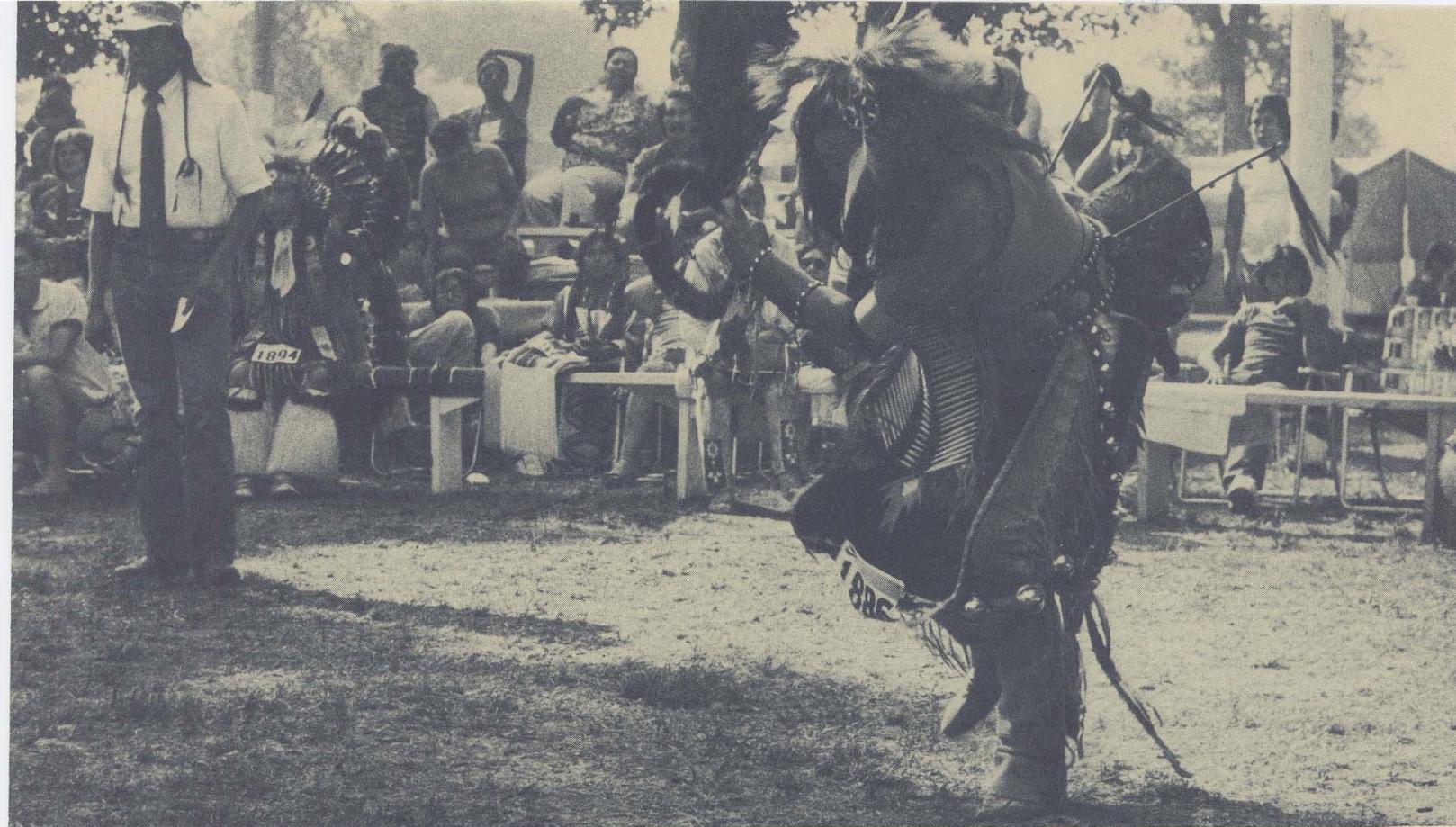
tivities going on both within and outside the arena. Most of the attention was focused on the dancers; as I recall, there were no contest dances this evening but rather general dances or intertribals, specials (given in honor of a particular individual), a performance by the San Juan Indian Youth Dancers, and an Oklahoma two-step. But there were also several small intersecting universes of activity and interaction on the periphery of the dance ground: young boys hawking soda and candy; the faint but unmistakable sound of rock music coming from radios and cassette players; movement to and from the concessions; parents dressing young dancers in contest costume.

Their appreciation of the many different activities that took place over the next three days and evenings of the pow-wow and their efforts to record the event were greatly assisted by explanations, comments, and suggestions offered by Tribal Chairman Elmer Blackbird; Joseph Harlan, Sr., Chairman of the Pow-Wow Committee; master of ceremonies Clifford Wolfe, Sr.; Dennis Hastings, tribal archivist of the Omaha Tribe; and many others.

In assessing the impression that the return of the cylinder recordings made, Dorothy Lee noted that the reactions after the presentation were gradual and subtle, often woven into conversations about the pow-wow's ongoing events. It seemed too that their importance to the Omaha lay not in the return of the recordings and the songs on the recordings, but in the fact that some songs were still part of the Omaha repertory after nearly a century. The singers seemed especially proud of this, and lead singer Rufus White said several times, "I know that song; we still sing that song."

Contest





Pow-wow competitions are for dancers, categorized by age and by gender, who perform "fancy" and "traditional" dances. Fancy dances call for intricate steps and more elaborate attire. At many pow-wows fancy dancing is emphasized most, but at the Omaha Pow-wow traditional dancing was stressed, and the best adult male traditional dancer received the pow-wow's biggest cash prize: \$1,000.

Judges score contestants both on dancing and costume. Younger competitors rely on parents or older siblings for help in preparation. The photograph in the parking area depicts sister and brother Linda and Norman Robinson costuming young Jamie and Seth as Norman Jr. stands by. (Photos by Carl Fleischhauer)

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Native American forms of generosity and hospitality were displayed at the pow-wow. From time to time, dances—often called “specials”—would be dedicated to a person or group. The photograph on the opposite page shows an honoring dance for John Turner, a respected tribal elder who died a few months before the event. An interview with Turner is described in the Director’s Column of Folklife Center News, Vol. VI, No. 2, April–June 1983. The dance is led by Elmer Blackbird, Chairman of the Omaha Tribal Council, who is joined by other old friends and relatives of the deceased. During the dance persons in the crowd come forward to honor Turner by placing contributions to the family into Blackbird’s hat.

A person thus honored may stage a giveaway, and present blankets,

Giveaway



shawls, and other gifts to family and friends as a means of reciprocating the tribute that has been paid by the honoring dance. Here, Pow-wow Princess Melanie Dawn Parker gives away a shawl.

The spirit of hospitality extends to meals, and all visitors to the pow-wow are fed. The corn for one meal was shucked by Ida Anderson, Pow-wow Committee Treasurer, and her friends Delia Hallowell and Rosa Linda Wolfe.

The pow-wow was also the occasion upon which Dorothy Sara Lee of the Center's Federal Cylinder Project formally gave copies of Omaha cylinder recordings to the tribe. Lee is shown here with Dennis Hastings, tribal archivist for the Omahas. (Photo of dance honoring John Turner by Dorothy Sara Lee; remaining photos by Carl Fleischhauer)



The Washington Meeting on Folk Art

The following is a preliminary program for the "Washington Meeting on Folk Art," and is subject to change. The meeting, organized by the American Folklife Center with assistance from the Museum of American Folk Art, will be held at the Library of Congress on December 5-6, 1983. Morning sessions will begin at 9:30 a.m. and afternoon sessions at 2:00 p.m. Due to limited seating, pre-registration is required. There is no charge for attendance. For further information, contact Peter Bartis at the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540, (202) 287-6590.

Concrete pieces by Laura Pope Forrester gathered on the verandah of her Pelham, Ga. home, an environmental folk art work known locally as "Mrs. Pope's Museum." (South-Central Georgia Folklife Project photograph)



Monday, December 5, 1983

Morning

Welcome from the American Folklife Center
Director, Alan Jabbour

Welcome from the Board of Trustees

An overview of Folklife Center perspectives
Director, Alan Jabbour

Panel: FOLK ART TODAY: PERSPECTIVES AND VIEWPOINTS

Moderator: John Vlach

Participants:

John Vlach, George Washington University
Eugene Metcalf, Miami University
Jules Prown, Yale University

Commentary and discussion

Herbert W. Hemphill, Jr., private collector and author
Michael Owen Jones, U.C.L.A.

Afternoon

Panel: FOLK ART AND CREATIVITY

Moderator: Henry Glassie

Participants:

Henry Glassie, University of Pennsylvania
Simon Bronner, Pennsylvania State University
Charles Briggs, Vassar College
Charles Bergengren, graduate student, University of Pennsylvania
I. Sheldon Posen, graduate student, University of Pennsylvania

Commentary and discussion

Christopher Knight, Los Angeles Herald Examiner
Kenneth L. Ames, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum

Tuesday, December 6, 1983

Morning

Panel: THE AFFECTS AND EFFECTS OF COLLECTING

Moderator: Robert Bishop

Participants:

Robert Bishop, Museum of American Folk Art

Louis C. Jones, Director Emeritus, New York State Historical Association

Suzi Jones, Alaska State Council on the Arts

Commentary and discussion

Jane Livingston, Corcoran Gallery of Art

Lonn Taylor, Museum of New Mexico

Ralph Rinzler, Smithsonian Institution

Afternoon

Panel: FOLK ART IN THE LARGER CIVILIZATION

Moderator: Beatrix Rumford, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Participants:

Richard Brettell, The Art Institute of Chicago

David Jaffee, The National Museum of American History

Rosemary O. Joyce, consultant in the humanities and traditional arts

Jack Santino, Smithsonian Institution

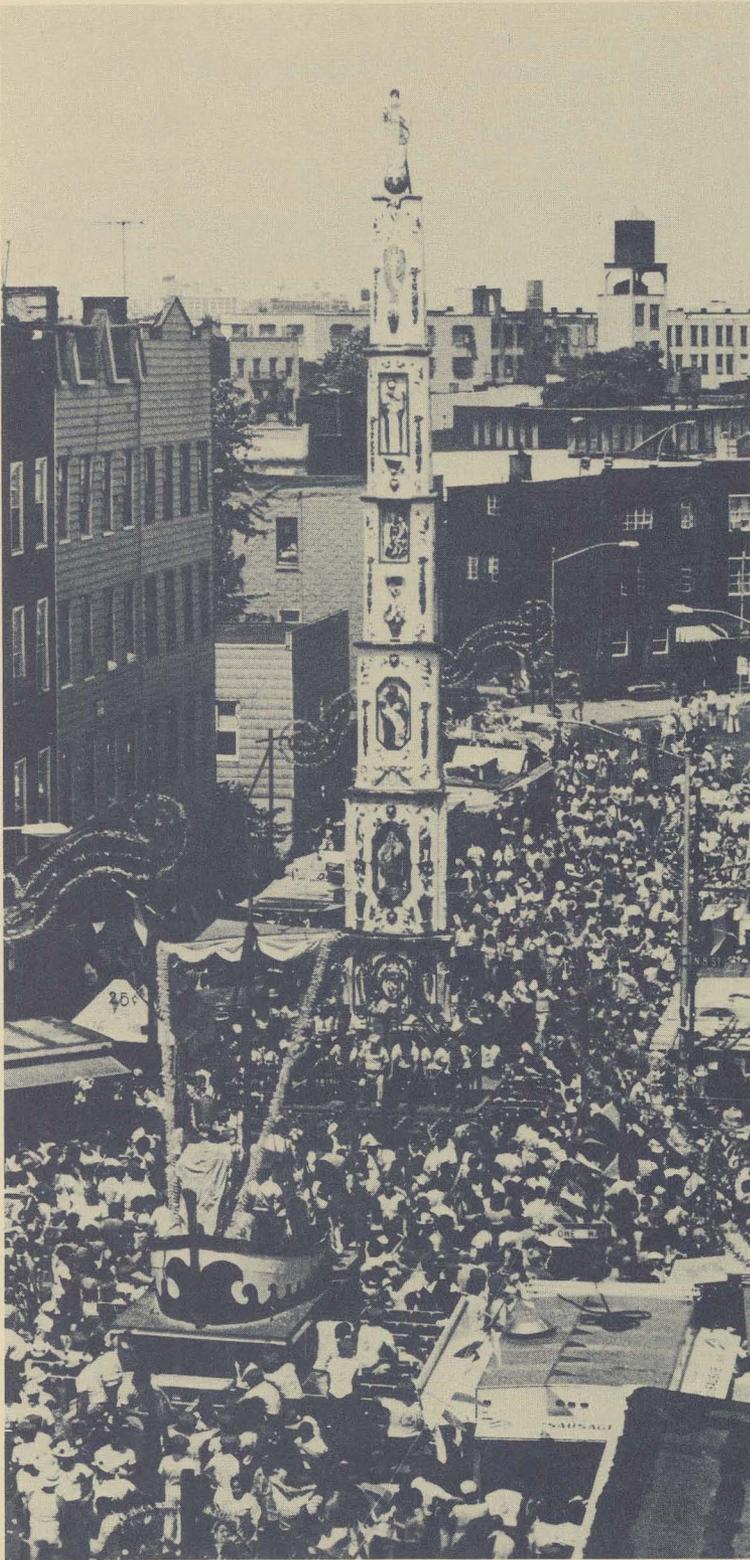
Final commentary and discussion

Alan Jabbour

Robert Bishop

Michael Durham, Americana Magazine, Inc.

Dean Failey, Christie's International Ltd.



At the annual festival held by Brooklyn's Italian community in honor of St. Paulinus of Nola to commemorate the arrival of Paulinus's ship following his release from African slavery. A six-storey giglio, representing the mountain of lilies used to welcome Paulinus, and a boat are "danced" through the streets by 128 men. I. Sheldon Posen recorded the festivities in 1981. (Photo by Martha Cooper)

Pinelands Folklife Project

The American Folklife Center's Pinelands Folklife Project, a survey of traditional culture in New Jersey's Pinelands National Reserve, got under way in September 1983. Conducted under the combined auspices of an array of public agencies and offices—the Pinelands Commission and the National Park Service, along with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Historical Commission, Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of Human Services—the project is evaluating a broad range of folk technology, craft, and expression occurring within the National Reserve.

The project's research team will conduct two months of field research during the fall of 1983 to identify and document aspects of the region's folklife. The initial fieldwork will be followed by a series of in-depth case studies based on the survey's findings in the spring of 1984. The field coordinator for the project is Susan Samuelson, a folklorist from the University of Pennsylvania. She is joined by folklorist Christine Cartwright from Memorial University of Newfoundland; Elaine Thatcher, trained in American studies and folklore at Utah State University; folklorist Jens Lund from Indiana University; Nora Rubinstein, who holds a degree in environmental psychology from New York University; and anthropologist Eugene Hunn from the University of California at Berkeley. The field team will be augmented by three project associates currently doing graduate work in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania: Thomas Carroll, Malachi O'Connor, and Bonnie Blair. Freelance photographer and instructor Joseph Czarnecki, a graduate of the Yale University School of Graphic Design, will act as photographer for the project team. The survey is being coordinated for the Center by Mary Hufford.

The Pinelands Folklife Project will emphasize living cultural resources, which distinguishes it from cultural surveys already conducted in the Pinelands. The field team will pay special attention to the interrelations of the region's cultural groups, natural resources, and landscapes. Such traditions as the ways to harvest and process muskrats and sphagnum moss, to serve snapping turtles and clams, and to navigate woods and bogs will be investigated, as will the rich vein of folklore about the region's people and places.

The project is a pilot study in several ways. The Pinelands National Reserve constitutes a unique category of public land. The National Reserve concept provides for continued development of the land in accordance with guidelines established by a commission comprised of federal, state, and local representatives. The commission hopes to apply some of the study's findings in carrying out its mandate to manage and interpret the region's resources, cultural as well as natural. Information gathered by the study may prove helpful to policymakers whose decisions can influence the vitality of traditional life in the area. The project will also demonstrate some of the recommendations made by *Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States*, particularly that government agencies join forces to conserve living cultural resources that are often less tangible, though no less real, than historic artifacts and archaeological sites.

The materials generated by the project will be added to the collections of the Library of Congress as a corpus from which copies, publications, and future research can come. A reference archive will be housed in the state to facilitate future interpretive programming in the region.

For further information on the Pinelands Folklife Project, contact Mary Hufford, Folklife Specialist, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

Cries, Chants, Pitches, and Routines

Now I'm makin' records for the
WPA
Now when you hear 'em don't
you swing and sway
Don't you fuss and don't you
fight
Don't be right
Cause these records gonna play
all night.

Hey, hey, hey, I'm the fish man
And I sell 'em by the dish pan
I sell 'em to the rich
I sell 'em to the po'
I sell 'em everywhere I go
I sell 'em up, and I sell 'em down
I sell 'em all around this town
Whoa, ho, ho, ho, fish man.

This impromptu fish cry by Clyde "Kingfish" Smith was dedicated to "Mr. Herbert Halpert and Mr. Hatch," who recorded him in New York City for the WPA's Federal Theater Project in 1939. The Archive has recordings of a number of Smith's cries. Many of them, such as "Now come on folks, I got crabs," were sales pitches set to his own or traditional tunes. In other cases he borrowed popular tunes of the day and produced cries like "Can't go home, till all my fish is gone, stormy weather," and "Now folks, I'm gonna tell you 'bout the jumpin' jive, buy your fish on the East Side." His cries are listed in the Archive of Folk Culture's recently available finding aid "Street Cries, Auction Chants, Carnival Pitches and Routines in the Recorded Collections of the Archive of Folk Culture," compiled by Amanda Dargan.

The finding aid also lists interviews with Kingfish Smith in which he talks about a few of his sales strategies.

In the Spanish neighborhood, I usually sing something Spanish. I get in a Jewish neighborhood, I sing something like "Bei mir bist du schoen," or something that



A sideshow barker and performers at the south Louisiana state fair in Donaldsonville, November 1938. (Farm Security Administration photograph by Russell Lee; Prints and Photographs Division)

rhymes fast and can be picked up easily. And I get in the colored neighborhood, I sing something kind of swiny.

Another strategy was to make people laugh and get to feeling good so they would buy some of his "jive."

In addition to street cries and interviews with produce vendors recorded in the late 1930s in New York City and Charleston, S.C., as well as Virginia and other southern states, the finding aid lists carnival and auction recordings. The carnival recordings were made in 1941 by Charles Harrell and the Library of Congress Radio Research Project when the James E. Strates Shows came to Washington. Amanda Dargan, whose work on the finding aid grew out of several years of research on carnival pitches and street cries, said recently that she is particularly interested in the Archive's recordings of the Strates carnival because they are so complete.

Donning earphones and listening to the carnival recordings, you are transported to a vacant lot covered in tents, just prior to

World War II. You hear the signature sounds of calliope and motordrome and the barking for individual sideshows. One barker begins his buildup, "The James E. Strates Shows presents a real two-headed baby." He continues through his entire pitch and ends with the final "grind" to sell tickets—"Now is a very good time to go, no waiting or delay whatever. Come in now."

Moving inside the tent, you are treated to the less commonly recorded sounds of the inside lecture—in this case the nurse who travels with the baby explaining the details of its physiology, followed by a question-and-answer period. Interviews with the nurse, the baby's uncle, and other carnival show people were also recorded, along with a number of other sideshow routines.

The auction recordings listed in the finding aid are more recent. The earliest were made by Herbert Halpert at Kentucky furniture, livestock, and tobacco auctions in 1948. There are also recordings of auctions of household furniture or tobacco from the mid-1970s. Another item in the Archive's collections is a ninety-minute cassette

recording titled "How to Chant Like a Professional Auctioneer," by Col. George Beam.

One lasting impression made by the Archive's recordings of street cries and sales chants is of musicality. The street cries from Charleston, S.C. sound as though they could well have been the inspiration for parts of *Porgy and Bess*. Auctioneer Bob Cage counterpoints his own vocalizations to the background swishing rhythm of the bundles of tobacco called "hands" being pulled from the bottom of stacks, examined by buyers, and dropped back on top. Gerald E. Parsons, Jr., who recorded him in 1976, says Cage is very aware of the musical dimension of his work, an awareness that may well have been shared by vendors like Kingfish Smith, who consciously set his fish cries to songs recorded by Ethel Waters and Cab Calloway.

"Street Cries, Auction Chants, and Carnival Pitches and Routines in the Recorded Collections of the Archive of Folk Culture" invites you to explore "the oral poetry of the marketplace." It is available free of charge from the Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

"It's Pow-Wow Time!"



Fancy dance contestants prepare for the competition in the parking lot prior to arena performances at the 1983 Omaha tribal pow-wow. A story about this Nebraska event will be found on pages 7-11.

Front cover: From Cultural Conservation, Pine Barrens decoy maker John Holloway (L) teaches a wood shop class at Central Regional High School, Bayville, N.J. The class was part of a Folk-Artists-in-Education project supported by the Arts Endowment's Folk Arts Program in 1979.

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