REPORT ON WAYNE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES*

Thelma James

In any section of the Old Northwest Territory, history and tradition move easily together. But this pleasant and illuminating condition is nowhere as well reflected as in the Detroit Metropolitan area where colorful and significant local history provides the background for the folklore of the world's people who now live here. It has become the task of the Wayne University Folklore Archives to deal with the traditional materials of the ethnic groups of the area.

Professor Emelyn E. Gardner (now retired) brought to Wayne University her rich collecting, archiving, and editing experience in her native New York State, and, as a teacher at the Michigan State Normal College, of upstate Michigan. Thus, while the chief concern of the Archives has been for the Metropolitan Detroit area, it contains items from Michigan and other states.

Since Miss Gardner began the Archives in 1939 by rich collections of Armenian, Italian, Polish, and Finnish lore, it has grown steadily by yearly additions. The first materials were collected by young women trained from their high school days. The general policy has been to collect any and all items at hand, with special emphasis on the lore of ethnic groups, and of the kinds until now most sought in the United States. Physical materials have been neglected for lack of space and assistance. Complete archiving, indexing, cross-indexing, typing and motifing have had to wait, for the pressure of collecting among the sixty groups resident here, steadily growing older and dying, has been great.

More than 250 manuscripts are prepared in duplicate so that while one copy remains intact, the other may be cut up and distributed on the basis of whatever archiving patterns are finally adopted. Tales

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have been recorded on typing paper, on tape, and discs. Shorter items like cures, games, charms, weather lore, children's rhymes, superstitions, riddles, have been kept on 3 x 5 cards, and are now cross-indexed. Cures, numbering in the thousands, have been cross-indexed by disease and curing agent.

The larger materials (such as tales and songs) have been indexed by the ethnic group of origin and each collection thereunder is in a separate folder giving reasonable adequate information for collector, year, informants, file indices (which are maintained alphabetically for both collectors and informants). An accession book is kept wherein each collection is given a sequential number with a brief notation of the amount and kinds of materials. Eventually each item will be indexed and easily found when it is denoted by number and page. For example, 37 GN-4T (1943) would mean Accession number 37 found in 1943, Norwegian, page 4, a tale (which will have its Type number and Motif analysis). But this is very time consuming and requires trained, consistent workers, hard to find. Further essential or helpful refinements are anticipated.

European Lore (32 Countries):

Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Holland, England, Friesland, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Norway, Poland, Roumania, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, Wales, Yugoslavia. (The names are those given by the older informants who still think in terms of the old, often no longer used, names of their native lands.) Of these the fullest collections are: Armenian, Finnish, Italian, Polish (all widely represented in this area).

Non-European Lore (8 Countries):

Canada, French-Canada, Jamaica, Liberia, Mexico, South Africa, Syria, West Indies, Yucatan.

Japan, China, Korea have contributed extremely interesting and varied materials. Recently two hundred Korean proverbs have come in.
United States:

Folklore of all kinds is represented from all of the forty-eight states except Idaho and Nevada.

Michigan:

Fifteen counties, the Great Lakes. Folders of these towns: Clarkston, Detroit, Flat Rock, Gibralter, Grosse Ile, Harbor Springs, Mount Clemens, Northville, Sebewaing, Utica, Wyandotte.

Special Folders:

American Negro, American Indian, Jewish.

There is scarcely a topic from charms to voodoo which has not been touched upon. The cross-indexing of these topical items is essential for quick-finding, but it is time-consuming to complete and is not finished. In fact, the break down of all categories is a task large enough to occupy a full time archivist for a year or two.

There are also on file a series of seven albums of folk songs on discs, all of which have been transcribed as has virtually all of the music received. The Armenian songs have been sent to the Library of Congress. At present a series of slides in color dealing with folk costume and folk art in the area is being developed.

On file are 210 'Studies' which are derived from term papers and other analyses. These are chiefly valuable for a kind of overview and elementary bibliographies of many topics. Students have developed these from either a personal or professional interest. They will now provide a fairly good starting point on scores of topics of popular interest. Former students write regularly asking for reprints or portions of their earlier work which continue to interest or serve them.

Professional Tapes:

Fourteen half-hour tapes have been made; they cover (with illustrations) such topics as: cures, games, proverbs, folk songs and tales, Christmas and Easter festivals. These were made for radio broadcasting by the Wayne University and large commercial
radio stations. Here they constitute a well-received part of the program of adult education.

Purposes and Uses of the Archives

It has been the hope that we might cover fairly thoroughly the folklore of the ethnic groups of the Metropolitan area to the end that we might preserve this fast-disappearing lore, archive it, finally publish it. Meantime, the Archives are proving a sound resource for trained scholars who seek to know and understand the sociological, psychological, and traditional aspects of our ethnic groups.

Wayne University Detroit, Michigan