AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FOLKLORE DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CANADA, OTTAWA

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HISTORY, ORGANIZATION, and FACILITIES

Folkloristic research was first introduced at the National Museum of Canada by Marius Barbeau, who, under the auspices of that institution, initiated his investigations into French-Canadian folklore in 1915. A special section devoted exclusively to general folklore research was not formally organized until 1957 at which time Carmen Roy was appointed Chief of the new Folklore Division.

The Folklore Division forms one of the five divisions which constitute the National Museum's Human History Branch. The other four are Archeology, The Canadian War Museum, Ethnology, and History. The Museum maintains a number of common services to which all Divisions have access. These include the Museum Library, photo lab and processing, display services, editorial and other technical facilities. Data processing machines are currently being installed. In addition to the services available within the Museum complex itself, the Division has access to many of the resources offered by other branches of the Canadian Government.

The Folklore Division is currently located in the Victoria Memorial Museum Building in downtown Ottawa, the capital of Canada, where it occupies approximately 1,500 square feet of floor space, or nine rooms, which include five offices, one archives room, one sound room, one storage room, and a special room which house the archival collections of Dr. Marius Barbeau ("La Salle Marius Barbeau"). In addition, temperature controlled storage space for the Division's collection of artifacts has been set aside in the Laperrière Building in Ottawa's west end, and in the cold storage room within the Victoria Museum Building.

The daily activities of the Division are carried out by five full time workers and two part time assistants. These include two professional folklorists, one administrative secretary, and two cataloguers and their assistants. The Division is also directly responsible for the administration of an extensive outside contract research and display program which during the fiscal year of 1967-68 amounted to approximately $75,000.
SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

The main field of interest of the Folklore Division is focused on the investigation of all manifestations of folklore in Canada. Its status and function as the national repository of Canadian folklore materials makes the Division an important source of information for the general public as well as for scholars, institutions, and various organizations around the world.

The Division's physical holdings include manuscript collections, tapes, discs, wax cylinders, various types of card catalogues (acquisitions, analytical, bibliographical), unpublished field reports, photographs and slides, clipping files, information listings, and others. One of the most valuable holdings is a tape collection of Canadian folklore materials which at the end of the 1966-67 fiscal year numbered almost 2,500 reels representing approximately 35,000 different items on tape; of these 20,887 songs and tales and 4,923 melodies have been transcribed. In addition to the tape collection, the Division also holds about 42,000 classified manuscript items which have been noted in the field without the use of sound recording equipment.

ARCHIVAL PROCEDURES

Accessioning

All materials recorded on tape, transcribed from tape, or noted by hand, are stored and accessioned under the name of the collector.

Each collector is provided with a code usually composed of the first few letters of his or her surname (e.g., PEA for the collection of Mr. Kenneth Peacock). Each reel of tape is assigned an accession number composed of the abbreviated form of the surname and a reel number (e.g., PEA 150 designates the 150th reel in the Division's collection of tapes recorded in the field by Mr. Peacock). Almost eighty different collections are currently stored and accessioned in this manner.

After each individual reel has been assigned an accession
number, an itemized list is typed out for each reel in duplicate. The list serves as a guide to the different items found on the reel and provides the name of the informant along with the name or description of the item recorded. Each individual item is given a number which, like the reel number, locates the item within the collector's entire collection of taped materials. Thus, the full accession number for any given item is composed of three elements: the abbreviated surname of the collector, the reel number in his collection, and the item number (e.g., PEA 150, item no. 985). One copy of the itemized list is inserted, along with the reel, into a dust-proof metal can and shelved in the section allotted for the tapes of the collector. The duplicate copy of the itemized list is placed in a file folder which is marked with the reel accession number (e.g., PEA 150) and which includes any transcriptions which may have been made or will be made for any of the items found on the itemized list.

A 6" by 4" descriptive or topographical card is filled out for each item. This card identifies the item by genre or category, by accession number, gives basic data on the informant, gives the place and date of the recording, and provides technical information concerning the recording itself. Depending on the nature of the item, the topographical card may be one of seven colors or printed in one of Canada's two official languages, English or French. The color scheme is as follows:

1. yellow topographical cards for all Eskimo and Indian materials
2. blue topographical cards for all materials collected among Canada's minority and immigrant ethnic groups
3. pink topographical cards for instrumental music
4. white topographical cards for songs
5. turquoise topographical cards for interviews
6. salmon topographical cards for accounts
7. buff topographical cards for folktales.

There are seven colors in English and five in French; the yellow and blue cards exist only in English. One of the twelve topographical cards is selected for each item, filled in, and filed under the name of the collector in numerical order according to the full accession number previously established.

For information concerning the general content of any collection, the topographical card index is consulted first, thereby eliminating the unnecessary use of transcription files as well as the reels themselves. A given collector's topographical card catalogue reveals at a glance the general nature of his collection: an all white topographical card catalogue, for instance, indicates that the given collection is devoted exclusively to folksong materials; a multi-colored topographical card catalogue, on the other hand, shows a varied collection, and so on.
Basic Cross-Indexing

Additional catalogues are established either in anticipation of certain kinds of requests for information or as part of the Division's research program. All cross-index catalogues refer to specific items by accession number.

Songs: Separate card catalogues are maintained for each of the following features as found in every song text of a specific collection: themes and motifs, popular title, first line, place where recorded, name of singer, refrain.

Tales: The Division maintains a collection of transcribed tales classified according to Aarne-Thompson's international system of classification and cross-indexed by means of card catalogues under the following headings: special tale accession number catalogue, popular titles, names of informants, places where tales recorded.

Indian and Eskimo Materials: (1) All Indian folklore materials are cross-indexed by tribe; (2) all Eskimo folklore materials are cross-indexed by subject; (3) both Eskimo and Indian folklore materials are cross-indexed by Provinces and Territories in separate catalogues.

Ethnic Folklore Materials: All folklore materials recorded among Canada's minority and immigrant ethnic groups are cross-indexed by means of card catalogue, according to the name of the specific ethnic group followed by sub-headings for the different genres and categories which have been recorded. At the end of the 1966-67 fiscal year, the Division's archival holdings included folklore materials collected among twenty-four of Canada's minority, non-aboriginal ethnic groups.

Field Artifacts: The Division maintains a special descriptive card catalogue for its artifact collection (Figures 1 and 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOLKLORE SPECIMEN</th>
<th>Classification no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition no.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of specimen:</td>
<td>Ethnic group:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Dimensions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor's/vendor's name and address</td>
<td>Price:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Person(s) who arranged for acquisition (if other than donor/vendor):  

Supplementary materials:  
(1) sound recordings  
(2) photos  
(3) film  
(4) other documents  
(5) bibliographical references  

Figure 1. Descriptive card (front).
Transcribing and Sorting Procedures

Much of the work at the Division is involved with the processing of "raw" folklore materials on tape which have been recorded in the field by members of the Division's professional staff. Generally, these are complex collections which cover many different aspects of folklore or which approach a single folkloristic phenomenon "in depth." The procedures adopted in these cases are as follows:

1) the taped materials are transcribed verbatim by a technician and typed out on legal-sized paper, double-spaced, in duplicate;

2) the cataloguer examines the original typewritten copy, marks off those segments which relate to the Division's system of classification, and assigns item accession numbers using the classified segments as a guide (see "Accessioning," above);

3) an itemized index is compiled for all the materials which have been transcribed and taped field materials in the sound lab.
classified for a particular reel (if the index appears to be too bulky to be inserted with the reel into storage metal container, a skeleton-index of one or two pages is compiled for this purpose, using the complete index as a guide);

4) topographical cards (see under "Accessioning," above) are filled out according to the color scheme outlined earlier;

5) the assistant cataloguer notes onto the duplicate carbon copy the classification headings and item accession numbers established by the cataloguer on the original;

6) the duplicate copy together with the complete index sheet(s) are filed in a folder which is marked by the proper accession number (see under "Accessioning," above);

7) the original, itemized and classified copy of the transcription is cut up according to the classified segments. Song texts and tales are automatically transferred to other cataloguers who group and classify the texts in keeping with the basic cross-indexing procedures outlined earlier;

8) each of the remaining classified, cut-up segments is mounted onto a separate piece of blank paper at the head of which has been typed the classification heading, data concerning the informant, and the full item accession number. That is, each excerpted and mounted classified segment is identified by (a) a classification heading which relates the given excerpt to the Division's classification system; (b) a full item accession number which refers to the particular collection, reel, and item from which the segment has been excerpted; (c) data concerning the informant (name, place, date of recording, age);

9) the mounted, classified, excerpted segment is then filed in a folder under an appropriate heading in keeping with the Division's system of classification.

Work on a classification system for Canadian folklore materials forms an important aspect of the Division's long-term research program. The system is Consulting the transcription files in the Archives Room.
currently being developed largely on the basis of French-Canadian materials and is periodically revised and refined in keeping with the new insights offered by the influx of more and more field materials.

PUBLICATIONS

Publications in Folklore are issued by the National Museum of Canada as part of its Anthropological Series of Bulletins. Past publications include:

- Folk Songs of Old Quebec (1935, 1936, 1964), by Marius Barbeau
- Folklore of Waterloo County, Ont. (1950), by W. J. Wintemberg
- Folklore of Lunenburg County, N.S. (1950), by Helen Creighton
- La littérature orale en Gaspésie (1955), by Carmen Roy
- Le moules du Québec (1963), by R.-L. Séguin
- Gaelic Songs in Nova Scotia (1964), by Helen Creighton and Calum MacLeod
- Songs of the Newfoundland Outports (1965), 3 volumes, by Kenneth Peacock
- Folk Ballads and Songs of the Lower Labrador Coast (1965), by MacEdward Leach.

Publications to be released in 1968 include:

- Le costume en Nouvelle-France, by R.-L. Séguin
- A Bibliography of Ukrainian Folklore in Canada, 1902-64, by R. B. Klymasz
- Dance and Song Rituals of Six Nations Reserve, by Gertrude Kurath
- Songs of the Doukhobors, by Kenneth Peacock.