

Thus, the book must stand simply as a charming collection of well told tales, full justification of Richard Dorson's comments that "no nation of the world has gathered in its folktales with the fullness, the loving care, and dazzling rewards manifest in Ireland" (Richard M. Dorson, "Foreword" in Sean O'Sullivan, Folktales of Ireland [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966], p. v.). If the reader is willing to abandon his scholarly inclinations he can enjoy five full richly-embellished narratives. The lack of editorial involvement is a more commendable quality when considering the texts; the book is an eloquent argument for exact reproduction of the teller's words. Dillon translated the tales from the original Gaelic, carefully noting any alterations of the original text -- either for purposes of clarification or logical completion of the story when, as in at least one case, the dictaphone broke down. The translation is skillful, revealing an appreciation for the sound of words, as in the alliterative sentence "He put on his short suit of Indian rubber, his two curved carved shoes below his two fine Greek graceful greaves plated with Spanish silver."

Although all the tales begin with a reference to a "king in Ireland long ago," they actually center around the deeds and adventures of one of the king's sons. The texts reveal the problems inherent in reproducing in writing a man's speech -- the lapses in coherent style, the occasional introduction of a motif that is abruptly abandoned; but they also display the vigor and beauty of oral narrative. The formulae, the "runs" and conventions are recorded in full and the teller emerges with personality and style.

American Fiddle Tunes From the Archive of Folk Song, edited by Alan Jabbour, Head, Archive of Folk Song, Music Division, Library of Congress. Folk Music of the World series, Recording Laboratory L62, 33 rpm sound recording, with 36-page Introduction-discography-bibliography-discussion by Jabbour.

Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1971. No price given.

Reviewed by Rodney Moag.

This long-playing record, put out by the Library of Congress, brings forth 28 field recordings made in the late '30's and early '40's from the Archive of Folk Song. Fourteen separate fiddlers are heard covering a wide range of style, place of origin, and quality of performance.

The Library of Congress, Music Division, is to be commended for making these interesting recordings available. Especially praiseworthy is the booklet which accompanies the record. Besides selected bibliographic and discographic data, it also contains sensitively-written background information on each fiddler and each tune, along with many fascinating facts or observations about fiddling in general, and style differences in particular. Any true lover of fiddling, whether professional scholar or aficionado, would approve of the thorough scholarship found here.

The style of language in which the booklet is written is, however, at times overacademic, and this detracts a bit from its overall effect. It seems somehow inappropriate to discuss such an exciting and down-to-earth sub-

ject as fiddling with terms like "aberration," especially where we fiddlers already have an accepted term -- i.e., "change in the tune." The valuable information contained in the text would be far more accessible to the amateur enthusiast if the language were less pedantic. The style of language tends to obscure the sound scholarship of the writer rather than attest to it.

To turn to the music on the record, the collection is not as representative as it might be. First, the album contains only fast tunes. Because of their relative neglect elsewhere, I would have chosen to include at least one of each of the major types of slow fiddle tunes; waltz, slow march, and especially song air.

More importantly, the two fiddlers given greatest prominence on the record, four tunes each, are the least typical. Leisime Brusoe was a French-Canadian living in Wisconsin, and the pamphlet itself contains the following statement about W. M. Stepp from Kentucky: "Stepp's fluidity is either a local or an individual peculiarity" (Alan Jabbour, ed., American Fiddle Tunes, p. 20). These performers do, by all means, merit a place on the album precisely because they diverge from tradition (see below); but including two numbers by each would have kept them better in perspective as well as allowing room for samples of types of fiddling or regional variants not represented in the present collection.

One entire side of the record, 14 bands, is devoted to items from the South, but there is not one Cajun tune from Louisiana among them. The eleven recordings on the other side are supposed to provide a sampling from the rest of the country. However, Texas fiddling is completely absent. A recent paper ("The Fiddling Traditions of Cape Breton and Texas: A Study in Parallels and Contrasts," Nov., 1971 AFS convention, Washington, D.C.) by Earl Spielman from the University of Hawaii documents the distinctive character of this style.

On the other hand, I find the album superb in several crucial areas. Technically the quality could not be better. The reproduction on most of the recordings is amazingly good.

Second, the compiler deserves a bouquet for his recognition of the influences of non-traditional sources. Often archivists are so caught up in their research for the "pure tradition" that anything which bears the taint of modern influence is cast aside as irrelevant. Of course it is basic to catch the stolid tradition-bearer, but equally noteworthy are those performers whose inner self cannot be satisfied by simply promoting the static tradition. These are the musicians who form new styles, and even new traditions, through a combination of the old tradition and contemporary commercial music, leavening the amalgam with something of their own creative genius. Brusoe and Stepp, mentioned above, are notable examples.

The compiler is further intimately acquainted with the development of commercial musical forms over the past several decades, and its influence on both fiddlers and certain fiddle-tunes is well handled.

Finally, I have always had a personal aversion toward rigorous academic treatment of folk music for fear that it would dissolve that mystical attraction which the music has held for me since early childhood.

Happily the scholarly approach of the pamphlet did not destroy anything; on the contrary it added new dimensions of depth to my appreciation of fiddling.

The record and booklet are available as a single package from the Recording Laboratory, Music Division, Library of Congress, and deserve a place in the personal collection of any true lover of good old-time fiddling.

The Ballad of Tom Dula, by John Foster West.

212 pp., illustrations, bibliography.

Durham, N. C.: Moore Publishing Company, 1970. \$6.95.

Reviewed by Richard Sweterlitsch.

After reading John Foster West's book about the real story of Tom Dula, I ran off and got out an old 45 rpm of "The Ballad of Tom Dooley." Somehow, it just seemed like the thing to do. At least I really knew how Grayson fitted into the whole picture, and that Dooley, nee Dula, wasn't really all that the song made him.

The Ballad of Tom Dula is one of those books which proposes to recreate an historical event. Based on court records (limited as they were), newspaper accounts (sensational as they were) and West's own re-creative skills, the book makes most interesting reading. Tom Dula, Laura Foster, Ann Melton, James Grayson are all here, and they are here with somewhat detailed character sketches. There are also briefer descriptions of the major witnesses, the judge, and the various attorneys. Large pieces of testimony are reprinted, suggesting what mountain courtroom justice may have been like in the 1860's.

West knows something about folklore (he's presently one of the vice-presidents of the North Carolina Folklore Society), and he has an acute skill in handling historical facts. Yet, although historical re-creation is a major aim of the book, there is a reasonable proportion of space devoted to oral tradition about the Dula affair.

In the first part of the book, West reprints sixteen ballad texts or fragments of texts about Dula and the murder. In the first chapter, he compares ten stories about the murder, including one he collected in 1969. He includes these to show discrepancies in the various oral traditions, and between the traditions and the facts themselves. West writes: "The important point to be made here is that 'The Ballad of Tom Dula' and the myths surrounding it serve as classic examples showing how folklore grows up around most folk ballads and how the two complement each other. Discovering what really happened to Tom Dula and those involved in the tragedy clarifies the relationship of all folk ballads to the montage of facts and myths upon which they are based" (p. 50). This problem of clarifying the relationship between folklore and written history is adroitly handled by West, and his methodology should interest persons who are interested in the problem. Whether the book "clarifies the relationship of all folk ballads to the montage of facts and myths" or not, remains to be seen.