Star Myths And Stories From Andromeda To Virgo. By Percy M. Proctor. 
Pp. 183, introduction. 
New York: Exposition Press, n.d. $6.00 cloth. 

Reviewed by W. K. McNeil 

According to the book jacket, Percy M. Proctor is a retired public school principal who for more than fifty years has been intensely interested in astronomy. During this time he has been able to interest numerous elementary and junior high students in his hobby. Apparently with the intention of getting even more people enthused about astronomy he has compiled Star Myths And Stories. This is, of course, an admirable goal and for such a purpose the book is, I suppose, adequate. For folklorists, however, the volume has no significance. The fifty myths (using the term here in a very loose popular sense) and stories herein are rewritten literary texts ranging in length from one paragraph to nine pages. Mr. Proctor, however, is a pleasant enough writer and if his style is no better it is certainly no worse than that found in numerous other works of this type. If his book succeeds in interesting one person in astronomy then, I suspect, it will have achieved its author's purpose and at the same time proved that its publication was not a waste of time. 

Records 

Cajun Sole (sic): Traditional Cajun Folk Music. By the Mamou Cajun Band, featuring Cyp' and Adam Landraneau. 
12 selections, vocal and instrumental, mono, liner notes by Paul C. Tate. 
Swallow LP-8001. Swallow Records, Ville Platte, Louisiana 70586, n.d. $5.98. 

Ed and Bee Deshotels Chantent de la Vie des Cajuns. 
12 selections, vocal and instrumental, stereo, notes by Revon Reed. 
Swallow LP-6017, n.d. $5.98. 

The Balfa Brothers Play Traditional Cajun Music. 
12 selections, vocal and instrumental, stereo, liner notes by Mrs. Edna Redlich. 
Swallow LP-6011, n.d. $5.98. 

Reviewed by Jens Lund 

The French-speaking Cajuns of southern Louisiana have, over the years, developed an esoteric folk music by syncretism of French musical traditions with those of their Anglo- and Afro-American neighbors. During the late 1920's and early 1930's, when numerous "hillbilly" and blues performers were being recorded in the field by commercial talent scouts, some Cajun performers, such as Joseph Falcon and Leo Soileau, were also commercially recorded. Their popularity, both within and outside of the Cajun region of Louisiana, later influenced Country and Western music's development. On the other hand, through radio and mass-produced recordings, Country and Western also made significant inroads upon the culture of southern Louisiana, with the effect that by the 1940's, many of the most popular Cajun musicians were performing nothing more than Country and Western music with a few French features, such as a prominent accordion and the inclusion of a few Cajun-French idioms. A Cajun stage stereotype also emerged, consisting of a comedian in bib overalls and hip-boots cracking self-deprecating
jokes in French-accented broken English. It was not until Sarah Gertrude Knott included a traditional Cajun band at the 1957 National Folk Festival in Oklahoma City that the older, more esoteric form of Cajun music began to be deliberately revived. Since then, traditional Cajun bands have played at the Newport Folk Festival, the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, numerous collegiate events, and at the 1973 Presidential inauguration. A further development has been the popularity among the Rock music audience of Doug Kershaw, a musician and singer of Cajun origin, whose music still incorporates some Cajun elements. The effect of this widespread notice has been a deliberate revival of interest in traditional music among the Cajuns themselves. This revival has been spurred to some degree by the Swallow Record Company and Floyd's Record Shop of Ville Platte, Louisiana. Over a hundred LP records of Cajun music of varying authenticity have been released by Swallow, including the following three examples.

The most traditional Cajun music on the Swallow label is played by the Mamou Band, consisting of Cypr' Landreneau, accordion; Adam Landreneau, fiddle; and Jerry Devillier or Isom Fontenot, triangle. The Mamou band's interpretations are somewhat similar to those of the 1920's and 1930's recordings. The waltzes, "La Valse de Kaplan," "La Valse de Pinier," "La Valse de Opelousas," "Ta Robe Barre," and "Grand Mamou," are performed in the older style, featuring unison playing of fiddle and treble accordion notes, triangle percussion, and the throbbing pump organ-like accompaniment on the accordion's bass notes associated with the Joseph Falcon band of the late 1920's. All of the songs are sung by Cypr' Landreneau except "Colinda," which is sung by Adam. The latter song is believed to be based upon a dance of West Indian origin, indicative of contact with Louisiana's Creole culture. All of the selections are dance-tunes, as is most Cajun music - waltzes, one-steps, and two-steps, with the waltzes played in moderate tempo and the others in a faster tempo. Of particular interest is the song "Rosalie," which describes, with some humor, the defloration of a young woman. Folklorists have, of course, been aware of the presence of sexual humor in most cultures, but "boosters" of folk music often ignore such traditions for propriety's sake. Perhaps the fact that the song is sung in an archaic French dialect makes it less objectionable to the record's producers.

One feature of traditional Cajun music that occurs in numerous places in the songs is the sound of repeated interjections, described as "yipping yells." The notes for the Mamou Band album are extensive and give considerable background information on Cajun music, culture, and history, albeit of a "local color" type. The Cajuns, like other ethnic communities in the contemporary United States, are experiencing a deliberate expression of ethnic consciousness, which is reflected in some of the notes to the Swallow record albums.

Ed and Bee Deshotels' music is unlike most of the Cajun music heard on commercial records. It consists of slow lyric songs, some of them narrative such as "La Veuve du Lac Bleu" and "Un Saint sur la Terre." The vocals are performed alternately by Ed and Bee, with Ed playing either unison or octave intervals on the fiddle and Bee on acoustic guitar. Unlike many Cajun recordings, the record is of little interest to the person who has no understanding of Cajun French, as the songs are primarily text-oriented. There is insufficient musical variety to sustain listening interest to more than a few of the songs on the album. Six of the selections are traditional and the other eight are composed and copyrighted by the Deshotels.

The Balfa Brothers' music represents an attempt to take the traditional acoustic instrumentation and high-pitched, rough-timbed singing of Cajun music and introduce speed, syncopation and harmony. The result is a sound which is indisputably modern, but which does not compromise with Country and Western as have most previous attempts to modernize the music. The effect is comparable to that of Bill Monroe on the traditional Appalachian string-band, and it has sufficient variety so that the Balfa Brothers are in demand at folk music events outside
of Louisiana. The band consists of five musicians - Dewey Balfa, lead fiddle and vocals; Rodney Balfa, guitar; Harry Balfa, guitar; Burke Balfa, triangle; Will Balfa, second fiddle (played in baritone harmony); and Hadley Fontenot, accordion. The inclusion of guitars and double fiddle is a departure from the traditional Cajun ensemble of violin, accordion, and triangle. The music is, however, essentially traditional Cajun dance music, with all but the waltzes played in a fast tempo, but the inclusion of harmony and complex, almost Bluegrass-like fiddling, suggests a deliberate attempt to appeal to non-Cajun audiences. Of particular interest is the love song, "Parlez Nous a Boire," which is sung in close "hillbilly" style harmony.

Of the three albums reviewed, the most typical of Cajun tradition is that of the Mamou band. Unfortunately, the selections were not chosen for variety sufficient for the record to be very entertaining to persons who are not Cajun music devotees. The Deshotels' album appeals, as previously stated, only to persons with a command of the language. The Balfa Brothers' appeal to non-Cajun listeners by virtue of their variety and innovation makes their album one which could be recommended to persons who have not yet acquired a taste for the music. Fortunately, they are able to innovate without compromising the music's essential qualities, all of which survive despite the "slick" professionalism of the band.

12 selections, vocal and instrumental, stereo, commentary by Keith Cunningham. AFF Limited Edition 33-2. Arizona Friends of Folklore, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, 1972. $5.00

Reviewed by Howard Wight Marshall

The appearance of this second album from Arizona is a welcome event not only because it offers up another dozen examples of bona fide traditional material, but because it also signals the apparent success and stability of the young regional society, the Arizona Friends of Folklore. Volume One in the potentially long and rich series of discs (reviewed here, 4:6, 1971) was produced on a thin budget in the expectation that its and the society's success would allow for further issues of live, collected cowboy material.

Again local folk musicians were sought out for the taping sessions in Flagstaff, one of whom, Roberts, appeared on the earlier LP. Again Cunningham and staff have provided an excellent selection of material and have added a soundly-researched and annotated brochure with the record. Cunningham's wife Kathy, a talented photographer, once more provided the album cover design and execution. Some, though very little, of the recorded material is not necessarily "cowboy," and might well be collected elsewhere, particularly fiddler Crandall's numbers (which this writer has collected in Missouri and Indiana). Interestingly, Crandall here plays "Turkey in the Straw" and "Soldier's Joy" as a play-party medley, and Cunningham keenly notes the lack of Ben Botkin's awareness of this sort of church-oriented (Crandall is Mormon) instrumental music in his The American Play-Party. Crandall also plays "The Irish Washer Woman," and "Peek-A-Boo Waltz," well-known and well-traveled fiddle tunes. Frances Roberts performs