

FIELD SPECIFICS LEARNED FIRST-HAND IN THE CITY

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I walked slowly up the concrete steps and hesitantly entered the small pentecostal church. A tall, stout black woman was speaking to a congregation of perhaps ten, and as I took a seat in one of the empty rear pews, she raised her voice and commanded me, "Come on up front, brother. The back row is for backsliders." Thus began my introduction to field-work.¹

The field, however, was not far afield, only as far as the west side of Bloomington, Indiana. I was a second-year Indiana University graduate student in Folklore and Ethnomusicology, and for three months in 1974 I studied the music and traditions of this black pentecostal church and its minister, Reverend Helen Hartfield.

Because of this experience as well as several years of compiling a gospel music bibliography, I was unofficially designated as the Folklore Institute's resident "expert" on black gospel and was appointed ethnomusicologist for the Urban Folklore Team Project. In May 1976 I found myself at the wheel of my Volkswagen, driving north to the unfamiliar territory of the Calumet Region, known for steel, ethnics, and crime, though not necessarily in that order.

Could I, small-towner-at-heart, find safety and success in the big city--in crimy, grimy Gary? Could a young white man--conspicuously white--find informants and acceptance in the black community? Plagued by rural ragweed, how would my nose withstand the noxious fumes and milldust of Steel City? Primed with but a single lesson on the videotape camera, would I be able to operate it without fumbling? A student of Afro-American musics, I was prepared to study sanctified shouters, but how was I going to handle Balkan Bouzoukists, Serbian soloists, mariachi musicians, singers of salsa?

Many uncertainties plagued me as I drove to Gary. When I arrived colleague Richard March whisked me away to the Croatian Hall in Gary, where a folk dance group was practicing. Somehow March persuaded me to join the group in learning the miserlou and several kolos. The waltz had been the closest I had ever come to participating in an ethnic dance, but--to my surprise--I picked up the kolos quickly and enjoyed them thoroughly. For the moment, cares vanished, as I had a sweaty but exciting introduction to one of the Region's many ethnic traditions.

I stayed for three days, reconnoitering the cityscape and taking stock, as it were, of the situation. After returning to Bloomington for five days I undertook a five-and-a-half week stint in the Region (three weeks of it uninterrupted). From my initial visit I knew what type of clothes I would need to wear, what to bring in the way of notebooks, paper, and so on. I would recommend to other fieldworkers that if possible, they include such a preliminary trip to their research site.

I set three related goals for myself: (1) to collect on audio and videotape representative samples of musical traditions, especially of black gospel music, (2) to document these recordings with still photographs and oral data, and (3) to make a preliminary survey of black religious music, in order to begin exploring research questions. My work constitutes more than collecting, yet the exploratory nature of the Gary Project and the six weeks' time limitation prevented my fully investigating even one major research problem of the many that intrigued me: gospel's changing styles and subgenres, musical differences among the various denominations, attitudes toward increasing instrumentation, voluntary associations of gospel musicians, and professionalism.

Researching the Locale

Despite having participated in about eight

months of weekly Gary Project meetings, I felt poorly prepared for my fieldwork in the Region. Though I had taken a seminar in Urban Ethnomusicology, I had not taken a course in Urban Folklore. Busy with course-work commitments during the academic year, I lacked the time to read appropriate historical or ethnographic material on the Region. Without a map on which to localize area landmarks such as U.S. Steel, Indiana University Northwest, and cities such as Whiting and Munster, these locations meant very little to me; my cognitive map of the Region was blank.

Upon arriving in Gary, I obtained free-of-charge from the Gary National Bank a large and detailed map of the Calumet Region, which proved to be most helpful. By consulting the National Atlas of the United States of America,² a fascinating and invaluable compendium, I learned that more than half the church members in Lake County (which includes the Region) are Roman Catholic--a significant fact. County by county, the National Atlas also maps per capita income, population density and migration, black population, and birth, marriage, divorce, and death rates.

In addition, I consulted the handy Almanac of American Politics³ for information on Indiana's first congressional district, which consists of Gary, Hammond, East Chicago, Whiting, and suburban territory--approximately the Calumet Region. Here I learned that 32% of workers are white-collar, 68% are blue-collar; that blacks comprise 26% of the district's population and "foreign stock," 25%. Other useful information on the politics and economics of the district is included, as is a brief discussion of the political uneasiness between blacks and East Europeans. Clearly, these statistics intimated a story that was to be reflected on the folklore and music we were to encounter in the Region.

In retrospect I wish I had also included other census data,⁴ and had read appropriate literature--including the short stories of Hammond-born Jean Shepherd,⁵ and Blood on the Forge, William Attaways' novel of black steelworkers in a midwestern city⁶--in order to flesh out my picture of the Region.

At the suggestion of the Project's director, Richard M. Dorson, I contacted several former Regionites for their impressions and advice. Upon hearing of the team's forthcoming work in Gary, one black friend scoffed, "You're going to Gary? You're crazy! My folks are from there, and I won't even go there." Avoiding the subject of crime, I asked another friend about the Region's ethnic restaurants. She gave me a number of recommendations, but on follow-up, about half of her information proved incorrect. I realized that information furnished by former residents is--like so many other things--not necessarily reliable.

Logistics of the Urban Setting

One of the first and most important decisions the Gary Team had to make was that of where to live. We could (1) live individually in the homes of informants as true participant-observers in their lives, (2) rent motel rooms, either in the same motel or in different ones, (3) rent apartments, in one location or in scattered spots, or (4) rent, as a team, an entire house. Each choice offered advantages and disadvantages of cost, proximity to research site, security, privacy, distractions, telephone communications, and potential for rapport and participation with the community and with each other. The various times and lengths of our stays helped narrow our options, as we finally decided to make individual arrangements to stay in motels and private homes.

Since Dorson had found a hospitable abode at a budget-stretching price in the Gateway Motel in Merrillville (at the southern end of the Region) I too checked in there. My first night, I was awakened about four o'clock to deafening crashes and churning outside my window. It was the garbage truck which came every day--or, rather, night--at that hour. But in the end, this annoyance could not compare with the motel's errative telephone and message service. At various unpredictable points during the day, the cashier-clerk-switchboard operator would simply disappear, and no calls could be made or received

through the room's dial-less telephone. The office and phone service inconveniently closed each night at ten o'clock.

Making a single phone call was a hassle, and even worse, I realized, I was missing calls from informants. Despite the separation from Dorson and company in the Gateway, I decided to move to the Red Roof Motel, one mile away. I was continually grateful for the Red Roof's round-the-clock phone service, its responsible telephone operator who could be relied upon to take messages, and its phone with a dial.

In addition to the conventional uses of the telephone to contact colleagues, informants, and equipment suppliers, I utilized the phone to make initial contact with potential informants, to ask permission to visit churches and, sometimes, to record services and concerts, and on one occasion, to interview an informant at a time when her schedule prevented our meeting in person. (She gave me permission to record our conversation using a telephone pickup coil.) Not all of these usages of the telephone were advisable, I now think. Common sense dictates that face-to-face contact is very desirable (1) when introducing oneself to a stranger--to avoid suspicion, (2) when requesting something of someone--to show sincerity; and (3) when interviewing somebody--to monitor physical and facial cues. The telephone cannot, after all, convey kinesic and proxemic signs.

On the other hand, I drove thirty minutes to a Gary church one day hoping to introduce myself to the minister. Even though he was scheduled to be at the church, he did not show up. The telephone, in this instance, could have been a time-saver. At other times it became an outright necessity, considering that I was trying to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short time and that my tradition-bearers were not centrally located in one family, building, church, or neighborhood, but were scattered throughout the Region. The telephone had still other advantages compared with in-person communication: the fieldworker feels more secure using the phone than venturing alone into unfamiliar neighborhoods in a crime-troubled city,

and urban residents themselves do not always appreciate an unexpected stranger knocking at their doors.

The proper use of the telephone, then, depends upon the nature of the community, the type of research, and the number of researchers. If our team had rented an apartment or house, we might have considered installing a telephone answering service to ensure receiving informants' messages, or even hiring a secretary to handle telephone communications.

The telephone directory became just as essential in the Region Project as did the telephone itself. One night I was trying, without success, to locate a small church; no one in the neighborhood could direct me to it. I found my way back to Broadway and looked at length for a telephone booth. When I finally came across one, the phone was out of order, and I could not look up the address because the directory had been stolen. From then on, I carried in my car a Gary phone book, which came in handy not only during the fieldwork, but later as a source of addresses for writing thank-you letters and for documenting tapes and photos. No need, I have since discovered, to take the directory from the motel room. Indiana Bell provides customers with out-of-town phone directories at no charge.

The fact that I had chosen to live in a motel was not without consequences for my fieldwork, of course. It meant that I did not interact closely with any one individual or family. The location of the motel may have somewhat affected my informant-relations. When asked where I was staying, I replied, "The Red Roof Motel--you know, down in Merrillville," and I always felt guilty. I felt that some of my informants were thinking, "You're just like the other whites--running out to the suburbs." Truth to tell, though, there were only a couple of closer motels--one with rather expensive rates, another with dubious four-hour and six-hour rates--and both near the air-fouling, grime-belching mills.

The fact that my informants were scattered throughout Gary and my motel was eleven miles from the black inner city meant I drove an average of thirty-five miles each day, with the result that at times I felt I was spending most of my time either making appointments by phone or driving to them. As the telephone and telephone directory became necessities to me, clearly so did my automobile: to travel from place to place, to haul around the bulky equipment, and to afford some after-dark protection. I had been mugged in San Francisco and accosted in New York City, so my personal safety was often on my mind as I drove down dark and unfamiliar streets at midnight. In five weeks in Gary, though, I experienced no incidents.

The make of my car was both an asset and a liability. I felt the almost trunkless Volkswagen to be distinctly unsuited for carting, and especially for storing, bulky and expensive video, audio, and photographic equipment. My feeling of uneasiness grew after a service station mechanic assured me that auto burglars can go through cardoor locks in fifteen or twenty seconds. Yet, I discovered the VW could be an asset. One night as I waited at a stoplight, a car pulled up next to mine and four tough-looking youth eyes me suspiciously and, I feared, maliciously. The light turned green, and they drove off. "They probably thought," I supposed, "'What drug dealer, what narc or undercover FBI agent would drive around in a VW bug? Just some harmless . . . student.' That was it! My bug said 'student.' All it needed was an Indiana University sticker prominently pasted to the rear window."

I learned one security measure from Reverend Roosevelt Robinson, whom I interviewed late one Sunday. Earlier that evening I had videotaped a concert at his Centennial United Methodist Church, and we had retired to his study to talk. As I was leaving at midnight, he insisted on escorting me to my car, for my protection. Having an escort, or better yet a partner, seems only sensible for the urban fieldworker, particularly when going into a high crime area. A colleague can provide not only security, but also intellectual partnership and assistance with recording equipment.

Though as an urban fieldworker in the United States I did not have to endure grueling treks through the desert, frigid Himalayan temperatures, or the plagues of a tropical jungle proverbial to many of my colleagues in ethnomusicology, I nevertheless encountered some physical discomfort: acute tiredness, frequent hunger from missed meals, and tests of endurance such as the Open Door Church's four-hour service on a blistering, muggy June afternoon. Especially for work in hot weather, I resolved to carry in my car a change of clothes (or at least a shirt and tie), a toothbrush, moist towelettes, a thermos bottle of cold beverage, and a supply of granola bars or some other high-calorie food.

Psychological Obstacles

Our problems during the Urban Team Project were many. We had difficulties in communicating with each other and thus in coordinating teamwork, because we were housed in six different locations (three motels and three private residences). We encountered repeated snags with the recording equipment. Yet for me the difficulties of communications, logistics, and technology were not nearly as constraining and unsettling as were the psychological obstacles to my fieldwork.

Usually fieldworkers do not publicly discuss their personal life and emotions and how these were affected by--and more importantly how they affected--the field research. "It is impossible to review the literature about methods in the social sciences," writes John M. Johnson, "without reaching the conclusion that 'having feelings' is like an incest taboo in sociological research." In the rare instances when feelings are mentioned, "the remarks . . . tend to be presented in an anecdotal fashion and not considered seriously."⁷ I present the following information because I think it is necessary for a clear picture of my field research and because I do not believe a fieldworker ever conducts his research in isolation from his feelings.

Just before my fieldwork was to begin, my mother died of leukemia, after a long, hellish struggle. After two tumultuous years of care and hope, worry and fear, I was emotionally and physically exhausted. Since my father was already dead, I had just experienced the death of my remaining parent, which, psychologists say, is one of life's major crises. In my case, it also meant the loss of a home and the onset of a feeling of rootlessness--in short, a feeling of great loss.

I needed time--to help settle the estate, to grieve, to rest, to come to terms with my losses. But instead, because of prior commitment, I entered a strange and unfamiliar setting, away from my reassuring apartment and closest friends. My colleagues could provide little comfort--I needed friends and family.

One of my journal entries reveals my reluctance at being in the field then: "All the things which anchor my life have been missing: daily jogging, twice-daily meditation, regular meals, enough sleep, friends, and playing the piano. I feel somewhat adrift, somewhat numb." Not surprisingly, I became indifferent and somewhat depressed, and started driving recklessly yet, somehow, wreck-lessly. On several Sundays, I covered events in four different black churches, and rushed down the interstate at close to seventy miles per hour, steering with my knees as I used both hands to tie my necktie!

Each time I picked up the phone to call someone, each time I set up an appointment, I struggled to overcome my personal inertia which, though often endemic to the initial stages of fieldwork, was certainly aggravated by my personal need to grieve. Project Director Dorson worked at an unrelenting pace and thus set a demanding example for the rest of us to follow. To my knowledge, none of us once went to a movie or other purely recreational event. If I rested I felt guilty, so I worked night and day and unwisely left virtually no time for personal, and little time for professional, contemplation.

One day I foolishly scheduled five field appointments between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.: a ride in a

chartered plane to photograph the Region from above, a videotaping of gospel disc jockey Vivian Carter during her WWCA radio broadcast, a videotaping of four young men trading a cappella doo-wops on a street corner, an audiotaping of Moselle Lewis and singer Arthur Pollard in rehearsal at Moselle's home, and a videotaping with Adrienne Seward, of a stage production of God's Trombones at the Palace Theatre. The plane ride, in a two-seater, was bumpy and nauseating. Somehow, I got through the other appointments, but by the time of God's Trombones, my bones were weary and my head dizzy; it took a week to fully recover from the vertigo and near-exhaustion.

To be honest, other factors besides Dorson's example prodded me to overcommit myself in the field. I felt a sense of urgency because of the absolute six-week time limit; I sensed the potential importance of our project both to urban folkloristics and to my own career. My enthusiasm often leads me to drive myself, but under the circumstances of my emotional loss I could not cope as well with overwork and, what is more, felt I should not have to.

The questions which must be asked are, of course, how did my sense of loss and my personal disorganization affect my work? And how would my research have been different under other circumstances? I cannot say to what degree I avoided certain situations--for example those requiring the summoning of considerable initiative. I do believe that under other circumstances I would have tackled my work with a greater degree of eagerness--an avidity which, presumably, my informants would have sensed--and would have had more enthusiasm to return to the Region for future fieldwork. I believe that under other circumstances I would have been more organized and systematic in scheduling, interviewing, recording, pursuing specific research questions, keeping a field journal, documenting the recordings and photographs, and following up with thank-you letters to informants.

My field adventure in the Region was, I felt, one of the emotional low points of my life and yet--simultaneously--one of the academic-professional high points, as I was becoming an ethnomusicologist. As I entered into my journal, the Gary stint "has been and is a most exciting experience, full of learning both about music and how to do fieldwork."

Making Contact

I have mentioned some of my informants, but how did I meet these people? When I arrived in Gary, I knew no gospel musicians, no ministers, no church members, not one soul. In fact, I didn't even have the name of anyone I could look up; for me Gary was terra incognita. How was I to locate gospel singers? Taking the telephone directory in hand, I turned to the "churches" listing in the Yellow Pages to look for a midweek Baptist prayer service. I found that the Metropolitan Baptist Church located on Broadway (Gary's main thoroughfare) advertised a "Midweek Service Wed 7PM."

At seven that evening, no one was to be found at the church--except me, outside the locked doors, peering in. I went to a nearby service station, checked the phone book and found another church, Mt. Mariah Baptist, which listed a Wednesday evening service at 7 p.m. Certain I was late, I rushed over to Gary's east side and found the church, but the front door was locked and covered with an anti-vandal barrier. I waited expectantly but no one arrived. With sinking expectations, I drove to the west side of Gary to the Holy Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, which also listed a Prayer Meeting at 7 p.m. I began to suspect that in the inner city (especially in the summer) events do not always occur as advertised.

I walked inside the Holy Bethel Church and found, to my delight, a group of five or ten adults waiting for services to begin. I took a seat in a pew. A husky, jet-black man approached me, with hand outstretched in greeting, and said, "Welcome, brother--are you a minister?" This question was to recur several times during my visits to churches. I was conspicuously out of place in the black churches, so

churchgoers made a plausible assumption--that I was a man of the cloth. When I told them that I was a student studying the black church and its music, they readily accepted this social role. As a visitor, however, I was generally called upon to make a statement during the service, and sometimes I felt obligated to participate in the giving of testimony.

The Holy Bethel congregation was most friendly, and welcomed me back for a number of visits, even tolerating the tape recording of their personal, sung-spoken prayers. Reverend Earnest Stevenson, a full-time steelworker and part-time minister (not an uncommon combination in Steel City), provided me with my first leads into the broader black religious community by recommending I visit a religious book store named the Jesus Shoppe, and contact a gospel radio announcer named Vivian Carter.

At the Jesus Shoppe, I bought some gospel sheet music, a copy of the popular Broadmar Hymnal,⁸ and spoke with the sales clerk, who provided me with the name of Moselle Lewis, a leader in Gary's gospel music activities. Moselle is one of the moving forces behind the Gary chapter of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, a large and dynamic nationwide organization founded by Reverend James Cleveland, the "Crown Prince of Black Gospel Music." Moselle turned out to be my key informant, always willing to be interviewed, to provide advice and opinions, even to call ministers to smooth my way into their churches.

By the end of two weeks, I was beginning to build a social network in the gospel community, through such person-to-person contacts. Another important resource tool in building that network was the Church page of each Saturday's Gary Post-Tribune, which listed numerous gospel music concerts and musical programs. I attended many of these concerts, and introduced myself to many musicians and ministers. Since most such concerts

include choirs from other churches or gospel groups unaffiliated with any church, I was able to make contact with many ensembles. I discovered a Gary chapter of the National Quartet Convention of America, which owns a Quartet Union Singing Hall where weekly or bi-weekly singing sessions are held. The Gary chapter hosted the "state convention" (the only other city represented was South Bend) and this provided me an opportunity to meet and record a number of quartets.

Though my hands were full with the gospel singers, I was also interested in contacting a few ethnic musicians to gather some data on the phenomenon of urban music.⁹ In search of contacts, I talked with other fieldworkers on the Gary Team: Elena Bradunas, Tom Adler, and particularly Richard March; Adler and I paid a visit to the office of the musicians' union, Local 203 of the American Federation of Musicians, AFL-CIO. Making it clear that we wished to interview performers (not engage their services), we found a most receptive and flamboyant informant in Red Arbuckle, Secretary of the Local, who bears a striking resemblance to Santa Claus. Red gave us the names of over a dozen people to contact. We also checked the bulletin boards of record and music stores to find business cards and concert placards. The local radio stations provided names of several musicians heard on their ethnic broadcasts. Ethnic organizations were helpful--the Polish hall furnished names of several Polish bands.

If I had needed more contacts, I would also have checked the bars, taverns, supper clubs, and hotels, where the musicians performed. I would have checked with music teachers in the public schools, who are likely to know numerous other people, young and old, in the musical community.

Without intending to, I obtained many more leads than I could follow up in such a brief stay in the field. Although ethnic musicians, especially South Slavic and Greek, were not difficult to locate, the gospel musicians were even easier to find once I got

started. Three factors made contacting them more a matter of time than of ingenuity or luck: (1) their institutional base, (2) the abundance of these tradition-bearers, and (3) the nature of the musical occasions. One, the institutional base of black religious music (as opposed to, say, the blues) made the musicians easy to locate--just find black churches and you've found black religious music and musicians. Two, the large number of black churches and religious participants made choir members and musicians readily accessible. In terms of number of performers, gospel must be the most popular black music today. And, three, the fact that the musical occasions are public or semi-public events (church services, but more importantly, gospel music concerts) made the musicians accessible. Since gospel is often performed in multi-group concerts, contacting groups is a relatively easy matter.

Informants and My Relations with Them

Though I interviewed a young Greek-American band and collaborated with Richard March to videotape a Serbian-American guslar,¹⁰ almost all of my informants were black. Most of them, including several ministers, worked in the steel mills or if not, other family members did. As the mills dominate the Region landscape, steel shapes the lives of almost everyone in Gary. In order to even remotely understand the lives of the steelworkers, it seemed necessary to tour the mills, not the limited, safe tourist's visit, but a foray into the very heart of the operations.

On 14 June 1976, the Project's three Richards--Dorson, March, and Vidutis, and I were guided on a special tour of Bethlehem Steel. The grounds were ashy, cinder-covered, desolate. Inside, it seemed that virtually everywhere there was heat, fire, or danger. The building housing the basic oxygen furnace ("blast furnace") was an unforgettable experience. The graffiti in the elevator read,

bowels of the earth ↓

and indeed the building's interior seemed like a netherworld. Surrounded by red-hot molten steel in huge ladles, and gigantic furnaces with temperatures soaring to 170°F, and heat almost searing my skin, I jotted down my impressions on a little pad: "This building [is] like a nightmare of hell, a fiery, mechanized [Hades]. Industrial civilization at its worst, gone berserk. A fiery, roasting, mechanized hell."

Not all my steelworker informants, of course, worked in such conditions, yet there are few soft or safe jobs in the mills. Even a custodian's job may be hazardous; during our stay in Gary a mill janitor was killed when a heavy object fell onto him. Not surprisingly, few of my informants volunteered information about or seemed to enjoy their steel work. Out of the extraordinary, almost unbelievable working conditions in the mills, I believe, arises a religious fervor which affects every aspect of black church life and music.

My main impression regarding the black religious music in Gary is that there is an enormous amount of it.¹¹ It is my impression, further, that gospel music is particularly vital in Gary both because of its steel mills and its connection with the seminal black folk culture of Mississippi and Alabama. As I have written elsewhere, "The majority of blacks living in Gary today have their roots in Mississippi and Alabama--two areas of intense concentration of Afro-American folk tradition. . . . Migration is still continuing from these states to Gary . . . individuals travel back and forth . . . and so the folk tradition in Gary is constantly being reinfused from the deep South."¹² Other cities such as New York and Washington have large black populations, of course, but are not dominated by steel mills and do not have such strong historical and contemporary connections with Mississippi and Alabama.

Most of the black gospel singers, ministers, and church officials I encountered in Gary were very

cooperative. In retrospect, I am surprised at the degree of cooperation offered me. I was accepted into many churches with my bulky, obtrusive, and potentially disrupting equipment. I was allowed to tape personal prayers and to videotape a striking, very emotional four-hour church service complete with healing, glossolalia, "falling out," holy dancing, and mass baptism. Some informants went out of their way to sing for my recording equipment, with no remuneration. Only one minister refused to allow me to record a concert in his church, and if I had made my request in person rather than by telephone, he might have been more cooperative.

As John M. Johnson suggests, the informants' attitude toward a researcher may depend upon their past experience with other fieldworkers, and upon the political situation in the community.¹³ In my work in Gary I encountered no one who mentioned having been interviewed or recorded by a previous researcher. I seem to have been toiling in virgin territory, unspoiled by previous investigators.

The political and racial situation in Gary seemed to me superficially calm yet troubled beneath the surface. White flight¹⁴ had emptied the northern half of Gary of most Caucasians, and white-black animosities had flared in the city and county electoral politics. Though I encountered some initial reticence if not suspicion--typical in many field settings--my informants generally seemed pleased with my presence, and perhaps even flattered that an outsider had come all the way to their oft-maligned city to inquire about their religion, their music, their lives. The church people I encountered were generally friendly. Many people, I found, do try to "live the life they sing about in the song," to quote a gospel piece.

Common sense told me that I should not use too elaborate an explanation of my purpose. I introduced myself as a music student from Bloomington interested in black church music in

Gary. The word got around. When I approached Reverend Roosevelt Robinson of the Centennial United Methodist Church, he responded, "I've heard about you. You're the one that's going around making a survey of black churches." Since the term "survey" seemed to be readily acceptable, I used it to explain my purpose from then on, with good results. Besides this "cover story," I tried several other techniques of rapport-building.

In Gary's black community the profusion of business cards seemed to say the "everybody is somebody." I was offered cards by a number of my informants--ministers, disc jockeys, concert promoters, music teachers. Many of the cards bore witness to the multiple "hats" worn by their bearers: one card, for instance, announced five different vocations including music instructor and notary public. Several times I was asked for my business card in return, and I had to answer that I didn't have one. So I had cards made up, and Dorson and Seward followed suit. My card read, "John Hasse, Ethnomusicologist." In retrospect, I wish it had read, "Ethnomusicology," for though I increasingly thought of myself as an ethnomusicologist, my social role was that of an (ethnomusicology) student rather than professional. Colleague March did not have business cards printed, for they would have interfered with his social role as Serbo-Croatian insider, and to others on the team, they connoted a formality their own field style contradicted. But for the three of us who saw value in these cards, they served to (1) help people remember our names, (2) assist informants in contacting us, and (3) legitimize us in the eyes of officials.

A camera, too, can help or hinder. Once I revealed that I had a camera, I was in a somewhat vulnerable situation, I discovered, for people asked me to take their pictures. If I refused, I was likely to offend. On the other hand, if I consented I invited several possible problems: (1) I would have to process a print and send it to each informant, (2) I would have to pay for these prints (color prints for a group of ten could cost \$5), and (3) I might be asked to take

photos unrelated to my work. In Gary, I was asked by a churchgoer who saw me with my camera if I would take color portraits of his family!

There are several ways to handle photographs for informants. The fieldworker can take a photo on an inexpensive instant camera such as a Polaroid Swinger and deliver it to the informant at once, thereby winning an immediate measure of gratitude. When a casual contact or bystander asks Phil Stockton of the Indiana University Audio-Visual Department that he send a copy of the photo taken on a non-instant camera, Stockton says, "Sure. Here is my address: you write me, and I'll send you one." This puts the burden of initiative on the bystander. I find it a good practice to send each important informant a photograph and a friendly thank-you letter. This act of courtesy helps create long-term good will which may be necessary if I ever return to the field locale. In fact, the absence of a follow-up letter or phone call, I found, can create some suspicions on the part of the informants: "He's probably making a mint off those tapes he made of us." One year after my fieldwork I telephoned a helpful musician with whom I had not spoken since leaving Gary. He was surprised to hear from me, saying, "We all wondered whatever happened to you," with a slight note of reproach in his voice. He was correct: I should have followed up much earlier.

"The gifts with which a fieldworker repays the efforts of his informants," writes Rosalie Wax, "will, of course, vary with each investigational situation. Some will be simple gifts like relieving boredom or loneliness."¹⁵ My presents to my informants must have been perceived as the gifts of providing excitement (with video camera), of paying attention and thus imparting an importance, and in some cases, of offering the possibility of inclusion in any videotapes or LPs to issue from the Project. I tried to make clear the selective process involved in editing our field recording, and the nonprofit,

educational nature of any audio-visual materials we would produce. But in at least one instance a misconception arose. One of my informants whose group was about to sing for my tape recorder bubbled excitedly, "We're gonna cut a record and make us some money!" I had to quickly disabuse him of that notion.

There was no provision in the Project budget for remunerating our many informants--a lack about which I had misgivings. Yet I was able to use one monetary technique to build good will with informants and especially with their churches.¹⁵ Whenever I attended a church service or gospel concert I would make a donation--conspicuously, if possible--to the collection plate. In some churches, the offering was collected at the front of the church, so I would walk up with my two or three dollars in hand. The nods of those around me indicated that my gesture of support did not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

One other circumstance was a tremendous rapport-builder for me--my piano playing. I am no gospel performer, but as a semi-professional in ragtime and popular styles, I can play a couple of gospel tunes with embellishment and spirit. Without my mentioning it, informants would often ask if I sang or played an instrument, and after my affirmative reply I was usually asked to play the piano.

One Sunday morning, as I was videotaping the service at St. John's Primitive Baptist Church, the preacher, Elder George McCoy, asked me to play "Amazing Grace"--right in the middle of the service, right in the middle of my videotaping. What could I do but oblige? When I finished to general murmurs of "Amen" and "Yes, Lord," Elder McCoy said, "Mmmmmnnn. Somebody be walkin' by the church this mornin' and hear that good music come out of the window, and they say, 'Yes, Lord. Some nice colored boy playing.'" Another round of assent from the congregation, as I returned, self-conscious but pleased, to my videotape camera. I thought to myself, "What rapport!"

A well-known and fun-loving gospel singer in Gary, Selma K., and an informant of Dorson and Seward named Louis T., asked that I "jam" sometime, so we went to Indiana University Northwest and found a piano. Selma sang, I played the piano, and Louis, at one time a musicians' manager, looked on. We ran through some blues, jazz, and pop songs, and had fun. Suddenly Louis proposed that Selma and I form a group to work in night clubs. "But," I protested, "I have to go back to school in Bloomington." "We'll drive down to Bloomington for the jobs we get," countered Louis, oblivious to the 400-mile round trip. "But," I continued, "I already have a playing job this summer--each weekend in Nashville, Indiana." I could see he was determined. "That's O.K.," Louis T. said, unconcerned, "Selma can sing with you in Nashville." I then tried to explain that the Village of Nashville was known for its rustic rednecks, and that his proposed collaboration would be fun, but just not practical for any of us. His idea died hard.

From my field experiences I concluded that "the ethnomusicologist as performer," as I call him or her, engages in an intensive and special kind of participant observation, or perhaps more accurately, observer participation. Once he has revealed to his informants that he can play music, he will probably be asked to demonstrate. If he shows a competence at playing their style of music, the fieldworker may be called upon at any time to perform. To decline this invitation may be as damaging to good relations as refusing a proffered drink or meal.

Yet the field researcher-performer may heap a harvest of good will. Indeed, this was my experience. In fact, at least one instance of performing was the key to winning the cooperation of an informant, reluctant to speak with me at any length or with any degree of openness until I played some gospel piano for her. In both

Bloomington and Gary, my piano-playing earned me good will among church-goers. To hear a white person who could play at least a semblance of black gospel music--a genre little-known or appreciated outside black communities--was a novelty. But, moreover, my playing earned me the esteem and confidence of my informants because they felt, I think, that I cared enough about their music to learn to play it, and that I had enough "soul" to render it with feeling.

Equipment and Recording in the Field

If the Gary Project had anything approaching an Achilles heel, it was our equipment. When the Project was being planned, none of us knew enough about equipment to make authoritative decisions, and a number of oversights resulted. When I arrived in Gary, I quickly realized that we would need more equipment, especially accessories. We had a brand-new Uher reel-to-reel tape recorder but not an AC adapter. The headphones for the Uher were the open-air type, and had to be replaced. We had four expensive microphones, but no adaptor plugs and no wind screens. For the 35mm camera we had neither tripod nor flash attachment. For the videotape cameras there were no floodlights.

Though I had some assistance in purchasing the remaining equipment we needed, by default most of the burden fell onto my shoulders. I felt annoyed and frustrated that I had to spend about one-third of my time dealing with the Team's equipment and supplies--time I could have better spent collecting and interviewing. I drove all over the Region searching for the right patch cord, the right adaptor plug. After several weeks, we were running out of audio tape. So I got on the telephone and called Terre Haute, Chicago, Indianapolis, and Bloomington trying to track down the fastest supply at the lowest price. The project director dropped our Nikorex camera and it had to be repaired. So I drove an hour and a half to the north-west suburbs of Chicago to deliver the camera to Nikon.

But these troubles were trifling compared with those caused by our not-so trusty tape recorder. Early in our fieldwork, March was recording a Croatian community choir when the Uher simply stopped running.

From then on, we were tormented by its repeated malfunctions which--as if by some devilish law--often occurred at the worst possible moment. I had waited four weeks to record the Sounds of Peace, an all-female gospel group from Gary. They were to perform in Chicago's Monumental Baptist Church on 18 July, so I drove the five hours from Bloomington to record their concert. A few minutes into their performance--unbeknownst to me until later--the Uher's constant recording speed became variable, thus ruining the recordings. We took the machine back to Bloomington to technicians at Indiana University's Electronics Department two or three times, but to no avail--until they finally figured out that our AC adaptor was being overloaded. This revelation came at the tail end of the field project.

From these and other experiences, I learned a number of lessons. If I ever participate again in a large team field project, I will insist that the project include one technically-minded person whose primary duty is to supervise the equipment. The equipment would include a microphone shock mount to negate the noise caused by people bumping the mike stands during a live recording. For recording in a church, I would use multiple microphones placed to pick up the preacher, choir, organ~~ist~~, soloist, congregation, with a shotgun mike to aim at a roving preacher or singer. This elaborate set-up would of course require at least one assistant--a good idea in any recording situation. As we did in Gary, I would pack the tape recorder, recorder instruction manual and schematic wiring diagram, microphones, headphones, cables, AC extension cord, adaptors, recording tape, and tape labels into a lightweight suitcase for easy carrying and protection against damage. I would dev~~ise~~ an equipment checklist to insure that nothing is left behind.

As accessories I would include: small tool kit, flashlight, various electrical adaptors (cube tapes, grounding wire adaptors, etc.), a telephone

pickup for recording an occasional telephone interview, AC extension cords, electric tape for adhering cords to floor to prevent tripping, dolly or small cart for wheeling heavy video equipment, and extra batteries which would be rotated frequently to prolong life. The ethnomusicologist should also have a tuning fork or pitch pipe to sound at the beginning of each recording, as a check on the recorder's speed.

In the Region, I sometimes made the mistake of arriving, sight unseen, at a church concert I wished to record less than an hour before it began. I had time to set up my equipment, but no time to judge the acoustics, to experiment with mike placement. Not to "advance" a site would be unthinkable for a political rally organizer, and it also should be for a music collector, I realized.

As a neophyte collector, I made other mistakes, several of which were mistakes of sensitivity and pacing. One Saturday afternoon I went to the home of Henry Hill, a burly steelworker, for an agreed-upon recording session of his unaccompanied quartet, the Gospel Choice. They sang stiffly and without any of the usual interaction (laughing, hand-clapping, hand-slapping) which characterizes their performances. After recording for half an hour, we sat down at the kitchen table and talked into the tape recorder, about their group, their tastes in gospel music, their attitudes towards Gary. As we talked they opened up, relaxed. Next time, I would first get to know a group by talking with them informally at some length. Then I would interview them on tape; most people, I have found, like to tell their story, and in so doing, they relax with you. Ideally, only after these two steps would I record the group's music.

Another day the Choice members got together on a street corner to "trade doo-wops" (unaccompanied rhythm 'n' blues) as they had done as teenagers, and sometimes still do. As I circled them, videotaping their jam session, they were visibly tense and unnatural in their performance. Interrupting their session, I played back their performance through the

tiny monitor on the video camera. They were fascinated and tickled. Laughing at each other, they went back to jamming and the rest of the videotaping went naturally and smoothly.¹⁷

Though many people are self-conscious before the television camera, their qualms can often be easily overcome simply by playing back the videotape. When they see themselves played back--even through the tiny eyepiece of the camera--they usually relax.

In Conclusion

Looking back, I can extract a number of themes from this recapitulation of my experiences in Gary: (1) at the community level, the religious fervor in black Gary, the abundance of gospel music, the friendliness and cooperation of the church people, and the ease of making contact with gospel musicians, (2) at the team level, our recording equipment as Achilles heel, and our reliance, even dependence, upon automobile and telephone, and (3) at the personal level, my surfeit of data, my piano playing as good will builder, and my fatigue and personal disorganization resulting from overwork, equipment problems, field circumstances in general, and my personal situation in particular. I returned to Bloomington with more knowledge about music, about myself, about how and how not to do field research. My first real foray into the field seemed laden with encumbrances. Yet, though it lasted only six weeks, it had been very productive and, perhaps above all, instructive. It was my rite de passage as fieldworker.

NOTES

1. This manuscript has benefited considerably from the critical reading and good advice of Inta Gale Carpenter, Ruth M. Stone, Richard M. Dorson, and Nancy E. Rallis.
2. The National Atlas of the United States of America (Washington: U. S. Department of the Interior Geological Survey, 1970).
3. Michael Barone, Grant Ujifusa, and Douglas Matthews, The Almanac of American Politics, 1976 (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1975).
4. U. S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book 1972 (A Statistical Abstract Supplement) (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971); Census of Population 1970; Volume 1, Characteristics of the Population (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1973); and Census of Housing: 1970 (Washington: D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971).
5. Jean Shepherd, In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), and Wanda Hickey's Night of Golden Memories and Other Disasters (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971).
6. William Attaway, Blood on the Forge, A Novel (Garden City: Doubleday, 1941). Paperback ed., with an introduction by Edward Margolies (New York: Collier, 1970).
7. John M. Johnson, Doing Field Research (New York: The Free Press, 1975), p. 147.
8. B. B. McKinney, music ed., The Broadman Hymnal (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1940).
9. My exploratory research led to a paper, "Is There an Urban Music in the United States?" which I read at the Urban Folklore Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, 2 September 1977.
10. The resulting production is A Singer of Tales in Gary, Indiana, ed. Richard March, 1977, available through the Indiana University Folklore Institute, Bloomington.
11. This was the same conclusion reached by Richard A. Waterman twenty-five years earlier, working in nearby Chicago. See his "Gospel Hymns of a Negro Church in Chicago," International Folk Music Council Journal 3 (1951): 87-93.
12. "The Gary Black Religious Experience: A Photo Essay," Indiana Folklore 10 (1977): 165
13. Johnson, Doing Field Work, p. 77.
14. See my article, "'The whites runnin' because the blacks are movin' in': An Interview with Rev. Roosevelt Robinson," Indiana Folklore 10 (1977): 183-190.
15. Rosalie H. Wax, "Reciprocity as a Field Technique," Human Organization 11 (1952).
16. This idea was suggested by Charles Boiles at a Symposium on Ethnomusicological Field Work, held at Indiana University, Bloomington, 10 April 1976.
17. The Gospel Choice, along with other quartets, groups, and choirs, appears in my documentary videotape, Gospel in Gary, 1978, also available through the Folklore Institute.