

They tended to carry out research in a distant place, often on a different continent. They went "to the field" for a whole year or more, strove to learn the local language, and endeavored to create a book-length ethnography, to bring back a total picture of the culture. The anthropologists' choice of titles for their works reflected this intent: *The Forest People*, *Knowing the Gutumumba*, etc. European ethnologists, on the other hand, tended to work incrementally, producing more of their opus in the form of short articles. Their titles reflected modest goals: "Some Characteristics of the Pottery Styles in Donja Dubrava" or "Concerning the Melody of a Rumanian Christmas Song."

I have come to realize that my work and life at the Arts Board more closely resembles Hofer's picture of European ethnologists than his view of American anthropologists. This has proven to be personally sustainable for me. I have worked with hundreds of people, building a network of field contacts which represents the kind of connectedness that I require personally and professionally. These people know me as a reliable resource who will endeavor to help with matters of mutual interest. I am a part of a community that extends throughout the state. Nobody is farther away than a five-hour drive. I have mourned the deaths of many elders I have learned from, congratulated young families on births of their children and seen young kids mature into skilled artists. With the backing of these people, I have worked to enhance the appreciation and ensure the continued vitality of Wisconsin's traditional arts.

My vision for the future is already under construction. We will continue to build a strong network of folklorists throughout the country. They will have established a commitment to their communities and carved out a position from which to advance a cultural policy that recognizes, honors, and advocates traditional artists as well as preserves the practice of folk traditions.

## **Anchored in Place: Encounter, Accompaniment, and Partnership**

*Margaret "Peggy" Yocom*  
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How did a woman from a Pennsylvania German farm family get hooked up with loggers in Rangeley, Maine? Walking in green spaces, riding in my grandfather's lap on his tractor, watching fresh clothes snap as they dry on outdoor lines, and listening to stories flow; for me, these scenes embody life in the western Maine mountains. But it was my first encounter with Rangeley folks that has kept me traveling in their direction for twenty-five years.

In the fall of 1975, I was a folklore graduate student at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, traveling around New England looking for

traditional performers for the Smithsonian's 1976 Festival of American Folklife. A photograph in the reject pile of an Orono, Maine, juried arts show caught my eye, and I was on my way to Rangeley. There, I learned about the work of woodcarver Rodney Richards and his family, and I traveled with them to the Brown Company's logging camp. We shared a noontime meal where the line of pies seemed to go on forever, and having begun to appreciate their spot in the world, I became friends with the Richards.

The day before I was to leave, Rodney asked me if I could stay longer and go with him to the Rangeley Historical Society meeting: "I've been trying to get them to help me with a logging museum, and if they heard how a logger's carvings were important to the Smithsonian, it might help." Today, Rodney is pleased to tell anyone who asks that my talk didn't do a bit of good, but his asking me to accompany him has stayed with me all my life.

After getting a teaching job and tenure, I began in earnest to help in the museum's development. If I would be writing about the Richards and Rangeley, I wanted to return something to the community. By then, Rodney, with other loggers and their wives, had incorporated the Rangeley Lakes Region Logging Museum. To raise money for a building, I helped with a July 1985 festival. Following the lead of what people on the Board wanted, I sang, took photographs, and wrote some articles.

As the Board wanted to take on larger projects—grants, books, exhibits—I gradually added partnership to accompaniment. To improve our productions, I began suggesting ideas, even when those suggestions differed from the desires of some Board members. This shift was not a comfortable one for me; I speak for the rights of local people to set their own agendas, but I don't want the museum to become an organization driven by non-year-round people. I chose to strengthen my relationship with the museum, buying a small "camp" nearby where I now stay for much of the summer. Now, I voice my suggestions selectively, believing that if I blend accompaniment with partnership, the two strands together will make a stronger rope.

My ways of accompaniment and partnership keep evolving. I've nudged our museum into larger partnerships with local museums, and lately toward colleagues in environmental groups, such as the Northern Forest Center, who value logging cultures. I'm not certain what the next partnership will be—maybe links with worlds of literature and performance arts—but I'm certain there will be more. Like many other grassroots organizations, we need more volunteers to keep flourishing.

I am like that "plant dreaming deep" that New England writer May Sarton described, choosing to work in only a few places—sending out more and more roots into Maine and answering Pennsylvania's call from time to time. For me, the joy in folklore comes from ever-evolving encounters, accompaniments, and partnerships securely anchored in place.