No greater chaos can be imagined than that which prevails among the various set-ups which are, or might be, termed folk archives in the United States. At least such is the impression gained by one tourist who inspected more or less intensively some twenty American archives for periods ranging from a few hours to six weeks. Yet that same tourist realized that within each archive there exists its own particular, not to say peculiar, kind of order that makes reason to at least its director and/or founder. To describe all the major problems and needs of folk archives apparent in such disunity would take more than 500 words, more than 5000 words, and so at this time I shall attempt only to describe generally, and in no particular order of importance, a few problems that seem pressing and significant.

To begin with, all folk archives can be dichotomized by purpose and scope into private and public archives. The private archive serves as a storage depot for the trove of one collector, usually is the source of his own publication or performance, and may or may not be known and available to the general scholar. The public archive houses the collections of various and varied field workers, may contain the "raw materials" of standard publications, is open (sometimes the road is understandably or whimsically barricaded) to the scholar, and should be, but often is not, known to him. As might be expected, uniform archiving practice is even more conspicuously absent among private archives than among public archives. But since all private archives—whether by death or by less grim causes—may be expected to fall eventually into the category of public archives, we shall not consider their peculiar problems but shall dismiss them with two observations: 1, a modern descriptive list of such private archives would be extremely valuable—and difficult to compile; and 2, public archivists should do everything in their power to locate such private archives and to insure their final transition to public archives.

Though the problems that exist in connection with public archives are numerous and though each deserved full discussion, here they can only be listed:

1. How many archives should there be? How large an area can a single archive serve? Must every political, geographical, cultural area have an archive?

2. How should archives integrate their services? Should single archives store verbal folklore, folk music, recordings and pictures of folk dances, "physical folklore" as collected in museums, once-popular publications (songsheets, records), photographs of folk products? Should there be super-regional archives to coordinate (and duplicate) the efforts of local archives? Should there be a national archive cooperating with the regional or local ones?

3. Should the material archived be grouped according to its collector, donor, place or time of collection, type, or shape? How should it be stored?

4. How should it be indexed? In what various ways cross-indexed?

5. What is the minimum physical plant, the minimum personnel, for an archive? What the minimum operating budget?

6. What activities (local historical museums, hobbyists' collections) bear on folk archives? How to discover, how to utilize them?

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TO OUR READERS: This is the first issue of THE FOLKLORE AND FOLK MUSIC ARCHIVIST, a publication devoted to the collection, documentation, indexing and cataloguing of folklore and folk music. We shall be most happy to receive your comments, suggestions or contributions. Address communications to George List, Editor.