THE FOLKLORE ARCHIVES OF CHICO STATE COLLEGE

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The Chico State College Archives were established in 1947 by Dean Hector Lee. Student collections in a course he initiated, English 177, American Folklore, make up the bulk of the archives. Dean Lee had earlier established, with the assistance of a Rockefeller grant, the Archives of the Humanities Research Foundation at the University of Utah.

Kenneth Clarke assumed supervision of the collection in 1955. A third folklorist, Mary Washington, who joined the staff in 1958, now shares in the supervision of the collection.

The Archives of manuscript, tape recordings, photographs, clippings, and documents are distinct from books, journals, films, and recordings related to folklore, which are classified and maintained by the Library and the Audio-Visual Department. The Audio-Visual Department provides both students and staff with tape recorders, tape, cameras, and film.

Content:

Various factors such as recent settlement and geographical and social mobility make the Chico collection somewhat different from those described elsewhere. It leans heavily toward events reflecting the gold rush and settlement. There are many narratives about lost mines and buried treasure, for example, but folksong is rare.

Manuscript:

Because the collection is designed for student use, a readily available form has been a first consideration. All items, even the "small" ones such as superstitions, have been submitted on 8 1/2 x 11 typing paper with informal information on the upper-right corner. This frequently results in more than one item on a single page. If more than one informant is represented on a page, appropriate additional informant notes appear.

Each semester's accumulation is arranged into categories, bound into a volume, and placed in the library. The Archives now include fifteen bound volumes and three volumes of MS in various stages of processing. This amounts to roughly 6,000 pages of material, a considerable percentage containing several items per page.

Deterioration from use is prevented by microfilming. Recent practice has been to make microfilms fully available for library use and to restrict circulation of the originals.

The Chico collection has been used by feature writers, students, and the staff of an award-winning television series: "There Is A Telling," narrated by Hector Lee. It has also stimulated formation of the Butte County Historical Society and the Chico Folklore Society. Although the archives serve as a source for replies to mail inquiries, there is no paid staff to handle exchange and reference service.