

REPORT ON THE FOLK MUSIC ARCHIVE OF
TENNESSEE FOLKSONGS AT MOREHEAD
STATE COLLEGE, MOREHEAD, KENTUCKY

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In 1949, as a portion of the preparation for writing my dissertation at George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, I began collecting folksongs in Tennessee. An article of mine that appeared in the June, 1959, issue of the Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin ("Progress Report: Collection of Tennessee Folksongs in Recent years," pp. 31-79) gives a good idea of the contents of the collection. For my book, Tennessee Folksongs, which is to consist of the best variants of the best folksongs collected by myself or anyone else in Tennessee, I have added one category: Tennessee folksongs. Here are the categories as they appeared in the 1959 article (pp. 69-70):

- I. Child ballads
- II. Non-Child material
 - a. ballads
 - b. song ballads (ballads with a high lyrical content)
 - c. ballad songs (songs in which the lyrical element predominates over the narrative)
 - d. comic songs
 - e. sentimental songs
 - f. laments
 - g. love laments
 - h. dance songs
 - i. play-party songs
 - j. Negro and pseudo-Negro (and Indian) songs
 - k. child's songs and lullabies
 - l. love and courting songs
 - m. hymns, spirituals, and religious songs
 - n. war and hunting songs
 - o. satires and parodies
 - p. political songs
 - q. tall tales in song
 - r. street calls
 - s. drinking songs
 - t. temperance songs
 - u. cumulative songs

In 1959, when this article appeared, I had collected only 432 different songs; now, I have some fiddle tunes

on tape and close to 1,000 variants of 600 folksongs that occur in Tennessee. As a rule, I have collected almost anything that was sung by the informants, whether very folk-like or not. I have not classified or transcribed any of the fiddle tunes. Some of the songs are on tape; all have been transcribed onto paper and music paper.

My classification system of the songs, such as it is, consists in having all the Child ballads in one notebook arranged by number, and all other songs and ballads scattered through the other nine notebooks. The contents of each notebook are arranged alphabetically by the first line of the song, and every music transcription is with its text in its notebook.

My songs, run in with Tennessee songs collected by others, are now indexed also on file cards, in three groups: first, ballads arranged numerically; second, songs arranged by stock title; third, inferior songs which I do not plan to print. On each large 6 by 8 card I have tried to list every variant of each song being indexed. In preparation for publication I have also arranged the British and the American ballads by Laws number, and the songs by types. Although I am somewhat behind on my running indexes, I expect to put them in final form for my book.

The collection has been assisted by no sponsored collecting. When I was teaching at Austin Peay State College, Clarksville, Tennessee, students in my folklore classes would contribute to my collection, and some few would on their own initiative. Here at Morehead, however, Dr. Leonard Roberts teaches our folklore classes, and songs collected here would hardly be Tennessee folksongs. He has given me some Tennessee songs that his students collected for him while he was at Union College.

The collection, of course, is available for anyone to use for any legitimate purpose. Since I maintain it myself, without budget or archival assistance, such use is limited. Currently it has no space except shelves in my office, although it has been promised an appropriate home in the Tennessee State Library and Archives Building at Nashville, Tennessee, after I have finished working with it for Tennessee Folksongs.



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