The study of folklore in Venezuela is for the most part under the direction of the Institute of Folklore (Instituto de Folklore), formerly called "The National Folklore Investigation Service" ("Servicio de Investigaciones Folklóricas Nacionales"). Through the efforts of Juan Liscano, its first Director, the latter organization was brought into being by decree no. 430, dated October 30, 1946. In 1953 this Service was elevated to the rank of Institute, and its directorship was entrusted to Luis Felipe Ramón y Rivera.

The Institute of Folklore is small in size but energetic and modern in its outlook. It gathers and studies materials in order to be of service to contemporary culture, not merely to inform coming generations about matters of the past. Consequently, the Institute does not conceal the results of its field trips and investigations but instead publicizes them as widely as possible. And the investigators do not keep from each other the results of their studies, because all are aware that they are serving a common purpose, that the State supports them not for their personal prestige but rather in the national interest. This in no way prevents each individual from developing his own field of specialization; the individual work of each investigator is clearly indicated by his signature.

The investigators of the Institute of Folklore, all trained personnel, are these:

The Director, Luis Felipe Ramón y Rivera, is also in charge of the Music Section, and, for reasons of methodology, shares with the present writer those tasks which have to do with both folk and indigenous music.

The Vice-Director, Professor Miguel Cardona, is in charge of the sections of material and animistic folklore. He is involved especially with cataloguing and describing the objects of material folklore which come into the Institute, and with exhibiting them in the museum and preserving them. He also makes sketches, and besides serving as a teacher of handicrafts, he is curator of the archive of photographs and slides.

Professor Abilio Reyes, a choreographer, has specialized in studying and filming dances; he teaches such dances to special teachers in various schools. In addition, he supervises folk dance spectacles sponsored by the Department of Schools and Physical Education, and he is Professor of Folk Dance in the School of Artistic Training of the Ministry of Labor, where he directs a group of dancers who give public performances of national dances.

Dr. Gustavo Luis Carrera, Professor of Literature at the Central University, has specialized in the study of the literary aspects of folklore. In collaboration with his wife, Pilar Almoina de Carrera, he investigates typical fiestas.

His wife, Professor Almoina, who has a degree in literature, studies Venezuelan fiestas and collaborates with Professor Cardona in the preservation of folklore materials. She is also in charge of the correspondence files.

Finally, the present writer is Technical Adviser of the Institute and collaborates with its various sections. In addition, she is Director of the School for Artistic Training of the Ministry of Labor, where several organized groups make use of folklore studies which come out of the Institute of Folklore.

Whenever possible, these six specialists work as a team on field trips. The Institute places at their disposal a Jeep station wagon, and light, modern equipment of all kinds: tape recorders which operate on batteries or outside electrical sources, motion picture and still cameras for either black-and-white or color photography, folding aluminum cots, cooking
This kind of teamwork permits investigation in depth of different villages in short periods of time; and it makes possible exhaustive studies of fiestas, since the investigators involved take turns day and night in studying the fiestas from different angles. In such cases each specialist describes what he sees. Upon his return, he works over his own materials: he files them, classifies them, and studies them. The results of the field trip being set down in reports which are preserved in bound volumes. Later, then, the observations of all the professors are gathered together and published in book or monograph form.

It should be pointed out here that the Institute investigates fiestas for several days before they actually take place, in order to record the preparations which precede them. It also observes a given fiesta for several years in order to detect changes which take place in it.

The archives of the Institute include the following folklore items:

The Section of Musicology - This section possesses 2571 recorded and catalogued items. In so far as is possible, these musical compositions are written down in integral form, since we believe that the study of music should not be confined merely to its melodic aspects but rather should be extended to include attention to the accompaniment of stringed and percussion instruments, where such exists.

The Section of Literature - This section includes many thousands of verbal items. In prose there are tales, legends, casos, historical accounts, dramas, and so forth. In verse there are romances, corridos, and ensaladillas; glosas and décimas; coplas and advenanzas. This material is preserved in original tape recordings and in written form.

The Section of Material Folklore - This section has one thousand items, already catalogued and studied, which represent the different aspects of material life in Venezuela. In addition, it possesses a special file which includes cooking recipes and popular cures for illnesses.

The Section of Dances - The film library of this section includes 10,000 feet of film in black-and-white and in color. These motion pictures document fiestas, dances, and other interesting aspects of rural life.

The Archive of Photographs - This archive contains 3000 negatives which document various aspects of Venezuela's folklore.

The Archive of Slides - Five hundred slides in color represent the beginning of this special archive, which is of great documentary value.

The Library - The Institute has begun a specialized library, which contains 1670 volumes and 5117 newspaper clippings.

The Folklore Calendar - The Institute keeps an up-to-date folklore calendar which includes data that are gradually being collected about typical fiestas of different Venezuelan villages. This calendar serves in a general way as a source of information, and, incidentally, is also of value to the Department of Tourism.

Publications

The Institute has completed Volume III of the Boletín del Instituto de Folklore; each volume contains eight numbers. This bulletin has been published since September of 1953.

Besides this official organ, ten booklets dedicated to the study of different dances and parrandas have been published by the specialists of the Institute. They include musical arrangements for the piano, descriptions of wearing apparel, and directions necessary for the manufacture of devices used.

Also, each specialist is the author of numerous articles, monographs, and books. In a separate list we offer a complete bibliography of those works which deal with Venezuelan folklore.

Expositions of Folklore

Museum - The Institute plans the construction of a museum of rural life in order to house its entire collection of folklore objects. In the meantime, it presents exhibitions in its own quarters and organizes periodic expositions in Caracas and in the interior. It possesses catalogs of all such expositions. In addition, the Institute has sent samples of Venezuelan folklore to various countries which have requested them, such as Argentina (Tucumán), Russia, Rumania, the United States, Cuba, Brazil, and others.

Exposition of popular art - The Institute possesses numerous objects such as pictures, sculptures, pottery, jewels, and objects of adornment made by untutored artists. It possesses also a collection of old examples of the silversmith's art. These objects will make up the Salon of Popular Art which is planned in the Institute's museum.

(continued on fourth page)
Photographic exposition - The Institute has presented several expositions of photographs dealing with folklore themes in Caracas, in the interior, and in foreign countries.

Instructional Activities

Short courses in folklore - The personnel of the Institute periodically offer short courses in folklore (folklore theory, general folklore, and Venezuelan folklore) in the Central University of Venezuela. Such courses are designed to meet the needs of students in Caracas as well as those in the interior. Illustrated talks are also given in the normal schools and lyceums of the country and in cultural centers, both in Caracas and in the interior.

The Technical Adviser is also charged with giving instruction in folklore to the special music teachers of the country, who work under the Ministry of Education, and also to the members of the "Venezuelan Dance" group of the Ministry of Labor.

Instruction in folk dances - The Professor of Dance of the Institute teaches folk dances to the special teachers of physical education and also supervises the presentations of numerous schools. He also directs a Folk Dance Group, which is dependent upon the School for Artistic Training of the Office of Culture and Social Welfare under the Ministry of Labor.

Short courses by foreign professors - The Institute has arranged visits of foreign professors like Stith Thompson of the United States and Señora Delia Millán de Palavecino of Argentina. The former, as is well known, is a specialist in the folktale; the latter, in fabric weaving.

Dissemination of Information

The personnel of the Institute are further charged with the following tasks related to the general dissemination of information:

The program "Getting to Know Our Country" - The purpose of this weekly program on the National Television Service is to inform the general public in an entertaining manner about different aspects of Venezuelan folklore.

Radio programs - Intended for listeners in the interior of the country, talks by the Director of the Institute on different topics related to the national or Spanish American folklore are being broadcast currently by the National Radio Service.

Contributions to the publications "Educación" and "Tricolor" - Members of the Institute regularly contribute informative articles about the national and Spanish American folklore to Educación, a review for teachers, and Tricolor, a magazine for children.

Artistic projection - The Institute of Folklore collaborates with the School for Artistic Training of the Ministry of Labor in its efforts to create a modern Venezuelan ballet. The Institute assists by making available autochthonous elements to musicians, choreographers, scenographers, and designers of costumes and props.

Inter-American Institute of Traditional Music

The Inter-American Council of Music, an organization dependent upon the Organization of American States, in its First General Assembly, held in Mexico, 1958, resolved to recommend the creation of an Inter-American Archive of Traditional Music. Since then the members of the Inter-American Council of Music have made efforts to bring about the establishment of this Archive in Caracas; at the third meeting of the Inter-American Cultural Council, held one year ago in San Juan, Puerto Rico, a resolution was approved calling for the creation of this Archive in collaboration with the Institute of Folklore. Recently the Inter-American Council of Music held its Second General Assembly, and Luis Felipe Ramón y Rivera, attending the meeting by special invitation, carried with him the proposed statutes that would govern the new Institute.

The Institute of Folklore of Caracas has in its possession as a basis for this project collections of music made by its own specialists in various Latin American countries, as well as copies of tapes obtained through exchanges with colleagues in various Central American countries. It also possesses music from Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Honduras, and Mexico.

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