

ARCHIVING CULTURE: AMERICAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES IN THEORY AND
PRACTICE

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For my Jenny. I couldn't have done it without you.

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ARCHIVING CULTURE: AMERICAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

American folklorists have long preserved their research materials in repositories dedicated to this purpose. The motivations for saving these items and the methods of doing so have changed over time, but the practice of preserving research materials has persisted as a central aspect of folkloristics into the present—one that distinguishes it from other ethnographic disciplines such as anthropology. Although these collections go by many names—including folk archives, folklife archives, and ethnographic archives—for the sake of this dissertation I label these collections categorically as folklore archives. Issues related to intellectual property rights and intangible cultural heritage, while important to consider, are beyond the scope of this project. Despite the ubiquity of folklore archives in the discipline, they are an understudied aspect of historical and contemporary practice in folkloristics. This dissertation examines the role of folklore archives in the field, the nature of these collections, and the growing influence on them from theories and practices originating in the fields of library science and archival management. Folklore archives were at one time a distinct product of the discipline of folkloristics, reflecting disciplinary practice and responding to disciplinary need. As theoretical and methodological approaches within the field changed, the utility of these old archival forms diminished dramatically. Rather than abandoning the creation of archives all together, folklorists began to modify archival practice to suit changing needs. Of particular

significance is the impact of the requirements of public folklore work on folklore archives, including the reuse and repurposing of archival materials in publications, exhibitions and public events, as well as an increased emphasis on collaborative engagement with communities of origin. Folklore archives in the present are increasingly shaped by the theories and methods of professionally trained archivists. Folklore archives are developing into a hybrid form that draws on both the legacy of archiving in folkloristics and aspects of the well-developed body of theory that informs the work of professional archivists outside of folklore.

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Introduction

Personally I found it extraordinarily cheering and stimulating to learn that the archiving of folklore is a very special and thrilling activity and is not the dull detection of dead things. I know there may be questions and comments on this. (Maude Karpeles in Thompson 1976(1958):93-94.)

This dissertation explores the history and legacy of folklorists in the United States preserving their accumulated research materials across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The reasons for saving these items and the methods of doing so have changed over the course of the last century. These changes are linked to the ongoing negotiation of the disciplinary boundaries of the field of folkloristics, and related changes in research methods employed by folklorists since the foundation of the field.

In the following pages I will examine these willful accumulations—as they appeared in the past and as they continue to emerge in the present. I undertake this exploration for several reasons. My dual training in archives and folkloristics has provided me with a distinct perspective on my work as a folklorist and on folklore archives in particular. Over eight years of employment as the archivist of the Vermont Folklife Center, a non-profit public folklore organization in Middlebury, Vermont, has given me first hand experience with generational and operational differences in the way folklorists accumulate and manage their archival collections. Through consulting work undertaken as an employee of the Vermont Folklife Center I have been privileged to visit folklore archives created by public and academic folklorists across the United States and in Canada,

further broadening my exposure to the diverse forms folklore archives take, and providing opportunities for first-hand observation and interaction with folklore archives and their creators and managers. Finally, as a member of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections and the American Folklore Society's Archives and Libraries Section I have been able to interact with, and learn from, other people who do related professional work and to share ideas with them.

As I thought, and traveled, and interacted with fellow folklorists, archivists and folklore archivists on topics related to folklore archives I began to note that although folklorists who manage and fill folklore archives certainly think a great deal about their collections, we as a field have not necessarily thought about our archives critically, nor have we thought about them from the perspective of what they can say about us, our work, or our discipline. Furthermore, fundamentally we have thought about them as folklorists and not, until very recently, from the very different perspectives of professional archivists. As more and more folklorists reach out to professional archivists for assistance in managing and preserving their collections, there is an growing need to provide a translation between the theoretical orientations and professional jargon of both fields so that these interactions can be more fruitful—and less confusing and frustrating—in the future.

Scope of the Project

Folklore archives in general—and the historical and ongoing relevance of folklore archives to our field—are poorly delineated areas of study. In this dissertation I will delve into this dark corner of our discipline and illuminate the archives—contextualizing them within the history of the field, locating them within current practice, and comparing them to the collections created and maintained by professional archivists.

An important first task in scrutinizing the folklore archive involves articulating what, within the scope of this dissertation, is meant by the use of the term. A concise definition of the folklore archive has not been accepted to date, although scholars have expressed perspectives on the matter since the 1950s. In this introduction I begin to outline elements of the nature of folklore archives as a starting point for framing the intellectual scope of this dissertation. I present two of the most salient characteristics of folklore archives: that, within the discipline, folklore archives persist as a unitary idea, yet in practice these collections manifest themselves through a great diversity of form; and that the theories and approaches of professional archivists have had an increasing role in shaping the structure and perception of contemporary folklore archives. Finally I conclude this section with an operational, minimal characterization of folklore archives to inform this dissertation.

What constitutes a folklore archive, as well as what constitutes appropriate content for a folklore archive, has changed dramatically over the history of the field. There is no one thing, one system or model, which represents its rightful form. Rather folklore archives in the United States have been shaped by a range

of historically situated actions—actions informed by the ebb and flow of theoretical perspectives, technology, budgets, geography, individual personality, expediency and a host of other parameters—and exist as a gaggle of somehow-related but also distinct bodies of material scattered across colleges and universities, state arts agencies, museums, historical societies and private non-profit organizations.

The content of these collections is highly specialized, and emphasizes those things that in the past (and present) we have called folklore. The exercise of defining folklore has occupied inclined scholars since before William John Thoms first coined the word in 1846. In *Voices of Modernity* Bauman and Briggs deftly explore the assumptions that underlie the breadth of our contemporary perspectives on folklore. Folklore is, simply put, a cognitive symptom of the emergence of Modernity, a category shaped by various interlocking ideological exercises related to the emergence of the European notion of the nation-state, the rise of market capitalism, and expansive industrialization among other forces that have been in play since the 17th century (Bauman and Briggs 2003). Moving from this broad, foundational understanding of folklore, those who have engaged with it as a scholarly enterprise have understood their efforts and the object of their interests in more concrete terms. In contemporary understanding, folklore consists of culturally circumscribed creative behaviors, most frequently those tied to a sense of collective identity and associated with a protracted temporality—or at least a rhetoric of temporality—by those groups who practice and profess them. A useful framework for engaging with folklore conceptually is found in

Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture (Feintuch 2003), an edited volume that highlights eight foundational concepts in folkloristics and expounds on their historical and contemporary utility. These concepts include *group*, *art*, *text*, *genre*, *performance*, *context*, *tradition* and *identity*. Taken collectively these ideas situate folklore as creative action (*art*), grounded in a social base (*group*, *context*, *identity*, *tradition*), and shaped by formal rules (*text*, *genre*, *performance*).

Folklore archives act as repositories for *folklore* by serving as sites for the preservation, organization and continued accessibility of discrete representations of this specific class of human creative behavior. They encompasses materials ranging from typescript texts of individual folktales and folk song lyrics; to audio recordings of music, jokes, riddles, and contemporary legends; to photographs of items of material culture such as baskets, beadwork, and regional foods, in addition to photographic documentation of creative processes such as boat building, rug hooking and maple sugaring; to motion pictures and video recordings of live performances of tamburitza music or a potter at his wheel. The context of the collection often determines the nature of the content. A collection housed as a part of a university folklore program, which are most often formed from student projects, tends to contain more examples of folk narrative such as contemporary legends. The collection of a state arts agency-based public folklore program, where institutional priorities focus on the documentation and presentation of traditional arts, will emphasize material culture and the creation of material culture objects, as well as performance forms such as dance and music.

Although they all are rooted in the discipline of folkloristics and can be said to contain *folklore* (however the concept might have been understood at various points in time), the bodies of material we call folklore archives are distinguished from one another by the nature of the variations in their intellectual content, the physical materials that make them up, the eras in which they were drawn together, their systems of organization, the nature of their host organizations, their intended use—as well as the actual use they are ultimately put to. Yet despite these contrasts, as a field we view these collections as fundamentally more alike than different from one another. The ability to see continuity in divergence (as opposed to continuity *of* divergence) is a broad earmark of the work of folklorists for the past century and a half in general. In regard to folklore archives, the ability to reconcile the presence of similarity that is simultaneously coupled to stark difference says a great deal about how we view ourselves as a field.

As my statements above suggest, my long-term interaction with these units of paper and plastic, their caretakers and their users has demonstrated something very clear—the thing we call a folklore archive is extraordinarily diverse. All extant evidence suggests that the great diversity found between and within folklore archives has, indeed, always been the case. The diversity of these collections mirrors the experience of our field and the people who worked, and work, to shape it. The ways in which we have compiled our archives, and the ways in which we have thought about them have changed radically over time and between sites established contemporaneously. I began by arguing for the

great diversity among folklore archives in the United States. However, statements of diversity alone, while certainly telling of the nature of the subject, do not provide a suitable base from which one can draw many meaningful conclusions. Furthermore, while some collections are so distinct from one another that the only factor they share in common is the folkloristic incarnation of a distinctly post-Enlightenment, European compulsion to save stuff, at another extreme, other collections, or at least aspects of other collections, are literally identical—Photostat, mimeograph, photocopied, and dubbed duplicates—copies of materials that are also stored at different locations and that traveled from institution to institution along with the individuals who first drew them together.

One key step in understanding folklore collections and rendering their diversity more comprehensible has to do with identifying the actual physical locations of their creation, housing and use. Taking this perspective we have several common sites where these collections reside. Folklore archives in the United States were first collected by, and can still be found in, various units of colleges and universities. In addition to these academic sites, folklore archives can be found at local and state historical societies and in public libraries across the country. Government agencies, in particular state arts agencies, the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution also house folklore archives. Finally private non-profit institutions of varying types also maintain folklore archives.

Looking from the present backward, we have on one side collections based in universities and colleges that are connected to folklore departments, programs and individual folklore researchers on faculty. On the other side we

have collections that are connected to public sector folklore programs based in federal offices, state arts agencies, private non-profit institutions and public/private arts and humanities partnerships.

Outside of ostensibly dealing with the same concepts and emerging from the same discipline these two types of collections have very little in common with one another—even if at times they share intellectual lineages, and organizational approaches and are cataloged using the same subject taxonomies. Even the act of naming produces complication. We can call one kind of collection, the older University-bound collections, *folklore archives*, and the newer collections in the field since the 1970s and the emergence of the public sector as *ethnographic collections* or *folklife archives*. We can refer to them all categorically as *folklore archives*, and reserve *ethnographic archives* and *folklife archives* as a descriptor for a sub-set—or vice-versa. Naming them for the sake of this dissertation has proven to be profoundly challenging.

Since at least the mid 1970s practice in folklore archives has made a gradual turn toward the adoption of the methods and techniques developed by professional archivists. Thus folklore archives, which were once the sole provenance of the discipline of folkloristics, have in recent years become increasingly associated with archival methods and theory born outside the field. The increased role of archival methods in the structuring and conceptualization of folklore archives is an earmark of these collections in the present, but as such it represents a distinct break with the past.

While the adoption of the theories and methods of professional archivists has been most pronounced in folklore archives created by public folklorists, this trend is not limited to the arena of public folklore alone. In public arts agencies, private non-profits and colleges and universities folklorists are increasingly reaching out to archivists for assistance in managing, organizing, describing and providing access to their collections. These trends, which have been underway in earnest since the late 1980s, have had a great impact on the structure of folklore archives and the conceptualization of them. Despite the introduction of professional archival methods, folklore archives of the present continue to have more in common with the folklore archives of the past than they do with the kinds of archival collections that professional archivists generally manage.

As a way to begin the discussion of what it is that constitutes a folklore archive, I provide the following characterization of the nature of the materials that I address in this dissertation: *I use the term **folklore archives** to describe formally structured bodies of research materials created by folklorists in the course of their work, and preserved for future use in a dedicated repository.* The sites these materials reside—a filing cabinet in an office, the collections storage area of a museum, a box under a bed, the Library of Congress—are not of consequence. Furthermore, the rationales that inform and/or motivate the preservation of these materials are not important for the sake of this dissertation. The key aspects of these collections I label folklore archives are: the materials that make them up are created by folklorists in the course of their work, and that the collections are compiled, organized and indexed by folklorists or from the

disciplinary perspective of folkloristics. This perspective roots folklore archives in the interests and approaches of the discipline that created them, regardless of the dominant theoretical approaches that guided the research that created the materials they contain, regardless of the organizational or theoretical models that shape their form and structure. In them we folklorists see a reflection of who we are.

This dissertation hinges on several ideas. First, that at the heart of folkloristics lies a Romantic compulsion to save, to create a record of a state of being that, by the very nature of our disciplinary orientation, will always be perceived as in transition or ephemeral. Some revel in this perspective, others fight against or dismiss it, but as folklorists we are all subject to it. This push and pull of our long legacy of the tumultuous twining of Romanticism and Rationalism is what makes the discipline of folkloristics what it is. Second, that in structure, content and nature, folklore archives can be read to reveal the history and trajectory of our field. Third, that although bound together by a thread of commonality, folklore archives as well as the field they document, are diverse and always have been so. Fourth, that the diachronic and synchronic tensions between commonalities and distinctions, stability and instability, Rationalism and Romanticism, centralization and localization—whether I am discussing archives, folkloristics or folklore—are a point of strength, and something that defines who we are and what we do as a field. Finally, that in recent years folklorists in charge of folklore archives have begun reaching out to professional archivists for guidance in managing and preserving their collections. The result of this

interaction is the emergence of a new, hybrid archival form that combines elements of the disciplinary practices of folkloristics with the theories and methods from the field of archives.

At points throughout this document I make mention of informant/interviewee cultural heritage rights and the increased emphasis in folkloristics placed on collaborative engagement with communities of origin. Changing perspectives on the relationship between researcher and research subject-and the way in which folklore archives fit into these discussions-are an important aspect of the trajectory of folkloristics since the 1960s, one whose impact cannot be underestimated.

However, while issues related to intangible cultural heritage and intellectual property rights are vital to consider (Brown 2003; Toelken 1998; 2004), they are not a primary focus of this document. The emphasis of my research has been on theoretical and methodological change in the organization and use of folklore archives over time, and the relationship of these changes to developments in the wider field. Because there has been so little critical scholarship on the very fundamentals of folklore archives, in this dissertation I center my attention on the structural and practical issues related to these collections so that this topic can be better understood. For now, out of practical necessity, I make a conscious choice to leave aside the detailed exploration of concerns related to intangible cultural heritage rights and communities of origin.

Methodology

My efforts here are deeply informed by my dual academic training as an archivist and a folklorist, and my professional work as a public sector folklorist and archivist at the Vermont Folklife Center since January of 2002. The research that guided my conclusions was undertaken from 2002 through 2010. During this period I conducted library research and visited folklore archives held at the following organizations, institutions and academic units:

As a part of the Preserving Americas Cultural Traditions (PACT) GRAMMY Foundation-funded archival project, in 2008-2009 I visited the Association for California Traditional Arts (ACTA), Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, University of Wisconsin (CSUMC), City Lore (CL), Center for Traditional Music and Dance (CTMD), Institute for Community Partnerships (ICP), Institute for Community Research (ICR), the Michigan State University Museum (MSUM) and the Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP). For all eight of these sites I wrote detailed reports, several of which I cite below (Kolovos 2008a-2008h).

As a part of paid, professional consultations between 2002 and 2009 I visited CL, PFP, Oregon Folklife Program Archive of the Oregon Historical Society (OFP), Randall V. Mills Archive of Northwest Folklore, University of Oregon (RVM), and the Roberson Museum and Science Center (RM).

Between 2002 and 2010 I made multiple visits to the Archive of the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (AFC), as well as visiting the

William A. Wilson Folklore Archive at Brigham Young University (BYU), the Fife Folklore Archive, Utah State University (FFA) and the Folk and Traditional Arts Program of the Utah Division of Arts and Museums (UTFTA). In addition to folklore archives in the United States I have also had opportunities to visit collections in Canada. As an invited expert for the 2005 Canadian Symposium on Text Analysis (CaSTA), I had the opportunity to visit the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archive at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. In March of 2010 I travelled to St. Johns Newfoundland on behalf of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador to conduct a series of workshops and had the opportunity to visit the Folklore and Language Archive at Memorial University Newfoundland.

I conducted and recorded formal interviews with archive and administrative staff at AFC, CSUMC, FFA, PFP and UTAC. Whether or not I recorded my interactions, at all the above listed sites I engaged in extensive conversations with staff about the collections, their perception of them, how they were used, organized, stored and what informed their decisions regarding the materials.

In addition to site visits and interviews conducted after leaving Bloomington, while still living in Bloomington I worked with folklore archives generated by Traditional Arts Indiana and the earlier Indiana Folk Arts Survey. This early exposure to the research collections generated through public folklore work conducted in Indiana was my first hands-on experience with folklore archives. Working under Inta Carpenter I processed the archival collection

created by Richard Dorson and his students during their work in Gary, Indiana in the mid 1970s (aka the Gary Project) so that it could be repatriated to the Calumet Regional Archives at Indiana University Northwest. Also working under Carpenter I processed research materials generated through the American Folklife Center Field School in Bloomington. As a part of my Masters in Library Science (MLS) degree at the School of Library and Information Science, Indiana University Bloomington I was an intern at the Archives of Traditional Music (ATM) where I continued my work with Gary Project materials held by that repository.

Since completing my MA and MLS degrees I have been actively engaged professionally in the Archives and Libraries Section of the American Folklore Society and active in the Association for Recorded Sound Collections. I am in frequent contact with colleagues at AFC, in particular, Catherine Kerst, Margaret Kruesi, Marcia Segal and Michael Taft, and Steve Green of the Western Folklife Center. With these colleagues and many others I have swapped stories, developed grants, collaborated on projects and explored the ideas that shape this dissertation and the conclusions at which I have arrived. I have corresponded with other professionals involved with archives and folklore archives in relation to this dissertation. These individuals include Jennifer Cutting, Judith Gray and Todd Harvey of AFC; Marsha Maguire of the Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress; Nathan Georgitis of the Knight Library, University of Oregon; and Nicole Saylor of the University of Iowa.

Finally, from 2002 to date I have been employed full time as the archivist and a staff folklorist at the Vermont Folklife Center in Middlebury, Vermont where

I have had first hand experience with the special challenges of folklore archives and the practical experience of maintaining such a collection in the 21st century. I have presented at professional meetings on folklore archives, archival preservation digitization, digital preservation of fieldwork materials for researchers, and the special needs of folklore archives. My knowledge of these collections is intimate and first hand, and the conclusions presented in this dissertation have been drawn from this long term, direct experience with folklore archives and the people who create, shape and maintain them.

Defining Terms

Because of the specialized nature of some of the terminology I employ in this dissertation it is necessary to articulate my rationales for using specific, key terms and to define them. In this section I provide explanations for how the terms *folklore archives*, *archives*, *archivist*, *folklorist* and *folklore archivist* are employed throughout this dissertation.

Folklore archives

In this dissertation I refer to the bodies of material I study as *folklore archives*. In many respects this is an outmoded term, as I shall explain later, but my use of “folklore archives” to describe these consciously accumulated research collections of folklore materials is intentional. Although somewhat archaic, the

term is still current. Additionally, it is not in anyway anachronistic—it continues to be applied both to the collections of the past and the present. In contrast, using a more current term such as *folklife archives* or *ethnographic archives*¹ to refer to older collections would indeed be anachronistic because of the way contemporary collections differ in form and content from their ancestors.

I use the term folklore archives rather than *folklore collections* in an effort to be precise with my language. A folklore collection can refer to many different things, from a folklore archive to a printed volume of collected folklore. Furthermore it can function as a noun or a verb. Depending on syntax, a folklore collection is a body of folklore materials, while folklore collection is the act of gathering folklore in the field.

However, my most pertinent reason for using the term folklore archives is due to the presence—and role—of the word *archives*, in particular as it is modified by the presence of the word *folklore*. In this dissertation I am speaking about a kind of gathering of folklore materials, what our field has for approximately the last century called folklore archives, and how these collections have, over time, come to have more in common with the kinds of collections maintained by professional archivists. As a way to distinguish these two distinct but related kinds of collections from one another—*folklore archives* and, what, for want of a better term I shall call simply *archives*—I use the term folklore archives

¹ Among public sector collections, *ethnographic collections*, and the corollary terms, *ethnographic archives* and *folklife collections/archives*, are currently the most common terms used to refer to these materials.

throughout this document to refer to collections of research materials created by folklorists.

Archives

The field of archives, much like the field of folklore, is cursed with having the object of its focus also serve as the name of the field. Chapter 2 provides an in depth definition of what archivists mean when they use the word *archives*.² Throughout this dissertation I use the word *archives* specifically to refer to collections as defined there—resources shaped, maintained and curated by professional archivists that are structured according to the concepts of *respect des fonds*, provenance and original order. Up until quite recently the kinds of collections I term *folklore archives* and the kinds of collections I term *archives* had little in common with one another outside of the shared usage of the word

² The use of the letter “s” at the end of the word archive is a continual topic of debate among professional archivists. In my practice I tend, mostly for aesthetic reasons, to omit it. However the general preference among archivists in the United States is to use the word archives as a noun to designate the materials, the physical spaces that contain them, and the professional field that maintains these collections and spaces. In contrast, the word *archive* is generally employed as a verb to express the act of putting archives into an archives. For the sake of adhering to broader and less idiosyncratic usage, in this dissertation I defer to common US practice and use the word archives for archival materials, repositories and profession. When I began my training in archives two things from the field immediately resonated with me. The first was the idea of archival context and how it connected to folkloristic concepts. The second was how archives (the field) is cursed by the same kinds of vexations related to nomenclature that folklore (the field) is similarly stricken with. And while for folklorists this problem is somewhat mitigated through the use of the word folkloristics, the equivalent term from archives, archival science, has never quite worked for me.

archives. As the dissertation argues, since at least the late 1970s the commonalities between these two formerly completely distinct kinds of collections have grown. Increasingly folklore archives are less distinct from *archives* and more a specialized subset of them. However, it is still necessary to draw a distinction between the two.

Professional archivists, folklorists and folklore archivists

To avoid confusion regarding professional roles, throughout this dissertation I use the term *professional archivists* to refer to individuals trained (in the United States most frequently through academic programs in Library and Information Science), and professionally employed in the management of *archives*—as the word archives is defined in Chapter Two. The standard definition of the term “archivist,” as established by the Society of American Archivists is as follows: “An individual responsible for appraising, acquiring, arranging, describing, preserving, and providing access to records of enduring value, according to the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control to protect the materials’ authenticity and context” (Pearce-Moses, Richard 2005c).

When referring to the individuals who create and maintain folklore archives I use the words *folklorist* or *folklore archivist* depending on the context. In all cases those identified as folklorists or folklore archivists are understood to have minimal, if any, training in the field of archives or library science unless

otherwise stated. Many folklorists have extensive experience with folklore archives.

Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter One is an overview of the roles served by folklore archives within the field related to the functions of research and preservation. It examines the research role of archives and explores what folklore archives preserve, why they preserve it and how they have done so from the 1920s to date. As the field of folkloristics has developed over time, rationales and approaches toward research, and motivations related to saving have ebbed and flowed. Chapter One explores these fundamental issues, arguing that while some motivations and perspectives on the roles of folklore archives have changed, some have persisted strongly over time.

Chapter Two provides an introduction to archival theory for non-archivists as background to the archival concepts I discuss throughout the dissertation. I focus in particular on the meaning of the concept of “context.” Within the field of archives, context is one of the key ideas that fundamentally define the nature of the archival endeavor and professional archivists’ work. An investigation of the concept of context is a useful way to bridge the theoretical distance between folklorists and professional archivists. The centrality of the idea of context in each field provides a point of entry for both professional archivists and folklorists to understand one others’ intellectual perspectives. Context is a key for cross-

disciplinary communication, and elaborating on how the term is employed by both professional archivists and folklorists will facilitate future collaboration between the fields.

Chapter Three examines the intellectual history behind what I call the archival turn in folklore archives in the United States. In it I focus on the role of ethnography in the field and its impact folklore archives. In particular I demonstrate how the growth of performance-focused approaches, the maturation of an American conception of the idea of folklife, and the rise of public sector folklore all laid the groundwork for the emergence of a new kind of folklore archive to suit the needs of a new kind of folkloristics.

Chapter Four explores the folklore archive from the perspective of two scholars separated from one another by 40 years. In the late 1950s George List, long time director of the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University gave an invited talk to the Texas Folklore Society on the topic of folklore archives (List 2002). In the mid 1990s Gerald Parsons of the American Folklife Center drafted a memo for the Center's trustees as a way to articulate to them the special nature of the collections held by the Archive of Folk Culture. When read side by side, List's and Parsons' papers provide insight into the changing scope of folklore archives over the period that separates them. Furthermore, unlike much other writing on the topic of folklore archives, both List and Parsons write with reference to the theoretical approaches of professional archivists. In this way archival theory serves as a fixed point of reference for examining how folklore archives changed from the 1950s to the 1990s. Finally, since the approaches

outlined by Parsons embrace many of the methods of professional archivists, his memo sets the stage for the discussion of folklore archives as they are currently constituted.

Chapter Five explores the increasing role being played by the theories of professional archivists in a specific type of contemporary folklore archive, the active research collections of public sector folklorists. I argue that while folklore archives have moved toward the methods of professional archivists as a part of a larger trend to professionalize public folklore practice in general, these archival methods are not always a neat fit for the needs of public folklorists and their collections. As a result, public folklore archives in the present are a hybrid form that takes what is useful from professional archivists, modifies tools for the specific needs of folklore archives, and rejects some elements of archival practice. They are a tangible representation of the work of folklorists. It is a record of our actions and the objects of our interest.

Chapter One

Roles of the Folklore Archive

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the core functions of the folklore archive and examines the way these core functions have been understood over the course of the history of folkloristics. I present this information as a way to acquaint the reader with the general roles folklore archives have filled for the discipline across the 20th century. In this chapter I aim to provide readers with base-line familiarity of the key issues that have guided the creation and use of folklore archives over time. In the following chapters the ideas addressed here will be readdressed in greater detail.

Folklore archives have served two primary roles in the field of folkloristics—they preserve research materials related to the study of folklore, and they serve as sites for primary source research in folkloristics. As I note in the introduction to this dissertation, folklore archives represent an under-studied and under-theorized aspect of our field. In much of the literature they are treated as a given—a fundamental element of folkloristic practice that has not been subject to much consideration beyond the practical aspects of creating, maintaining and using them. As such, the idea that the core functions of folklore archives amount to research and preservation has not been explored directly by many other scholars in a comprehensive and expansive manner. Although not

always framed in these terms, discussions of the pragmatic aspects of research and preservation certainly emerge explicitly in the literature of folklore archives. Such practical writing has in many respects been the meat of academic writing on this topic. In addition, much of this applied writing implicitly addresses broad ideas relating to the role of research and preservation in folklore archives and the impact of these concepts on how we understand and use these disciplinary collections without directly articulating these ideas in concrete terms³. However, neither nuts-and-bolts practical writing nor the implicit flirtation with the critical consideration of the fundamentals of folklore archives has pushed for a greater understanding of the ideas that motivate the creation and use of folklore archives and how these basic notions have been understood at different points of time and in different institutional contexts. Although seemingly quite simple and direct, the roles of research and of preservation that folklore archives fulfill are deeply nuanced. This chapter teases apart the basic elements that underlie each of these roles in order to open up a critical understanding of what has informed practice in folklore archives in the United States over the last century or more.

The dual callings of research and preservation have marked the mission of the folklore archive since these collections were first created. In this chapter I

³ An interesting exception is the paper by Georges, Blumenreich and O'Reilly, "Two Mechanical Indexing Systems for Folklore Archives: A Preliminary Report" (1974) that offers insightful observations on the function and role of folklore archives in the field up until that time. I address some of the thoughts of Georges et al. at a later point in this chapter and in Chapter Three.

address each of these roles in turn, breaking out the practical and conceptual components that inform them and exploring historical, theoretical and technological factors that have influenced how these concepts were interpreted. In addition to exploring the changing perceptions of the meaning of research and preservation, I examine how changes in interpretation of these ideas have altered practice and altered the physical structure of folklore archives themselves.

I begin by discussing the role of folklore archives in the research work of folkloristics. Across their history the research role of folklore archives has been framed from two perspectives—the role of the archive as a site for primary source textual research and the role of the archive as an agent for generating new field-based research. Folklore archives have maintained both these roles from their inception and, with changes in approach and emphasis, continue to do so into the present day.

The second role I explore is that of preservation. The preservation role of folklore archives encompasses a wide array of perspectives on preservation activity rooted in the questions: “what do folklore archives preserve?”, “why do folklore archives preserve?” and “how do folklore archives preserve?”. To address the question of what folklore archives preserve I break down this aspect of preservation activity into two units, the preservation of physical things and the preservation of information. I further break down the kinds of information folklore archives preserve into two classes: the preservation of texts and the preservation of what I call *field research materials*. In exploring why folklore archives preserve

I tease out and examine six preservation motivations intrinsic to the folklore archiving program: to rescue a vanishing resource for posterity; for future research utility; as a function of the creating organization; to address the needs of the creating organization; to keep record of the work of the field; and to serve the cultural communities documented.

Finally, in my discussion of how folklore archives preserve I delve into changes in the way folklore archives have arranged and described the materials in their collections over time. In particular I focus on how early discipline-based systems of indexing, cataloging and filing materials in folklore archives have gradually been replaced by approaches developed by professional archivists to address the needs of the kinds of archival collections (business records, government documents, personal papers, etc.) historically in their care.

Research

In their 1974 paper, “Two Mechanical Indexing Systems for Folklore Archives: A Preliminary Report,” Robert Georges, Beth Bluemenreich and Kathie O’Reilly articulate the following in regard to the research function of folklore archives

On the basis of experience and the published literature on the subject, one can infer that the principle objectives of folklore archives are to provide centralized repositories for unpublished research records and reports and to maintain databanks to which investigators may contribute and upon which they may draw as they engage in inquiry. (Georges, Bluemenreich and O’Reilly 1974).

While I argue that folklore archives have two distinct roles—or “principle objectives” in accordance with Georges et al—and I interpret the research role of archives in a broader manner, their insightful paper does something that no prior work attempted to do: articulate a clear rationale for why folklorists have kept archives to begin with. That an academic on the level of Robert Georges should focus on the scholarly use of collections comes as no surprise, and his co-authored paper provides an excellent starting point for discussing the research component of folklore archives.

Folklore archives have played a central role in the research enterprise of US folkloristics since early in the 20th century. This research role rests on two related yet distinct pillars. First, folklore archives have historically existed to serve as repositories for primary source resource materials deposited there by active researchers. From this perspective, folklore archives were themselves (and in some senses still are) valid and active sites for scholars to conduct research that would lead to publication. Second, in addition to serving as a research site for records generated by others, folklore archives have also supported active internal research projects conducted by archive staff or sponsored researchers. From this perspective folklore archives have generated their own research with the direct intention of having materials created through this work come into the archival collection. In characterizing the research role of folklore archives it is necessary to distinguish between these two distinct ways in which research activity and the archive come together.

Folklore Archives as Sites of Primary Source Textual Research

Folklore archives function as “archives” in the most traditional sense when they are treated as sites for researchers to utilize extant primary source materials in the creation of their own new work. Across the history of folkloristics, folklore archives have served this role in varying degrees. As mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, the use of archives as sites of primary source research has meant different things at different points in time. The shifting theoretical center of the discipline has dictated both how these materials were used, how they were organized and, in many respects, if they were used at all. By all accounts the heyday of the folklore archive was the period during which disciplinary practice (or nascent disciplinary practice depending on one's perspective) focused on comparative, and in particular, Historic-Geographic studies of folktales and ballad texts.

For folklore scholars oriented toward comparative research, archives, along with folktale collections, were necessary to research work. Folklore archives were sites where a scholar could consult multiple versions of the same folktale, with materials frequently indexed using tools such as Antii Aarne and Stith Thompson's *Types of the Folktale* and organized to facilitate access to texts in accordance with the A-T indexing system. Evidence suggests that collections held at many folklore archives were not necessarily unique, but rather that many

archives shared materials with one another.⁴ This kind of duplication of content demonstrates that folklore archives were in many ways not seen exclusively as sites dedicated to the preservation of unique materials, but rather as sites where scholars could work with large bodies of primary source materials from many potential sources.

As the field's focus shifted away from the Historic-Geographic method and toward a largely ethnographic model, the research use of the archive changed—and in many cases evaporated completely. The increased emphasis on contextual studies of folklore and the increased influence of European folklife models on American practice changed the relationship between the researcher and the research subject and between researcher and archive. Folklore archives became less sites for research and more sites for the deposit of research materials. Rather than being seen as data storehouses intended to fuel new research, they became places to preserve the history of the field, the legacy of individual scholars, or the work of creating institutions as well as and the history and practices of documented communities. However, despite these changes as evidenced by the explosion of archival activity in the public sector and the growth

⁴ An example of this are the two university-based folklore archives founded by William Wilson in Utah. Wilson began his teaching career at BYU where he built a student-paper based folklore archives. In 1978 Wilson moved to Utah State University (USU) and brought the archives with him. In 1985 Wilson returned to BYU. At that time he duplicated the student-generated materials in the Fife Folklore Archives at USU and brought this duplicate content with him to BYU. As a result, substantial overlap exists between content in the William A. Wilson Folklore Archives at BYU and the Fife Folklore Archives at Utah State.

of the Archive of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress⁵ the folkloristic compulsion to archive, and to create archives, did not diminish. The archiving of research materials remained a focus of folkloristics, even if the relationship between folklorist and folklore archive had changed substantially.

Folklore Archives and the Generation of New Fieldwork

In international folkloristics, particularly in countries where folklore research was directly tied to nation building and national identity, national folklore archives actively conducted their own research projects in order to document cultural practices and preserve records of them in their confines. In Ireland, Sweden and Norway to cite three examples, national archives undertook their own research to fill their collections. This fieldwork was sometimes undertaken by archive staff and sometimes undertaken by paid researchers with varying degrees of training (Thompson 1953:89-154). The United States, lacking a distinct national folklore archive, had no such program along these lines until the establishment of the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress in 1928⁶.

⁵ The Library of Congress's unit dedicated to folk materials has borne the following names: 1928-1955 Archive of American Folk Song; from 1946-1955 a parallel section, the Folklore Section, existed as a part of the music division; 1955-1981 Archive of Folk Song; 1981-2003 Archive of Folk Culture. 2003 to date Archive of the American Folklife Center (Taft 2010c). Throughout this dissertation I refer to it as the Archive of the American Folklife Center unless such usage is overly anachronistic.

⁶ In contrast the Landsmåls och Folkminnes Arkivet in Uppsala Sweden was founded in 1914.

Under the auspices of the Archive of American Folk Song, Robert W. Gordon, John Lomax, and Alan Lomax and others conducted recording trips throughout North America and the Caribbean through the 1960s. In addition to work undertaken specifically by the Archive of Folk Song, certain projects undertaken by the WPA, particularly those overseen by Benjamin Botkin and the Committee on Folk Arts of the Works Progress Administration (Bartis 1982: 74), also serve as models for the interaction of archive and researcher where the archives supported research activities with the intention of deposit. Smaller-scale projects, once more tied to federal agencies such as the Bureau of American Ethnology (Brady 1999:75-80) were undertaken as well. In many respects the pre-WPA research projects created the template that other American folklore archives would follow in regard to supporting active research programs as a way to document traditions in the field and bring them into archival collections.

Research programs instituted by archival bodies serve several, frequently overlapping, purposes. Projects are undertaken to fill perceived holes in collection content, or for distinctly preservationist/salvage ethnography ends. They are also undertaken to support the interests of regional, cultural, or ethnic constituencies of the archive or its host institution. Often research is conducted simply as an end in itself. Most cynically the archive becomes a self-perpetuating beast, drawing material into itself as a part of a meta-documentary exercise to justify its own existence.

A key element in how folklore archives support the creation of new research is by making documentary technology, such as audio recorders, video

recorders and still cameras, available to researchers. In the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries these capacities were first cultivated by the Bureau of American Ethnology, and later from the 1920s onward by the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress. The Archive of Folk Song would eventually make it policy to loan audio equipment to fieldworkers with the agreement that copies of all recordings would become part of the Archive's collection. While the Archive of Folk Song is in many respects the starting point in the United States for the practice of loaning out expensive equipment to researchers who were often unable to afford it on their own, other collections also adopted similar policies. At universities with folklore programs that maintained folklore archives, the folklore archive itself was most often the site that stored and administered program-owned field recording equipment for use by approved researchers—most frequently students. The tendency for folklore archives to serve this role within academic settings persists to this day. Contemporary public folklore programs perpetuate similar models. In many cases where public folklore programs have a distinct archival space within the organization's offices, fieldwork equipment is stored there. Furthermore in public folklore programs where a staff member carries the responsibilities of the archivist, he or she frequently maintains field equipment and checks it out to staff. Much as the folklore archive itself persists as an assumed part of the practice of folkloristics, folklore archives serving as the storage location of fieldwork equipment and as the body that administers the use of this equipment is frequently one of the assumed roles of the archive.

The research role of folklore archives must be considered from two perspectives. On one hand, the folklore archive is a site for scholars to utilize existing resources to further their own research and publishing ends. On the other hand, folklore archives as institutions have actively undertaken and promoted their own field-based research projects to support their institutional missions. The way scholars have used the resources available in folklore archives has changed dramatically as the theoretical and practical imperatives of the field have changed. Research directly undertaken or supported by folklore archives has been a fundamental aspect of these collections in the United States since the establishment of the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress.

Preservation

The other primary role of the folklore archive is preservation. Preservation in the archival context in general is a complex issue, and in regard to folklore archives it is even more so. As noted elsewhere in this dissertation, exactly what archives were seen as preserving, why they preserved it, and how it was preserved changed over time in response to shifts in the theoretical emphases of the field. In this section I will address each of these points: what they preserve, why they preserve and how they preserve it. Each sub-section is further broken down into smaller sections that explore in more granular detail the evolving preservation functions of folklore archives over time.

What they preserve

In addressing the question of what folklore archives preserve it is important to draw a distinction between two aspects of the preservation role of archives in general. To oversimplify to some degree, archives preserve information. They preserve information in part by working to maintain the integrity of the physical carriers upon which this information is inscribed. Archives therefore preserve both tangible items and their intangible content⁷. Archival theory employs several evaluative criteria to appraise physical materials and the range of information these items can transmit through their physicality, about their creators and their content. The three criteria most frequently considered by professional archivists when making decisions on what physical materials to preserve are framed as *artifactual value*, *evidential value* and *informational value*⁸. Within the sphere of folklore archives these categories of

⁷ This statement serves to provide, for the sake of the following discussion, a general overview of the preservation role of archives. Omitted here (at the moment) for the sake of brevity and direct relevance to the question at hand is what many professional archivists feel to be the most critical aspect of the preservation role of archives in addition to preserving intellectual content: the preservation of information about the intellectual context of the creation and use of the records in their care. A more complete statement on archival preservation in line with the above would read, "Archives therefore seek to preserve tangible items, their intangible content, and the conceptual relationships between these two parts in order to maintain contextualizing information about their original creation and use." I explore the archival concept of context in detail in Chapter Two.

⁸The SAA *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* defines *artifactual value* as, "The usefulness or significance of an object based on its physical or aesthetic characteristics, rather than its intellectual content." (Pierce-Moses 2005d); *evidential value* as, "The quality of records that provides information about the origins, functions, and activities of their creator" (Pierce-Moses 2005h);

archival value were not articulated as such until, as discussed in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, a greater intellectual communion between professional archivists and folklore archives developed. However, despite the absence of these categories from explicit practice in folklore archives, the essence of these concepts did guide choices made by collection curators in the years prior to increased adoption of archival theory in folklore archives. The three categories of value—artifactual, evidential and informational—are also useful points of reference for analyzing the preservation goals and emphases of folklore archives at different points across the 20th century.

Of the three values highlighted above, artifactual value relates directly and solely to tangible materials. Evidential value resides both as a part of an object's physicality, but can also exist in the information an object contains. Informational value is most closely associated with the content of archival records rather than their physical make up. Informational value is the crucial determinant for inclusion of anything in a folklore archive. The exact nature of the information that folklore archives preserve is highly specialized, especially when compared to the general informational emphasis of other kinds of archives, libraries and special collections. Folklore as a subject, a concept and a discipline, has been contested, constructed and reinvented by folklorists since the word itself was first coined in 1846. The debates about the nature of the research subject itself, and

and *informational value* as "The usefulness or significance of materials based on their content, independent of any intrinsic or evidential value." (Pierce-Moses 2005j).

the corollary battles over the intellectual center of the discipline, informed the approaches of the archives that served the field. As the research foci of folklorists and the theoretical frameworks that informed them shifted across the history of the field, the nature of the material perceived as relevant to the work of folklore archives changed as well.

The conceptual framing of the material that folklore archives sought to preserve has changed over time. While the guiding principles for informational appropriateness were and are always tied to the evolving concept of folklore among researchers, archival preservation of folklore materials has shifted from a sense that the preservation function of folklore archives should focus on the long-term maintenance of *folkloric texts* to a current understanding that they preserve the *research materials* of people engaged in folkloristic field research. Marking this distinction between “texts”—in the folkloristic sense—and “research materials”—in a more general ethnographic sense—is key to understanding the shifting roles of folklore archives across the 20th century.

In this section I will explore how folklore archives have apprehended the preservation of physical materials, how they have understood the informational content of records and the nature of what constituted appropriate informational content for folklore archives at various points in time. I will also address the impact of technology on physical preservation and the way technological that developments have played a role in shifting the conceptual and theoretical perspectives of the archive.

Saving things

Since archives are generally conceived of as repositories of tangible items, it is useful to begin the discussion of preservation in folklore archives by discussing the physical, rather than the strictly conceptual, aspects of preservation in folklore archives. What follows are two examples of how the three archival values described above can be employed in the interpretation of preservation decisions made in folklore archives. Examining this question from the perspectives of the three archival values introduced above provides a lens through which we can gain perspective on aspects of the preservation activity in folklore archives. In this section I provide two real-world examples of preservation activity in folklore archives to present the varied scope of the items in these collections and the varied perspectives on folklore archives in different institutional and historical contexts. Example One addresses field recordings made of Lead Belly by John and Alan Lomax in 1933 that are now housed as a part of the collection of the Archive of the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, and is drawn from references to the material made in a biography of Lead Belly. Example two looks at the content and structure of the Western Kentucky Folklore Archive circa 1958 as reported by D.K. Wilgus in *The Folklore and Folk Music Archivist* (List 1958-1968).

Example One: Field Recordings of Lead Belly by John and Alan Lomax:

As noted by Wolfe and Lornell in their 1992 biography of Lead Belly, the original instantaneous disc recordings made of Lead Belly at Angloa Prison by John and Alan Lomax in 1933 and held by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress are “too cracked and decayed to be reissued for the public” (Wolfe and Lornell 1992: 114). Although Wolfe and Lornell’s appraisal of the discs is overstated,⁹ concerns about the fidelity of the original recordings—in other words, how discernable Lead Belly’s performances are within the surface noise of the recording medium and the environmental noise at the time the recording was made—beg the question regarding the preservation of these materials. If the recordings are of limited use due to their fragility and sonic fidelity, the fact of their preservation emphasizes more than anything else choices made based on the artifactual and evidential value of these objects, as well as on a perspective of informational value that treats aspects of informational quality as inseparable from the physical things.

From an artifactual perspective the physical objects are significant because they were created by three people of historical, popular and disciplinary significance, because these objects represent the material manifestation of a key cultural encounter, and because the grooves in the disc were cut using one of the

⁹ In a personal communication on 2010-05-03 Michael Taft, Archivist of the Archive of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, informed me that while the discs are indeed fragile they do, to the best of his knowledge, remain playable. His concern focuses on the fidelity of the recordings themselves based on the technical limitations of the original recording medium—aluminum discs—and how well the original recordings were executed. Taft notes that he has listened to the open reel tape reference copy of the Lead Belly song, “Irene” and describes it as “rough but identifiable.”

first portable disc recording machines custom-constructed to suit the needs of Lomax and the Library of Congress. For all these reasons the actual discs themselves are, to many people, subject to special reverence.

Evidentially the discs serve as proof of the Lomax's encounter with Lead Belly in Angola in 1933. They are artifacts of the careers of all three men. They reinforce a claim of authenticity measured from both archival and folkloristic perspectives¹⁰—that on one hand the recordings are what they purport to be, and on the other they contain “genuine” performances demonstrative what folksong was understood to be at the time.

Additionally certain aspects of the informational content of the objects are inseparable from the physical objects—the writing on the disc labels in John or Alan Lomax's hand, the brand of the disc, the materials from which it is made, the width of the grooves.

Example Two: Western Kentucky Folklore Archive.

In a 1958 article in *The Folklore and Folk Music Archivist* D.K. Wilgus outlines the Western Kentucky Folklore Archive of Western Kentucky State College (Wilgus 1958). As Wilgus describes, the collection is organized in a

¹⁰ The concept of authenticity as understood in archival theory is complex and would require an academic paper in itself to articulate clearly. An article that discusses and compares folkloristic and archival concepts would make an interesting project.

fashion to suit the needs of textual researchers. “The archive contains over 11,000 items” he says, with items characterized as individual units of folklore such as “rhymes,” “tales,” “riddles,” “beliefs,” etc. Wilgus then indicates, “Items are generally preserved in duplicate (special collections in triplicate) one copy filed in area and one by type” (Wilgus 1958:3). Since Wilgus doesn’t explicitly state what constitutes a “special collection,” it is impossible to know if this additional copy is kept as a reserve alongside the others or if the third set is kept isolated. Regardless, the collection described by Wilgus is one that places greater emphasis on the informational value of the records than on their artifactual or evidential value.

From what we can determine given Wilgus’s brief description, materials from multiple sources are broken up into pieces according to “type”—which in this case most likely correlates to the genre categories sketched out above—and “area.” Area, as Wilgus explains, is both general US (“organized by state”) and on the level of county in Kentucky. The evidential aspect of these materials would be tied up in their relationship to the individual who created them. This relationship is apparently severed once materials enter the collection. The artifactual component of their value is indeterminate, in particular since we do not gain a clear understanding of what Wilgus means by “special collection.” If a collection were deemed special because of its source—a prominent individual, for example—the third set of copies created could suggest an artifactual importance had been placed on the material. If a collection were deemed special on account of its content, and in particular the potential demand for its content,

then the additional copy would serve as a reserve in the case of loss. In this case the special collection would be framed as such because of its high informational value rather than its artifactual qualities.

Looking at the organizational structure outlined by Wilgus, the primary reason these materials were preserved in the Western Kentucky Folklore Archive was to provide access to the information they contained, be this information folkloric texts and items or information about the geographic distribution of folkloric forms in different areas of Kentucky. Informational value drove structure, need and use. Single source collections were broken up into informational units based on genre and place without regard to their evidential value to increase their usability for those interested in conducting research on genre and place. Artifactual value, with the unknowns regarding special collections identified above, was not relevant to the focus of the archive and the needs of its users.

Saving information

By far the most significant distinction in folklore archives in relation to their preservation role has to do with exactly *what* kind of information they were—and are—seen as preserving. For example, in the simplest sense, the earliest folklore archives in the United States placed emphasis on the preservation of *texts*, while most current folklore archives place emphasis on the preservation of what I term *field research materials*. This stated, the nature of the folkloric text, or perhaps more correctly the understanding of what constitutes a folkloric text,

has been drastically different at different points in time. Field research materials, as conceptualized in this dissertation, commonly include texts, but as a preservation focus of folklore archives the conceptual category of field research materials persists in being largely distinct from texts and the text concept. Below I explore both the folkloric concept of the text as it comes to bear on folklore archives and the concept of field research materials as they relate to texts and as they are conceptualized in the folklore archive.

Texts

Although perspectives on text and textuality in folkloristics are diverse, this diversity of understandings can be grouped according to two broad assumptions: the text as a *record of* folkloric expression, and the text as a *conceptual unit in* the study of folklore. Ideas of the *text-as-record* and *text-as-unit* have been simultaneously present in the thinking about folklore since the beginnings of the field. On its furthest extreme, the text-as-record perspective views the collected/documented—i.e. captured and inscribed—example of folkloric expression as the text of the expression in question. The expression can be fixed in any way—written down, recorded on tape, photographed, etc.—but it is the tangible item of documentation that is viewed as the “text.” From this perspective the physical entity that is the transcribed lyrics of the North American ballad, *The Backwoodsman* (Laws C19), would be viewed as a text, or audio

recording, the sound stored in grooves or on tape of a singer performing the song, would be the text.

In contrast, the text-as-unit perspective treats the text as a conceptual category of human expression, behavior, or communication that exists (or emerges) in an intangible sense through discourse. From this perspective folkloric expression does not have to be recorded to exist as a “text.” Using the example above, Laws C19 can also be viewed as an abstract, conceptual body composed of semi-formalized content and predictable structure—in this case a metered song that tells the story of a young man who shirks his work to go drinking and spends all night eluding his father so that he can attend an all night dance—and still be considered a folkloric text. It can be discussed and referenced, but its textuality is not directly tied to a specific fixed inscription.

Text-as-record and text-as-unit perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but at various points over the history of the field the influence of one or the other perspective has held sway. The literature on collecting, texts and textuality suggests that from the early years of folkloristics and well into the 1960s, the text concept correlated almost exclusively to the text-as-record model, in particular the existence of written texts on paper (Brady 1999:55; List 1972:475). In the case of folk song, the text idea was applied primarily to song lyrics (Hickerson 1983:493). The sense that “texts” could exist in multiple forms—different versions of the same song or story, for instance—and could be viewed as expressions of culture, suggests a perception of some notion of text-as-unit functioning as well (Thompson 1977:367).

With the emergence of contextual, performance-based studies and the influence of the ethnography of speaking, primary concepts of the text in the field shifted dramatically toward the idea of text-as-unit. This shift does not mean that folklorists wedded to the study of folklore as text necessarily always view such items in terms of the text-as-record model alone, nor does it mean that written texts—texts-as-record—are no longer being made, even by those with a strict performance orientation. The debates surrounding the emergence of contextual and performance approaches to folklore study articulated in Steven Jones's article, "Slouching Toward Ethnography" (Jones 1979a) and in Dan Ben-Amos's response (Ben-Amos 1979) to Jones highlight a dispute taking place primarily from the intellectual perspective of the text-as-unit, despite the radically different sides taken by each in the so-called "Text/Context" controversy. Ben-Amos, arguing at one extreme, stated, "a 'text' extends beyond the verbal level to include the entire set of relationships that involve performance" (Ben-Amos 1979:50). In pressing his point he also stated, "in reality there is a complete integration between text and context" (Ben-Amos 1979:50). Although he noted "it is possible to abstract text from context for analytical purposes" he felt such an approach limited the power of the research (Ben-Amos 1979:50). Clearly Ben-Amos viewed the text, in this case at least, from the orientation of text-as-unit. On the other side of the debate, Jones argued for the centrality of the folklore text in folklore research, remarking "...the text as we usually transcribe it, is usually the most important part of the story telling experience" (Jones 1979:44). Jones's phrasing suggests that the text exists both in transcription—text-as-record—and

prior to transcription in the telling—text-as-unit. Just as emphasis on the text-as-record does not preclude the consideration of text-as-unit, so the view of text-as-unit does not exclude the consideration of text-as-record. If anything, it is the nature of the records that has changed.

Exactly what changed is difficult to pinpoint. Connected to the ethnographic turn in folkloristics was a greater tendency to view texts more abstractly in addition to seeing them as physical items. This certainly seems to be the view of D.K. Wilgus, who articulated the value of item-centered approaches to the study of folklore while suggesting that those items—“things” as he referred to them—could exist as more than just captured physical representations, and certainly more than just written renditions. “Text in this context is the item, the artifact, or a record or mentifact of folklore. To be pseudo-Platonic, I would say that it is the manifestation of a folk idea whether it be a song, story, dance or cooking pot” (Wilgus 1973:244). Of course, others, such as George List, also seemed to adhere to an idea of text as representation alone.

From the practical perspective of folklore archives—as articulated by List (List 1972:475)—historically the text concept has been viewed overwhelmingly from the perspective of text-as-record. Following List even further, in the context of the genre-organized folklore archive, it was the written record of folklore that was viewed as the text. As Rosemary Zumwalt argues, the history of folkloristics in the United States can be seen as a process of two different orientations to the material, the anthropological and the literary, slugging it out over the course of

the twentieth century (Zumwalt 1988:xi). Much of the impetus for folktale research came from scholars with a literary orientation interested in comparative tale analysis. Most of the early folklore archives were founded to facilitate such research, and a textual preoccupation informs folklore archiving in academic environments through the present day.

Field Research Materials

Folklore archives in the present are much more focused on the preservation of a broad category records generated by researchers rather than on the atomistic preservation of individual folkloric texts. For the sake of this dissertation I frame this broad category of records as *field research materials*. In the simplest sense field research materials are the sum total of a body of work generated by a folklorist while conducting fieldwork. They are, in archival terms, “records” (Pearce-Moses 2005I)—evidence of folklorists performing research work, evidence of the individuals and communities they worked with, and documentation of the particular cultural practices with which the folklorist was concerned. In framing the idea of field research materials as a category of stuff preserved by folklore archives, my perspective on *fieldwork* is not limited to conscious ethnographic engagement following classic anthropological participant-observer models alone, but rather is includes all work created by folklorists through engagement with other human beings be it classic anthropological “ethnography” at one extreme or literary-style folklore “collecting”

at the other. Furthermore, field research materials include those generated both in the midst of fieldwork and later—from magnetic recordings, photographs and notes done while meeting with a research informant, to publication drafts, edited articles and final printed items completed weeks, months, or years later. Finally, the exact physical make up of the field research materials is largely irrelevant—the records they consist of can be formed from any of the tools a folklorist would use in the field—pen and paper, audio tape, photographic transparencies, DVD discs, digital audio files, or digital images.

While the greatest emphasis in archives today is focused on preserving field research materials, this does not mean that archives in the present do not have an interest in text. Nor does it mean that archives of the past paid no consideration to what I term field research materials as a part of the scope of their preservation activity. Rather, at various points in time differential emphasis has been placed on the preservation of texts primarily or on the preservation of fieldwork materials primarily. Furthermore, in addition to changes in emphases on texts compared to fieldwork materials, there have been other changes in praxis that relate to the perception of the importance of texts within bodies of fieldwork materials.

Technology

As I state repeatedly throughout this section, the dominant theoretical assumptions that informed—and that continue to inform—folklorists' research

agendas at various points in time are the primary forces that shaped the goals and needs of folklore archives. In light of this pattern, the main theoretical frames that guided folkloristic work have, by and large, dictated exactly what was and is considered to be worthy of preservation in folklore archives. However, in addition to theory, the nature of what folklore archives preserved and continue to preserve has been greatly influenced by technology as well. While the independent impact of each of these forces cannot be overlooked, the most profound impact on archives results from the evolving, intertwining relationship between technology and theory over time. Robert Baron describes the relationship between technology and the history of folkloristics:

During the past few decades there has been an explosion of scholarship (in art history, cultural studies, semiotics, and anthropology) about many of these issues of transparency, the selectivity of the observer, technical constraints, representational conventions, and the nature of recording technologies as mechanical transcriptions of reality. For understanding folkloristic practice, these issues are critically important, because, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett states, "folklore is a discipline made and defined by technology and especially by technologies of communication" (1998b:309). Phonography, as an "artifact of inscription" used in addition to print, transformed folkloristics despite early resistance. Cecil Sharpe, for example, claimed that like photography, phonography was limited as an "artistic record." Nonetheless, as we know, phonography prevailed as did photography. Such a fresh look at the intellectual history of the discipline suggests that folkloristic practice can be viewed as constituted by technologies, which have defined the discipline over time. (Baron 1999:188).

It is no coincidence that the emergence of ethnographic models of folklore research coincided with the ready availability of portable magnetic tape recording machines. In fact, the ethnographic interview, as it has developed within folkloristics, was in many respects made possible because of magnetic recording

on tape and wire. As folklorists experimented with and adapted various technologies to the realm of fieldwork, the locus of the folkloristic endeavor increased in scope.

Changing perceptions of intellectual content—especially those changes that relate to intellectual fashion and passion—are only one aspect of forces that have shaped the nature of the intellectual content that the discipline felt merited preservation within the folklore archive. Technological developments—particularly in audio recording, and more directly the impact these technologies had on folklore theory—also rattled the foundations of folklore archives. These changes in the physical materials found in folklore archives had tremendous impact both by challenging approaches to physical preservation as a means for maintaining intellectual content, and stretching the conceptual limits of the object of study. Audio recording in itself challenged the literary (and literal) conceptualization of the folklore text. Changes in audio recording technology—from the 2-4 minute cylinder to the 10-minute disc to the 30-minute magnetic tape—further challenged these conceptualizations and had a key role in expanding the work of folklorists into the broader framework of ethnography.

In one sense the advent of audio recording, whether on wax cylinder, lacquer disc, steel wire, or magnetic tape, required folklore archives to fabricate whole new ways of relating to physical objects in their collections. The presence of objects other than manuscript or typescript pages forced a reconceptualization of space and order within the archive. The presence of audio materials caused a radical shift in the sensory components and environment of the folklore archive—

what had once been a primarily or exclusively visual space was now also a realm of sound. It forced new financial and technical demands on folklore archives—without the equipment and skills necessary to awaken the voices lying dormant within the grooves a lacquer disc, the value of these materials could be found only in their potential. Finally, audio recordings and technological developments in audio recording stretched and challenged the idea of the folkloric text, gradually shifting the center of the folklore archive as a site for the preservation of folklore texts toward the folklore archive as a repository for the preservation of research materials generated by folklorists.

The first technology applied to the preservation of orally created texts was writing. The earliest extant example we have of a written folkloric text dates to circa 1800 BCE. The use of cuneiform script embossed into clay tablets to preserve a written text of the Epic of Gilgamesh marks the earliest extant effort to entextualize oral narrative on the planet (Sandars 1972:19-20). Writing would persist as the primary text making technology until the end of the nineteenth century.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Edison's phonograph made possible the recording and reproduction of sound. Not long after it appeared, the phonograph began to be used as a documentary tool in recording and preserving oral and aural forms of human cultural expression. But although many fieldworkers used cylinder recorders, the machines were by no means the primary method of text-capture during the period. Wax cylinder recordings could capture a few minutes of sound at best, so they were well suited to the

documentation of short material, such as songs and tales. However, as Erika Brady notes, issues of textuality and recording at this period were problematic. “The historically shaped sensorium of ethnographers of the period was still essentially a post-enlightenment environment in which meaningful sound was automatically spatialized—and specialized—in the form of written word” (Brady 1999:73).

In time the use of disc recording machines would supplant the cylinder in the field. Like wax cylinders, disc recorders etched the audio signal into the physical material of the disc, normally aluminum or acetate. Also like wax cylinders, they only allowed a short recording time suitable for capturing short materials or truncated versions of songs and stories. In the relationship between text and researcher, these short songs, tales and truncated versions of materials could provide misleading data to later researchers. In one example, a researcher listening to a tape of a series of recordings made in the 1900s assumed the standard four-to-six minute length of songs from a particular Native American group was culturally defined. In actuality it was a result of the limits of recording duration on wax cylinder (Brady 1999:6). The fragility of the medium could also be problematic in adding artifacts into the text. Anthony Seeger and Louise Spear discovered that the drumming noise on a wax cylinder labeled “man sings with drum” was actually the result of a fine crack (Sterne 2003:326).

Although the disc format did have intrinsic limits, at least one scholar devised a way to work around some of them and tie the experience of recording closer to the experience of actual performance. In the 1930s Milman Parry had a

custom, portable, dual-disc recording machine made for his work on epic song in Yugoslavia. The dual-disc system afforded Parry the ability to record continuously without break by allowing him to switch to a second recording blank before the first disc ran out (Lord 2000[1960]:x). Before entering the field, Parry's, and later his student Albert Lord's, perception of text differed greatly from many of their contemporaries. To Parry, the oral epic did not exist as a set text, but rather an almost endless assortment of texts created in performance that could extend for hours. When they recorded the performances of singers, they were not recording *the* text of an epic, but a text of a dynamic and emergent oral poetic tradition. Parry's dual disc cutter allowed him not only to record full renditions of songs as opposed to the truncated versions recorded in the past, but to do so in a more natural way—without interruptions to change discs—than had been done before.

An observation on Parry's work made by Béla Bartók describes an additional way that Parry's recording approach added to the making of complex texts:

...there are many "conversations" in addition to the songs incorporated in the recording, talks between collector and singer concerning data connected with the song, with the singer, with the circumstances referring to the performance of the song, etc. When you listen to these "conversations" you really have the feeling of being on the spot, talking yourself with those peasant singers. It gives you a thrilling impression of liveliness, of life itself. (Bartók 1942:X6).

Since there was no practical limit to the time he could record, Parry could capture information previously viewed as tangential to the texts sought by collectors. What Bartók terms "conversations" added information to the song

texts, enriched the experience of the song recordings, and for perhaps the first time in the history of the documentation of verbal art, allowed for context to be aurally documented along with text. This would not be generally possible until the advent and application of magnetic recording to fieldwork. At the time, Parry's utilization of recording equipment was very rare, if not unique. He struck upon a way for his conceptual vision of the text—text-as-unit—to prevail against the limitation of recoding technologies at the time. Thus, he was able to create a text-as-record that captured not only the emergent and highly variant quality of the Yugoslavian epic poem, but also the qualities of performance and the personal, social and cultural context in which these poems persisted and grew. In doing so he provided a preview of what kinds of recordings, and therefore what kind of text making, could be achieved as new methods of sound documentation emerged.¹¹

Alan Lomax, another proponent of audio recording in folkloristic fieldwork, was also an early advocate of the centrality of the recorded performance to the study of folklore and folksong. As a participant in the 1950 symposium on Archiving Folklore held as a part of the Midcentury International Folklore

¹¹ As a side note, once more using Parry's work as a jumping off point, Bartók makes comments that suggest yet another new perspective to the text brought about by recording technologies. Comparing his own experience working with single disc cutters to Parry's work with his dual disc machine he states, "we generally had to confine ourselves to the recording of the first three or four stanzas, even of ballads as long as forty to fifty stanzas, although we knew quite well that every piece ought to be recorded from beginning to end" (Bartók 1942). Bartók's comments propose another category of text—the partial text. The partial text is the fragmentary skeleton of song useful in sketching form and aspects of the full text. However, although incomplete, it was still a text in itself.

Conference at Indiana University, Lomax sparred aggressively with other attendees regarding the importance of audio documentation ahead of the written transcription of both folksongs and folktales. Lomax opened his discussion by noting a project undertaken by the Library of Congress:

They went out and recorded whole communities, everybody in the community so that they could make as complete a record as possible of the history and general social life of the community. This approach, I think, should be discussed here because it does turn folklore rather upside down. It is making an oral approach to various fields and is certainly in contrast to the older literary approach....The reason I bring this up is that I sometimes wonder whether it is possible to study oral literature in books. The folk tale by definition at any rate is lived and it survives by oral transmission. If scholars are not interested in the oral aspect of it they are not interested in the folk tale at all. And although the language problem is very difficult I don't see how a scholar or scientist can know what folk tales are like unless he can and does follow them in their living oral form, in one or preferably several languages. (Lomax in Thompson 1976[1953]:143-144).

The larger project Lomax described of “recording whole communities” has interesting implications for understanding his perspective on the scope of the field during this time. However, the more pertinent matters for the current discussion relate to Lomax’s statement contrasting what he framed as the “oral approach” to the “literary approach” and his forceful assertion that scholars not interested in the tale as it exists orally “are not interested in the folk tale at all.” By default Lomax argued that the transcribed text—the text as it appears “in books”—does not approximate the tale as it exists in the telling in the same way that an audio recording can. And since folk tales “by definition survive in oral tradition” he seemed to argue that a transcribed text of a tale is, in essence, no longer a folktale since it cannot be experienced as sound.

Here Lomax was not arguing for the centrality of audio recording as a way to foreground the stylistic and meta-communicative elements of folk tales that would come to be the central concerns of performance-based approaches to folklore study (e.g. Bauman and Paredes 2000[1972], Ben-Amos and Goldstein 1975, Ben Amos 1976, Bascom 1977), but rather was advocating for a reorganization of the work of comparative and diffusionist literary folkloristics around oral/aural texts. Lomax suggested a new comparative folkloristics—a literary folkloristics (as framed in Zumwalt 1988) focused on use of the oral/aural text rather than the printed text as source of data. Lomax's interests persisted in being grounded in the textual concerns of literary folklorists, only it was a literary folkloristics where sound—and the perceived objectivity of the recording technology—not the written word, was central.

As noted above, Milman Parry's use of grooved disc cutting equipment in this way was extremely innovative and unusual, if not unique. Alan Lomax came of age working within the durational and fidelity limits of disc recording, and his comments from 1950 were very much informed by his long-time involvement with this technology. With the post-war emergence of magnetic recording via wire, open-reel and later cassette tape, the ability of folklorists to document their ethnographic experiences and a complex variety of textual forms exploded. However, for the first time in history the method of recoding texts did not involve permanent physical inscription. Text recording began with the written inscription of words. From the 1890s through the 1950s it became possible to record the whole or part of text performance via the mechanical inscription of sound on wax,

metal, or acetate. In the 1950s, the age-old requirement of physical inscription as a necessary element in text recording disappeared. From words in clay, ink or pencil, from lines cut into wax or acetate, the text could now exist as an array of microscopic particles patterned with an invisible, electro-magnetic force on a strip of tape or length of fine wire.

From what I've been able to determine, the irony of preserving what was perceived to be a vanishing resource in a form as ephemeral as a string of magnetized particles on a strip of plastic did not occur to fieldworkers at the time. Instead, researchers quickly embraced magnetic recording, tape in particular, for the improvements it brought to fieldwork practice.

Roger Abrahams comments on the impact of the technology of the tape recorder from several perspectives: that of the corollary tool of the electronic microphone and its influence on sound fidelity and research/informant proxemics, the potential duration of the recording medium and its sound fidelity (Abrahams 1993b:281-282). From Abrahams' perspective the improvements in microphone technology were crucial in improving the fidelity of recordings in general. Coupling improved microphones to the superior recording medium of tape allowed for recordings that greatly surpassed the quality of what was achieved prior. Furthermore, Abrahams sees the "mobile directional microphone" as altering the dynamics of fieldwork by increasing the intimacy of fieldwork interaction, since it "encouraged the collector to get closer to artists as they were recording" (Abrahams 1993b:281). The length of record time afforded by tape allowed for extended sessions, which led to more extensive documentation. The

quality of documentation on audiotape allowed for these recordings to be easily used in commercial distribution. With audiotape it became easier to bring higher quality representations of traditional artists to the public in a manner where the acoustical components of performance could be experienced. This capacity, in a sense, liberated scholarship from its sole dependence on printed text and opened up the nuances of performance to both researchers and the general public.

The impact of tape was not limited to researchers alone. Performers felt it as well. Huddie Leadbetter first encountered a tape recorder in 1948, after a long career of recording truncated versions of songs on instantaneous discs. Fred Ramsey and Charles Edward Smith approached Lead Belly in September of that year about conducting recording sessions on this new medium. For approximately two months they recorded Lead Belly's repertoire as it had never been documented before. As described by biographers Chris Wolfe and Kip Lornell, Lead Belly's reaction to this new recording medium was enthusiastic:

In addition to superior sound, tape gave the performer the luxury of time. Discs could only hold three to five minutes of music; tape could go on for thirty minutes or so. For artists like Leadbelly, whose songs with stories often ran up to ten minutes or more in concert, tape seemed an ideal solution. In late September, Ramsey invited Leadbelly up to his flat and, in an informal and relaxed atmosphere, showed him how the tape recorder worked. Leadbelly was fascinated with the sound and the abilities of the machine and agreed to record some of his songs, as well as his personal history. The sessions continued into October and eventually included over 90 songs. Some of them Leadbelly had never recorded before; as he reminisced with Martha and Ramsey and Smith, he reached back far into his past and brought out things nobody had heard. He also talked about his childhood for the first time on record, and about his parents. Martha even helped him sing some old gospel songs. (Wolfe and Lornell 1992: 252).

In addition to the points outlined by Abrahams and described by Wolfe and Lornell, tape recorders were smaller, lighter, and easier to use than disc and cylinder machines previously employed. The equipment was much more versatile, so fewer limitations were placed on what the performer could or could not do while making a recording, and due to the greatly expanded recording times allowed by magnetic reel media, there was no need for interruption. Additionally, magnetic tape engendered two dramatic documentary possibilities that would transform practice in folkloristics: the simplified aural documentation of events, and the ability to conduct full, open-ended interviews with performers. As a document of a performance event, a tape or series of tapes could be in itself a “text” that contained a number of other individual “texts.” The interview, as method and as genre, entered the field of folkloristics. Through the advent of magnetic tape the ethnographic approach to the study of folklore—contextualism, performance—became conceptually and technologically achievable.

With the advent of cassette, tape recoding became even more convenient. Smaller machines and a smaller recording medium expanded the range of sites that could be documented and made the equipment less intrusive. Cassette also brought longer recording times, from 60 to 120 minutes, per unit of tape. From the first applications of reel-to-reel tape to field research on the part of folklorists and ethnomusicologists in the 1950s, through early part of the 21st century with the use of cassette, DAT and MiniDisc by field workers, up until quite recently linear, magnetic media-based recording has been the primary, if not sole, method

of audio recording in the field. Within the last five years, file-based digital recording has overtaken tape and disc based media, pushing them into technological obsolescence. The average professional digital audio recorder has the potential to produce recordings of quality simply not attainable with common analog tape-based recording equipment, and, depending on the nature of the file being created can record uninterruptedly for hours on end. The trade off is that unlike tape and digital disc recorders, these machines generate data files on reusable digital storage media. The recordings themselves have no tangible existence unless one takes extra steps to create one after the fact. For archives this has been a challenge, and for folklore archives, typically with smaller staffing, smaller budgets and limited technological expertise, it has been very difficult.

Both the ubiquity and the range of applications of magnetic tape have greatly shaped the contemporary perspective on the concept of the text, while simultaneously providing a technological means to expand the scope of the folkloristic enterprise beyond just the study of discrete texts. Although it is impossible to state concretely the exact relationship between the emergence of contextualism and performance studies and the advent of affordable, portable magnetic tape recorders, evidence such as that presented by Abrahams does suggest causality. Scholars engaging with the ethnographic perspectives percolating in the anthropological folds of folkloristics suddenly had access to technological tools that would allow them to explore old ideas in new ways. The impact of these intellectual and technological changes on folklore archives was drastic and far-reaching. Intellectual changes challenged the basic structure of

folklore archives as they had existed for decades. Technological changes strained organizational systems, necessitated the purchase of appropriate playback equipment and complicated the jobs of folklore archivists.

Why They Preserve It

The rationales for preserving the kinds of resources folklore archives contain are linked to the theoretical assumptions that informed and inform research. However, the moving targets in all these cases were not only theoretical, but also technological and demographic. As noted above, technology and theory have intertwined over the course of the 20th century, generating complex, mutual interdependencies. Folklore archives, as both passive receivers of the work of others and as active agents in the creation of new research, have both reacted to and shaped the ongoing interaction of practice, theory and technology.

Fundamentally archives serve as sites for research. Whether or not archive creators and administrators see scholars, or students, or institutional employees, or members of the ethnic and community groups whose folklore resides in the archive as potential users of the collection has an impact on the rationale for preserving the content. The ability to conceive of particular populations as potential users—community members for instance—is tied to the theories that guide research and the increased importance of ethical considerations in informing theory.

Furthermore the active institutional sites that have maintained folklore archives each express different, although frequently overlapping, rationales for maintaining their collections. For example, the motivations of university-based folklore archives have differed dramatically from the motivations of private, non-profit public folklore organizations, in large part because of the pragmatic differences in the missions of the host organizations. However, although practical contextual differences related to the needs and demands of various host institutions should not be understated, the impact of these institutional differences are at times eclipsed by the shared core values that inform preservation activities across the field of folkloristics.

In addition to these core values that emerge from the theoretical font of the discipline, other motivational commonalities related to larger trends outside and inside the discipline have, over time, also emerged to inform folklore archiving practice and reshape motivations across institutions. By and large these forces have stressed or created commonalities where many were not perceived before, allowing disparate collections to be viewed in similar ways. A prime example of this trend is the growth of influence of methods and theoretical models from archival theory and their application to folklore archives generally. The blanket application of archival models to folklore archives has in many respects spanned the differences of time and institutional context, casting motivations for preservation in universal terms that transcend the diachronic differences across collections. While in many respects these generalizing or standardizing trends are problematic, the linking of folklore archives to archival

theory has become a tool in the broader project of legitimizing these collections in the eyes of potential researchers and, most pragmatically, granting agencies.

Surveying the motivations for preservation among folklore archives in the United States over time reveals a matrix of rationales for saving research materials. In this section I will highlight six motivations for saving folklore research materials. The values below are presented in the rough chronological order of their emergence. However, in many respects different groups of these values have more conceptually common with one another. Some of the values I present below are categorically broader, relating to fundamental values that inform and structure world view (e.g. those that draw directly on Romantic Nationalist ideas and ideals). Others are more pragmatic and functional—in Gregory Schrempp’s terms, “instrumental values” that allow individuals and institutions to persist in their work without making reference to larger conceptual and theoretical concerns (Schrempp 2010). Although beyond the scope of this project, an awareness of the differing conceptual natures that underlie the values that guide preservation in folklore archives further exposes the rich complexity of motivations that guide what we as folklorists do. In this section I will highlight six motivations for saving folklore research materials:

- 1) To rescue a vanishing resource for posterity
- 2) For the sake of future research utility
- 3) As a function of the creating organization
- 4) To address the needs of the creating organization
- 5) As a record of the work of the field

6) For the sake of the cultural communities documented

1. To rescue a vanishing resource

The fundamental motivation for preserving these materials in dedicated repositories lies at the Romantic Nationalistic heart of the field itself: preservation with the goal of rescuing a perceived ephemeral resource from oblivion and maintaining it for posterity. Although rarely directly articulated, and often obfuscated beneath layers of legitimizing scientific and/or post-modern rhetoric, this basic, charged, and problematic orientation is fundamental to the folkloristic archival endeavor past and present. Hovering above all the shards of the Baconian, Enlightenment intellectual project as transmitted to contemporary folkloristics via the antiquarianism and philological exercises of the 17th-19th centuries (Bauman and Briggs 2003), coupled to the “Phantoms of Romantic Nationalism” that persist at the often unspoken core of the field (Abrahams 1993a) continue to inform the work of folklorists and structure their thinking as they move through the world.

The overriding motivation of preservation-as-salvage or rescue informed the creation of early folklore archives most directly. And although the rationales behind the salvage motivation varied from place to place, ultimately the impulse was driven as a response to perceived threats to the tenuous behavioral threads connecting the present to the past. These perceived threats were many and various, “an overwhelming foreign interest which threatened the native cultural inheritance, the language and the traditions” (Campbell in Thompson 1976[1953]:

89), looming industrialism, technological developments (e.g. recorded music, radio, television), social workers, art collectors, the folk revival, jazz, rock and roll, market capitalism, international socialism, cultural assimilation, changing mores. Although other motivations for creating and maintaining archives have arisen over time, the preservationist mentality persists, if at times wrapped in more contemporary verbiage such as “cultural conservation” (Feintuch 1987; Hufford 1994) and directed at the broader mission of supporting cultural pluralism in a multi-ethnic state. The perception of the folklore archive today as a site of cultural memory is an extension of this base line motivation—to preserve what we have before it is lost.

2. For the sake of future research utility

An often-articulated motivation for the preservation of folklore research materials is so that they will continue to be available for future professional researchers. The articulation of this motivation has consistently served as a means of legitimizing the preservation component of archive, as well as the archive itself, by grounding it in the productive needs of the field it supports. It serves as a statement of archival neutrality, defending the institution against potential criticism of the archive serving an overtly ideological end. It acts as a hedge against criticism that the archive exists for nothing more than its own sake. It provides an implicit imprimatur to the researcher who deposits his or her materials by communicating that his or her research is worthy of long-term

preservation. Finally it serves as a blunt counterpoint to accusations of Romantic enthusiasm on the part of folklorists by highlighting the objective goal of research—an understandable defensive posture in academic environments where the study of folklore was frequently tolerated at best.

Much of the overt discourse surrounding folklore archives in the mid-twentieth century embraces the perspective that the materials they contain are first and foremost there to be made available for scholars to use in the creation of new work. In surveying the extant literature on folklore archives from the 1950s and 1960s it is extremely rare to have any other motivation for preservation outside of research utility articulated at all.¹² While perhaps more of an unconscious ideology than an active strategic position, the roots of these attitudes can be found in the long-standing arguments by various folklorists for the construction of a mature “science of folklore”—a perspective that followed the discipline from its roots in philology and Tylorian anthropology well into the late 20th century.¹³

Separate from its employment as a rhetorical strategy, research use by professionals and students, or potential research use, affixed a comprehensible

¹² Key publications used to ascertain attitudes about preservation during this period, the height of the literary-comparative textual era of folkloristics, include the section, “Archiving Folklore” in *Four Symposia on Folklore* (Thompson 1976[1953]:89-154) and the run of the George List edited journal, *The Folklore and Folk Music Archivist* (List 1958-1968). As noted above, Georges, Blumenreich and O’Reilly directly articulate this perspective as late as 1974.

¹³ From the Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, to Dorson’s “Great Team” to Kaarle Krohn to Stith Thompson, inflections of the science of folklore were a central part of the discipline’s self-perception for well over a century.

value to folklore archives that could justify to the host institution the cost of creating and maintaining them. Research use of folklore archives has been a strong, central argument for maintaining folklore archives in the United States for the better part of the past century.

3. As a function of the creating organization

For many folklore archives that exist as autonomous and semi-autonomous entities, in particular those that engage in active research programs, preserving folklore research materials is distinct, articulated function that forms a key part of their institutional roles. And while other motivations also inform their preservation activities, preservation for the sake of preserving these materials frequently persists and is an expressed end in itself. While many organizations maintain folklore archives, not all of these organizations view the primary role of the archive in this way—as a repository for research materials conducted for the sake of research and documentation.

Examples of this motivation are much more common in Europe—the Irish Folklore Commission in Dublin and the Landsmåls och Folkminnes Arkivet in Uppsala, Sweden being two classic cases—but such archives did and do exist in the United States. The Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress was one such institution that existed fundamentally to preserve folklore materials created by it and donated to it. On a national level the Archive of Folk Culture—the contemporary incarnation of the Archive of Folk Song—serves this role today.

Outside of national-scale collections, other institutions also preserve as a dedicated function of their work. The Vermont Folklife Center Archive preserves research materials generated through the Vermont Folklife Center's research program as well as materials donated to it. And although decisions about what to preserve are made using a range of criteria, the act of preservation itself is an articulated aspect of the mission of the Vermont Folklife Center Archive.

4. To address the needs of the creating organization

In the context of older academic folklore archives, the archive itself served a curricular and pedagogical role in training students both to use folklore archives in their own research and to add to these collections through the products of their research. In this respect folklore archives were central to training undergraduate and graduate students in the practices of folkloristics and part of their enculturation into the discipline. Even though academic folklore archives have declined in importance as sites of active professional research, at many institutions the role of student archivists has persisted both as a continued expression of the classical pedagogical pattern in folkloristics training and because maintaining these positions perpetuates funding opportunities for graduate students that otherwise might not exist.¹⁴

¹⁴ Treating the University of Oregon as a typical example, through the Randall V. Mills Archive of Northwest Folklore the Folklore Program can provide two University-funded GTF (Graduate Teaching Fellowship) positions per academic term.

In the context of contemporary public sector folkloristics, folklore archives are often maintained with the primary goal of serving the operational and programmatic needs of the creating organization. One of the key motivations for public sector folklore organizations to preserve staff-generated research materials in their internal archives is to allow reuse of the content in future public programming. This pragmatic fact behind much of the archival activity of public sector folkloristics inspired Western Folklife Center Archivist Steve Green to coin the term *working collections*¹⁵ as a more accurate descriptor for public sector holdings.

While most associated with public sector organizations, the same motivation for preserving research materials can also be attributed to individual researchers. Many folklorists maintain their own research collections for the primary purpose of utilizing them in teaching and future publications. This stated, collections of individuals not housed in a repository are outside the scope of this study.

5. As a record of the work of the field

¹⁵ Steve Green's term is most appropriately used as a way to distinguish collections created and maintained by active public sector folklore programs from the kinds of collections overseen by professional archivists. Archivists generally take on records after they are no longer needed for daily work by the creating individuals and organizations. Folklore collections in public sector work would be viewed by many archivists as *active records* rather than archives since in general their content is still necessary for the daily functioning of the organization. I address this topic in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Folklore archives (as entities) can be treated as documentary records in themselves—evidence of the work of folklorists—from several perspectives. In the case of public sector organizations, one of the many functions their archives serve is to act as a documentary record of the work of the organization. This self-conscious awareness of posterity fosters a kind of meta-documentation, one that runs alongside the externalized documentary acts undertaken by public sector folklorists when conducting fieldwork. Their research materials, programs and publications create a record of the communities with whom they've worked. Their archive, when viewed as a gestalt, becomes a tangible a record of what the organization has undertaken.

From another perspective, folklore archives have, over time, developed their own historicity. Archives created at various points in time have come to be viewed as part of a disciplinary legacy—as the records of the individuals and organizations that participated in the folkloristic exercise over time. For this reason many materials that are preserved because they are now part of the documentary record of the field.

6. For the sake of the cultural communities documented

At the present time much of the discourse surrounding folklore archives and the preservation of cultural materials in them focuses on the archive as a site for maintaining the cultural memory of the communities it documents. In this sense, the archive serves as a resource to community members for accessing

cultural knowledge. While fundamental now, this perspective on the preservation role of folklore archives has not always been dominant. In fact, in much of the writing on folklore archives from the 1920s through the 1970s this perspective was never articulated.

That a central or primary motivation for folklore archives could be to serve the cultural needs and interests of research subjects directly—whether characterized as “folk,” “informants,” “interviewees,” “performers,” “research partners,” “community members,” “community scholars” etc.—is a recent development. The emergence of these perspectives in folkloristics is very much tied to wider intellectual trends, trends that had a large hand in reorienting folklorists’ practice in general, but also recreating perceptions of the relationship between researcher, subject and archive.

The post-modern critique of ethnography and ethnographic representation as typified by works such Clifford and Marcus’s *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986) and Said’s *Orientalism* (Said 1979), as well as the moves toward ethnographic reflexivity and reciprocity that they engendered, were a large influence in this direction. From another perspective, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), established in 1990, inspired, and at times required, folklorists and folklore archives to focus on the interests of culture groups and communities represented in their collections (Brown 2003: 16-18). Furthermore, folklorists’ long-standing interest in social and economic disparity and concerns related to intellectual property rights of performers and creators that developed in the 1960s and 1970s also had a hand in forging preservation

motivations that focused on community groups as owners and interpreters of archival content.¹⁶

By and large it is public sector folklore archives that have taken the lead in adopting this set of motivations. Included among them, if not at the center, is the Archive of the American Folklife Center. Public sector work matured in an intellectual environment that increasingly recognized, and criticized, the mechanisms of power that perpetuate social inequity. Hinged to this increasing awareness among folklorists was a gradual sense that, rather than challenging these structures and assumptions, the forms of cultural advocacy and cultural representation folklorists employed frequently reinforced the very same inequity we hoped to obviate through our praxis.¹⁷ Folklorists, public and academic, were forced to ask questions about the acts of representation they undertook and their impact on the communities represented, about valid sites of interpretive authority,

¹⁶ Stahl 1973, a special issue of *Folklore Forum* dedicated to “Folklore Archives: Ethics and Law” is an extremely interesting early document that addresses the issues of intellectual property rights of informants.

¹⁷ Three excellent sources that explore the complex issues in relation to representation and advocacy in public folklore are Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2007 (from whom I borrow the terms “representation” and “advocacy” as here employed); Bauman, Sawin and Carpenter 1992; and Bauman 2000. As a professional public sector folklorist, I make a sincere effort to be aware of the issues these scholars highlight as I undertake my work. I am particularly indebted to Bauman’s use of the phrase “mushy liberal pluralism” (Bauman 2000:74,77), as well as his assessment of the dynamics of representation: “But from what I see, there is still a heavy degree of saturation of what is almost the founding structure of inequality that made the idea of folklore make sense in the first place. ‘Oh yes, present cultures, but you have to have a presenter with a masters degree because these people cannot speak for themselves?’ You know? It’s bullshit. I’m against it. Giving voice to the voiceless? Legitimizing local traditions? No.” (Bauman 2000:82) in guiding how I think about what I do.

and about the ownership of materials they gathered through fieldwork and rationales for gathering them to begin with. Akin to perspectives developing in anthropology, collaborative models of working began to develop that stressed partnership in research and representation and cultural interpretation. These same ways of thinking eventually became applied to folklore archives maintained in public sector programs.¹⁸

Why Preserve: Case Studies

Over the course of the 20th century motivations for saving materials in folklore collections developed over time. The motivations presented above build upon one another chronologically, adhering to one another and accumulating with each new reformulation of folkloristic praxis—moss that has managed to accumulate on the proverbial rolling stone. This metaphor can be extended in several ways—to older collections that have themselves persisted over time such as the Indiana University Folklore Archive, the Randall V. Mills Archive of Northwest Folklore at the University of Oregon or the Wayne State University Folklore Archive; and to new collections created in the past several years by

¹⁸ For example, Lynne Williamson, director of the Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program of the Institute for Cultural Research in Hartford, CT periodically holds archive open houses where she invites members of the various cultural communities documented in the archives to physically handle parts of the collection. Her actions draw community members in as partners in preservation and interpretation and facilitate access.

public folklorists such as the collections of Traditional Arts Indiana or the Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program.

The Randall V. Mills Archive of Northwest Folklore

Because they are made up of tangible things, older collections created with one intention in mind persist through time and weather various changes in intellectual perspective on their contents. Using the Randall V. Mills Archive of Northwest Folklore (hereafter Mills Archive) as an example, one can chart how different perspectives on an archival collection can influence the perception of it and the motivations for its continued preservation.¹⁹ The Mills Archive began its life in 1966 as a standard academic collection based on student-submitted materials. The rationale for the archive was rooted in its research potential, in its potential to preserve folklore documented by students, and as a part of the curriculum and pedagogy of the folklore program. For these reasons the archive was maintained over time. However, as the research focus of the folklorists on the faculty switched from being primarily literary in nature to being primarily ethnographic, the utility of the archive to both research and their curricular goals became more limited. Increasingly it came to be viewed as part of the history of the folklore program, a record of the work of faculty and students and a broader record of the program's achievements over time rather than an active site for

¹⁹ In the spring of 2007 I visited and surveyed the Randall V. Mills Folklore Archive at the University of Oregon as a paid consultant on behalf of the Vermont Folklife Center.

conducting new research. As time moved on, larger movements within and outside the field of folkloristics encouraged another reframing of the archive—as a resource that could be of use to the people it documented. The Mills Archive assumed an additional function—as a de facto kind of oral history collection that could be drawn upon by the culture groups documented within it.

Taking the Mills Archive as an example, all six of the identified preservation motivations highlighted above appear from 1966 to date. While new motivations emerged at different points in time, old motivations persisted as well, albeit in diminished form. The preservation motivations of the Mills Archive are part of an accumulation over time, with the legacy of past approaches lingering into the present. The archive serves as a reference point for changes in the intellectual focus of the field itself.

Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program

A collection of more recent vintage, the archive of the Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program (CHAP) is an excellent example of how a contemporary collection rooted in public sector folklore practice incorporates many of the preservation motivations into its mission.²⁰ The CHAP archive was founded along with the program in 1991. Since then the archive has grown as CHAP staff

²⁰ I visited CHAP between 2008-01-21 and 2008-01-23 to conduct archival survey work as a part of the GRAMMY Foundation funded PACT (Preserving America's Cultural Traditions) Archival Survey Project (Kolovos 2008d).

conducted new fieldwork in support of their traditional arts apprenticeship and exhibit programs. The primary motivation for the archive is to serve informational needs of CHAP staff as they plan programming. However, CHAP also maintains the collection for other reasons as well, in particular to serve the needs of the artists and cultural communities with whom CHAP works and to serve as a repository for cultural memory.

In the CHAP collection we see core values that have guided preservation decisions in folklore archives since the early 20th century, namely the archive as site of preservation, arrayed alongside pragmatic needs emblematic of public sector folklore work. Core thinking in relation to folkloristics—what I’ve cast as our Romantic Nationalist heart—regarding preservation is recast in support of cultural pluralism, but still intact. The source of authority for the archive has shifted from the researcher/archivist to the individuals and communities the collection documents. The motivational hybridity, as well as the intellectual recasting of old ideas into newer shapes that is exhibited by the CHAP collection is typical of contemporary folklore archives. It is evidential of the way archives serve the field by adapting to the demands placed upon them.

Why Preserve: Conclusion

As noted in this chapter, the earliest folklore archives in Europe served an important role in nation building exercises as sites for the preservation of national identity via folklore and as sites for research into the history of the nation—and

ultimately the history of nations. These two motivations for saving, to rescue a vanishing resource for posterity and for the sake of future research utility, inspired the earliest American collections at the Library of Congress and at colleges and universities. They continue as core motivations behind folklore archives though the present. While in different contexts one or the other of the other motivation holds sway, both are evidenced in how folklorists in the past wrote about folklore archives, and how folklorists continue to speak about them in the present.

Among comparative literary folklorists a much greater emphasis was placed on preservation for the sake of the research needs of the scholars who created and used the collections.²¹ Secondary emphasis—not always even directly articulated—was also placed on the archive as a site for the sheltering of threatened cultural resources. Occasionally these perspectives would be presented in strict Romantic and Romantic Nationalist terms (Bartis 1982:31), but

²¹ A casual discourse analysis of the transcript of the “Archiving Folklore” symposium published in Thompson 1976[1953] and articles published in List 1958-1968 demonstrates an articulated emphasis on the primary value of folklore archives as sites for academic research. Very little, if any, discussion addresses the importance of the folklore archive as a site for preserving folklore as a threatened cultural resource. However, despite the direct absence of discussion along these lines, in reading these materials it is clear that an implicit assumption of the value of folklore archives is present across these articles and transcribed discussions. Folklore archives in the United States were very much seen as sites for preservation of folklore because folklore was seen as fragile and because it was seen as having value in itself.

until the development and application of an American conception of folklife,²² an expansion of ethnographic methods and the establishment of public folklore programs, it was highly unusual for cultural salvage, overt nationalism, ethnic exceptionalism or cultural memory²³ to serve as the sole or even primary guiding motivation for collection policies.

An excellent overview of the interplay of motives and audiences for folklore archives, during the period they addressed the needs of literary folklorists, is provided by Thelma James in a 1955 article on the Wayne State University folklore archive:

It has been the hope that we might cover fairly thoroughly the folklore of the ethnic groups of the Metropolitan area to the end that we might preserve this fast-disappearing lore, archive it, finally publish it. Meantime, the Archives are proving a sound resource for trained scholars who seek to know and understand the sociological, psychological, and traditional aspects of our ethnic groups. (James 1955:64).

James's comments highlight the two primary motivations for folklorists of her generation—preservation of a threatened resource and scholarly research. Most interesting is her mention of a “hope” to “cover fairly thoroughly the folklore of

²² The folklife concept and its role in expanding ethnographic engagement among folklorists and its impact on folklore archives is discussed directly in Chapter Three.

²³ An example of an early archival collection established with broad preservationist perspectives in mind would be the archive of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center at Franklin and Marshall College, founded circa 1950 by Alfred Shoemaker, J. William Frey, and Don Yoder (Bronner 1998:292-293). The work of Shoemaker and Yoder is marked by its early adoption of an expansive ethnological folklife perspective on folkloristics.

ethnic groups.” As she makes clear this impetus is not for the sake of the communities, but rather for the preservation of folklore for its own sake, and to provide access to scholars interested in understanding the ethnic groups documented in the collection. This perspective is perfectly consonant with the time,²⁴ and I highlight it not out of criticism but rather because her description typifies the perspectives of the era.

Motivations related to the functions and needs of the creating organization held sway at various points in time. The first of these motivations, preservation as a function of the organization, was in the early years much more common among state-sanctioned European collections than collections in the United States. The largest exception to this in the United States is clearly the Archive of Folksong at the Library of Congress—an entity that undertook field research for the sake of expanding the holdings of the archive. This orientation continues today in various ways depending on how a host organization perceives itself in relation to its archive.

In public sector organizations the preservation role of archives is four fold—preserving a working record of the activities of the creating organization for legal and historical reasons; preserving fieldwork materials so their content can be repurposed for publication, presentations and promotional material for the creating institution; preserving research materials for potential secondary uses by outside researchers; and preserving research materials for their value or

²⁴ In contrast, Dr. James’s interest in ethnicity and urban populations is well ahead of her time.

presumed value to the communities documented in them. In the context of contemporary American public folklore, the main motivation for maintaining archival collections is often so that research materials from past projects can continue to be accessed for inclusion in new programming and publications. This preservation motivation has everything to do with the needs of public sector folklore organizations and is, by and large, a distinguishing element of how they use folklore archives.

Most recently consideration of the needs of cultural communities has taken a greater and greater role in folklore archives. This consideration has taken the form of repatriation of Native American content,²⁵ more conscious consideration of intellectual property rights of communities and performers, and of the value of the artistic and informational content it holds to the communities who are documented in it and shifts in the sites of interpretive authority away from academic experts and toward research subjects.

How they save

How folklore archives save is marked by two factors, what in archival terms would be called *arrangement* and *description*. In the parlance of the mid-

²⁵ During the 1980s as a part of the Federal Cylinder Project the American Folklife Center began to disseminate copies of recordings of Native American materials to their specific communities of origin. Although the shape of these repatriation efforts has changed since the 1990s, the AFC continues to work with tribal communities to return their cultural content (Gray 2010).

century folklore archive these two concepts correspond roughly to *filing* and *classifying*.²⁶ Methods employed in US folklore archives from mid-century through the late 1980s had much more to do with disciplinary practice, personal quirks of archivists and the influence of European folklore archives than the approaches employed by professional archivists. In the last twenty years folklore archives have increasingly fallen under the influence of practices developed by professional archivists and the methods of arrangement and description used by archivists have increasingly been adopted in folklore collections.

From the 1950s through the emergence of a coordinated, national public sector folkloristics infrastructure in the 1970s-1990s, the application of taxonomic systems and the act of classifying content in folklore collections were central elements of the folklore archivist's work. By the mid 1990s the emphasis on classifying content diminished dramatically. In this section I will discuss how folklore archives have saved materials from the 1950s to date. I begin by discussing how materials were classified and filed in during the period where literary folkloristics and textual models held sway among collections. I then address the period where academic archives went into decline and public sector folkloristics took up the mantle of the folklore archive, gradually melding folklore disciplinary practice to theories and approaches developed by professional archivists.

²⁶ *Filing* and *classifying* are non-technical terms that emerge in the older literature on folklore archives to describe systems and methods for organizing materials. I pair them with the concepts of *arrangement* and *description* as conceived by archivists for the sake of comparison.

During the heyday of the text-based folklore archive items were gathered in the field, classified like samples in a natural history collection and filed alongside their taxonomic brothers and sisters in the archive. The classificatory practices within folklore archives were an extension of the general methodologies of folklorists. These methodologies were framed by an understanding of the world steeped in the scientism that prevailed in the educated classes in Europe and America during the period.

While nationalism first inspired the impulse to collect and preserve folklore materials, the rapidly accumulating pools of data soon fueled a whole set of curious new observations. Rather than reinforcing the uniqueness of various national traditions, folklore collecting projects began to establish the pervasiveness of many traditions across nations, language, geography and time. These mounting observations eventually inspired the growth of cross-cultural comparative folklore research, which became the focus of folklorists' work through middle of the 20th century (Ben-Amos 1981:xix). The folklore archives became central to these comparative projects. As a result, most folklore archives began to develop organizational and indexing systems that further assisted the comparative study of folklore.

There are few records of very early archival organizational schemes that I have come across. However, based on discussions in later publications that refer to archival practices, such as the "Archiving Folklore" symposium held at Indiana University as a part of the Midcentury International Folklore Conference in 1950 and the run of *The Folklore and Folkmusic Archivist* (Thompson

1976[1953]; List 1958-1968), it does seem that the two dominant approaches to organization during the mid twentieth century had been in use since at least the end of the nineteenth.

Like the geologists, botanists and other natural historians of the era, a basic approach involved categorizing each item received according to the folkloric equivalents of genus and species. Folklore genres, sub-genres and a host of other typological distinctions shaped the intellectual arrangement of materials, which were then collocated with their kin in files, folders, or envelopes, or by transcribing them onto index cards (Thompson 1976[1953]:118; Wilgus 1958:3). Form followed intellectual fashion as well. From the literature it seems that the most influential organizational plan was that developed by the Landsmåls och Folkminnes Arkivet in Uppsala, Sweden, which formed a basis for genre categorization in many other settings (Thompson 1967[1953]:113). After the revision of the major European and American folktale index, the *Types of the Folktale* (Aarne and Thompson 1961[1928]), in 1928, both it and later the *Motif Index of Folk Literature* (Thompson 1955-1958) became a popular alternate means of organizing folktale materials within folktale-genre files.

A second approach to the organization of materials in folklore archives involved maintaining some degree of provenance according to collector. In such archives it seems that materials coming in from a particular collector were accessioned and organized into units based on the researcher who conducted the fieldwork. If a single collector contributed consistently to the same archive, for example an archive employee who also conducted fieldwork, his or her

research materials would often be added to cumulatively. In either case, all materials brought in by an individual were organized first by that person's name, frequently kept in original order and heavily indexed to allow subject—here primarily meaning genre and region—access (Stekert 1967:64). In some cases materials were stored in folders or envelopes, and in at least one institution, the Archives of the Irish Folklore Commission, materials received from individual collectors were bound into leather and cloth volumes and stored on shelves in accession order (O'Danachair 1961:1; Thompson 1967[1953]: 94). In some cases, archives that were originally organized along genre lines reorganized their holdings into units according to individual collectors or researchers at later dates (Stekert 1967;Rikoon 1979:5).

In the literature on folklore archiving there is nothing mentioned that suggests one system predates the other or that one of the two necessarily dominated the field early on. Evidence does exist that the nature of the organizational systems in folklore archives were subject to debate within the field. In his essay, "Techniques of the Folklorist" originally published in 1968, Richard Dorson notes

As an example of the problems confronting archives builders in the United States, we may cite the question currently under heated discussion, as to whether a collection should remain intact and be cataloged under an accession number or whether it should be distributed among the various genres already in the archive. The genre specialist will, of course, prefer to have all texts of a tale, song or custom side by side, while the ethnologically minded folklorist will argue persuasively that each collection possesses its own individuality, marked by the bias of the collector, and must be preserved as a unit. (Dorson 1973:22).

That this issue, or any issue related to folklore archives could be under “heated discussion” within the field at all is quite interesting. Dorson’s use of this language, especially in light of his casting the argument along lines of “genre specialists” versus “ethnologically minded folklorists,” suggests that folklore archives were yet another disputed territory in the internal text/context struggle that raged within folkloristics at the time of his writing. Folklore archives became yet another piece of turf to be claimed by one side or the other, with the systems used to arrange and describe them becoming politicized points that separated advocates for one or the either set of theoretical perspectives.

During this transitional period, the apparent increased pressure placed on genre-based archival structures accompanied a decline in the use of folklore archives in general. For the sake of analysis I treat the years between 1967 and 1976 as a period where folklore archives and the dominant theories that would be applied to them were in transition. Actions taken during this liminal period—bordered by the 1967 presentation by Dan Ben-Amos of his seminal paper, “Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context” at the American Folklore Society conference in Toronto on one side, and the passage in 1976 of Public Law 94-201, the American Folklife Preservation Act which established the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress on the other—would have a profound effect on the direction folklore archives would take into the present. While I address this period more completely in Chapter Three, below I present an overview of some of the practical developments in folklore archiving that

emerged out of the text/context controversies that attempted to accommodate and integrate the emerging “New Perspectives” on the study of folklore.

The second phase of folklore archiving commences at a point where folklore theory began a dramatic shift, from treating folklore materials as discrete items—texts—that could be studied in of themselves outside of the social and historical context of their creation, toward a conceptualization of folklore as a specialized and highly context-dependent type of communication meaningful only when viewed in relation to its performance. For the last thirty years, largely as a result of these dramatic theoretical changes, the field of folklore has had an uneasy relationship with its extensive documentary heritage. The rise of contextual and performance-based approaches altered the nature of research activities to such a degree that folklore archives today—of the sort housed in universities and created to support comparative textual research at least—stand largely unused by professional researchers (Gabbert 1999:123).

The vast majority of folklore archives from the 1950s through the 1980s were based at academic institutions, and in academic collections, student papers often form the largest single body of material in the archive. Because of the ubiquity of student paper collections in folklore archives, changes in the treatment of student work serves a useful reference point for exploring the transition from textual to contextual, behavioral and ethnographic practice, the way in which these ideas moved from research into pedagogy, and ultimately, how they came to bear on folklore archives.

Generally speaking the research papers that make up student collections in folklore archives are final projects undertaken by undergraduates in college and university folklore courses. Most often they are maintained as a separate body within the archive's holdings—distinct from other materials in the collection and collocated together in one or more filing cabinets. Filing systems for storing student papers range dramatically across collections. Common systems of top-level organization include strict alphabetical order by student's last name (e.g. Randall V. Mills Archive of Northwest Folklore at the University of Oregon), chronologically by academic year (e.g. Fife Folklore Archives at Utah State University, Indiana University), or using a numerical accessioning system (e.g. William A. Wilson Folklore Archives at BYU).

In most cases elaborate indexing systems were developed or adopted in academic collections to provide access to student papers. Earlier systems focused primarily on classification by genre. When he established the folklore archives at BYU and Utah State, Bert Wilson employed a genre system developed out of the system employed at the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society. Following Wilson, Barre Toelken utilized the Finnish system at the University of Oregon. Other sites developed their own internal indexing systems that were employed in varying degrees of consistency over time. As ideas about context and performance became mainstream aspects of teaching and research, many academic collections expanded their indexing beyond just genre to address these types of data.

The basic taxonomic information gathered about student materials is most often generated by the undergraduate students themselves rather than by a professional archivist or a graduate student assistant. The most common site for recording these data is typically a form affixed to the student paper. These forms vary from site to site, but will usually carry slots for the identification of the genre (often pulled from an institution-specific controlled vocabulary), “texts” within a project, the “context” in which the text was collected and some basic demographic information about the informants. As folkloristic practice became increasingly ethnographic, faculty and archive staff struggled with the relevance of the text/genre framework to their larger pedagogical goals. Different institutions developed different strategies for addressing these needs. In some institutional contexts, namely those where a professional folklore archivist maintains the collections, these changes are part of a compromise between faculty and archive staff, where the folklore archive accommodates the needs of the faculty member and the faculty member accommodates the needs of the folklore archive. In other cases where the program or department head directs a folklore archive, the priorities and approaches of the archive are more often shaped by pedagogical demands.

Since student paper collections are normally the largest single body of material in academic folklore archives they provide a useful metric for measuring changes in practice related to arrangement and description in academic folklore collections generally. In order to gain an understanding of how these materials have been viewed by folklore archives over time, below I discuss developments

in how materials were saved at one important site, the Fife Folklore Archive at Utah State University.

Fife Folklore Archive, Utah State University

Randy Williams, Curator of the Fife Folklore Archives at Utah State University provides this overview of the developments in that collection since its foundation in 1972:

The format has changed somewhat over the years to reflect the trends in folkloristics. Many of the early submissions had little contextual data, and often limited, if any, informant data. Wilson created a collecting format that included: informant data, contextual data and text (item of folklore). Toelken and Williams added "texture" (stylistic notation) to the format of genre collections, allowing the collector to give "the feel" of the item to potential researchers. As well, in 1998, the students were asked to include release forms with their genre items, following a trend in the folklore field that addresses not only the item but also the performance of the lore. (Williams n.d.)

As Williams notes, research and theoretical trends in the discipline have influenced the practice within the Fife Folklore Archives. Over time these changes have resulted in the Fife Folklore Archive changing how they go about the work of indexing the materials that come into the collection. In the years before folklorist Bert Wilson took over the Directorship of the archive in 1978, deposits were geared primarily toward folklore texts—individual items of folklore such as stories, jokes or concise statements of belief. Wilson, seeing a need for information about the context of creation and use of the folkloric texts entering the archive added this component to the intake forms.

After Wilson left Utah State and joined the faculty at BYU, Barre Toelken moved from the University of Oregon to Utah State and took over responsibility for the Fife Folklore Archive. Toelken and Williams, taking a cue from Alan Dundes, added the additional component of “Texture” to indexing (Dundes 1980). In an interview I conducted with Williams in 2004 she went into greater detail about the order in which these elements became part of the indexing process and the meaning of each of the above components.

RW: It came from—the undergraduate, which is the A, the 8A²⁷ part of it, is students that are taking, probably, an introduction to folklore class and they are, you know, going out and finding out: what is folklore? Oh, okay, you go get three jokes. You get some legends. You get some material culture. And here’s the format. And it’s on our web site and, you know, it’s created by Bert Wilson, modified over the years by Barre and myself, input from instructors, of course, and basically it says: give us information about the informant. You know. Bob Jones is a frat boy, you know, and he likes to tell jokes with his roommates and he’s Catholic and he is twenty-three and he loves to—fish. You know, whatever the case may be. And then you’ve got a little bit of situational, the context, you know: Bob and his frat brothers are, you know, sitting around after dinner and they usually start telling, you know, this kind of joke. And then, and, of course, much more context than that, but then there’s the joke. And then what Barre and I’ve added is texture. You know, what’s behind the scenes? It’s not so much part of the context, but you need to know, maybe these words are explained a little bit better. Maybe you need to know that—why. Let’s say it was a Japanese ghost legend and they’re talking about this woman in white. Well, maybe you don’t know that white’s the color of death and so, if you don’t know that, that would really help you understand and impact this legend.

²⁷ “8” and “8A” are collection units within the Fife Folklore Archive. *Folk Collection 8* is the Utah State University Student Fieldwork Collection and *Folk Collection 8a* is Utah State University Folklore Genre Collection.

AK: Now how about things like, you know, when people say: when Gary got to this point in the joke he spoke in a falsetto.

RW: Right. (Williams 2004:36-37)

In recent years the ways of ingesting materials into the Fife Folklore Archive have been, through collaboration with faculty, modified even further to address the increased importance of ethnography, a more holistic apprehension of context, and the goal of giving students an exercise in ethnography and the interpretation of folklore rather than just collecting folkloric items. When folklorist Lisa Gabbert joined the USU faculty in 2003 and began teaching the introductory folklore course, her modifications to the structure of the class required a modification to the way the Fife Folklore Archive accepted work produced by her students. Her approach, framed by Williams as “as ‘context focused’ collecting,” (Williams n.d.) necessitated a reconsideration of the methods employed by the folklore archive on one hand, and deeper reconsideration of the relevance of the folklore archive to Gabbert’s pedagogical goals. She explains:

Rather than having them collect lots of ‘items’ (essentially, texts with cover sheets + basic informant info), they write a research paper. The paper focuses on one or two texts they have documented, but the thrust of the paper is examining the folklore example according to one of four contexts: cultural, social, comparative, or individual. Those contexts are taken from an article by Oring that we read in class. It’s an attempt to get away from the item-centered nature of collecting, but unfortunately it tends to make a mess of the archives. (Gabbert 2010a).

Gabbert goes on to say that she feels that attempting to meld the needs of pedagogy to the needs of the archive has been problematic for the archives

because “the projects don't seem to contribute as much to the archives, since the students don't collect as many examples as other item-centered collecting models” and “since the focus of the project is getting them to write a decent research paper (complete with thesis statement, citation of sources, etc. etc.), it becomes very cumbersome to add all the requirements of the archive—permission forms, proper labeling of tapes, proper introduction of informant in the recorded interviews, etc. Usually the students are overwhelmed. To me, the Intro class isn't a fieldwork class—it's getting them to get the basic concepts of folklore and having them write and synthesize, so trying to combine both has been problematic” (Gabbert 2010b).

As changes in theory, research methods and pedagogical aims butt up against the practical needs of the folklore archive and the history of collaboration between the Fife Folklore Archive and the teaching faculty, either teaching goals or archival methods must give ground. The Fife Folklore Archive and teaching faculty are working to maintain the relevance of the approaches used in the archive to contemporary folkloristic practice. The result has been challenging to both. It has challenged the long-held approaches of the folklore archive, and it has challenged the ability of faculty to structure classes in accordance to their approaches to the material. At the same time it has demonstrated the ability of the folklore archive—or perhaps more correctly the folklore archive staff—to adapt to changes and attempt to keep their collections relevant to contemporary praxis.

Ultimately just as the larger textualist/contextualist debate within the field was settled via an unnoted compromise, so has the descriptive issue—cited by Dorson above—within contemporary academic folklore archives been settled as well. By virtue of limited staffing, changes in research needs and the growing influence of archival methods on practice in folklore archives, both academic and public collections have moved increasingly toward a model based on organization by researcher rather than genre. To a greater or lesser degree depending on institutional policy and staff time, indexing tools—controlled vocabularies drawn from internal lists and/or external sources—serve to provide access to collection content rather than using the very organizational structure of the collection as a physical manifestation of intellectual content. And while old genre files and indexing systems to access them persist, they are not as widely used by scholars as they had once been. They become historicized, granting insight into how we used to work and what we used to do. They stand as evidence of work conducted by the academic sites that host them. They become part of the history of these organizations.

An example of this can be seen through the description of the index files of the Indiana University Folklore. Resurrected from a storage warehouse, the IU Folklore Archives is now “an integral unit within the IU University Archives” and as such is viewed as part of the larger history of folklore at IU. The index files are described as being, “abundant but confusing in terms of method and focus; by now they might constitute an interesting study in their own right as evidence of

shifting approaches to the cataloguing of folklore materials” (Indiana University Archives 2006).

Transition: 1967-1976

As noted above, the years between 1967 and 1976 frame a period of great transition for the field of folkloristics. These ten years are notable for the development and entrenchment of contextual, performance-based and behavioral approaches to folklore study; for the increased role of ethnography in the field; for the adoption of the word *folklife* as a “means of indicating the breadth of interests of the field” (Abrahams 1993b:386); for the establishment of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival; and for the founding of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. The impact of these years was jarring on folklore archives, and the collections and collectors found themselves in search of new approaches and justifications to keep folklore archives useful and relevant to folklorists.

Following this wave of change, a small trend in the literature during this period involved explorations into the computerization of folklore archives. During this period Joseph Hickerson (Hickerson 1969), Dan Ben-Amos (Ben-Amos 1970) and Robert Georges, Beth Blumenreich and Kathie O'Reilly (Georges, Blumenreich and O'Reilly 1974) each published articles addressing the computerization of folklore archives and the creation of databases for describing and accessing their content. While I will discuss these articles in greater detail in

Chapter 3, it is important to make note of these directions since they represent an effort to keep folklore collections relevant to the changing center of the discipline. It is exceptionally notable that two of these articles come from scholars central to the emergence and institutionalization of contextualism and behavioral approaches in the field.

In addition to the work investigating computerization, the most important development in the field relating to folklore archives during this period was the establishment of the American Folklife Center at the library of Congress, the reformulation of the Archive of Folk Song as the Archive of Folk Culture (now the Archive of the American Folklife Center), and the expansion of public sector folklore programming across the United States that these occurrences engendered. The most drastic impact of these developments on folklore archives came in the areas of arrangement and description.

The founding of the American Folklife Center heralded an era of expanding public sector folklore work originating from federal and state agencies, universities, public-private partnerships and private non-profit organizations. Fieldwork is central to the enterprise of public folklore, and through their fieldwork efforts public sector folklorists generated enormous quantities of material including photographic images, audio and video recordings, notes, collected ephemera and the like. As I argue, the idea that materials created through fieldwork will be preserved for one or more of a range of reasons is a defining feature of the discipline of folkloristics. As such it was natural that folklorists

began to seek out models for organizing and accessing their ever-accumulating bodies research materials.

The collections created by public folklore organizations have consistently been referred to over their history as *archives*, and the use of the word *archive* to frame these bodies invariably reflects back on the folklore archives that were, at least tangentially, part of the academic training of all most public folklorists undertake. In this way they are very much a continuation of the tradition of archiving in the discipline. However for a range of reasons in the years following the establishment of the American Folklife Center, the kinds of archival collections created and maintained by folklorists have increasingly been seen as more alike than distinct from kinds of collections overseen by professional archivists. As a result, *how* things are saved in contemporary public folklore collections is increasingly similar to how professional archivists arrange and describe their materials.

I explore the way in which archival methods came to influence folklore archives in greater detail in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, but in short, in large part through the courted intervention of trained archivists and the increased role taken by the staff of the Archive of the American Folklife Center in proactively training public sector folklorists in the mechanics and philosophy of archival methods, folklore archives in the public sector, and increasingly folklore archives in general, are structured much like standard archival collections. And while the *how* of saving increasingly bears the stamp of archival theory and methods, the *what* and *why*—although increasingly informed by the practices of

archives—maintain a distinctly folkloristic identity. In contrast to the disciplinarily-rooted approaches of earlier academic folklore archives, folklore archives created by public sector folklorists are a uniquely hybrid form. They draw from two pools, the disciplinary traditions of folkloristics as applied to archival collections and, increasingly, from approaches developed by professional archivists since the late nineteenth century.

How They Save: Conclusion

Over the last thirty or more years folklore archives have undergone dramatic changes in how they save the materials in their care. Current practice in folklore archives draws much from the theories and methods of professional archivists in addition to the distinct disciplinary practices of folkloristics. And while the older discipline-bound approaches such as organization by genre and storage in filing cabinets has increasingly given way to organization according to the field worker or project and storage in acid-free, buffered archival boxes arranged on shelves, the disciplinary core of folkloristics still wields profound influence in determining how outside ideas are applied to folklore archives. As I describe more fully in Chapter 4, folklorists, and in particular folklorists who are also trained as archivists, have become extremely adept at adapting tools and techniques developed in libraries and archives and modifying them to suit the specialized needs of folklore archives. These same people have also created new resources such as the Ethnographic Thesaurus specific to the needs of

folklore archives and developed them within the framework of library and archive best practices.

Conclusion

Within the discipline of folkloristics, folklore archives serve two primary roles—they act as sites for primary source research, and they serve as repositories for the preservation of research materials related to the study of folklore. Although these roles have persisted across time, the way research and preservation has been understood has changed over time. Furthermore, these concepts have meant different things in different institutional contexts.

The research role of folklore archives can be viewed from two perspectives. Folklore archives are venues for new primary source textual research, and folklore archive also conduct their own new research by supporting fieldworkers, loaning equipment and having archive staff conduct field research.

The preservation role of folklore archives is best understood when explored from the perspectives of what folklore archives preserve, why they preserve it and how. These three categories provide a necessary framework for exploring in nuanced detail how the preservation role of folklore archives has been understood, and how it has changed in relation to theoretical developments and technological change.

Folklore archives preserve both physical things and the informational content these tangible items contain. The kinds of physical objects seen as appropriate for preservation in folklore archives have much to do with the overarching theoretical perspectives that guided research at various points in time. The intellectual content preserved in folklore archives is best understood from a similar perspective as well. Early archives focused their attention on the preservation of discrete folkloric texts. The nature of the folkloric text has changed over time. To understand what folklore archives were perceived as preserving, one must understand how folklorists conceived of the idea of the text at various points in time. Furthermore, the technology employed in fieldwork had an enormous impact on the understanding of text and on the broad research practices in the field. In many respects technological developments led to the growth in contextual studies and the ethnographic turn in the field. In contrast to the perspective that viewed the folklore archive as a site for the preservation of texts, contemporary folklore archives place a greater emphasis on the preservation of an intellectual gestalt that I have framed as field research materials. This broad category of materials is inclusive of texts, but also treats the research products of folklorists as a cohesive whole.

To address the question of why folklore archives preserve I outlined five preservation rationales that have emerged in my research: to rescue a vanishing resource for posterity; for the sake of future research utility; as a function of the creating organization; to address the needs of the creating organization; as a record of the work of the field; and for the sake of the cultural communities

documented. These rationales overlap dramatically over time and across collections. They are, in many respects, the heart of the archival enterprise in folkloristics. They provide insight into folkloristic practice in general and the motivations that define our field.

Finally I look how folklore archives preserve the materials in their care from the perspective of the organizational and descriptive systems employed in them. Earlier systems for preserving and allowing access to content drew mostly on practices born from the literary side of discipline of folkloristics itself. Over time these methods became increasingly inadequate for addressing the research needs and research practices of folklorists. Several scholars made efforts to redeem older collections, other scholars simply abandoned folklore archives wholesale. Folklore archives in the United States had historically been situated in academic institutions. With the growth of public folklore organizations a new wave of folklore archive emerged. Unique to these collections is an emergent and developing hybrid approach to arrangement and description that draws on both the disciplinary practice of folkloristics and the long-standing methods and theories of professional archivists.

Understanding the roles folklore archives have served in the field of folkloristics provides us with insight into the history and culture of our field. Folklore archives provide a window into ourselves, in addition to serving as a tangible and lasting legacy of the discipline. In the chapters that follow I will address points from this section in greater detail, highlighting specific case studies and expanding upon the ideas presented.

Chapter Two

Contextualizing Archives: An Introduction to Archival Theory for Non-Archivists

Whether they are in good order, or in bad or in none, we shall still require to arrange them: not yet, is it to be observed, to index them for subject-matter they contain, but to marshal them in such a way that the Archive significance of every document—its own nature and its relation to its neighbors—is brought out as clearly as possible. In this way we give the fairest opportunity to the Archive of saying what it has to say and to the student of understanding and profiting. (Jenkinson 1922: 80).

Introduction

By *contextualizing* archives I refer in part to my efforts to do two things. First, I present readers of this dissertation who are not versed in the theoretical underpinnings of contemporary archival practice with an introduction to the concepts and ideas that guide professional archivists in their work. Second, I touch on the idea of *context* as useful way to bridge the disciplinary span that separates folkloristic thinking and methods from approaches developed and employed by professional archivists as a way to make the connections between these two fields more recognizable and comprehensible to folklorists.

Much of the argument of this dissertation is hinged on the distinctions between how folklorists conceive—and have conceived—their archival endeavors and how professional archivists understand their work and the collections in their care. The focus of the dissertation involves exploring how folklore archives, which were once seen primarily as disciplinary collections and

were governed fundamentally by disciplinary needs and rules, are increasingly being addressed from the perspective of the work of professional archivists. As a result it is necessary to introduce non-archivist readers to the basics of archival practice so that the heart of my argument is meaningful to non-specialist readers.

In this chapter I present discussions from some foundational works of archival theory that address the fundamental contextualizing concepts of *respect des fonds* and provenance (respecting the point of origin of a body of records), and original order (maintaining relationships between records within a body of material) and their applied roles in archival practice.²⁸ I focus the substance of my discussion of archival theory on the larger idea of *context* among archivists, and in particular how the ideas of *respect des fonds*, provenance and original order serve in practice as means for defining, generating and maintaining context among archival materials. Archival theory, and in particular those elements of it that have the greatest impact on folklore archives, is a central element of my academic training and as such has shaped my thinking about this dissertation as well as my perspectives on information management in general, and archival management in particular. In this regard, providing an overview of the bedrock elements of archival theory sets the stage for later discussion. Furthermore, as

²⁸ These three related concepts are best conveyed through a practical example. In the case of personal papers, the Stith Thompson Collection at the Lilly Library of Indiana University was accepted and maintained as a cohesive unit, not broken up into pieces and filed according to subject—materials related to his period as graduate school dean filed with other materials on university deans, folklore materials broken up and stored with other folklore materials. In addition, when there is a clear, evident order within a body of records, archivists do their best not to disrupt it.

noted above, both the intellectual framing of folklore archives by folklorists and the practical approaches for assembling folklore archives have over time drifted increasingly toward practices employed by professional archivists. With this in mind, understanding how professional archivists think is useful for understanding how folklorists have begun to think about their archival collections.

Second, I use the idea of *contextualizing* as a metaphor to map out a key area where the languages of folkloristic theory and archival theory overlap dramatically through the shared employment of the word *context*. Professional archivists' usage of the word *context* differs in a range of ways from how folklorists employ the term. At the same time, the shared centrality of valuing information that relates to the site of creation and use of records (for professional archivists) and the multi-faceted settings in which folklore emerges (for folklorists) serves as a common point for understanding the approaches of either field, and the relevance of the methods of one field to the other.

What is an archives?

Within the archival profession the notion of context is directly linked to the formal, internal definition of *archives* employed by archivists:

Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control; permanent records. (Pearce-Moses 2005b).

The site for the storage of these “permanent records” is also referred to as an *archives*. Within archival theory the important extension of the concept of archives as defined above is the implicit understanding that records generated by individuals and institutions through the course of daily work have limited currency in addressing the needs of work or personal functions. For example, a time arises where sets of correspondence documenting a transaction are no longer needed to complete tasks or as proof (*evidence* in archival terms) that tasks were completed or transactions were undertaken. The separation between records maintained because of daily professional need or immediate evidential requirements and records that are no longer needed for such ends is noted through the distinction drawn by archivists between *current*²⁹ and *noncurrent*³⁰ records. *Archives* are composed of a subset of noncurrent records, those that are deemed to have continuing value³¹ to the institution or individuals that created them and/or to society at large that merits their long-term preservation.

The perception of archives as being composed of noncurrent records that are valued according to a variety of specific criteria is important for understanding

²⁹ “Records that continue to be used with sufficient frequency to justify keeping them in the office of creation; active records.” Pearce-Moses 2005g.

³⁰ “Records that are no longer used in the day-to-day course of business, but which are preserved and occasionally used for legal, historical, or operational purposes” (Pearce-Moses 2005k).

³¹ For examples of three types of *continuing value* employed by professional archivists see Chapter One footnote 2.

what kinds of things enter the archival frame. The key, and in many respects defining, aspect of a professionally managed archival collection comes in the application of theoretical guidelines that archivists have developed for *how* materials are integrated into archives. The central, overriding concern of archivists is the preservation of records in the context of their original creation and use, the idea of archival context.

What is archival context?

Archival context is best understood as the effort to maintain information about the environment in which a body of records were created and used before they entered an archival repository. Approaches for maintaining this contextual information are rooted in two fundamentals of archival practice: *arrangement* and *description*. There are three primary concepts that guide archival arrangement. Two, *respect des fonds* and provenance, frame the basics of the archival unit through the preservation of records in groupings that relate to their sites of creation and use. The corollary concept of original order stresses the maintenance of the organizational and filing systems of the records' creators.

In addition to the use of arrangement schemes to maintain the intellectual context of archival materials, professional archivists also rely on descriptive conventions to stress the same ends. In this way, the primary cataloging tool of professional archivists—the *finding aid*, is more than just a document that provides access to archival materials by noting subjects, describing content and

identifying their locations within a repository. As a narrative description of the contents and history of a collection, the finding aid frames a body of material. It places an archival collection within an intellectual context, and by explicating the logic of arrangement in narrative form, gives meaning to the whole as a sum of its parts, and each part as a portion of a larger whole.

In this way it is useful for folklorists to think of the archival finding aid as a kind of ethnographic document that serves as an intellectual and taxonomic study of the content of an archival collection. In the way a folklorist would discuss the cultural and historical context of an expressive form, the archivist describes the institutional and personal contexts that produced the materials that have come into his or her care. In the way a folklorist would describe the situational and interpersonal context of a performance event, the archivist describes the relationships between documents, folders and boxes. The desired end result of the folklorists' ethnography and the archivists' finding aid is explication of embedded meaning. The folklorist describes an expressive form within the contexts from which it emerges so that the meanings it carries to performers and audience are discoverable. The archivist describes a body of records within the contexts from which they emerged so that meaning of these materials to the institutions of the individuals that birthed them is preserved alongside the physical items they created.

While professional archivists began to focus on the concept of *respect des fonds* and the related ideas of provenance and original order as early as the nineteenth century, the notion of applying these concepts (either explicitly or

implicitly) to folklore archives did not become pronounced until relatively recently. Furthermore, when apprehending the idea of context within the folklore archive, folklorists have been confronted simultaneously by ideas of context from two distinct perspectives. On the one hand folklorists working with their disciplinary archives had to develop ways of managing “context” as the term is employed within the theoretical scope of folkloristics, i.e. the context that led to the creation and performance of the folkloric materials that make up their collections. On the other hand, as archivists and archival methods have grown in influence within folklore archives, folklorists have increasingly confronted “context” as employed by professional archivists, i.e. the institutional and personal context that produced the documentation of those performances through writing, video and audio recordings.

As I discuss in the following chapter, the maintenance of extensive information about the context of performance of folklore materials did not become a concern for folklore archives until it first became a priority for the field itself (e.g. Ben-Amos 1970; Georges, Blumenreich and O'Reilly 1974). Once folklore researchers began to stress the importance of the environment surrounding the creation and performance of folklore—the social, cultural, situational, linguistic context in which folklore emerged—archives struggled to develop means of preserving this information along with the folkloric “texts” they had originally been created to care for. By and large this struggle led to the decline of old-style folklore archives that lessened in importance once the field drifted away from research based on textual comparison and moved more toward ethnographic

studies. The revolution in archiving practice proposed by Ben-Amos and Georges et al. would never mature. Curiously as the importance of academic collections within the field generally declined, the growth of public sector folkloristics breathed new life into the idea of the folklore archive. With the rise of public sector folkloristics, new collections began to be established outside the academy. And while these collections were unquestionably shaped by influences from the larger academic tradition of archiving within the field, they also turned for guidance beyond the confines of folkloristics. In particular, and to an increasing degree, practice in public sector folklore archives drew on models and concepts from archival theory to guide how collections were and are organized, described and accessed. The result is a mingling of the legacies of the historical disciplinary practices of folklorists with the theories and approaches of professional archivists—and the birth of a new category of archival collection, the ethnographic archive.

In the following section I will discuss the key archival contextualizing concepts of *respect des fonds*, provenance and original order as understood by a range of key archival theorists. Included in this discussion are important theorists S. Muller, J.A. Freith and R. Fruin—Dutch archivists from the late 19th century; early 20th century British theorist Sir Hilary Jenkinson; mid-20th century American theorist T.R. Schellenberg; as well as contemporary archival theorists Frank Boles, Brian Brothman, Terry Cook, Michel Duchein and Luciana Duranti.

Respect des fonds, Provenance, and Original Order: Context in Archival Theory

In contrasting the role of professional archivists to that of librarians as information specialists and brokers, Jean-Pierre Wallot makes special note of professional archivists' conceptualization of intellectual context as a crucial factor that separates the work and methodologies of the first field from those of the latter. "Libraries and librarians focus their attention first of all on the *content* of the *information*, not on the *context* of its creation—their classification systems are not based on provenance, but on subject matter,,," (Wallot 1996:10). Wallot is hardly the first writer to highlight this distinction, and others have not limited their discussions simply to library-archive comparisons alone.

In his discussion of archival arrangement, seminal archival theorist T.R. Schellenberg reviews the history of archival arrangement practices in Europe, describing earlier formulations as having been organized "much as books are classified in libraries" (Schellenberg 1956:169). In his article on the history of European archives, Michel Duchein examines the relationship of early archival schemes of organization based on intellectual content to the general taxonomic obsession of scholars during the 18th and 19th centuries (Duchein 1983:65;1992:19). Luciana Duranti also discusses the role of subject organization in European archives, noting that "The pattern of arrangement. . .was sometimes chronological, but mostly by subject, in harmony with the rationalistic and classificatory mindset of the eighteenth century, which reflected

the spirit of the Enlightenment and the *Encyclopedie*.” (Duranti 1993: 30). Brien Brothman, in a post-modernist challenge to standard thinking on archival context, also addresses the role of classification and the importance of “ordering” during the period as it relates to archival science. Brothman connects the importance of ordering the world, of creating distinctions between different classes of things, to what he calls the creation of archival “space,” through which new significance is generated for the materials contained within.

All these discussions highlight the vital connection professional archivists have made between the physical arrangement of documents and description of holdings in a repository and how methods of arrangement and description can influence the way in which the intellectual content of records is seen as relating to other records within and between collections. However, in addition, the above statements also point out the way broad worldview—here, in regard to subject organization, what Duranti calls “the classificatory mindset”—intersects with the theoretical orientation of professional archivists. The writers’ comments also suggest the way a methodological practice—the maintenance of original order—rooted in theoretical considerations—*respect des fonds* and provenance—has served as a marker of identity for the development of an entire profession over the last three-plus centuries. Drawing on three classic works of archival theory, S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin’s *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (Muller, Feith and 1968[1898]), Sir Hillary Jenkinson’s *A Manual of Archive Administration* (Jenkinson 1922) and T.R. Schellenberg’s *Modern Archives, Principles and Techniques* (Schellenberg 1956) as well as more recent

studies by Frank Boles, Brian Brothman, Terry Cook, Michel Duchein and Luciana Duranti I explore the archival conception of context from the late 1890s to date.

Respect des fonds

For the sake of this discussion I follow Terry Cook's perspective on *fonds* as outlined in his article, "The Concept of Archival Fonds in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems and Solutions" (Cook 1993). Cook simultaneously addresses the centrality, and perhaps ironically the concurrent poor definition of, the idea of, *fonds* among a variety of archival traditions. He assesses the developing meaning of the term from theoretical, historical, and cultural perspectives—looking at dynamic meaning of the across time and locale. Cook ultimately attempts to settle the matter by breaking down *fonds* in to two primary components, what he terms the "external" and "internal" elements of the *fonds* as articulated by the French early in the concept's history. According to Cook, the external element of the fonds was expressed through the segregation of records from one point of origin from another, and the internal dimension was expressed through the maintenance of original ordering systems within each segregated unit (Cook 1993:25). In English, the internal aspect of the *fonds* became conceptualized as provenance, and the internal element as "the sanctity of original order (Cook 1993:25). The concept of provenance circumscribed a body of material as the creation of a single body or individual while the concept of

original order “focused on preserving the logical structure and internal arrangement of the records of each creator” (Cook 1993:25). Provenance serves as a guiding principle—a conceptual construct—that structures the mechanical process of arrangement, and original order functions a methodological approach to the arrangement of records within a conceptually distinct group of materials segregated according to the idea of provenance. Following Cook’s lead, then, provenance and original order will be treated as concepts that, in their English language usage at least, have emerged and grown out of a broader idea of *fonds* throughout the history of archival thought.

The idea of the *fonds* forms the first and broadest effort to maintain the intellectual context of records by organizing them according to their site of creation. The idea of *fonds* will form the central organizing principle for my discussion of context in archives. Provenance and original order will be discussed as they relate to the concept of *fonds*.

Depending upon who one reads, the origin of the *fonds* concept and term can be linked to a circular issued on April 24, 1841 credited to either French Minister of the Interior, Count Duchatel (Schellenberg 1965:170), or French historian Natalis de Wailly (Duchein 1983:66). Schellenberg attributes the circular to Duchatel, Duchein to de Wailly, although noting that it does bear the signature of Duchatel (Duchein 1983:66). Regardless of the actual source, the emergence of the concept of *fonds* marked the beginnings of a move away from the organization of archival materials according to subject distinction and toward one that attempted to replicate or represent both the original environments of

record creation and means of record organization within the institutional confines of the archives.

An important aspect of the concept of *fonds* is the idea that the records generated by organizations—government bodies, institutions—and individuals are created “organically”—that each *fonds* represents the natural accretion of records from a specific site. The use of such naturalistic terminology serves as a means of justifying the relationship between the *fonds* concept and the idea of context. “Organic” and “natural” metaphors in relation to record accumulation are rife in the literature, and what follows are a few considerations of this orientation among writers. In rule two of their *Manuel*, Muller, Feith and Fruin stress that “An archival collection is an organic whole, a living organism which grows, takes shape, and undergoes change...” (Muller, Feith and Fruin 1968:19). In his definition of the “archive group,” a term he considers consonant with *fonds*, Hilary Jenkinson tweaks the application of naturalistic metaphors slightly, placing the focus on the actual body of creation as opposed to the records generated by the body—“the Archives resulting from the work of an Administration which was an organic whole” (Jenkinson 1922:84).

Writing more recently, Duchein not only notes the historical adoption of the *fonds* concept and its close connection to metaphors of naturalness and the organic, but also highlights the way in which these metaphors have become so entrenched among professional archivists that they seem “natural” in themselves (Duchein 1983:65). From another perspective, Brothman offers what he sees as an important corrective to professional archivists’ assumptions about the

“naturalness” of organizational systems outlined by professional archivists—

”Information ordering is social, not natural. Archival ordering does not emerge as a result of some inexorable constraint placed upon us that we are powerless to repudiate” (Brothman 1991:84). In other words, it is the archivist who ultimately shapes the ordering system, whether or not he or she bases it on how the creating institution organized the material—”record *grouping* then, entails a conceptual imposition upon an indifferent documentary universe” (Brothman 1991:84).

Be they “real” or “constructed,” it is these ideas of naturalness that connect the idea of the *fonds* to the notion of context. The *fonds* concept—that each body of records should be viewed as a unitary whole generated by a creating body—reflects back on the site of record creation as the point of identity for that unified body of records. Through the translation of this conceptual unity into a means of managing archival arrangement at the highest level, the French *fonds* or American record group reflects back on that point of origin, orienting the meaning of any documents contained therein toward that point of creation. It is in this way that records associated with the same *fonds* are viewed as component parts of a larger whole, and their meaning can be interpreted in light of those relationships. The context of their creation and use—their “original context” so to speak—is recreated (insofar as this is ever possible) within the archive, allowing the records to speak not as a collection of individual informational documents, but to reflect on the intellectual context of the body that produced them.

Provenance

Strongly related to the idea of *fonds* is the concept of provenance as articulated in the United States and Canada. With this stated, perspectives on what exactly constitutes provenance are extremely varied. Cook's perspective, mentioned above, views provenance as a concept that developed over time and that relates most specifically to the "external" ordering of the fonds. Provenance is an element of the *fonds*—the aspect that relates most fully to the macro-contextual issues embedded in the isolation of records produced by a single creative entity.

Jenkinson makes use of the term provenance to refer literally to the place from which an archive was received (Jenkinson 1922:80). As such, he stresses that the literal place of origin of an archive (here meaning collection) is no sound basis for arrangement (Jenkinson 1922:80). In this sense, Jenkinson makes a clear division between provenance as a physical point of origin, and *fonds* as connected to the creating agency or individual. To Jenkinson, provenance, using his terms, is not a tool for providing context for records at all, but merely a way of registering from where a body of records was received and providing temporary organization for unknown materials (Ibid).

Schellenberg relates the concept of provenance (or perhaps more correctly the German term, *provenienzprinzip*) to *fonds* by way of comparison between French and Prussian archival practices. Schellenberg states that the

Prussians “extended and developed” the French conceptualization of *respect des fonds* by deciding “that public records should be grouped according to the administrative units that created them (rather than according to the nature of the institutions that created them as in France)” (Schulenburg 1956:173). He then goes on to discuss how the Dutch soon adopted the Prussian model of provenance, which was soon codified in the *Manual* of Muller, Feith and Fruin.

For their part, Muller, Feith and Fruin make no overt mention of provenance (or, for that matter, *fonds*) at any point in their manual,³² although they do discuss both ideas without applying to them any names (Muller, Feith and Fruin 1968:19-99). Across their chapters dedicated to archival depositories and archival arrangement, the foundational trio cover a host of topics related to archival organization based on the point of origin of the records, attempting to iron out in minute detail as much potential confusion as possible in regard to complex ownership history of records and how this comes to bear on, for want of a better term, provenance. Where Muller, Feith and Fruin come into their own is in their extended discussion of original order, a concept I will address shortly.

Although the authors cited above view provenance from a host of differing perspectives, all, with perhaps the exception of Jenkinson, treat the concept as an important aspect of archival context. Admittedly, the difference between provenance and *fonds* is quite often blurred in the literature, but this distinction is

³² It should be noted that this might be a limitation of the English language translation.

more often than not one of terminology. Both terms propose similar notions—that the context of creation of archival materials has much to say about the nature of those materials, and that, through the maintenance of records in groupings according to their sites of origin, the contextualized meaning of records and their ability to document the environment from which they came is reassured.

Original Order

The final contextualizing concept I will discuss in this section is the idea of original order. Although original order is yet another debated concept among professional archivists, the debate centers more on the degree of its application rather than its meaning or overall relevance. In this section I will provide an overview of the historical development and application of the idea of original order and address some of the concerns expressed about original order since its initial formulation.

Schellenberg places the first stirrings of the idea of original order in the hands of the Prussians (Schellenberg 1956:173). He links the development of the concept to the Prussian reconceptualization of the idea of *respect des fonds* as *provenienzprinzip*, noting that Prussian professional archivists instructed that “the arrangement given public records by the creating agencies themselves should be preserved in the archival institution” (Schellenberg 1956:173). This was a fairly straightforward task in Prussia where, according to Schellenberg, a registry system was implemented for all public records.

As mentioned above, it is regard to the concept of original order that the Dutch truly come into their own. Several other authors attribute the legitimacy of the idea of original order directly to its codification in the Dutch *Manual* (Boles 1982:26; Duchein 1983:76). The bulk of Muller, Feith and Fruin's chapter on arrangement, which contains rules 15 through 36, consists of extrapolations on the application of the concept of original order across various permutations of circumstances. In it they see similarities between archivist's role and that of a paleontologist whose job it is to restore to some semblance of life to a skeleton of an organization just as a paleontologist arranges the bones of a prehistoric creature (Muller, Feith and Fruin 1968:71). Maintaining the original order of the records is the only way that this skeletal context can be accurately restructured. The idea of the *fonds* forming an organic unit—as mentioned above—is also an important consideration in regard to original order. Muller, Feith and Fruin carry this organic metaphor out to the level of the accumulation of records within the *fonds*,

The old organization of the archival collection was not created arbitrarily; it is not the result of chance, but the logical consequence of the organization of the administrative body, of whose functions the archival collection is the product. That the body built up, as it were, its archival collection and in doing so took into account its own organization and its own needs. (Muller, Feith and Fruin 1968:57).

The higher—"external" in Cook's sense—organizing principle of the *fonds*/provenance stressed that through grouping archival records into bodies of related materials based on a shared point of creation, such segregated records express a collective level of meaning that would be otherwise lost. Maintaining

or recreating the original order of those records within the *fonds*—Cook’s “internal” organizing principle—allowed the *fonds* and the records not only to maintain a higher degree of contextual meaning, but created a “skeleton” of the organization. In this way the body of records maintained in an archival institution is not only a collection of records about an organization, nor is it only a record of the organization—it becomes, in a very real sense, a representation of the organization.

Jenkinson’s contribution to the development of the concept of original order follows closely on the heels of the Dutch. As he states,

With regard to the second part, the division of the Archives; since what we wish to do in order to comprehend them is to put ourselves in the position of the men compiled them, our object will clearly be to *establish or re-establish the original arrangement*; even if, when we look at it, we think we could have done better ourselves. (Jenkinson 1922: 82)

Although, unlike the Dutch he does not devote page after page to various possible arrangement scenarios, he too, citing the *Manual*, invokes their image of archivist as paleontologist reconstructing the skeletal form of an organization through the records of that organization (Jenkinson 1922:88). As with the Dutch, archival arrangement acts as a representation of the organization that produced the records now within the confines of an archival institution.

Although both the Dutch archivists and Jenkinson outline examples of the flexible application of original order, it is Schellenberg who argues most for the relative flexibility of the concept. As Nesmith notes, Schellenberg’s great

deviation from Jenkinson's views on archival practice came in his stress that the great value of archives was not with their ability to serve as evidence or reference for record creators, but in their informational value for outside researchers (Nesmith 1993:3). For this reason, Schellenberg felt more comfortable in deviating from original order than his theoretical predecessors in an effort to make some categories of archival materials more easily accessible to historical researchers (Schellenberg 1956:193). This is not to say that Schellenberg advocated the wholesale disruption of original ordering systems, quite to the contrary. Schellenberg expresses along with the others the importance of maintaining original order for those records "that are preserved for the evidence they contain of organization and function," however, he also admits a different class of records that need not be subject to the maintenance of original order (Schellenberg 1956:189). These records that are outside the scope of original order are those "modern records" preserved primarily for their informational value (Schellenberg 1956:193). Since they are not preserved as evidence, the contextualizing power of original order is unnecessary.

Duchemin (Duchemin 1983) discusses original order in the context of *respect des fonds*—asking the rhetorical question, "*Does respect des fonds involve respect for their original internal arrangement?*" (Duchemin 1983:75 emphasis in original). Duchemin argues that the concepts of provenance (the external structuring of the *fonds*) and original order (the internal structuring of the *fonds*) are intimately joined in the contextualizing role of the archives. He ultimately decides that, even under circumstances where the order of records has been

altered several times as they changed hands or when the agency itself seems to “have no respect for the ‘principle of original structure’ in arranging their current archives” (Duchemin 1983:76) the maintenance of original order is still a central element of archival practice. “In reality these two principles [provenance and original order] flow from the organic concept of the archives, which is, as we have seen, fundamental. They are joined to each other and cannot be logically separated” (Duchemin 1983:77).

Original order –the internal ordering of the fonds—is the most evidential aspect of archival context. Keeping records as they were created allows them to speak in many complicated ways about the people who generated them.

Respect des fonds, provenance and original order—the three contextualizing forces of archival theory and arrangement—allow a body of records to be a representation of the body that created them.

Contextualizing Context

In the pages above I have laid out the professional archivists’ perspective on context through the exploration of the key concepts of *respect des fonds*, provenance and original order. To professional archivists, the physical arrangement of materials in their care serves as a means to fix for the future the intellectual context of the creation and use of these materials prior to their arrival in the archive. The maintenance of this context is key to how professional archivists perceive their work. Indeed, the primary definition of the word

“archivist” in the Society of American Archivists *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* places an emphasis on the centrality of these ideas to the perception professional archivists have regarding their work by directly invoking the terms provenance, original order and context:

An individual responsible for appraising, acquiring, arranging, describing, preserving, and providing access to records of enduring value, according to the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control to protect the materials’ authenticity and context. (Pearce-Moses 2005c).

The idea of context as conceptualized and utilized by professional archivists certainly differs from the application and utilization of the term by folklorists. However the emphasis both fields place on the importance of notions of context, and the way in both fields context reflects back on interpretation and meaning of the materials and behaviors provides an important means for connecting the work of professional archivists with that of folklorists, and for providing an interpretive framework for changes in folklore archives since the late 1960s.³³ Where the professional archivist would say that any collection of records cannot be reasonably interpreted without an understanding of the context of their original creation and use, most folklorists would say the same thing about the communicative behaviors they explore through their research. Where a professional archivist seeks to maintain information about the original context of

³³ In many respects archivists’ notions of context can provide folklorists a reflexive lens we have at time lacked, a lens that can allow us to consider folklore archives as a kind of material culture for our field—a tangible manifestation of our craft whose form and structure provides insight into the worldview of the group who created it.

creation and use of a body of records through theoretically informed systems of arrangement and description, folklorists employ the descriptive methods of ethnography and a range of technological tools to capture information about the context in which folklore is created and shared. With these considerations in mind it is easy to see how the idea of context within archival theory can resonate with folkloristic theory and make complete sense to folklorists.

The idea of context as utilized by both professional archivists and folklorists is a point of intellectual commonality, one that serves as a powerful conceptual bridge for uniting the fields. Although the scope of work of folklorists and professional archivists differs greatly, within the spheres of each field the word *context* is employed toward similar ends, carries a similar meaning and bears a similar significance. An important reason to highlight the role of context among professional archivists and folklorists is that this relationship has not been widely acknowledged or discussed outside the relatively small community of folklorists who are also trained as professional archivists.³⁴ While in professional and casual discussions with one another many archivally-trained folklorists make note of the overlapping usage of the word context in both their fields, no one working with folklore archives has yet formally explored the archival use the term

³⁴ At professional meetings, casual gatherings, in telephone calls and email exchanges I have discussed the dual usage of the term *context* among archivists and folklorists with colleagues such as Steve Green of the Western Folklife Center, Michael Taft and Cathy Kerst of the American Folklife Center, and Nicole Saylor of the University of Iowa among many others. Steve Green and I have had extensive discussions on this topic over the years and I owe a great deal to his insights.

context, how it relates to folkloristic understanding of the term, and how those trained both as folklorists and professional archivists have hybridized archival and folkloristic understandings of the term to inform their work. Finally, as noted in Chapter Three, the increasing drift toward the application of archival theory to folklore archives occurred alongside the growing importance and eventual centrality of contextual theory to the study of folklore. The growing emphasis on utilizing archival theory in our handling of our own archives presents a (perhaps at times overly) neat parallel—that the idea of context as we direct it toward our research subject continues to be relevant to how we approach the long-term management of the records of that research. The penultimate context for folklore—one that precedes utter abandonment or thrilling rediscovery—is the archive. And in the archive new kinds of context arise alongside the old.

Within both the fields of archival management and folkloristics notions of context serve as profession-defining elements of theory and practice. For professional archivists, the idea that the records in their care do not exist in a cultural vacuum, but rather emerge from a variety of individual, social, cultural and institutional contexts, has been fundamental to professional practice since the late 19th Century. For folklorists, a theoretical focus on the context of folklore, and folklore as a context-situated event, came to the fore during the 1960s and 1970s, eclipsing earlier approaches that focused primarily on texts as discrete conceptual, and at times even physical, items. The ideas of context described above emerge from two different intellectual traditions and have been applied to distinct sorts of materials. However, within the intellectual and physical confines

of folklore archives over the last 150 years they have gradually come together. Through this discussion I further contextualize the relationship between folklore collections and collections maintained by professional archivists.

Folklore, however has not always been viewed by folklorists as inextricably tied to—or defined by—the context of its creation and use. And the theories developed by professional archivists have not always been relevant to the goals and needs of folklorists when compiling their own archival collections. For much of the history of folklore archives the approaches of professional archivists were not just irrelevant, but almost completely unknown. The only thing these collections shared was, put simply, the word *archive* itself. And according to the specific professional parlance of archivists, the collections referred to as “archives” by folklorists were not even archives at all.

As the intellectual locus of our field shifted from treating folklore as items to treating folklore as a communicative process, as ethnographic practice grew through the focus on context and performance, and as the idea of *folklife* took hold in the United States and gave life to public sector folklore, the practices of professional archivists began to gain a new relevance to the collections of research materials generated by folklorists. In the following chapter I address in detail the history of folklore archives in the United States and the impact the emergence of ethnographic approaches in folkloristics had on these collections.

The drawing together of archival approaches and folklore archives has had a profound effect on the practice of folklorists working with disciplinary

collections. Increasingly folklorists are developing archives in the same sense that a professional archivist would use the term. Archives structured by contextual relationships maintained through the application of concepts such as provenance and explicated through the use of standard archival descriptive approaches. Folklore archivists increasingly operate within an archival context. In Chapter Five I explore the impact of the application of archival concepts on a specific category of folklore archives in the present—archives created and maintained by public sector folklorists—and the ways in which archival approaches fit and don't fit the needs of certain types of folklore archives.

This chapter surveyed a body of literature outlining archival notions of context. Professional archivists have employed several theoretical models for maintaining the intellectual context of materials in their care. The ideas of *respect des fonds*, provenance, original order have all provided frameworks through which evidence of the context of the site or process of record creation can be maintained. Increasingly these concepts have come to bear on folklore archives, and as such it is important for folklorists to gain a basic understanding of them so that archivists and folklorist can speak in mutually comprehensible terms. In addition to allowing for folklorists to develop an awareness of archival theory, the idea of context serves as an important bridge between the disciplines of archives management and folkloristics. Understanding the context in which folkloric expression emerges is vital to the contemporary practice of folkloristics. The maintenance of the intellectual context of the creation and use of the records in their care is fundamental to archival practice.

Chapter Three

Reformulating the Folklore Archive, 1967 to 1998

Introduction

In Chapter One I examined the broad history of folklore archives in the discipline—their role, their uses, their methods in our field’s past and present. In this chapter I explore the intellectual foundation for the reformulation of folklore archives that occurred between the mid 1960s to the late 1990s. Here I provide historical and intellectual context for folklore archives as they are currently constituted by exploring the intellectual trends in the field that have led to the reformulation of the folklore archive. I root this transformation in four related movements in folkloristics, all of which developed in the 1960s and 1970s: The growth of interest in and influence of ideas of context, performance and the notion of folklore as communication in academic research; the maturation of an American concept of *folklife*; the creation of US federal agencies related to folklife and folk arts at the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Arts; and the emergence of a viable, national public folklore infrastructure. All these factors worked to encourage a shift in perspective in folklore archives that allowed for the adoption and importation of theories and practices developed by professional archivists.

This dissertation project has been guided by a fundamental premise: that folklore archives in the present are in part a received assumption, that folklore

archives are a form of inherited professional practice that has been under-theorized, under-considered but still undertaken as a fundamental part of the work folklorists perform. In this sense, folklore archives are a part of the tradition of our field and we, as folklorists, are no less subject to the forces of traditionalization and the discourses of tradition than are any other circumscribed group of human beings. To take this argument a step further, like the expressive forms folklorists study, folklore archives are localized, fluid, and adaptable—but still recognizable as a distinct conceptual form and manifestation of human action in the world. Folklore archives are a part of our disciplinary culture, an expressive form of our own, and we have shaped them to suit our changing needs over time but not necessarily thought critically about how these collections fit in with our work, how we use them, and how they have changed along side our field.

Since these collections were first created we have referred to them using the word *archives*. The use of this word is important since, up until very recently folklore archives—research collections created by folklorists as repositories for folklorist-generated research—had very little conceptually or structurally in common with the kinds of collections most often called *archives*—repositories for noncurrent records of individuals and organizations deemed to have continuing value, maintained by professional archivists and shaped by the principles of *respect des fonds*³⁵. On some level this distinction can be treated as a contrast

³⁵ The concept of *respect des fonds* and the archival notion of “context” is explored in detail in Chapter Two.

between the “vernacular” use of a term (in this case *archives*) and its use in a professionalized context. While folklorists are well aware of these issues in regard to the word *folk* (e.g. Schrempp 1996), the distinction between popular meaning of *archives* and the meaning of the word among professional archivists is much less understood by folklorists. At the same time, regardless of nomenclature, since at least the 1960s the nature of folklore archives and the perception of them has begun to change in such a way that by folklorists, archivists and researchers they are increasingly seen as having—and do indeed have—more in common with the kinds of collections maintained by professional archivists than with the disciplinary collections of times past. Folklore archives are increasingly being treated as archives in the way an archivist would employ the term. As a result, long entrenched ideas of archival practice that had previously been seen as unimportant to folklore materials have gradually assumed a greater relevance, and new collections have been founded whose practices adapt the standards set forth by professional archivists to the folklore archive.

These trends, the gradual alignment of the *perception of* folklore archives and the gradual alignment of *practice in* folklore archives with the perception of and practice in the kinds of collections historically maintained by professional archivists are a central feature of folklore archives in the present. Materials once perceived as fundamentally different from one another, and treated in

fundamentally different ways, are now seen as more or less consonant.³⁶ The implications for folkloristics and the archives folklorists have produced have been complex and far reaching. The contemporary folklore archive is directly the result of a process of negotiation across disciplines and the compromises and accommodations necessary to bridge the very real divide between the field of archives and the field of folkloristics. In turn, what we have created is a unique, hybrid form, partly rooted in the approaches and theoretical apparatus of professional archivists and partly rooted in the disciplinary history and theoretical perspectives of folkloristics. If folkloristics is “a bastard field that anthropology begot upon English,” (Coffin 1968:v), the contemporary folklore archive is a similar by-product of the scandalous coupling of folkloristics and archives. In this section I explore the growing influence of archivists and archival methods on folklore archives and the impact these trends have had on folklore collections since the mid 1960s to date. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first explores the intellectual trends related to the emergence of contextual, behavioral and performance-based studies of folklore that had an impact on the role of folklore archives in academic research. The second section looks at the

³⁶ While I am speaking particularly about the perception of folklore archives within the discipline of folkloristics, the conceptual reorientation that I note within the field was also taking place within a broader intellectual and cultural context. The development of social history in the 1960s and 1970s with its emphases on class, gender, race and the lived experience of everyday life, as well as the emergence of oral history as a methodology, radically changed the nature of the records seen as having value for understanding the past. The argument here is that historians themselves are brokers in what constitutes a viable historical resource, and that archivists, while often trained as historians as well, both shape historical valuing of materials and follow the lead of historians.

development of an American concept of *folklife*, the rise of public sector folklore and the beginnings of the application of archival theory to folklore archives.

There are many factors that have contributed to the gradual adoption of archival methods in folklore archives and to the emerging capacity to perceive of folklore archives as similar to archival collections maintained by professional archivists. Intellectual trends in folkloristics, in particular the ethnographic turn that began in the 1960s (rooted in behavioral, contextual and performance-based approaches to folklore study as well as the formulation of a distinctly American perspective on the concept of "folklife") and the rise of public sector folkloristics in the 1970s and 1980s had a tremendous impact on the relevance of folklore archives to research, the form and shape archives have assumed, and perception of the role of archives in the field.

While these intellectual trends were paramount in transitioning folklore archives from a strictly disciplinary frame into a broader and more general frame aligned with practice in archives, pragmatic factors within the academy and within the public sector related to work processes, funding and the politics of academic programs and departments also had a large role in prompting this shift. Finally, the emergence in the 1990s and 2000s of a new kind of professional, the folklorist or ethnomusicologist who is also trained—normally through a school or program in Library and Information Science—as a professional archivist had a large role in the promulgation of methods born in archival theory into folklore archives.

Section One: The “Text/Context Controversy” and Its Impact on Academic Folklore Archives

In his 1973 article, “The Text is the Thing” D.K. Wilgus remarked on the rise of contextual and performance theory and its potential impact on folklore archives:

But if a school of "behavioral folklorists" determines that its questions are the only valid ones and that its findings cannot be applied to materials of previous researchers, then the results will not be revolutionary, but catastrophic. To be blunt, we might as well burn the archives, for what behavioral information they contain is far too limited and too lacking in disciplined methodology to be of much use. (Wilgus 1973:244-245).

Wilgus’ comments provide scholars in the present one of the few glimpses of the predicted impact on the archival collections created by folklorists that the contextualist revolution in folklore theory could have. Still referred to using the blanket phrase the “Text/Context Controversy,” the diverse yet intertwining and overlapping approaches that emerged in these “New Perspectives” (Paredes and Bauman 2000[1972]) and the nature of the controversy these proposals engendered are best summed up by Lisa Gabbert: “The shift from an item-centered perspective to a more processual one was developed by scholars in a number of ways, with a pronounced concern for rules governing the behavior and language of particular situations” (Gabbert 1999:120). Today the heart of this approach is most simply identified with Dan Ben-Amos’s definition of folklore as “artistic communication in small groups” (Ben-Amos 2000[1972]:14).

Largely between the years of 1967 and 1976 circumstances within the field of folkloristics began to shift dramatically away from older comparativist approaches identified with the “literary school” (Zumwalt 1988) and toward the

establishment of folkloristics as primarily an ethnographic discipline. The long-standing feud outlined by Zumwalt between “anthropological” and “literary” folklorists gave way to a different kind of debate. As explained by Roger Abrahams:

The confrontation between the literary comparatism and the anthropological study of tradition was now subordinated to the pursuit of ever-more powerful ethnographic observation. Only the adherence to the words and actions recorded directly from tradition bearers remained to connect the older ways of studying with the new concerns. For the moment, questions of traditionality, authenticity, and textuality were subordinated to the ethnographic project of revealing the systematic features of vernacular forms in performance. (Abrahams 1993:385).

The increased emphasis on ethnographic methods, particularly those keyed to the study of folklore as contextualized communication, gradually made folklore archives that were created to support comparative research obsolete. In many respects the prediction made by Wilgus was ultimately fulfilled—to an extent.³⁷

The primary texts outlining much of the scope of contextualist and performance-based approaches to folklore study first began to appear in earnest in the mid to late 1960s. Books published in the 1970s (e.g. Paredes and Bauman 2000[1972]; Ben-Amos and Goldstein 1975) contain papers given at conferences in 1967 and 1969 respectively, and published in journals in 1969 and 1970 (Ben-Amos 1976). Other key collections and works were published

³⁷ As I demonstrate later in this dissertation, while older academic folklore archives largely lost their relevance to contemporary research interests, in recent years they have taken on a new life as historical artifacts in themselves. What once were vital sites of research have obtained a new relevance as a legacy to the history of the field and the individuals and programs that produced them.

through the 1970s and 1980s (Bascom 1977, Bauman 1977 and Bauman 1986). In addition there were many uncollected articles of great importance (e.g. Dundes 1964, and Georges 1969).

In addition to these theoretical works, other insight into the nature of the published contemporary debate surrounding the role of ethnography, contextualism and performance in relation to previous literary and comparativist methods are many (Welsch 1968; Bauman 1969; Welsch 1969; Dorson 1972b; Wilgus 1973; Jones 1979a; Ben-Amos 1979; and Jones 1979b). Finally beginning in the 1980s and continuing into the 1990s are a number of key historical overviews of the “text/context” controversy written after much of the actual controversy had settled (Georges 1980; Zan 1982; Abrahams 1993; Ben-Amos 1993; Gabbert 1999).

As noted above the impact of these dramatic changes in the field upon folklore archives was dramatic in itself. The concern put forward by Wilgus that, in light of “behavioral” approaches “we might as well burn the archives” (Wilgus 1973:245) while hyperbolic, has turned out to be essentially correct. Archives of the sort developed to support the literary and comparativist methods that dominated the field since the 1940s had little, if any, role in supporting the fundamentally communication-focused, ethnographic enterprise proposed by the so-called “young Turks” (Dorson 1972b:45). These collections, most often organized around folkloric items—individual folktales, individual superstitions—and complemented by only the smallest amount of ethnographic information such as the name of the interviewee, the date of the interview and the location, offered

little if anything to scholars interested in how folklore emerges linguistically and para-linguistically, how and why it is used, and the aesthetic aspects of oral narrative performance. By and large, they serve a greatly reduced role in the research of folklorists in the present. The theoretical revolution that emerged from the 1960s left the folklore archives of that time obsolete. Indeed, Wilgus's statement implicitly acknowledges something about the mechanism through which his fears would be fulfilled, that the material culture (i.e. folklore archives) of the past was not suited to the needs of a looming future.

Wilgus was not the only scholar to express an awareness of a threatening "catastrophic" impact the ethnographic turn would have on folklore archives. As mentioned in the previous chapter, during this period seemingly pre-emptive efforts were made (curiously by two of the more notorious of the "Young Turks," Dan Ben-Amos and Robert Georges) to develop projects to reformulate folklore archives with the hope of extending their relevance to more ethnographically-focused research. In their respective articles (Ben-Amos 1970; Georges, Blumenreich and O'Reilly 1974) Ben-Amos and Georges et al. offer up solutions to address new theoretical demands and new technological developments in relation to archives.

While older archival systems focused on discrete folkloric texts, the systems proposed by Ben-Amos and Georges seek to develop the archival capacity for the documentation of rich ethnographic detail that would be useful, indeed necessary, to contemporary researchers who might choose to make use of these collections. Additionally, where older systems were limited by available

technology to paper files, print indexes and card catalogs for access, Ben-Amos and Georges both argue for archival systems that take advantage of developments in computerization to facilitate access to materials and, in Ben-Amos's case, as additional tools for data analysis.

Ben-Amos and Georges et al. outline their rationales for why the underlying structure in archives needs to be changed, and do so by providing very similar suggested solutions:

[T]he current demands for contextual studies in folklore require subsequent modification in the storage and retrieval of archival information. The name, place and the ethnic group of the performer are no longer sufficient. Details concerning the informants and their audiences' attitudes toward a particular expression, the cultural restrictions imposed upon its performance and the social composition of the participants in the folkloric event, all seem vitally important in this search for a multi-dimensional view of storytelling, riddling and singing. In short, at the present time, students attempt to grasp the totality of folkloric behavior; and archives should be designed to meet, not restrict, these legitimate demands. (Ben-Amos 1970:148).

In their article, Georges et al. present two proposed systems for computerizing folklore archives. Their first system, "System 1" is directed at addressing the needs of legacy systems built upon older theoretical models. Their second, "System 2" is aimed at new collections that can emerge in light of changes in research practices and needs. The approach Georges et al. take by adopting two distinct systems to address folklore archives is telling, and in doing so they acknowledge several important things. By formulating two systems they explicitly note that a break in research methodology has brought with it corollary break in the applicability of archival methods. At the same time, proposing two distinct systems addresses the fact that, as physical things, folklore archives will persist

into the future and that, despite the limitations of older collections in light of theoretical changes, they can be made more useful to researchers who might be interested in accessing them. Finally their choice reinforces the notion that despite the limitations of older collections, folklore archiving is a central aspect of folkloristic practice. Although both systems are interesting from a range of perspectives, due to its immediate relevance to the topic of this chapter I will focus my discussion on “System 2.” Georges et al. frame “System 2” as follows:

By contrast with the first, the second system marks a significant departure from traditional archives and archiving practices. It is rooted in the assumption that the growing interest among folklorists in what is often called (erroneously in our judgment) “context” or “contextual data” is not a contemporary “fad” that will fade as its proponents age and mellow. Rather it represents a permanent shift in folkloristics away from item-and-single-informant-oriented students and toward processually focused investigations concerned with segments of human experience continua that researchers have chosen to study. Hence, rather than focusing solely or exclusively (as has been the tendency in the past and as is, for the most part, still the predilection in the present) upon records that characterize and represent the verbal aspects of the “messages” human beings communicate, the configurations of actions and interactions they create, and the tangible objects they produce ...The focal point instead becomes the events during which, in terms of which, and because of which, messages are generated and communicated, actions and interactions are configured and tangible objects are created. (Georges, Blumenreich and O'Reilly 1974:41).

Here Georges reflects on a folkloristics that is tied to the ethnographic exploration of folklore as *event*. In turn he proposes a folklore archive that is organized around these “events” rather than being organized around individual folkloric texts. The new ethnographic folkloristics that had been proposed by scholars such as Ben-Amos and Georges required a new kind of folklore archive, one that could incorporate the information gathered by, and can accommodate

the needs of, the ethnographically-focused researcher. However to Ben-Amos and Georges an intellectual and structural reformulation of folklore archives—gathering and preserving different types of information reorganizing physical collections, etc.—alone was not enough. From their perspective the next step for folklore archives also involved the creation of computerized databases (“machine readable records” in the Library and Computer Science parlance of the period) as a way to enhance access. While both Ben-Amos and Georges et al. are both interested in exploring the prospects of computerization, each does so from a somewhat different angle.

The proposed machine readable (“mechanical” in the terms of Georges et al.) component of the systems proposed by Georges et al., which is more limited in scope, “enables one to determine with the help of machines whether data of certain kinds are stored in a given archive and facilitates greatly the retrieval of available information” (Georges, Blumenreich and O'Reilly 1974:40). Ben-Amos’s proposition is much more ambitious, particularly in the way he anticipates the impact of machine readable records on research—“Moreover, a well organized folklore archive can theoretically generate new research problems as it may enable students to draw correlations between different aspects of folklore expressions, the relations between which have not been realized otherwise” (Ben-Amos 1970:148-149). Regardless of the scope of either proposal, the inclusion of a machine-readable component (using, it should be noted, IBM punch cards) made perfect sense within the university environments occupied by Ben-Amos and Georges. The creation of machine-readable library catalogs was

by this time underway, and computers, much like “contextual” theory itself, provided a new perspective on the project of folkloristics.

Ultimately, however, efforts to add contextualizing information to folklore archives along these lines never gained much traction. In large part this is due to the fact that the archival enterprise as it was fundamentally constituted within folkloristics was not particularly relevant to the ethnographic exercise folkloristics was increasingly becoming. Within academic environments folklore archives trundled on much as they had before, often with some periodic modifications to their structure as a nod to addressing a basic interest in performance context.³⁸ They collected student research papers at the close of each academic cycle, and graduate student assistants dutifully classified and filed these materials away. In some cases, such as the at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Oregon, Western Kentucky University, and the Ohio State University, they continue on as units within folklore programs. At others, such as Utah State University and Brigham Young University, they persist as integrated units of their university libraries. At other sites, such as Indiana University, they were—until quite recently—boxed up and packed away.

In a discussion at the 1972 American Folklore Society meetings referenced by Georges et al., attendees addressed the fundamental relevance and fate of folklore archives:

³⁸ These additions usually involved new fields being added to intake sheets in folklore archives to address concepts such as “texture” and “context” (in Alan Dundes’s terms) or other related kinds of information that would provide some data about the where, when and how of folkloric performance.

A suggestion voiced boldly by several participants during the session on “The Computer and Information Retrieval in Folklore Archives” during the 1972 meetings of the American Folklore Society in Austin, Texas, was that folklore archives be abandoned or discontinued, for the data in most of them, it was asserted, are of limited usefulness to contemporary researchers; thus, to perpetuate archives is to encourage a continuation of, or a return to, a policy of “collecting for collecting’s sake.” While such an alternative might well deserve to be discussed and debated, it appears to be based upon the notion that archives can only be what they have tended to be in the past—repositories of “texts,” untranscribed tape recordings, and photographic records of tangible objects—and that their nature and objectives cannot be altered to fit the research needs and interests of contemporary investigators. This assumption seems dubious, as our presentation clearly demonstrates. Moreover, it is unlikely that folklore archives—which have become a major “tradition” in folkloristics—will be abandoned, despite the fact that current research trends seem to demand a more comprehensive data-base than was the case when the practice of archiving was first initiated in folklore studies. (Georges, Blumenreich and O'Reilly 1974:51-52).

Despite the efforts of scholars like Ben-Amos and Georges (and others such as Ellen Stekert and Thelma James of Wayne State University) the academic folklore archive fell into disuse as a site of primary source research for a majority of folklorists. In many cases folklore archives in academic settings continued to grow, but in a stagnant and lifeless manner. However, despite this the “tradition” of archiving in folkloristics has persisted. As I address further along in this chapter some university archives, such as those at the University of Oregon, are starting to be revived following the computerization plans intuitively similar to those laid out by Ben-Amos and Georges et al.. Others, such as the Indiana University folklore archive and the Wayne State University folklore archive³⁹ have

³⁹ The Wayne State University folklore archive is now a part of the collection of the Michigan State University Museum in East Lansing, Michigan. The Indiana University departmental folklore archive is now a collection in the Indiana University Archives.

shifted into a new frame, entering the collections of other archives and museums as units, and becoming collections within collections. However, all these folklore archives are reemerging in to a different world and serve a different function within it. They are not lively sites of contemporary research they once were, but collections of historical (and historicized) records. The center of the folklore archival activity has shifted from universities and colleges to the public sector, and the nature of the collections created at these sites is fundamentally different than the folklore archives that came before.

Section Two: The Emergence of American Folklife and the Birth of the Public Sector

The ethnographic turn in folkloristics emerged at a similar time from two distinct corners of the field. One corner, outlined in the section above, relates to the development of ideas about context and performance and the reframing of folklore as specialized kind of communicative behavior. The other developed out of the application of ideas born in European, and in particular, Scandinavian ethnology—the concept of *folklife*.

The American adoption of the European idea of *folklife* by scholars such as Alfred Shoemaker, Don Yoder and Warren Roberts—and perhaps more importantly its gradual transmutation at the hands of other folklorists as time progressed—was one crucial factor among many that informed the move toward ethnographic approaches in the field. Yoder wrote many excellent essays

addressing his perspectives on the *folklife* concept (e.g. Yoder 1961, 1976a, 1976b). Leonard Primiano gives an excellent general introduction to the term (Primiano 1997) as does Mary Hufford (Hufford 1991). Simon Bronner presents an interesting discussion of the rise of the *folklife* concept in American folkloristics during the 1950s and 1960s (Bronner 1998: 226-312). In brief discussions Jeff Todd Titon (Titon 2003: 82) and Roger Abrahams (Abrahams 1993:485-486) both provide their perspectives on the role of *folklife* in relation to the rise of ethnographic methods among folklorists. Ultimately the concept of folklife was codified in *Public Law 94-201*, the law establishing the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in 1976:

[T]he term "American folklife" means the traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups in the United States: familial, ethnic, occupational, religious, regional; expressive culture includes a wide range of creative and symbolic forms such as custom, belief, technical skill, language, literature, art, architecture, music, play, dance, drama, ritual, pageantry, handicraft; these expressions are mainly learned orally, by imitation, or in performance, and are generally maintained without benefit of formal instruction or institutional direction. (94th Congress of the United States of America 1976).

Definitions of *folklife* have moved over time from those that strictly associated the term with pre-industrial material culture (Roberts 1988: xii), to material culture generally (Dorson 1972:2-3) to those that relate most to the more expansive definition set out in Public Law 94-201 (Cantwell 1993:307).

In essence the definition of *folklife* presented in *Public Law 94-201* is the definition that most folklorists, public or otherwise, operate under today. Folklife in this conceptualization encompasses much of the stuff of everyday life of

human groups, with greatest attention being paid to expressive culture. It serves, by and large, as a means for folklorists to address human behavior more generally as opposed to being limited by a set of generic categories or circumscribed forms. It has become a term that mirrors closely European (as well as Quebecois) ideas of ethnology—the study of the culture and cultures of one's own nation or state.

Furthermore, in the American context, as Bronner and Abrahams (Abrahams 1993:485) note, replacing the word *folklore* with the word *folklife* in public discourse served concrete rhetorical functions. Abrahams states:

In conversations held primarily in Washington in 1967-68, a decision was made self-consciously by folklorists in the academy and those working in public institutions to introduce the term *folklife* into the discussion, as a means of indicating the breadth of interests of the field. The term served double-duty, for it also was a way of dodging the political opprobrium of the term *folklore*. Just as Penn was changing the name of its program to Folklore and Folklife, the Smithsonian Institution was developing the Festival of American Folklife, soon to be followed by the creation of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Yoder and Glassie's impact on the thinking of folklorists lobbying in behalf of the discipline must not be overlooked. (Abrahams 1993:385-387).

The conscious adoption of the term *folklife* provided folkloristics two things. On one hand it provided a way to publicly present that the interests held by folklorists went beyond the limited, and at times problematic popular and political, connotations of the word *folklore*. On the other, it served as a way for folklorists to lay claim this large swath of interests—essentially the study and presentation of the stuff of everyday life in the United States—for the field. The adoption of the word *folklife* for the public face of folkloristics is one of the key

factors in the development of public sector folkloristics as it is currently constituted in the US. In many respects, the reframing of public folkloristic activity and programming under the umbrella of folklife, especially when coupled to notions of cultural heritage preservation, was the catalyst that birthed the American public sector.

Archie Green attributes the coinage of the phrase “Folklore and the Public Sector” to Richard Bauman. Green had been invited to teach several classes at the University of Texas in 1975, where Bauman was teaching at the time. After describing what he felt he could best teach, Bauman proposed “Folklore and the Public Sector” as a course title. Green credits Henry Willett with generating the title *public sector folklorist* in 1980 (Green 2007:52-53). Public sector folklore, or *public folklore* as it is commonly referred to at this time, has most often been defined in contrast to academic work and “pure” research. Public folklore is framed as the activities of trained, professional folklorists (where “trained” and “professional” are normally equated with graduate training and, at a minimum, an MA degree) engaged in producing public cultural representation in the form of exhibits, festivals, performances, publications and archives. Increasingly the importance of collaborative processes with members of cultural communities in the development of these representations has become a central methodological and ethical element of the public folklore enterprise. For example, “Public folklore is the representation and application of folk traditions in new contours and contexts within and beyond the communities in which they originated, often through the collaborative efforts of tradition bearers and folklorists or other

cultural specialists” (Baron and Spitzer 2007a: 1). Other definitions explore the underlying motivations for undertaking the work:

A small but growing movement is flourishing in the United States, developing a variety of tools for thinking about the significance of cultural pluralism, about preserving cultural continuities, about the encouragement and preservation of the diverse cultural heritages that comprise American Society. Described by various neologisms—*cultural conservation*, *folklore and the public sector* and *public folklife programs* come immediately to mind—it is a movement stressing public responsibilities derived from both academic discipline and social concern. (Feintuch 1988a:1. Emphasis in original).

The primary theoretical and methodological publications on public sector folklore have been edited volumes, including books (Sweterlitsch 1971; Baron and Spitzer 1992; Baron and Spitzer 2007b; Feintuch 1988b; Hufford 1994a; Jones 1994, Sommers 1994) and special issues of journals (Payne and Shuldiner 1998; Bendix and Welz 1999; Belanus and Hansen 2000). In addition there have been several single and multiple author books (Whisnant 1983; Loomis 1985; Bauman, Swain, and Carpenter 1992) that explored foundational issues in cultural conservation and issues in public folklore, as well as many articles (e.g. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1988) that explore public folklore work.

Although presenting a full history of the public sector folklore movement is beyond the scope of this project, it is important to provide at least an overview of the key individuals and events that led to the establishment of a (relatively) stable and (relatively) sustainable public folklore infrastructure in the United States. Most such exercises tracing the history of public folklore begin by citing the work of Benjamin Botkin at the WPA. From there, they note the public work of Alan

Lomax, Kenneth Goldstein and others in broadcasting, releasing commercial recordings, and the organization, promotion and participation in folk festivals (Abrahams 2007). The modern era of public folklore is connected to its official enshrinement at the federal level through creation of the Smithsonian Institution's National Folklife Festival in 1967, the creation of the Folk Arts Program at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in 1974, the hard-won lobbying efforts of Archie Green and others that resulted in the official establishment of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in 1976, and the growth of state-based folklorists at Arts Councils across the country that followed (Baron and Sptizer 2007b:5,vii).

The Smithsonian Office of Folklife and Cultural Heritage, the NEA Office of Folk and Traditional Arts, and the American Folklife Center have served as hubs for the promotion of public sector folklore, support and training of public sector folklorists and, in the case of NEA, crucial funding to the field (Feintuch 1988:2-4). In another important sense they have implicitly and explicitly served (at times problematically, as Cantwell 1993 observes) to connect the underlying ideas of folklife to a broader project of cultural heritage preservation and cultural conservation (Hufford 1994b; Loomis 1988). When coupled to the archival missions of both the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress (and in particular the Archive of the American Folklife Center), the cultural heritage and cultural conservation perspectives advanced by these federal bodies have dramatically influenced the perception of archival collections and archival

methods among public sector folklorists in particular, but also among folklorists in general.

The impact on archival practice that resulted from the broad scope of the folklife model, concepts of cultural heritage and conservation, and the concurrent emergence of ethnographically-focused public sector research was monumental. From these factors a quiet revolution in the perception of the relationship between folklore materials and historical archives began to occur. The cultural salvage aspects of earlier folklore archiving certainly carried with them an implicit understanding of folkloric materials as representative of national heritage or identity. However, no matter how important they were, folkloric materials were not seen by folklorists as the same kind of materials historically and traditionally under the care of professional archivists. Over the last 30 or so years this perception has begun to change. It has become possible to view materials that in the past were seen as essentially different from one another—e.g. a recording of a folk song made in 1984 and an 18th century farm ledger—as conceptually connected in new ways. I argue that perceptual changes among folklorists, archivists, historians and others linked so-called folk materials to, or perhaps rendered them more concordant with, other materials that for years had been under the care of professional archivists. As a result, long entrenched ideas of archival practice that had previously been seen as unimportant to folklore materials gradually assumed a greater relevance, and new collections were founded whose practices attempt to adhere to or adapt the standards set forth by professional archivists.

While these conceptual shifts are important, the archival turn taken by folklore collections was also thoroughly pragmatic. From the perspective of scale alone the fieldwork undertaken by public sector folklorists across the country has generated tens of thousands of hours of audio and video recordings, hundreds of thousands of photographic images, as well thousands of linear feet of manuscript material, ephemera and administrative records. And, as scholars who emerged from a discipline with a long and vital history of creating archival collections of research materials, they preserved these materials and perpetuated the archival tradition of the field. From the very beginning of the public sector folklore movement, public folklorists kept their slides, tapes, transcripts, tape logs and other field-generated items in physically and/or conceptually cordoned off extra rooms, closets or on a few feet of available shelf space. These locations became identified as their “archives.” In search of help addressing these growing accumulations these newly professionalized public sector folklorists turned to professional archivists for assistance. With this, the contemporary era of folklore archives began, with work begun by the New York Folklore Society serving as the primary catalyst.

In the late 1980s Ellen McHale, then folklorist for the Rensselaer County Council for the Arts, applied to the Documentary Heritage Program (DHP) of the New York State Archives for grant funds to support the processing of the growing research collection she was generating through her fieldwork. McHale’s rationale for seeking support for her research collection from a program directed at the

needs of historical archives was directly rooted in her training and the disciplinary use of the term “archives” to describe folklore research collections.

It was a long time ago and I've learned alot (sic) since then but I think that I had all this 'stuff' that I didn't know what to do with. Kenny Goldstein had instructed us how to label our tapes, etc., but that was the extent of my information. I did think that I had an archive and so it made sense to go to the NYS archives for funding for 'my archive.' I remember one of the first meetings with Fred Stielow and Kathleen Roe and Bruce Buckley.⁴⁰ Bruce brought a box from his 'archive' and then Fred and Kathleen proceeded to talk to us about Bruce's collection and how that differed from a true archive. It was an eye opener for me. (McHale 2010).

While it is safe to assume that McHale was not the first folklorist to seek outside funding to address the needs of a folklore archive, nor the first to encounter differences in meaning in terminology across disciplines, the developments that resulted from McHale's application have had far-reaching implications for folkloristics and the treatment of folklore archives by the field. As McHale reports, “So, I wrote the grant and it was rejected. However, the archives [DHP] responded to it and said that they had never thought about folklore in archives, didn't know how to even think about the materials, and maybe I should think about a larger planning process to really look at the issues in the field and develop some strategies” (McHale 2010).

Working with the New York Folklore Society (NYFS) and the New York State Archives McHale crafted a grant narrative aimed at "assessing the state of

⁴⁰ Fred Steilow and Kathleen Roe are archivists who worked with the New York Folklore Society on a number of archiving projects. Bruce Buckley was a folklorists and one of the founders of the Cooperstown Graduate Program in Cooperstown, NY.

the folklore collections" in New York as well as trying "to educate folklorists about the care of collections and to provide a way for folklorists to talk to archivists so that their collections would be better poised for inclusion into archives" (McHale 2010). These early efforts by McHale and John Suter of NYFS, quite likely the first coordinated exercise in the United States to address folklore archives from the perspective of professional archivists, produced several results including an assessment survey of "folk archival collections in New York state" (Suter 1991:5) conducted by archivist, Frederick Stielow, and a conference—"the Folk Archives Conference" held on September 13 and 14 in Stanford, NY—that drew together folklorists and archivists from the state and region to discuss issues related to folklore archives. Both Stielow's full report and summary conference proceedings were published by NYFS not long afterward as *Folklore Archives and the Documentary Heritage of New York State* (Suter and Stielow 1991).

Folklore Archives and the Documentary Heritage of New York State is a seminal document marking the beginning of the serious application of archival methods to folklore archives and the opening up of a perception of folklore archives as akin to the kinds of collections commonly curated by professional archivists. In their "Executive Summary" (Suter 1991) and project report (Stielow 1991) Suter and Stielow draw concrete connections between practices in archives that are relevant to folklore archives, and make repeated references to the content of folklore archives as vital elements of the "documentary heritage" of the state: "The State of New York has a distinctive folklore heritage of great importance. This living legacy invigorates the many and diverse communities of

the state and illuminates the history and culture of its peoples” (Stielow 1991:9). While they were not the first to make these connections regarding structure or content,⁴¹ the ramifications of *Folklore Archives and the Documentary Heritage of New York State* and, more significantly, the continued interests of Ellen McHale and NYFS in folklore archives have been far reaching.

From *Folklore Archives and the Documentary Heritage of New York State* arose two additional publications, *Working with Folk Materials in New York State: A Manual for Folklorists and Archivists* (Suter 1994) and *Folklore in Archives: A Guide to Describing Folklore and Folklife Materials* (Corsaro and Taussig-Lux 1998). While *Folklore Archives and the Documentary Heritage of New York State* represents the first concerted effort to formalize the relationship between folklore archives and archives (albeit overtly limited to the level of New York state), the 1994 and 1998 volumes are practical guides—handbooks—that translate archival terms and concepts for folklorists and folkloristic terms for archivists, and demonstrate how these concepts can be applied to the materials in folklore archives. They serve, quite directly, as functional tools for managing folklore archives in accordance with the approaches of professional archivists. Both books are ubiquitous presences in offices across the country, where

⁴¹ As Suter notes (Suter 1991:3), twelve years earlier Barre Toelken reflected on the heritage preservation role served by folklore archives, “for in folklore archives (whether hidden under the bed or catalogued in several buildings) is the most telling evidence of the vitality of cultural tradition in our country as well as elsewhere” Toelken 1979:307). A similar sentiment was expressed in an article in the *United States Daily* as early as 1928 regarding the foundation of the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress (*United States Daily* 1928).

folklorists have turned to them in search of pragmatic advice and methods on how to handle their research collections.

Beyond providing a hands-on resource for action by archivists and folklorists, both books have, over time, come to serve a corollary function within folkloristics. Through their ubiquity and broad acceptance by the field they have done much to cement in the minds of folklorists the connection between *folklore* archives and archives, and have become self-reinforcing tools for the establishment of these connections. However, it is also important to note that NYFS was not operating in a vacuum.

At approximately the same time Ellen McHale began to investigate professionalizing her archival collections, a small revolution was underway at the (then) Archive of Folk Culture of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. In his 1991 report in the section headed “Other Influences” Stielow details a range of institutions that have had a hand in “laying the groundwork for New York’s folklore documentary heritage and it’s future prospects” (Stielow 1991:19). In addition to The New York State Library and State Archives and the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), Stielow singles out “the Folklife Center of the Library of Congress (LC)” as a site for “folklorists seeking archival background” to go for additional information on archival practice (Stielow 1991:19). In particular Stielow notes the “LC’s folklore archives manual”⁴² as a

⁴² In consultation with Michael Taft I have come to the conclusion that Stielow is most likely (although not definitely) referring to the original edition of *Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman’s Introduction to Field Techniques* (Bartis 2002[1979]).

“basic resource for many of the folklorists in New York” (Stielow 1991:19). It is safe to say that if an AFC archival resource was in use by folklorists in New York, it was most likely in use among public folklorists in general.

In addition to the influence of the AFC through print materials, in the 1980s and 1990s the Archive of Folk Culture underwent a reformulation of practice that drew their methods closer to the approaches of professional archivists (Maguire 2010). As described by Catherine Kerst, in 1990 the AFC’s own archival structure was dramatically revised to come into alignment with professional archival practice.

The history of the Archive’s numbering system reflects our archival history. From the beginning, unpublished ethnographic field recordings that were received were given individual AFS (Archive of American Folk Song) numbers. The numbers were assigned to individual items, sometimes comprising one disc with one recording on it, sometimes encompassing one cassette tape with numerous recordings.

In 1990, our basic archival numbering system changed to mirror the field’s broadening concept of what constitutes ethnographic research. Consequently we began to assign AFC numbers for whole collections, beginning with the year in which the collection was received, if available. (Kerst 2004:29-30).

The alteration of this basic accessioning system marks an important shift for the American Folklife Center. By maintaining the conceptual integrity of a body of donated material and identifying it as a unit, this shift in accessioning practice represents a wholesale adoption of the archival principles of *respect des fonds* and provenance, and an abandonment of the disciplinary-specific, item-centered approaches AFC had employed in the past. And although the immediate impact of these changes in the internal practices AFC does not seem to have reached

outside of the institution, they served as the foundation of the greater role AFC would take in influencing archival practice in folkloristics through the 1990s and beyond. Of particular importance are publications such as *Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques* (Bartis 2002[1979]), in particular the 1993 and 2002 revisions, as well as *Ethnographic Collections in the Archive of Folk Culture: A Contributors Guide* (Hall 1995).

Bartis's *Folklife and Fieldwork* contains brief information aimed at individual researchers on the preservation of common materials found in ethnographic research collections—audio recordings, slides, etc. The advice is absolutely reflective of what an archivist would do to manage physical materials in collections. Bartis stresses the use of acid-free enclosures, warns researchers away from particular examples of problematic storage materials and advises them to work with archival experts to prepare their collections for deposit (Bartis 2010[2002]). Hall's *Ethnographic Collections in the Archive of Folk Culture* (Hall 1995) is aimed at researchers who are seeking to donate collections to AFC. However though its rich description of how to prepare materials for deposit, *Ethnographic Collections in the Archive of Folk Culture* serves as a defacto handbook for the archival arrangement of folklore materials in general, and has been used as such by many folklorists in the United states.

These four books, the New York Folklore Society's *Working with Folk Materials in New York State* (Suter 1994) and *Folklore in Archives* (Corsaro and Taussig-Lux 1998) as well as AFC's *Folklife and Fieldwork* (Bartis 2002[1979]) and Hall's *Ethnographic Collections in the Archive of Folk Culture* (Hall 1995)

emerged at similar times⁴³ and were widespread in their reach. In addition to these works, outreach efforts by the staff of AFC as well as efforts by the Archives and Libraries Section of the American Folklore Society, and the consulting activities by individual folklore archivists such as the Western Folklife Center's Steve Green and others (myself included) continue to play an enormous role in promoting the parallels between archival practice and "best practice" in folklore archives. At the same time, these publications, people and institutions also highlight the differences between what archivists do and what folklorists and folklore materials require. With varying degrees of vehemence we argue that folklore archives are related to, but distinct from, standard archival collections. They are a hybrid form that requires hybrid solutions.

Folklore archives in the present have much more in common with archival collections created and maintained by professional archivists. This increasing commonality of form is in large part the result of several factors in the history of the field. The contextualist turn in folkloristics during the 1960s and 1970s that recast folklore as communication and grounded fieldwork in an ethnographic model rendered the academic folklore archive as it was then constituted relevant to the research exercise of the field. During the same period a parallel ethnographic model emerged from the wellspring of the European concept of folklife. From the American conception of folklife arose the American field of public sector folklore. In these contexts a new kind of folklore archive developed,

⁴³ As noted above, the original edition of Bartis's *Folklife and Fieldwork* was first revised in 1993.

one grounded in the intellectual traditions and history of the discipline, but framed to great extent by the theory and methods of professional archivists. The folklore archive today is a hybrid form, distinct from the disciplinary collections founded to support comparative research, but also distinct from the collections created and maintained by professional archivists.

Chapter Four

Diachronic Perspectives on the Folklore Archive: An Examination of the Work of George List and Gerald Parsons

Introduction

In the previous four chapters I provided an overview of the roles maintained by folklore archives within the field of folkloristics, background information on the theoretical underpinnings of archival theory as they relate to folklore archives, a study of the historical factors within folkloristics that led to dramatic shifts in the methods in and use of folklore archives by folklorists, and an overview of contemporary practice in folklore archives. In this chapter I explore the nature of folklore archives as articulated in writings by two scholars, George List of Indiana University (List 2002) and Gerald Parsons of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress (Parsons 1995). George List was affiliated with the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music/Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University from 1954 through his death in 2008. Gerald Parsons worked as a reference librarian at the Archive of Folksong/Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress for 21 years, until his death in 1995.

The value in undertaking a comparative reading of these two pieces on the topic of folklore archives, the first a talk given by List in 1959 and published by the *Folklore Historian* in 2002 (List 2002) and the second, an often-cited memo drafted by Parsons in 1991 and published by the American Folklife Center in 1995 (Parsons 1995) is rooted in the insight they give into changes in folklore

archives from the 1950s through the 1990s. Their overviews of folklore archives—separated as they are by approximately 30 years—further highlight the great change in the professional approach to, and understanding of, these materials over time. List and Parsons present their perceptions of folklore archives in light of their very different perspectives on professional research practice and the theoretical bases of folkloristics. List, writing in the late 1950s from the vantage point of a university professor, provides us a window into the work of a folklore archivist and theorist whose approaches were shaped by the nature of the fields of folklore and ethnomusicology during his day, and by the academic context itself. In contrast, Parsons, working for the federal government, articulates a position on the materials that is informed by theoretical and intellectual changes in the field over the intervening period of time from the perspective of a public sector folklorist.

Writing in the 1950s when audio recording by folklorists was still beginning to take firm hold in research practice and historic-geographic and taxonomic approaches largely defined the theoretical orientation of folklorists, the archival collections List reflects archival collections that are emblematic of this period in our field. As someone embedded in an academic environment, his view of the utility of archives has much to do with their role in academic research. Writing in the 1990s after the emergence of a vibrant public/applied sector in the field, at a time when folklorists' conceptions of both folklore *and* folklife had transformed beyond 19th and early 20th century definitions tied primarily to class and geography, and after the broad acceptance of contextual and performance-based

approaches in the field, Parsons writes for an audience much more in tune with contemporary practice in folkloristics. Furthermore, as a staff member of the American Folklife Center, his orientation on folklore archives is greatly influenced by that organization's public mission.

While a comparative reading of the work of List and Parsons foregrounds changes in professional perspectives and practice over a thirty year period as related to the methods and content of folklore archives, such an exegesis also affords an opportunity to explore the persistence of core ideas about folklore archives over time. The obvious differences in archival practice between List and Parsons are important to recognize and expound upon, more significant are those places where the ideas of each connect and resonate.

Despite the differences in their thinking on folklore archives, List's and Parsons' pieces have two things in common. First, unlike many others writing about folklore archives, they explicitly discuss folklore archives in relation to the kinds of archival collections maintained by professional archivists. In doing so they set folklore archives in a broader conceptual context that forges intellectual connections beyond the bounds of folkloristics. In discussing the relationship of folklore archives to other kinds of archival collections, they present folklore archives in a manner that is comprehensible to both professional archivists and folklorists. Finally, by invoking professionally managed archives each ties the folklore collections of their and professional context to a body of theory—in this case archival theory—that has not changed fundamentally over the intervening 30 years. As a result archival theory becomes a fixed point of reference from

which we can judge changes in perception of and approach to folklore archives over the period.

Second, both List and Parsons were professionally engaged with physical collections that had (and continue to have) long-ranging, historical scope. Materials at what is now called the *Archives of Traditional Music*⁴⁴ (ATM) at Indiana University date to the early part of 1890s. Material in the collection now called the Archive of the American Folklife Center (AFC) date to the 1890s as well. While not stated by either, awareness of the chronological topography of the materials in their individual collections informs their writing. That the job of an archive, and in particular a folklore archive, involves simultaneously maintaining a body of older materials while acquiring new holdings is simply understood—regardless of the authors’ differing perceptions on the utility of these materials or the rationale for preserving them to begin with.

As noted in Chapter Two, the vast majority of folklore archives do not contain materials that a professional archivist would treat as having high *artifactual* value.⁴⁵ However, unlike many folklore archives, the collections of List at Indiana University and Parsons at the Library of Congress do include such valuable artifacts. The presence of archival materials that have what an archivist would easily see as *artifactual* value on his or her terms, such as wax cylinders

⁴⁴ At the time of List’s writing in 1959 the *Archives of Traditional Music* was named the *Archive of Folk and Primitive Music*. I have chosen to use its current name so that readers will be better able to identify the repository and its collection.

⁴⁵ For an explanation of archival values, please see Chapter One.

recorded by Béla Bartók or instantaneous disc recordings made by John Lomax, puts these collections in a different category from most folklore archives. As such the awareness—unconscious or otherwise—of this sort of *artifactual* value among items in their collections certainly informed the thinking of both List and Parsons about folklore collections in general.

George List and the Folklore Archive

At the time of List's writing, folklore archives in the United States were all essentially academic or academic-style collections. In his overview of folklore archives he focuses on three criteria: scope, administrative support and organization. List defines scope as "the type of folklore found in [an archive's] holdings and the geographical regions or cultures covered" (List 2002:39). As pointed out by List and as I discovered through my survey work from 2002 through 2009, diversity of scope—particularly in public sector collections—is the rule rather than the exception. Some collections, particularly those in academic settings, will have a broader, frequently international, scope. Regional collections—as most public sector folklore programs today are framed—will intentionally have more limited scope, and generally the contents of the collections will be more reflective of the cultural practices of the people who live within the programs' geographic operating ranges.

List treats folklore archives exclusively from the perspective of academic collections,⁴⁶ and as such, his focus is on the administrative support provided to a folklore archive by its host institution including factors such as staffing and the allotment of space to the collection. However, all folklore archives, whether in the college and university context or not exist as units within a larger bodies such as a public library, an agency in state government, or a private non-profit. The nature of these administrative relationships has always been complex and differs greatly from one collection to the next.

As expressed by Jansen (Jansen 1958) as well as List, as early as the 1950s shared approaches to organizational structure certainly were not the defining feature among folklore archives. My own survey research, as demonstrated in the next chapter, makes a similar impression. Although some sites do share organizational approaches at least partially, and although certain standardizing methods did begin to gain traction in various places at various points in time, and methods applied in individual collections might be internally consistent, between collections diversity of structure is a rule.

Gerald Parsons and the Birth of the Ethnographic Collection

⁴⁶ Although List makes reference to collections in non-academic settings (such as the Virginia Folk Song Society and the Library of Congress) these bodies of material are essentially treated by List in the same way as collections created by academic faculty.

Gerald Parsons opens his 1991 memo to the board of trustees of the American Folklife Center by making the following statement: “This discursus is necessary because we have discovered a small gap in the English language. Amazing as it may seem, the sort of collection of which the Archive [of Folk Culture] is such a splendid example doesn't really have a name.” (Parsons 1995). With this salvo Parsons undertakes a systematic exploration of the collections of the American Folklife Center and their relationship to other materials at the Library of Congress with ultimate exercise of providing them with a name—*ethnographic collections*.⁴⁷ In writing this piece, Parsons was tackling an immediate practical need that went beyond simple theoretical rumination alone. His coinage of *ethnographic archives* is part of a larger rhetorical effort to legitimize folklore archives and the place of the AFC in the Library of Congress. In this chapter I will focus primarily on the criteria Parsons uses to frame the collections.

While Parsons speaks specifically of the collections of the Archive of Folk Culture, (as Chapter Five demonstrates) the points he makes are very much applicable to folklore archives held at other sites. In his framework, these collections of “representations of human expression” (i.e. folklore) are “multi-format,” they are “unpublished” and they are “created works” (Parsons 1995). In contrast to list, List who discusses folklore archives in relation to their

⁴⁷ By all accounts Gerald Parsons is the individual responsible for coining *ethnographic collections* as a descriptive term for the bodies of material that formerly had been known only as *folklore* or *folk music* archives.

intellectual content, the administrative structures that support them, and the approaches employed to organize them, Parsons takes a different approach. Parsons bases his classificatory efforts on the ethnographic documentation processes that led to their creation. By aligning the AFC with ethnographic practice Parson implicitly contrasts the AFC collections to the text-based archives discussed by List, and articulates a vision of a folklore archive rooted in contextual approaches to folklore study. The repository Parsons defines is not one focused on the preservation of atomized texts. Rather it is a repository that, through its efforts to represent the ethnographic process in its structure, embeds folklore in the cultural, social and situational contexts in which it emerges in the world.

This approach also carries with it a secondary outcome. The contextualizing practices outlined by Parsons both contextualize the “representations of actual human expression” (Parsons 1995) that the archives contain *and* contextualizes the *creation* of these representations. In addition to providing context to the folklore the archive holds, the documentary materials in AFC are also the folkloristic correlate to the types of records managed by professional archivists. The ethnographic archive is a distinct type of thing in part because, although Parsons does not say so overtly, it ties together the working methods of folklorists with the conceptual framework of archivists. It does so through the integration of overlapping contextual concepts from both fields.

What Parsons refers to as the “multi-format” nature of the materials is the direct result of the multifaceted means employed by folklorists conducting

ethnographic documentation of cultural expression. “[O]ur collections always entail, at the very least, something inscribed on paper as well as something inscribed on a medium of sound recording or photography. More often than not, our collections entail documentation in three or four different media” (Parsons 1995). The overlapping content of the sound recordings, field notes, transcripts and 35mm slides provide a rich, contextualized picture of the expressive culture they document. The additional layers of intellectual context provided by the conceptual grouping of materials from a single source—a single researcher, a single project—deepens the relationship between the parts and the whole. Examples of folklore can viewed with reference to their performative contexts and to the broader context of the research effort during which they were documented.

Parson’s second criterion, that these materials are “unpublished,” establishes that the materials housed by the Archive of Folk Culture are the “raw material, not the finished products” (Parsons 1995) of ethnographic work. The further implication of the unpublished nature of the collections is that they are also unique, or at least, rare.⁴⁸ In short they are not the edited and crafted products of commercial mechanical or electronic reproduction.

⁴⁸ In addition to being the sole repository of many collections, the Archive of Folk Culture also maintains collections of duplicate materials where copies or originals are also held at other repositories. One example of such a collection is the material generated by Alan Lomax in Vermont in 1939 with Helen Hartness Flanders. Originals are at the Library of Congress and a set of duplicates reside at Middlebury College. From the other side, duplicates of recordings made in Vermont by Helen Hartness Flanders are at the Library Congress, while the originals remain in Middlebury. I recently learned that the Library of Congress holds copies of recordings made in the 1960s by Vermont singer and song

Parsons' third aspect of these materials, that they are "created works" brings the discussion full circle. Parsons frames these collections as "created works" in contrast to other types of archival materials that he casts as coming into being through a process of "accumulation" (Parsons 1995). Ethnographic collections exist because of the conscious activity of the ethnographer pulling together different documentary forms so that the expression he or she captures can be viewed holistically:

The fieldworker takes a photograph of a musical instrument, makes a sound recording of it being played and jots down notes on the recollections of a virtuoso player. He does so because he has determined that the photographs, sound recordings, and written text must be yoked together to fully represent the performance. (Parsons 1995).

Parsons is not saying that an ethnographic collection is an objective representation of a documentary subject. Rather he is saying that an ethnographic collection is willfully formed and is both an example of the ethnographer's effort to understand his or her subject as it emerges in performance as well being as physical expression of that effort.

Archives, Folklore Archives and Ethnographic Archives

Archives and Folklore Archives

collector Margaret MacArthur. The originals are in the collection of the Vermont Folklife Center.

In their two pieces on the folklore archive, Parsons and List both use professional archives as simultaneously a point of contrast and a point of commonality. The conclusion drawn from reading their work is that folklore archives, whether they are being called *folklore* archives or *ethnographic* archives, are a hybrid form that combine elements of archival theory with approaches and demands distinct from them that emerge from the nature of the work folklorists do. Folklore archives are *archives* in a sense that is similar to the collections managed by professional archivists, but different in a range of unique ways.

The field of archival management aspires toward a high degree of standardization of practice. One of the key elements of this standardization is the maintenance of by the Society of American Archivists (SAA) of an online publication entitled *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Pearce-Moses 2005). Since its publication it has become an important resource for defining how professional archivists use language to describe their field. In contrast to the *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore and Mythology and Legend* (Leach 1949) with its 17 definitions of “folklore,” the SAA *Glossary* contains two definitions of the word *archives* relevant to this discussion, one primary, one secondary. The primary definition of is as follows:

Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control; permanent records. (Pearce-Moses 2005b).

In his 1959 presentation, George List worked to articulate something of the nature of folklore archives by comparing them to the sorts of collections overseen by professional archivists:

The term 'archive' is used rather loosely. We have at Indiana University a folklore archive, consisting almost entirely of manuscript material, an archive of recordings of traditional music, and an archive of recordings of the languages of the world. There is also an archive attached to the President's office. The latter is the type of institution to which the appellation 'archive' has traditionally been applied, that is, to a repository of those records of a public or private institution or of a private family which are judged worthy of preservation for reference or research purposes. (List 2002:30)

List's comments are the earliest published comparative statement that I have found on the relationship between the specialized archives of folklorists and the collections maintained and overseen by professional archivists. His definition of the term *archive* is clearly based on the classic definition put forward by American archivist and archival theorist T.R. Schellenberg: "those records of any public or private institutions which are adjudged worthy of preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been deposited or have been selected for deposit in an archival institution" (Schellenberg 1956:16). By drawing on Schellenberg, List demonstrates both a working knowledge of contemporary archival theory, and an awareness that the type of materials which preoccupied much of his professional life would be perceived by professional archivists as categorically different from the materials in their care despite the application of the term "archive" to their name.

That List, unlike many from his era who worked with folklore archives, would have this awareness is not surprising. As the head of the Archive of Folk and Primitive Music at Indiana University he worked within a university environment where professional archivists were also employed. And as he notes in the 2002 introduction to his paper to the Texas Folklore Society, when taking over this position he set out on a course of self-education in the field of archiving that ultimately directed him to create his own organizational system for the collection (List 2002: 27-28).

In his published memo, Parsons also discusses folklore archives—and in particular the Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress—in comparison to the types of collections managed by professional archivists: “The Archive of Folk Culture is not an ‘archive’ at all in the sense that professional archivists use the term because we do not collect the business records of institutions” (Parsons 1995). Rather the AFC—and other collections like it—are a type of collection distinct from those managed by professional archivists.

In their efforts to distinguish folklore archives from the kinds of collections managed by professional archivists, both List and Parsons resort to coining terminology. List, for his part, attempts to classify archival collections managed by professional archivists with a new term; Parsons coins a term to describe the AFC collection in contrast to them. After describing the different types of repositories called “archives” at Indiana University, List opts to refer to collections like the Indiana University archives as follows: “It is not a very good term, but for the purpose of identification, I shall refer to this type of archive as a documentary

archive.” (List 2002:30). Taking a different route, Parsons reserves the term “archives” for the kinds of collections managed by professional archivists and adopts for the general term, “documentary archive”—and its specific sub-type, the “ethnographic archive”—to refer to folklore archives.⁴⁹ While List’s “documentary archive” and Parsons’s “archive” stand on one side, List’s “folklore archive” and Parsons’s “documentary archive” and “ethnographic archive” stand on the other. To both scholars, folklore archives are not the same thing as collections maintained by professional archivists, but rather are things unto themselves that, by their nature need to be approached in different ways.

How They Save

However, just because both List and Parsons see them as different from archives does not mean they simultaneously see folklore archives as a completely distinct category of thing. Both Parsons and List are aware of the similarities between them, and List in particular focuses on their commonalities as well as their differences. In his discussion of the structure of folklore archives

⁴⁹ While “documentary archive” might have been a meaningful way of distinguishing the two types of collections in the past, today it would hopelessly muddle matters since the contents of most folklore archives in the present are viewed by their creators as the products of cultural documentation—i.e. *documentary*—work. And as noted above, Parsons (1995) reinforces this by using the exact words “documentary archive” as a term *for* folklore collections! Needless to say, I have not adopted Lists terminology. The confusion caused by List and Parsons using the same term in opposite ways opens up interesting questions surrounding the changing meaning of the word “documentary” over the 31 or so years between List’s presentation and Parsons’s drafting of his memo.

List refers specifically to two theoretical constructs central to the theory that informs the work of professional archivists that are also relevant to folklore archives: *accession* and *provenance*. In List's terms an accession is "a collection of materials received from a single source at a single time" and in regard to provenance he says that "material received in the archive...must not be separated into discrete items but must be retained in groups according to its provenance" (List 2002:40). List's definitions of these terms cleave very closely to the standard definitions applied by archivists, and his application of them to folklore materials reflects both the practical side of how ethnographic materials frequently enter the archive ("a single source at a single time") and the practical demands of managing rights and access (List 2002:40). However it also represents a break with some of the methods used to organize folklore archives in the past, in particular methods that broke field collections apart and organized materials in accordance with discipline-specific indexing systems. While List's approach was not entirely unique at this time, he was the first person I have identified to relate these models back to long-established approaches among professional archivists.⁵⁰

Parsons does not explicitly address the utilization of archival concepts with materials in the Archive of Folk Culture, but rather implicitly notes them throughout his text. For example, He uses of the word "collection" repeatedly to

⁵⁰ As noted in Chapter One, the Irish Folklore Commission has historically employed a model based on accession and provenance. In the Irish case, I do not believe that this system was the result of the conscious adoption of archivists' methods.

frame a circumscribed body of material received from a single source, e.g. "...the Archive of Folk Culture may be seen as a conglomerate of some seventeen hundred 'ethnographic collections'." He periodically articulates that these collections are the work of individual creators, relating the collection, as the AFC possesses it back to the ethnographic work from which it came—an unstated expression of the idea of provenance (Parsons 1995).

That List states explicitly and Parson infers is not surprising. Writing in 1959 List stands at the beginning of a process to professionalize and standardize practice in folklore archives, while Parsons, writing more than thirty years later, represents the culmination of this process. Through the creation of the journal, *The Folklore and Folk Music Archivist*, George List spent much of his early career trying to understand the nature of folklore collections and articulate standard practices for use in them. For Gerald Parsons, working at the Library of Congress where by the 1990s professional archivists had increasing influence on approaches to the management of unique resources such as those at AFC (Maguire 2010), it only makes sense that the Archive of Folk Culture would adopt such language implicitly for describing their materials

Archival theory, static as it is, becomes a point of reference on changes in the approach to managing folklore archives over time. What is new to George List is second nature to Gerald Parsons. What both List and Parsons see, however, is the way their collections are similar and yet distinct from what professional archivists would term an *archive*. Despite the acute theoretical divides that informed folklore research conducted in 1959 from folklore research

conducted in 1991, we can still talk about a shared idea of a folklore archive that transcends research practice.

What They Save and Why

Finally, a key commonality shared by List and Parsons comes in how they characterize the materials in the care of a folklore archive, and how their characterizations of the job of the folklore archive contrast with the way professional archivists articulate the nature of the materials they oversee. Archival theory hinges on the concept of the *record*. Most recent formal definitions of archives can be summarized by saying that archives preserve *records* of continuing value, and that records (in archival terms) are evidence of human action in the world.⁵¹ Records in this archival sense are not limited to any particular form, although records are always fixed in some way. Broadly speaking, to archivists while the information within a record is certainly important, what matters more is that the record *contains* the information to begin with—that the record in itself can provide evidence of action taken. Furthermore, records are conceived of from the perspective of the individual who created them. They

⁵¹ The first three definitions of a “record” in the SAA Glossary are “1. A written or printed work of a legal or official nature that may be used as evidence or proof; a document. – 2. Data or information that has been fixed on some medium; that has content, context, and structure; and that is used as an extension of human memory or to demonstrate accountability. – 3. Data or information in a fixed form that is created or received in the course of individual or institutional activity and set aside (preserved) as evidence of that activity for future reference” Pearce-Moses 2005l.

are less evidence of their own content than they are evidence of the creator having generated said content. So in the archival context a record is seen as documenting the specific actions of the individual who created it.

In contrast to this perspective, both List and Parsons see the central role of the folklore archive as preserving folklore itself rather than, as an archivist might, preserving research materials that contain folklore or acting as repository of a record of the research efforts of folklorists. To List and Parsons it is the very stuff of folklore they seek to save: “The province of the folklore archive, then, is unpublished folklore and folk music, the traditions passed on by ear, recorded either by an electronic device or transcribed by hand” (List 2002:30); “What is the function of the folklore archive? To my mind, the folklore archive has two basic functions: the preservation of cultural traditions, and the making of these traditions accessible for research and general education” (List 2002:31); “[the Archive of Folk Culture] is not composed of information about things, but rather composed of representations of actual human expression” (Parsons 1995). Although List and Parsons would most likely disagree on the scope of what encompasses appropriate content for the folklore archive—for example Parsons’ model of the folklore archive is one that aims to preserve folklore in its performative and cultural contexts rather than only as discrete text—they both agree that the folklore archive first and foremost preserves expressive cultural content for some future end. The records preserved by folklore archives are not saved fundamentally because they are the evidence of a researcher having done his or her work, but rather because they are evidence of the expressive culture

the researcher sought to document and understand. Rather than preserving tangible documents for the sake of what they represent, they preserve the intangible cultural heritage the documents contain.

From Folklore Archives to Ethnographic Collections

It is important to note that when Parsons talks about ethnography, he is talking about a very specific subset of ethnographic practice, in particular the ethnographic methods in folkloristics that emerged alongside the development of the *folklife* concept from the 1960s onward. Although he is speaking overtly about ethnographic action, he is implicitly discussing the ethnographic work of the contextual documentation of folkloric performance. Omitted from his discussion, for example, are the broader ethnographic concerns of cultural anthropologists and other ethnographers who do not focus their energies on performance and culturally circumscribed creative behaviors. Without saying so directly, here Parsons does several things—he asserts the ethnographic credentials of folkloristics; he affirms the role of ethnographic practice at the American Folklife Center; he acknowledges the centrality of ideas of context and performance to contemporary folkloristics; and, most significantly for the concerns of this dissertation, he seizes the term *ethnographic archives* for primary use by those in the field of folkloristics.

For these reasons, Parson's coinage of the term ethnographic archives and its continued use by the staff of the American Folklife Center to describe

their holdings—has found resonance in many corners of the field today. Part legitimizing rhetoric, part eloquent articulation of circumstance, the utilization of the term ethnographic archives to describe the public collections of research materials generated by folklorists, while not exclusive, is at this time extensive. The onomastic shift promulgated by Parsons serves to mark a point of theoretical contrast between the past and the present of the field.

However, despite the conceptual break it highlights, Parsons' articulation of ethnographic archives also serves another end. Parsons' framing of the ethnographic archives concept serves as an acknowledgement—if not an affirmation—of folklorists long-standing efforts to save the physical materials generated through their work for some later purpose. He identifies how this long-standing disciplinary impulse has assumed more modern clothing, and how this new garb brings new life and new ends to the practice of collecting and cataloging field materials for future use. His treatise on ethnography and the preservation of the materials that result from it morphs into an ethnographic act in itself.

Most folklore archives in the present have much more conceptually in common with the kinds of collections described by Parsons than those elaborated upon by List. However, by viewing these two discussions in concert with one another one can see how our theoretical and conceptual present continues to be very much informed by the past in key ways. Parsons' attitudes on ethnography, for example, provide an important point of reference for distinguishing both the ethnographic practices of folklorists and the inroads of

contextualism in the discipline. Within Parsons scope it is a given that many folklorists undertake research with an implicit understanding that the raw material of it will be preserved, and that it will be preserved in a repository dedicated to the purpose. Even though he is separated from List by 30 years, the fundamental assumption regarding the archival inclination of folklorists remains a given.

Conclusion

The comparative reading of George List's "The Function and Organization of a Folklore Archive" and Gerald Parsons' "Performers, Collectors, and the People of the United States" provides the opportunity to observe how two scholars who dedicated their careers to the folklore archive frame their perceptions of these collections. The thirty year temporal divide between their work allows us to explore how theoretical changes in the field of folklore have altered perspectives on folklore archives over time. In addition, the years separating the work of List and Parsons also allow us to see continuities in the nature and perception of these collections as well. Finally, since both List and Parsons write with reference to archival collections managed by professional archivists, through their work we are able to view folklore archives in reference to collections created and maintained by professional archivists. In this way professional archival theory provides a stable set of theoretical assumptions that

serve as a yardstick for understanding the nature of the folklore archive over time.

Both List and Parsons use their writing as a way to present to an audience—in List's case the Texas Folklore Society and in Parsons' case the board of trustees of the American Folklife Center—what it is that makes the collections in their care distinct. Using criteria relevant to each of their individual periods in time and to their distinct discursive and rhetorical needs, both writers address what they view as the fundamental factors that define archival collections of the sorts they curate. Although List refers to these collections as folklore archives while Parsons calls them ethnographic archives, and although the gulf that separates List's "folklore archive" from Parsons's "ethnographic archives" results from much more than just the application of new terminology. Both scholars are fundamentally discussing the same category of thing. Both types of collections are defined in contrast to archives maintained by professional archivists. Where List applies basic archival ideas to his collections, the ethnographic archive of Parsons uses archival theories of context to preserve folklore in context. Both types of collections are dedicated to the same basic task, preserving for some future needs the expressive culture of the individuals and communities that they document.

Chapter Five

Public Folklore Archives: When is an Archives not an Archives?⁵²

Introduction

In this chapter I turn my attention to a particular kind of folklore archive, the archives maintained by active public folklore organizations. In particular I examine the increased role of professional archivists and archival theory in the folklore archives of public sector folklorists, and the challenges involved in applying archival methods to these kinds of collections. For reasons I will articulate below, in these collections we see the greatest conflict between folkloristic methods and needs and the methods of professional archivists. Throughout this dissertation I have referred to the hybrid nature of contemporary folklore archives. In the folklore archives of public sector folklorists this hybridity, the combination of elements of archival practice with approaches and methods specific to the discipline of folkloristics, is at its most pronounced.

This chapter is primarily concerned with the challenges faced by folklore repositories that implement concepts from the field of archives to folklore collections. It is rooted in two fundamental convictions: 1) that the contemporary folklore archive—both those maintained by public sector programs and elsewhere—is marked as distinct from the folklore archives of the past because

⁵² I want to thank Steve Green, Archivist of the Western Folklife Center in Elko, NV, colleague and friend, for sharing his thoughts with me on this chapter.

of a) the awareness folklorists now maintain of professional archivists and their methods, and b) through the adoption of certain archival approaches to the management of folklore collections, and 2) that, although they increasingly reflect the practices of professional archivists, these archival methods are not well suited to use in certain folklore archives. In response, folklore archives have developed hybrid approaches that better serve their needs and respect the nature of their collections.

I began my professional work as a folklorist and trained archivist in 2002 as a partisan for the adoption of professional archival methods in folkloristic archiving practice. I was devoted to the idea that a proper folklore archive, regardless of its institutional context, should be arranged and described in the way a professional archivist would work. In 2003 I presented a paper entitled “Contextualizing the Archives” at the *Building Bridges with Folklore Archives: Pedagogy, Fieldwork, Collective Memory* conference at Brigham Young University (Kolovos 2004) that argued, among other things, that folklore archives had finally arrived, and the vehicle for this arrival was little more than the willing adoption of the methods of professional archivists by folklorists in the conceptualization and management of their collections. Since then my position on this matter has shifted, and I am now ambivalent about the application of archival methods *in toto* to many kinds of folklore archives. I see a real value in what archivists do and the methods archivists employ. At the same time I see a great value in the approaches employed by folklorists to manage the disciplinary collections we have been creating in one way or another since the early 20th

century. I have come to see the great divide that exists at times between the goals of professional archivists and the needs of working folklorists, yet I have also seen how archival approaches can satisfy certain needs as well, in particular the preservation of folklore in context.

The forces that drew folklorists to professional archival approaches, and that drew professional archivists toward folklore archives, emerged during the relatively recent history of our field. As noted in Chapter Two, they concretely emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s as practice at the Archive of Folk Culture began to formalize around archival methods (Kerst 2004:30; Maguire 2010), and grew as the staff at AFC increasingly professionalized along formal archival lines (Taft 2005). Beyond AFC, public folklorists such as Ellen McHale of the New York Folklore Society began to reach out regionally to archivists for assistance in managing their collections. The direct catalysts for the practical implementation of archival methods in folklore collections include the public outreach efforts of the AFC, the surveys (Suter and Stielow 1991), publications (Suter 1994; Corsaro and Taussig-Lux 1998) and outreach work of the New York Folklore Society, the professional consulting activities and public presentations of folklorists and ethnomusicologists with archival degrees, and the activities of the Archives and Libraries Section of the American Folklore Society.

In Chapter Two I detailed the aspects of archival theory that have been most influential on practice in folklore archives. The adoption in folklore archives of the central, profession-defining theoretical concept in archival science, that of *archival context* as reflected in the principle of *respect des fonds* and the

corollary concepts of *provenance* and *original order*, is the most telling sign of the inroads made by archival theory in folklore archives. The ideas that shape the concept of archival context are the defining elements that separate professionalized archival practice from the methods and goals of other information centered fields such as library science and information science.

In addition to adopting the broad conceptual framework of archival practice, folklore archives have also adopted and adapted practices from professional archivists—methods, systems and activities—and applied them to folklore collections. In particular, folklorists are increasingly employing (or wrestling with how to employ) description and arrangement practices that were developed by archivists as a way to represent, in physical and narrative form, the underlying principles of *respect des fonds*. Folklorists have also begun to employ metadata standards—structured, descriptive systems—that have emerged from library and archive fields, as well as using tools and ideas born in library and archival practice to develop our own, native descriptive tools for indexing and cataloging folklore materials. Folklorists have also utilized preservation practices employed by archivists to maintain the physical materials in their collections and to preserve their intellectual content. The resulting collections represent a structural and intellectual hybrid between the practices of archivists and those of folklorists.

When is an Archives not an Archives? Folklore Archives as Current Records

As noted in Chapter Two, part of the fundamental definition of an *archives* within the archival profession includes the idea that the records it is composed of are *noncurrent*, that they are no longer needed for daily work by their creating organization or individuals. This definition can be applied to certain collections of folklore materials, such as the collections of the Archive of the American Folklife Center, or a body of papers and research materials generated by a senior scholar during her career and donated to a university special collection upon retirement, or the research collection of a defunct public folklore program that is transferred to a state historical society, or a departmental folklore archive that is transferred to the university archives as a whole where it becomes part of larger institutional history. These collections, *noncurrent* in archival terms, can more easily be drawn into the archival frame. It is collections of this sort that handbooks such as Steilow and Suter 1991, Hall 1995, and Corsaro and Taussig-Lux 1998 were written to accommodate.

However, in the kinds of collections I have worked with most closely, the folklore archives of active public folklore research organizations, the situation is quite different. In public folklore organizations all the materials that make up the folklore archive are potentially necessary for reuse in future programming and publications. From a professional archivist's perspective folklore archives of this sort are more often than not *current records* as defined in Chapter Two: "Records that continue to be used with sufficient frequency to justify keeping them in the office of creation; active records" (Peace-Moses 2005g). As a result they fail to

meet one of the fundamental criteria of *archives*. They are not archives, but rather something different.

I stumbled over this recognition early in my career as I interacted increasingly with public sector folklorists and their collections. As I began to work in earnest with the collection of the Vermont Folklife Center, and as I began to be hired as a consultant by public folklorists to work with their folklore archives, I quickly realized there was a large divide between these collections and what, through my archival training, I had learned to call an archives. As a result archival methods of arrangement and description that were developed specifically to manage noncurrent records were not well suited to records for which the context of creation and use are still unfolding. In 2002 I first met Steve Green, ethnomusicologist and professional archivist employed by the Western Folklife Center. An early topic of conversation between us involved what we both experienced first hand about the differences between the folklore archives of active public sector collections and the bodies of materials we both had been trained to view as archives.⁵³

Of course while Green and I arrived at our conclusions independently, we were certainly not the first people to make note of this problem. This distinction has been mapped out several times in the past in the series of publications related to folklore archives produced by the New York Folklore Society. In his in-depth report, *Folklore Archives and the Documentary Heritage of New York*

⁵³ Green has detailed some of his thoughts on this topic in Green 2008.

archivist and historian Fred Steilow notes, “Collections from public sector folklorists were often in effect not archives—but working files from exhibits and performances. They held a mix of folklore documentation with institutional records and often confidential materials” (Steilow 1991:17). In the follow up publication to Steilow’s report, *Working with Folk Materials in New York State: A Manual for Folklorists and Archivists* (Suter 1994), the unidentified author of Chapter 4, “When Folklorists and Archivists Meet,” outlines this distinction as follows:

But by “archives,” a folklorist may mean a body of research material of an individual scholar or an organization that is actively being used, added to, rearranged and changed as a part of the ongoing work of that person or organization. This is essentially an *in-process* collection.

The holder of an in-process collection may have a lot to learn from an archivist or another information management professional about organizing and managing the materials more efficiently for her or his own use ... But the archivist as archivist becomes interested in them once they are no longer current. It is at that point, or in anticipation of that point, that the archival processes of appraisal, arrangement, and description become relevant. (Suter 1994:4.1-4.2. Emphasis in original.)

Finally, in their introduction to *Folklore in Archives: A Guide to Describing Folklore and Folklife Materials* under the heading, “Who This Manual Is For” authors James Corsaro and Karen Taussig-Lux state, “Secondarily, the manual is written for folklorists and other cultural specialists...to raise their awareness of *the archival issues involved when donating their collections to a repository.*”

[emphasis mine] (Corsaro and Taussig-Lux 1998:1.6)⁵⁴

⁵⁴ I do not believe that I am exaggerating when I say I have seen either or both Suter 1994 and Corsaro and Taussig-Lux 1994 on the bookshelves of almost

The collections that public sector folklorists create and maintain as active parts of their daily work are not archives in the sense that an archivist would use the term—although, as Cosaro and Taussig-Lux imply above, once they cease being current, they can indeed smoothly enter the archival frame. As noted in Chapter Three, we call these collections *archives* out of habit, out of tradition and in the vernacular sense of the word. Archivists would most likely speak of a public folklore archive as a collection of *current records*, and while I find the archival terminological distinction between current and noncurrent records critical to informing decisions related to archival activity, because of its popular obscurity this nomenclature is not well suited to the public folklore context. From folklorists' perspectives these materials are better framed using other terms.

There are several candidates for a better term to describe these collections. Ellen McHale, in a personal communication, framed the difference between archives and active public folklore archives through the distinction between an archives and a “collection” (McHale 2010). The author of the quote above from Suter 1994 uses the term “in process collections.” Steve Green characterizes active public folklore archives as *working collections*. Green has never formalized the definition, nor published on the topic, but of the alternate terms to *current records*, I favor his *working collections* because I feel it embodies the spirit of the relationship between folklorists and their research

every public sector folklorist's, office I have visited. I suspect, as was the case with me before beginning the writing of this dissertation in earnest, that they served more as unread talismans to archiving rather than frequently accessed tools for managing archival collections in active public folklore contexts.

collections better than the term employed in Suter 1994—in-process collections—and with greater precision than McHale’s *collections*. Additionally Green’s *working collections* has attained some currency in the field, particularly among some western states folklorists where he is most active. For these reasons I employ Green’s terminology for the remainder of this chapter.

In working collections the context of creation and use is continually unfolding. Because of these circumstances, many of the methods developed by professional archivists to manage and describe static archival collections are often a poor fit for working collections. Within public sector folklore the encroachment of archival theory on folklore archiving practice is best understood under a larger rubric of professionalization. Despite the practical and conceptual misfit of aspects of archival methods to working collections, the introduction of archival practices is often emphasized as public folklore organizations in possession of working collections seek funding to support and professionalize them. On one side, folklorists, in an effort to *professionalize* their collections, reach out to professional archivists for advice. On another side, an increasing number of folklorists have *professionalized* their archival training through the receipt of MLS degrees focused on archives and special collections, bringing with them these perspectives to the organizations and institutions that employ them.

Michael Taft, Head of the Archive of the American Folklife Center (AFC), reflected on the growth of professional archival practice at the AFC by first reflecting on how he viewed folklore archives while a student at Memorial

University in Newfoundland in the 1970s, before he attended library school himself:

It was all hit or miss, it was all—you know, none of us were plugged into the Society of American Archivists or the Canadian equivalent organization. You know, we were folklorists, first and foremost, and what we did in archiving was done on the side and done through trial and error. You know, I had no background in any literature, a scholarship on archiving or library science, until I went to library school. You know, the most I knew about it was something like—what's the *Folklore or Folk Song Archivist*, the journal that came out from Indiana, things like that. As you scan their articles, again, written by folklorists on what archiving should be about and none of them with real training in archiving. (Taft 2005).

In contrast to this amateur state of affairs in the past, Taft also reflected on the current role of the American Folklife Center in providing direct support to public folklorists wrestling with folklore archives, and how the increasingly professionalized perspective on archival methods at AFC radiates out to the field at large:

You know, we, in our Center here, we can't really get away with being idiosyncratic because too many other institutions, archives out there, are asking us what the procedures are and because of the Library of Congress we have this special responsibility, whether we like it or not. People see us as being leading edge. We're not really, not necessarily, but we have to try to at least adhere to certain standard procedures that we can act as a model for. (Taft 2005).

While visiting folklore archives for dissertation research or as a professional consultant I frequently received what can best be framed as embarrassed apologies for collections that their creators felt did not meet some

kind of presumed archival muster.⁵⁵ Randy Williams, curator of the Fife Folklore Archive at Utah State University for the past sixteen years, a trained folklorist with extensive supplemental archival training, expressed her anxiety in this way:

And for many years, believe me, I had this dread and fear that somewhere there was going to be somebody swooping down and, 'Oh, my gosh! You've done that? Good grief, we don't do that anymore. We did that twenty years ago.' In fact, there might be things here that people could do much better, but they, you know, my resources and my training allow me to do the best that I can and the best I can is interacting with people like yourself or Cathy Kerst or Michael [Taft]. (Williams 2004).

From encounters such as this I discovered that the methods of professional archivists, and in particular those used at the Archive of the American Folklife Center, are often seen as an aspirational ideal by folklorists who maintain working collections.

Another push in the direction of professional archival methods comes from funding agencies such as the IMLS, NEH, NHPRC and others who will only support archival projects if professional archivists—and professional archival methods—are involved. With folklorists both strapped for funds generally and feeling that their archival collections are sub-standard, grant applications to

⁵⁵ The discourses surrounding ideas of professionalism and authority that have emerged through my interactions with public sector and academic folklorists in relation to their folklore archives merit an article of their own. One of my hopes is that this dissertation can set folklorists' minds at ease by demonstrating that the methods of professional archivists, while useful, are a distinct kind of practice rather than the last word in managing all research collections to which we affix the word *archives*, and that folklore archives emerge from a distinct and different tradition and carry with them their own needs and methods.

support archival projects are increasingly common. The grant narratives I have read and the projects I have participated in as a consultant generally boil down to reorganizing indigenous archival systems to suit the approaches of professional archivists, and creating descriptive documents for collections—*finding aids*—along standard archival lines.

Despite my concerns about the applicability of archival methods to working collections, folklorists' working collections have real needs if they are to persist in time, if their contents are going to be useful for contemporary research and if they are to be made accessible to organizational staff and potential outside researchers. As noted in the quote presented above from Suter 1994, professional archivists do have much to offer folklorists in charge of working collections. Many folklorists have learned to balance those aspects of archival theory that work to address their specialized needs against those aspects that do not. Furthermore, professional archivists who are also trained as folklorists and ethnomusicologists, people like Michael Taft and Catherine Kerst of AFC, Steve Green of the Western Folklife Center and myself, are strong advocates for the implementation of hybrid systems that draw on both archival methods born outside folkloristics, and indigenous approaches born within. In this way key aspects of archival theory have entered working collections, namely the conceptual frame of archival context—especially as way to maintain information about the contextual aspects of folklore; preservation methods and techniques employed by archivists; standard metadata systems. What are often, although not always, ignored are the particulars of strict archival arrangement and

description—fundamentals tools for how archivists maintain intellectual context in their collections of *non-current records*, but poor tools for use of managing the current records of public folklore organizations.

Understanding Working Collections

Public sector folklorists require consistent and easy access to their research materials so they can continue to perform their jobs. In Chapter Three I outlined some of the theoretical underpinnings of public folklore work. In practice, public folklorists' professional work hinges on acts of cultural documentation that are undertaken with the goal of creating a range of *representations*⁵⁶ including print and multimedia publications, exhibits, performances and festivals. In many respects public folklore work is built around the development of long term relationships with traditional performers. These relationships, through the research materials preserved in a working collection, can transcend even death. The public folklorists I interviewed for my research and interacted with personally and professionally universally describe the continual use and reuse of preserved research materials.

A series of interviews I conducted with staff of the Folk and Traditional Arts program of the Utah Division of Arts and Museums⁵⁷ (Edison 2004; Miller

⁵⁶ I borrow this term from Baron 1999.

⁵⁷ At the time of these interviews the Utah Folk and Traditional Arts program was a part of the Utah Arts Council. At this point in time it is a program of the Utah

2004; Shoemaker 2004) provide typical descriptions of the relationships between public sector folklorists and their working collections. Here Carol Edison, Program Manager for the Folk and Traditional Arts Program, shares her thoughts on the relationship between the working collection and the organization:

AK Okay. Now, how does the archive here fit into the operation of the organization to you?

CE It's integral to what we do. We couldn't do our jobs without the archive and we couldn't do our jobs without the archive being on this site.

AK Okay.

CE Our major programs are we run two grants programs, we have a museum that's open regular hours, six months of the year, by appointment the rest of the year. We do a three-day folk life festival, we do a one-day festival at the fair, and an eight-week concert series, so that's the basic stuff we do every year. We couldn't do any of those things if we didn't have the archive right here. You buy a new piece of art, you have to have a label to hang on the wall with the art. I go to the archive to get an image of the artist, to listen to a tape recorded interview, so I can't make my label if I didn't have the archive. I want to publicize the opening of the show, I go to the archive to get images to send to the press. If, by some lucky chance, we have money to do a publication that goes along with that opening, same thing. Pick any of our programs, we use—it's a working archive, we're in and out of it all the time and it's not just for our own needs or for advertising what we do, but it's also to bolster our agency in terms of their reporting needs to the department, to the rest of state government, to the federal government, to NASAA [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies], to NEA [National Endowment for the Arts], to the arts organizations nationally that track what's happening. So our materials are oftentimes the only thing that can be found to share with the national agencies to show what's going on in Utah because we're the only program of the Utah Arts Council that regularly documents our work. (Edison 2004).

Division of Arts and Museums. I identify the program through its current administrative structure so that it can be more easily located by readers.

Edison provides an eloquent overview of the ways public folklorists make daily use of their collections for everything from programming to grant writing to internal and external promotion of their work. Fellow staff member Craig Miller makes similar observations:

AK: So how do you view—or, maybe I'll put it this way, where does the archive fit into the operation of the organization?

CM: In my opinion, it's absolutely critical because I came on and I was always doing constant projects, digging materials out of the archives, and I absolutely love it, and I think that's probably why we've got so much already integrated into the [database] system. (Miller 2004).

In addition to his statements about the centrality of the archive to their daily work, Miller makes an additional comment that ties the description of the collection—the way so much is “already integrated into the system”—to this active use. It is described because it has been used. Description of the contents has not been undertaken for the sake of facilitating access to the materials by outside researchers once the collection has entered a formal archives, but so that staff have been able, and can continue, to make use of it as a body of current records.

Consistent, easy access to collections and continual reuse of their contents is vital for public sector folklorists. In many offices a byproduct of this constant repurposing is that the organizational structure of these collections is not fixed. As current records their organization is based on need, and as needs change, so can the structural relationships between records. For instance, the fixed nature of the relationships between records is one very important factor that

allows archival organizational and descriptive systems to function. Steve Green notes how in the context of the Western Folklife Center and other public folklore organizations he has worked with, materials are removed, shifted and reorganized in response to immediate need (Green 2010). While actions like this are not taken at all sites—at the Folk and Traditional Arts program in Utah the organizational systems of the materials are fixed, for example—they do occur, and under such circumstances archival systems of organization and description cannot function in the way they were intended.

Findings from a disciplinary-wide archival survey project conducted for member organizations of PACT (Preserving America's Cultural Traditions), a loose affiliation of public folklore projects primarily based at private non-profit organizations, further highlights the relationship between public folklorists, their working collections, and the misalignment of archival methods to the needs of active public folklore organizations.⁵⁸ The PACT Archival Survey project is in itself an excellent example of the field-wide institutionalization of the assumption of the value of archival methods in folklore archives. The PACT Archival Survey

⁵⁸ The official title of the project I refer to here was *Preserving America's Cultural Traditions: An Archival Initiative for Non Profit Folklife Centers Across the U.S.* For the sake of brevity I refer to this effort as the *PACT Archival Survey Project*. The project was administered by the Fund for Folk Culture with financial support coming from the GRAMMY Foundation. I served as primary fieldworker on the project and Steve Green conducted one site visit at the Alabama Folklife Association. The project officially began April 1, 2007 and ran through May 31, 2008. Parts of this section are drawn from "Summary Report for 04/09/2008 PACT Meeting, Washington, DC" my unpublished report on the project (Kolovos 2008i). The content of the report is used here with permission of the Board of Directors of the Fund for Folk Culture.

project was conceptualized both as an effort to survey collections to establish their current status and needs, and to lay the groundwork for the adoption of archival methods in folklore archives as a way to address these needs (Peterson 2008). While working on this project—and on other occasions as a paid consultant—I became aware of 1) an acute desire on the part of public sector folklorists to receive guidance in “best practices,” to manage their collections and 2) assumptions on the part of public folklorists that the practices of professional archivists were a template for the correct way to manage their collections.

Of the folklore archives at the nine sites surveyed for the project, five—the Alliance for California Traditional Arts, City Lore, the Connecticut Heritage Arts Program, the Institute for Cultural Partnerships, and the Philadelphia Folklore Project—are all essentially working collections. Three—the Alabama Folklife Association, the Michigan State University Museum, and the Center for Traditional Music and Dance—are a mix of materials that include both working collections and noncurrent materials that an archivist would see as *archives*. Only one repository visited for the project, the University of Wisconsin,⁵⁹ held

⁵⁹ For additional information on the extensive archival work undertaken by Janet Gilmore and Nicole Saylor in the upper Midwest see Saylor 2009 and the collection of online finding aids created under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures (CSUMC):

<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/w/wiarchives/csumc.html>. The CSUMC archival projects are extremely interesting and unusual in part because of the ways they adapted Encoded Archival Description (EAD), the standard for digitally encoding archival finding aids, to suit the particular needs of geographically separated collections that fall under the same project-based *fonds*. Their work is an excellent example of archival hybridity in folklore archives—here the adaptation and modification of an archival standard to suit the specialized needs of folklore archives.

collections where the majority of them would be considered truly archival. Generally speaking, systems of arrangement at PACT member organizations have tended to develop organically over time and have been subject to three primary forces: internal use and need; organizational systems developed in folklore-disciplinary collections; and external “best practice” considerations rooted in the theory and approaches of trained archivists. The push and pull of these considerations, as well as the absence of trained staff members, has usually resulted in the blossoming of indigenous approaches over the assertion of standard practices. These indigenous approaches range from the use of internally-generated lists of subject terms for indexing collection content (e.g. Miller 2004 and Kolovos 2008a), to site-specific, idiosyncratic organizational systems (e.g. Kolovos 2008g, described more fully below), to the development of complex database systems for collection description (e.g. Kolovos 2008e and 2008g).

By and large such homegrown systems have proved effective for these organizations from the perspective of space used, as well as facilitating access to the materials needed most often for daily work tasks. Furthermore, all these indigenous systems—quirky though they might at times be—are part of the history of each organization, and from them we can learn a great deal about the history of our field and the way the internal knowledge of folklorists’ practice has been passed between us—our own oral tradition, as it were. For example, the internally developed controlled vocabularies employed by the Utah Folk and Traditional Arts Program and the Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA)

are the collective cognitive products of staff at each organization, and as such they serve as evidence of the thought and work processes at each site. In addition they are also highly localized—reflecting the nature of the traditional art forms practiced in California and Utah that each organization documented through their fieldwork. From another perspective, the database developed by the Center for Traditional Music and Dance (CTMD) in New York City draws together what in other organizations would be viewed as three distinct bodies of information—the content of the archive, the list of artists involved with the organization, and the list of dues paying members of CTMD and unites them in a single, searchable system. The mingling of archival and administrative functions in an organizational database is extremely unusual, and also intriguing in that it places archival functions on equal par with other organizational activity (Kolovos 2008b).

Perhaps most significantly the survey demonstrates that many public folklore collections—in particular those that are part of organizations with active fieldwork and programming missions—are generally not “archives” in the technical definition of the term as framed by archival theorists, but rather are bodies of material retained in part because they are actively needed for daily work by the organization that created and maintains them. Since these materials are still in use, since organizations are still growing and changing, the application of fly-in-amber methods developed by archivists to preserve the intellectual context that surrounds the creation of records is both preemptive and a

hindrance to staff whose priorities require materials to be accessible in a way that is primarily meaningful to job functions.

Because of the stark conceptual distinction between current and noncurrent records in archival theory, the application archival methods to folklore archives is fraught with difficulty. The results of efforts to apply archival methods are often complex compromises in relation to arrangement schemes and descriptive systems. These compromises lie at the heart of my assertion that folklore archives in the present represent a hybrid between the approaches of professional archivists and the needs of folklorists and the disciplinary legacy of folklore archives.

In public folklore archives relationships between records are in flux, and as a result the application of archival concepts of arrangement and description is extremely problematic. As noted in Chapter Two, archival notions of arrangement and description were developed to maintain information about the original context of creation and use of noncurrent records. In the ideal form, archival arrangement of a body of records will be identical to the organizational system in place while the records were in daily use. The maintenance of archival context is vital so that records can be interpreted in light of the roles they served when they were considered current. These systems were not developed to address organizational needs of current records, but rather to reflect and fix the organizational system of a body of records in place after the fact. Attempting to apply archival concepts of arrangement and description to working collections, where items are being removed, recontextualized and reorganized in light of

developing organizational or individual need, is counter productive to the use of the materials and their role within the creating organization. The application of a rigid structure of archival arrangement on a working collection, rather than serving as a representation of the way an organization functioned, becomes an imposed system that shapes aspects of the way an institution will function.

To demonstrate the impact on workflow at a public folklore organization of the structural reorganization of a collection—an attempt to recreate a working collection using arrangement principles from archival theory—I present an example from my own work experience at the Vermont Folklife Center (VFC).

Case study: The Vermont Folklife Center

An example of the conflict inherent in applying archival methods to a working collection can be found in the archival reorganization project undertaken at the VFC. I was hired in 2001/2002 in large part to professionalize the collection by applying formal archival methods (Beck 2010). Part of this program required a top to bottom reconsideration of how VFC maintained and organized its collection. Particularly this meant developing a way to apply archival notions of *context* to a collection that had been organized primarily to facilitate access to intellectual *content* by staff members.

Before my arrival, VFC maintained two parallel systems for organizing the print transcripts of audio-recorded interviews. One set of transcripts was treated as the preservation set and was printed on acid-free, buffered paper and stored

in accession number⁶⁰ order in a group of filing cabinets. A second set was printed on standard acidic office paper and stored alphabetically by name of the interviewee in a separate set of filing cabinets. This organizational approach certainly reflected the context of creation and use of the materials in the VFC archive. It was shaped by the dual demands of record keeping and access, and over all the system worked quite well for staff members and researchers who came to use the collection.

Following my archival training and the precedent laid out by two of my predecessors, Michael Taft and Christina Barr, I began to reorganize materials into distinct collections based around individual research projects. The paradox implicit in this exercise was not lost on me. As I note in Chapter Two, archival theory is rife with organic and natural metaphors that relate to the way in which archives come into being. VFC had in place a system for ordering its folklore archive that an archivist would no doubt view as organic—it grew as the organization grew, and changed subtly as needs changed. I imposed a system upon the collection that was, in its methods and structure more, reflective of strict archival principles than the original. However, from the same archival perspective, my system was imposed atop a number of already extant systems, such as alphabetic ordering of transcripts according to interviewee name for example, that had developed in response to institutional need and function. In

⁶⁰ In archives and museums accession numbers are generally assigned to mark the formal inclusion of items in a repository. They are often sequential numbers that make reference to the year or date materials were officially registered and recorded as part of a repository's holdings.

my efforts to establish a folklore archive organized along archival principles of context I altered the original organizational context in which these materials had existed for 20 years. By imposing an order that was more archival in flavor I violated the primary tenant of archival organization—I disrupted the ordering of the *fonds* as it emerged over time through daily use and need.⁶¹

Within most folklore archives the *fonds* concept can be interpreted in a number of ways. At this point in time, practice promotes the idea of ordering the *fonds* in accordance with the motivations for why documentation was undertaken. These motivations are normally identified with a research project or institutional program. Therefore, in contemporary folklore archives that are rearranging materials to fit presumed archival norms, the top level of organization for each *collection* is most often a discrete research project or formal program.⁶²

⁶¹ Please note that I recognize that all systems of ordering are constructed by human beings and therefore byproducts of culturally-situated action rather than some kind of extra-human physical or biological process. I rely on metaphors of “naturalness” to demonstrate how choices made by me and others when working with folklore archives would be viewed in light of archival theory. The use of organic and natural metaphors by archivists is a topic worthy of exploration on its own.

⁶² The reasoning behind using a research project as the primary unit of the *fonds* in folklore archives is the belief that the ideas that informed a research project provide intellectual context for the documentation conducted under its auspices. Furthermore, these contextualizing practices are useful for preserving examples of expressive culture documented in their cultural, social and situational contexts. In the case of collections like VFC where the same interviewees were visited on many different occasions, the rationales for each interview were rooted in the project that motivated the interview, and result in interviews that touch on different, albeit frequently overlapping, aspects of knowledge and life experience. Linked records that include photographs, audio recordings and fieldnotes allow archival researchers to gain an understanding of both broad cultural and

The new system of archival-style organization has created a range of problems for VFC staff members who need to access materials from the archives. Following the old system if someone wanted to access interviews from a particular individual, for example Nellie Staves,⁶³ she would visit the filing cabinet containing the alphabetical files and remove the Staves transcripts, peruse them and return them when finished. Following the new system the interviews with Nellie Staves would be distributed across three discrete collections⁶⁴ stored in separate archival boxes in different areas of the archival storage vault. To access the interviews following reorganization that same staff member would now need to ask the archivist what collections the interviews were a part of and have the archivist retrieve them. The system implemented to establish archival notions of context complicates the completion of daily work tasks because systems of archival organization were not developed to support daily work activities.

immediate, situational contexts that allow for clearer interpretation of the archival materials in light of these issues.

⁶³ Nellie Garnet Dunbar Badger Staves (1917-2009) was one of Jane Beck's key informants on life in north woods lumber camps during the early-mid 20th century. She was born in West Danville, VT and worked as a logging camp cook for much of her adulthood. She was an avid hunter, fisherman and trapper and was actively involved in conservation causes in the Adirondack region of New York state. VFC has used materials from fieldwork interactions with Staves in print publications, exhibits, radio programs, and public presentations.

⁶⁴ The three collections that include interviews with Nellie Staves are the *New England Storytelling Project Collection*, the *Visitn' Collection* and the *Radio Survey Interviews Collection*.

The VFC example is fairly typical of efforts to professionalize folklore archives through the application of archival methods. It also illustrates how the imposition of archivally-based systems of arrangement on folklore collections often results in the fundamental alteration of the established organizational systems, systems that are reflective of institutional history and practice. In addition to restructuring the nature of institutional identity as reflected in archival structure, archival arrangement schemes are extremely problematic in environments where the materials in the folklore archive are current records necessary for daily work functions.

Working Collections as Hybrid Archival Forms

The combination of aspects of the methods and theories of professional archivists with methods developed by folklorists is an increasingly common trend in working collections. The hybrid archival forms that result from these activities represent a distinct approach to the preservation of folklore research materials and a distinct type of folkloric archival practice. The primary elements of this approach, the emphasis of certain professional archival practices over others and the fusion of these methods with local and distinctly folkloric activities, have become something that I advocate for in my professional consulting work. The adoption of specific practices from archivists can greatly assist with the conceptual organization of materials in working collections; aid in the development of standardizing methods useful across collections that still respect

the diversity between collections and the diverse working methods of different public folklore organizations; assist in the long term preservation of materials and their content; and ultimately set a stage for the eventual incorporation of these materials into archives proper once they are no longer needed for daily work.

In this section I will discuss three ways in which folklorists have adopted and adapted approaches from the field of archives to their working collections. First I will discuss how archival notions of context are conceptually adapted to working collections without the corollary adoption of archival systems of arrangement and description. I will then discuss how folklorists, with the direct involvement of the staff of the AFC, have utilized modified versions of standard metadata systems to describe their collections. Finally I will discuss how archival methods of preservation and conservation of physical materials and their intellectual content have found ready acceptance among folklorists.

Aspects of Intellectual Context in Working Collections

In his memo cited in the previous chapter, largely an exegesis on the application of archival principles to collections of noncurrent ethnographic records of expressive culture research, Gerald Parsons (Parsons 1995) ties the multi-format nature of the materials to the conceptual principles that guide folklorists' work. Parsons indicates that the folklore archives need to be conceived of in a manner that accommodates the way in which folklorists work, because of the way the work generates records that allow for the contextual

study of folklore. To Parsons, the folklore archive is a site for the preservation of human cultural expression in context. Parsons argues that folklorists' work methods are distinct, and that these distinct working methods generate records that are both physically and conceptually different from the kinds of business records that are normally housed in archives.

The fieldworker takes a photograph of a musical instrument, makes a sound recording of it being played, and jots down notes on the recollections of a virtuoso player. He does so because he has determined that photographs, sound recordings, and written text must be yoked together to fully represent the performance. Even if there is no intent to publish the documentation, there is, in every ethnographic collection, a conscious weaving together of different representational media to achieve a rounded statement. There is, in short, something that looks like authorship even though there may be no publication. (Parsons 1995).

Parsons notes that these multi-format materials are conceptually linked to one another ("yoked together") in ways that have an important bearing on the application of notions of archival context. All the pieces of each documentary act—audio, still image, text, video—work together to form a record of the act of documentation and of the intellectual content of the human actions documented. The contextual interrelationships between the documentary units that comprise most contemporary working collections reflect and express the performative and interactional contexts of the events they represent.

As identified in the case study on VFC presented above, the primary contextual unit employed within folklore archives—working collections or otherwise—is most often the research project or program for which documentary research was conducted. In addition to answering framing contextual questions

that allow the materials to be interpreted in light of the rationale for conducting the research, this approach to contextualizing research materials also supports the contextual relationships between individual media elements—audio recordings, video recordings, still photographs and field workers’ notes—that provide insight into the social and cultural context of the expressive form documented. While archival approaches for formalizing these relationships through arrangement and description are problematic when applied to working collections, the archival concept of context, as interpreted and applied by folklorists, is extremely valuable to folklorists who reframe their perspectives on their working collections in light of them.

When I articulated the archival idea of context to Debora Kodish of the Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP) her response was typical of many of the public sector folklorists I have engaged with on the topic, “Right. So that’s so folkloric!”(Kodish 2007). The archival approach to contextualizing records resonates well with folklorists, and the *conceptual* organization of working collections to suit ideas of archival context—shaped by the notion of a research project/program being consonant with an archival collection—is an increasingly common, and effective, means for folklorists with working collections to approach their materials. At many of the sites I have visited and consulted for, this kind of approach is in place—conceptualize the working collection as a series of discreet units based in the practical motivations for conducting the work, leave original organizational systems more or less intact, and use dynamic databases for the description of collections and to track the location of materials. In a follow up

telephone interview, Kodish asserted that since creating a conceptual organizational schema for their archive around discrete collections formed from research projects and building a database to support this conceptual organization, the PFP collection is more useful to her now than it had been beforehand (Kodish 2010).

It is important to note that, as laid out in Chapter One, there are many overlapping motivations for preserving folklore archives. In contemporary public folklore organizations, re-use is one crucial motivation for preservation. However, internal re-use is far from the only thing that inspires preservation of public folklore materials. Public folklorists universally see a value in these materials that transcends their utility to the institution that generated them. They see them as part of the wider cultural heritage of the United States, and of the particular cultural heritage of the communities and individuals documented. Part of the hybrid nature of these collections emerges from their hybrid needs. Access is vital, but maintaining the material in a manner that preserves the cultural, social and situational contexts through which it emerged is vital as well.

An element of the compromise between indigenous systems and archival methods, and between the needs of access versus the need to preserve materials within a framework of intellectual context is found in the ways folklorists employ certain archival concepts and not others. As I have stated previously, the methods that archivists bring to bear on their collections are fundamentally tools for maintaining information about the original context of creation and use of records. When applied to folklore materials archival methods of contextualization

can achieve two contextual ends. They satisfy the basic archival desire for documentation of work processes, and they can be used to fix together the various elements that form folkloristic documentation—audio recording, fieldnotes, still images—in a way that cements the context of performance so that the expressive cultural forms documented can be interpreted in relation to the cultural, social and situational contexts of *their* creation and use.

The creation of conceptual systems for identifying the intellectual context of the creation of fieldwork materials is an example of an effective, hybrid practice. It combines the archival notion of context with the conceptual aspects of how and why folklorists conduct their actual work, providing a contextual framework for fieldwork materials that ties them back to the project and programs through which they were created while allowing local systems of organization to persist. These conceptual units effectively link (“yoke” in Parsons’ terminology) various constituent elements while maintaining indigenous systems of organization that are useful to folklorists who need ready access to materials, and are in themselves representative of the administrative and institutional contexts in which these materials were originally created.⁶⁵

Metadata: Adapting Dublin Core to Working Collections

⁶⁵ The maintenance of this kind of context through archival systems of arrangement and description, the organizational systems in place among groups of records, is key to the ways archivists view these materials as evidential of *how* an organization or individual functioned in addition to what they did.

This section addresses the ways in which folklorists have adopted and modified for use in folklore archives particular descriptive conventions and systems developed by other information professionals. Because some of the concepts surrounding these descriptive approaches can seem esoteric to the uninitiated, I begin this section by providing an overview of their fundamentals.

This sub-section is divided into three parts. The first addresses the general concept of *metadata* and the specific metadata schema, Dublin Core (DC). The second discusses the use of databases by folklorists and the incorporation of standard metadata schema, in particular a modified use of DC to these databases. The third looks at an effort by folklorists and ethnomusicologists to develop a new, disciplinary-specific controlled vocabulary of subject terms, the Ethnographic Thesaurus.

Metadata

Simply stated, *metadata* is information about information. In the world of libraries and archives metadata is often a cognate for the kinds of information generated through the process of cataloging or indexing books and archival collections. The term metadata had its origin in computer data management fields and first entered the lexicon of librarians and archivists in the mid to late 1990s (Gilliland 2008). While the related traditional terms of cataloging, indexing and archival description are still current among professional archivists, the word metadata is the one most often employed when describing systems for managing

digital archival materials and the information about them. It should be noted that the use of the word metadata by archivists is not limited to the discussion of digital materials and their description, but that it is most often applied in this context. The Getty maintains an excellent print and online resource, *Introduction to Metadata* (Baca 2008), which clearly articulates the broad scope of the term and the specific application of the concept in libraries, archives and museums.

In the context of libraries and archives, *metadata schemas* are systems developed for the management of library and archival cataloging and descriptive information. Dublin Core (DC), Encoded Archival Description (EAD), and the Anglo American Cataloging Rules (AACR2) are all examples of metadata schemas employed by libraries and archives for structuring the nature of the information that librarians and archivists capture about books and archives when they are describing them for the purposes of administration, access, and preservation.

Metadata *elements* are individual categories of metadata. Metadata schemas are composed of individual elements that address different aspects of the kinds of resources a particular schema is designed to address. For example, the DC metadata schema is composed of 15 elements. Two of these elements are *Creator* and *Coverage*. The DC element, *Creator* is defined as specifying “an entity primarily responsible for making the content of the resource. Examples of a Creator include a person, an organization, or a service. Typically the name of the Creator should be used to indicate the entity” (Dublin Core Metadata Initiative 2010). In a common example, if DC were being used to describe a published

book, the author of the book would be treated as the *Creator*. The DC element *Coverage* is used to define “the extent or scope of the content of the resource. Coverage will typically include spatial location (a place name or geographic coordinates), temporal period (a period label, date, or date range) or jurisdiction (such as a named administrative entity)” for a given resource (Dublin Core Metadata Initiative 2010). Once more using the example of a published book, a study of the folklore of a particular region—Dorson’s *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers* (Dorson 1952) for example—would use some iteration of “Michigan” in the *Coverage* element.

Largely through the efforts of Michael Taft and others from the AFC staff, folklorists managing working collections have begun to adopt Dublin Core as a tool for structuring their collections databases. Dublin Core provides them with a set of standardized concepts for identifying the types of information archivists feel it is useful to gather about resources so that they can be more easily understood, accessed, and cared for over time. The adoption of Dublin Core by folklorists in this way is an example of fusing tools and methods employed by archivists to the methods historically employed by folklorists in managing research materials.

Dublin Core (DC) is a relatively simple metadata schema developed for general applications but still useful in the archival context. DC is made up of 15 basic elements: Title, Subject, Description, Type, Source, Relation, Coverage, Creator, Publisher, Contributor, Rights, Date, Format, Identifier, and Language (Dublin Core Metadata Initiative 2010). One source of this schema’s strength, its simplicity, is also the source of its primary criticism. However, what DC provides

is a basic (i.e. “core”) set of values useful for describing information resources. It is minimal enough that applying it is not overly complex or burdensome, and structured enough that data described using this schema can be readily exported from databases and shared.

I first encountered the use of DC as a descriptive metadata schema in folklore archives when I worked with Debora Kodish of the Philadelphia Folklore Project as an archival consultant in 2007. At that time Kodish was actively in contact with Michael Taft of the AFC for assistance in developing a standards-based descriptive system for the PFP archive based around Dublin Core. I have since worked with Steve Zeitlin and staff members at City Lore in New York City as they too have developed a DC-based metadata schema. As a part of crafting a grant narrative for the Ethnographic Archives Initiative (EAI) project⁶⁶ I worked with a group of archivists and catalogers including Catherine Kerst and Margaret Kruesi of AFC and Nathan Georgitis of the University of Oregon to develop descriptive standards for folklore archives that incorporate aspects of Dublin Core as well as EAD,⁶⁷ using DACS⁶⁸ as the content standard. The system

⁶⁶ The EAI proposal was submitted to NEH in 2008. The proposal was not funded. In 2010 the project was redeveloped as the National Folklife Archiving Initiative (NFAI) and resubmitted to NEH. I have been party to both proposals.

⁶⁷ Encoded Archival Description (EAD) is a standard way to structure electronic versions of archival finding aids utilizing XML (eXtensible Markup Language) to define the overall architecture of the finding aid document and identify its component parts. As with all text mark up languages, EAD is built around “tags” (in EAD referred to as “elements”), paired sets of identifiers for framing aspects of finding aid structure, concepts and content. Tags are formed from a selected list of terms, and represented by presenting the term between left and right angle brackets, e.g. <tag>. As noted above, tags come in pairs, an opening tag, <tag>

developed for the EAI project was built upon the Dublin Core-based schema developed for the Civil Rights History Project of the American Folklore Society and American Folklife Center, and was further refined for a grant narrative to NEH for support of the National Folklife Archiving Initiative (NFAI), a national effort to identify and create shared catalog records for collections of folklore materials in the United States. As an example of the application of these standard metadata systems to folklore archives I have included the NFAI Metadata Document as Appendix A.

In folklore archival applications DC elements are often used to shape databases and the data fields in databases. The use of DC elements for the names of data fields and/or the creation of concordances between folklore archive databases and DC elements supports several ends. Most importantly,

and a closing tag, `</tag>`, with the concept placed between the opening and closing tags. An example of a content-related EAD element for noting a personal name is the `<persname>` tag. `<persname>` would be employed anywhere within a document where one wanted to note that a string of characters is a personal name. An example would be `<persname>Stith Thompson</persname>`.

⁶⁸ *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS) is the Society of American Archivists-developed set of rules for cataloging archival collections. Pearce-Moses 2008m defines *content standard* as "A set of formal rules that specify the content, order, and syntax of information to promote consistency." A more detailed definition of *content standard* is provided by the Moving Image Collections Portal's *Glossary of Cataloging & General Terms*: "A detailed set of rules for preparing bibliographic records to describe and represent items added to a library or archival collection. A content standard is established to maintain consistency within the catalog and between the catalogs or libraries or archives using the same standard. The word 'content' refers to the [sic] content of the bibliographic or descriptive record, not the content of the resource being described, such as a moving image resource" (Moving Image Collections 2003).

using a structured metadata schema like DC that consists of a series of well-defined elements provides an important guide to a folklore archive for the kinds of basic information about their collections that it is useful to record. Also, DC elements are platform independent. Since DC is a conceptual structure it does not require any particular software—or even a digital environment—to be employed by a repository. DC can be utilized in everything from complex, proprietary database systems to a pencil and pad. Moreover, structured metadata allows for data to be more easily transferred from one metadata system to another. As shown in Appendix A, DC elements can be related to individual elements within other metadata schemas so the data from one system can be *cross walked* to another. For example, the table below illustrates how DACS, EAD, MARC, DC and the planned NFAI data structure each represent the “title” concept:

DACS Element	EAD Tag	MARC Field	Dublin Core Element	NFAI Data Field
2.3 Title	<unittitle>	245\$a	Title	Collection Title —Documentary Event Title

Where DACS uses the term “Title,” EAD uses the tag <unittitle>. The MARC field used for storing title information is field 245\$a, while DC simply uses the element “Title” to store this information. The proposed NFAI data structure both follows these general approaches and creates a specific, ethnographic

usage of the “title” concept for use within the scope of cataloging folklore archives.

The use of a structured metadata schema like DC makes it easier for repositories to share information with one another, and for researchers to access folklore archival collections. If the Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP) employs the DC element *Title* for the data field that is used to describe the name of an archival collection and City Lore (CL) also uses the same element in the same way, information about collections at PFP and CL can be more easily shared between institutions, and a researcher interested in urban folklore who visits both repositories will have an easier time searching materials. Additionally, because the value in DC elements is found in the concepts each element embodies, DC elements can be assembled and organized within a database in any order or manner that is useful to the repository.

This feature is extremely important in folklore archives where, as Wm. Hugh Jansen noted as early as 1958, archival systems tend to be highly localized (Jansen 1958). My research has shown that the tendency for localized approaches continues into the present, and is evidenced in the variations in systems developed to support working methods at particular sites. Systems developed to support work at one site do not necessarily translate usefully to different institutions. For example, the earlier system in place at the VFC archive, noted above, that emerged to facilitate the organization’s orientation toward creating publications of an oral historical nature would not be useful for framing a collection such as the one at the Utah Folk and Traditional Arts

Program that is focused primarily on artistic practice and expressive culture.

VFC's needs were generally organized around individual interviewees, and broad categories of knowledge or experience an interviewee related to the researcher.

In contrast UFTA generally requires access to information about, and examples of, distinct artistic practice. Due to specialized work needs at different programs there is no one size fits all approach to organizing metadata.

Among the public sector folklorists I worked with there is a distinct reluctance to abandon familiar, often expensively developed—and frequently effective—approaches to archival description and organization in favor of a single, fixed approach proffered by a standards-creating body. At the same time, the public sector folklorists I encountered also expressed strong desires to standardize aspects of their practice so they could comply with work being done by professional archivists and librarians. These two points were made repeatedly in discussions held during the PACT GRAMMY Project in 2007-2008, and in relation to the EAI and NFAI grant applications—applications that were centered on developing descriptive best practices. Metadata schemas like DC allow different institutions to track similar kinds of information about their collections. Because DC is not overly structured, individual organizations can use the aspects of it that are useful to them, arrange data fields in any useful way. Because a metadata schema like DC is a widely accepted, descriptive standard, they can feel comfortable that the information they collect corresponds to professional information practice. Due to its flexibility, DC lays the groundwork

for the development of discipline-wide standards for the description of folklore archives such as those used in the EAI and NFAI proposals.

In addition to the use of metadata standards like DC, folklore archives, working collections included, have adapted aspects of DC to suit the intellectual and ethical perspectives of folkloristics. The key way this has been done is through the modification of the use of the “Creator” role element. Library and archival cataloging rules have well-developed and highly standardized guidelines for defining the relationships that go into the creation of intellectual works. In *Anglo American Cataloging Rules* (AACR2) the creator of a work is defined through the “Statement of Responsibility” in the MARC 245 field or the MARC 100 field. In *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS) the creator is defined in “2.6 Name of creators.” In the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) standard these data are defined in the “Origination” tag. Dublin Core employs the more direct designation of “Creator” to define this information. In the general practice of libraries and archives the role of what is most easily articulated as “creator” is assigned to the “individual, group, or organization that is responsible for something's production, accumulation, or formation” (Pearce-Moses, Richard. 2005f).

Following standard guidelines, if an archivist or librarian were cataloging an ethnographic interview the role of creator would be assigned to the interviewer while the interviewee would be assigned the secondary role of “contributor.” In contrast, in folklore archives the emerging best practice, defined by the Archive of the American Folklife Center and the American Folklore Society Archives and

Libraries section is to assign the role of creator to the *interviewee* and the role of contributor to the *interviewer*. Although this distinction seems small at first, it is a reflection of the growing consensus among folklorists that the site of interpretive authority lies first with those who choose to share aspects of their lives with researchers. They are the creators of the resulting documentation, not the folklorist. By formalizing this idea within the descriptive structures of the folklore archive, folklorists trained as archivists have modified extant metadata systems to suit the specialized needs of folklore archives, creating a new, hybrid approach that satisfies a range of needs. At the same time through the act of fixing these relationships within the cataloging system the dynamic of the relationship between folklorist and informant is cemented. Archives and the descriptive systems for accessing them continue to be a reflection of the field and its practice.

The Ethnographic Thesaurus

Another excellent example of the give and take between the methods of professional archivists and the archival practices of folklorists can be found in the creation of the Ethnographic Thesaurus (ET)⁶⁹ as a controlled vocabulary aimed at serving the needs of collections created by folklorists and ethnomusicologists. While there has been a greatly decreased emphasis on the minutiae classifying

⁶⁹ A brief but detailed history of the Ethnographic Thesaurus project is available on the AFS website, <http://et.afsnet.org/about.html#history>.

materials in folklore archives there has been an increased emphasis on—or perhaps more correctly a revival of interest in—creating standard descriptive protocols for indexing the content of folklore collections.⁷⁰ The ET project is an example of this new (or revived) emphasis, and it is emblematic of the way approaches from the mainstream of archival theory and library/information science have, though the influence of the American Folklife Center and the Archives and Libraries Section of the American Folklore Society (Taft 2010b), entered the sphere of folklore archives.

The ET was developed because standard subject vocabularies used by archivists and librarians are not well suited to the description of the content of folklore archives. The Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) and terms from the Getty's Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT), while applicable to folklore content, are not well suited to cataloging this kind of material.

The project is a highly collaborative enterprise overseen by the American Folklore Society (AFS) and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Begun in the late 1980s the project was first funded in pilot form in 2001 by the National Endowment for the Humanities and then in earnest by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in 2003. The earlier versions of the ET were

⁷⁰ Michael Taft has noted that “this is partly an outgrowth of the 'maturing' archives at public sector institutions that never had the time or inclination to deal with the increasing amount of materials that their work generated. The revival was matter of necessity more than one of theoretical interest in the subject of information retrieval--making it a different kind of imperative than, for example, the historic-geographic method or structuralist attempts at information organization” (Taft 2010b).

based on the taxonomy developed for indexing folklore publications for the folklore section of the *Modern Language Association International Bibliography* and the index to the *Journal of American Folklore* (Taft 2010b), but this basic framework had been modified by folklorist and archivist Michael Taft and others over the years. The project itself was born out of two frustrations, namely the great number of internally generated and locally specific indexing schemes in folklore archives, and the broad a lack of a controlled vocabulary that easily accommodated the description of the content of research materials created by folklorists, ethnomusicologists and anthropologists.

Much like the folklore archives created by public sector folklorists, the ET is a hybrid form—very much a product of the library and archive community but aimed at addressing the special descriptive needs of folklore archives in particular. Scanning the category descriptions (<http://et.afsnet.org/outlines.html>) reveals how the structure of the ET balances general descriptive concerns of all ethnographers with the specific needs of those who study expressive culture from primarily folkloristic and ethnomusicological perspectives. General top-level categories for organizing information such as “Migration and Settlement,” “Health,” and “Human Dynamics” live along side other top-level categories that are aimed primarily at the needs of folklore collections such as “Verbal Arts and Literature,” “Music”, “Dance,” “Material Culture,” and “Foodways.” To be clear I am not highlighting this to be critical of the enterprise, but rather to demonstrate that the ET is both a product of the archival and information fields *and* a product

of the work of folklorists. As such it represents the increasing kinship between both of these worlds as they come together in the folklore archive.

Preservation Methods

While the two examples cited above are largely conceptual, the adoption of preservation methods employed by archivists into working collections has had the greatest practical impact on the physical content of these collections. Preservation methods incorporated into practice by folklorists include those aimed at physical materials and those developed to preserve content on machine readable records such as audio recordings.

Folklorists have readily adopted practices and products developed by archivists and conservators to address the long term preservation needs of archival materials. Chemically inert plastic sleeves created for the storage of 35mm slides are ubiquitous in working collections. Acid free, archival-grade boxes for the storage of media such as audio and video recordings, and acid-free archival document storage boxes are common sights as well. The adoption of these materials has gone a long way toward preserving media in folklore collections. Knowledge of archival preservation methods is also widespread among those who care for folklore archives, as evidenced by the fact that they acknowledge the absence of some of these practices in their collections. For example, all the sites I visited during the PACT Archival Survey project were acutely aware of the impact that temperature and humidity, as well as variation in

temperature and humidity, can have on the longevity of archival materials. Most of the sites had no capacity to create a dedicated, climate controlled archival space. The folklorists of PACT were very aware of the limitations of their storage areas to control for these factors, but could do very little to remedy the situation.

In addition to the preservation of physical materials, folklorists have been on the leading edge of emergent preservation approaches, most significantly folklorists and folklore collections have been at the forefront of audio preservation through digitization. The 2001 conference and report, *Folk Heritage Collections in Crisis* (Council of Library and Information Resources 2001) served as an opening salvo in the movement to address concerns related to audio preservation in archival collections. *Folk Heritage Collections in Crisis* argued that largely due to changes in the recording industry, the old approach to preserving audio materials—periodic, scheduled transfer to new tapes—was becoming untenable. The solution recommended by the report rested on high quality digital conversion of analog audio recordings, and the storage of the resulting audio files on managed servers.

From 2002-2004 the Smithsonian Institution and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress jointly conducted *Save Our Sounds*,⁷¹ an audio preservation project aimed at developing standards for the preservation of ethnographic audio recordings. More recently the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University and Archive of World Music Harvard University Libraries

⁷¹ Additional information on *Save Our Sounds* is available at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/sos/>. Last viewed on 2010-07-26.

received funding from the Mellon Foundation for the *Sound Directions: Digital Preservation and Access for Global Audio Heritage* project.⁷² Methods developed through these discussions and projects have, often in scaled down form, found their way into working collections. The compromises made by the curators of working collections are emblematic of the limited resources available to public folklore work in general, and the specialized nature of audio preservation.

Projects like *Save our Sounds* and *Sound Directions* were possible in large part due to the relatively easy access these institutions have to four key things that most public sector folklore organizations lack: trained staff dedicated to audio preservation, quality analog playback and digital conversion equipment, large-scale information technology (IT) support, and ready access to dedicated funds. Folklorists I worked with through my research for the PACT project, consulting work, and dissertation research uniformly expressed an importance of preserving audio materials in their working collections, and articulated an understanding that digitization was the currently accepted approach for preserving audio resources. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of the sites visited lacked trained staff, quality equipment, relevant IT infrastructure, and funds. Unable to achieve the approaches put forward in best practice documents, folklorists at these sites made due with what they had. They used non-ideal (but still serviceable) playback and digital conversion equipment, they stored files on

⁷² Additional information on *Sound Directions* including reports and publications, is available at <http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/projects/sounddirections/>. Last viewed on 2010-07-26.

writable Compact Discs and external hard drives rather than redundant file storage servers, and they created lower-resolution preservation files that would take up less space in digital storage.

Digitization is a complex and problematic approach to preservation. Despite the expense and technical challenges of maintaining large audio files in digital storage, for certain types of materials like audio it is the only viable method of preservation available. Through projects like *Save Our Sounds* and *Sound Directions*, folklorists have been part of the group at the forefront of developing viable and sustainable approaches to audio preservation digitization.

*Case Study of Archival Hybridity in a Public Folklore Working Collection: Philadelphia Folklore Project Archives.*⁷³

The Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP) models how a working collection can combine archival and folkloristic methods in its organization and storage. I visited the PFP on two occasions. In September of 2007, with the support of funds from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, PFP hired me as an archival consultant to assist them with the process of reformulating their

⁷³ Much of the text of this section has been drawn from a report written by me for the PACT Archival Survey Project as a contract employee of the Fund for Folk Culture. It is used here with permission of the Board of Directors of the Fund for Folk Culture. PFP Director Debora Kodish made her own contributions to the report. Kodish's text appears as an indented block text and includes a separate citation.

archival descriptive system and provide advice for digitization and preservation. I returned in November of 2007 under the auspices of the GRAMMY Foundation-funded PACT Archival Survey Project as a contract employee for the Fund for Folk Culture to conduct a survey of the PFP collections. The information and analysis below is drawn from observations and discussions during both visits, my report on the PFP collection that was a part of the PACT Survey Project (Kolovos 2008), a formal interview with Debora Kodish (Kodish 2007) and a follow up telephone interview with Kodish in 2010.

PFP maintains a large collection that preserves the documentary work generated by PFP during the course of its over twenty-three year history. The archival system of organization developed by PFP founder and director, Debora Kodish is, even by the standards of folklore archives, unusual. I find it fascinating, and a remarkable document in itself of how Kodish and her fellow staff members have conceived of their work. Since the early 2000s Kodish and PFP staff have been actively addressing the needs of the archives. In particular they have been altering the system of conceptual organization PFP staff initially developed for the collection, as well as recasting the system of archival description used by PFP.

The PFP archival collection consists of over 48,000 photographs and slides, 1600 audio and video recordings, 72 linear feet of paper records and files, and approximately 175 artifacts. The bulk of the materials are stored on wire shelves and in lateral filing cabinets in an open area on the second floor. The storage area serves as both the PFP archive and an office space. The collection

includes fieldwork recordings (e.g. interviews and performance documentation), photographic images, and print materials generated through PFP programming and other community and artist-based events. The collection also includes donations and purchased materials from people with whom PFP has worked. Purchased materials consist primarily of objects.

The indigenously created organizational system that governs the collection is, in my experience, probably unique to PFP. According to Kodish “it was developed in 1987 after exploration of public folklife archives practice at the time, and largely derived from systems existing at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archives and Maine Folklife Center in the 1970s” (Kodish in Kolovos 2008:2). The primary unit of organization in the PFP archive is the “accession.” At the time of this writing, the PFP archive contains 1,870 accessions.

The use of the term *accession* by PFP is inclusive of both the normative archival meaning of the term (“Materials physically and legally transferred to a repository as a unit at a single time; an acquisition” (Pearce-Moses 2005a)) and a broader, non-standard application. Where in normative terms an archival accession can be an entire unitary conceptual body (i.e. a “collection” or “record group”) or a portion of some larger, unitary whole, in PFP terms an accession can be either of those, both or, seemingly neither. Although each PFP accession has been historically treated as a unique thing unto itself—as a unitary conceptual body—in practice these accession-based units are not necessarily directly consonant with what an archivist would call a “collection” or “record

group.” Rather they are units that in Kodish’s terms followed “folklore practice in combining in a single ‘accession’ the varied media documents of a single or extended series of performance events with coherence coming from the encounter at their core” (Kodish 2010b). The “varied media documents” identified by Kodish relate directly to the various documentary elements named by Parsons—audio recordings, photographs, text, video recordings—that capture expressive culture in (or as) its context of creation, performance and use.

Characteristically the conceptual framework that guides the designation of a group of materials as an accession in the PFP archive is—or at least has been—very different from the criteria that a trained archivist would generally apply to designate, or create, a collection in archival terms. Furthermore, although some accessions certainly would be viewed as “collections” from the perspective of archival theory, these particular accessions were not generated with an explicit awareness of or nod to these principles. Because it deviates from some of the basic conceptual underpinnings of archival theory, the accessioning system developed at PFP is emblematic of the challenges that folklore archives face when trying to bring their collection into line with standard archival models and approaches. It is characteristic of two aspects of folklore archives in general—folklore archives as “working collections” and folklore archives as a mirror of the organizational culture and history of the organizations that create them. The structure of the PFP archive provides evidence of how Debora Kodish and others working with the organization conducted their work and the ways in which various PFP projects related to one another.

That stated, when a trained archivist approaches the PFP archive armed with a perspective on the concepts of accession, collection, and provenance that is informed by archival theory—even when his perspective on said concepts is tempered by an awareness of their limitations in the context of public folklore collections—there is a lot to unravel. A PFP accession can be documentation of a single event or documentation of multiple events. When an accession is composed of documentation of a single event such as a performance or interview, it can sometimes be a completely stand alone unit. However, this is not always the case as many small accessions are related to each other as well. When an accession is composed of documentation of multiple events these events are usually, but not necessarily, part of the same project. However it is very important to note that, as with most public folklore organizations and programs, projects are not neatly separable and one project tends to flow into the next, which often morphs yet again.

There is logic and background to the creation of accessions and the system itself, and to the local peculiarities of archival practice at PFP. As Kodish notes in my report:

From its inception in 1987, PFP was committed to organizing and responsibly preserving its ongoing documentation work—without consistent access to the emerging field of folklife archiving or to archivists (although various projects have brought PFP temporary access to various specialists) or to much in the way of dedicated resources. The systems and processes that PFP created reflect a primary commitment to the people documented (i.e., a preference for these sources retaining rights over materials), long-term and evolving relationships with people represented in the overall Archive, and efforts to make use of evolving folklife archive practice (as reflected in changing use of and treatment of

media, duplication procedures, indexing tools, and the like). (Kodish in Kolovos 2008:2-3).

These accessions have become the basis of what Kodish characterizes as 45 (Kodish 2010a) discrete, conceptual collections that are documented in both a collection description narrative and a Dublin Core-structured FileMaker Pro database. For example, the *Philadelphia Tap Initiative Collection* (PFP Collection Number C0001) was built from materials created for four PFP projects: Philadelphia Tap Initiative, Plenty of Good Women Dancers, Stepping in Time, and Carrying the Show—each of which involved multiple accessions that related to these projects—as well as additional accessions. In order to fabricate collections along archival lines, PFP had to reformulate and restructure the conceptual organization of their entire collection.

Over the past several years PFP has been involved in an ongoing process of professionalizing aspects of their archival practice by adopting elements of the methods and approaches of professional archivists. They have directed a great deal of energy into developing the descriptive systems for the PFP archive, and thinking about how to adapt archival practices in regard to processing and storage to collections materials. This work started in 2001, well before the PACT-GRAMMY project, and has continued apace during its course. The overarching goals of these efforts have been to assess and address long-term preservation and access issues for the PFP archive, to improve accessibility and to standardize descriptive protocols so that they are in line with the practices in place at other institutions. Kodish notes that "This latter goal was more of a

PACT aim than a PFP aim, but has been incorporated into PFP workplaces" (Kodish in Kolovos 2008g). Consultants who have provided advice and guidance in regard to reconceptualizing the PFP archive have included staff from the Conservation Center (Philadelphia), Andrew Eskind (formerly of the Eastman House) and Michael Taft of AFC Archivist, who has been involved with the PFP archive since 2003.

In addition to their accessioning system, PFP has maintained a database of the materials in the PFP archive since the beginning. This resource, like many other similar databases in public folklore collections, grew organically and locally and—although developed with input and influence from others in the field of folklore—was fundamentally suited to the needs of PFP staff and not tied to any external descriptive standards. In the last several years Debora Kodish has worked with Michael Taft on issues directly related to the PFP archive database. In particular, Taft went through the PFP database thoroughly in 2003 and created a data crosswalk to reconcile (and convert) the old fields employed in the PFP database to comparable Elements from the Dublin Core metadata schema. In September of 2007 PFP consulted with me on work separate from the PACT-GRAMMY project to reconcile database revision project undertaken by Taft and PFP with a revised set of Dublin Core Elements created as a model by the PACT-GRAMMY project as a database template.

In addition, working with Kodish and two PFP interns, Dana Dorman (a FileMaker database developer) and Jane Fries, Kolovos assisted in the redevelopment of the PFP archive database and the creation of processing

protocols for the archival collection. PFP is now using a FileMaker Pro database to manage its archival collection that employs the revised PACT Dublin Core Elements as data fields. She and Fries are working to create—and describe—6 collections from the PFP archive under the terms of a Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PMHC) grant. It should be noted that each of these new collections is based on coherent organizational units drawn from PFP projects or clusters of projects in order to simplify access to materials. In essence, from a descriptive perspective the PFP collection is undergoing a complete overhaul.

However, as Kodish notes:

Viewed from the perspective of PFP staffers, it is less of an overhaul than creating of an additional superstructure: we have now sorted (considerably after the fact) every single accession into a smaller set of defined collections. Collections are defined as larger project and initiative-based categories reflecting major areas of PFP work over time. We aim to lose none of the richness of our existing accession database, but to add some larger coherence as well as making the database more amenable to “industry” standards. (Kodish in Kolovos 2008g).

Despite the introduction of many archival practices, from the use of archival enclosures to the creation of conceptual collections to the use of Dublin Core as a standard metadata schema, the physical organization of the PFP collection persists as it has for many years. Kodish notes that this is partly practical, since PFP is tight on space and lacks the staffing to undertake a large scale archival reorganization, but also due to the utility of the old system and the way it reflects institutional practice and history.

The working collection created and maintained by PFP is an excellent example of the way archival methods and the indigenous approaches from folkloristics can be productively combined in ways that assist with the long term management and preservation of archival materials, facilitate access to the collections and respect the history of the organizations, individuals and discipline that gave them birth.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have identified a class of folklore archive, the *working collection*, that forms a central aspect of contemporary practice in public folklore organizations. While working collections serve several roles within the organizations that maintain them, their primary function comes through their practical utility to the daily work needs of employees of their host institutions. They are, in archival terms, collections of *current records*. The systems developed for managing working collections have generally emerged in response to these practical needs and to organizational culture to facilitate internal access by staff.

As current records, the methods developed by professional archivists for maintaining *archives* are not well suited to these materials. Since archival theory emerged to develop intellectual and practical tools for managing a contrasting class of material, *non-current records*, efforts to implement strict archival approaches to folklorists' working collections often hamper internal use. At the

same time, within folkloristics a growing emphasis has been placed on the adoption of archival methods in folklore archives. In response to the pressures of professionalization and the demands of organizational work need, many public folklore organizations have created hybrid systems that incorporate aspects of archival methods and indigenous, institutional practice. These compromise systems draw on aspects of archival methods that seem appropriate or most useful to working collections in their individual organizational contexts, such as descriptive systems and preservation methods, and discard those elements that complicate access such as strict collection-based organization of physical materials. In doing so they support the usability of the materials, honor the history of the creating organizations, and ground the collections in archival fundamentals that will facilitate their eventual integration into formal archives.

While working collections need to be functional to the people who use them, the information they contain is easiest to access for the discipline at large if we strive to do certain things in similar ways. However, working collections should continue to reflect the systems, thought patterns, methods, and experience of the folklorists who brought them into being. They should do this so we can respect the range of approaches to the work of folkloristics that each working collection embodies. They should do so because, if and when they enter the control of a distinctly archival repository, they can reflect how we saw the world.

The working collections of public sector folklorists are not archives as an archivist understands the concept. As result, many of the systems created by

archivists for the management of *archives* are poorly suited to the needs of working collections and those who utilize them for their daily work. Hybrid archival systems that incorporate the methods and tools of archivists and co-mingle them with the approaches of folklorists have emerged to satisfy the complex needs of working collections and their creators. They offer the best option for preservation and access while respecting the unique aspects of working collections and the field from which they emerge.

Conclusion

In 1958 W.M. Hugh Jansen wrote in the inaugural issue of *The Folklore and Folk Music Archivist* “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” (Jansen 1958:1). Although he limits this statement to refer to archives in the US, a reading of the extant literature on the matter shows beyond a doubt that there were very few standardized practices in the field. In the words of another scholar, “Every archive is the development of an idea of some one pioneer in the field” (Ake Campbell in Thompson 1953b:89). As a part of my research for this dissertation I visited fifteen folklore archives in the United States and two in Canada, the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archive at the University of Alberta, Edmonton and the Folklore and Language Archive at Memorial University Newfoundland. My experience demonstrates that more than half a century after Jansen’s words were first published not much has changed in this regard.

There is enormous diversity among folklore archives today. An array of vernacular approaches are in play in regard to how folklorists have arranged and described their collections, the nature of the records folklore archives house, and the nature of subject matter they contain. Unlike Jansen, who views this diversity as problematic, I see it as emblematic of the interests of the field that created them. As Debora Kodish noted in an interview I conducted with her, folklore archives in general are the product of “a field that’s so interested in non-

standardized vernacular," and the structures of folklore archives themselves are representative of the vernacular practices of the culture and cultures of folkloristics (Kodish 2007). What this means in practice is that approaches used at the Vermont Folklife Center (VFC) differ from those in place at City Lore (CL) or the Oregon Folklife Program. It means that content of archives differs in general between public folklorists' working collections and academic collections, between older archives and newly established repositories, and across geography.

The VFC's lackadaisical approach to the organization of photographic images is in stark contrast to the detailed documentation of individual images undertaken by CL. The research focus of an active public sector program such as the Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP) differs dramatically from the individual research papers of an undergraduate folklore class at Utah State University. Newer collections such as the archive of the Connecticut Heritage Arts Program (CHAP) do not hold examples of older forms of traditional expressive culture—ballads or Jack tales—that reside in quantity in a collection with the time depth of the Archive of the American Folklife Center. The prevalence of material on saddle making and cattle ranching found in the archive of the Western Folklife Center is matched by the prevalence of material on maple sugaring and dairy farming in the collection of the VFC.

These collections all differ from one another in genuine ways yet, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, as the product of the work of folklorists they have more in common with each other than they do with the collections

created and maintained by professional archivists. These commonalities are rooted in the broad nature of the content of these collections—culturally circumscribed expressive behavior (aka *folklore*)—and the developing intellectual organizing principles that have informed approaches to the study (or depending on ones' perspective [e.g. Bauman and Briggs 2003] the *invention*) of this category of human behavior over the last two centuries. If we can talk about a disciplinary center of folkloristics—and I believe we can—we can also talk about a common culture of archiving that is as much a part of folkloristics as are folklore, fieldwork or comparative textual analysis.

Folklore archives emerge from disciplinary practice, and reflect scope of the disciplinary exercise and the needs of disciplinary use. As a result, in their content and structure they reflect these interests and methods back to us. A majority of contemporary folklorists would agree that the story of the Vanishing Hitchhiker, Grimm's *Kinder und Hausmärchen*, a Tajik carpet, a Western saddle, the fiddle tune *Fishers Hornpipe*, and a Greek village dance are conceptually connected such that they all can be considered folklore. From this base, If folklorists can legitimately argue that the way an Acoma potter shapes and decorates a water jar is reflective of personal and communal values and aesthetics (Glassie 1999:48-56), then the creative acts undertaken by members of the intentional community of folklorists as a part of our disciplinary practice are also comprehensible in similar ways. If an oral narrative told by a Navajo storyteller can be understood and interpreted on multiple levels by Navajo listeners (Toelken 2004:441-443), then enculturated members of the community

of folklorists can read the esoteric coding and subtlety of meaning represented in a folklore archive in ways that would puzzle scholars from related disciplines such as anthropology or literary studies. If, as trained folklorists, we can read literature published across the history of our field, see it as both simultaneously related to a contemporary understanding of folkloristics and distinct from it, and interpret this literature in light of diachronic and synchronic understandings of folklorists' practice, we can read the same into our archival collections. As genetic researchers through selective breeding shaped *Drosophila* into a distinct object of scientific material culture (Kohler 1994:1-6), folklorists have shaped their archives into a distinct kind material culture reflective of the needs and values of folkloristics. If there is an intellectual center to our field, then folklore archives are as expressive of this center as any other practice that has emerged from folkloristics.

As I have also argued, while folklore archives (both academic and public sector and *working collections* and *archives*) have distinct needs and approaches that make them different from the collections of professional archivists, they also share much in common with them. Ideas from the field of archives can be valuable to folklore archives, can strengthen their collections and make them more useful to potential researchers. The hybrid archival form that is the contemporary folklore archive draws on conceptual models from the theories that inform professional archivists. The adoption in folklore archives of ideas of intellectual context as understood by archivists, and the conceptual extension of

these ideas as a tool for preserving folklore such that it can be preserved in context are a critical example how these ideas mingle.

In his presentation as a part of the 1998 Bad Homburg Symposium, “Public Folklore: Forms of Intellectual Practice in Society” Robert Baron calls for folklorists to “turn an ethnographic lens on ourselves and begin to describe and reexamine the kinds of work we do as folklorists, as we rethink practice, theory, and the *representations* [emphasis in original] linking theory and practice we construct through our work” (Baron 1999: 186). Baron makes this call within a broader discussion that explores the connection between practice and theory in folkloristics, and in public folklore in particular: “In American folklore studies, practice is generally viewed as skill, best acquired experientially and taught—if at all—as technique. A chronic disjunction between theory and practice is thus perpetuated...” (Baron 1999: 185). In Baron’s view this disjunction is problematic because of the inseparable links between practice and theory in the ultimate end goal of folklorists’ work: the generation of ethnographic representations in the form of written articles, video or audio documentaries, exhibits, performances or festivals. Baron argues that through the de facto denigration “practice” on the levels of pedagogy and training, as a field we have failed to recognize the intersection of practice *and* theory in defining and shaping the very scope of our work. As a result we both compromise the resulting representational end products, and leave ourselves less able to critically reevaluate our work in the process.

Baron stresses that theory and practice should go hand-in-hand if we are to be able to conduct and consider what we do. Technical mastery of a practice, for example extensive skill in the audio recoding of acoustic instruments, will potentially generate fieldwork records that can lead to the creation of better ethnographic representation. However, doing so in the absence of a theoretical framework for interpreting the meaning of an aural record and the choices that go into creating it compromises any resulting representation created from the work. In contrast, theory uninformed by practice undermines the very necessity of empirical engagement that defines the ethnographic process. And while the essence of Baron's argument is that folklore training heavily prioritizes the theoretical over the practical, the apparent status quo, according to Baron, fails both theory and practice by not allowing either to be completely fulfilled through conceptual integration of one with the other.

To further his discussion Baron selects for elaboration three elements of folklorists' professional practice, two rooted in technologies: photography and audio recording, and one in action: the public presentation of traditional artists, that are central to (and that, as noted above, in many respects define) folklorists' practice but that are generally "left to be learned on the job" rather than deeply integrated into a pedagogical framework for training new folklorists. (Baron 1999: 186). The three subjects listed above are selected by Baron to serve as key examples drawn from a much larger pool⁷⁴, and Baron structures his three brief

⁷⁴ As he notes at the conclusion of the article, based on a discussion held at 1997 Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation's Traditional Arts Program there are many other

discussions as vehicle for providing examples of how various theoretical perspectives relevant to folkloristic practice might be applied. For instance, his discussion of photography touches on the theoretical literature on photography and seeks to apply these perspectives to the way folklorists use photographic tools in their work. His discussion on audio recording presents the ways folklorists have used audio, for example creating commercial LPs from field recordings, aside ideas about how people interact with the aural world and the limitations of aural documentation in capturing and representing performance.

The relevance of Baron's article to this dissertation project is several fold. His call for ethnographic inquiry into the professional activities of folklorists and the overlapping roles of practice and theory in our work—as well as their implications on our work—resonates well with the perspectives that have guided my research and writing. The key proposition made by Baron, that there is a need to “turn an ethnographic lens on ourselves” so that, in essence, we can develop a more accurate understanding of what our disciplinary practices and as a result better unify theory and practice, is one of this project's guiding impetuses.

While Baron's call for self-inquiry has shaped and informed aspects of my project, his discussion of (on the one hand) unstructured practice, and (on the other) practice functioning in the absence of theory are directly applicable to the problem of archives in our field. As this dissertation has argued, archiving is a

examples of practice he could have addressed as well, among them “archiving and record management” (Baron 1999: 197-1998).

practice fundamental to folkloristics, one that defines our field in contrast to many other ethnographic disciplines. To understand the place of archives within our field we must change our perspectives on them. We must view *archiving* as a distinct type of professional practice and the *archive* as a form of complex ethnographic representation and meta-representation. Along side other practices fundamental to the work of folklorists such as photography, audio recording and public presentation archiving is neglected in training and under theorized by scholars in a way that detrimentally impacts the outcomes of our work. This lack of focused training and coordinated theorizing leads to a compromised representational outcome of archiving practice—the archive itself.

While there is a long history in folkloristics of crafting tools and handbooks to guide folklore archiving practice there has been very little work done to build a theoretical apparatus for informing archiving and conceptualizing our archives. Rather than attempt to understand folklore archiving as a distinct practice among the range of practices employed by folklorists—interviewing, presenting, recording, photographing—and the folklore archive as a distinct kind of representational form—akin to folktale collections, audio recordings, films and ethnographies—engagement with archiving practice has been treated as an afterthought, and the archive has been treated as little more than a benign by-product of the real work of folkloristics. Through this dissertation I have initiated my contribution the process of building a theory of folklore archives. It is my hope that I and other scholar-practitioners can move forward in exploring folklore archiving from the perspective of professional practice; analyzing the theories (as

well as the absence of theory) that have governed folklore archiving in both abstract and pragmatic ways; treating folklore archives themselves as a distinct type of ethnographic representation shaped by the intersection of practice and theory; and finally building a theoretical basis so that we can better understand our archives and build better collections rooted in complex understanding of what the act of preserving these sort of materials mean.

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Appendix

Appendix A: National Folklife Archive Initiative (NFAI) Proposed Data Structure

A data crosswalk developed by Andy Kolovos with input from Nathan Georgitis, Cathy Kerst, Maggie Kruesi, Nicole Saylor, and Rhonda Sewald to facilitate descriptive best practices for folklore archives. It identifies data elements in Describing Archives a Content Standard (DACS), Encoded Archival Description (EAD), Dublin Core (DC), MARC and the requisite fields to be employed in the NFAI archival cataloging project. I include it here to provide an example of how folklore archives are currently developing metadata tools for the specialized descriptive needs of folklore collections.

Appendix A

National Folklife Archives Initiative (NFAI) Proposed Descriptive Structure

1 REQUIRED FIELDS

1-1 REQUIRED NFAI FIELDS GOVERNED BY DACS

DACS Elements	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
2.1 Reference Code	<unitid>	090 09X 040\$a (repository code)	Identifier	Repository Code	Structured text	* MARC (if extant) * NFAI Defined * Repository internal	Repository code + collection identifier (or call number) + country code
2.2 Name and Location of Repository	<repository> <corpname></corpname> </repository>	852 524 (if the preferred citation includes name and location of repository)	Publisher	Repository Name	Free text	* MARC (if extant) * Repository internal	Name and address of the repository

1-1 REQUIRED NFAI FIELDS GOVERNED BY DACS (Cont.)

DACS Elements	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
2.3 Title	<unittitle>	245\$a	Title	Collection Title --Documentary Event Title	Free text	Repository internal	Title of the resource being described.
2.4 Date	<unitdate>	245\$f, 260\$c	Date	Date	yyyy-mm-dd; yyyy-yyyy	Repository internal	Inclusive dates and other dates of creation of collection materials
2.5 Extent	<physdesc> <extent></extent> <dimensions></dimensions> <genreform></genreform> <physfacet></physfacet> <container></container> </physdesc>	300 655 genre/form	Format [Extent]	Physical Description --Extent --Dimensions --Container --Genre/Form --Physical Facet	* Numerical—linear feet * Numerical—Quantity * Forced Choice * Forced Choice	NFAI Defined	Physical description of materials in collection, including media materials and quantities.

1-1 REQUIRED NFAI FIELDS GOVERNED BY DACS (Cont.)

DACS Elements	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
2.6 Name(s) of Creator(s)	<origination>	100, 110, 111 and/or 700, 710, 711 511 (text note for performers, speakers, participants)	Creator Contributor	Creator Contributor	* Free Text * Repository customizable forced choice	Repository internal; LCNAF, if applicable	Names of interviewees, interviewers, photographers, videographers, recordists, etc.
2.7 Admin/Biog history	<bioghist>	545	Description Provenance	Administrative and Biographical History	Narrative free text	Repository internal	Information about corporate creators, families, or persons who are identified in 2.6; context for the administrative history or creation of the collection

1-1 REQUIRED NFAI FIELDS GOVERNED BY DACS (Cont.)

DACS Element	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
3.1 Scope and Content	<scopecontent>	520 Summary 505 (Formatted contents note, usually at the item level, but for some collections this is useful)	Description [Abstract]	Scope and Content	Narrative free text	Repository internal	Narrative description of the scope and nature of the collection; summary of who, what, when, where
4.1 Conditions governing access	<accessrestrict>	506	Rights [AccessRights]	Access Restrictions	* Forced choice yes/no * Free text	Repository internal	Restrictions on access to materials
4.4 Conditions governing reproduction and use	<userrestrict>	540	Rights [AccessRights]	Use and Reproduction Restrictions	* Forced choice yes/no * Free text	Repository internal	What use materials can be put to
4.5 Language and scripts	<langmaterial>	041\$a, 041\$d, 546	Language	Languages	Forced choice	MARC Code List for Languages	Languages used within collection

1-2 REQUIRED NFAI FIELDS NOT COMPLETELY GOVERNED BY DACS

DACS Element	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
	<controlaccess> <subject> <genreform> <persname> <corpname> <geoname> </controlaccess>	600, 610, 611, 650, 651, 690, 655	Subject	Subjects	Repository Customizable Forced Choice	* AFSET * AAT * LCSH * BGN, TGN * LCNAF * TGM I & II * Local subjects, keywords	Controlled subject access = what the collection is about, i.e., topics, persons, organizations, events, places. Slot for including controlled access points, local subjects, and forms and genres in collection, e.g., interviews, poems, etc.
2.6 Name of Creators	<origination label ="creator"> <creator role="interviewee"> <origination label="contributor"> <contributor role="interviewer">	1XX,\$e or \$4 7XX,\$e or \$4	Creator Contributor	Creator Role Contributor Role	Forced Choice	* MARC Value List for Relators and Roles * NFAI Defined	Roles linked to name of creator, e.g., performer, singer, speaker, interviewer, recording engineer

1-2 REQUIRED NFAI FIELDS NOT COMPLETELY GOVERNED BY DACS (Cont.)

DACS Element	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
2.5 Extent	<physdesc> <extent> <dimension> <genreform>	300	Format	General Material Designation	Forced Choice	* IASA * TGM II	For sound recordings and moving images, more detail is needed than is covered by DACS.
2.5 Extent	<physdesc> <extent> <dimension> <genreform>	300	Type	Specific Material Designation	Forced Choice	* IASA * TGM II	For sound recordings and moving images, more detail is needed than is covered by DACS.

2 OPTIONAL FIELDS

2-1 OPTIONAL NFAI FIELDS GOVERNED BY DACS

DACS Element	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
3.2 System of arrangement	<arrangement.>	351	Description	Arrangement	Free Text	Repository internal	Groupings/arrangement of the archival materials and their hierarchical relationships within the collection
5.1 Custodial History	<custodhist>	540	Description	Custodial History	Free Text	Repository internal	Useful to track ownership of materials
5.2 Immediate Source of Acquisition	<acqinfo>	541	Accrual Method	Acquisition Information	Free Text	Repository internal	Used for tracking direct donations

2-1 OPTIONAL NFAI FIELDS GOVERNED BY DACS (Cont.)

DACS Element	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
5.3 Appraisal, Destruction, Scheduling information	<appraisal>	583	Description	Appraisal and Disposition	Free Text	Repository internal	An important element for contexts where materials are subject to disposition schedules. Can be used to indicate when records should be transferred to another agency prior to disposal

2-1 OPTIONAL NFAI FIELDS GOVERNED BY DACS (Cont.)

DACS Element	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
5.4 Accruals	<accruals>	584	Accrual Method	Accrual Policy	Free Text	Repository internal	Useful for those collections that accrue on a regular basis, such as traditional arts apprenticeship programs, grant programs, etc.
6.1 Existence and location of originals	<originalsloc>	535	Relation [HasFormat]	Location of Originals	Free Text	Repository internal	When an archive holds copies, this field is to indicate the location of the original materials.

2-1 OPTIONAL NFAI FIELDS GOVERNED BY DACS (Cont.)

DACS Element	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
6.2 Existence and location of copies	<altformavail>	530	Relation [HasFormat]	Related Material	Free Text	Repository internal	When duplicates of the archive's holdings in different formats are held in the same repository, or by another repository
6.3 Related Archival Materials	<relatedmaterial>	544	Relation	Related Material	Free Text	Repository internal	For describing overlapping categories of creation and use in ethnographic collections

2-1 OPTIONAL NFAI FIELDS GOVERNED BY DACS (Cont.)

DACS Element	EAD Tags	MARC Fields	Dublin Core	NFAI Data Field	Rules	Sources	Description
6.4 Publication Note	<bibliography>	581	Description	Publication Notes	Free Text	Repository internal	For information about publications created from materials, including exhibits and websites
7.0 Notes		518	Description	Event Notes	Free Text	Repository internal	Date/Time and place of an event note, e.g., Recorded in..., filmed in...Broadcast on....
7.0 Notes	<odd> <note>	500	Description	General Notes	Free Text	Repository internal	General information for which a specific note has not been defined.

Curriculum Vitae

Andrew Kolovos

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Education:

Doctoral Candidate. Folklore, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. 2003-present.

Thesis title: Archiving Culture: American Folklore Archives in Theory and Practice

M.L.S., Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. 2001.

M.A. Folklore, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. 2000.

B.A. Literature, Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont. 1993.

Professional Experience:

Archivist/Folklorist, Vermont Folklife Center, Middlebury, Vermont. January 2002-present.

Instructor, Vermont Community College, Rutland, VT. Spring 2003.

Instructor, Department of Anthropology, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, IN. Fall 2001.

Intern, Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Summer 2001-Fall 2001.

Graduate Assistant, School of Library and Information Science, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Fall 2000-Spring 2001.

Calumet Region Project Assistant, Traditional Arts Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana. Summer 1999-Fall 2000.

Researcher, Traditional Arts Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana. Spring 1999.

Researcher, Polis Center, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis,

Indiana. Summer 1998.

Modern Language Association Folklore Bibliography Assistant, MLA Folklore Indexing Project, Bloomington, Indiana. Fall 1997- Spring 1999.

Fieldworker, Indiana Folk Arts Survey, Bloomington, Indiana. Summer 1997.
Library Assistant, Medical Sciences Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Summer 1997.

Librarian and Archivist, American Society for Psychical Research, New York, New York. Fall 1993-Fall 1996.

Major Projects and Initiatives:

Project Manager, GRAMMY™ Foundation Archiving and Preservation Grant, "Vermont Traditional Music Preservation and Access Project." July 2007 to date, Budget, \$39,000.

Audio Engineer and Co-Audio Producer. *New Neighbors: Bosnia* Website. Vermont Folklife Center 2010.

Audio Engineer. *The Hale Street Gang: Portraits in Writing* exhibit. Vermont Folklife Center. 2010

Audio Engineer. *A Deep Look at a Small Town: Marlboro, Vermont* exhibit. Vermont Folklife Center. 2010.

Audio Engineer and Co-Audio Producer. *Stories of Hope: Ethnography Inspires Student Action In Rwanda* exhibit. Vermont Folklife Center. 2010.

Audio Engineer. *Our Stories: Reflections from Participants at the Parent Child Center* exhibit. Vermont Folklife Center. 2010.

Audio Engineer and Co-Audio Producer. *The Art of Action: Shaping Vermont's Future through Art* exhibit. Vermont Folklife Center. 2009.

Audio Engineer and Co-Audio Producer. *Almost Utopia: In Search of the Good Life in Mid-Century America*. Vermont Folklife Center. 2009.

Audio Engineer. *The Golden Cage: Mexican Migrant Workers and Vermont Dairy Farmers* exhibit. Vermont Folklife Center. 2009.

Primary Investigator, PACT Folklife Archive Survey Project. March 2007 to August 2008.

Audio Engineer. *Fish Stories* exhibit, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Vergennes, VT. 2008.

Co-developer (with Justin Purdue) *Envoyé à maison: A Franco-American Homecoming* website, <http://envoyeamaison.org/>. 2008.

Co-producer (with Paul MacGowan) *On My Own: The Traditions of Daisy Turner* DVD video disc. 2008.

Primary Investigator, PACT Folklife Archive Survey Project. March 2007 - April 2008.

Co-producer (with Jane Beck) *Journey's End: The Memories and Traditions of Daisy Turner and her Family* compact disc. 2007.

Technical Advisor, Youth Radio Vermont, Vermont Folklife Center, 2006-date.

Co-developer (with Jane Beck, Gregory Sharrow and Krent/Paffett/Carney Inc.) Vermont Folklife Center Multimedia Interactive Exhibit. 2006-2007.

Co-developer (with Justin Perdue) Vermont Folklife Center's Deer Stories website, <http://vermontfolklifecenter.org/multimedia/radio/deer-stories/> 2006.

Co-developer (with Justin Perdue) Vermont Folklife Center's Vermont Women's History Project website, <http://vermontfolklifecenter.org/multimedia/womenspeak/> 2006.

Co-developer (with Gregory Sharrow) Vermont Folklife Center Children's Book Series Website, <http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/childrens-books/> 2004-2006.

Audio producer, *All in the Family: Tradition and Creativity* exhibit, Vermont Folklife Center, 2006.

Project Director, NEH Preservation and Access Grant, "Creating a Digital Archive of Materials Related to Traditional Culture in Vermont and New England". March 2002-December 2006. Budget, \$160,000.

Co-producer (with Jane Beck and Gregory Sharrow) *A Treasury of Vermont Storytellers* compact disc. 2005.

Co-producer (with Jane Beck) *Under the Golden Dome* compact disc 2005.

Co-developer (with Justin Perdue) Vermont Folklife Center's Under the Golden Dome website, <http://vermontfolklifecenter.org/multimedia/radio/golden->

dome/ 2005.

Co-producer (with Gregory Sharrow and Erica Heilman) *Prisoners of War*
compact disc. 2004.

Co-developer (with Justin Perdue) Vermont Folklife Center's Prisoners of War
website, <http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/multimedia/radio/pow/> 2004

Publications

"Researcher Considerations for the Long-Term Preservation of Folklore
Research." *Calicut University Folkloristics Journal* 1:1 (2010).
Forthcoming.

With Marcia Segal, "Resources on the Preservation of Materials in Ethnographic
and Oral History Collections."
<http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/archive/preservation-resources.shtml>.
First published 2008. Last updated 2008-02-17.

"Contextualizing the Archives," *Folklore Forum* 35:1/2 (2004).

"Archival Collection of the Vermont Folklife Center: Our Recent Digitization
Initiative," NEA Newsletter 30:1, January 2003. Pp. 4-6.

"Field Recording in the Digital Age"
http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/res_digital-age.html. First published
2002. Last updated 2010-05-12.

"Audio Field Recording Equipment Guide,"
http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/res_audioequip.htm. First published
2002. Last updated 2010-03-01.

"Digital Editing of Field Audio"
http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/res_digitalediting.htm. First published
2002. Last updated 2006-02-01.

Co-Editor (with Eleanor Levy and Kurt Hartwig), *Folklore of Death and Burial*.
Folklore Forum. 29:2 (1998).

Conference Presentations

"The Martha Pellerin Collection of Franco-American Song." Presented at the
Folklore Studies Association of Canada meeting, Montreal, Canada. May
2010.

"Practical Approaches to Digital Preservation for Smaller Institutions." Presented at the 55th Meeting of the League of Local Historical Societies, Bellows Falls, VT. November 2008.

"Ethnographic Archives in the Era of the Electronic Commonwealth." Forum Participant, American Folklore Society Conference, Louisville, Kentucky. October 2008.

"The Vermont Folklife Center Digital Archive Project: An Overview." Presented at the American Folklore Society/Folklore Studies Association of Canada Joint Conference, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. October 2007.

"At Last! The Vermont Folklife Center's Online Digital Archive." Presented at "Culture Archives and the State: Between Nationalism, Socialism, and the Global Market." The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. May 2007.

"The Best-You-Can-With-What-You-Have Practices: Digital Audio Preservation in a Small Non-Profit Institution." Presented at the Association for Recorded Sound Collections Conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. May 2007.

"Your Stuff, Their Stuff, Our Stuff: Preparing Public and Private Folklore Collections for Public Access." Forum Participant, American Folklore Society Conference, Atlanta, Georgia. October 2005.

"A Natural History of the Text in Folkloristics." Presented at the Canadian Symposium on Text Analysis. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. October 4, 2005.

"More Than We Can Chew? Audio Preservation Digitization and Small Non-Profit Institutions." Presented at the Association for Recorded Sound Collections Conference, Austin, Texas. April 2005.

"Assessing Organizational Needs in Selecting Vendors for Audio Preservation Digitization Projects." Presented as a part of "Us, Them, We: Strategies for Creating Successful Collaborations with Vendors for Recorded Sound Preservation Projects." Society of American Archivists Conference, Boston, Massachusetts. August 2004.

"The Present is Prologue: Ethnographic Materials as Historical Records." Presented as a part of the panel, "Sounding Out American History: Recording and Documenting the Voices and Soundscapes of America's Past and Present." American Historical Association Conference, Washington, D.C., January 2004.

"Field to Archive: Practical Topics and Questions." Panelist. American Folklore

Society Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico. October 2003.

"Contextualizing the Archives." Presented at the Building Bridges with Folklore Archives Conference, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. February 2003.

"Belief in Photographs: Spirit Portraiture and the Extraordinary Return of the Familiar." Presented at the American Folklore Society Conference, Rochester, New York. October 2002.

"Images from Beyond: Spirit Portraiture and the Post-Mortem Extension of Domestic Space." Presented at the Great Lakes Area American Studies Conference, Muncie, Indiana. March 2001.

"An Eastern Orthodox Iconographer in Indianapolis" Presented at the American Folklore Society Conference, Memphis Tennessee. October 1999.

"Andrew Lang, Folk-Lore and Psychical Research: Belief and the Paranormal in Nineteenth-century Scholarship." Presented at the American Folklore Society conference, Portland, Oregon. October 1998.

"Suddenly We Can Do Anything: Punk Rock and the Urban Landscape." Presented at Great Lakes Area American Studies Conference, Miami, Ohio. February 1998.

Invited Presentations

Instructor, Digital Audio Recording for Ethnography and Oral History. Department of Folklore, Memorial University Newfoundland. St. Johns, Canada. March 12, 2010.

Instructor, Digital Audio Recording for Ethnography and Oral History. Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador. St. Johns, Canada. March 11, 2010.

Instructor, Audio Preservation and Reformatting. Northeast Document Conservation Center, Andover, MA. October 1, 2009.

Faculty, Audio Preservation. Northeast Document Conservation Center Persistence of Memory Conference, Chicago, IL. December 9-10, 2008.

Presenter, Audio Preservation. New England Archivists Fall 2008 Meeting. "Audio Preservation Digitization: Best Practice Basics." Boston, MA. November 15, 2008.

Faculty, Audio Preservation. Northeast Document Conservation Center
Persistence of Memory Conference, Seattle, WA. November 28-29, 2007.

Instructor, "Demystifying Digital Audio and Digital Audio Field Recorders"
Workshop. Middle-Atlantic Folklife Association/Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the
Society of Ethnomusicology Joint Conference. Williamsburg, VA. March
30, 2007.

Invited Expert, Anthropology and Oral History. CaSTA (Canadian Symposium on
Text Analysis) 2005 "Digital Technologies: Tools, Methods, Solutions."
Edmonton, Canada. October 4, 2005.

Honors

Phi Beta Mu, National Library Science Honor Society

Eileen J. Garrett Scholarship. 1999.

Service to the Field

National Sound Recording Preservation Plan Digital Audio Preservation and
Standards Task Force. 2009 – 2010.

Barbara McCullum Prize Committee, Archives and Libraries Section, American
Folklore Society, 2010.

American Folklore Society Publications Committee. 2007 – date.

Board of Directors, Vermont Music Library. 2007 – date.

Oral History Association Non-Print Media Award Committee. 2007.

Polly Grimshaw Memorial Award Committee, Archives and Libraries Section,
American Folklore Society. 2007.

Barbara McCullum Prize Committee, Archives and Libraries Section, American
Folklore Society, 2006

Barbara McCullum Prize Committee, Archives and Libraries Section, American
Folklore Society, 2005.

Grant Proposal Reviewer. National Historic Publications and Records
Commission. 2004.

Barbara McCullum Prize Committee, Archives and Libraries Section, American Folklore Society, 2004.

City Lore Archives Advisory Board, 2003.

Preservation Survey Consultant, Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, 2002.

Chair, Don Yoder Prize Committee, Folk Belief and Religious Folklife Section, American Folklore Society, 2001.

Don Yoder Prize Committee, Folk Belief and Religious Folklife Section, American Folklore Society, 2000.

Professional Consulting

University of Oregon Folklore Program/Oregon Historical Society. Portland, OR. 2009. Consulted on archival collection of the Oregon Folklife Program.

Roberson Museum and Science Center, Binghamton, NY. 2008. Consulted on cataloging and preservation of multimedia ethnographic collection and redevelopment of permanent folklife exhibit.

Philadelphia Folklore Project. 2007. Consulted on cataloging and preservation of multimedia ethnographic archive.

University of Oregon Folklore Program, Eugene Oregon. Consulted on Randall V. Mills Archive of Northwest Folklore. 2007.

Billings Farm and Museum, Woodstock, Vermont. Consulted on redevelopment of Billings Farm and Museum permanent exhibit. 2005.

Vermont State Archives, Montpelier, Vermont. Consulted on digitization of legislative audio recordings. 2004.

City Lore, New York, New York. Consulted on City Lore field research collection and preservation grant writing. 2003.

Continuing Professional Education

Ethnographic Archives, Communities of Origin, and Intangible Cultural Heritage Symposium, Society of American Archivists, Washington, DC. August 2006.

Audio Tape Reformatting and Restoration Seminar, Vignettes Media/Richard

Hess, Aurora, Ontario, Canada. May 2006.

Encoded Archival Description I Workshop, Society of American Archivists/Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York. July 2003.

Encoded Archival Description II Workshop, Society of American Archivists/Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York. July 2003

Management of Archival Sound Recordings Workshop, Association for Recorded Sound Collections, Santa Barbara, California. May 2002

Disaster Preparedness Workshop, Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, Middlebury, Vermont. February 2002.

Memberships

American Folklore Society

Association for Recorded Sound Collections

New England Archivists

Society of American Archivists

Vermont Archival Network