

NOTES AND QUOTES

THE GIRL SCOUT FOLKLORE BADGE

The general conception of exactly what constitutes folklore is varied and the use of the term is and by no means should be restricted to academicians and professionals in the discipline. A good example of the popular impression of folklore is the Folklore Badge which was developed by the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. in 1963 for inclusion in the Junior Girl Scout Handbook, for girls ages 9 - 11. Badges for this age group generally lack much depth and aim instead for broad, introductory type requirements to acquaint a girl with the general subject matter. The stated purpose of the Folklore Badge, for example, is "to learn about American folk music, folk tales, and hand arts and how they tell some of our country's history" (Junior Girl Scout Handbook, p. 329). There are six basic and simple requirements for earning the badge:

1. "Find out about the history of your community--how things happened, its legends and stories, early arts, songs or dances of early settlers. Tell or write a story about this history.
2. With your troop or patrol, work out a play or puppet show based on one of the legends. Include simple costumes, scenery, music, and dances.
3. Act out one of the folk songs. OR learn one of the folk dances and teach it to others.
4. Find out all you can about arts practiced in your part of the country. Make up a notebook or file about works of early craftsmen and toys made by the people in early settlements. Using ideas from these early arts, create your own design using paint, metal, clay, wood, weaving, or embroidery.
5. Find out what are the chief characteristics of folk art in one of the following: New England, Pennsylvania, the Northwest, the South, the Midwest, the Southwest. Collect pictures or make sketches that show this.
6. With your troop or patrol, choose a story, legend, song, or poem that tells about the early days of our country. Plan a book together. Each one letter and illustrate some of the pages. Share this book with other troops or present it to shut-ins."

Consistent with its frontier-pioneer emphasis and orientation, but questionably representative of folklore in general, the design on the badge itself is a Conestoga wagon. The National Girl Scout Headquarters in New York City has declined to offer

any more specific information, but it would be interesting to know exactly how the specific requirements of the badge were determined as well as how the general idea for such a badge arose in the first place. Likewise, one wonders which, if any, professional folklorists were consulted to assure its validity and what sort of reference materials are suggested for Scout leaders who might request further information for helping their troops with this badge. No statistics are available on the popularity of this badge, i.e. the number of girls who earn it year after year and what sort of results they obtain by approaching community and national history from a general folkloristic approach.

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THE GROWTH OF GRAFFITI

Theorists who conceive of folklore as organic will be interested in a series of graffiti collected at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, during the summer of 1974. In the right-hand center area of the metal paper dispenser in the mem's room of the fourth-floor stacks of Perkins Library, at some undeterminable date (probably early 1974) someone wrote "LITCHI MARCHING MARTHA. Why?" This inspired a series of rhymed responses that subsequently filled the space below the original query, extended to the area above it, and finally continued onto the area to the left of the original series, nearly filling that by the end of August. An observer not acquainted with the progressive history of the series would be puzzled by the apparent incoherence of the material in the order in which it now appears. Since collectors of graffiti, usually latecomers to the scene, rarely have the opportunity to record and date the development of a series of this type, it is worthwhile to note here its progress, indicating the date of first appearance, where possible, of each item, to show the rapidity with which the whole was created.

(1) LITCHI MARCHING MARTHA. Why?

(2) to cool his tool

(3) to rule his mule

(4) to tool his ghoul

(5) to fool his jewel