

by W. K. McNeil

In recent years some academics have manifested an avid interest in popular music. Judging from their publications these students seem to think popular music did not exist prior to the post-World War Two era or, at least, that popular music before that time is of no importance. The pages of a new journal, Popular Music and Society, have thus far been almost entirely devoted to studies concerning top tunes of the last twenty-five years, in most cases popular songs of the past ten years. Unfortunately the authors of such studies too frequently seem to be appreciators rather than scholars and thereby often fail to provide significant information about the importance of current popular music and the role it plays in society. But, whether these writers are good or bad scholars it seems certain that they are the main academic audience Gale Research Company hopes to reach with their publication, Top Pop Records--1955-1970.

1955 was chosen as the earliest date covered in the compilation for at least two reasons: this was the year Billboard published the first of its "Top 100" charts (changed in August, 1958 to the "Hot 100") and it is also relatively near the beginning of the rock and roll era, the period popular music specialists seem to be most interested in. From 1955 to 1970 over 9,800 records appeared on the Billboard charts and each is listed here under the names of the approximately 2,500 performers who recorded them. The groupings are in chronological order under the artist's names which are arranged alphabetically. Such a system operates to the disadvantage of those who may know only the title of a song and wish to find the names of those who recorded it. The present classification necessitates a painstaking search through each of the book's 236 unnumbered pages. However, after records are located one finds some useful facts. Entries are arranged in five columns with the following information given in this order: (1) Date the record first appeared on the chart, (2) Highest position the record reached on the chart, (3) Total number of weeks on the chart, (4) Title of the record, and (5) Recording company and number of recording. Dates of the recording sessions and, in the case of performances by duets, trios, quartets, etc., the names of members of a group are the only basic items omitted.

Whitburn's compilation is valuable for those collectors of folklore who consider all items in an informant's repertoire important since folk singers often have numbers like "Seventh Son" and "I Want To Hold Your Hand" as well as more traditional songs which they perform. These objective types excluded, Top Pop Records--1955-1970 probably will not appeal to folklorists. Financially, however, it is not out of reach because for once Gale has issued a reprint priced far below the original selling price of the first edition (which was \$50 in this instance). It is certainly a volume which should appeal to those interested in acquiring reference works on popular music.

Ironworks on the Saugus, by E. N. Hartley. Pp. 328. Illustrations, index.

Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971. Reprint of a 1957 edition. \$8.95.

by Warren E. Roberts.

The restored, or, better, reproduced, Hammersmith ironworks on the Saugus River at Saugus, Massachusetts is a monument to archaeological and historical research. It reproduces, on the original site, a large industrial complex which flourished for a few years after construction began in 1647 but which was abandoned as an economic failure. Of the two types of research undertaken in connection with the ironworks, Hartley's book represents the historical and is an excellent embodiment of the accomplishments and limitations of that type. Hartley has dug deeply into the mine of documents available in the United States and in Great Britain and has excavated great chunks of pertinent material. From that crude ore he has refined a fascinating narrative dealing with the leaders and directors of the work, the capitalists in England, for the most part, who provided the financial backing, the interminable lawsuits surrounding the demise of the enterprise, the output of the plant and the costs of raw materials and labor, seemingly every subject that the surviving written records could throw light upon. He also devotes a lucid chapter to the technology at Hammersmith, ably illustrated with photographs of the reproduced ironworks and with engravings from eighteenth century treatises on ironworking. Hartley has seemingly left no stone unturned in his search for historical data and his book must certainly be considered a major contribution to the history of industry.

But what of the other type of research that has gone on in connection with the reproduced ironworks and which can best be termed as archaeological in the broadest sense? How was the site excavated and what was found that determined the exact form the reproduced buildings and machinery were to take? What archaeological evidence supports the use of the particular roofing material shown in the photographs? What artifacts were uncovered in the course of the excavations which throw light on how the many ironworkers lived and ate and worked? These, and other similar questions, belong of course in another book, but it is this other book which would probably be of most interest to the folklife researcher. Historical research tends to emphasize what is unique about an undertaking such as this--the activities of the directors and the backers who financed it, for example--while the archaeological research would emphasize what is typical about it, for the craft of ironworking changed slowly in earlier centuries and iron furnaces very similar to the seventeenth century one on the Saugus were flourishing in southern Indiana in the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, the southern Indiana furnaces such as that south of Stanford, a few miles from Bloomington, and that a few miles southeast of Bloomfield seem to have been smaller and considerably simpler than the much earlier operation at Saugus. But it is not the purpose of this review to set one type of research up as more important than another type or to criticize Hartley for neglecting an area which he never intended to deal with. We must welcome the book for what it is, namely, an outstanding and highly readable contribution to industrial history, and welcome, too, the fact that the book is now back in print and available at reasonable cost in paperback.

Films

From the Reviews Editor: Beginning with this issue of the Folklore Forum, the editors hope to be able to include reviews of documentary and