

Lawrence Doyle: The Farmer-Poet of Prince Edward Island, A Study in Local Songmaking, by Edward D. Ives.

xviii + 269 pp. Maps, appendix, bibliography, index.

Orono: University of Maine Press, 1971. \$7.95.

Reviewed by William M. Clements

Edward Ives's study of Lawrence Doyle, a songwriter of Prince Edward Island, is another example of that approach to folklore scholarship which Ives has brought to its most impressive American blossoming. The study of an individual participant in a folk tradition has been most frequently directed at the skilled performer. Linda Dégh's study of Mrs. Palkó and Richard Dorson's treatment of J. D. Suggs are probably the examples most familiar to American readers. Although he also deals with the individual in a tradition, Ives's emphasis has not been upon skilled performers. He has been concerned with the creators of folklore -- especially the makers of folksongs.

An earlier book, Larry Gorman, The Man Who Made the Songs (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), reconstructed the biography of a folk poet of Maine and the Maritimes in terms of the place of his compositions in the satirical song tradition of the Northeast. Ives's articles on Gorman and others have appeared in various folklore periodicals. Recently with Henry Glassie and John Szwed, he has contributed to the volume, Folksongs and Their Makers (Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press, 1970).

Lawrence Doyle differs in approach from Larry Gorman. The earlier book had emphasized the life of the folk poet and the tradition of satirical songmaking of which he was a part. In Lawrence Doyle Ives seems more concerned with the songs themselves and with the circumstances which stimulated Doyle to exercise his talents. A chapter tracing Doyle's biography is followed by discussions of individual songs attributed to him. Eight chapters are devoted to single songs, four chapters treat songs which deal with the same theme or subject, and one chapter concerns fragments of and allusions to other songs allegedly written by Doyle. Ives covers the tradition which fostered Doyle's activities in chapters on other folk poets from the section of Prince Edward Island where Doyle lived and on the occasions at which the compositions of these folk poets might have been performed. A concluding chapter examines Doyle in terms of Glassie's characterization of the creative individual in a folk community, offers Ives's criteria for attributing songs to Doyle, and comments on the persistence of Doyle's songs in folk tradition.

The arrangement of the book seems to have been dictated by the nature of the subject. Unlike Larry Gorman, Doyle spent his life as a colorless, but solid citizen -- a moderately prosperous farmer whose only mark of distinction was his songmaking talent. Not the sort of figure about whom Gorman-like legends would accumulate, Doyle is known primarily through public records and an occasional vague reminiscence. His songs, also, were different from those of Gorman, who used his talent to direct satirical shafts at those who had wronged him or of whom he disapproved. Doyle's songs deal with local events and institutions (parties, murders, exchanges between farmers and tramps) and with partisan politics (Liberal). When recognizable persons are mentioned in Doyle's songs, they are treated with gentle good humor. Even his political songs lack the personal invec-

tive which made Gorman a man to be feared. In his descriptions of the situations which inspired Doyle's songs, Ives not only presents some insights into possible stimuli for local songmakers, but also provides a good deal of information about the way of life among the farmer folk of Prince Edward Island in the late nineteenth century.

My only reservation about the book relates to the amount of space devoted to the possible origins of particular songs. Ives is careful to note when he is conjecturing, but so many pages are spent describing hypothetical circumstances behind songs that other significant features of the book are outweighed. However, Lawrence Doyle deserves the acclaim that it will certainly receive. It is essential reading for anyone interested in North American folksong, folk creativity, or the culture of the Canadian Maritimes. This valuable study combines these interests with results that should satisfy any scholar.

William M. Clements, a Ph.D. candidate at the Folklore Institute, teaches folklore and English at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro.

Sing To Me Of Heaven: A Study of Folk and Early American Materials in Three Old Harp Books, by Dorothy D. Horn.  
212 pp. Appendices, bibliography, index of tunes, general index.  
Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1970. \$10.00.

Reviewed by Lida M. Belt

Dorothy D. Horn has made a significant contribution to American folksong scholarship with the publication of her most recent work, Sing To Me Of Heaven. The author has said that she intended it to be an all-purpose book, which would present information of interest to the general reader as well as a considerable amount of technical musical analysis of her materials, and she has succeeded admirably.

This volume represents a study of Old Harp music, so named because of the age of the song books in which this music is found and the use of the word "harp" as a part of the title of the various song books themselves (i.e., The Harp Of Columbia, The Sacred Harp, The Harp Of The South, etc.). The Old Harp music which forms the basis for Dr. Horn's study is to be found in three Old Harp books still in use: The Southern Harmony, The Original Sacred Harp, and The New Harp Of Columbia.

The music itself can be divided into two types: (1) early American works (which she defines as hymn tunes, fuguing pieces, or anthems whose composers are definitely known and were born in the eighteenth century), and (2) folk hymns. Although the greater portion of the work is devoted to a detailed discussion of folk hymns, Dr. Horn provides her reader with a brief and concise section of background information on musical activity in early America as well as with a very useful list of the early American compositions which appear in the three Old Harp books previously mentioned; each item on her list is accompanied by explanatory notes and documentation.