

Happily the scholarly approach of the pamphlet did not destroy anything; on the contrary it added new dimensions of depth to my appreciation of fiddling.

The record and booklet are available as a single package from the Recording Laboratory, Music Division, Library of Congress, and deserve a place in the personal collection of any true lover of good old-time fiddling.

The Ballad of Tom Dula, by John Foster West.

212 pp., illustrations, bibliography.

Durham, N. C.: Moore Publishing Company, 1970. \$6.95.

Reviewed by Richard Sweterlitsch.

After reading John Foster West's book about the real story of Tom Dula, I ran off and got out an old 45 rpm of "The Ballad of Tom Dooley." Somehow, it just seemed like the thing to do. At least I really knew how Grayson fitted into the whole picture, and that Dooley, nee Dula, wasn't really all that the song made him.

The Ballad of Tom Dula is one of those books which proposes to recreate an historical event. Based on court records (limited as they were), newspaper accounts (sensational as they were) and West's own re-creative skills, the book makes most interesting reading. Tom Dula, Laura Foster, Ann Melton, James Grayson are all here, and they are here with somewhat detailed character sketches. There are also briefer descriptions of the major witnesses, the judge, and the various attorneys. Large pieces of testimony are reprinted, suggesting what mountain courtroom justice may have been like in the 1860's.

West knows something about folklore (he's presently one of the vice-presidents of the North Carolina Folklore Society), and he has an acute skill in handling historical facts. Yet, although historical re-creation is a major aim of the book, there is a reasonable proportion of space devoted to oral tradition about the Dula affair.

In the first part of the book, West reprints sixteen ballad texts or fragments of texts about Dula and the murder. In the first chapter, he compares ten stories about the murder, including one he collected in 1969. He includes these to show discrepancies in the various oral traditions, and between the traditions and the facts themselves. West writes: "The important point to be made here is that 'The Ballad of Tom Dula' and the myths surrounding it serve as classic examples showing how folklore grows up around most folk ballads and how the two complement each other. Discovering what really happened to Tom Dula and those involved in the tragedy clarifies the relationship of all folk ballads to the montage of facts and myths upon which they are based" (p. 50). This problem of clarifying the relationship between folklore and written history is adroitly handled by West, and his methodology should interest persons who are interested in the problem. Whether the book "clarifies the relationship of all folk ballads to the montage of facts and myths" or not, remains to be seen.

The Final chapter of the book "A Modern Lawyer's View of the Tom Dula Case," by Ted G. West (author's brother?), an attorney at Lenoir, North Carolina, provides an appropriate ending to the book. He makes some observations about the nature of the evidence and reaches some interesting conclusions, among them is that folklore which he heard as a child about the murder may have been closer to the truth about Tom Dula than what available historical evidence would have us believe.