

## Academic Folklore Research in Canada Trends and Prospects (Part 2)

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### Résumé de l'article

Ce texte est la seconde partie d'un rapport préparé pour le compte de Patrimoine canadien et portant sur l'état de la recherche en ethnologie au Canada. Écrit en 1998, ce rapport expose comment le Canada a donné suite à la déclaration de l'UNESCO de 1989 concernant la sauvegarde des cultures traditionnelles et de leurs savoirs. Cette seconde partie aborde les quatre derniers points de la déclaration de l'UNESCO : la préservation des cultures populaires, leur diffusion, leur protection et la coopération internationale. Des suggestions sont présentées relativement aux politiques gouvernementales qui pourraient améliorer l'appui canadien à la déclaration de l'UNESCO. Les cultures populaires ont été préservées par le biais du financement fédéral de la recherche et de la formation de professionnels. Les ethnologues ont diffusé des contenus dans différents types de médias et de publications. Les cultures populaires ont été protégées par le biais de l'adoption de différents codes d'éthique concernant les informateurs, leurs savoirs et leurs objets. Les ethnologues canadiens ont été impliqués dans un large spectre d'activités internationales et de projets de coopération avec des spécialistes de différentes parties du monde. Finalement, sont présentées des raisons historiques qui expliquent pourquoi aucun des différents centres qui se sont développés à travers le pays n'assume le rôle de centre national pour les études canadiennes en ethnologie. Parmi la série de recommandations qui sont formulées, il est proposé d'établir un tel centre à Ottawa, pour coordonner et encourager toutes les formes de documentation et de recherche sur les cultures populaires au Canada.

# ACADEMIC FOLKLORE RESEARCH IN CANADA

## Trends and Prospects (Part 2)

Gerald L. Pocius

*Memorial University of Newfoundland*

This essay is the second part of a report I prepared for the Department of Canadian Heritage; the first section appeared in *Ethnologies* (2000, 22, 2: 255-280). As a prologue to that initial section, I discussed the background to this report, the issues that it needed to address, and the time frame of its creation. I discussed, as well, the point that recommendations were mine, and are not current policy in the Department of Canadian Heritage, nor will they necessarily be converted to policy. The reader should consult part one of this essay for fuller details.

### Preservation of Folklore

The UNESCO declaration urges that both formal teaching and out-of-school programmes emphasize folklore in its widest sense. According to the declaration, this means that folklore is not just a product of rural cultures, but flourishes in urban contexts and is created and maintained among diverse social groups, professions and institutions. This point, the declaration maintains, will promote cultural diversity and cultural understanding.

Canadian academics researching folklore could not more wholeheartedly agree with this statement. Clearly, the term folklore as an academic construct is misunderstood by scholars not familiar with its academic study and the general public alike. Academic folklorists around the world agree that folklore is not a product simply of the rural isolated community. This may have been the late nineteenth century romantic nationalistic reasons why the study began, but modern folklorists have long recognized the limitations of this approach. Folklore can exist in all contexts, and is a part of all our lives.

Amateur enthusiasts in many countries — including Canada — also misunderstand the term. To these enthusiasts (often involved in folk arts organizations) who are frequently performers of songs, stories or dance, folklore is colourful, quaint, and the product of isolated peoples or peoples out of the mainstream. Folklore, then, becomes associated simply with a certain language group (the French, say), or a certain region considered isolated (Newfoundland), or groups different from the majority (ethnics). All of these assumptions the academic folklorist recognizes as simply wrong.

Academic folklorists have recognized that folklore exists among all groups, the groups mentioned in Section B of UNESCO's declaration: family, occupation, nation, region, religion, ethnic group — and so many more. What has often led to subtle divisiveness in public policies and public perceptions is the notion that somehow *we* do not have folklore, but other groups do — therefore marginalizing them, making them different from us. While academic folklorists continue to struggle with making the true universality of folklore among all groups better understood, they must often labour under the burdens of regional politics that makes this problematic. With no national institution putting forward a national viewpoint, dialogue is often difficult.

Many important studies have been produced by Canadian folklorists that indicate how folklore exists among a wide range of groups. One could, for example, take the special theme issues from the national journal of professional folklorists, *Canadian Folklore Canadien* (now *Ethnologies*), as an indication of how research today is focused on the folk traditions of ordinary people. Topics covered include traditions surrounding women, masculine national pursuits including hockey, houses of mainstream ordinary Canadians, food, material culture, costume, urban traditions.<sup>1</sup>

### *Folklore in Schools*

Academic folklorists in many instances have been concerned with raising awareness among the general public of their folklore, and through this awareness ensuring a pride in local traditions. This has sometimes been done through introducing folklore materials into school curriculums. A good example of this was the experiment in the Newfoundland school system to have a special

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1. Special issues of *Canadian Folklore Canadien* include: women, 15:2 (1993); masculinities: 19:1 (1997); vernacular architecture, 17:2 (1995); food, 12:1 (1990); material culture, 4:1-2 (1982); clothing, 10:1-2 (1988); urban ethnology, 16:1 (1994).

section on folk literature. Memorial University academics wrote special modules dealing with various aspects of Newfoundland folk literature: ballad, song, rhymes, drama, and so on, each having a brief discussion with local examples.<sup>2</sup> These were used in particular folk literature courses, as well as a special course that had been introduced on Newfoundland culture. Unfortunately, with funding cutbacks, these courses were the first to feel the crunch, and the future of this program is in question.

### *Economic Support for Research*

The Federal Government over the years has played a role in supporting scientific research that has led, certainly, to the documentation and preservation of much folklore. This support has come through the general funding of scholarly research by granting agencies such as the Canada Council, later divided into the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the Canada Council for the Arts. Folklorists have received funding, as well, from Multiculturalism, and even the Department of External Affairs.<sup>3</sup>

SSHRC was created in 1977, with academic research before that funded under the old Canada Council. Academic folklorists have received the bulk of their funding for scholarly research under the SSHRC General Research Grants funding programme. Through the lobbying efforts of several academic folklorists, folklore was added as a discipline to the categories that SSHRC funds early in its mandate. Over the years, folklorists have served on the appropriate adjudication committees, although this is not necessarily the case each year (Labrie 1994: 3-4). Folklore projects that SSHRC has funded include: Newfoundland vernacular architecture (1980); Newfoundland furniture traditions (1984); aging in a traditional society (1986), children's folk music (1989), Québec costume (1990), an Ottawa Valley community folksong study (1990), mock weddings in Western Canada (1990), Acadian conversational narratives (1991), Québec popular culture (1991), Canadian women's folklore (1991), Native-Basque cultural transfer (1991), Newfoundland fisheries architecture (1992), Ontario festivals (1995), modern Québec clothing (1996).<sup>4</sup>

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2. These modules have been reprinted in one volume (Butt and Small 1995).

3. For example, External Affairs sponsored speaking trips of folklorists to Australia in 1990, and Lithuania in 1993.

4. Summarized from SSHRC (1996).

The Multiculturalism Programme has also funded research projects by Canadian folklorists. The numbers have been small, partly because the two major folklore research institutions — Laval and Memorial — have focused on language and regional groups outside of Multiculturalism's mandate. But some research by folklorists under the Ethnic Studies Programme has been supported; this includes work on American immigrants to Nova Scotia as an ethnic group; Italian-Canadian songs; Métis music in Alberta and Saskatchewan; Ukrainian songs; Cape Breton mining songs; Doukhobor traditions; Cape Breton Gaelic folklore; South Asian Canadian music (Canadian Heritage 1993a: 17, 28, 30, 38, 54, 66; 1993b: 30, 34, 61).

Most exciting and most promising from the viewpoint of the professional folklore community is the funding of Pauline Greenhill's study of the English as an ethnic group in Ontario. This funding, which led to the publication of Greenhill's book, *Ethnicity in the Mainstream*, calls into question the entire stereotype that ethnic studies involves non-Anglos (or non-Francophones) (Greenhill 1994). Following current folklore scholarship, Greenhill's work indicates — as the UNESCO declaration maintains — that folklore is a part of every group's heritage, no matter what its background.

### *Economic Support for Training*

The Canada Council, and, later, its offspring, SSHRCC, both provided funding for postgraduate and postdoctoral students. Carole Henderson received a Canada Council grant to fund her PhD research (Halpert 1969: 22, footnote 16); her dissertation was published as *Many Voices*, and remains the standard work on the history of Canadian folklore studies.

SSHRCC funding, again, has meant that students coming from diverse cultural backgrounds are able to document, analyze and preserve their own cultural materials. At Memorial University, for example, some of the earliest postgraduate students were Newfoundlanders. Two of these — Wilfred Wareham and Lawrence Small — were supported by Canada Council Fellowships, and were able to complete PhD research that focused on traditions in their home communities. Both subsequently taught at Memorial University. A number of PhD and postdoctoral folklore students have been supported at both Laval and Memorial over the years.

## Dissemination of Folklore

Canadian academics have attempted to promote scientific research across the country in many ways, most obviously through the formation of a national scholarly organization devoted to exchange of information relating to research. The Folklore Studies Association of Canada/l'Association Canadienne d'Ethnologie et de Folklore was founded in 1976, and for over twenty years has been the leading force in promoting the scientific study of folklore.<sup>5</sup> As part of its mandate, FSAC/ACEF publishes a Bulletin and a Journal, has a website ([www.fl.ulaval.ca/celat/acef](http://www.fl.ulaval.ca/celat/acef)), and holds annual meetings where papers are presented and information about folklore and its study can be exchanged. During its twentieth anniversary year in 1996, Ronald Labelle reported that over 900 papers had been given at previous annual meetings; music and dance research formed one large group, as did studies of oral narratives and material culture (Labelle 1996: 8).

### *Media and Academics*

While folklorists focus much of their time on their teaching and research projects, there has been a long history of involvement with the professional media. Many academic folklorists began their careers with some media involvement, later moving on to research and teaching. Edith Fowke, for example, was one of the key figures in the development of Canadian academic folklore; she authored many of the first folklore texts in Canada, and taught folklore courses for many years at York University. However, her earliest work in the 1950s and 1960s was creating a series of folk music programmes in her native Saskatchewan for the Canadian Broadcasting Compagny (CBC). Later, she collaborated with the singer Alan Mills to produce various CBC

5. Originally the name of the Society was the same in English and French: Folklore Studies Association of Canada, and l'Association canadienne pour les études de folklore. Francophones had wanted to rid themselves of the term "folklore" completely, noting that it was pejorative in Québec, and that "ethnologie" was the accepted term for study and employment. A compromise was arrived at by changing the French name of the association to Association canadienne d'ethnologie et de folklore (FSAC/ACEF 1988: 31-32). Although the title of the Association's journal was *Canadian Folklore Canadien*, the word "Ethnologie" was added prominently to the cover when the journal's production and editorship changed from Memorial to Laval in 1990; the new name of the journal, *Ethnologies*, fosters unity with its bilingual plural.

programmes, Fowke writing the scripts, Mills narrating and singing. During her career, Fowke published popular anthology after popular anthology, and issued a series of recordings on the *Folkways* label featuring singers from all over Ontario.<sup>6</sup>

Folklorists have worked closely with both CBC and the National Film Board over the years to produce many documentaries on traditional culture. Like so much of this activity, however, no national coordinator has ensured broad and continual coverage. However, in spite of this, much has been produced. For example, five films are mentioned in the Québec government's ethnologie handbook that were created by the National Film Board; these include productions on religious arts, Marius Barbeau, and a thirteen-part series on traditional music. Robert Klymasz, now working for the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, researched the important film, "Luchak's Easter", for the National Film Board; this piece focused on an Ukrainian Easter custom in western Canada. Memorial University's Art Gallery produced a film series on traditional craftspeople that involved folklore faculty and graduate students. Folklorists have recently moved into the commercial video market; Richard MacKinnon at University College of Cape Breton, working through his own company, Folkus Productions, has recently released a video on mining folklore in Cape Breton. Folkus Productions now is beginning to produce CD-ROMs; "Time Travel to the Eighteenth-Century" is a recent CD-ROM on material culture, based partly on materials from Louisbourg, and aimed at the high school market.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of radio, the CBC national radio series "Ideas" featured a programme on fairy beliefs, created by Memorial folklorist Peter Narváez.<sup>8</sup> Anita Best, a former student of Memorial's folklore programme, had a popular radio series on CBC St. John's that highlighted traditional singers and storytellers. And the recent annual reports by CELAT list the extensive participation of Laval ethnologists in local radio programming (Turgeon 1997: 108-111).

Folklorists, as well, have often been involved in the production of music recordings. For years, several faculty at Memorial University have been involved

6. For Edith Fowke's work at CBC, her anthologies and recordings, see Fowke 1996: 118; for her biography see Rahn 1996: 183-185.
7. Folkus, "A Day Underground: The Men of The Deeps,"; CD-Rom: "Time Travel to the Eighteenth Century: Life in New World Settlements."
8. "Ideas: The Fairy Faith," CBC Radio, 24 June 1989.

with helping produce recordings that include French fiddle music, mining songs relating to a major strike, and accordion music. Many Laval folklore graduates have been involved with assisting in commercial music productions. For example, Charlotte Cormier, a leading Acadian scholar as well as performer, produced a recording and publication dealing with traditional materials (Cormier 1977). More recently, folklorists have begun to move into the video format to promote musical traditions. Richard MacKinnon at UCCB recorded and produced a documentary video on three Cape Breton musical traditions, Micmac, Acadian and Scottish.<sup>9</sup>

### *Libraries*

In their work, academics have made efforts to assemble important research collections of scholarly folklore works accessible to all scholars. Laval's folklore research over the years has been matched by an impressive collection of French folklore works at the University Library. Mount Allison Library has the Mary Mellish Archibald Collection, strong in folksong materials, which — as one folklorist described it — is “hard to match anywhere in the United States or Great Britain” (Halpert 1969: 14; Ralph Pickard Bell Library 1975). Certainly the leading Canadian library for folklore volumes and periodicals is Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II. For thirty years, the Department of Folklore has worked closely with the library to build up its collection, and the library, in turn, has been generous in its acquisitions policy. The importance of the Library was both recognized and enhanced by SSHRCC's now-defunct funding programme to strengthen special library collections. Memorial's library was awarded Special Collections Grants in 1989, 1990, 1991 — totalling \$45,000 — to acquire specialized volumes in folklore. This award was based on the recognition that the library's collection of folklore was the most important in Canada, and that it was a collection to be used for both national and international research.

### *Publication Series*

Over the years, academics have attempted to make known their scholarly work to both university researchers and the general public. Early this century, the most common outlet was publications by the National Museum of Man, first through its *Anthropological Bulletins*, later through its general publications,

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9. “From the Heart: Maritime Folk Music,” Folkus Productions.



and, most recently through the various Mercury Series volumes. While in the 1970s the Mercury Series attempted to provide a vast amount of inexpensive material to the general public, more recent volumes have been more carefully edited, and fewer in number (recent volumes include: Galipeau 1995; Klymasz 1996).

As the National Museum as a publishing outlet declined, regional publishers and institutions became more involved. At Laval, the Archives de Folklore series has produced 26 volumes to date. When CELAT became the institutional framework for much Laval folklore work, Jean-Claude Dupont launched the *Ethnologie de l'Amérique française* series; studies include popular religious devotional cards, songs of the voyageurs, a general study of seventeenth century material culture, and the evolution of domestic heating (Lessard 1981; Béland 1982; Audet 1990; Moussette 1983). The Québec provincial government also produced several series that made its work accessible to the general public; these included *les Cahiers du patrimoine*, the *Civilisation du Québec*, the *Dossier* series, and *les Retrouvailles*. No government — Federal or Provincial — can match the efforts of the Québec Government to document its folklore and make those results available to the general public in published form.

Within English-speaking Canada, no national folklore series exists — unlike other countries. In the United States, for example, the American Folklore Society has had a long-standing publication series, choosing volumes that are then produced by commercial publishers. Two Canadian volumes have appeared under this designation, Gerald Thomas' *The Tall Tale and Philippe d'Alcricpe*, and Gary Butler's *Saying Isn't Believing* (Thomas 1977; Butler 1990). One other regional series has drawn from the work of academic folklorists. Breakwater Books in Newfoundland has an Atlantic Canada Folklore and Folklife Series, started by Kenneth S. Goldstein in 1978, when he was Head of Memorial's Department of Folklore. This series intended to produce popular folklore works for the general public, and a number of volumes have been written by Memorial faculty and former postgraduate students.<sup>10</sup> During the 1970s, dozens of volumes were published by commercial publishers in Québec on ethnologie topics, some involving Laval graduates, some funded by the Provincial government.<sup>11</sup>

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10. The first volume appeared in 1978 (Ryan and Small 1978); to date, 17 volumes have appeared.

11. The list would be massive (Lessard and Marquis 1971; 1972; 1975).

Canada's folklore archives all have had series that were produced with the intention of making their materials accessible. The Archives de Folklore volumes have already been noted. Memorial's archive, MUNFLA, has several series; to date, the titles have been largely analytical works, such as a catalogue of songs sung by French Newfoundlanders, a title and first-line index to Newfoundland songs in printed collections, and a discography of Newfoundland music (Thomas 1978; Mercer 1979; Taft 1975a). However, MUNFLA materials have been used to produce publications that have been among the most widely-selling books on Newfoundland culture; the best example is the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982).

The Centre franco-ontarien de folklore has published an extensive amount of folklore texts; most widely known are the thirty-three volumes of folk narratives collection by Germain Lemieux (1973-1991). More recently, however, Jean-Pierre Pichette has engaged a wide range of Francophone scholars to assist in a project to produce a massive *Encyclopédie des traditions populaires de l'Amérique française*. This volume, when complete, will contain entries dealing with the traditions of Francophones all over North America (Pichette 1997: 65-68). One could only hope that similar volumes might be planned by scholars for other Canadian groups, or for Canada as a whole — as has been done in the United States (Brunvand 1996).

Individual folklorists continue to be involved in making folklore texts and items accessible to the general public. Most popular and widespread in this regard are songbooks edited by folklorists. These usually involve careful attention to presenting exact transcriptions of texts, providing annotations as to where other versions of songs can be found, and some commentary about community contexts.<sup>12</sup>

### *Periodicals, Bulletins, Newsletters*

The promotion of scientific research on folklore has taken place through a variety of journals over the years. Early on, Marius Barbeau quickly moved into the forefront of academic folklore studies in the North American context. In 1916, he became co-editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*, and eight special Canadian numbers of that journal appeared between 1916 and 1950.

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12. Recent examples by folklorists include: Arsenault (1993); Creighton (1988).

While other regional journals (such as the *Alberta Folklore Quarterly*) have made brief appearances, the most important avenue of dissemination has been *Canadian Folklore Canadien*, now *Ethnologies*, published by FSAC/ACEF since 1979. This journal continues to provide a national forum where research materials and findings can be disseminated. In the past, *CFC* received publication support from SSHRCC; most recently, the journal has received a three-year publication subvention from the Québec granting agency Fonds pour la formation de chercheurs et l'aide à la recherche (FCAR). Since its inception, the Society has published a *Bulletin*, first semi-annually and now annually, which contains a broad range of information about folklore research in Canada. As well, the abstracts of papers given at the annual meetings are listed each year.

Other periodicals disseminate current folklore research. Postgraduate students at Laval and Memorial have been producing Canada's longest-running folklore journal (since 1976), *Culture & Tradition*, which has published both student and faculty research. CELAT at Laval has issued various information Bulletins since 1979; *Nouvelles du CELAT* is its current title, and usually appears at least three times a year. This Bulletin has sections on recent research projects funded by the Federal and Provincial Governments, announcements on symposia held at CELAT, and recent conference presentations and publications by students and faculty. Recently, the graduate students at Memorial have started a similar newsletter, *Transmission*. From 1975-1980, largely because of the influence of Robert-Lionel Séguin, the *Revue d'ethnologie du Québec* was published, concentrating on the study of historical traditions. Finally, the Ukrainian Folklore Program at the University of Alberta publishes *Ukrainian Ethnography News*, an annual update of conferences, publications, and research projects.

### *Bibliographies*

The research done by academic folklorists has also been disseminated through the publication of national and regional bibliographies. Edith Fowke and Carole Carpenter compiled the definitive bibliography of Canadian folklore works written in English. Their volume, *A Bibliography of Canadian Folklore in English*, published with support from Multiculturalism, contains nearly 4000 entries, and covers Anglophone, Francophone, First Nations, and other cultural groups (Fowke and Carpenter 1981). Michael Taft (formerly a free-lance folklorist in Alberta) and Gerald Pocius, Memorial, are both Senior Bibliographers for the Modern Language Association Annual Folklore

Bibliography, and their work ensures that current Canadian scholarship is listed. Other recent bibliographies compiled by folklorists include regional themes such as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, as well as folklore types, such as material culture and rites of passage (Taft 1975b and 1992; Hiscock 1989; Blanchette, Bouchard and Pocius 1982).

### *National Academic Meetings*

FSAC/ACEF has held annual meetings since 1976 — usually in conjunction with the Learned Societies, the national gathering of most academic societies at one University campus each spring\*. At the annual FSAC meeting, papers in both English and French on a wide variety of topics are presented. These meetings act as forums where numerous issues that the UNESCO declaration mentions have been debated. These include archiving principles, safeguarding informants, fieldwork techniques and methods, the proper training of folklorists, use of folklore in media, museums and other public venues.

### **Protection of Folklore**

Academic folklorists recognize the importance of safeguarding the rights of informants and collectors in the documentation of folklore, and the safeguarding of these rights once materials have been deposited in institutions for safekeeping and future use. Because of this, FSAC/ACEF drew up a code of ethics in 1980 that outlined the rights and responsibilities of collectors to their informants, and the proper safeguarding of folklore materials (Dufresne *et al.* 1980: 22-36).

Similarly, major folklore archives such as Memorial and Laval have put in place formal agreements for collectors, informants, and depositors of materials to ensure the safeguarding of this intellectual property.

### **International Cooperation**

Canadian folklorists have felt that cooperation with scholars from other countries has been a key concern in their academic work. This cooperation

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\* Editor's note: Since 1998, the Learned Societies meetings have been replaced by the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, held under the auspices of the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada (HSSFC)/Fédération canadienne des sciences humaines et sociales (FCSHS).

has permitted interchanges of ideas, exchanges of new findings, and innovations in scholarly theory and method. We can start with Marius Barbeau's early exchanges with Franz Boas, and point to the fact that Canadian folklorists have been involved with scholars and scholarly organizations from other countries over the years.

Canadian folklorists have held posts in a wide range of international organizations: the American Folklore Society, the International Society for the Study of Contemporary Legend, the Vernacular Architecture Forum. Many Canadian scholars participate in meetings hosted by international societies: the list is long, but examples include: International Society for the Study of Popular Music; Vernacular Architecture Group; Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore; International Society for Folk Narrative Research; Society for Historical Archaeology, l'Association internationale de sémiotique, among others.

An indication that Canadian folklore research has had an impact on international scholarship is the awards received by recent monographs. For example, the Chicago Folklore Prize (the most prestigious international prize for English language monographs) was awarded to Pauline Greenhill's book on Ontario popular verse, *True Poetry* (second prize in 1990), and Gerald Pocius' work on Newfoundland material culture and landscape, *A Place to Belong* (first prize, 1992); Pocius' book was also awarded the Cummings Prize from the Vernacular Architecture Forum in the United States (FSAC/ACEF 1990: 11; 1992: 19-20). Gary Butler's book, *Saying Isn't Believing*, was awarded the first Alcée Fortier Prize in French and French-American Folklore by the American Folklore Society in 1992 (FSAC/ACEF 1993: 29). Canadian academics have also been invited scholars at foreign universities. Laurier Turgeon, Laval, has twice been a Visiting Professor at l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris; Gerald Pocius was appointed a National Endowment for the Humanities Visiting Research Fellow at Wintherthur Museum in the United States in 1985 as part of his work on Newfoundland material culture.

Canadian folklorists have also organized a number of international conferences held here in Canada in order to further folklore research. These meetings have usually been financed in part by SSHRCC, as well as receiving funds from individual University sources and Provincial granting agencies. In 1986, for example, the Institute for Social and Economic Research at Memorial funded — together with SSHRCC — an international meeting on the study

of material culture. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of Laval's folklore programme, a major conference was organized to assess past scholarship and suggest future directions; speakers were chosen from across Canada, from the United States, and from France. CELAT recently has had, as well, a series of specialized meetings that have drawn participants from outside Canada, as well as speakers from here. Themes have included: *Transferts culturels et métissages Amérique/Europe, XVIe-XXe siècle* (which received SSHRCC funding).

Attendance at international conferences by Canadian scholars has been possible through a number of funding sources. Most widely used are the funds from SSHRCC. For many years, there was a special funding programme for attendance specifically at conferences outside Canada. Now these funds are administered directly by each university. But this funding has assured that Canadian scholars can continue to attend international conferences during times when individual university travel budgets have been reduced.

Canadian scholars have been involved with various bilateral projects over the years involving work both at home and abroad. Most recently, for example, Laval University has made links with scholars in eastern Europe. CELAT has started a cooperative research programme with the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow; this programme focuses on cultural issues of interest to scholars from both countries (CELAT 1997: 5-6). Part of the results were discussed in a conference held in Moscow in March, 1998. Laval has also established a student/faculty exchange programme with the University of Bucharest in Hungary, and the University of Sophia in Romania. Five folklore students are currently studying at Laval, funded by AUPELF, the International Francophone University Scholarship Fund. Laurier Turgeon, Director of CELAT, recently returned from a three-week tour of China, forging links with Chinese academics. He is currently engaged in a research project comparing religious material culture used by the Jesuits in China and Canada in the seventeenth century.

At Memorial University, Gerald Pocius has been involved in a joint project with Lithuanian researchers looking at how popular housing in both countries adjusted to Government pressures: in Canada's case, Federal regulatory agencies, in Lithuania's case, Soviet architectural ideology.

Memorial University has established an exchange programme with Bergen University in Norway, and a number of bilateral folklore projects have ensued.

Two Memorial PhD students have been at Bergen, cooperating with Norwegian scholars, and utilizing Norwegian materials and scholarship in their research. David Taylor's PhD thesis compared boatbuilding traditions in Newfoundland with those in Norway. James Moreira's work on medieval ballads drew heavily on Norwegian analogues to explain Canadian materials.

## Conclusions

The academic documentation, preservation, and dissemination of folklore within the Canadian academic context has had a long and often turbulent history. Clearly two institutions have led the way — Laval and Memorial — with scholars at Laval clearly producing the bulk of work devoted to Canadian (i.e., Québec) materials. Indeed, as Carole Carpenter has noted, “the greatest strength of Canadian folklore scholarship is that concerned with French Canadian traditions” (Carpenter 1996a: 120).

The expansion of academic folklore within English-speaking Canada has never occurred. Memorial University remains the only postgraduate degree-granting programme that entertains studies of all Canadian groups; in reality, work at Memorial has either focused on Newfoundland or on non-Canadian topics. What often were hopeful statements of academic expansion of folklore studies in the 1970s to other Anglophone universities never materialized.<sup>13</sup>

With much folklore work occurring within regional contexts, the necessity to maintain contact with scholars on a national or international basis is even more a concern. In its earliest days, FSAC/ACEF often had as much as half its membership attend annual meetings, with close to half that membership coming from Québec (Maranda 1980: 42); that number has fallen off drastically. With attendance at meetings dropping, and with sporadic representation from major centres of research depending on a meeting's location, it becomes even more imperative to have a permanent national body to maintain connections among various scholars.

In spite of many of the problems within the university institutional framework that plague the discipline of Canadian academic folklore, it is clear that governments continue to play an important role in all aspects of folklore

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13. For example, Neil Rosenberg reported on the growing interest in academic folklore among Atlantic Canadian Universities in 1977 (Rosenberg 1978: 9); however, in Anglophone Atlantic Canada today, only University College Cape Breton currently employs a folklorist.

activities. SSHRCC, the Canada Council, and Multiculturalism continue to support folklore scholars through research grants and grants for fellowships. Most academic folklore monographs receive subventions from various Federal and Provincial Government programmes for publication. Archives at Laval, Memorial, Moncton and elsewhere have received various kinds of Government granting support, as have libraries (Carpenter 1978: 54-60).

Government policy and government funding, however, have encouraged notions of folklore that are at odds with current folklore scholarship. The emphasis on multiculturalism is “a significant strength and a serious recent problem in scholarship” (Carpenter 1996a: 121). Because of such policies, as Carpenter argues: “Canadians do not view folklore seriously because they identify it as the strange, frequently entertaining, but rather insignificant property of others — foreigners and any minority group to which they themselves do not belong — rather than as part of their nation’s and their own cultural attributes” (Carpenter 1978: 63; also see Carpenter 1975). Instead of fostering the notion — as in other countries — that folklore is part of everyone’s national, regional and group heritage, it has become the heritage of “the other”. One only has to read a discussion of folk arts recently appearing in a series financed and published by the Federal Government to realize how widespread is the notion that folklore is “quaint” activities practiced by those different (Government of Canada 1993: 1-3).

Academic folklore work in Canada would not be what it is today if not for support from various levels of government over the years. Twenty years ago Carole Carpenter argued that the Federal Government must begin to pay more attention to funding policy, and determine if what is being funded is truly beneficial for Canadian culture in general. She wrote: “Much more consideration must be given to the ramifications of today’s government role. At present, the federal government operates without either long-range cultural planning or a clearly articulated cultural platform presented to the electorate. Neither deficiency is acceptable considering the government’s culture-related activities” (Carpenter 1978: 66). Unfortunately, after twenty years, little has changed, and the Federal Government still has not formulated a coherent policy on folklore, its documentation, preservation and dissemination, as other countries have done. There are alternatives.



## Recommendations

Academic folklorists have played an important part in both the documentation and study of traditional cultures in Canada. These academics are aware of the work of amateur enthusiasts, and have often worked side by side in the recording studio, festival stage, or a popular magazine editor's office. But academics realize that their responsibilities are to present material that reflects their careful analysis of the role of folklore in a particular culture.<sup>14</sup> Because of this interest in both analysis and presentation, the amateur, the performer, the "professional folk" often have little knowledge or little interest in what the academic has done. This is unfortunate, because the experiences in our country indicate that both groups can benefit from the knowledge and expertise of the other. Indeed, Edith Fowke, one of the founders of Canadian folklore studies, worked all her life popularizing her academic work; late in her career she wrote: "I would hold that the distinction between amateur and professional, if it must be made at all, should be on the basis of the work produced: those whose work is of professional standard are professionals; those whose work is superficial may be termed amateurs" (Fowke 1978: 10).

Within the Canadian academic folklore community, the UNESCO declaration in theory is well known — well known because the professional journal of the discipline published the text not long after it was adopted by member countries in 1989 (Honko 1990). Yet, in many ways, this declaration commits signatories to national programmes, and what has gone on in Canada is much more haphazard and regional in its focus.

The Government of Ontario recently has showed initial interest in implementing projects and programmes that coincidentally respond to much of what UNESCO has called for. Several years ago, for example, the Ontario Heritage Foundation, part of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, funded an exhibition on Ontario folk art that toured various parts of the province (Kobasyashi *et al.* 1985). Most of what was documented in this exhibit came from mainstream Ontario culture, and involved academics who have been involved with the professional folklore community in Canada.

The Ontario Folklife Centre was involved for a number of years in a lobbying effort to have the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications

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14. For example see Vivian Labrie's study of the role of folklore in Québec festivals (Labrie 1980).

expand its mandate to more fully include intangible resources as part of its documentation and conversation of provincial heritage. Indeed, the Ministry had agreed to the recommendations of the Ontario Folklife Centre and other professional folklore organizations. The Ministry proposed that the longstanding work on the province's tangible heritage had now to be matched with an equal concern for intangible heritage. A significant part of that intangible heritage was folklife (Ministry of Culture and Communications 1990: 58). The Liberal Government intended to expand the provincial work on intangible heritage, but with its defeat, the new NDP Government did not adopt the former administration's plans.<sup>15</sup>

Within the Canadian context, the activities fostered by the Government of Québec provides another model on which to borrow. The Ministère des Affaires culturelles for many years had an extensive programme that surveyed, preserved, and disseminated aspects of folklore and traditional culture. Yet, these programmes have been scaled back considerably within the Provincial Government, and work on intangible heritage is nowhere near what it was in the past.

Clearly for Canada to adequately implement the recommendations of the 1989 UNESCO declaration, a series of steps should be taken to facilitate and coordinate national policies and goals. These are:

*1. Recognition of intangible heritage as one of the primary responsibilities of the Department of Canadian Heritage.*

The Federal Government should officially recognize that Canadian heritage consists of immovable heritage (land-based resources such as buildings and natural areas); moveable heritage (resources such as artifacts and documents, films, recordings); intangible heritage (such as traditional skills, values, speech, folklore) (Ministry of Culture and Communications 1990a). As many studies — such as the Ontario Heritage Policy Review — indicate today, “the intangible aspects of heritage should be viewed as an integral part of culture equally worthy of funding, study, and preservation” (Carpenter 1993: 16).

*2. Recognition that folklore is one of the key components of intangible heritage whose documentation, preservation, and conservation needs to be systematically*

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15. That plan was set out (Ministry of Culture and Communications 1990b).

*addressed on the Federal level.*

Up until now, folklore has not been documented, preserved, or conserved in any methodical way — as has, for example, immovable heritage under the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Measures should be taken to set in place similar institutional mechanisms to ensure that the intangible heritage of folklore achieves a similar level of attention. To these ends, a national coordinating body within the Department of Canadian Heritage is needed, with its mandate the safeguarding of Canada's folklore heritage.

In the United States, for example, the "American Folklife Preservation Act" was passed in 1976; the United States Government recognized "that it is in the general welfare of the Nation to preserve, support, revitalize, and disseminate American folklife traditions and arts" (94th Congress 1976). In a subsequent study, the American Folklife Centre identified what these intangible elements of cultural heritage were in traditional communities, preferring to use the term folklife:

These intangible elements are values, and actions expressing them, that stand in favor of connections to one's immediate community and place. As such they are found in the interaction among family, neighbors, and friends and provide the touchstones for orienting the individual in society. They order personal associations. They shape the relationships that enable the individual to know who one's friends are, what and where home is, who the "folks" are. The groups in which such elements are found are not limited to geographic areas, but can be composed of people who share common attributes whether family, ethnic, occupational, religious, or regional (Loomis 1983: 27).<sup>16</sup>

*3. The Federal Government should establish a Canadian Folklife Centre to provide a national focus for action to document, preserve and promote Canada's folklore heritage.*

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16. A massive body of scholarship now exists by American academics involved in the documentation, preservation, conservation and dissemination of the intangible heritage of folklore; recent discussions include: Feintuch (1988); Baron and Spitzer (1992); Hufford (1994). Current discussions of the conservation of folklore as intangible heritage appear in the newsletters, *Public Programs Newsletter* (published by the Public Sector Section of the American Folklore Society), and *Talk Story* (published by the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, Smithsonian Institution); a Canadian equivalent of either of these would be extremely useful.

The American Folklife Preservation Act created the American Folklife Centre in Washington, D.C.<sup>17</sup> This Centre has a small staff which basically acts as advisors and coordinators on folklore and folk arts activities for both academic folklore researchers and for the public at large. A Canadian Centre for Folklife should be established along this model, a model that other countries such as Australia are pursuing (Committee of Inquiry: 142-145).

The Canadian Centre would act as an administrative and research centre. First, staff would coordinate the various Federal Government programmes that deal with folklore (Canada Council, SSHRCC, Multiculturalism, and others), liaison with Provincial Government programmes dealing with folklore (Museums, Art Galleries), ensure interchange among the various academic folklore programmes in the country, act as professional and technical advisors to folk arts and multicultural organizations (folk festivals, craft groups, dance troupes) and private individuals (performers, artists).<sup>18</sup> This Centre will be in the forefront of the effort to conserve our country's national, regional, occupational, ethnic and family folklore heritage.

As one of its mandates, the Canadian Centre will develop a strategy for evaluating intangible resources. As is the case with tangible resources, this evaluation will be based on discerning categories of quality, to sort intangible cultural artifacts into groupings according to conservation strategy — in short, to judge the intangible heritage most valued, worthy or significant.<sup>19</sup> Such decisions are necessary in deciding the Centre's priorities in much of its ongoing work. As with the current Historic Sites and Monuments Board, decisions might best be made by a Board made up of Provincial Representatives, along with academic folklorists, Centre staff, and other ex-officio Government representatives (such as the Heads of Canada Council and SSHRCC).

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17. Many of the recommendations that follow in this report are modeled on what has gone on in the United States and in Australia. For more extensive discussions see: *American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress* (1987).

18. Over twenty-five years ago, a researcher at the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies wrote that the CCFCS functioned as the country's leading folklore research centre; that its responsibilities were to contribute to international folklore scholarship, stimulate the development of folklore studies in Canada, disseminate information and materials concerning Canada's folklore heritage to the public at large (Klymasz 1972: 13). In theory, this is exactly what a national folklore centre needs to do; in reality, the CCFCS no longer has this as its mandate, and has focused on other tasks.

19. These evaluative criteria are more extensively discussed in Carpenter 1993 : 7-8.

*4. A Canadian Folklife Centre would establish a National Archive of Folklife Network.*

The Canadian Folklife Centre would act as a coordinator to assess the national and regional collections of folklore that now exist in Federal, Provincial and Municipal institutions, to act to consolidate these wherever possible, and most important, using recent developments in Information Technology to devise a system that will permit the public to access holdings.

*5. A Canadian Folklife Centre would conduct field research projects in cooperation with interested Federal and Provincial Government bodies, university research institutes, and folklore programmes.*

The Canadian Folklife Centre would cooperate with Provincial organizations (Ministries of Culture, Museums, Historic Sites) and universities to engage in a series of folklore surveys. In the United States, for example, the American Folklife Centre has documented traditional artistic expression in rural Georgia and among Chicago's ethnic communities; traditional farming life in Montana; traditional ranching life in Nevada; heritage and language schools; maritime occupational culture in Florida; Italian-American family traditions in the American West. The American Folklife Centre has also worked in cooperation with the National Parks Service in nature heritage parklands to document traditional uses of landscape by residents of such preserves.<sup>20</sup>

*6. A Canadian Folklife Centre would promote the popular dissemination of folklore.*

Through the Centre's surveys, documented folklore materials would lead to popular publications, recordings, television and radio programming that would disseminate findings to the general public. The materials from such Centre surveys would be housed in regional archival repositories. However, the Centre would also act as an advisory body for Provincial and local institutions interested in producing books, magazines, recordings, videos, CD-ROMS, and so on, dealing with traditional culture. The Centre could help such organizations and individuals ensure that folklore is being presented/portrayed in accurate and sensitive ways.

The Centre would also act as an advisory body for individuals or institutions seeking advice on Canadian traditional culture. Guides could be compiled on

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20. For a discussion of these surveys see Fleischhauer (1990: 118-124).

various Government Departments and programmes that are involved in folklore documentation and/or research.<sup>21</sup> Directories would be compiled and periodically updated on current academic programmes in folklore across the country, research projects, publications, concerts, media events, museum and gallery shows, folk art sales. Much of this information-gathering and listing could be posted on the Centre's website.

*7. The Canadian Folklife Centre would liaison with national and regional folk arts organizations.*

Through joint cooperation with local folk arts enthusiasts, the Centre can facilitate the cooperation of academics and amateurs, each group benefiting from the particular strengths of the other. The academic and the amateur both can better be served by joining forces helped by such a centre to ensure that Canada's folklore is documented, preserved and conserved. Through the Centre, such groups can organize joint concerts, lectures, and workshops.

*8. The Canadian Folklife Centre would work with Provincial Ministries of Education to establish a programme of folk arts in the schools.*

Efforts should be made to encourage each Province to establish programmes that involve folklore performers and artists within local schools. This means involvement of local tradition-bearers within an formal institutional framework, able to discuss their skills, often with members of their own community. The Centre, as well, should promote the use of folklore materials in the classroom through the publication of guides for teachers,<sup>22</sup> make available folklore materials through CDs, videos, and internet sources, and have Centre staff conduct workshops on the use of folklore in the classroom for teachers across the country.

*9. The Canada Council should specifically devote a new category to Traditional Artists.*

In the United States, the National Endowment for the Arts (the equivalent of the Canada Council) has had many programmes devoted specifically to

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21. Again, a model from the American Folklife Center: Linda C. Coe (1977).

22. The American Folklife Center, for example, has published *A Teacher's Guide to Folklife Resources for K-12 Classrooms* (Bartis and Bowman 1994).

traditional artists: musicians, craftspeople, storytellers — the entire range of the performing folk arts. The NEA has a longstanding programme recognizing important folk artists as “National Heritage Fellows”. In Japan, the “National Living Treasures” programme provides country-wide recognition to those traditional performers who carry on Japanese folklore heritage. Similar programmes would be put in place by the Council (Siporin 1992). An apprenticeship programme could be established under Canada Council, as well, where young performers and craftspeople would apprentice with recognized folk artists, ensuring that traditions recognized as of national historic importance are maintained.

### **A Postscript**

Through a rather uncoordinated and often haphazard route, Canada has managed to respond to many of the recommendations of the 1989 UNESCO declaration of folklore. This is not because the Federal Government in any way has a coordinated and coherent plan that has governed folklore documentation and preservation over the years. Rather, what has gone on in Canada has largely been the work of academics using divergent agendas as to why folklore should be studied. This has meant that folklore has often been associated only with particular regions or groups, that, as such, it is at times divisive, and that certain groups are believed to have no folklore. Academics have often been driven implicitly by political agendas that are often at odds with current concepts of Federalism — making folklore seem, at times, as a threat to unity rather than a rallying symbol of identity.

The academic basis of Canadian folklore is problematic; in English-speaking Canada, it has made no inroads in twenty-five years. One leading scholar claims that in Anglophone Canada, academic folklore “remains largely an academic frill with little perceived probability for development,” a discipline characterized by “inertia” with rather limited success in Canada. In Francophone areas ethnologie is stable at best. And, unfortunately, “the focus in neither of Canada’s postgraduate folklore-studies programs reflects a nationalist orientation” (Carpenter 1996b: 124).

In short, university-based academics cannot be left with the sole responsibility to carry out the kinds of activities outlined in the UNESCO declaration. Academics have done much until now, but the future is uncertain. If the Federal Government believes that the UNESCO declaration on folklore

is to be followed, then it must be willing to take a more active and a more central role in the safeguarding of one of Canada's most pervasive, most important intangible heritages — its folklore.

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### **Afterward for Professional Folklorists, 2001**

It is appropriate that I add just a brief note for professional folklorists to this report, since the original essay was written for government officials who obviously had little knowledge of how folklore had been documented and researched by academics across the country.

Many of my recommendations follow quite easily from the fact that the Department of Canadian Heritage (under the Historic Sites and Monuments Board) already has a bureaucratic structure in place to identify and recognize examples of Canadian built heritage. To argue that similar mechanisms should identify and recognize intangible resources is the next logical step.

Canadian academic folklorists, however, may well be at a crossroads in their work related to such policy. In many quarters, academics are hard pressed to agree that there is any folklore that can be identified as of national importance. The discipline is increasingly concerned with authenticity and invention, pointing to a myriad of forms that while considered icons of cultural nationalism are, in fact, merely spurious creations fabricated by romantic ideologies.

Equally of importance in recent years is folklorists' need to prove that anything can be considered as folklore, and in this broadening of the field, the increasing emphasis on middle-class modern-day culture. In this regard, perhaps academic folklorists will be unwilling — or unable — to place their academic imprimatur on certain traditional artists and activities, fearing that they will be labelled as old-fashioned romantics.



My report, then, is dated, as new directions are being proposed by academic folklorists at the beginning of the twentieth-first century. My recommendations, therefore, may be dated, as well. Academic folklorists in Canada are still struggling with who they are, and what kind of studies are truly appropriate. We supposedly are the experts on traditional Canadian cultures. While the Government of Canada may come to us as academics again for advice, we need to decide if we can still offer direction that can be translated into government policy — and programs. If we decide our theories have taken us beyond cultures once considered traditional, other experts will take our place.

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