

Lunenburg County Folklore and Oral History: Project '77.
Edited by Laurie Lacey (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1979. CCFCS Mercury Series 30. 142 pp.)

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Article abstract

La publication du rapport de recherche de Laurie Lacey, fait à partir d'une collecte de terrain entreprise à l'été de 1977 par un groupe d'étudiants des niveaux secondaire et universitaire, présente un vaste tableau des genres de matériaux trouvés dans le comté. Des exemples de ces matériaux sont choisis en vue de faire part de quelques aspects des modèles traditionnels de travail, des modes d'apprentissage, des valeurs, des croyances et des chansons traditionnelles des résidents du comté de Lunenburg.

an account of how songs were learned, whether songs got written down and where, and so on. The contradictions in information which Ives gives in this section enhance rather than hinder their readability and verisimilitude. It is important and interesting to know, for instance, that in some camps there was singing every Saturday, in others, none at all, ever — depending on who was there that winter. Or that for most men, singing was only entertainment, and only one of many forms of it; only for a few was it a passion and obsession. No one has said these kinds of things as well or as authoritatively as Ives does here. He also proposes the notion of a double singing tradition: a “public performance” or men’s tradition, and a “private” or women’s tradition. It is a notion which I think bears further investigation.

Each chapter of *Joe Scott* that examines a ballad in detail begins with a vignette of how Ives collected one version of that song. There might be several of these vignettes per chapter, interspersed with text and tune analysis, dealing with how the songs “live.” The vignettes sparkle. First, they show how fieldwork gets done. Ives gives, for instance, a perfect picture of the awkwardness of a collector/informant first meeting and interview, and shows how coaxing (by friends of the informant) works in that situation (pp. 282–84). Second, they capture a sense of Ives’s informants for the reader, and the meaning of their singing to their lives:

Billy Bell died in 1967. During his last months in the hospital he recognized no one, not even his wife or sister; but as the end came on, he sang the old songs once more, going over and over his favorites, among them “The Cumberland Crew” and “Benjamin Deane.” No friends traveled further into that night with him than they. (p. 232)

Third, they show that underlying and beyond Ives’s own persona in his work, and his careful reportage and pursuit of the facts, are his warm affection for the people he works with, and a magic, mystical,

social communion he sometimes feels in the presence of their artistry. Ives’s description, in the final pages of *Joe Scott*, of the transport of the spirit that can happen during singings, is the best statement I have read of what can take place during a session.

Joe Scott is a vital book, for the information it contains, and for the questions it raises. It is weakest when it dwells on *Joe Scott* the individual, for his own sake. It is strongest when *Scott*, again the individual, is used as a point of departure, a vehicle, a window on his culture, a means of talking about and looking at a society, an era, a way of life, the lives of people.

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Lunenburg County Folklore and Oral History: Project '77

Edited by Laurie Lacey
(Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1979.
CCFCS Mercury Series 30. 142 pp.)

The abstract sets forth the purpose of this publication:

Laurie Lacey’s edited research report, based on a field collection in the summer of 1977 by a group of high school and university students, offers a presentation of a wide array of genre materials from the county. Selected examples of materials are chosen which convey aspects of the traditional work patterns, educational processes, values and beliefs and song traditions of the residents of Lunenburg County.”

Variouly described as a companion or an extension of Helen Creighton’s *Folklore of Lunenburg County* first published in 1950, it covers some of the same types of material but emphasizes oral history and recorded interviews. It contains much interesting information on oxen lore, rum-running, lumbering and milling, local

legends, and songs. Unfortunately, the value of the material is largely negated by the numerous faults of the publication.

It does not provide any comparative references, motif numbers, Child or Laws numbers, or bibliography: the academic apparatus that is standard in any scholarly publication.

The production is unbelievably sloppy. The pages listed in the Table of Contents are wrong for every item past page 40. Two pages at the beginning of the article on local legends are missing so that the piece starts with Legend 4, although the pages are numbered consecutively. For some unknown reason, every time any number occurs, it is given in both words and figures, producing a very strange effect, particularly in such phrases as "one (1) group of men," "one (1) time," "one (1) o'clock," "one (1) night," etc. Abbreviated dates such as "the 20s" are always printed as "20^s," or "30^s."

The number of spelling errors is astronomical. A hasty listing produced the following, with the pages: "warrented" (9), "paraphanalia" (18), "preceeded" (36), "sauercraut" (55), "layed" (44), "pevee" (57), "remnants" (81), "phenomena" (87), "payed" (99), "who's" (104), "attendence" and "truely" (110). "Johne" is repeatedly misspelled on pages 83 and 84, and "exhibition" appears at least seventeen times between ages 5 and 26. These are in addition to ordinary typographical errors.

The grammatical errors would also be a disgrace to any high-school publication: "centers about" (1), "your welcome" (24), "with my father and I" (5), "your feeding the devil" (89), "there was frequent delays" (9), etc.

The section on songs is the most seriously mangled, which is unfortunate because some of the items are unusual and interesting. Even the title, "Songs from Hackman's Island," which could be put down to a typographic error once, occurs also in the Table of Contents, and "song's" is repeated in the introduction. I have never seen anything to compare with the messy way the songs are printed: almost

every text has its lines running over so that the rhythm and rhyme schemes are completely obscured. Typical is Stanza 8, page 92:

We cruised our boat to Foggy Bank for
the space of
Eighty days, we boarded a couple of
Frenchman but no
Brandy could we raise. Dehalibut being
kind of scarce
We ran our codfish gear, McLeod he
swore he'd fill her
Up if it took him half a year.

It is hard to understand how university students could produce anything so full of errors, or how so many errors could get into print without some checking and editing.

The slipshod nature of this publication is especially unfortunate because it tends to discredit the CCFC Mercury Series, and that series is of great value to Canadian folklorists. It represents the largest number of Canadian folklore publications from a single source, and while its thirty-odd volumes are uneven in quality and relevance, many of them are excellent. Recent issues of particular importance include Carole Carpenter's *Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and Their Role in Canadian Culture* (No. 26), Mary-Lou Patterson's *Swiss-German and Dutch-German Mennonite Traditional Art in the Waterloo Region, Ontario* (No. 27), and Laurel Doucette's *Skill and Status: Traditional Expertise within a Rural Canadian Family* (No. 28). These and most earlier volumes are now being distributed free on request by the Chief, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, National Museum of Man, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M8.

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Résumé

La publication du rapport de recherche de Laurie Lacey, fait à partir d'une collecte de

terrain entreprise à l'été de 1977 par un groupe d'étudiants des niveaux secondaire et universitaire, présente un vaste tableau des genres de matériaux trouvés dans le comté. Des exemples de ces matériaux sont choisis en vue de faire part de quelques aspects des modèles traditionnels de travail, des modes d'apprentissage, des valeurs, des croyances et des chansons traditionnelles des résidents du comté de Lunenburg.

Religion populaire et travail

(Sudbury: Revue de l'université Laurentienne, vol. XII, no 1, novembre 1979. 130 p., ill. 5\$)

Au Canada français, ethnologues et historiens se penchent de plus en plus sur un des plus riches domaines de la tradition orale: la religion populaire. Et, bien que les études qui nous aient été proposées jusqu'ici n'en soient encore qu'à leurs prémisses, elles offrent déjà d'abondantes pistes de recherche grâce auxquelles nous pourrions bientôt ouvrir grandement la bible si imagée de nos traditions religieuses.

La dernière livraison de la Revue de l'université Laurentienne (vol. XII, no 1, nov. 1979) fait ainsi bénéficier le lecteur des riches échanges du colloque tenu à cette université en novembre 1978 et qui réunissait les participants autour du thème d'études suivant: religion populaire et travail. Une dizaine de collaborateurs ont ainsi participé à l'élaboration de ce recueil dont les textes, sans avoir tous le même intérêt et le même enthousiasme, répondent bien aux mots sur lesquels se termine l'avant-propos de Pierre Savard: "En somme, le lecteur cultivé à qui s'adresse cet ouvrage collectif a l'avantage d'assister à un savoir en formation dont l'objet, variable et approximatif, ne cesse de lui demander le maximum d'ouverture d'esprit tout autant qu'une confiance totale dans les sciences humaines de la religion".

Le vécu religieux des forestiers et

voyageurs constitue le premier champ d'investigation porté à notre attention. Marcel Breton nous offre les résultats d'une enquête assez fragmentaire qu'il a menée dans le Nouvel-Ontario, auprès de 12 informateurs dont l'âge varie de 67 à 82 ans. Avec les faiblesses inhérentes à l'exploration d'un sujet nouveau, l'auteur dégage quand même des constantes qui serviront de point d'appui à l'étude de la mentalité religieuse de ce secteur, que la tradition orale n'a pas encore rejointe.

Avec Benoît Lacroix et Conrad Laforce, la religion traditionnelle des coureurs de bois nous est signifiée dans un corpus d'une douzaine de chansons fort bien analysées. Les auteurs nous font savoir, d'une part, que ces hommes sont tributaires d'une religion orale et des dogmes du Petit Catéchisme et que, d'autre part, leur destin tragique se manifeste jusque dans ses recours à Dieu et à la Vierge. Ces textes populaires, que les auteurs passent au peigne fin, constituent une source très valable pour l'analyse d'une époque religieuse et d'un milieu de vie. Un catholicisme très peu positif, articulé sur des croyances naïves, voilà ce qui ressort de l'âme religieuse de ces coureurs de bois.

Deux autres textes présentent deux métiers dans leurs rapports avec la religion: les artisans du fer (J.-Claude Dupont) et les tailleurs de pierre. Les premiers nous sont montrés dans leur étroite participation aux activités religieuses, alors que Ronald Labelle détermine les motifs qui entourent la construction d'un monument au Sacré-Coeur, à Saint-Marc-des-Carières, en 1932. Alors que les sources écrites ont tendance à valoriser, à travers cette manifestation, la foi des fidèles de la paroisse, les sources orales, elles, nous apprennent la seule fierté humaine de ceux qui ont participé à l'érection du monument.

Un tryptique savamment élaboré forme la quintessence de cette revue, en nous éloignant cependant du vécu religieux d'un milieu défini. On saura gré à Jean Simard et à Rodrigue Lavoie d'avoir observé, par le champ visuel de l'icôno-