

## Academic Folklore Research in Canada Trends and Prospects (Part 1)

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### Article abstract

This is a report written for the Department of Canadian Heritage on the state of academic folklore research in Canada. Written in 1998, the study addresses how Canada has followed the UNESCO declaration of 1989 regarding the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore. This essay will be published in two parts. This first section deals with the initial three parts of the UNESCO Declaration: definition of folklore; identification of folklore; conservation of folklore (which includes collecting and professional training). Folklore has been defined within Canada along language, ethnic or regional lines. Folklore has been identified using catalogues and indexes from the United States and France, although Canadian guides have been developed. The conservation of folklore has taken place at archives (such as at Laval and Memorial) and at museums (such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization). Little systematic collecting has occurred across the country. The largest centres for professional folklore training are at Laval and Memorial.

# ACADEMIC FOLKLORE RESEARCH IN CANADA

## Trends and Prospects<sup>1</sup> (Part 1)

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### Prologue

The following essay — which will appear over the next two issues of *Ethnologies* — is somewhat different from other contributions that appear in this journal. My discussion was written originally as a report for the Department of Canadian Heritage, completed during February and March, 1998. I was approached by Katherine Spencer-Ross of the Department's Heritage Policy Branch; they wanted a background paper which outlined the history and current status of the academic preservation and study of folklore in Canada. Specifically, my report had to address the UNESCO declaration of 1989 on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, a proclamation of which Canada was a signatory (Honko 1990). I was asked to discuss, where appropriate, how the Federal Government has facilitated the implementation of the major recommendations of the UNESCO declaration.

Katherine Spencer-Ross knew of my work because I had acted as a consultant for the Department of Canadian Heritage before. In 1995, I had been contracted by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMB, part of Canadian Heritage) to investigate a group of buildings used in the smoked herring industry on Grand Manan, New Brunswick. In this report, as in all HSMB reports, I had to give evidence as to whether the buildings in Seal Cove, Grand Manan, were of national historic importance, and whether

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1. This report has benefitted from conversations with Carole Henderson Carpenter, York University; Laurier Turgeon, Université Laval; Diane Tye, Memorial University, and with materials and assistance from Robert Montgomery and Scot Weeres, Ontario Ministry of Culture, and David Taylor, American Folklife Centre, Washington, D.C.

they should be designated a National Historic Site. Through this report, the Policy Branch knew some of the skills of professional folklorists, and thought I might be able to offer advice on a more academic topic.

As I prepared my report on academic folklore work, I knew that in other countries intangible resources were designated as of national historic importance. Clearly, then, the earlier work I did on built heritage for the HSMB might enable me to offer recommendations involving intangible heritage that would follow Departmental policy and practices.

Knowing the similarities between tangible and intangible cultural resources, and the work that the Department of Canadian Heritage (and the HSMB) might do, I asked if I might make recommendations for future work that could shape government policy. This I was encouraged to do. But it is important to note that the recommendations which appear in the latter part of my report do not necessarily reflect the views — past or present — of the Department of Canadian Heritage. The Department received this report originally on a “policy advice basis,” and my recommendations will not necessarily be converted to policy or ministerial initiatives.

My report as it appears in *Ethnologies* is basically the exact document I submitted to the Government of Canada in 1998 (omitting the initial executive summary). I have not edited it, nor have I updated any sections to reflect current work. I thought it best to keep it as I had written, reflecting my assessment of academic folklore work in 1998. I feel that this can serve as an example of a consultancy report prepared for a government agency in this country. Folklorists working as consultants in Canada are few and far between, and part of the difficulty of securing such work is how to adapt to existing bureaucratic frameworks that exist within organizations such as Canadian Heritage or the HSMB of Canada.

I would like to thank Katherine Spencer-Ross of the Policy Branch of Canadian Heritage for her help in preparing this study. Charles-Henri Roy of the same branch graciously gave me permission to publish this report. Much of what I outlined in this essay had already been discussed in Carole Carpenter’s *Many Voices* (1979). My task in many ways was simply to update her important work, point to more recent trends, and add my own critique and recommendations.

## **Introduction**

This report profiles the academic study of folklore in Canada, specifically addressing the various activities outlined in the 1989 UNESCO Declaration on Folklore. Following the UNESCO text, how academics have confronted the following issues will be discussed: a) definition of folklore; b) identification of folklore; c) conservation of folklore; d) preservation of folklore; e) dissemination of folklore; f) protection of folklore; g) international cooperation.

Interest in Canadian folklore has existed from the nineteenth century — and in certain cases, before. However, the systematic — some would say the scientific — study of folklore within academic contexts did not occur in Canada until the mid-twentieth century. This report focuses on this recent academic work, work that has taken place largely within the context of universities, museums and archives. At the outset it is important to briefly clarify the varying terms that academics have used in their study of what UNESCO defines as folklore.

### **Definition of folklore: three differing academic traditions**

The academic study of traditional cultures in English-speaking Canada has used the term “folklore” both for the materials studied (the songs, the stories, and so on) and the actual discipline. However, the term “folklore” has always carried with it a connotation of untruth or marginality, and therefore English-speaking scholars have attempted to use other words to cover their research — in the United States “folklife” or “folk studies”, and in Canada “folklore studies”. French-speaking Canadian scholars, however, increasingly felt that a continued use of the term “folklore” cast an unrespectable shadow on what they did. While folklore had been used for years to cover both the materials studied and the discipline in French Canada, two terms replaced it by the 1970s. Instead of folklore being used to cover the materials studied, the phrase “arts et traditions populaires” was adopted. Under this general category, the oral literature designated as folklore still was a major subject of study.<sup>2</sup> However, during the same time period of the 1970s, the actual study of folklore — the discipline — within the Francophone context came to be called

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2. For example see Du Berger 1973.

“ethnologie”, and researchers were “ethnologues” — perhaps borrowing from the similar use of the term “ethnologie” in France.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, then, within the academic community, traditional culture is studied under various terms: folklore, folklife or folklore studies (English Canada) and ethnologie (French Canada).

The academic study of traditional culture in French-speaking Canada — ethnologie — continued to use the term folklore. But folklore then was restricted to its popular usages: performance materials such as songs, stories, dances, music. The vast array of traditional day-to-day activities was categorized as material culture. Ethnologie, then, had two sub specialities, either oral materials (folklore) or material culture (artifacts).

Turning to the UNESCO definition of folklore, the declaration centres on two issues that need to be initially addressed, issues that academics in Canada have debated. In short, these concern who are the “folk” and what constitutes their “lore”. UNESCO essentially defines the folk as being members of various groups: “familial, occupational, national, regional, religious, and ethnic”. In terms of “lore”, UNESCO lists forms such as “language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts”. Academics would agree that these are appropriate groups and items to study, whether as a folklorist or as an ethnologue. However the academic study of folklore within Canada has not covered all these groups or topics equally. In fact, because of a number of political and cultural factors, academic studies has been very selective in what has been studied within the Canadian context.

The academic study of Canadian folklore has occurred along three major research focuses: that folklore is associated primarily with a particular language group; that folklore defines a particular region; that folklore is the product of particular groups popularly considered as ethnic. Each of these assumptions led to the development of three different schools of academic folklore research in Canada.

### *Academic Folklore and Language Group: The Laval Tradition*

The earliest academic work in Canada was done by Francophone scholars. Most important was Marius Barbeau (1883-1969), who can be considered

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3. France’s leading journal, *Ethnologie française*, began publication in 1971; Jean-Claude Dupont’s title was “Professeur d’Ethnologie traditionnelle” as early as 1972 (Dupont 1972).

the founder of the Canadian academic discipline of folklore, and both English and French scholars point to him as their intellectual ancestor.<sup>4</sup>

Barbeau was born in Sainte-Marie de Beauce, Québec, studied law at Laval, and received a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford. The first French-Canadian Rhodes scholar at Oxford, he studied anthropology, focusing on Native American beliefs and songs. He returned to Canada in 1910, and in early 1911 joined Edward Sapir as one of the two anthropologists on the staff of the National Museum of Man (Carpenter 1979: 221). For several years, Barbeau collected Huron and other First Nations materials for the museum, although he frequently came across folklore from his own Québec background. Initially he ignored these Francophone traditions. However, Barbeau met Franz Boas at an American Folklore Society meeting in 1914, and Boas encouraged him to document the French as well as Native traditions. He immediately turned to recording these overlooked items, and for the remainder of his lifetime focused on French as well as Native traditions. He documented all aspects of First Nations and Francophone folklore: clothing, food, architecture, furniture, weapons, domestic utensils, games, customs, beliefs and folk art. He was especially interested in oral traditions: folktales, legends, songs and music (Thomas 1996: 306). He remained in charge of folklore activities at the National Museum of Man until his retirement in 1948 (Carpenter 1979: 228).

Barbeau's influence gradually began to be felt outside the context of the National Museum. In 1939, a young Québec scholar, Luc Lacourcière, spent time at the National Museum studying with Barbeau. In 1942, Barbeau began lecturing at Laval and the University of Ottawa. With Barbeau as a lobbyist, Lacourcière helped found the Archives de Folklore at Laval in 1944 (Nowry 1995: 400), and was appointed to a chair in folklore, beginning a programme within Canadian Studies. With the appointment of Lacourcière as teacher and archivist at Laval in 1944, folklore as an academic discipline within Canada was born. From this inception to the present, Laval has produced the greatest amount of academic folklore work of any university in Canada, with numerous publications, a large postgraduate programme, and numerous graduates working in positions related to Francophone folklore.

The central role of Barbeau, Lacourcière, and Université Laval has meant that academic folklore is sometimes considered as based within the Francophone

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4. For details about Barbeau's life see Fowke (1969, 1988); Katz (1970); Preston (1976); an excellent recent biography is Nowry (1995).

Canadian intellectual community — whether in Québec or elsewhere. Following from this popular stereotype, then, folklore is assumed to exist most widely in the French parts of Canada, obvious because there are so many Francophone scholars involved in its study. The Laval programme trained scholars that would develop Francophone folklore centres and courses in other places: Jean-Pierre Pichette at Sudbury (where there is now a small Department of Folklore), and Ronald Labelle at Université de Moncton, for example. In short, over the years, it is clear that the massive amount of Francophone scholarship relating to folklore is explained by two trends: that folklore was clearly considered an important part of French identity, and that identity was promoted by Francophone intellectuals wanting to enhance French self-esteem.

This self-study in early years was probably simply part of the “Quiet Revolution” occurring within Québec, but was an interest that sovereigntists could capitalize on when they achieved power. Folklore was clearly used as a political tool to prove that Francophones were different, but the differences were largely based on the initial assumption that folklore existed primarily among those who spoke French. To the professional folklorist, all peoples have folklore irrespective of language, but the largest body of Canadian folklore scholarship associated its study with one language group.

#### *Academic Folklore and Regionalism: Memorial University*

While Québec scholars had established academic folklore in 1944 at Laval focusing on Francophone traditions, universities in other parts of the country did not follow until much later. This time lag had as much to do, again, with political agendas as it did with institutional budgets. In fact, Canadian universities have generally done little or nothing to advance the study of folklore. Besides Laval, the only other major academic folklore programme in Canada developed at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and not until the 1960s, fully twenty years after scholars had begun working at Laval.

In the early 1960s, Memorial University was undergoing a major expansion: it had recently moved to a new campus; faculty numbers and student enrollment were increasing. Newfoundland administrators at Memorial felt that the University should concentrate on local culture — a culture that had a “unique character” within the Canadian context (Halpert and Rosenberg 1974: 31). This perceived uniqueness of Newfoundland was often articulated by outsiders to the place; the earliest folksong collecting, for example, had been done by

Americans and British looking for musical gems that survived in supposed isolation, far longer than other areas of North America.<sup>5</sup> Folklore studies in Newfoundland focused on all groups — English, Scottish, Irish, French — that settled there, creating a distinct culture shaped by complexities of geographical region and settlement history rather than simply by language.

By 1960, Memorial had begun various projects on Newfoundland history, language, place names, and folklore. To expand this research, Herbert Halpert — an American folklorist — was hired in 1962 to teach introductory English courses that would deal partly with oral traditions. By 1968, he was asked to start a Department of Folklore, and create both undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. By the 1990s, Memorial had eight full time folklore faculty — second in size only to Indiana University in folklore programmes around the world, the largest Folklore programme in the British Commonwealth.

Over the past thirty years, Memorial's folklore programme has attempted to be both local and international. From its inception, the Department's mandate has been partly the study of Newfoundland folklore — study that primarily involves undergraduate students and courses. On the other hand, the Department has often argued that its postgraduate and research programme is international in scope. Unlike Laval — where scholars have often prided themselves on research projects that involve Francophone folklore — students and faculty at Memorial have frequently researched topics outside the province and Canada. This probably relates to the fact that over the years most faculty at Memorial have been born outside Canada, and many postgraduate students come from abroad as well.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the Department has never had a national focus; its teaching and research interests rest primarily on Newfoundland — with a fair number of research projects outside Canada.

### *Academic Folklore and Ethnicity: Multiculturalism*

While academic folklorists have emphasized certain language groups or regions in establishing their discipline, a third vision of folklore studies has characterized the Canadian scene. This version basically associates folklore

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5. Comments on these early Newfoundland collectors can be found in Carpenter (1980) and Peere (1985).

6. For a discussion of how this particular issue has shaped research at Memorial see Doucette (1993).



with very specific groups: immigrants (neither English or French) that have come to Canada over the years. In short, for many, the term folklore has become associated with multiculturalism, encouraged by the Multiculturalism policies announced by Pierre Trudeau in the House of Commons in 1971. Many members of the public assume that folklore items are transplanted from the homeland by non-Anglophone or non-Francophone cultures now living here in Canada, and that these items can usually be put on public display.

No academic programme on the scale of Laval or Memorial developed that focused on folklore as ethnic expression. But this particular viewpoint became prominent through the work of the National Museum of Man, now the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC). While this influence is more logically discussed below in the section on Museum involvement in folklore studies, it is important to note here that the National Museum of Man became an important instrument of Federal Government policy, and the Museum's academic activities, in turn, influenced the public perception of folklore.

Marius Barbeau had retired from the National Museum in 1948; he was essentially responsible for overseeing folklore research up until this point. However, with the Museum's reorganization, the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies (CCFCS)/Centre canadien d'études sur la culture traditionnelle (CCECT) was formed in 1970, to primarily act as an institutional arm for the Federal Government's new Multiculturalism policy which was adopted in 1971. In its initial years (from 1970 through the early 1980s), the CCFCS sponsored a wide range of research on ethnic groups, with a subsequent body of publications that reflected that research. What this emphasis did is to stereotype within the academic community at large the notion that academic folklorists research immigrant traditions in Canada, that folklore items were not found among all groups, but only among those seen as different through their folklore. In short, what has often been assumed to be folklore outside professional folklore/ethnologie circles has — during the past twenty years — been incorrectly defined as essentially ethnic, due to government programmes and policies.

Perhaps the extreme case of folklore being associated with groups other than the mainstream Anglophone or Francophone is the vast body of materials relating to First Nations groups. Early on in this century, Franz Boas did an extensive amount of work with Northwest Coast natives. Boas' scholarship influenced the work of fieldworkers like Barbeau, and much of the early field material gathered by the National Museum dealt with Native folklore. As the

academic study of folklore developed at Laval and Memorial, the focus of these individual programmes (Francophone materials; Newfoundland materials) has meant that research on native folklore now is done largely by anthropologists or ethnohistorians. Native groups are not involved with professional folklore groups. Rather, much of their contact is now with anthropologists interested in oral narratives. Often, in this work, close collaboration occurs between informants and fieldworkers; the dominant theme, then, is giving control of oral traditions to those Native groups who perform them. In earlier days, every aspect of a First Nations' culture was considered exotic, and therefore folklore.

The legacy of this multicultural trend within academic folklore led to the establishment of the Ukrainian Folklore Programme at the University of Alberta in 1980 (*Ukrainian Ethnography News* 1995a). This unit is part of the Division of Slavic and East European Studies at the university; the programme is quite small, staffed by two folklorists — Bohdan Medwidsky and Andriy Nahachewsky. While specializing in folklore, researchers focus on this particular group and all their traditions. While at first glance similar, perhaps, to the emphasis on Québécois folklore (language and cultural group), the Ukrainian Folklore Programme by definition is concerned with a particular ethnic group irrespective of language. One can research Ukrainian folklore and that folklore can be manifested within an English-language New World context. While issues of acculturation and assimilation may be seen as threats to one school of research, other studies focus on how Ukrainian traditions adapt to New World contexts, even at the cost of speaking English. Folklore is no longer defined simply by items appearing in a particular language.

To summarize, while the folklore of ethnic and native groups is as important, therefore, to the professional researcher as any other type, stereotypes and government policies have assumed these are the only places where folklore is found. As one leading folklorist explained: "our policies in this country have tended to identify the folk as marginal, as disadvantaged, as overtly ethnic, as other, as foreign, whatever, to some sort of mainstream. This is very dangerous (Carpenter 1990: 53)." Lore, as well, has frequently been associated with entertainment, with things that could be put on stage, festivalized, commercialized. Folklorists realize that performance items are just one part of the lore that all of us have, for lore pervades our family gatherings, our national holidays, our outings to the hockey arena. Lore, for the professional folklorist, is the traditions that we maintain and carry on in our day-to-day lives. Academic

scholarship argues for these views, yet official policies have often worked against this stance, maintaining divisive stereotypes.

### **Identification of folklore**

The UNESCO declaration suggests that an inventory of institutions concerned with folklore be published in each country. To date, no such directory listing academic institutions and museums has been compiled. Standard introductory works on Canadian folklore sometimes mention in passing the major institutions where folklore research takes place (Fowke 1988: 6-8), while standard surveys of the history of Canadian folklore scholarship list important centres (Thomas 1996: 305-309). The *Bulletin* of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada in the past has sometimes included membership lists that provide an informal assessment of the professional Canadian folklore community.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Catalogues, Indexes*

The suggestion to create identification and recording systems, collecting guides, handbooks and other scholarly devices implies that folklore needs to be properly identified across the country, and then properly recorded. The scholarly study of folklore is based on extensive and meticulous fieldwork, this documentation being the first step toward properly understanding folklore. As documentation takes a wide variety of forms depending on the item recorded and the goals of the scholar, no one overall scheme has been developed. Generally, scholars have simply adapted standard fieldwork handbooks that are not nation-specific. For example, Anglophones rely on the standard introductory text by Edward Ives in regard to tape-recorded interviews, or the more general book on fieldwork by Bruce Jackson (Ives 1974; Jackson 1987). Francophones might refer to Arnold van Gennep's early volumes, or more recent works on ethnographic field methods such as that by Marcel Mauss (Mauss 1967; van Gennep 1943).

Some attempt has been made to deal with the issue of transcription of oral texts. Vivian Labrie has written an extensive manual as a guide to transcription theories and methodologies (Labrie 1982). This complements those written by American folklorists, and offers a Canadian viewpoint on the

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7. The latest listing appeared in 2000 ("Membership" 2000).

way tape interviews should finally appear. Alternative transcription systems to Labrie's and Ives', such as that used by Gerald Thomas, have also been suggested (Thomas 1993: 137-143).

In terms of standard folklore typologies, Canadian folklorists have often adapted international classification schemes developed over the years and recognized as universal models. Folk narrative scholars all over the world use two standard works: the story typology scheme developed by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson (1961) and published as *Types of the Folklore*, and a catalogue to identify individual story elements, Thompson's *Motif Index* (1955-1958). This work delineates text by story theme, identifying each particular international type by number. Since the earliest days of Canadian folk narrative scholarship, scholars have used these systems to identify narratives both in analytical studies and for archiving purposes. For example, Les Archives de Folklore had been involved in a project cataloguing its folk narratives using the Aarne-Thompson index (Lacourcière 1976: 123-128), while Memorial's MUNFLA has some of its narrative collection catalogued using the *Motif Index*. All major Canadian narrative collections rely on these international type and motif indexes; the massive collection of Newfoundland folktales recently published is an example of the use of this classification (Halpert and Widdowson 1996).

Canadian scholars, as well, have been in the forefront of developing new catalogues and classification schemes. Probably the most well-known of these is the multi-volumed catalogue organizing French-language folksong that Conrad Laforte has developed at Laval (1977-1987).

In terms of archival indexing systems, again models from other countries have often been borrowed, rather than relying on national norms. The archive at Memorial University of Newfoundland, for example, adapted the system used at the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University when it was established (Halpert and Rosenberg 1976: 107).

## **Conservation of folklore**

### *Archives*

Unlike other countries (such as the United States or many European countries), Canada has no national institution or archives where collected folklore is stored and made available. Most of the conservation of folklore now occurs in regional centres that have particular emphases in their mandates.

Major archival repositories exist primarily in the academic centres where folklore research occurs within the University context. The Archives de Folklore, as previously noted, was founded at Laval in 1944 as part of the establishment of academic folklore studies there.<sup>8</sup> The classification and documentation schemes of the Archives was greatly aided by a Canada Council Killam Foundation grant (well over \$250,000) in 1971 (Maranda 1978: 236). Les Archives is certainly the first repository in Canada devoted exclusively to folklore, and probably the first in North America. To date, it has approximately 10,000 sound recordings; these deal with songs, narratives, rhymes as well as interviews concerning day-to-day life. As well, there are approximately 12,000 photographs, and a large amount of manuscript materials. The bulk of the material in Les Archives deals with Francophone traditions, mainly in Québec, but there are also materials from Acadians as well as other Francophones in Canada. As Carole Carpenter noted: "North American scholars generally agree that Les Archives de Folklore is the best organized centre on this continent (Carpenter 1979: 235)." In 1981, Les Archives became a part of the Archives Division of the University Library, no longer attached to any particular Department or programme (Saulnier 1981: 30).

Memorial University of Newfoundland's Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA) is the other major repository for folklore material in Canada. With Herbert Halpert's own early field recordings, and a massive amount of undergraduate student essays, MUNFLA contains materials dealing with Newfoundland.

Folklore archives across the country — although lacking in national coordination — have benefited from Federal Government support. When MUNFLA was being established, for example, a series of Canada Council grants aided in much of the initial work. The Council financed a tape duplication project (1967-68), as well as the implementation of the accession, filing, and indexing systems (1968-70). The Council also provided funds to hire a research associate (1971-74), David Hufford, who worked on a project to classify a large number of folk narratives in MUNFLA following Stith Thompson's international classification systems. The Canada Council, finally, for many years paid for a transcription project that involved thousands of hours of taped interviews.<sup>9</sup>

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8. The early work of Les Archives is discussed in Luc Lacourcière (1961).

9. For details on this support see Halpert and Rosenberg (1974).

While the folklore archives at Laval and Memorial are the largest repositories in Canada, several other important regional archives need to be mentioned. In 1970, the Centre d'études acadiennes (CEA) was founded at the Université de Moncton.<sup>10</sup> This Centre was founded partly as a research centre as well as an archive. The holdings of CEA include field materials from Anselme Chiasson who worked in his native Cheticamp, Nova Scotia, area.<sup>11</sup> Materials from Acadian groups in other parts of Nova Scotia, as well as New Brunswick, are included in the holdings. Besides materials from important Acadian scholars, the archives contain contributions from student courses in folklore, offered at the Université since 1967. Both CEA and MUNFLA have much student material in their archives; both institutions believe that students who grow up in a particular folklore tradition often provide the best insights into their culture, and thus make the best collectors.

As part of the ongoing research at the Université de Sudbury on Franco-Ontarian culture, an archive was established, based in large part on the early fieldwork of Germain Lemieux. Lemieux had conducted fieldwork in the region since 1948. This archive is part of the Centre franco-ontarien de Folklore (CFOF, founded in 1972), which operates in conjunction with the academic programme in the Department of Folklore at Sudbury. The holdings of this archive include some 5600 songs and 680 narratives that Lemieux collected. Building on Lemieux's collection, the archive has added over 3000 additional collections.<sup>12</sup> As with other folklore archives, the CFOF has received numerous grants over the years, in this case from the Canada Council, the Ontario Council, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.

While these are the major repositories for folklore holdings, there are smaller folklore collections connected to academic research in various universities across the country. These include: Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton, Sydney, Nova Scotia; Le Centre Acadien, Université Sainte-Anne, Pointe-de-l'Église, N.-E. (primarily Acadian materials from Nova Scotia); and the Ontario Folklife Centre.<sup>13</sup> A repository for Ukrainian materials now exists — the

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10. See Anselme Chiasson (1976); for a list of holdings see Ronald Labelle, with Jean Beaulieu and Marcel Breton (1984).

11. For Chiasson's work, see Ronald Labelle and Lauraine Léger, eds. (1982); Georges Arsenault (1996).

12. See Jean-Pierre Pichette (1983); for its folklore holdings see Jean-Pierre Pichette (1992: 153-202).

13. For Le Centre acadien see Neil Boucher (1987); for the mandate of the Ontario Folklife Centre see Ontario Folklife Centre (1987: 32); for its holdings see Carole Carpenter (1992).

Ukrainian Folklore Archives at the University of Alberta, containing important materials on western Ukrainian traditions: video and audio recordings, folktale material, student essays, music recordings (*Ukrainian Ethnography News* 1995b). And certainly even when archives do not specifically collect folklore materials, academics have recognized that folklore items are there, waiting to be identified and used (cf. Taft 1987).

### *Museums*

While archives provide one repository where folklore items can be deposited for conservation and future reference, museums provide another institutional framework for such safeguarding. Here, again, professional work has gone on across the country, but often without national coordination. What folklore-related work that has occurred in museums has happened largely because of regional priorities rather than any consistent attempt to coordinate documentation and display folklore items and activities.

With Marius Barbeau's retirement from the National Museum in 1948, Carmen Roy was appointed a museum advisor, and began research in the Gaspé area. In 1957, she was placed in charge of a Folklore Section within the Ethnology Division; in 1966, a separate Folklore Division was established, changing its name to the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies in 1970, a Centre that continues today (Roy 1973: 48-51). Logically, the CCFCS could have been the focal point as a national institution coordinating folklore activities.

Under Barbeau's guidance, and, later, under Carmen Roy in the 1960s and 1970s, the National Museum of Man had produced much that was important for academic research in Canada. The Museum had not only sponsored Barbeau's work; for many years, the NMM clearly played the role of national repository for folklore materials. With Barbeau's retirement, this massive folklore collection was passed on for safekeeping to the newly-created Folklore Division and then the CCFCS. In these years under Roy, the museum sponsored much research among various groups. Especially important was its fostering of folksong scholarship; the collections of MacEdward Leach in Labrador, Helen Creighton in the Maritimes, and Kenneth Peacock in Newfoundland and the West all remain important published collections of texts (Leach 1965; Peacock 1965, 1971; Creighton and MacLeod 1964; Creighton 1971).

With the founding of CCFCS, the Centre initially assumed a role acting as national coordinator for dissemination of information on folklore materials, guiding research, and producing printed materials. Roy continued to concentrate — as Barbeau did — on Francophone materials; in 1972, for example, of approximately 24,000 songs in the CCFCS archives, nearly half were French (Maranda 1978: 25; Peacock 1972: 333). This role, however, quickly changed from a national focus covering all peoples to one responsible primarily for ethnic groups. As a recent Canadian scholar pointed out, the Division at CMC that was “once dedicated to folklore, is now defined largely as a ‘multicultural’ centre (Posen 1991: 3).” With the introduction of the Federal Government’s multicultural policy, CCFCS soon became involved primarily in the study of non-Anglophone and non-Francophone groups.

One shift in emphasis at CCFCS followed another; the fiscal restraints of Federal funding forced the Museum as a whole to gradually focus almost completely on its own collection and exhibits. While it had been the central national institution in the past for a number of academic disciplines — history, archaeology, anthropology, and folklore — it soon scaled back on research and publications. CMC became primarily a museum to display its national collections, rather than having any national responsibility for academic research. CCFCS “now operates primarily as a repository and springboard for mounting exhibitions, sponsoring only that research directly required for specific exhibits (Carpenter 1996: 124).” No longer would the new CMC foster the massive amount of research and collecting projects that had taken place under Barbeau and Roy.<sup>14</sup> Even the multiculturalism research projects sponsored by the 1970s ethnic emphasis of CCFCS stopped. Essentially, except for limited acquisitions of new artifacts, the CMC can no longer be considered as an ongoing repository for all folklore materials, nor a sponsor of extensive ongoing research projects.

CMC and CCFCS, however, continue to mount exhibitions that draw on its own collections — and thus, as a national museum CMC does attempt to display traditional and popular culture. A major exhibit in conjunction with the Glenbow appeared in 1983, highlighting folk art objects from the CCFCS collection (Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies 1983). In recent years, for example, the museum has mounted exhibitions dealing with Jewish folklore, German-Canadian decorative arts, and Québec folk art, among other topics (Weizman 1990; Galipeau 1995). Many of the permanent displays of

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14. For example, CCFCS awarded twenty-six research contracts in 1973 (Rohan-Csermak 1974: 7).



the current Museum deal with First Nations materials, and reflect how the cultural world is divided according to the institutional framework. At CMC, the world is carved up into particular niches: the Archaeology Division basically deals with prehistory; Ethnology deals with First Nations; History deals with the past of primarily the two founding European nations; and Folk Culture deals with ethnic groups. While the study of First Nations folklore has been of interest to both folklorists and anthropologists in both Canada and elsewhere, CCFCSS has little to do with native materials.

Museums elsewhere in Canada have been involved in folklore exhibitions, although nowhere in Canada does a strictly folklore museum exist. This is quite different, for example, from many European countries; France, for example, has a national institution in Paris, Musée national des arts et traditions populaires, devoted to traditional culture. Wales has the Welsh Folk Museum, Sweden has Skansen, even tiny Lithuania has Rumsiskes (Cuisenier and de Tricornot 1987; Owen 1974; Rehnberg 1957; Velyvis *et al.* 1979). The list could go on, but there is no Canadian equivalent that foregrounds traditional Canadian life. Once again, museum work parallels the regionalism that characterizes academic study and archives.

Some museums do display what is considered the “pioneer life” of past peoples; usually these concentrate on particular regions or groups. Closest to the European open-air museum models are Upper Canada Village and Black Creek Pioneer Village, both in Ontario; Kings Landing and the Acadian Village in New Brunswick; Highland Village in Cape Breton; the Ukrainian Pioneer Village in Alberta; or even the recent development of Battle Harbour in coastal Labrador. These villages attempt to portray the ordinary day-to-day life of earlier peoples, sometimes with costumed guides to interpret that life. These types of museums often have limited budgets which cause problems in how accurately traditional culture is portrayed. They are the only types, however, completely devoted to portrayal of what would fall under the rubric of folklore.

The Musée de la civilisation in Québec has been one of the most successful institutions that have been involved with presenting folklore to the public.<sup>15</sup> Employing over six ethnologists, the Musée has become the model of an ethnological museum not only in Québec, but for French museologists as well. While the Musée displays the more stereotypical forms of heritage artifacts, it also draws on more current schools of folklore scholarship which stress the

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15. For a survey see: Roland Arpin (1997).

universal and contemporary nature of folklore. Much of the museum deals with current themes that are both Québécois and pan-national. These include notions of feminine beauty, the culture of sleeping, childrens' art — many of the exhibits relying on contemporary artifacts to display their themes. The Musée averages approximately 700,000 visitors a year, an extraordinary number reflective of how popular locally the institution is. Unlike other museums which tend to follow the stereotypes of folklore artifacts as existing only in the past among minority groups, clearly this museum is in tune with current folklore scholarship. The displays indicate that folklore traditions continue, and are part of all our lives.

Museums and other institutions that have a broader mandate have sometimes been involved with the documentation and presentation of folklore. As part of its programme in Leisure Studies, the University of Waterloo has a Museum and Archives of Games; although small in size, exhibits often touch on the folklorist's interest in play. In Alberta, David Goa has worked on exhibitions on traditional Ukrainian religious belief. The Glenbow funded an initial feasibility study conducted by freelance folklorist Sheldon Posen on hockey in Canadian culture; unfortunately, for a number of reasons, the exhibit was never undertaken. This proposed exhibit by the Glenbow was one of the few coming from the Museum community in recent years that indicated that folklore was not associated with only particular groups (Native, Francophone, ethnic), but, in fact, was part of every Canadian's life — a central assumption of contemporary academic folklore work.

Some Canadian museums and art galleries have fostered research and exhibitions in the area of folk art. Like folklore, folk art is often a misunderstood term, associated with untrained artists producing childlike and naive products. There are particular institutions that have a special emphasis on folk art. The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS), for example, has had a longstanding policy of collecting Nova Scotia (and Maritimes) folk art. To emphasize this commitment, the AGNS held a symposium in 1997 on the theme "Folk Art: Is It All Over?". This conference brought together a wide range of academics, museum curators, and art collectors. The symposium raised a number of issues that it is hoped will soon be available in a published proceedings (Pocius 1997). Other galleries in Canada also have had recent folk art shows — the McMichael, for example, in 1996 (Foshay *et al.* 1996). However, in general, as with the performing folk arts, there is often little consultation between the art gallery community and the academic folklorist. Canada Council — which finances much of the work in this area — does not have a separate division which deals

with folk arts (performing, visual, or otherwise). More problematic is the fact that Canada Council seems not to be aware of the academic work done by folklorists across the country in the area of folk art.

If Canadian museums occasionally sponsor exhibits on folklore produced by Europeans, then clearly they have done an extensive amount on the folklore of First Nations. As one of Canada's leading folklorists has noted, large segments of Canada's population — such as many Westerners — do not assume that any part of their life can be considered folklore (Carpenter 1979: 318-319). Instead, the issue of difference comes up again, and, in these circumstances difference equates with First Nations materials. And folklore is equated with First Nations traditions in the West. Much research throughout the country — but especially among leading museums in the West — deals with Native American oral materials, beliefs, and artifacts. In fact, what is often been considered as distinctively Canadian culture by foreigners has often been First Nations traditions, whether items from the south or Inuit or Innu culture from the North (Blundell 1994).

One could write a complete report on the massive amount of work that has been done over the years on First Nations folklore as it appears in Canada's museums. While primarily involving anthropologists, these displays range from massive travelling shows such as "The Spirit Sings" curated by the Glenbow, Micmac quillwork at the Nova Scotia Museum, or Inuit Art at the McMichael (Glenbow Museum 1987; Whitehead 1982; Gustavison 1994). There are important permanent displays in the nation's museums; one thinks here of the large installations in the University of British Columbia Museum, the hall at the CMC, or even smaller exhibits such as the Native Peoples Floor in the Newfoundland Museum.

### *Collecting Folklore*

The collecting of folklore across Canada has been haphazard and unsystematic, left to the priorities of particular archives, museums and other cultural institutions. Because of its changing emphasis over the years, the CMC has a large collection of early Native and Francophone materials, and a more recent collection of ethnic traditions. Memorial continues to emphasize Newfoundland traditions, Laval Francophone items.

Unlike European countries (such as Ireland) that established Government institutions early in the twentieth century to carefully survey all areas and

groups in the country, no national systematic folklore survey has gone on in Canada (cf. Ó Súilleabháin 1970). Some attempts at regional surveys have taken place. For years, for example, questionnaires were used in Memorial's folklore courses to obtain archival data from all over the province. More recently, from 1991-1994, the Centre franco-ontarien de folklore engaged in a multi-year project of surveying Francophone folklore in all regions of Ontario, funded by the Provincial Government (Pichette 1997: 59).

The most systematic folklore survey has taken place in Québec: Le macro-inventaire du patrimoine québécois project. This program, in theory, set out to systematically survey all forms of heritage — including tangible and intangible folklore — throughout the Province.<sup>16</sup> Using large numbers of field researchers, recording schedules and guides were devised to identify and document the entire range of heritage in all communities. A number of publications grew from this survey — some on particular kinds of tangible heritage (such as roadside crosses [Simard 1983]), others on more intangibles such as folk artists (Simard *et al.* 1985). With government funding cutbacks, this survey has been discontinued, but it remains a model of the kind of field survey project that needs to be carried out in all parts of the country.

### *Professional Training*

The training of professional folklorists in Canada takes place primarily at two institutions, Laval and Memorial. Both programmes offer a wide range of postgraduate courses that deal with issues of how folklore material should be recorded, how it should be classified once it is documented, and, finally, methods of analysis. Both programmes also offer a wide range of undergraduate courses, from oral literature, to belief systems and customary behaviours, to material culture and popular art. Memorial's folklore faculty currently numbers eight, while Laval has four faculty specializing in folklore topics (together with four archaeologists).

Memorial's folklore teaching takes place within the context of a established university departmental framework. While folklore as an academic discipline has quite an established place in other countries (such as the Scandinavian countries), it enjoys considerably less respectability in North America. This is

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16. For the survey guide and a discussion of methodology see Ministère des Affaires culturelles (Québec) (1985); for comments see Bernard Genest (1987: 22-35); for its importance in research see Jean-Claude Dupont (1997).

especially the case in Canada. While there are numerous universities in the United States that have folklore courses and degrees, only Memorial has an actual extensive department in Canada, offering a wide range of courses and degrees. While attempts have been made to expand folklore training programmes beyond Memorial, there seems to be somewhat of a resistance among the academic community to admit folklore into the traditional university disciplinary framework. This comes, in part, from the use of the term folklore — which connotes marginality of both topic and study group. As well, however, within Anglophone Canada, English universities often have been shaped by British University models, where folklore declined in respectability after its initial flourishing in the early twentieth century. If folklore is not taught at Oxford or Cambridge, so this mentality goes, then it need not be taught at Toronto or McGill.

In the 1975 Symons Report, “To Know Ourselves,” the Commission drew attention to the “comparative neglect of folklore studies at Canadian universities, particularly in English-speaking Canada, and to urge that greater emphasis be placed on both teaching and research in this field (Symons 1975: 83).” Symons’ Commission pointed out many of the reasons why academic institutions have been sceptical about folklore studies, and offered a number of recommendations. Unfortunately, little has been done in this regard. Folklore courses are offered by professional folklorists in Anglophone Canada only at University College Cape Breton (which has introduced a summer certificate programme in Heritage Resources as part of its folklore work), University of Winnipeg, University of Alberta, and York University.

Laval’s folklore courses have been part of a folklore programme since their initial creation in 1944. This programme, however, has not been a free-standing body, but, instead, has been part of a larger Department. Originally, that Department was Canadian Studies, but in 1971 *Ethnologie* became part of the History Department. This affiliation in the 1970s and 1980s explains in part why folklore (or *ethnologie*) as it developed in Québec was much more historically-oriented than its English counterpart. Laval students were not only trained in oral literature, custom, and material culture, but in history, archaeology, and museum studies as well. This broader training enabled many Laval graduates to quickly obtain positions in Québec museums and government agencies. In the late 1970s, for example, one Québec ethnologist estimated that approximately one hundred ethnologists trained at Laval were working in Québec in Federal or Provincial Government positions (Maranda 1978: 32).

In 1975, the folklore program and the Archives de Folklore merged with two ongoing linguistic projects (Atlas linguistique du Canada de l'Est and the Trésor de la langue française au Québec) to form a new research centre, the Centre des Etudes sur la Langue, les Arts et Traditions populaires des francophones en Amérique du Nord (CELAT) (Maranda 1978: 27). This research institute coordinated work in history, archaeology, folklore, art history and other topics. First directed by an historian, Jean Hamelin, it was taken over by Jean-Claude Dupont in 1976; Dupont was a student of Lacourcière's, and a specialist in material culture. Folklore students often conduct their research within the framework of CELAT, but as of now, their degrees are still granted in History. Francophone folklore studies increasingly is focusing on more contemporary issues, and the folklore programme may eventually move from the History to the Anthropology Department.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s, as the CCFCS increasingly shifted its focus to multiculturalism, much of what was going on in Québec folklore circles had to do with a growing nationalism, and the use of folklore in the creation of a national identity. In a sense, this has always been one major theme in the study of French folklore, but in this period some researchers turned more and more to the creation of a clear identity, a clear Québec heritage — what was labelled as patrimoine. Laval academics and graduates were involved in many of the recording programmes and research projects that had been established under the auspices of the Ministère des Affaires culturelles (MAC), which had a special section that dealt with patrimoine.

The best introduction to the relationship of folklore to the fostering of patrimoine is given in the booklet, *L'ethnologie au Québec*, produced by the MAC, and published in 1987 (Genest 1987). This was written primarily by a Laval ethnologie graduate, Yves Bergeron, with editorial assistance from scholars at Laval and the Société québécoise des ethnologues. This booklet clearly outlines how ethnologie evolved from its early dominance by oral materials to a broader scientific focus on traditional cultures of the past and present. Methods of documentation and classification are briefly discussed, followed by a number of ongoing case studies. The final section deals with how Governments might help to promote the continuing survival of both tangible and intangible folklore items in a community.

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17. For a history of the folklore program at Laval, see Jean Du Berger (1997).

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