AN ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN CHORAL FOLK MUSIC CURRENTLY AVAILABLE IN DOMESTIC PUBLICATION

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The traditional music of America in collection is musically representative of pioneer settlements of the country from Mexico to Canada and from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. To insure that each section of this vast country was musically represented naturally would require a systematic and thorough coverage by those persons who have made this work their primary concern for a good many years.

A look at the map of these United States gives the observer an acute awareness of the stupendous undertaking for those who were first to begin their trek into the regions of the land where folk song abounds, into communities into which fast-moving civilization has been slow to penetrate. Early in their history these communities were isolated because of the hardships and dangers of travel. With the spread of civilization, however, the country was tamed and became more densely populated so that the growth of folk song and traditions within the social life of these isolated communities was a natural sequence.

The preservation of this folk music with its traditions has been the purpose of men such as Phillips Barry, *Folk Music in America* (1939); Carl Sandburg, *The American Songbag* (1922);
Ira W. Ford, *Traditional Music of America* (1940); A. M. Buchanan, *American Folk Music*; John A. Lomax, *Our Singing Country* (1941); J. W. Hendren, *A Study of Ballad Rhythm* (1906); A. K. Davis, *Traditional Ballads of Virginia* (1929); and many others who have spent much time and energy in the villages and homes of the people, the people who have stored in their memories the folk songs of previous generations. Migrations of varying song versions could be plotted and related to streams of population movement, of migrations and interlacings of families, their culture and general structure. From this store of folk lore has come to us the old fiddle tunes with their traditions, the quaint calls of the American square dance, the play-party songs of olden times, the play songs and games of the old-time village green, and other songs of entertainment.

America, because of its youth among nations, provides for the research worker the advantage of his having to delve only a relatively short distance into history for material and facts. If this is true, it follows that the preservation of a folk-song tradition in America should be more nearly complete and accurate than in some other country where the researcher must trace a tune more than three centuries. The quantity of work already published gives evidence of the fact that the rural districts of the country are rich in tradition. Writers have found the music in the rural
districts among the descendants of "post-Colonial pioneers," tracing the tradition from one community to another until it took final shape from the tangles of recollections. The tracing is difficult, however, and made more so if the inquirer does not "belong" in the region. Unless the observer can adapt himself to the mode of life of these people, he fails to gain their confidence.

Ira W. Ford states that the violin was the usual musical instrument of the first generation of pioneers, followed later by the dulcimer, melodeon and reed organ. Because the fiddle was light of weight and easy to carry, it was present at almost all their social gatherings. Many of these fiddles still in use were made over one hundred years ago by men just as skillful in converting the trees of the forest into homes. The progress of the nation was accompanied by the fiddle tunes composed and performed by these pioneers on their homemade instruments. When the farmers assembled for dancing, which was often, there were quite a number of fiddlers present and each had his instrument.

Traditional instrumental folk music in America is dance music. Fiddle dances and fiddle tunes for formal balls were a feature of New England social life in the 1820's and the

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1Ira W. Ford, Traditional Music of America, p. 8.
2Ibid.
period immediately following. The ring-play, or song for
dancing, flourished considerably at such gatherings as late
as the 1870's and perhaps later. Because the present writer
is concerned primarily with traditional folk song, tradition-
al instrumental folk music will be merely referred to only so
often as is necessary for clarification.

As near the present as 1937, those people in America who
have been most actively interested in American balladry and
folk-song from the collector's viewpoint have been at odds
on establishing the origin of folk song as being either "com-
munal" or creation by individual invention. The "communal"
theory of folk song origin in this country was especially
prevalent during the latter part of the nineteenth century
and the early part of the twentieth century. According to
this theory, folk songs or ballads came into being through
improvisations resulting from group activities whether this
group assembled for group labor or to furnish music and song
for dancing.

From another viewpoint, the "communal" in folk song is
that element which is constant or which survives as definite
evidence of the combined effects of the revolt, whether con-
scious or unconscious, of the folk singer's individualism
against a set pattern of tune or text. Naturally, the effects
of such revolt will manifest themselves in such manner as to

3Phillips Barry, *Folk Music in America*, p. xii.
make a poor ballad of a good one or vice versa. They will include particularly the establishing of "pattern figures" of text and tune. These ballad styles do not depend on nor affix the origin of the ballad but grow gradually as a natural product of the laws of association and memory. To state this in another manner, a communal folk song does not exist as the product of one composer or one author. It is quite the opposite; into the song has gone the collective labors of many authors and composers, collective in the sense of tradition in time and space, including interpreters quite disposed to association with the original composer by recomposition.

Phillips Barry was one of the first workers in American balladry to regard folk song as being the product of single individuals, with the resulting changes wrought by interpretations of subsequent traditional singers. The original versions of ballads are usually unobtainable, but in many instances authorship can be traced to some village poet or folk-composer. The process is actually a combination of the two elements, individual creation together with communal recreation. Consider the instance of the growth and change of a single event from its first telling to another individual through many such repetitions. From this constantly changing character of folk song have arisen impersonality of authorship and multiplicity of versions.

\[4\text{Ibid.},\ p.\ 110.\quad 5\text{Ibid.},\ p.\ 84.\]
In the case of a ballad, the individual originates or composes; the community edits and recomposes. The role played by the folk is an active one but occurs following the act of the individual in composing. Different versions of a ballad result from each having been through a period of re-creation in the minds of the folk singers, that period of re-creation lasting years or even through a generation or more. In the case of quite similar versions of the same ballad, it is quite probable that the process of re-creation by the folk has not extended over so long a period of time. The wide currency of a ballad will contribute further to a more extensive process of re-creation.

American ballads, even the oldest of them, are still quite young, especially when contrasted with the native balladry of Britain where the re-creative process covers by far a greater expanse of time. Too, the "heroic days" of balladry are no longer extant, resulting in a wide difference of literary worth, though not so in kind. However, the process of ballad making is the same and will not change. It is true that a ballad may enjoy only local prominence, yet it may at any time find a wide dispersion and move rapidly through the various sections of the country. Why one ballad should live and another perish is unanswerable. But the important fact is that American native balladry exists.

Changes and new growth in folk song are brought about chiefly by the processes of wearing down ("zersingen") and
of re-composition. Those people who have gone to the folk singers to listen and to study have learned extensively regarding tradition, interpretation, and extension. These collectors have considered the most important thing learned to be the fact that though the folk singers are the keepers of a tradition, they never for a moment consider themselves as being bound or dominated by it. They learn their songs but then do as they please with the text and melody. To a folk singer, his way of singing a folk song is the right way; deviations from his way are met sometimes with tolerance, other times with bitter intolerance.

Phillips Barry refers to the "folk-composer"—fiddler, piper, or singer—as one who consciously recreated folk songs. Patrick W. Joyce, the collector of Irish folk music, and Barry point out definite examples of folk song in which variations of one melody show convincing evidence of conscious and deliberate change of notation in a manner which is more definite than that effected by communal change. To say that tradition makes of a folk song what it is does not complete the statement: consciously or unconsciously exerted, the individualism of the folk singer makes the tradition.

Tradition is usually selective and as a consequence, the best songs are perhaps the oldest. Barry distinguishes between "tradition in time" and "tradition in space." A song may

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6 Ibid., p. x.  
7 Ibid., p. 92.  
8 Ibid.  
9 Ibid., p. 84.
have descended through many generations of singers in which case it becomes traditional in time. The same song may have tradition in space in which instance many people over a large territory sing this same song. Both are species of folk song; both are equally traditional. In each case tradition establishes the folk song as a definite genre, textually and musically.

As stated previously, those songs which are the oldest are usually the best, having the advantage of tradition in time and considering tradition as a factor in the making or the selection for preservation of what is best. But folk songs, especially the popular ballads, have their life span, and F. J. Child contends that the ballad is at its best when "caught early."\(^1\)

"Early," however, is relative. A ballad may endure in the best tradition for over two hundred years in one section of the country, while deteriorating badly in another section. An explanation of this difference by Barry is stated thus:

\[
\ldots \text{the favorable results of tradition are in direct ratio to the intelligence and literacy of the singers. No greater mistake was ever made than to suppose that ballads survive best among the most illiterate and ignorant. A ballad may have sufficient vitality to survive in spite of illiteracy, but it does not thrive on it.}^{11}\]

However, considerable reading of ballad collectors' works will indicate to one that folk song flourishes best among

\(^{10}\text{Ibid.} \quad ^{11}\text{Ibid.}\)
rural folk. Add to this the fact that illiteracy usually exists at a higher rate among the rural districts than in urban communities, and the situation becomes one for more lengthy study.

Tradition in space may produce in terms of a plane, rather than a line, the same good or bad results that under similar circumstances are derivative from tradition in time. In fact, a song need not be very old to pass through many groups of people and acquire variations. For instance, a text may be set to a musically unattractive sentimental air. But should the folk accept it, wide distribution may cause the song to lose its insipidness and to become a quite passable folk melody. Other ballads, set to melodies unacceptable to the folk, have become traditional over several states. Re-creation of the texts by tradition has sufficiently improved them to cause widespread and favorable interest among experts of ballad criticism.

Ballad collectors often refer antagonistically to the influence of printing upon ballad tradition. They contend that printing tends to stabilize the text and to break the tradition. Barry prefers the phrase "reinforced tradition" to that of "contaminated tradition" that some collectors see fit to employ.¹² This would seem preferable in the sense that the text is not the whole of the ballad and, furthermore,

¹²Ibid., p. 85.
printing the texts did not stabilize many of them unless the ballads might be used in a musical show or on the stage. In this case the texts did at times become somewhat more stable. Persisting in oral tradition, the folk tune retains its freshness and vitality, while this is not true of folk ballad. Printing the texts did not affect the music. It remained as pure and "uncontaminated" tradition.13

The ballad collector, if he is to determine that ballad making is still in progress, must investigate the history of the forms of ballad tradition. From the singer he should obtain full information regarding the source of the ballad. If the song is one from the family, the collector should learn as much as possible of the family history, the genealogy and migrations. This concerns tradition in time. Should the song be extra-familial, the name of the person from whom the song was learned, with the circumstances involved, should be noted. These are factors bearing on tradition in space. Finally, ballad sheets, manuscripts, broadsides, and sheet music should be collected and preserved. The final solution of the many problems involved for the ballad collectors and critics lies in the extent of the knowledge gained of the varied folkways with their traditional songs.

13Ralph Vaughan Williams, discussing folk-song tradition, wrote: "Our traditional melodies are, I am aware, no longer traditional. They have been noted down by experts and committed to printing, they have been discussed and analysed and harmonized and sung at concerts; they have in fact been stereotyped. They are no longer in a state of flux . . ." (National Music, p. 68).
CHAPTER II

AN ANALYSIS AS PERTAINING TO TEXT

Phillips Barry is among those who condemn the idea of a folk ballad's existence apart from the folk tune. He admits there is certain literary value in the ballad but strongly contends that the ballad text set apart from the musical setting or folk song is a pale, lifeless, and incomplete narrative or poem. In conjunction with this line of thought, Reed Smith states that "ballads lose their identity when they are read instead of sung. The ballad poem is only half the ballad; the ballad melody is the other half."

It is apparent that the folk tune tends to heighten the beauty of the ballad. A certain but undefinable lift is granted to the text by the flow of the music, and surely the emotional content of the music and the words assumes proper proportion when the two are combined. Having been conceived to be sung, ballads should find their appreciation as songs, not as poems.

Consider the ballad "Barbra Allen" which has dozens of settings. The story is nearly always the same--Willie dies for love of Barbra Allen, and she goes into the grave beside

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1 Barry, Folk Music, p. 72.
2 Reed Smith, South Carolina Ballads, p. 11.
him with a wasted heart. The repetitions of the verses and the unwinding of the narrative seem lifeless, as stated before, and interesting only in a pale sort of way until placed with the counterpart, the folk tune. Even though many times the settings are monotonous, the tune, together with the text, produces a oneness that affords more complete satisfaction to the receptive ear.

Such, also, is true of "The Lane County Bachelor," which only finds its characteristic banter and lilt when one hears "My name is Frank Bolar 'nole Bach'lor I am, I'm keepin' ole bach on an elegant plan . . ." to the Irish Washerwoman tune. "It is a document in jigtime." 3

Even so, there are certain interesting and illuminating facts that can be brought to light by studying ballad texts without necessary association altogether with their musical settings. Some enthusiasts have ventured so far in their response to folk ballads and folk tunes as to suggest that certain collections be used as related material with the study of history and geography at various school levels. 4 It is true that history runs through many of the songs. More interesting for such a discussion as this, however, is "life" as it is told in balladry.

American balladry comes from the voices of thousands of men and women from all sections of the country. Into

3Carl Sandburg, The American Songbag, p. 120.
4Ibid., p. viii.
their songs has gone the stories of their lives, the modes and customs of their section, the stories of their toils and labors, tales of steamboat parties, logging camps, hayrides, saloon brawls, weddings, and deaths. The "city slicker" figures in many songs as do the simple mountain folk and the lumberjack. River gangs and farm workers sing of their work and their fellow laborer. Studying the texts one feels certain that no group of people or community existed in this land without its balladry and song. Murder, disaster, and scandal appear frequently and are narrated as dispassionately as "Ain No Mo' Cane on dis Brazis." Realities such as sadness, sorrow, and poverty are often related in song, but laughter bursts forth just as often as do tears.

The recurrent theme running through the center of this balladry is the common man. A good hand was always welcome, regardless of race or religion, while the gentleman who affected airs usually was bound for trouble. The common man's work and play are put first, and his passions and problems are not without the concern of his fellowman. Book learning was at a minimum with the common man, but his songs are rich with a deep understanding of humanity and the universe.

Wherever the promise of entertainment caused men to gather, tunes, dances, tales, and religious ideas were swapped.

5John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, _Folk Song U. S. A._, p. 320.
freely. At this level of human communication, intolerance of racial and religious differences was minimized by a basic understanding acquired by this "meeting of minds."

Faced with stern religious prejudices, the young folk of the frontier popularized the play-party. In this guise those elements of the square dance so objectionable to their elders were removed or hidden in a manner to win approval. The dancers sang and clapped their own music—no instruments being permitted. Fancy steps and involved figures were replaced with simple patterns similar to children's games. In this manner early frontier communities saw many innocent dances wherein the girls danced gaily with their cowboys, the river boatsmen, the bear hunters, and Indian fighters.

The play-party soon flourished with a vitality all its own. Young folks and married couples preferred this gay entertainment to the square dance which required a fiddler, a caller, and a group of people who knew the steps to the dances. Because a friendly crowd of people who enjoyed singing and dancing was the only requisite, the play-party moved with the frontier, gaining instant popularity wherever it was introduced.

"Skip to My Lou" is one such dance tune that has found new life with the revival of American folk music. Its rhythmic character, catchy words, and simple melody create an appeal that almost guarantees it instant popularity wherever it is sung or danced. Many concert arrangements have appeared
in recent years; one which was written by Harry Robert Wilson is published by Hall and McCreary Company, Chicago.

Skip to My Lou

1. Choose your partners, skip to my Lou,
   Choose your partners, skip to my Lou,
   Choose your partners, skip to my Lou,
   Skip to my Lou, my darlin'!

2. Can't get a redbird, a bluebird'll do.
   Can't get a redbird, a bluebird'll do.
   Can't get a redbird, a bluebird'll do.
   Skip to my Lou, my darlin'!

3. I got a redbird, a pretty one too,
   You got a redbird, a pretty one too,
   I got a redbird, a pretty one too,
   Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.

4. Cat's in the cream jar, what'll I do?

5. Chicken in the dough tray, what'll I do?

6. Fly's in the buttermilk, shoo, shoo, shoo.

Harry Robert Wilson inserts calls for the caller of a square dance throughout his arrangement, and includes a section for the caller where the participants sing "loo-loo-loo-loo." According to the tradition of the tune, this would be in contrast to its earliest uses as a play-party dance tune.

Lomax lists the tune with ten verses:

Skip to My Lou

1. Lost my partner, what'll I do?

2. I'll get another one, purtier'n you.

3. Can't get a redbird, a bluebird'll do.

6 Ibid., p. 99
4. Little red wagon, painted blue.
5. Fly in the sugar-bowl, shoo, fly, shoo.
6. Gone again, what'll I do?
7. Hair in the butterdish, six feet long.
8. Cows in the cornfield, two by two.
9. Rats in the breadtray, how they chew.
10. One old boot and a run-down shoe.

This disparity in text is explained partly by the obvious reasoning that use of a longer text would have been impractical for concert performance. Furthermore, it is to be expected that variations in folk songs will be found by collectors of folk material.

"Sourwood Mountain" exists with many variants as to tune and text. It may be referred to as a dance tune, a fiddler's tune, and as a song. The text has a mountain flavor with a repetitious line suggestive of the style of the yodel. Howard Brockway collected the melody in Harlan County, Kentucky, and arranged it to a text collected by Loraine Wyman. This arrangement was for mixed chorus and was published by H. W. Gray Company in a series called Lonesome Tunes. The following text is attributed to Gilbert Reynolds Combs of Lexington, Kentucky:

**Sourwood Mountain**

1. Chicken a-crowin' on Sourwood Mountain,
   Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day,

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So many pretty girls I can't count 'em,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day.

2. My true love, she's a blue-eyed dandy,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day,
A kiss from her is sweeter than candy,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day.

3. My true love lives over the river,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day,
A hop and a skip and I'll be with her,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day.

4. My true love is a blue-eyed daisy,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day,
If she don't marry me I'll go crazy,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day.

5. Back my jenny up the Sourwood Mountain,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day,
So many pretty girls I can't count 'em,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day.

6. My true love is a sun-burnt daisy,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day,
She won't work and I'm too lazy,
Ho-dee-ing-dong-doodle allay day.

It is of interest to note that Combs himself was born
on Pine Mountain, and at the age of sixteen first became ac-
quainted with "a railroad train, a telephone, typewriter,
fountain pen, bath tub, barber chair, and other items of on-
rushing civilization."\(^8\)

Phillips Barry mentions two types of ballads which he
calls "the ballad of situation" and "the ballad of intro-
spection."\(^9\) The example given for the ballad of situation
is "The House-Carpenter." This ballad is a tale about a

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 124.

\(^9\)Barry, Folk Music in America, p. 38.
seaman who has become rich from his voyages and returns to persuade his onetime sweetheart to sail away with him. She leaves her babe with her carpenter husband and, arraying herself in her finest dress, boards her lover's ship. Three weeks out of port the ship springs a leak and sinks, but not before the sailor repents of his stealing the carpenter's bride.

Another ballad of situation which has been collected in dozens of variations is one that is probably sung in every state of the union. One collector is known to have over one hundred different versions of "Frankie and her man."

As early as 1888, the "Frankie and Albert" song was well known along the Mississippi River and among railroad men of the Middle West. The "Frankie and Johnny" versions probably followed later as did the "Frankie Blues." The college song version is usually referred to as a bar-room classic. Joseph W. Clokey has published with J. Fischer and Company such an arrangement of "Frankie and Johnny."

The Frankie story deals with adultery, murder, violence, and crime just as do many first-class operas. The mention of "rubber-tired hearses," Johnny's "Stetson," of Frankie's trial "under an electric fan" and other action-packed phrases impresses upon one the realism of the action. "Rooty-toot-toot-toot-toot" certainly is more expressive than "bang-bang" would have been when Frankie "nailed the man what threw her down."

10Sandburg, op. cit., p. 75.
The following version is one collected by Carl Sandburg and is of the supposedly earlier version of the tale:

Frankie and Albert

1. Frankie and Albert were sweethearts, everybody knows, Frankie spent a hundred dollars just to get her man some clothes; He was her man, but he done her wrong.

2. Frankie went down to the corner, took along a can, says to the lovin' bartender, "Has you seen my lovin' man? He is my man, but he's doin' me wrong."

3. "Well, I ain't gonna tell you no story, ain't gonna tell you no lie, Albert went by 'bout an hour ago, with a girl called Alice Fry; He was your man, but he's doin' you wrong."

4. Frankie's gone from the corner, Frankie ain't gone for fun, Underneath her apron she's got Albert's gatlin' gun; He was her man, but he done her wrong.

5. Albert sees Frankie comin', out the back door he did scoot, Frankie pulled out the pistol, went roota-de-toot-toot-toot. He was her man, but she shot him down.

6. Frankie shot him once, Frankie shot him twice, Third time that she shot him the bullet took his life; He was her man, but he done her wrong.

7. When Frankie shot Albert, he fell down on his knees, Looked up at her and said, "Oh, Frankie, please, Don't shoot me no mo', don't shoot me no mo'."

8. "Oh, turn me over, doctor; turn me over slow, Turn me over on my right side, "cause the bullet am hurtin' me so. I was her man, but I done her wrong."

\[11\text{Ibid.},\ pp.\ 76-77.\]
9. Now it's rubber-tired carriages, decorated hack,
   Eleven men went to the graveyard, and only ten came back;
   He was her man, but he's dead and gone.

10. Frankie was a-standin' on the corner, watchin' de hearse go by,
    Threwed her arms into the air, "Oh, let me lie by the side of my man, what done me wrong."

11. Frankie went to the graveyard, bowed down on her knees,
    "Speak one word to me, Albert, an' give my heart some ease.
    You was my man, but I done you wrong."

12. Sheriff arrested Frankie, took her to the county jail,
    Locked her up in a dungeon cell, and throwed the keys away.
    She shot her man, said he done her wrong.

13. Judge tried lil' Frankie, under an electric fan;
    Judge says, "Yo' free woman now, go kill yourself anothah man.
    He was yo' man, now he's dead an' gone."

It may be of interest to note the psychological significance of the word "said" in the last line of verse twelve.
Previous to her "arrest," it seemed an accepted fact that "he done her wrong." A like instance may be noted in verse thirteen; the use of the word "lil'" adds a note of pity for Frankie for the first instance in this respect.

The ballad of introspection centers the action and interest around the chief character as a personality. The following ballad is published by M. Witmark and Sons in an arrangement by Kenneth Winstead:

The Lonesome Dove

1. One day while in a shady grove
   Sat o'er my head a lonesome dove,
   For its lost love began to coo,
   It made me think of my love too.
Refrain:
O sad, o sweet, o lonesome dove
Remind me not of my lost love.

2. O plaintive dove, you are not alone,
With you I am constrained to moan
I once like you did have a mate,
But now I am left to mourn my fate.

3. My love's fair cheeks, her sparkling eyes
Are withered like the rose that dies.
Arms that once embraced me round
Lie moldering now beneath the ground.

The homiletic ballad is the ballad of introspection in another form. Some versions exhort the listener to shun the vices of poker and whiskey, while in others the main character repents his dissolute life and may ask for a particular type of funeral or burying.

The well-known cowboy song, "The Lone Prairie," is an instance of a ballad made through communal re-creation in the early part of the twentieth century. This version is short, effective, and somewhat characteristic of the ballad of situation:

The Lone Prairie

1. Oh, a trapper lay at the point of death,
And, short his bank account, short his breath,
And as he lay, this prayer breathed he,
"Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie!"

2. "Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie,
Where the wild coyote can howl o'er me,
Where the rattlesnakes hiss and the winds blow free,
Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie!"

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12 Barry, Folk Music in America, p. 41.
3. But they heeded not his dying prayer,
On the lone prairie, they buried him there,
Where the rattlesnakes sing, and the wind blows free,
They buried him there on the lone prairie!

The American work song has been found wherever men exist by their might and brawn. The odor of sweating bodies, the clank of chains, the creak of oars in a lock, the cry of a lumberjack—all seem to come alive in the work song.

As is typical with all folk song, the texts are terse and concise though free and flowing. An air of lightheartedness becomes prevalent on hearing the words, and a feeling of optimism pervades the songs. "Oh, I Drive Oxen," a Pennsylvania lumber camp song, is a typical work song. It is published by Witmark and Sons in an arrangement by Harvey Gaul.

Oh, I Drive Oxen

1. Oh, I drive oxen for Tim McAdoo
   And we drag the timber for the Cheat River Crew,
   Me off ox is Clem, an' me nigh one is Jack
   But they're both out of luck when I yells "Haw Buck."

   Chorus:
   For "Haw Buck" is pull and "Haw Buck" is jerk,
   So go yank on the chains and get down to work
   For "Haw Buck" is draw and drag up the load
   So it's "Haw Buck" ye Spalpeens or ye'll get the goad.

2. Oh, Clem sleeps standin' like a bally statue
   And Jack sticks in the ground like a pot o' glue,
   But whether Clem's sleepin', or whether Jack's stuck,
   They're both out of luck when I yells "Haw Buck."

This negro woodchopper's song is from the collection of Tubman K. Hedrick, acquired when he was a newsman in Memphis, Tennessee. The origin is supposedly the Ozarks and Arkansas.
The phrases time with ax-strokes; the ax sinks on "Go 'way," then on "f'om my window," and so on.

Go 'Way F'om Mah Window

1. Go 'way f'om mah window,
   Go 'way f'om mah doh,
   Go 'way f'om mah bedside,
   Don' you tease me no mo'.

2. Go 'way in de springtime,
   Come back in de fall,
   Bring you back mo' money
   Dan we bofe can haul.

The Erie Canal in its day was a highway for boats and a common carrier for a current of merchandise westward and of products going eastward. Because it was a vital artery for the Midwest, it was praised as an achievement of genius. Its navigation was easy, and life moved at a walk, monotonously so.

Many songs came to life on the Erie Canal, songs about the daily goings-on of the boat crews, particular trips, and storms on the canal. This particular one tells the tale of a crew who let the monotony of the voyage press in on them.

The E-ri-e

1. We were forty miles from Albany,
   Forget I never shall,
   What a terrible storm we had one night
   On the E-ri-e Canal.

Refrain:
   Oh the E-ri-e was a-rising
   The gin was getting low

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13 Sandburg, op. cit., p. 377.

14 Ibid., p. 180.
And I scarcely think
We'll get a drink
Till we get to Buffalo
Till we get to Buffalo.

2. We were loaded down with barley,
   We were chuck up full of rye;
   And the captain he looked down at me
   With his goddam wicked eye.

3. Oh the girls are in the Police Gazette,
   The crew are all in jail;
   I'm the only living sea cook's son
   That's left to tell the tale.

The mountainous regions of this country are peculiarly rich in folk-song tradition. From them come versions of folk song and ballads that tell of the simple beauty of the unhurried life in these regions. During the early part of this century, collectors were amazed to find communities in the mountain regions of West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, and Kentucky living almost completely isolated from civilization as known in the urban areas.

Within these communities, singing was common to all inhabitants and was a part of their everyday life. Furthermore, age was not the determining factor in song knowledge; children could sing a wealth of ballads and could do so in the best traditional manner.\(^\text{15}\) The simplicity of their mode of life and their unassuming manner made their singing unaffected

\(^{15}\)Olive Dame Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp, \textit{English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians}, p. viii.
and straightforward. Sidney Lanier lived his last years in the mountains of North Carolina; a quotation of his expresses the spirit of these folk in their ballads:

I know that he who walks in the way that these ballads point will be manful in necessary fight, fair in trade, loyal in love, generous to the poor, tender in the household, prudent in living, plain in speech, merry upon occasion, simple in behavior and honest in all things.16

The following stanzas are from a Kentucky mountain song. The quiet awareness of emotional content in the text is typical of the mountain love song.

Fond Affection17

1. The world's so wide I cannot cross it.
The sea's so deep I cannot wade,
I'll just go hire me a little boatman,
To row me across the stormy tide.

2. I give you back your ring and letters,
And the picture I have loved so well,
And henceforth we will meet as strangers,
But I can never say farewell.

3. There's only three things that I could wish for,
That is my coffin, shroud, and grave,
And when I'm dead please don't weep o'er me,
Or kiss the lips you once betrayed.

"Springfield Mountain" is a favorite ballad among mountain folk and is widely known in many variants across the country. Though the singer gives warning about a "pizen sarpint," one feels he is "poking fun" at the sad accident

16 Smith, op. cit., p. 8.
17 Sandburg, op. cit., p. 323.
depicted in the story. In fact, there exist some folk songs whose merit is in their faculty for calling forth a laugh.

Springfield Mountain

1. On Springfield Mountain there did dwell
   With-a-ri-ting-a-tim, ring-a-tid-en-nah-den-ay,
   On Springfield Mountain there did dwell, Tim-a-row!
   On Springfield Mountain there did dwell
   A lovely youth whom I knew well,

2. This lovely youth one day did go
   Down to the meadow for to mow.

3. He mowed a while and then did feel
   A pizenous sarpint bite his heel.

4. He turned around and with a blow
   He laid that pesky sarpint low.

5. They carried him to his Sally dear,
   Which made her feel so very queer.

6. "O Johnny dear, why did you go
   Down in your father's field to mow?"

7. "Why, Sally dear, I suppose you knowed
   When the grass gits ripe it must be mowed!"

8. Now Sally had two ruby lips,
   With which the pizen she did sip.

9. Dear Sally had a hollow tooth,
   And so the pizen killed them both.

10. So Johnny died, gave up the ghost,
    And off to heaven he did post.

11. Come all young girls, and shed one tear
    For this young man that died right here.

12. Come all young men, and warning take,
    And don't get bit by a rattle-snake.

Ibid., pp. 28-29.
If a person has heard a dialect from living people, he will not stumble on apostrophes, elisions, and varying word forms necessary to record accurately the phonetics of folk-song texts. Different parts of the country have their own dialects where the daily speech and common idioms are peculiarly their own. To be an authority on dialects would require extensive travel and investigation on the part of a collector. Accurate recording of the texts, however, is an essential part of the task.

A study of the texts will reveal in many instances the locale, the "use," and the origin of the song. The psychological and sociological significance of the words may explain modes, customs, and philosophies of peoples and communities. In fact, the soul of a country may be found in the rhymes of its songs, the songs made by the folk as they live their normal vigorous life.
CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS AS PERTAINING TO MELODY

The literary interest in folk song preceded considerably the musical interest. The main objects of this literary interest have been those types of folk song which have the most immediate appeal to the reader and student primarily interested in classical literary tradition. This overemphasis on the textual side has for some time prevented other aspects of folk literature, such as folk music, from receiving proper attention.¹

The cooperation of the trained musician and the musicologist is essential to gaining an accurate objective record to stimulate interest in comparative studies and serious research. Theoretical discussion has covered problems of literary study, but a strictly musical study of American folk song has hardly begun.

Phillips Barry may be mentioned as the first to call attention to the musical aspects of balladry in this country. The interest in the musical side was given a strong boost by the collecting and lecturing of Cecil J. Sharp, an Englishman

¹George Herzog, Research in Primitive and Folk Music in the United States, American Council of Learned Societies, Bulletin No. 24, p. 46.
who sought out regions in this country where traditional balladry was prominent. Many people are actively interested in the field in general, whether through extended collections or theoretical discussions, and the number of individual collectors is almost innumerable.

Much of the earlier work appears to be amateurish and to be undertaken in order to offer aesthetic pleasure rather than to promote scholarship. Guy B. Johnson and George P. Jackson combine scholarship with the attempt to remain free from bias. Various regions of the country are covered by Robert W. Gordon's collections; those of John A. Lomax concern various types of folk song in the South and the Southwest.

Any form of study of folk material will bring out facts that are interesting and experiences that are enlightening. From the musical aspect of folk song, the unconscious experimentation has gone on for generations with musical rhythm, melody, and form, and their relations to speech and poetic form. Such studies are obviously vital to the history of folk song as well as to other musical studies.

As noted in the discussion on texts, there is no single text to which all variants are compared. Rather, there exist many variants, no one of which possesses exclusive authenticity. Each variant usually has its own melodic setting, and though the settings may be closely akin, no single melody carries the stamp of authority. Because this is true, it is
rightfully imperative that every obtainable version of text and of melody be recorded.

Certain aspects become apparent when one studies the melodies closely. In the melodic content, the music reveals the conservatism and good artistic judgment of the singers. Elaborate modulations are exceptional and rarely to be found. The major seventh of the harmonic minor scale likewise is seldom found in folk tunes.²

For further evidence of conservatism one may note the frequent use of the Church modes—Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Ionian.³ The Lydian mode, because it admits the dissonance of the augmented fourth, is only used occasionally. The following melody will illustrate the effective use of this tonality, the Lydian mode being noticed in the final cadence.

The Golden Dagger⁴

²Barry, Folk Music, p. 73.
³Willi Apel, Harvard Dictionary, article "Church Modes" (unsigned).
⁴Barry, op. cit., p. 74.
The Mixolydian mode is quite similar to our major mode, having as its difference the minor seventh. The following folk song from the North Atlantic States is set in the Mixolydian mode.

_Sally_  

Occasionally one encounters melodies of the ecclesiastical type even though they are set in a gapped scale in which certain tones are lacking. In this instance, it becomes difficult to determine precisely in what mode the air is set. The following air is given for illustration of this point:

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5_Ibid._., p. 65.
Another form of melodic structure is shown by a simple type of modulation which involves modal rather than key change. For instance, a melody may begin in the Dorian mode. Later by using the minor sixth of the Aeolian mode a shift in modes is accomplished to give the bimodal type. The Mixolydian mode and its minor seventh is usually adhered to even though the various modes are somewhat interchangeable. Because of this interchangeability, variants of the same tune may possess tonal and modal differences.

The simplicity of phrase structure of folk songs is also to be noted. These melodies usually consist of four phrases which may correspond to the four lines of the ballad stanza. Barry suggests the terminology ballad type for this example or form of melody. 7

A form of the ballad-type melody may reveal on analysis a series of developments of one or two simple themes. This kind of structure is used in the following air:

6Ibid., p. 75.  
7Ibid.
The Cowboy's Lament

The first phrase of the tune gives the theme which is repeated in shorter form in the second phrase. In the third phrase the second theme is given and is built around the octave of the tonic. A variation of the first phrase is given in the final phrase in which the last three notes progress to the closing cadence. This type formula is fairly frequent, lending coherence and unity to the melody in its entirety. There are other instances, of course, in which the second theme may be built around the third or fifth of the tonic; in other examples, the second theme may center around a harmonically related but lower note. The following melody illustrates the latter type:

Ibid., p. 40.
The second theme in the following melody is constructed around the third of the tonic, the closing phrase being introduced with the first two notes of the first phrase.

Because of its Irish folk-music character, Barry calls another type of melody structure the "come-all-ye type." Two distinct phrases characterize this type, the two usually being arranged so that the formula will be ABBA. On other

9Ibid., p. 76. 10Ibid., p. 76. 11Ibid., p. 77.
occasions, however, the final phrase may be a variation of the first, or it may be entirely new, in which case the formula is ABBC. Though variable at times, this form appears to be fairly constant.

The following song of the Civil War will illustrate the come-all-ye type. This song was collected in Massachusetts in 1912.

The Battle of Fredericksburg

This next tune in the Mixolydian mode is another example of the come-all-ye style. The first and fourth phrases are identical; however, the inner phrases have note-value and time-value differences. In the second phrase the third note

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12Ibid., p. 62.
differs by a whole step from the same note in the third. The difference in time value occurs in the second measures of phrases two and three.

The Jam on Gerry's Rock

The title of a published version of a come-all-ye type ballad is "Brother Green" or "The Dying Soldier," collected and arranged by Howard Brockway. This piece for eight voices is published by the H. W. Gray Company. The melody was found in Harlan County, Kentucky; the text probably was based on an incident of the Civil War. Differences of rhythm and pitch cause phrases one and four and two and three to differ slightly, but structurally the melody fits the qualifications of the come-all-ye type.

13Sandburg, Songbag, p. 394.
Still another version is "Young, but Growing," which was found to be current in Maine in 1929.¹⁴

Young, but Growing¹⁵

\[ A_a \quad A_b \quad B_a \quad C_a \quad C_b \]

The air is set in the Dorian mode; the structure is shown by the formula \( A_a A_b, B_a A_a, A_a A_b, C_a C_b \).

To a person intending to collect folk songs without the use of recording apparatus, a knowledge of these types and formulas would be of assistance in writing down the airs. One would learn to anticipate certain forms, though care should be taken to observe variations and differences. It is possible, too, that tune variants would be helpful in comparing and establishing text variants with their proper tunes.

The use of definite tonality, strict meter, established and defined phrases, intervals based on the triad, and a well-defined form might give weight to the belief that folk melodies

¹⁴Barry, _op. cit._, p. 78. ¹⁵Ibid.
are of a "relatively recent origin" and that they show
definite influence of the features of art music vocabulary.
This is a belief which Willi Apel supports.\textsuperscript{16} Other authors
maintain that folk music is the source for art music and
that the process is upward; Apel believes, however, the pro-
cess to be one in which the principles and influence of art
song progress downward to the folk over a period of time.
More recent authors tend to support this theory and that of
individual authorship. The idea of authorship by a group
has been observed, but the theory that individual author-
ship of folk songs is first, followed by communal re-creation,
appears to carry more weight for the majority of folk-song
collectors.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16}Willi Apel, \textit{Harvard Dictionary}, article "Folk Music"
(unsigned).

\textsuperscript{17}Smith, \textit{South Carolina Ballads}, p. 27.
CHAPTER IV

FOLK SONG IN USE TODAY

Music and text of folk song form an organic whole which functioned as a vital part of the society of our forefathers. However, lest we relegate its uses entirely to a time already past, let us consider folk song as it manifests itself throughout the United States today.

Because it is music alive and, as such, is subject to the processes of growth and change, our folk music is not a static and stereotyped entity to be studied from afar. Folk music lives about us in the community sing, in the fiddlers' contests, and in the weekly rural square dances which have been revived in the cities. The many choral arrangements that have been published in the past few years have given fresh zest to choral music in high school and college groups. In a like manner, orchestral and choral compositions in the style of the folk tune are heard more frequently in concert every year. Some of the most successful musical extravaganzas of the past few years have featured folk music or music that has been composed with the purpose of simulating folk music.

The tunes of the square dance, the fiddle tunes, and play-party songs furnish excellent material for social recreation. The square dance is widely known in the rural communities
and is becoming increasingly popular in the urban centers. Square-dance clubs have been formed and meet once or twice a month for an evening of dancing in long cotton dresses and blue jeans.

Dude ranches usually feature a Saturday-night square dance in a building which once served the purpose of a barn. The fiddle is the most prominent of the instruments, but a bass violin which the player "slaps," a guitar, and perhaps an accordion or banjo complete the array of instruments which furnish the music. And of course the "caller" receives most of the attention for the evening. A modern invention, the microphone with an amplifier, has been added to the group and throws the caller's voice and the fiddle's screech into every corner of the barn.

For four or five hours, city dudes jostle elbows and swap partners with country folk. For the time being, economic and social differences are shoved to the background. In some instances the city folk already know the dances, but one may often see a farmer's wife patiently leading her city partner through the intricacies of "Hop Light Ladies" or "Turkey in the Straw." Square dances have always aroused an instant enthusiasm on the part of their participants, and today their popularity is still gaining momentum. One certainly has to be a part of the dance. A square dance demands nimble feet, a graceful rhythm, and enthusiastic participation on the part of the dancer.
The bodily exertion and enthusiasm aroused by the square dance is an excellent means of releasing emotional and physical tension. Bouyant laughter rings out at such a dance, and good humor is evident throughout the group. Participation is usually eager and spontaneous; "wall flowers" are at a minimum. Finding such an aggregate of good points, one easily understands why square dancing is being taught in schools and is finding wide acceptance.

Play-party songs are employed by some churches as suitable recreation for young people. These folk games are taught in such a manner that no offense is intended for those who may object to social dancing. The tunes are sung by all participants with no instrumental accompaniment. Usually there is one large group of people, dividing occasionally into smaller groups to play games that are more suitable for a fewer number of people. When church basements or lawns ring with the singing of folk games, there usually is found an active and interested group of young people who are alive to the church program.

Bosque County, Texas, has seen both the old and new versions of the play-party songs. In the 1860's dancing was forbidden by Protestant churches in this region as in many others. Square dancing was popular but shunned by religious people. The play-party games and dances provided a way around religious prejudices.
Bob Hanna was a colorful cattleman of that day whose ranch was on the Bosque River in the Texas county of the same name. Each spring he drove cattle up the trail to Kansas. When folk gatherings grew dull, Bob would jump up and call for everyone to grab a partner. Soon the walls were ringing to folk tunes that were sung as accompaniment to dancing.¹ These play-party dances actually included many figures of the square dance but were acceptable as entertainment without the tinge of "social dancing."²

In more recent years, this same county was the scene of "folk dancing" in almost all the Methodist Churches. Under the sponsorship of the Church itself, youth caravans visited certain communities, among which was Clifton in Bosque County, and there taught, among other things, folk games and folk singing for recreational purposes. The response was instantaneously enthusiastic. The young people of this community then carried their own "caravans" to neighboring towns where they taught folk dances to Methodist young people. Even the older people of the Church caught the spirit of the folk music and gave added approval to support the program. Often

¹Lomax, Folk Song, p. 81.

²An old settler, interviewed in the writer's home county of Bosque, remembers attending the funeral of Bob Hanna. This person stated that Hanna was the idol of small boys in those days in much the same way as the singing cowboy of the movies is the idol of young boys today. This settler was particularly impressed with the colorful clothes that Hanna wore and the beautiful leather harness and saddle trimmings of his horse.
these older people remarked that "Make My Living in Sandy Land," "Jingle at the Window," or some similar tune brought back memories of singing and dancing they had enjoyed when they were in their teens.

When this program was at its height, the local "honky tonk" saw little or nothing of these young people. Becoming interested, the youth from all sections of the town came to the church lawn to observe. With little coaxing they joined the group and became regular visitors. This occurrence became a weekly affair to which the young people of the town looked forward with eagerness. If inclement weather intervened, the group moved to the City Hall basement which was large enough to provide room for such recreation.

After the players learned by participation, various persons were asked to take charge of different games. This practice brought out the dormant leadership in those individuals who now felt no shyness in teaching the games which they themselves had become to feel at home in playing. Parents were always glad to furnish sandwiches and refreshments after those gatherings; such wholesome fun and fellowship for their children was worth the trouble and expense.

This is only one instance where play-party songs became a vital recreational outlet for young people in a small community of about two thousand inhabitants. Recreational facilities in this particular town were more adequate than in
neighboring towns, but were poor nonetheless. A program similar to this would benefit many small communities where pool halls and pinball machines in the local drug store are the most popular forms of recreation.

Community sings and civic choruses offer outlets for adults who seldom sing except on Sunday mornings in their churches. The urge to sing is strong in almost every person, but it so often lacks fulfillment. When people with common problems meet, they usually lose their self-consciousness and participate willingly in a group enterprise that calls for full participation by the membership. The community sing and the civic chorus are usually organized with this goal in mind.

The purpose of the community sing is to provide recreation through group singing. Participation is often on a "come-if-you-like" basis, though emphasis is placed on getting many people to be present. The leadership is usually placed in the hands of someone who can face a group of people and still retain his leadership ability. His ability to sing should be considered but not particularly with the basis of musical scholarship in mind. Attendance may be sought and encouraged by stating that the purpose is to provide informal fun and entertainment for those taking part.

Here folk music will find a gratifying acceptance. The

3This material is taken from the writer's personal experience in his home town of Clifton, Texas.
singers will readily respond to songs that are familiar or to music which has an easy-to-learn melody and text. Folk song surely fills this category; the simplicity of melody and text creates a song that can usually be learned after one or two hearings. It would help considerably, however, if printed texts were made available.

George Pullen Jackson and Charles Faulkner Bryan have collected and arranged twenty-five folk songs published by C. C. Birchard and Company. The collection is entitled "American Folk Music for High School and other Choral Groups" and features traditional music with piano accompaniment. Such a collection is desirable to have for the accompanist, but buying it for the entire group would be questionable from the financial standpoint. If the director has music for his use, he can ordinarily teach the group by rote, thus avoiding the handling of music that would be necessitated to pass out individual copies. The director will also have more "eye-attention" if his singers are not holding music.

The civic chorus is another community group wherein folk music may be used considerably to good advantage. This group of singers is usually a more efficiently organized and functioning choral group, because the membership is smaller and attendance at rehearsals is somewhat on a compulsory basis. Again the emphasis should be on a voluntary membership, with the guiding principle that of providing group recreation through giving the community better choral music.
Of course the director will strive to arouse interest in masterpieces of choral music, but the bulk of his program will have to be music that is sufficiently easy to master in a few rehearsals. The average civic chorus meets only from two to four times a month; consequently, a great deal has to be accomplished in a rehearsal of one or two hours. Choral arrangements of folk tunes are an excellent source for program building in such a situation. These arrangements are available for small or full choruses, and their cost will not tax a budget excessively.

The concert stage is the scene of many performances of folk music by solo performers, orchestras, smaller ensembles, and choral groups. A perusal of concert programs of recent years will affirm this statement. Furthermore, it is interesting to note the increasing frequency of instances in which American composers employ their country's folk tunes and folkways as material for their compositions.

Choral arrangements of folk tunes are increasing in publication each year. The growth in popularity of a cappella singing has probably been largely responsible for much of this increase. The radio has been another factor in promoting interest in choral music. Because of these two factors, a choral conductor now has a wealth of published folk music from which to choose in building a concert program. This includes such voice combinations as SSA, SAB, SSATB, SATTB, TTBB, and SSAATTBB.
Some arrangements vary considerably from the simple and straightforward manner of the folk singer, utilizing complicated modulations and harmonies that are foreign to the tradition of folk music. A wise conductor, however, will choose his selections with discretion, looking for simplicity of harmonies, clear melodic lines, and simple modulations.

John Jacob Niles, a noted collector and singer of folk ballads, stays close to the tradition of folk music in his compositions and arrangements. G. Schirmer, Incorporated, publishes two which well illustrate this statement. They are "Go 'way from my window" and "I wonder as I wander." Both compositions are available in four-part arrangements for chorus and a solo voice. There are no elaborate chord progressions nor difficult modulations present. Rather than being pretentious, the songs are beautiful in their simplicity and unassuming serenity.

The individual voice parts in these two compositions usually stay well within an octave range, having almost no awkward intervals to be sung. To a choral conductor these are important points to consider in selecting music. Difficult intervals and wide ranges in voice parts are factors that slow the learning process of a choir and create a tendency to sing out of tune.

"He's Gone Away," a southern mountain song arranged by Joseph W. Clokey, is published by J. Fischer and Brother. This arrangement is for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, the
soprano and bass parts being divided. The melody is carried in the alto part after an introductory section. Throughout the composition the dynamic level remains low with simple but effective harmonies framing the melody. The arranger inserts a note to the effect that the time is unmeasured. The characteristics noted suggest that the composer has retained in good measure the elements of the folk style.

Many collectors comment on the personal manner of the folk singer when he sings. There is no evidence of the singer's being aware of his audience. He merely tells his story in song, the music and words conveying the emotional element of the performance. There is no affectation, no artificiality of facial expression evident. Usually the folk singer will stare over his listener's head, giving a sincere and unaffected performance that rivals that of a polished professional performer.

A ballad from the Ohio and Pennsylvania hills is suggestive of the type song that a folk singer might render in true traditional manner. It is "Poor Wayfarin' Man O' Grief," arranged for a cappella choir by Harvey Gaul. This song, published by Galaxy Music Corporation, gives the melody to a solo voice and enhances it with a quiet background accompaniment from the chorus. The melody is occasionally given to a section of the choir, but it still is sung with restraint of dynamics. This description would suffice as well for "Kentucky Mountain Plaint," also arranged by Harvey Gaul with the
same publisher. The arranger's usage of chromaticism and more elaborate chord progressions causes the arrangements to compare less favorably with those of Niles, in so far as retaining the folk style is concerned.

Kenneth Winstead made a setting of "The Humble Heart" in the style of a chorale which catches the beauty of simplicity suggested by the folk tune. An old Shaker hymn furnished the text for this arrangement published by M. Witmark and Sons. Though Winstead departed somewhat from the style usually employed in choral settings of folk tunes, he kept the quiet dignity of the tune in mind and supported it with interesting, though not elaborate, harmonies.

John Powell's arrangement of a Virginia folk song, "Soldier, Soldier," is well suited for concert performance as are John Jacob Niles' arrangements previously mentioned in this chapter. Powell's arrangement is published by J. Fischer and Brother in a setting for a cappella choir with soprano and baritone solos. The dialogue sung by the soloists and heightened by the choir creates a humorous folk song that appeals greatly to an audience.

J. Fischer and Brother also publishes for a cappella choir an early American ballad which by its repeated use on concert programs has proved to have strong audience appeal. The words and music of "Poor Wayfaring Stranger" were adapted and arranged by George Pullen Jackson and E. J. Catwood. A tenor or a soprano may take the solo which is set in the
Aeolian mode. The choir hums a simple, straightforward accompaniment, made more effective by a rest placed on the third beat of each measure.

"Cousin Jedediah" is a spirited folk tune that would be adaptable to a high school choir. Joseph W. Clokey's arrangement, published by J. Fischer and Brother, is written for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, the soprano and bass parts being divided. The arrangement would be easy to learn and would add contrast to a choir program.

Work songs inspired by laborers on rivers, in forests, on farms, canals, railroads, and cattle ranges are published in arrangements very suitable for programming. These vigorous songs add color and variety to a choral program. Most people have the urge to see the beautiful outdoors and rugged scenery of our land. All this is brought before the audience by the medium of choral music that seeks to capture the spirit of workers at their task of hewing a civilization from the wilderness.

In his choral settings of American work songs, Harvey Gaul has endeavored to depict the scene surrounding the river worker and the lumberjack at work. M. Witmark and Sons has published these work songs under the titles of "Juniata Bound," "Ohio River Farewell Song," "Oh, I Drive Oxen," "Timber Cutter's Chant," and "Ohio River Bound." The settings are for baritone solo with chorus and piano accompaniment. Syncopation and relatively complicated time values of notes
add difficulty to these compositions; on the other hand, picturesque language and easy voice range of parts are factors in their favor.

Kenneth Winstead has arranged two American folk tunes that suggest the play-party atmosphere because of their prominence of rhythmical interest. "Old Joe Clark" and "Ida Red" are published by M. Witmark and Sons. The author suggests that "a rusty twang" be employed in performing one of the compositions. Both of them move spritely from beginning to end, the melody being featured at different times in the solo voice and in the chorus.

The great Southwest is the setting of "Night Herding Song," an American cowboy tune arranged by Harry Robert Wilson. Hall and McCreary Company is the publisher. The six-eight meter and flowing melody suggest a night scene wherein a cowboy is singing to quiet a herd of restless dogies. Interest is added by introducing a section for male voices alone.

The songs just discussed were listed to illustrate the variety in kind of folk songs published in choral arrangements. Their acceptance by performer and audience alike is a strong incentive to encourage the collecting and arranging of folk songs. The people who listen to folk music feel an "akinness" to it, thinking perhaps that here is something with which they feel "at home." The open animosity which often greets the performance of "imported" music rarely is voiced against American folk music.
Through these mediums--the play-party song, the square dance, the community sing, the civic chorus, the professional performer, and high school and college choral groups--America is reawakening to the social and cultural significance of its folk music. In a psychological sense, the laws of association heighten the enjoyment of hearing and performing this music. But the beauty of its simplicity and the fact that this music is an outgrowth of life itself guarantee it greater significance than it has as yet received.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This study has been made for the purpose of adding significance to American folk music as a definite genre capable of demanding recognition as such. Material gathered by collectors of folk song has furnished the background for this discussion. The music of the folk as gathered by collectors furnished further material for discussion which included choral arrangements of folk tunes.

Because it is a field which demands a separate and broader discussion, the music of racial groups, such as Indian and Negro, has been excluded. White spirituals were not included because their investigation presents a different type of problem. Any one of these subjects would furnish sufficient objectives and material for a separate study in that field.

Material for a discussion of history and background of American folk song was found to be scarce in volume. Examples of music and text of folk song were not lacking, however, and choral arrangements of folk tunes are quite numerous.

In Chapter I it was shown that folk song flourished in the early stages of the development of this country and that it receded somewhat with the advance of civilization. From this it may be assumed that folk-song tradition exists best
when the folk are isolated and, as a result, turn to music as a means of brightening their existence.

Because folk song is music alive, it lives by oral transmission alone if it exists in true tradition. When it is written down, it ceases to be in a state of growth and change, which is a characteristic of folk-music tradition. Tradition in space concerns the existence of a song over a region of the country; tradition in time concerns the life of a folk song in terms of generations of singers.

Communal and individual creation were discussed, and it was pointed out that there are arguments for both origins of folk music. The trend today is toward individual creation plus communal re-creation through oral transmission. The folk singer respects tradition but never considers himself bound by it.

Hence, one cannot say that any one version of a text or tune is the one to which all others should be referred. Rather than this, many variants exist, all of which demand recognition by recording for study. Tradition is selective; consequently, some versions die out as a result of the phenomenon of the ways of the folk.

Texts are often keys to the customs and modes of the folk. A study of them reveals that they were a part of the everyday life of the early settlers and that singing was common to all ages. A knowledge of the dialects is helpful in placing a text in its proper region of the country.
Investigation reveals that the folk employed simple modulations and harmonies in their music, quite a large percentage of which is set in the Church modes. It is usually recognized that these elements suggest conservatism and good artistic judgment. Their use by the folk singers probably indicates a preference for the elements of simplicity, accounted for by habit and familiarity rather than by the exercise of artistic judgment. The study of folk music from a purely musical standpoint is a field that has been neglected and one which is in need of academic research.

Several types of melodic structure are found to exist in folk song. These types are suggestive of the poetic ballad style which they resemble. The existence in folk song of features of the musical vocabulary common to art music is a strong argument for the idea that the process of knowledge is downward to the folk. Many present-day writers support this belief.

It remains true, nonetheless, that folk music, whether created individually or communally, is a product of the people; that they made use of it in their everyday life is also evident. Today, though the tradition of folk music is rapidly becoming history, there are innumerable occasions where folk song may be actively employed to enrich our environment and to broaden the understanding of our American heritage.

In recent years the enthusiasm displayed for social recreation, which includes square dancing as well as play-party games
and songs, has added impetus to the study of tradition in that field of folklore. These activities are thoroughly wholesome and promote social intercourse which in turn stimulates community enterprise.

The upsurge in a cappella singing is typical of the interest displayed in all types of choral singing. This development has caused music publishers to seek choral arrangements of folk music for publication. Currently, there are available numerous arrangements in varying voice combinations. Public acceptance of this music indicates that more activity may be expected in this field.

The impact of industrial civilization is fast causing the disappearance of the tradition of folk music. "Popular" music is replacing the function of folk music and is already a matter of some theoretical discussion and serious study. This is more reason why systematic and scientific collecting of American folk music has been encouraged and increased in the past sixteen years.¹ Since the study will hinge upon material and upon methods, the best practical means of recording should be employed. Our notation is not satisfactory for representing folk music as it is performed. Occasions of writing down the music upon its performance have been numerous, but since the development of methods of mechanical recording, no one has doubted its superiority.

¹George Herzog, Research in Primitive and Folk Music in the United States, American Council of Learned Societies, Bulletin No. 24, p. 94.
The practice of incorporating folk music into their compositions has been observed many times in the music of foreign composers. American composers have found an eager audience for their compositions which are based on or include American folk tunes.

These facts emphasize the outstanding point that American folk music is still alive and is a vital contribution to our American social order. It may be, perhaps, that its existence today is not in the true tradition of the folk singer; it is, however, serving the need of the people which was its original reason for being.
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