FOREWORD

Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis is a rare book—in more than one way. And it was written by a rare individual. This new edition is long overdue.

American folklorists have been closer to their material than have their European colleagues, but few have been closer than Josiah H. Combs. And few have come as far—from informant to scholar, from the Highlands of eastern Kentucky to the Sorbonne and beyond.

Josiah Henry Combs was born January 2, 1886, at Hazard, Perry County, Kentucky—the heart of what he was later to call "the pure feud belt"—where his father was sheriff during the French-Eversole "war." Combs grew up in Hindman, Knott County, among members of a "singing family." The song and speech of his culture were never to leave him, but he took the first steps of a long journey when, in 1902, he trudged barefoot to the newly established Hindman Settlement School. There even the old songs of this sixteen-year-old Highland youth were well received by the "fotched-on" women who—unlike many other Kentucky "educators"—had respect for some of the esthetic elements of Highland folk culture. At least some of the songs sent by Katherine Pettit for publication in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1907 were Josiah's.[1]

[1] Evelyn K. Wells, *The Ballad Tree* (New York, 1950), p. 261. Which of the texts in "Ballads and Rhymes from Kentucky" (ed. George Lyman Kittredge, *Journal of American Folklore*, XX, 251 ff.) were from Combs is difficult to determine. "My love sat down in a sad condition" and "Sail around the ocean in the long summer day" are virtually identical with Nos. 288A and 289 in the Combs Collection. It is quite possible that Combs did not write down texts which were his own—and we know the two aforementioned were his because he sent copies to B. A. Botkin (*The American Play-Party Song* [Lincoln, Nebraska, 1937], pp. 216–217, 320). Therefore the "lost texts"—conjectured on the basis of notes in the Combs Collection—of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (No. 18), "Barbara Allen" (No. 24B), and "The Drowsy Sleeper" (No. 93) may simply have been in Combs' memory and therefore are those printed in the *Journal of American Folklore*. Further, we cannot conjecture.

By the time the texts of these songs appeared, however, Combs had already taken his next step. In 1905, as he told the story later, he arrived at Transylvania University in Lexington with a dulcimore and a corncob pipe, and without five dollars in his pocket. At the gates he set down his "old valise over the turnstile and crawled under the turnstile to enter the campus. Right off a senior asked me if I had 'matriculated.' I started to hit him, but catching a friendly look in his eyes, I held back." He did matriculate, "under suspicion," and again found academic sympathy, this time in the person of Dr. Hubert G. Shearin, who stimulated Combs' scholarly interest in folksongs.[2] Their joint efforts produced *A Syllabus of Kentucky Folk-Songs* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1911).

After graduating from Transylvania, Combs taught in high schools and colleges in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and Oklahoma from 1911 to 1918. During this period he published his pamphlet on *The Kentucky Highlanders* (1913); an anthology of Kentucky verse, *All That's Kentucky* (1915); and contributed to *The Journal of American Folklore* and *Dialect Notes*. Furthermore, he took time out for lecture tours and folksong recitals. Typical of this period is the outline for a series of five lectures from a brochure of about 1915:

I. FOLK-LORE: Dulcimer and Ballad Recital.
   1. The Rich Margent (Traditional).
   2. Sweet William and Fair Margaret (Traditional).
   3. Hiram Hubbert (Civil War).
   4. Florella (Traditional)?
   5. Jackaro (Traditional).
   6. Pretty Peggy-O (Colonial)?
   7. Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender (Traditional).
   8. Pretty Maumee (Colonial).
   9. William Baker (Modern).
   10. Sweet Birds (Traditional)?
   11. William Hall (Traditional).
   12. Barbara Allen (Traditional).
   13. Jiggs, Ditties, Nonsense Rimes.

II. FOLK-LORE: Folk-Lore of the Southern Mountains.
   1. Folk-Songs, Traditional and Modern.
   2. British, Largely English in Origin.
   3. Method of Transmission.

[2] See D. K. W., "Leaders of Kentucky Folklore," *Kentucky Folklore Record*, III (1957), 67 ff.; Josiah H. Combs, "Some Kentucky Highland Stories," *ibid.*, IV (1959), 46 ff.; Ed Kahn, "Josiah H. Combs," *ibid.*, VI (1960), 101 ff.; D. K. Wilgus, "Josiah H. Combs, 1886–1960," *Journal of American Folklore*, LXXV (1962), 354 f.

4. "He wouldn't pack 'er ef he couldn't pick 'er."
   Musical Instruments; Mountaineer "follers pickin'."
5. Music of the Folk-Songs.
6. Plays and Dance-Songs.
7. Dance "Calls" and "Sets."
8. Child Rimes, *Zaehllieder*, Games, Riddles, Superstitions, Beliefs, etc.
9. Passing of Folk-Lore in the Southern Mountains.

III. DIALECT: The Language of the Southern Mountains.
1. Ancestry of the Mountaineers. Pure Old English—Foreign Element Negligible.
2. The Old English Element.
3. The Middle English Element.
4. The Elizabethan Element.
5. The Mountaineer's Slang.
6. "Spell 'Possum."[3]
7. Peculiar Grammatical Structure.
8. Glib Use of Formal Terms.
9. The Mountaineer's Nomenclature.
   Place Names—Given Names.
10. Pronunciation.

IV. The Kentucky Highlanders.
1. Origin, Extent, and Nationality.
2. The Scotch-Irish Theory.
3. The Scotch Highlander Theory.
4. The Old English Dictum.
5. Folk-Lore and Philology as an Argument.
6. Old and Middle English as an Argument.
7. The Mountaineer's Personality and Hospitality.
8. The Women of the Mountains.
9. Born Lawyers and Politicians.
10. No Social Castes.
11. Decay of the Clan Instinct.
12. Old English Customs and Superstitions.
13. Coquetry and Flirting Unknown.
14. Folk-Lore and Balladry.
15. The Mountaineer's Outlook.
16. The Educational Outlook.
17. What of the Future.

V. Old Kentucky.
With recitations from the speaker's *All That's Kentucky: An Anthology*.

Here one can see much of *Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis* in outline. While "furriners" like Cecil Sharp and Loraine Wyman were

[3] Cf. Josiah H. Combs, "Spellin' 'em Down in the Highlands," *Kentucky Folklore Record*, III (1957), 69 f.

tracking down the "lonesome tunes" in the Highlands, a young mountain boy was bringing them to the lowlands with a blend of defensiveness and self-criticism, grounded in hard-won learning but salted with folk attitudes and anecdotes. And the concerts of unarranged folksongs were well ahead of their time.

World War I found Combs serving in an army hospital unit in England.[4] After the war he journeyed to the Continent, where he married a charming French woman in 1920. He served as publicity director for the YMCA attached to the Czechoslovak Army, 1920–1921, and edited the *Czechoslovak-American*, Prague, 1921. Returning to the United States, he became Professor of French and Spanish at West Virginia University, 1922–1924. After study at the University of Paris, he received a doctorate *mention très honorable* in 1925—his thesis was *Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis.*

In his ensuing academic career, Combs was Professor of French and German, University of Oklahoma, 1926–1927; head of the Department of Foreign Languages, Texas Christian University, 1927–1947; head of the Department of French, Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia, from which he retired in 1956. Although he contributed song texts to *Folk-Say* (1930) and to B. A. Botkin's *The American Play-Party Song* (1937), and published *Folk-Songs from the Kentucky Highlands* (1939), his scholarly energies were devoted largely to study of the American language.[5] For, as H. L. Mencken wrote, Combs belonged to "that small minority of American scholars who took the national language seriously and gave it scientific study."[6] Much of his work remains in manuscript, including his monograph, The Language of Our Southern Highlanders.[7]

After his retirement, Combs turned again to folksong—arranging

[4] For a humorous account of this service, see his *The Siege of Sarisbury Court* (Hindman, Kentucky, [1921?]).

[5] See especially "The Language of the Southern Highlanders," *PMLA*, XLVI (1931), 1302 ff.; "Radio and Pronunciation," *American Speech*, VII (1931), 124 ff.; "British and American Usage," *ibid.*, XVI (1941), 153; "A Word-List from the Southern Highlands," *Publications of the American Dialect Society*, No. 2 (Nov., 1944), pp. 17 ff.; "Indecent Words," *ibid.*, No. 23 (April, 1955), pp. 33 f. See also George P. Wilson, "Josiah H. Combs and Folk Speech," *Kentucky Folklore Record*, VI (1960), 104 ff.

[6] *The American Language*, 4th ed., (New York, 1936), p. 53.

[7] Of his publication difficulties, Combs wrote, "When the final hour arrives for me to shove off into the Great Unknown, I want my earthly remains cremated, and the ashes molded into bullets and shot at publishers. If my wishes are carried out, it will comfort me on the scaffold, and console me in hell" (Letter, January 5, 1960). Alas, Josiah is buried in San Antonio and the publishers are unscathed.

for the disposition of his collection and contributing his wisdom, experience, and folk humor to the students who sought him out. They heard him reminisce of John Harrington Cox (who had "long since swallowed the canes of Gummere and Kittredge"), John A. Lomax, Louise Pound, Jean Thomas, *et al.* Much was insightful and humorous. Not all is publishable. For Josiah H. Combs was outspoken and "salty."[8] Many who disagreed with his pronouncements had the greatest appreciation of his character. Combs was a "mountain man" to the end. Indeed, the characteristics of the Highlanders that he analyzes[9] include many of his own traits. Although he lived elsewhere—in Texas by preference—he remained stubbornly loyal to his native Highlands, to the ideals and prejudices of his people. I shall never forget our first meeting. Entering his home in Fort Worth, I found the *savant*, his fractured leg in a cast, ensconced behind a low table liberally laden with bottles of bourbon in anticipation of a visit from an erstwhile Kentuckian. And the ultimate disposition of his folksong collection illustrates his generosity and his continuing resentment of affronts to his pride and dignity. His material was spontaneously and freely

[8] I am reminded of his story of "Black" Shade Combs, "a picturesque mountaineer, whose long black beard descending swept his rugged breast. 'Black' was merely a pseudonym, for Shade was white, with no great claim to education and culture, but blessed with much native wit and intelligence. Shade and some other mountaineers found themselves in Frankfort, stopping at the Capitol Hotel, frequented by the Senators and Representatives, and by the elite. It was dinner time. Directly across the table from Shade sat an elegantly dressed woman, of easy morals and notorious reputation. A waiter comes to the table to take the orders. He addresses the courtesan:

"Waiter: What will you have, Lady?

"Courtesan: First bring me a thimbleful of honeyed and spiced nectar, as sweet and soothing as an infant's cordial; second, bring me a tiny bowl of potage, seasoned with mushrooms and nightingale tongues; third, bring me a modest portion of asparagus tips, gently smothered with vinaigrette sauce; fourth, bring me a small beefsteak as tender as a chicken's breast; fifth, bring me a soft silk napkin to spread upon my bosom—and please inform me who the gentleman is that sits opposite me.

" 'Black' Shade was thinking, and thinking fast. He drank in the whole import of the woman's obvious satire and contempt. By the time the waiter got around to him he was ready with a retort stinging and terrible:

"Waiter: And what will you have, Sir?

" 'Black' Shade: First, fetch me a pint of moonshine liquor as clear as crystal and as strong as hell; second, fetch me a big bowl of onion soup full of hog kidneys and 'mountain oysters'; third, fetch me a bowl of hominy swimmin' in hog grease; fourth, fetch me a hunk of beefsteak as tough as a saddleskirt; fifth, fetch me a burlap sack to spread over my hairy breast—and (pointing straight at the woman of easy morals opposite him) please inform me who the God damned chippy is that sits opposite me."

[9] See below, pp. 6, 18, 46–50.

placed in the Western Kentucky Folklore Archive with no restrictions on use or publication—excepting the proviso that none of his collection was ever to reach the University of Kentucky, the Filson Club, or Indiana University. The rivalry between Transylvania University and the once-arrogant state university, the exclusiveness of the historical club of Louisville's first families, the impolite rejection of a scholarly note—these could not be forgotten.

On May 14, 1960, Josiah H. Combs tuned his dulcimore and again sang his Kentucky folksongs for a gathering at the home of his friend Dr. Jerrell Bennett. On June 2, while I was en route to record his performances, Josiah H. Combs was dead. His dulcimore and his collection of folksongs are now in the Western Kentucky Folklore Archive at UCLA. His memory is green and his work is still vital to the student of American folkways.

Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis, published at the University of Paris in 1925, has been somewhat neglected by students of American folksong because it has been difficult of access and because it was not in English. (I once saw its citation in a bibliography of French folksong.) The form of the present edition has been determined by a variety of circumstances. Our first plan was to reprint the original French edition, with an appendix listing the items in the Combs Collection deposited in the Western Kentucky Folklore Archive in 1957. We later realized, however, that the relatively simple language barrier which has separated Combs' work from the consideration of many folksong students should be removed. Yet a retranslation of *Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis* might resemble Mark Twain's hilarious rendering, "The Frog Jumping of the County of Calaveras." Fortunately, Combs' English manuscript of his thesis survived and, through the courtesy of Mrs. Combs, was used as the base text of this new edition. It is, however, only the "base," as it is not a precisely parallel form of the French. The difference between the two texts is one of the conditions which have necessitated difficult editorial decisions.

The English version is obviously little more than a draft. Literal adherence to its readings would have been a disservice to its author. The absence from the French text of passages in the English manuscript may be due to Combs' own second thoughts or to the decision of his Sorbonne *conférencier*, who did indeed reject one entire chapter, "The Highlander's Music" which subsequently appeared in French

in *Vient de Paraître.*[10] This chapter has been restored in this edition essentially in the English version authorized by Combs and published in the *Kentucky Folklore Record.*[11] Most other passages in the English version which were not included in the French form of the text have been added, but placed in brackets. Additions and changes made by Combs for the French version have been included in my English translation. My own additions or editorial comment is so indicated. The two texts have been carefully collated; mechanics and documentation have been made to conform to current American editorial standards, although certain usages reflecting the time of publication (for example, *folk-song*) have been retained.

The English form of the headnotes to song texts did not survive, and I am responsible for the translations. The notes have not, however, been altered to incorporate current knowledge and research, except to provide references to current syllabi. My few additions, for clarity or reference, are placed in brackets. A bracketed number after the title of each text refers to the Appendix, which is an annotated list of the entire Combs folksong collection, including significant information relative to many texts. Throughout the volume I have omitted footnotes glossing Americanisms unfamiliar to the French reader.

Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis must be evaluated in terms of its time and the limitations placed upon it. Forty years ago perhaps no more nonsense about the nature of the folk and folksong was in general circulation than exists today; but it was a different kind of nonsense. Still of prime importance in 1925 was the alleged relationship of the English and Scottish traditional ballads to "primitive poetry," their origin in communal composition. When contemporary evidence was admitted or adduced, it was generally treated—and sometimes dubiously treated—by "outsiders" not fully acquainted with the folk cultures. Josiah H. Combs, with an intimate knowledge of one continuing folk culture and with a grasp of the scholarly literature, approached the matter with sturdy common sense as well as with some of the heat generated by the controversy. As I have elsewhere[12] surveyed this controversy and indicated to some extent Combs' place in the "ballad war," it might be better to allow him to speak. His November, 1925, *soutenance* of his thesis before the University of Paris

[10] "La Musique du Highlander des États-Unis," *Vient de Paraître,* Vol. VI, No. 50, pp. 24 ff.

[11] VI (1960), 108 ff.

[12] *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1959), especially pp. 2–122, 143, 148, 151–152, 156, 178, 197–198, 340.

"jury" of Émile Legouis, René Louis Huchon, and Aurélien Digeon would have served as an admirable introduction to the published volume, as pertinent passages will show.

> Chapters I and II of this thesis . . . are included for the simple reason that a study of the folksong is incomplete without a consideration of the topographical features of the country and an inquiry into the nationality or ancestry of the people. . . . Here, as elsewhere, I go directly to the folk for much of my information, allowing the songs, language, names, customs, etc. of the people to help settle the problem of ancestry. . . .
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> . . . The study of mere song texts (largely from collections made in the British Isles long ago) is insufficient in the matter of determining origins. And so, I have gone to the people for more tangible evidence, to the folk, who, in the Southern highlands of America, still make and still sing ballads. . . . I have seen fit to question erstwhile definitions of "folksong," or "ballad," which, it now appears, no longer hold good. . . . Because of its seeming mystery (if there be any), the question of authorship has been thrown out of focus for a century; thus causing the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British ballad to become too closely linked up with remote and almost prehistoric song and dance origins; which origins should be considered apart from the epic or narrative song of a later age. Communal origin is untenable; we must accept individual authorship.
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> . . . The contention that the making of songs and the singing of songs among the folk are "lost arts," or "closed accounts," is denied. The discovery of the Highlands has been the chief factor in destroying the contention. . . . Most collectors in America have made the mistake of following some old trails; they should record ALL songs, whether identified with Child or not. In my personal experiences among the folk—which were many—I met with some evidence, perhaps, that all ballads were not sung originally. In brief, a conscientious study of the lore of the folk cannot be dissociated from the folk itself.[13]

One does not have to agree with all of Combs' conclusions to recognize their value. His assertion of "the baneful influence of the banjo-picker upon traditional song" may be questioned. But by "traditional song" he seems to have meant largely the older folksongs, and it is the influence of the banjo picker "as a true conservator of words and airs," that he is denying. In any event, Combs testified to the influence—for good or ill—of instrumentalists in an area and at a time when their existence had been virtually denied by the most renowned collector of Appalachian folksongs.[14] Although Combs could not then foresee the

[13] From a typescript sent me by Combs in 1960.

[14] Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (New York, 1917), p. 10; (London, 1932), I, xxvii. Sharp's comments are echoed to this day, particularly in English publications.

development from the banjo picker to the professional hillbilly musician (he later noted some of the effects), he saw clearly that the "contention that the traditional song, because of its superiority over the later lyric or love song, will outlive the later song is not well founded."

It is not the intent of this edition, however, to judge Combs' remarks and opinions in the light of current scholarship. Rather, the aim has been to preserve the original integrity of the work in a more readily available and usable form. I have consequently been content to add relatively few notes for clarification and explanation of Combs' discussion.

The collected texts in Part II of *Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis* must be approached in the knowledge that, apparently at the eleventh hour, Combs was not allowed to include any British or American song if "one or more versions, sometimes quite different and inferior, had already been published in America." The "line" was not tightly held —witness the inclusion of "John Henry"—but it shaped the collection.

This enforced concentration on "new finds" caused Combs, in this collection, to depend a good deal on the recently gathered West Virginia material (of the sixty-one texts, twenty-seven are from West Virginia), most of which he seems to have acquired from secondary sources. Having left his own community, Combs functioned generally as an "academic collector," depending largely on subcollectors, often students or colleagues. Among the student-collectors was one Carey Woofter, whose contributions bulk large in *Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis*, though less in the total Combs Collection. Both in *FSMEU* and in the Combs manuscript collection, the original informant is often credited without record of the contributor; consequently the immediate or intermediary source is not always clear. But of the twenty-seven West Virginia texts in *FSMEU*, thirteen are clearly from Woofter, seven probably, and five possibly. It is necessary to point up this situation in reference both to the contents of *FSMEU* and to the total Combs Collection because of the nature of many of the Woofter contributions—which Combs accepted but for which he does not bear ultimate responsibility. I have discussed the problem elsewhere[15] in particular relation to the issues raised by the Woofter text of "Edward" (Appendix, No. 7), but the problem must be surveyed briefly here.

The late Carey Woofter was a student at West Virginia University during the 1922–1924 faculty residence of Combs. He received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University and subsequently became

[15] "The Oldest (?) Text of 'Edward,'" *Western Folklore*, XXV (1966), 77 ff.

Dean of West Virginia State College at Glenville. He contributed a few texts to the collection of John Harrington Cox[16] and was reputed to have a large unpublished collection. Combs, in his last letter to me, described Woofter as "an eccentric West Virginia mountaineer, as eccentric as his name sounds . . . an avid student and collector of folk-songs and Highland dialect; [he] enjoyed getting Cox in deep water" (the last statement refers to disputes with John Harrington Cox). Woofter himself apparently published only a word list in *American Speech* (II, 347 ff.) in 1927. We have, then, as evidence of Woofter's collection, only the texts he contributed to the Cox and Combs collections, and I doubt that all items supplied to Combs are so identified. There are eighty-five texts in the Combs Collection explicitly credited as Woofter contributions, and seven others (Appendix, Nos. 10, 11, 16, 19B, 26, 89, and 121) can be attributed to Woofter on the basis of other evidence. Twenty-nine other texts in the Combs Collection could have been contributed by Woofter—and I am convinced that almost half of them were.

To judge the character of the complete Woofter collection—assuming that there was a "complete" collection—by the identifiable items in the Combs Collection might be highly unjustified. Woofter may have been selecting on the basis of rarity and the interest of the recipient. If we assume that the full Woofter collection had the miscellaneous character of the average Appalachian collection, he was practicing a good deal of selection (as Combs was forced to practice in his own selections for *FSMEU*). Of the ninety-four items that are assuredly from Woofter, thirty-eight are of the prized Child variety. On the other hand, the range of contributions extends to a large number of play-party songs.

Many, perhaps most, of the Woofter texts occasion no question. They seem—with no implied criticism—run-of-the-mill Appalachian material. Some of the rare texts inspire confidence as the product of an uninhibited native collector supplying unexpurgated texts to an uninhibited archivist. Consider a stanza of the Woofter text of "The Farmer's Curst Wife" (Child No. 278; Appendix, No. 40A):

> 7. And when he came to hell's great door
> Says, "Get off of my back, you damned old whore."

Rare texts may occasion suspicion, yet Woofter's "Johnny Collins"

[16] *Folk-Songs of the South* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1925), Nos. 35G; 162G; 185; *American Speech*, II (1927), 226–227.

text of "Lady Alice" (Child 85; Appendix, No. 25B) was contributed before its significance was apparent.[17] A unique local item such as "River Song" (Appendix, No. 205) beginning

> Pork and beans and eggs to fry
> Doughnuts, kraut and apple pie
> We'll hit Gilmer by and by.

seems to bear its own warrant.

On the other hand, a number of Woofter's contributions merit distrust. Louis W. Chappell pointed out variations in printings of "The Yew-Pine Mountains," which Woofter supplied to both Combs and Cox.[18] The variations are slight, and Chappell was using them to attack Cox's editing, pointing out also that Cox apparently made alterations in printing a Combs text of "John Henry."[19] But we note that Woofter contributed to Cox a text of Child No. 275 credited to Mrs. Sarah Clevenger of Briar Lick Run, near Perkins, Gilmer County. "She learned it from her grandmother, Mrs. Rebecca Clevenger, who came from London County, Virginia, seventy-eight years ago, as the date in the family Bible gives it." Woofter contributed to the Combs Collection a text identical but for a transposition in one line, and indicated the source as David Chenoweth, Gip, Gilmer County, West Virginia (Appendix, No. 38). To Chenoweth is also credited the unique textual form of "The Cruel Brother" (Appendix, No. 5), which Woofter annotates as "doctored by one Daniel De Weese."

To prove an alleged traditional text fraudulent (i.e., deliberately altered or re-created to deceive the student of folksong) is not always easy. Unless one can obtain from the alleged informant a denial that he furnished the song to the alleged collector—as Vance Randolph was able to do when investigating John Robert Moore's collecting of a version of Child 218[20]—he can judge the validity of the variant only by relating it to the known history of the song, which can be established largely by a study of its variants. The process is indeed almost circular. But, despite a memorat even more convincing than that supplied for the text of Child No. 275 quoted above, I believe I have demonstrated that the Woofter text of "Edward" is a clever conflation of

[17] For discussion and reference see Tristram P. Coffin, *The British Traditional Ballad in North America* (rev. ed., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1963), pp. 86 f.

[18] *John Henry* (Jena, Germany, 1933), pp. 3 f.

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 2 f. Cf. Appendix, No. 81.

[20] *Journal of American Folklore*, LX (1947), 117.

Child's A and B texts.[21] In a similar study, to be published in *Western Folklore*, Bernth Lindfors has shown that the West Virginia text of Child No. 2 in the Combs Collection (Appendix, 1A; not identified as a Woofter contribution, but alleged to be from a Gilmer County informant) is a palpable fraud—palpable only to the student who has made a meticulous study of the tradition of the ballad.

When a song text has little traditional status, one must be wary of an alleged recovery from a folksinger. We therefore must at least note that the Woofter text of "Ranting Roving Lad" (p. 149) is almost identical to that printed in Allan Cunningham's *The Songs of Scotland* (pp. 208 f.). One swallow does not make a summer—but Woofter also contributed "The Old Wife" (pp. 135 f.), which is quite similar to "The Auld Wife Beyont the Fire" in Allan Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany* (1871 ed., I, 103 ff.), where it was published as an old song with additions. For the Scots euphemism for sexual intercourse, *snishing*, the Woofter text substitutes *spruncin.* Aside from a version of "The Old Wife" on a recent recording[22] certainly derived from Combs' printing, the only other notice of *spruncin'* (*sic*) is in a localization of "The Gypsy Laddie" (Child No. 200; Appendix, No. 33B) contributed by Carey Woofter.

We must grant at this point that many Woofter texts must be accepted as traditional variants. But the literary connections and internal evidence of some of Woofter's dubious texts furnish touchstones for a number of items not credited to Woofter yet possibly from his collection. (Items possibly attributable to Woofter are those assigned to informants in Gilmer and adjacent counties.) The geographical pattern of contribution to the Combs Collection automatically suggests as Woofter contributions "The Rantin Laddie" (pp. 127 f.) and the two texts of "Bonnie James Campbell" (pp. 126 f.). The fact that recoveries are unusual (as is certainly true of these texts) proves nothing, except that it adds to the stature of Woofter as a collector of texts rare —almost unique—in the United States. But from within Woofter's collecting area comes "The Gowans Grow Gay" (pp. 142 f.), uncomfortably close to the *Tea Table Miscellany* text (II, 214 ff.).[23] Certain

[21] See Appendix, No. 7.

[22] Paul Clayton, *Unholy Matrimony*, Elektra 147, 12″ LP.

[23] It is indeed ironic that "the gowans grow gay" is the unique refrain of the Buchan "Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight" (Child No. 4A) which Holger O. Nygard has demonstrated to be a "forgery" (*The Ballad of Heer Halewijn* [Knoxville, Tenn., 1958], pp. 311 ff.). One is reminded of John Pinkerton's "discovery" of the second part of "Hardyknute" (see Sigurd Bernhard Hustvedt, *Ballad Criticism in*

texts from Woofter's area which do not have such obvious literary sources do have common patterns of localization and rationalization. Fair Annie (pp. 114 ff.) is stolen away by the Indians; Lord Harry ransoms this unknown girl and she lives with him in a "mansion-house," but never tells her name. When Lord Harry is later bedded with a new bride, "Fair Annie took a banjo on her hand/To play the two to sleep." This is the kind of rationalization which should happen in an American text, but seldom does. It happens also in the Woofter text of "Edward" when the protagonist desires to "paddle the boat over the old mill dam"; and in the localization of "Prince Robert" (p. 121 ff.) at Nicut Hill (Nicut is in southeast Calhoun County, West Virginia, near the Gilmer County line). Localization does not impeach a text, but there can be too much of a good thing.

I have been less than happy to introduce these remarks into this introduction, particularly as they might seem to destroy the validity of the Combs Collection and impugn the integrity and knowledge of Josiah H. Combs. They do not. The West Virginia texts—of which Woofter's contributions are only a part—constitute little more than a third of the Combs Collection, which is seven times larger than *Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis*. Largely on the basis of subsequent collection and experience one can question the Woofter contributions, and whatever tentative judgments I have made here must be supported or rectified by future students, using the collected materials I have made more readily available. But the efforts of these students—like my own—will be based upon those of a pioneer American *savant*.

I am particularly grateful to Claude M. Simpson, Jr., for the extensive advice and aid provided in the final stages of editing this volume. And without the courtesy of Charlotte Combs the publication of this edition would have been impossible.

Los Angeles, California D. K. Wilgus

Scandinavia and Great Britain during the Eighteenth Century [New York, 1916], pp. 87 f. and *passim*).

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