

From the Guest Editors

Proposals should show familiarity with current issues in folklore archives and draw connections between archives and the classroom, archives and the field, or archives and collective memory. We encourage submissions from fields allied with folklore archives including special collections, arts councils, historical societies, libraries, and records management.

*—Call for Papers,
Building Bridges with Folklore Archives Conference*

This volume focuses on folklore archives—some of the historical and institutional conditions that make archiving a central concern for some folklorists, and a worthwhile consideration of many others. Long an essential component of folklore research and collecting, archives have not as frequently been the focus of reflective discussion. To be sure, Stith Thompson included “Archiving Folklore” as one of the four symposia he organized for the Midcentury International Folklore Conference. Also, a current search for “folklore archives” on research databases, such as the MLA bibliography, will bring up several articles that describe the holdings of particular archives or use information from archival collections. Most of the entries about folklore archives on the MLA bibliography cluster around the late 1960s and early 1970s, while other databases bring up articles in a more recent time span. However, few of these articles address specifically the assumptions surrounding the formation of folklore archives and the conceptual, as well as practical, significance and challenges of maintaining archives and making their holdings available to a wide variety of potential patrons.

To encourage reflection on the unique aspects of folklore archives while drawing connections with related agencies and fields, the William A. Wilson Folklore Archives sponsored a conference on February 27 through March 1, 2003. The conference was possible because of the

affiliation Bert Wilson, the archives founder, established for the archives and the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at the Harold B. Lee Library of Brigham Young University (BYU). As conference organizers, we chose the theme, "Building Bridges with Folklore Archives: Pedagogy, Fieldwork, Collective Memory" to indicate our awareness of the need for folklore archivists to make connections within and beyond folklore studies. True to this theme, the conference made connections with and received support from many partners, including the university, library, and special collections, the BYU College of Humanities, the Utah Humanities Council, participants from the American Folklife Center, and the Archives Section of the American Folklore Society. For the conference, presenters and participants with a variety of professional affiliations came from many states; presenters from Bulgaria withdrew just before the conference because of international conflicts involving the United States and Iraq.

Although papers in this issue demonstrate the variety of bridges folklore archivists can make, several events associated with the conference are not reproduced here. Papers presented by Curtis Ashton, George Schoemaker, David Azzolina, and Brad Westwood were not available for this issue. In addition, Peggy Bulger presented an address on the American Folklife Center in a House of Learning lecture sponsored by the Lee Library for the BYU campus and community, and Cathy Kerst gave a presentation on cataloguing for selected library employees. Film archivist Jim D'Arc gave a lecture on "The Land and the West: A Case of Myth-Taken Identity" before a screening of the John Wayne film *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*. Michael Taft and Peggy Bulger gave a session on current issues in archiving and on intellectual property concerns. Finally, prior to the official opening of the exhibit, "Folklore: Illuminating Then and Now," William A. Wilson gave an evening lecture for conference participants and the general public titled, "The Folklore Archive: A Gateway to Cultural Understanding."

The papers in this issue aptly and amply illustrate the conference theme of building bridges with folklore archives. The research of Andy Kolovos marks a significant turn toward conceptualizing and contextualizing folklore archives in relation to other archives of historical records and information. With training in library science and folklore studies, Kolovos identifies the place of folklore archives in

the history of archiving in general. He traces how nationalist attitudes, genre-oriented classification systems, and performance theories in folklore have influenced folklore archives and how contemporary archival practice, influenced by changing technology and shifting needs for cultural preservation, has made folklore materials more amenable with other archival holdings and outreach events. Kolovos identifies the recent confluence of the rather quirky, specialized folklore archives of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with contemporary archival practices endorsed by librarians, archival societies, and government institutions. The American Folklife Center (AFC) stands as one leading force in encouraging the bridge building between folklore archives and other counterparts. In her paper, Cathy Kerst gives a “whirlwind” tour of the archiving process of the AFC. She explains the archival philosophy that emphasizes maintaining the unity of field collections while also making information available to a broad general public.

Carol Edison, Tierza Draper, and Randy Williams each discuss folklore archives that make distinctive partnerships with host institutions and a variety of constituencies. Edison introduces archiving issues associated with the creation and maintenance of a state folk arts collection. Contrasting the collection to paper-based folklore archives in universities, Edison notes the challenges and opportunities of archiving recordings, photographs, and material objects in a way that will make these items available for display, preservation, and study. Draper presents the fascinating situation of building a language archives from the conceptual groundwork up to the physical space and outreach events in the community. She considers the benefits and challenges of instigating a collections policy for a Native American Languages department affiliated with a natural history museum. Williams notes the opportunities available in a university-sponsored folklore archives to build partnerships with academic departments, special collections, academic societies, and community and governmental agencies. The work of Williams and her colleagues at Utah State University demonstrates clearly that folklore archives are no longer merely items in a forgotten area of the library.

Further illustrating the bridges folklore archives can make in a university community, Margaret Yocom and Kristi Bell discuss how archives have contributed to a campus-wide traditions committee at

George Mason University and to a museum-quality exhibit in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at BYU. Both Yocom and Bell suggest ways that folklore archivists instruct members of campus communities, and beyond, in the history and contemporary practices of folklore studies and tradition making in general.

As a way to reach an audience beyond the conference, we planned to publish the proceedings in a special issue of *Folklore Forum* simultaneously with organizing the conference, drawing on connections of BYU folklorists and the Folklore Publications Group at Indiana University. As guest editors, we appreciate the thoughtful comments and editorial work of Curtis Ashton and the *Folklore Forum* staff. We hope that publishing these papers from the Building Bridges conference will continue the conversations on the significance of folklore archives and will encourage more partnerships and reflection on the best practices that unite researching, teaching, archiving, and presenting folklore to many appropriate audiences.

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