

September 2015

Edward D. Ives Correspondence

Edward Dawson Ives 1925-2009

Sandy Ives 1925-2009

Hilda McLeod Jacob
Maine State Library

Maine State Library

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalmaine.com/maine_writers_correspondence

Recommended Citation

Ives, Edward Dawson 1925-2009; Ives, Sandy 1925-2009; Jacob, Hilda McLeod; and Maine State Library, "Edward D. Ives Correspondence" (2015). *Maine Writers Correspondence*. 285.
http://digitalmaine.com/maine_writers_correspondence/285

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Maine State Library Special Collections at Maine State Documents. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine Writers Correspondence by an authorized administrator of Maine State Documents. For more information, please contact statedocs@maine.gov.

IVES, Edward D.

b. White Plains, N.Y. 1925

May 6, 1959

Mr. Edward D. Ives
State Street
Veazie, Maine

Dear Mr. Ives:

Your diligence in gathering Maine folksongs, and in having them recorded is admirable, and we congratulate you on the completion of this outstanding work. We hope that many people will know of the availability of the record, and that it can be conveniently secured by those interested.

Although a record is not a book, more and more libraries are adding record collections to their holdings. We do not yet have the facilities for such a collection, but we write at present regarding the Maine Author Collection. This is a permanent exhibit of books written by Maine people, or written about Maine; and the collection also includes music pertaining to Maine. For this reason, we think your record would be a suitable and distinguished addition to the Maine Author Collection; don't you?

Most of the items in the collection are inscribed presentation copies, and we hope that you may be interested to inscribe and present one of your records. We would include it proudly with the other Maine Material.

Meanwhile, you have our very good wishes for the success of the record, which we hope is only the first.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
ORONO, MAINE



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

220 STEVENS HALL

May 17, 1959

Mrs. F.W. Jacobs
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jacobs:

I have your letter of May 6. I am sorry to say that I have no copies of my record to spare, having recently sold the last one of my consignment. You might write to Folkways Records, 117 West 46th Street, New York 17, New York, and see if they can oblige. If you wanted me to inscribe it, I'd be glad to do that if you'd send it up to me.

Thank you for your good wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward D. Ives".

Edward D. Ives

May 26, 1959

Mr. Edward D. Ives
220 Stevens Hall
University of Maine
Orono, Maine

Dear Mr. Ives:

We have written to Folkways Records, as you suggested; and now we wait -- hopefully. We'll let you know what happens.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

May 26, 1959

Folkways Records
117 West 46th Street
New York City 17

Gentlemen:

The recent issue of Edward D. Ives' record of Maine folksongs interests us. We wrote to him about the possibility of including it in the Maine Author Collection, and he has referred us to you.

The Maine Author Collection is a permanent exhibit of works by Maine authors, and it includes music, occasional pictures, and such allied material. We preserve the correspondence, gather biographical and critical material, and in general try to have as complete information on our authors and musicians as possible.

We think that the record would be a most suitable addition to this exhibit, and we wonder whether you might like to present one for the purpose.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

June 2, 1959

Folkways Records
117 West 46th Street
New York City 17

Gentlemen:

Sandy Ives' record was received safely, and we are delighted to have it for the Maine Author Collection.

Thank you very much for your interest and generosity, and for making it possible for the collection to include this unusually interesting collection of folksongs.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

June 2, 1959

Mr. Edward D. Ives
220 Stevens Hall
University of Maine
Orono, Maine

Dear Mr. Ives:

Folkways Records responded beautifully and promptly, and we are proud and delighted to tell you that we have your record now as a part of the Maine Author Collection.

We'd like very much to have it inscribed, but are a little fearful of trusting it to the mail. Are you likely to be in Augusta some day during library hours? We are open Monday through Friday, the main doors from nine to four, and the staff from eight to five.

It is a most interesting record, and we are impressed with your diligence and effective and simple presentation.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection



Edward (Sandy) Ives, professor, folklorist, reading artist and biographer relaxes in his "study", which stands behind his home in Veazie. In its potbellied stove and general atmosphere,

gaged on: writing a book about Joe Scott, a Maine backwoodsman and balladeer. If you know anything about Scott or his songs, Ives would like to hear from you. Letters should be addressed to Dr.

Professor Probes The Mystery Of A Ballad Singing Woodsman

By Julia Brake, Area Correspondent

DID YOU KNOW Joe Scott, the balladeer woodsman or ever hear of him? Was he really married; a ladies' man? Was he loved or feared?

How did he die: Violently in a bar brawl, in the woods alone or in a mental hospital?

Are these ballads familiar to you: "Benjamin Deane" who shot his wife in Berlin, N.H. or the song of "Howard Carrick" who hanged himself in his room in Rumford Falls, or "The Plain Golden Band"?

Dr. Edward D. Ives, an outstanding scholar as well as a folklorist and singer of folk songs, needs to know. He is trying to collect all Joe Scott's songs from people who know them. Sandy, as he is called by colleagues, is an associate professor in the English department at the University of Maine in Orono and the only folklore teacher for miles around.

He has a record album and a book to his credit. The album, a 1959 offering on Folkways label is titled *Folksongs of Maine*. His book, published in 1964 by Indiana University Press, is "Larry Gorman, the Man Who Made the Songs."

Dr. Ives refers to his beloved folk lore as the "illegitimate child of literature and anthropology."

Joe Scott was born in 1867 near Woodstock, New Brunswick, Canada and came as a young woodsman to work the Androscoggin River. He roamed the forests around Rangeley, Rumford, Patten and Berlin, N.H.

He lived and sang his songs in rough lumber camps and his ballads tell of death, lurid calamity, sentimental love and morbid melancholy.

One is about "Norman Mitchell" who poisoned himself over a girl. The first line begins "I was born in Pattern, Maine..."

Another is of "William Sullivan who was killed when a tree stump fell on him.

two fellows drowned in Magalloway River.

Dr. Ives has also heard of a fourth, "Wreck on the Grand Trunk," but adds, "The title is all I know. Scott is supposed to have written the song, but I can't find it. I'm looking for all these songs from people who knew Joe or his ballads."

Sandy Ives followed one successful lead to a gnarled old woodsman. Describing how the old man sang the blood and death song of "Benjamin Deane" who shot his wife in Berlin, N.H., Ives says:

"He sat in his camp parlor with his body leaning forward and relaxed. His hands hung down free and his elbows rested on his knees. He just sang: straight out, no pretensions, no emotion, no gestures.

"Today we think the style of singing must match the words. In the woods song tradition the style is undramatic. The story in the ballad does all the expressing."

Sandy captured the ballad on a tape recorder. It goes:

"Good people all both great and small, read these lines penned by me. These lines are written by a man deprived of liberty who is serving out a sentence for a deed that I have done. And it's here I fear I will remain 'till my race on earth is run."

According to the ballad, Ben runs a fruit and candy store but greed for gold causes him to start a free and easy house and sell rum. His wife, begging him to retrace his steps, cries, "Dear Ben, the path you tread leads to death and disgrace."

Ben says, "Had I but heeded her warning I would not be here now. And my wife would still be living with no frown upon her brow." She left him, but he followed and walked in on her and another man. "And when she saw the weapon it was loudly she did cry, 'for God's sake do not shoot me, Ben, for I'm not prepared to die.'" But he shoots

moral statement about not being led astray by a thirst for gold.

Some versions run to 18 or 20 stanzas. Ives wants as many versions as he can locate of each ballad. He explains that these songs out of context seem lurid, — but in it are works of art.

He has collected Joe Scott's works from the "west end of Prince Edward Island to the Connecticut River. Joe's ballads are still part of the woods song repertoire."

Dr. Ives is on sabbatical leave from the university this year and has been granted a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation to pursue his work as folklorist.

He says, "This book may be done within a year, but it will take a real yeoman effort. I'm still collecting interview notes, tapes, thousands of pages of manuscript. I need these before I can even consider beginning to write."

He is interviewing his way through a list of a hundred leads from an ad he placed in the papers of New Hampshire, New Brunswick and Maine.

"The response generally is, 'I'm so glad somebody is writing something on that man'. The only difficulty is that people with whom I've been corresponding expect to see an old professor expect me to have a grey beard, a curved stem pipe and look distinguished."

Dr. Ives did his undergraduate work at Hamilton College, earned his master's degree from Columbia and his doctorate from the University of Indiana.

As to why he is writing this book, Ives explains, "From a scholarly point of view the way a folk song comes into being has never been studied. We have never seen a ballad author up close and the aim of this book is to give us a chance to see one.

"This also is a chance to rescue the songs of a historic Maine era. These ballads are dying. The men don't sit around and sing them in the old way. Now they watch television like everyone