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THE NORTHEAST FOLKLORE SOCIETY

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Newsletter # 13
July 11, 1977

Florence E. Ireland
Editor

Summertime...

And the living is anything but easy. Exciting, busy, fun, sometimes hectic are more appropriate adjectives, but then the tempo of the song wouldn't fit and the whole thing would come out wrong. So, for those of you whose summer living is indeed easy, congratulations. You have my envy, and my wonderment at how you do it. For the rest of us, onward, and hurry!

Come One, Come All!!!

As promised, here is more detailed information on the Maine Festival. To remind you, it is a four-day event, running from July 28-31, noon to midnight each day, and will be held on the grounds of Bowdoin College. The ticket prices run as follows: \$3.00 per person from noon to 5 p.m. and \$4.00 per person for evening, and those under six are free. Children ages 6 to 12 are \$1.00 for afternoon and \$1.00 for evening.

Now for the fun part: our semi-firm schedule which, like good cheese, may change a bit as it ages, but will result in a more delightful flavor.

Thursday: All day (and Friday, too) Nikki Schumann will be demonstrating silk-screening. Also all day Horace Allison will demonstrate his incredible horns which he carved out of trees, and one of which is 21 feet long! His exhibit is called The Singing Tree, and he really does play tunes on them.

There will be a blacksmith on site all day, plus there will be an exhibit of boats from the Bath Marine Museum.

At around 2 p.m. there will be a special kind of Songwriters' Workshop with Dick Curless, Bill Chinnock, Dave Ingraham, Gordon Bok, and Jud Strunk. They will explore the writing of songs, each from his own angle and style-base. It should prove an exciting converging and diverging not usually present in single-style songwriters' workshops.

Other events for the afternoon include: Marcy Plavin doing modern dance, Garbo and Gillian, Pat Quinby giving a playwright workshop, The Celebration Mime Trio, and Lee Sharkey doing children's poetry. The Maine State Ballet and Circur, The Young People's Theatre, Mime Puppets, and Edie Dought will all do programs in the Children's Area, plus Mike Mears and Laurie Manny will organize games for the tots.

At 5 p.m. the Bangor Band will play during supper.

Our evening program will include Dick Curless, Jud Strunk, and Tony Montanaro, with Chuck Heart presenting a square dance in the Recreation Center.

Friday: St 1 p.m. there will be a classical guitar presentation by Tom Hoffman, and at 3:00 Anthea Goodfellow and Adrian Lo will play recorder, viola, and harpsicord. At 4:00 Ralph Robinson's ballet company will dance, after having given a lecture and demonstration at noon, and a performance in the Children's Area at 2:30. There will be a scene designworkshop with Ray Rutan, as well as two plays: "Oh, Dad" by the Mt. Desert High School club, and "Early Evening" by Bowdoin students. There will be a poetry workshop, a blacksmith, and a display of boats also. For the children, besides the ballet presentation, Al Miller will clown, and the Children's Theatre of Maine will perform.

The evening will feature Gary Merrill, the Portland String Quartet, and Lorin Hollander, as well as a waltz evening in the Recreation Center.

Saturday: This is Folk Life Day, when all the exhibits and performances pertinent to Maine culture will be featured, even though they'll already have been present for the previous two days. We will, as of this writing, have two blacksmiths, Wasson and Dunning, sheep shearing by the Christopher Farms, weaving by Bijhower, boat building by the Bath Museum Apprentice Shop (they're bringing the 25-foot Elijah), Randy Gowell (with a sailing dory), and others, sailmaking by Nat Wilson, and colonial pots by Gogi Millner. There will be workshop in banjo, women's songs, colonial songs, story telling (led by Marshall Dodge), and theater criticism. There will be a songwriters' workshop with Bob Stuart, Steve Bracchiotti, and Dave Mallet. The Argyle Highlanders will do English Country dancing at 1:30 and their fabulous marching and bagpiping at 3:00. There will be an afternoon folk concert, hosted by MPBN's Susan Tibbetts, with Ed Glaser, Dave Ingraham, Pixie Lauer, Jeff Aumeller, and the Soucey Family of Mount Vernon. The National Chimney Sweeps Guild will be represented all day to answer questions and display the tools of their profession. There will be poetry readings, a play, a flute ensemble, and an honest-to-goodness moose calling exhibition. At around 3:30 the Stinky River Valley Boys (formerly the Armaretto String Band) will play, and at 4:00 David Ingraham will sing his own songs and explain how he has so far avoided being tarred and feathered for them.

For Holman Day aficionados, there will be films on and by him, as well as a seminar and readings by Everett Foster, Arthur Bearce, and Joe Perham.

For the children there will be a juggling workshop, a magic show by Steve Rosenblum, Jud the Jester, and the Lionwich Puppets.

From 5:00 to 7:00 the entire Festival will pause for supper on the grass, while the Bath City Band plays.

The evening concert, hosted by folksinger Edith Doughty, will feature Gordon Bok, Kendall Morse, Bill and Jean Bonyun, Dave Mallet, and the Wild Mountain Thyme. After this concert, there will be contra dancing in the Recreation Center led by the MAINE Country Dance Orchestra. Even if you have never done contra dancing before,

do come, because this group not only plays, but can teach more than 100 dances to vast numbers of people, and within minutes have them all going in the right direction at once.

Sunday: This day will be somewhat calmer, although no less busy, than the rest. There will be a religious service at the Bowdoin Chapel with the Rev. Farrell Lenfesty of Beals Island, and a Sacred Harp Sing. The Belgrade Chamber Players will present a program, as will the Calderwood Consort. Oaken Shield will do Inkspots-type music, and arias will be sung in the Pickard Theatre. Kendall Merriam will improvise poems, after which there will be open readings. Jana Rice and Glenn Jenks will play ragtime music, and Sherman Curtis will march around playing his bagpipes.

Sharon Ventimiglia will demonstrate sawdust firing, Eric Hopkins will do glass blowing to jazz, and Ron Trell will do tap dancing. The Ram Island Dance Company will also perform.

On the main stage, beginning at noon and running all afternoon, there will be a gathering of talent whose goal will be improvisation. At this writing it is still in the planning stages, but some of the people will include Brad Terry, Bill Milo, Dick Cash, The Celebration Mime Trio, Bath Dance Works, Al Miller and Tony Owen.

The Children's Area for this day will feature Jud the Jester and the Young Peoples' Theatre. And while we go about our supper-time pursuits, the Hoffbrau German BAnd will play.

In the evening there will be a concert with Roswell Rudd, the Ragtime Millionaires, Brad Terry, Bill Mosels, Mark Perry, and Joe LaFlamme.

So there it is, The Maine Festival, so far. You will see more about it in your local papers, and you can obtain instant information by calling the Maine Festival office at 442-7467, or by writing them at P.O.Box 353, Wiscasset, if your information does not need to be quite so instant. It will be an enormous happening; do try to attend at least some of it.

One Morning in May

May 15th was the 5th Annual May Day Festival, held at the Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport. The day was very sunny and hot, but a lovely breeze relieved the heat enough to cause several sneak sunburns. The crowd numbered in the thousands, as each run of the trolley brought in more to the concert area. Everyone seemed to know almost everyone else, food and drink were liberally shared, and the grass, both underfoot and elsewhere, was pleasant and relaxing.

I think the first performance was Wild Mountain Thyme, a dynamite group led by Doreen Conboy. Their songs ranged from traditional folk (but accompanied) to original folk-style, to country and western pieces, and all were done in their usual enthusiastic way.

White Mountain Blue Grass was next, with Mac and Hazel McGee on guitar and bass, Herman McGee on guitar, Al McHale on mandolin, Smokey Vallee standing in on fiddle, Bob French filling in on banjo, and Grace and Bob French helping out on "Orange Blossom Special". Their style was definitely different from what this crowd was used to. It was distinctly C&W, while the audience was more acquainted with and appreciative of the C&W flavored music, such as that presented by Wild Mt. Thyme.

Jeff Aumuller sang and played banjo, accompanied by Henry Hutchins on guitar. Then he yodeled! What fun!

Steve Bracchiotti played and sang his original songs, and I wished the crowd had been smaller, or at least more attentive, because his songs appeared to be supremely worthy of 100% attention, and it was very easy to lose track, and he is also rather quiet. His music would be more suited to a small, and if possible, enclosed audience.

Doug Ramsey's Group, which had evidently only been together for about four months, though one would not guess from their performance, put on a tremendous show. Lady T and her Loose Caboose appeared to have brought her entire Portland following with her; being among friends, then, she put on an extra good performance.

The Northern Valley Boys came on at 4:00, and captivated the crowd with their fiddling and singing. One song in particular, Two Brethern, done unaccompanied, was a masterpiece, and the audience acknowledged this, listening quietly.

I had to leave right after that, due to the most intense, throbbing, blinding sun-headache I have ever experienced in my entire life. As my trolley pulled away, I could see the Strong-Morris Dancers prancing about in the distance, carefully executing their intricate steps and making it look like they thought up the dances on the spot.

A word about the festival's mundane details: I have never keen to a more well-organized outside event. The parking, which could easily have been a nightmare, was handled excellently, and even though I had the big car that day and had parked somewhere in the middle of all the vans and Broncos, I got out without a hitch, being carefully guided by two attendants. ~~The trolleys between~~ parking and field ran about every five minutes, there was food to buy, and the other facilities were adequate. Great job!

Folk Dance Association

Folk Dance Association is a service organization for dancers, leaders, workshop teachers and those who want to reach such people. Special services are offered to members, including folk dance trips to other countries as well as domestically, workshop circuits for dance groups, classes for those handy to New York City, mailing services, and their publications, Folk Dance Directory and Mixed Pickles. Folk Dance Directory is an annual resource guide listing classes, teachers, places to dance, publications, events, products,

services, and organizations across the country. Mixed Pickles, a monthly, contains informative and entertaining articles plus a monthly calendar of upcoming special events.

Membership in the Folk Dance Association is available at \$6 per year for individuals, \$10 for a family, and \$15 for institutions and businesses. More information may be obtained by writing the Folk Dance Association, P.O. Box 500, Midwood Station, Brooklyn, New York 11230, or by calling (212) 434-1766, 673-4769, or 434-2304.

Humanities Channel on Cable TV

Washington, D.C.--The National Endowment for the Humanities announces that the Portland Humanities Committee has been awarded a planning grant of up to \$25,000 to establish a "Humanities Channel" on the cable television system serving the Portland, Maine Area.

This channel will present programming in the humanities, including major films and instructional videotapes, to the television audience. Humanities scholars will be involved in both planning of programs and participating in on-air discussions of the various issues and subjects raised in the programs. These discussions will allow the viewing public to learn more about the historical, philosophical, and critical aspects of the programs.

Collections from Maine museums and the archives of historical organizations will provide valuable educational materials to be used in producing the programs. The entire project will be coordinated with the activities of local libraries and with the Maine Council for the Humanities and Public Policy, a state-based humanities program also funded by the Endowment. Mr. Walter E. Corey, an attorney and the chairperson of the Portland Humanities Committee, is directing this project.

New Smithsonian Exhibit

A new exhibit in the Smithsonian's National Museum of History and Technology "Photographing the Frontier" features the work of early photographers who provided some of the best documentary evidence of American life in the Northwest and Southwest from about 1855-1900.

The exhibit, which will be shown in two parts, opened June 23 with more than 100 photographs shown in the Museum's third floor Hall of Photography. The first part will close October 23, 1977 and the second part will be shown in the winter.

According to Eugene Ostroff, curator of photography, who organized the exhibit and wrote the catalogue essay, these photographs, which "offer insight into our heritage were often preserved by sheer accident by heirs, librarians or museums."

The photographs offer intimate revelations about the life styles, social customs and primitive living conditions of the early pioneers. We see miners panning for gold, a wagon train, a pioneer encampment in the wilderness with everyone formally posing for the photographer,

holiday parades, entire families working together in the fields, and homesteaders in their wooden shacks relaxing from their back-breaking job of land clearing.

There are scenes of early western towns, their saloons and saddlery shops, and the butchers, bankers, lawyers, dentists and other merchants who populated them. In one scene, children do a ring dance outside their school in 1899; in another, the class of 1892 poses for a picture outside their rough-hewn, one-room, wooden schoolhouse in Arizona. Birthdays, weddings and funerals are dutifully recorded and there are perceptive studies of whiskered old frontiersmen in battered clothes. Occasionally one sees a photo of a local event of note, such as a hanging. Scenery is recorded with the same panoramic sweep as is found in 19th century landscape paintings.

The obstacles these early photographers had to overcome were enormous, for the equipment even in the most ideal situations was cumbersome, and the photographer had to make extensive preparations to take one picture--sometimes even slowing down an entire wagon train.

The exhibit offers some glimpses of their makeshift darkrooms in tents and covered wagons and their studios in the early western towns.

The 32-page catalogue which accompanies the exhibit provides a brief history of early photographic techniques and will be sold in the museum shop.

"Photographing the Frontier" was developed and is being circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

Boom Book Out

Argyle Boom, Vol. XVII of Northeast Folklore, is now being sent to Northeast Folklore Society members and libraries, and is ready for sale from our office. It is a readable book on what at first appears to be an unreadable subject. Written and edited mostly by Sandy Ives, with a back up crew of some twelve field-work students and eighteen informants, the book covers (in the usual exhaustive Ives style) the description, operation, and peripheral data of the Argyle Boom and neighboring booms as they existed in the first two decades of the 20th century. An enormous operation in its day, the Argyle Boom system was responsible for sorting and rafting all the logs cut and dumped into the upper Penobscot each year. This amounted to something like 200 million boardfeet! The section on the daily lives of the workers should perhaps have been longer, in view of the possibility that not all readers will be familiar with lumbercamp life and will therefore have nothing to compare this description with. But maybe this criticism stems from the fact that I find the human side much more interesting than the details of sorting and rafting, and so would have liked to see more of it. Anyhow, what there is is very good.

For Non-Northeast-Folklore-Society members the price is \$4.00. Members have probably already gotten it by now.

New Publication

Downeast Ancestry, first published last month by Rosemary E. Bachelor and Mary H. Dormer, will be a bi-monthly magazine devoted to geneological research in Maine. Included will be articles on families, lineage summaries, queries, census listings, old letters, town records, and the like. Theri first issue is chock full of this type of information, and well worth the \$9.00 annual subscription price if geneology is your bag. They are looking for articles and photographs, as well as subscriptions. For more information, write: Downeast Ancestry, P.O. Box 398, Machias, Maine 04654.

That's All Folks

Well, what with Bob replanting the garden, in some areas twice, due to rain and birds, a full-time job for me, plus The Maine Festival, and swimming lessons for a 5½ year old suffering from approach/avoidance reactions each NWF at noon, this proves to be a busy summer. Hope yours is too! Back in the Fall.

