

FOLK-LORE OF THE SOUTHWEST; WHAT IS BEING DONE TO PRESERVE IT.¹

I

If I should adhere strictly to the title of this paper, the result would be little more than a bibliographical summary. What is being done to preserve the folk-lore of the Southwest necessarily involves what has been done to preserve it. A folk I would define as any group of people not cosmopolitan who, independent of academic means, preserve a body of tradition peculiar to themselves.

The Southwest in your own terminology includes Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Mexico. This vast region, so diverse in geography and climate, is no less diverse in ethnographic inheritances. It is as yet a region of natural folk units and of folk blends. When you consider that out of a total population of 344,303 Indians in the United States, exclusive of Alaska, 186,937—and these divided into scores of distinct tribes—reside within this Southwest,² largely influencing the populations of Oklahoma and New Mexico in particular; when you consider the numerous negro population of Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas; when you consider the powerful French strain of Louisiana; when you further consider, with its immense influence, the Spanish-Mexican element of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona; and, finally, when you consider the varied folk groups of Mexico, you will realize to what proportions the folk-lore of the Southwest must mount. For the moment I am leaving unconsidered the lore of the Caucasian element of this region to whom English is the ancestral tongue. A mere catalogue of the immense researches that have been made in the lore of the Indians alone would consume more than an hour of time.

Here, some definition of folk-lore is necessary. Its limits are by no means strictly defined. On the one hand, it runs into literature; on the other hand, it is a subdivision of anthropology, often blending into ethnology, archaeology, sociology, linguistics, and other kindred sciences. I have already defined what I understand to be a folk; the lore of a folk comprises its mythology—sometimes its theology,—its songs and ballads, its legends and communal tales, its signs, superstitions, omens, cures, customs of peculiarity, games, plays, dances, rhymes, sayings, jokes, riddles, its lore of plants, animals, weather and other natural phenomena, and its dialect. Yet even

1. This paper was read before the Southwestern Library Association in session at Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 28-30, 1924. The meetings were held in the Art Museum.

2. Figures are taken from the "Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1923."

this definition fails in both exclusion and inclusion. The status of folk-lore is constantly shifting. A quarter of a century ago or more the American Folk-Lore Society depended to a considerable extent upon the support of men and women whose interests were more or less literary, or at least, humanistic; today it draws its support largely from men and women whose interests are almost purely scientific, particularly anthropological. The result is something of a hiatus in the investigation and preservation of the lore of what politicians delight to call "the common people" of this country.

The shift of emphasis has been due rather to the pedantic aloofness from modern life and literature on the part of trained scholars in English and other modern languages than to any negligence of confessed scientists. It appears now that the pendulum is about to swing back. But however that may be, in any consideration of what is being done to preserve the folk-lore of the Southwest, cognizance must be taken first of the scientific institutions and of the large body of efficiently trained and eager scientists who have for half a century conducted their explorations and researches among the peoples and places of the Southwest.

You have already heard of the archaeological activities of the Southwest. This truly wonderful building in which we meet is, so we are told, very largely a visible product of those activities. In the works of Southwestern archaeologists, such as William H. Holmes, Adolph Bandelier, Dr. Jesse Walter Fewkes, and Dr. Edgar L. Hewett may be found a deal of folk-lore. The New Mexico Archaeological Society, the School of American Archaeology (now the School of American Research), the Archaeological Institute of America, the Smithsonian Institution, the Bureau of American Ethnology, the Department of Interior, all interlocking more or less, have taken an exceedingly broad view of the field of archaeology in the Southwest and the reports of its workers embody substantial folk-lore. The annual Santa Fe Fiesta under the direction of The School of American Research is the most extraordinary—the most humanistic—preserver of folk-lore, I dare say, in the western hemisphere. By means of this Fiesta is realized the vitality of a folk's lore. Through it the songs, the dances, the drama, the architecture, the handiwork, the art of a folk are cultivated beyond the dream of any mere archivist commentator on the ballads of the Scotch borderers or on the Athenian dances by the lovely Aegean.

The most eminent anthropologists of the Southwestern field have been highly developed folk-lorists. Dr. Washington Matthews, Lieutenant Frank H. Cushing, Colonel James Stevenson, his wife, Matilda Cox Stevenson, the Dorseys, Major Powell, to mention only a few of the larger names, have set down in lasting form a vast body of folk-lore that is substantive. The record of their work among the Indians is to be found in the publications of the Bureau

of American Ethnology, of which Major Powell was the first director. Today, such scholars as Dr. Franz Boas, Dr. P. E. Goddard, Dr. Elsie Clews Parsons are carrying on the work of collecting and preserving folk-lore of the Indians of the Southwest, particularly of the Pueblo Indians, and their findings are to be found recorded in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore* and in the *Memoirs* of the American Folk-Lore Society as well as in anthropological publications. Just as important, though less formulistic and more delightful, are *Taytay's Tales* and other volumes by Elizabeth DeHuff and *Pueblo Indian Folk Stories* by Charles F. Lummis.

The preservation of Indian lore has been and is being furthered by various state historical societies, notably by the historical societies and museums of Oklahoma and of New Mexico, by the Peabody Museum, by the Carnegie Institution at Washington, and in various byways.

One of the classics of America, in some ways finer than "Hiawatha," is *Myths of the Cherokee* by the late James Mooney, now resting in obscurity in the out of print Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, a forbidding folio that only the occasional specialist will inquire for. Along with that undusted tome repose the works of James Owen Dorsey, of Matthews, and of the Stevensons—great human works extant apparently only to supply footnotes for future academic lucubrations. The very aspect of the tomes forbids them; they preserve a lore mummified in its swathing. A few months ago George Bird Grinnell's *History of the Cheyennes* came from the Yale University Press, and it is safe to say that that excellent work will have ten times the vogue that Frances Densmore's *Teton Sioux Music*, Bulletin 61 of the Bureau of American Ethnology, published in 1918, will ever have, although Miss Densmore's work is one of the noblest and highest souled works ever printed, on the American continent, as exact and disciplined on one hand as an algebraic formula and as profoundly moving and lofty on the other hand as the soliloquies of Cooper's heroes. Miss Densmore's depiction and interpretation of the Sioux Sun Dance is surely one of the most understanding and thorough expositions ever attained to by an anthropologist.

It is the fashion to patronize Cooper's idealization of certain Indians—he did not idealize all Indians. Nevertheless in a marked manner the best scientists of modern times in dealing with the aborigines of this land have become warm with sympathy and interest. Sometimes, of course, the work of the scientific folk-lorist deserves to lie in the dry oblivion that scientific tomes have condemned it to. Nothing, for instance, could be duller or more desiccated than *The Osage Tribe; Rite of the Chiefs; Sayings of the Ancient Men* by Francis La Flesche in the Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. You will carry away a more distinct im-

pression of the Osage folk from Washington Irving's casual and delightful *Tour of the Prairies* than from La Flesche's careful and deadening volume. But it is too bad that the work of Frank Cushing, who forty years ago was charming the readers of the *Century Magazine* with his sketches of Zuni life, should also be doomed to the oblivion of a government report.

All in all, the Indian folk-lore of the Southwest has been well cared for. The civilized tribes who came west from the Mississippi, the Plains Indians who were herded into the Southwest from their northern ranges, the Pueblo Indians who have lived their stable life for centuries,—all these have had their lore exploited and preserved in such ways as I have indicated. A mere list of the publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology will show as much. I have dwelt on their folk-lore at some length, for in the Southwest it is exceedingly important. But I must remind you again that the more or less organized forces that have preserved it have pretty much ignored the lore of the white folk who live among and near these Indians.

Where two races meet, where two distinct sets of communal concepts come into contact, there results a blend that is highly interesting. In the blend now going on between the white and red races in some parts, the result on the Anglo-Saxon side has been almost altogether over-looked. A legend current among the white folk of the Arbuckle Mountains of southern Oklahoma will illustrate my point. It is a legend of a giant rattlesnake "as broad as the back of a dog and as long as two ponies." He is the king of all rattlesnakes. In his head is a great diamond, and studding his long sides are other diamonds so dazzling that they would strike blind any man who might see them in the light of the sun. Long ago a tribe of Indians, so goes the legend, brought this King of the Rattlers into the mountains, where regularly they came to observe their religious rites. To them the snake was sacred. Amidst their ceremonies they were attacked by hostile forces, and in their confused retreat they lost their sacred snake. But the story of the snake remained along with the snake, and even today certain ingenuous whites of the mountains are hunting him. Once a hunter saw his awe-inspiring tail disappearing into a wild crevice called Rattlesnake Cave; at other times his discarded skin has been found, and the breaks and indentations in it show that he still wears the great jewels in his body. It is said that a reward of five hundred dollars has been offered for the snake, "dead or alive."³

This legend is no great index to sophistication, to be sure. What genuine folk-tale is? But notice the curious blend. The American Indian never knew what a diamond was until a white man showed him one; the American Indians did and yet do make use of the

3. For this legend I am indebted to Mrs. Evelyn Farrell Bertillon, now living at Mineola, Texas.

rattlesnake in their ceremonials. The motive of the American today who hunts the snake is profanely cupidinous; that of the Indian who "makes medicine" with the rattlesnake is religious—his eye on the weather, of course. The legend of the jeweled rattlesnake is a hybrid of two folk groups.

II

Before turning to the folk-lore of the English speaking whites of the Southwest, however, it will be well to consider a few folk groups as distinct as are the Indians. While in America more Indian folk-lore has been gathered than of all other folk groups combined, negro folk-lore, it seems, is the most popular. The songs, the tales, and the manners and mannerisms of the old time negroes are familiar in almost every household. Negro folk-lore has made a distinct impression on American literature; such lecturers as John A. Lomax and Carl Sandburg delight thousands with it yearly; yet no systematic collections of it have been made as have been made of Indian folk-lore. It is to be picked out here and there, and the negroes of Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma have not been "worked" nearly so extensively as have the negroes of the upper South. I doubt, for instance, if a single collection has ever been made of what must be the very curious lore of those negroes that have intermingled with the Creeks and other Civilized Tribes of Indians. Uncle Remus, the classic of American folk-lore, however, as has been pointed out, represents not only the negroes of Georgia but those of all the old South.

One might name such collections of negro folk-songs as N. Burlin's *Negro Folk-Songs*, T. N. Talley's *Negro Folk Rhymes, Wise and Otherwise*, and a volume *Negro Folk-Songs of the South*, promised a year or more ago but not yet published, by Dorothy Scarborough, a Texas woman. Fourteen years ago the Texas Folk-Lore Society published a valuable, though slight, sheaf of negro songs, *Some Current Folk-Songs of the Negro*, which were collected by Professor Will H. Thomas of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas.

The folk-lore of Mexico is too vast a matter to be entered into here. A significant fact is that the Mexican government has inaugurated a series of studies that may be to Mexican folk-lore what the publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology are to Indian folk-lore. In 1922, under the direction of Señor Manuel Gamio, the departments of Interior and Agriculture of Mexico published three remarkable volumes on *La Poblacion del Valle de Teotihuacan*, in which a large section is devoted to folk-lore. Herein is the most logical treatment of folk-lore that I know of anywhere, for the lore is shown in its relation to geography, history, race, religion—the full circle of a folk's life. In passing, should be mentioned Frederick Starr's work on Mexican folk-lore. Real literature and real folk-lore also is Thomas A. Janvier's *Legends of the City of Mexico*.

Curiously enough, American investigators have pretty much skipped the main part of Mexico to run riot in the extreme southern end and in Central America. A brilliant exception is Carl Lumholtz with his *Unknown Mexico* and other studies of the inhabitants of western Mexico. But a vast part of the rich Mexican field is as yet practically unexploited. I should like very much, for instance, to have a collection of the myths and legends of the Yaqui Indians; such is not to be found. Yet I am satisfied that the Mexican reading public sees more of its own folk-lore in print than the reading public of the United States sees of its folk-lore. Nearly any train butcher of the border country will sell you a collection of the *Leyendas y Tradiciones de las Calles de Mexico* (*Legends and Traditions of the Streets of the City of Mexico*). Recently I secured in a Mexican book-store of San Antonio, Texas, a half dozen books of Mexican folk-songs and legends.

Time and again the immense influence of the Spanish and Mexican elements on the English speaking population of the Southwest has been pointed out. Such a romantic and worthy historian of the American frontiers as the late Emerson Hough was insistent on this influence. In considering some hundreds of legends current among English speaking Caucasians of Texas, I have found very few that do not evidence Spanish-Mexican sources. The blend of Indian and Caucasian folk groups has resulted in nothing when compared with the result of the blending of the Spanish-Mexican genius with that of Anglo-Saxon Americans. Furthermore, Dr. Franz Boas, the eminent anthropologist and folk-lorist, has pointed out the decided influence of the Spanish element on the Indian lore of the Southwest.

A few years ago in an article printed in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Dr. A. M. Espinosa of Leland Stanford University called attention to the paucity of material on the Mexican element of the southwestern part of the United States. Happily, Dr. Espinosa has done much to relieve that paucity. He has been particularly interested in the linguistic forms of folk-lore.⁴

An important work yet remains to be done in the Spanish-Mexican diction of the United States. A great many Mexican words and phrases in use not only in Mexico but along and far out from the border have never been put into a dictionary—Mexican, Spanish, or American. In addition to the material gathered by Dr. Espinosa, an interesting list of Texas Mexicanisms was made by H. Tallichet some years ago.⁵ In the main Tallichet was correct in his definitions,

4. See his "The Spanish Language in New Mexico and Southern Colorado," publication Number 16 of the Historical Society of New Mexico, May, 1911; also "Studies on New Mexico Spanish," *Revue de Dialectologie*, Nos. 2, 3, 1909; Halle, Germany, and in Bulletin of the University of New Mexico, Language Series, Vol. I, No. 2, 1910.

5. Tallichet, H., "A Contribution towards a Vocabulary of Spanish and Mexican Words Used in Texas," American Dialect Society, *Notes*, Parts IV, V, and VI.

but he was an academician with little direct contact with the folk that used the words, and frequently he missed not only shades but facts.

The pioneer in the field of Spanish-American folk-lore of the Southwest was Captain John G. Bourke of the United States Army. His work has never been equalled either in thoroughness or in compass. In 1894 the *Journal of American Folk-Lore* printed a long article of his on "Popular Medicine, Customs, and Superstitions of the Rio Grande." Soon afterwards it printed another article of his entitled, "The Folk-Foods of the Rio Grande Valley and Northern Mexico." He was a true borderer, having served for many years in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, and his very readable volume, *On the Border with Crook*, is replete with folk material of the mixed elements of the Southwest. The most noteworthy folk-lorist of the Southwest now living is Mr. Charles F. Lummis. His *The Land of Poco Tiempo* (with an extraordinary chapter on New Mexican folk-songs) is valuable, as are others of his books. *Spanish-American Folk-Songs* by Eleanor Hague, published by the American Folk-Lore Society, is a suggestive contribution. In the three publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society various contributors have done something in the way of preserving the lore of Texas-Mexicans. However, the vein of border-Mexican lore has merely been tapped. Rich, varied, immense, delightful, it awaits further exploration.

One legend I shall give to illustrate the vital influence of the Spanish-Mexican genius upon the imagination of the "American" of the Southwest. That influence will be found in almost every legend of buried treasure and lost mine of a region imperial in its vastness. It will be found in the nomenclature and traditions of a thousand streams, towns, mountains, and ranches. What is now known as the Brazos River of Texas was known to the Spaniards as Los Brazos de Dios—The Arms of God. "Why this extraordinary name?" have asked a century of Texans. Legend has given varying answers. Here is one bound up with the name of the immortal Bowie.⁶

Colonel James Bowie, as slave smuggler, frontiersman, patriot, and prospector, led a life purple with adventure. His name is now inseparably linked with the so-called Los Almagres Mines of the San Saba River country of Southwest Texas, now generally called the Bowie Mine (or Mines). The Spanish are popularly supposed to have worked these mines about 1756 and to have abandoned them through hostility of the Indians. History is hazy on the subject. Not so legend, according to which Bowie upon his arrival in Texas won his way into the tribe of Lipan Indians that held the secret of

6. For the historical background and for the detailed legend, see "The Legend of the San Saba or Bowie Mine," by J. Frank Dobie, in *Legends of Texas*, edited by J. Frank Dobie, published by the Texas Folk-Lore Society, Austin, Texas, 1924, pp. 12-20.

the mines, learned the secret, deserted his red brothers, raised an expedition to exploit the mines, fought a battle, and was killed in the Alamo before he could gain the famous mines or make known their exact location to any other white man.

The legend connecting the Bowie, or Los Almagres, Mine with the Brazos River came to me from a professional treasure hunter and prospector named Burton of Austin, Texas. It came to him from a former ranchman of Mason County named White. White, according to Burton, got the account, written on a parchment, from a grateful old Mexican whom he had befriended in a spell of sickness. The Mexican claimed to have secured the parchment from his grandfather, the date it bore being over one hundred and fifty years old. When the aged Mexican took sick on White's ranch, he was traveling through the country with a crude Mexican cart and two burros, looking for two dugouts somewhere between the old San Saba Mission and the site of the Waco Indian village, which was located in the limits of the present city of Waco, on the Brazos. As the parchment reads, thirty-six (or it may be forty-six, Burton says) jack loads of silver bullion were buried in those two dug-outs.⁷

"It was a time of terrible drouth. The drouth had lasted two years and the little colony of Spaniards at San Saba had gone on mining with their captive Indians and their peons until the Indians had deserted, the peons had died, and there was absolutely no water left in the river or springs. Each month the band of Spaniards hoped that the next new moon would bring rain, but no rain came, and they knew that in the nearly always dry region towards Mexico, the drouth must be even worse. So, instead of going south towards San Antonio as they would normally have gone, the Spaniards set out eastward toward the village of the Waco Indians. They had often heard of a great river flowing by the Wacos' camp, and there they hoped to find water. They left not a soul or a hoof behind, but packed on the burros their little store of provisions and what bullion they had accumulated, well knowing that they could not return until the drouth was broken.

"At Las Chanas (the Llano), they found a dry bed; the Colorado was as dry as the top of a rock. Arrived at the Lampasas Springs, they found a little water, a great deal of mud, and dead buffaloes covering the ground. They pulled some of the dead buffaloes out of the bog, got a little stinking water, and slowly moved on. But the burros were poor from want of grass and starved from want of water. To carry the heavy bullion much farther was impossible. The provisions had to be taken at any price. So two small dugouts were made in the side of a hill, the bullion was buried therein, and after the captain of the band had called on all to witness the marks of the place, the cavalcade moved on.

7. I quote from "How the Brazos River Got Its Name," by J. Frank Dobie, *op. cit.*, 214-215.

"The trail on eastward was marked by dead beasts and dead men, but at last, depleted in numbers and wasted in fortune, the travelers arrived at the village of the Wacos. They found a great river flowing clear and fresh, and when they had drunk and had seen their beasts drink, they knelt down to give God thanks, and the padre with them blessed the stream and called it Los Brazos de Dios—the Arms of God.

"The Spanish built a kind of rude fort and waited. The drouth kept on for three more years. Los Brazos still flowed clear and sweet, and memories of the rich mines and the rich bullion left behind began to grow dim. But at last the drouth broke and the grass and weeds sprang from the earth with a great rush. The grass grew so quickly that a powerful and fierce tribe of Indians was down upon the Spaniards before they could leave. Their little settlement was annihilated. Only one man lived to get back to Mexico, and that years later when he was old and feeble; he was so broken that he had no desire ever again to come into the region of the terrible drouth. But a while before he died he wrote out on a piece of parchment the history of that search across the desert for water, the directions, as well as he could give them, to the buried bullion, and this account of the settlement and disaster on the river called Los Brazos de Dios. The hidden dugouts with their wealth have never been found, and history has forgot to record the tragic episode of the first Spanish settlement on the Brazos."

This legend is representative. Hundreds, even thousands, of such legends going back to the days of the Spanish occupation and credited to Mexican transmitters, flourish among the Americans of the Southwest. From eastern Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri—lands that the Spanish physically never entered—have come to me legends connected with Coronado's quest of the Gran Quivira. Even more numerous perhaps than the Spanish-Mexican legends that have been taken over by the Americans are Mexican folk-tales of the border territory that have not yet been assimilated.

As distinct a folk group of the Southwest as the Indian, the negro, or the Mexican, is a stratum of the French Creoles of Louisiana. Alc e Fortier is generally recognized as the authority on the French folk-lore of Louisiana. His most significant work is entitled *Louisiana Folk-Tales*.

Whatever else is being done or has been done to preserve Creole lore, it is living in the short stories and novels of George W. Cable, Lafcadio Hearn, Kate Chopin, and Grace King. No scientific work could be more valid—notwithstanding the protests of Grace Elizabeth King—than Cable's *Old Creole Days*, or than Miss Chopin's *Bayou Folks*. Cable's "Jean-ah Poquelin" is, for instance, a haunted house legend of simple Creoles made over; perhaps it is the finest local color story of America. A thousand histories could not make clearer the juxtaposition of two races than this story of the overwhelming of a Creole personality by the enterprising Americans.

III

The Indian, the negro, the Mexican, and the Creole are not the only distinct folk groups of the Southwest, but they are the most important, outside of what for want of a better term we call the Americans—the English speaking Caucasians. The Americans of the Southwest had a vast body of folk-lore, in many localities have it yet, though with tin automobiles, tinhorn literature, and tinsel picture shows it is passing away. Within a few more years the ape-like instinct congenital to man may have made of the average westerner an exact replica of the pictured anomalies that appear daily on the screen and in the pages of *Action Stories*, *Ace-High*, and the all-knowing Zane Grey. Nevertheless, the American folk-lore of the Southwest is still rich and it has hardly been touched by the formal folk-lorists. Whatever record of it has been made has been largely through local color fiction. And here we must somewhat consider that form of fiction in its relation to our folk-lore.

A local color story is a story the characters and action of which could occur only at a given place at a given time. The action of "The Fall of the House of Usher" could have occurred anywhere, at any time; actually it did occur only in the haunted brain of Edgar Allan Poe. The action of "Jean-ah Poquelin" could have occurred only in New Orleans toward the first part of the nineteenth century. In no other place, at no other time could the characters have so lived, spoken, thought. If a local colorist then is true to his standards, he must be both folk-lorist and historian. Some local colorists of the Southwest have been conscientious students of folk-lore.

Octave Thanet (Alice French) over thirty years ago contributed an article (Vol. V. page 121) to the *Journal of American Folk-Lore* on "Arkansas Folk-lore." At the same time she was preserving that lore in her stories of the Ozarks and the Arkansas cane-brakes, notably in the collection of stories called "Knitters in the Sun." Fiction—of a dubious character to be sure—has made "The Arkansas Traveler" one of the great American myths, to be ranged alongside Colonel Carter, Uncle Sam, the Connecticut peddler, and other national myths. Some thirty-five years ago a curious gentleman named H. C. Mercer traced out the antecedents of this mythical character in an article of the *Century Magazine*, ("On the Track of the Arkansas Traveler," Vol. XXIX, page 707.) Ruth McEney Stuart might have contributed articles on the folk-lore of Arkansas and Louisiana. Instead she wove the lore of American white folk of Arkansas and of negro folk of Louisiana into stories. Her "Holly and Pizen," for instance, is a particularized embodiment of some negro folk-cures; her "Uncle Still's Famous Weather Predictions" is a full length portrait of a Louisiana weather prophet.

The Southwest never had a more indefatigable or better balanced scholar of ethnology and archaeology than Adolphe Bandelier; yet he turned aside from his formal researches to embody the lore

of a folk in a novel, *The Delight Makers*, frankly announcing that such a local color fiction was the best means of communicating a folk's lore. Mr. Charles F. Lummis has often presented his gatherings of folk-lore in unadulterated form; no one is likely to question his rank as a scholarly folk-lorist. At the same time, he has made valuable contributions to the folk-lore of New Mexico and the Southwest in such pleasing fiction as *The Enchanted Burro* and *A New Mexico David*.

The Texas Folk-Lore Society has preserved a few waifs of the folk-lore of the Brazos River bottoms, but it has done nothing in that particular field to compare with the work of Mollie E. Moore Davis in her unduly neglected *Under the Man-Fig*, a novel made up of legends, customs, and beliefs of both whites and blacks of the lower Brazos valley a half century ago.

Almost all the old time local color stories depended to a great extent on dialect, and no doubt much false dialect got into the stories. But dialect is a very essential part of folk-lore, and the important thing to note just now in this consideration of what is being done to preserve the folk-lore of the Southwest is that the local color story of dialect is absolutely passé. It flourished in the eighties and nineties and then fell into discredit. As long ago as 1898, Joel Chandler Harris felt that he must apologize to the editor of *Scribner's Magazine* for sending in dialect sketches. "That sort of stuff," he wrote, "has seemed to be under the ban." It certainly was under the ban.

Whatever loss to the record of dialect the changing fashion of fiction may have entailed, is, however, more than compensated for by the increasing number of chronicles and biographies from the folk themselves. Hundreds of words, metaphors, sayings common to the pioneer stock of the Southwest can be gleaned from such a homely and interesting magazine as *Frontier Times*, edited and published by Mr. J. Marvin Hunter of Bandera, Texas. *The Trail Drivers of Texas*, a remarkable compilation, in two volumes, of the lives and experiences of old time drivers up the Chisholm Trail, is a veritable mine of linguistic material from the point of view of folk-lore.⁸ Time does not allow of a list of the chronicles, downright and of the very soil, that have in them the diction, the genius itself, of frontier Americans. They are the stuff out of which great fiction may someday be woven, even as Emerson Hough wove from *The Trail Drivers of Texas* the best part of his epic *North of 36*. I should not omit to mention Charles A. Siringo's *A Texas Cowboy*, or *Fifty Years on the Old Frontier* by Captain James Cook of Agate Springs, Nebraska, published by the Yale University Press. Will James, who is just now coming into his own, specializes in cowboy diction. His *Cowboys North and South* (Scribner's) is a genuine contribution.

8. The material of the volumes was collected by Mr. George W. Saunders, an old time cowman of San Antonio, Texas, and the books are published by him for the Old Trail Drivers' Association of Texas, of which he is president, J. Marvin Hunter is editor of them.

In a very valuable book published only two years ago, *The Cowboy*, by Philip Ashton Rollins, the soundest and most extensive classification and definition of cow-folk terminology yet brought together is to be found. Mr. Hyder E. Rollins, a former Texan now living in New York, has contributed to the American Dialect Society a list of Southwesternisms, but it is short and in certain words erroneous, for Mr. Rollins was never, as Emerson Hough makes Wild Bill Hickok say, with a fine gesture, "a part of all this."

No part of American life has been so extensively treated of in fiction as the cow country of the West and South; no part has been treated of with less fidelity. Charles William Russel from Montana recently passed through Colorado on his way north from a winter in Mexico. Someone in Colorado City asked him why he had not painted scenes of Mexican life. Very modestly he replied that he would not attempt to paint a life that he had not studied and been familiar with for twenty-five years, and he went on painting subjects of Montana and the old West. Suppose the ex-dentist from Philadelphia, Zane Grey, had adopted such a standard! How much of false, snide impression millions of American readers would have been saved! Harold Bell Wright, is, I understand, so popular in Arizona now that he spends nearly as much time in autographing his books as he does in composing them. If he faithfully reveals Arizona life, then, in the words of Falstaff, 'God pity the wicked.' I know that he does not faithfully reveal Arizona life, though, for I have read the excellent *Arizona Nights* by Stewart Edward White.

Let me quote from that paragon of local colorists, that humanistic folk-lorist, Joel Chandler Harris. He began his literary career by writing for *The Countryman*, a paper published on a plantation. "It was," said Harris "on this and neighboring plantations that I became familiar with the curious myths and the animal stories that form the basis of the volumes accredited to 'Uncle Remus.' I absorbed the stories, songs and myths that I heard, but had no idea of their literary value until, some time in the seventies, *Lippincott's Magazine* published an article on the subject of negro folk-lore, containing some rough outlines of some of the stories. This article gave me my cue, and the legends told by 'Uncle Remus' are the result." Again, to the *London Folk-Lore Journal*, Harris wrote: "Not one of the 'Uncle Remus' narratives is cooked, and not one, nor any part of one, is an invention of mine. They are all genuine folk-lore tales."

Such is the ideal, unapproachable perhaps, of whoever would write down the life of any folk group; his business is not to invent but to select; he must be "a part of all this." O. Henry, brilliant trickster that he was, never got into the *Heart of the West*; he got no deeper than the tan of the sun. In its broadest sense, folk-lore is the fundamental expression of a folk, and of the writers of the Southwest I know of but one man who approaches the ideal of fidelity set by Joel Chandler Harris. I refer to Mr. Andy Adams. His

books are not popular; *Ace High*, *Action Stories*, the Zane Greys have driven him off the stage. A hundred years from now, nevertheless, he will be recognized as the one faithful historian of the range life that has already but passed away forever. In *The Log of A Cowboy*, *The Outlet*, *A Texas Matchmaker*, *Cattle Brands*, *Wells Brothers*, and *Reed Anthony, Cowman*, the six books that Andy Adams has written, the feel, the phrase, the very hue and color of cowman and cowboy are as genuine as the feel, the phrase, the heart, and the figure of Uncle Remus as realized by Joel Chandler Harris.⁹

One feature of the folk-lore of the Southwest has been done in a manner fairly satisfying. I mean the folk songs. The pioneer work is, of course, Mr. John A. Lomax's *Cowboy Songs and Ballads*. Following in his wake came Mr. N. H. (Jack) Thorp with *Songs of A Cowboy* (Houghton Mifflin Company). Another follower is Mr. Finger of Arkansas. The Haldeman-Julius Company publishes a little collection of folk-songs, many of them cowboy songs, that he has made. He understands the folk. In *American Ballads and Songs* by Miss Louise Pound (*Scribner's*) are a number of cowboy songs. A musician named Oscar J. Fox, now living in San Antonio, is likely to be heard of more and more. He is composing an opera that has for its motifs the tunes of cowboy songs, a number of which he has set to music. His music to "Oh Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie" has a most profound effect.

According to Mr. George Wharton James, who has himself, with sympathy and learning, treated of many phases of Southwestern folk-lore, a number of writers and musicians have done excellent work with the music and songs of the Pueblo and other Indians. Notable among such are Natalie Curtis Burlin (now dead), Mr. Carlos Troyer, Mr. Thurlow Lieurance, and Mr. Homer Grunn.

I cannot very well conclude this sketchy review of what is being done to preserve the folk-lore of the Southwest without mentioning the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Its object is to collect and preserve the folk-lore not only of Texas but of the adjacent Southwest. It has issued three publications, that of the present year being a collection of Texas legends that is significant for its revelation of the wealth of legends existing among English speaking people of the Southwestern territory. A folk-lore society has recently been organized in Oklahoma, and it is to be hoped that it will accomplish something in the way of gathering the bountiful lore of that state. All over this Southwest one can hardly go into a cow camp, a mining camp, an oil town, a field of cotton pickers, a settlement of unsophisticated farmers, a boat of fishermen, a darkened room of gamblers, a lighted Pullman of drummers, but that one can hear a legend, a folk-tale, a saying, a song.

9. The Andy Adams books are all published by Houghton Mifflin Company of Boston. *Wells Brothers* is a juvenile book, the scene of which is western Oklahoma.

The folk narratives in particular seem to me to express the genius of their tellers; certainly they are as significant as the songs, dances, games, and diction of a folk. Of prime significance is "The Legend of Stampede Mesa," contributed by Mr. John R. Craddock, a young ranchman of Spur, Texas. I use it by permission.¹⁰

"Among cattle folk no subject for anecdote and speculation is more popular than the subject of stampedes. There has always been a certain mystery surrounding the stampeding of cattle. Sometimes they stampede without any man's having heard, seen, or smelled a possible cause. The following account of how Stampede Mesa got its name, together with the legend, told in many variations, of the phantom stampede, is current among the people of the Panhandle and New Mexico. I was a mere child when I heard it first, and I have since heard it many times.

"Stampede Mesa is in Crosby County, Texas, about eighteen miles from the cap rock of Blanco Canyon, wedged up between the forks of Catfish (sometimes called White or Blanco) River. The main stream skirts it on the west; to the south the bluffs of the mesa drop a sheer hundred feet down into McNeil Branch. The two hundred acre top of the mesa is underlaid with rocks that are scarcely covered by the soil, though grazing is nearly always good. Trail drivers all agree that a better place to hold a herd will never be found. A herd could be watered at the river late in the evening and then be driven up the gentle slope of the mesa and bedded down for the night. In the morning there was water at hand before the drive was resumed. The steep bluffs on the south made a natural barrier so that night guard could be reduced almost half. Nevertheless, few herd bosses of the West would now, if opportunity came, venture to hold their herds on Stampede Mesa. Yet it will never succumb to the plow. Scarred and high, it will stand forever, a monument to the days that are gone, a wild bit of the old West to keep green the legend that has given to it the name 'Stampede Mesa.'

"Early in the fall of '89 an old cowman named Sawyer came through with a trail herd of fifteen hundred head of steers, threes and fours. While he was driving across Dockum Flats one evening, some six or seven miles east of the mesa, about forty-odd head of nester cows came bawling into the herd. Closely flanking them, came the nester, demanding that his cattle be cut out of the herd. Old Sawyer, who was 'as hard as nails,' was driving short handed; he had come far; his steers were thin and he did not want them 'ginned' about any more. Accordingly, he bluntly told the nester to go to hell.

"The nester was pretty nervy, and seeing that his little stock of cattle was being driven off, he flared up and told Sawyer that if he did not drop his cows out of the herd before dark he would stampede the whole bunch.

10. *Legends of Texas*, pp. 111-115.

"At this Sawyer gave a kind of dry laugh, drew out his six shooter, and squinting down it at the nester, told him to 'vamoose.'

"Nightfall found the herd straggling up the east slope of what on the morrow would be christened by some cowboy Stampede Mesa. Midnight came, and with scarcely half the usual night guard on duty, the herd settled down in peace.

"But the peace was not to last. True to his threat, the nester, approaching from the north side, slipped through the watch, waved a blanket a few times, and shot his gun. He did his work well. All of the herd except about three hundred head stampeded over the bluff on the south side of the mesa, and two of the night herders, caught in front of the frantic cattle that they were trying to circle, went over with them.

"Sawyer said but little, but at sunup he gave orders to bring in the nester alive, horse and all. The orders were carried out, and when the men rode up on the mesa with their prisoner, Sawyer was waiting. He tied the nester on his horse with a rawhide lariat, blindfolded the horse, and then, seizing him by the bits, backed him off the cliff. There were plenty of hands to drive Sawyer's remnant now. Somewhere on the hillside they buried, in their simple way, the remains of their two comrades, but they left the nester to rot with the pile of dead steers in the canyon.

"And now old cowpunchers will tell you that if you chance to be about Stampede Mesa at night, you can hear the nester calling his cattle, and many assert that they have seen his murdered ghost, astride a blindfolded horse, sweeping over the headlands, behind a stampeding herd of phantom steers. Herd bosses are afraid of those phantom steers, and it is said that every herd that has been held on the mesa since that night has stampeded, always from some unaccountable cause".

During the past three days here in this convention a good deal has been said concerning pioneers. Ladies and gentlemen of Santa Fe and of the Southwestern Library Association, I congratulate you. You are pioneers too. You are pioneers in the recognition of our pioneers of the Southwest. Believe me, something is surging up all over this Southwestern land, something of the land demanding recognition, interpretation, expression of its own life. We are almost now where New England was eighty-seven years ago when Emerson uttered the declaration of American literary independence in his Phi Beta Kappa address on "The American Scholar." Were General Lew Wallace now writing in yonder room of the Palace of the Governors, the table on which he wrote would hardly be kept by the next generation as a souvenir of a theme so removed from Lew Wallace's own life and people as *Ben Hur*!¹¹ Seventy-five years ago

11. The table of which Wallace wrote *Ben Hur* is shown to visitors of the Palace of the Governors, which is now used, in restored form, as a museum. And a remarkable museum it is also.

Henry Clay was returning from Washington to his then western home. Far out on the lonely stage road, he stopped the driver, descended, went back a few paces, leaned over, and put his ear to the ground as if listening.

"What are you listening for, Mr. Clay?" asked the driver when The Great Compromiser had returned to the stage.

"I was listening," replied he, "to the tread of unnumbered thousands of feet that are to come this way westward."

And in unnumbered tens of thousands, feet have been treading westward ever since. But now, as I see it, the West no longer needs mere numbers of feet and hands and heads. In all reason, the more people it gets henceforth, the less will be its western openness and am-ple-ness. It has its traditions now, and those traditions are epic. What the West, the Southwest, requires is expression, interpretation of those traditions. Such interpretation is already on its way. You as librarians of the Southwest have heard it coming. Nay, more, you have helped it to come. Witness the encouragement to the reading of western literature, history, biography, folk-lore that your shelves now give. The excellent bibliography of Southwestern books that Mrs. Maud D. Sullivan of the El Paso Public Library is making possible would have been unthought of in the Southwest even twenty-five years ago. The history departments of the country are with you, the newspapers are with you, the archaeological people have pointed you the way. Some day the English departments of our academic institutions will be with you. As yet they go through the mummery of teaching Jonathan Edwards and Cotton Mather with never a dream of the names of Andy Adams or Frank Cushing, but they are headed your way.

Pardon, please, a personality. I was born and reared far down the Nueces River in Texas. I grew up among cowmen, cowboys, Mexicans. I knew the life of the ranch, of cattle, of the cotton field. The prickly pear and the mesquite are yet to me as dear as the heather to the Scotchman or "The Yellow Violet" to William Cullen Bryant. But no one in all my school life ever directed me to a piece of literature in which one factor of that life down the Nueces River was revealed. Many times did I hear of Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards. Gladly do I acknowledge my debt "both to Greek and to Barbarian,"—but not to Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards. I am but one of many thousands. The time is at hand when we shall no longer have to starve for a picture, a tale, a song that tells of the life out of which we have sprung. Therefore, let us be glad.

—*J. Frank Dobie.*