DRAFT

ONE

Ballad Collecting: Impetus and Impact

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[1.0] Just as ballad collectors across North America in the first half of the twentieth century simply collected folk songs, in the same way this volume is simply a series of biographies of those intrepid researchers. With research and experience, one finds that neither undertaking can possibly be limited to such an essentialist study. While the songs they collected and the books they published have become instrumental in the collective consciousness of our ideas of "folk" or what it is to be American, the stories of those who did the untidy work of the actual collecting—their personal journeys, their stories, the larger social and technologic currents in which they operated, and the impact their efforts had on larger social movements—are mostly unsung.

[1.1] An image on the cover of this book is very telling. In the Library of Congress photograph collection, the lower left cover image is listed as "Blackfoot Chief, Mountain Chief making phonographic record at Smithsonian, 2/9/1916." While today's collectors and researchers are delighted by the original inclusion of the name of the singer and surrounding metadata, no mention is made of the pictured recordist. This volume will shed some light on these often unmentioned collectors and the stories behind their efforts. In the image in question, Frances Densmore is recording Mountain Chief on wax cylinder in the Smithsonian as part of the larger Cylinder Project. The story of how she came to that moment, the larger research she was undertaking which included that moment, and the academic and social context in which she undertook her research will be found in a following chapter.

[1.2] Some of the most glaring contextual gaps in the stories of the ballad collectors have recently been filled with major publications on some of the most immediately recognizable ballad collectors—such as Alan Lomax (1915–2002)[1] and Sidney Robertson Cowell (1903–1995).[2] Yet, as stated eloquently in many of the following chapters, the bulk of the lesser-known field collectors have left little information on themselves in their volumes of collected folklore. This volume is intended to fill in some of the missing biographical information—to detail the lives of the collectors

and the stories of why they were drawn to such dusty and grueling work, to bring the reader behind the microphone or transcriptionist's pen and begin to know the collectors themselves and the reasons why they were driven to gather songs across North America.

In presenting such biographies, it is difficult to ignore the prevailing academic trends and social movements often passing thorough and paralleling the movements of these collectors. Often called "songcatchers," these brave souls ventured into areas of the continent known to be insular, inaccessible, and wary of outsiders with the tools of the trade: pen and paper, cylinder recorder, personality, and perseverance. They did so to document ways of life thought to be quickly vanishing with the impact of radio and phonograph, printed page and broadcast media. [1.3]

Though songcatchers often came to the practice with the purest of intentions, many had agendas in their collection efforts and sought out certain tropes within the larger ballad traditions. Others were moved by personal experience to collect songs and melodies. Many were driven by teachers who pushed them to collect rapidly vanishing lore—often of a particular predetermined genre. Others saw academic worth in the texts of songs and used them to relate both to earlier archetypes of song and to schools of thought in academia. A few even jumped on the ballad bandwagon—trying to make a name for themselves and a quick buck by singing and publishing songs in a burgeoning folk revival, hoping to solidify their reputation as a holder of folk knowledge, or anchoring their place in academia by publishing collections and critiques as part of a professorship. [1.4]

Most of the songcatchers detailed in this book faced unexpected paradigm shifts during their efforts: a shift in focus from text to melody, the advent and eventual portability of recording technology, changing gender roles in academia, and even changing conceptions of where meaning and import lay in balladry as cultural memory and art form. In chapter 2, Erika Brady catches the use of transient technology as she details Franz Boaz's use of the phonograph to capture songs while at Columbia University and traces the incorporation of recording technology in academic fields such as musicology and folklore. Finally, as these ballad collectors gathered folk culture from around North America, their efforts, publications, and public appearances helped to influence a continent undergoing self-examination and the shaping of a collective identity early in an era of mass media and folk revival. In essence, the collectors brought localized traditions to greater audiences, enabling people to access a body of folk knowledge and eventually drive a national folk consciousness and resulting folk revival, as detailed in Paul Stamler's final chapter on commodification and revival of folksong. [1.5]

It is difficult to find a more salient example of popular identity-driven folklore than in the collection of western song—especially that of cowboy songs. In a continent defined by westward expansion and the idea of the [1.6]

wild frontier, cowboy culture became an important identity marker and an internationally identifiable cultural export. In Guy Logsdon's chapter on the collectors of cowboy songs, Austin E. and Alta S. Fife shine through as exponents of the avid collector searching for windows into a base North American experience, the pathos and freedom of the cowboy, and the most authentic songs to represent the frontier:

[1.7]

> The best of the cowboy songs came into being after 1870 and before 1930. Their real substance consists of the candid and dramatic way in which they reveal the human condition in those decades of frontier life when men lived, labored, loved, and died where laws, conventions, and tradition were lacking or ineffectual. To the present generation, which feels the omnipresence of law, moral codes, economic and social conformity, and the tyrannies of technology, the *ethnic* significance of cowboy and western songs may well reside in the singer's (and listener's) vicarious experience with a moment of freedom and high adventure that is no longer possible in real life.[3]

[1.8] Logsdon continues his study of the collectors of western traditions in the following chapter, covering a vast geographic region populated by economic migrants, escapees of the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, miners, ranchers, and those seeking a new life and identity. He details the influences of collectors of lesser-known but equally important traditions in the West—especially those collecting commonly overlooked Mormon song traditions. So much of American identity is wrapped up in ideas of the frontier and legends of the cowboys that it is surprising to learn of the diversity of traditions found in the West.

[1.9] Balladry is popularly connected to Appalachia, and as Norm Cohen brings out in his chapter, many of the settlers in the Ozark Mountains brought their traditions from Appalachia during America's early waves of migration. Academics searching for "authentic songs" came to the Ozarks relatively late in the ballad craze but found rich sources of songs, variants, and singers. In his piece, Cohen also investigates the often artificial divide between academic and amateur ballad collectors. Usually touted as an important distinction in collection styles and results (especially by academic collectors), Cohen discusses two songcatchers with parallel interests, yet each firmly planted on opposite sides of this perceptual divide.

[1.10] To continue a regional focus, James P. Leary, Nancy-Jean Seigel, and Sheldon Posen each bring to this collection chapters on songcatchers in central and northern areas of the continent. Again spotlighting the vast differences between geographic locations, we find that some of the greatest disparities between song traditions come from differences in local industry and natural resources, immigration patterns, and even means of locomotion. Leary brings us intrepid collectors sweating and drinking through bawdy songs in the logging camps of the upper Midwest and

others searching to find continuity in songs sung by recent immigrants from around the world residing across the lower Midwest. He also reminds us how diverse the people of the Midwest have been, as the area functioned as a crossroads for migrants moving west past the shores of the Great Lakes, interacting with other migrants and various native peoples. Parallels can be found between songs of these inland seas and those discussed by Seigel. Her chapter on ballad collection in the New England states brings us songs of the sea and shore, sailing, logging and fishing, and also uses the collectors of the northeast as a window into the particular challenges and advantages women collectors faced in both the field and academia. Sheldon Posen's chapter on four songcatchers in eastern Canada sheds light on the role of the collector in the field, and especially the role of personality and writing style in ethnography. It also traces intersecting lines of inquiry—both by means of geographic and temporal proximity, and by approach toward developing styles of ethnography in song collection.

Dan Milner's chapter on occupational songs brings our focus back from that of regionalism, showing universal themes in song across the continent. His chapter also demonstrates the actual function of song in the workplace, as teams of sailors used songs to keep time as they collectively hauled a bowline, pumped a bilge, or hoisted sail. He also brings us to the canals and rail lines that connected many of the industrial and shipping centers, detailing the rich singing traditions on these early national highways. One of the surprising aspects of occupational song that Milner returns to is not only the physical function of the songs but also the amount of vital information wrapped up in them—from clues on how to survive in the mines when things go wrong, to historic news of tragic events, geographic information, and even availability of work in certain areas. [1.11]

Finally, Matt Barton and Paul Stamler detail three of the larger names in ballad collection and folksong revival: John A. and Alan Lomax and Robert Winslow Gordon. Spanning the height of the ballad collection era, these three effectively ushered in a folk revival through their collection efforts, publications, and performance in the popular realm. Barton's chapter spans the era, from John Lomax's early academic affiliations to Alan's personal and political identification with the singers as people rather than objects of study. Stamler's piece on Robert Winslow Gordon brings wonderful contradictions in a collector's use of songs—showing that Gordon acted as dusty academic, adventurous collector in the field, popular serial writer, recording artist, and tragic figure. [1.12]

[1.13] FRANCIS JAMES CHILD AND THE IMPETUS TO COLLECT BALLADS

[1.14] As suggested above, a book dedicated to the collectors of ballads in North America must necessarily cast a wide net, bringing together an entire continent, multiple schools of academic thought, a variety of recording technologies and arenas of publication, and a seemingly endless string of songs. If there is one common antecedent governing the following chapters, it is this: most of the collectors, ideas, institutions, and general fervor for the collection, study, and publication of ballads began with the pursuits of Harvard professor Francis James Child.

[1.15] Francis James Child was born in February 1, 1825, in Boston.[4] His father was a sailmaker and a well-respected member of the community. In his obituary for Francis Child in the *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, C. E. Norton lauded the family and described the senior Child as "one of that class of intelligent and independent mechanics which has had a large share in determining the character of our democratic community, as of old the same class had in Athens and Florence."[5] The youngest of five brothers and sisters, Child attended public schools in Boston, excelling in a variety of subjects in the English High School, earning respect from his peers and achieving "all the honors."[6] Catching the attention of Epes Sargent Dixwell, the master of the Latin School in Boston, the Child family was encouraged to send Francis there in preparation for college.[7] In typical style, he placed top in his class and was encouraged to attend Harvard.[8]

[1.16] Harvard University was a perfect match for Child despite self-perceived class disparities, and he quickly proved himself as "the best writer, best speaker, best mathematician, the most accomplished person in knowledge of general literature."[9] He was also quite popular with his schoolmates, posthumously noted by C. E. Norton that "the sweetness of his disposition, the pleasant mingling in his nature of gay spirits and serious purpose, his high principles, his unaffected modesty won the affection of his teachers and of his comrades."[10] Child was chosen as class orator, and graduated in 1846—again at the top of his class of sixty students.[11]

[1.17] After graduation, Child was offered a tutorship in mathematics at Harvard and two years later accepted a tutorship there in history, political economy, and English literature.[12] During his tutorships, Child published a few edited volumes of poetry, including *Four Old Plays* (1848).[13] As graduate schools were a distinctly European phenomenon, a loan from Jonathan I. Bowditch, to whom *Four Old Plays* was dedicated, allowed Child to take a leave of absence from Harvard and remove himself to Germany where he studied English drama and Germanic philology at the University of Göttingen and Berlin's Humboldt University, where he attended talks by the influential brothers Grimm. The University of

Göttingen later awarded him an honorary doctorate—one of three he received during the course of his life.[14] At the end of his studies in Germany, and at the age of twenty-six, he was invited to return to Harvard to replace Edward T. Channing as the Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory.[15] In 1876, University of California President Daniel Gilman, who was developing a university based on the German Humboldt model of higher education, offered Child a research professorship at the new Johns Hopkins University. Harvard relaxed the demands of the Boylston professorship, allowing Child to adopt the inaugural title of Professor of English and devote much of his time to ballad research.

He was married to Elizabeth Ellery Sedgwick in 1860, and together they had four children. [1.18]

CHILD AND ORAL LITERATURE [1.19]

As Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, Child produced a number of editions of English poetry and from 1853 edited a series dedicated to British poets. Of the 130 volumes contained in this series, 8 volumes were dedicated to ballads, entitled *English and Scottish Ballads* vol. 1–8 (1857–1858).[16] Child's interest in balladry originated from a fascination with the fundamental differences between the written and spoken word, and especially with oral remnants of common oratory that might have predated written forms. This "oral literature" represented to Child a window into conceptual forms, or "thoughtful expression," prior to class distinctions associated with printed literature. As the folklore scholar David E. Bynum has offered, "Concerned as he thus so greatly was with rhetoric, oratory, and the motives of those mental disciplines, Child was inevitably drawn into pondering the essential differences between speech and writing, and to searching for the origins of thoughtful expression in English."[17] [1.20]

Dedicated to the rubric of poetic expression, and despite having produced many volumes of British poets through his extensive series, he found the works of Chaucer to be particularly challenging—mainly due to Chaucer's incorporation of both oral and written traditions in his dialogue. English balladry must have been a refreshing turn for Child, as a system for coding and analyzing the texts might have even acted as a vehicle for better dealing with Chaucer. He commented that such ballad texts represented [1.21]

> a distinct and very important species of poetry. Its historical and natural place is anterior to the appearance of the poetry of art, to which it has formed a step, and by which it has been regularly displaced, and, in some cases, all but extinguished. Whenever a people in the course of its development reaches a certain intellectual and moral stage, it will feel an impulse to express itself, and the form of expression to which it is [1.22]

> first impelled is, as is well known, not prose, but verse, and in fact narrative verse. Such poetry . . . is in its essence an expression of our common human nature, and so of universal and indestructible interest.[18]

[1.23] His intent to work with popular ballads was twofold. He endeavored first to find the most authentic, pure, and unadulterated version of each ballad—whether by folk utterance, transcription, or printed source; he then strove to publish the most perfect form of that text—an ur-text—for future use by researchers into such areas.

[1.24] Child expanded his original 1857–1858 work—collecting, amassing, and eventually categorizing into distinct textual families (with the assistance of a colleague over the course of twenty-one years) the plethora of texts, variants, and fragments of each ballad.[19] The undertaking was unprecedented, and as his student and protégée, George Lyman Kittredge (1860–1941), described in the eventual introduction to Child's tome,

[1.25]

> The book [*English and Scottish Ballads*, 1857–1858] circulated widely, and was at once admitted to supersede all previous attempts in the same field. To Mr. Child, however, it was but the starting-point for further researches. He soon formed the plan of a much more extensive collection on an altogether different model. This was to include every obtainable version of every extant English or Scottish ballad, with the fullest possible discussion of related songs or stories in the "popular" literature of all nations. To this enterprise be resolved, if need were, to devote the rest of his life. His first care was to secure trustworthy texts. In his earlier collection he had been forced to depend almost entirely on printed books. No progress, he was convinced, could be made till recourse could be had to manuscripts. . . . It was clear to Mr. Child that he could not safely take anything at second hand, and he determined not to print a line of his projected work till he had exhausted every effort to get hold of whatever manuscript material might be in existence. . . . A number of manuscripts were in private hands; of others the existence was not suspected. But Mr. Child was untiring.[20]

[1.26] The resulting monumental work, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882–1898), detailed 350 Child ur-ballads and came to be viewed as the crowning achievement of folklore at that time.[21] Child died after completing the bulk of the work, and Kittredge completed the introduction and bibliography to fulfill the project. The respect the work was awarded quickly canonized both publication and contents, leaving scarce theoretical room for the addition of further texts or an author with whom to debate. Of course, as with any canonization, there quickly came challenges to the completeness and veracity of the work.

[1.27] Kittredge carried on the work of Child, presiding over the collection at Harvard and trebling its *collectanae*. He also dutifully trained the following generation of graduate students, including Phillips Barry (1880–1937), Samuel Preston Bayard (1908–1997), Bertrand Harris Bronson

(1902–1986), Fannie Hardy Eckstorm (1865–1946), Helen Hartness Flanders (1890–1972), John Avery Lomax (1867–1948), and William Wells Newell (1839–1907). Kittredge often gets short shrift in the story of ballad collectors, though his impact over the course of generations was unparalleled.[22] One of Child's and Kittredge's lasting influences is the association between academic institution and ballad collection. As D. K. Wilgus has written,

> The most important single fact of American collection has been its close relationship to educational institutions. The institutions themselves have not always officially approved and supported folksong collection; but academic folklore interest encouraged teachers to take advantage of the American emphasis on universal education, which brought into the classroom informants and contacts with traditional culture. In the early years of the century the work of Professors Child and Kittredge had made Harvard University an unofficial center of folksong study. . . . The direct and indirect influence of Harvard University produced results which, when archives and theses are eventually surveyed, will be truly staggering.[23] [1.28]

The turn of the century found many devotees of Child and the Harvard school battling over the texts of the Child ballads, debating ideas of authenticity in the texts, the singers, and the academic and publishing process. Kittredge himself went on to study and publish on witchcraft trials, Arthurian legends, and other areas, firmly planting himself in the field of folklore and eventually serving for a few years as president of the American Folklore Society. As scholars such as Bertrand Harris Bronson, Cecil J. Sharp (1859–1924), and Olive Dame Campbell (1882–1954) began to find other variants of Child ballads, and indeed other ballads throughout England and especially the Appalachian mountains of America, a steamy battle erupted over the validity of many of the new discoveries. With such battles also came fragmentation, as scholars turned to the melodies of the ballads, trying to find other approaches to the problems of authenticity and definitions of oral traditions. [1.29]

As a result (and here I'll begin to paint with a broad academic brush), Kittredge's line of inquiry into remnants of English balladry surviving through migration led to Cecil Sharpe's work on the melodies of the Child ballads, which led to Bronson's expanded view of ballad scholarship and Mieczyslaw Kolinski's (1901–1981) reanalyses of regional migration, transmission, and the relative impermanence of melody and text. Child and Kittredge's devotees and their strident work on the ballad tradition produced some of the most detailed and vibrant work on the idea of an oral tradition. Some of those working on oral traditions helped to pave the way for a wider acceptance of ballad forms in academic thought. Others challenged the fundamental principles behind Child's impetus to collect and the institutions dedicated to perpetuating the col- [1.30]

lections, marking the end of the ballad wars and the start of engagement with balladry by multiple academic fields of thought. Walter Ong (1912–2003) was one of those who challenged. A pioneer in the media ecology movement and professor of English literature, he attacked Child's fundamental premise:

[1.31]

> Scholarship in the past has generated such monstrous concepts as "oral literature." This strictly preposterous term remains in circulation today even among scholars now more and more acutely aware how embarrassingly it reveals our inability to represent to our own minds a heritage of verbally organized materials except as some variant of writing, even when they have nothing to do with writing at all. The title of the great Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature at Harvard University monumentalizes the state of awareness of an earlier generation of scholars rather than that of its recent curators.[24]

[1.32] In the decades before this final attack on Child's fundamental hypothesis for the study of balladry, a number of researchers influenced by Child's work opened lines of thought through unexplored academic paradigms.

[1.33] POST-CHILD RESEARCHERS AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER DISCIPLINES

[1.34] With the explosion of interpretations of the Child ballads, challenges to their organization, and demands for redefinitions of fundamental ideas of orality and literacy came adaptation of the ballad genre by multiple academic fields. The varied uses of these texts by diverse fields can be seen in some of the influential publications offered by Child and Kittredge's students.

[1.35] In his work *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* (1959), Bertram Harris Bronson offers an abridged version of the Child ballads, including simple melodies along with the texts.[25] In this way, he opens the folkloric study of ballads to the musical realm, hastening the adoption of balladry by the field of ethnomusicology. Bronson notes that his collection has been somewhat limited by its constraint within Child's collected ballads, and hints that other ballad collectors were questioning the authority of Child himself: "It is very noticeable that of late students are becoming increasingly restive under Child's authority, more and more unwilling to grant a mere second-class citizenship to the ballads in their own collections which missed of his royal accolade."[26]

[1.36] He also postulates that the focus of ballad research should be on the primacy of tune over the text. It should be noted that his inclusion of specific tune ballads reflects his perception of how well he thought the evidence worked. Because of this approach, many of the original Child ballads, especially obscure and rare variants, were eliminated from his

study. Bronson uses the selected melodic variations in the tunes to study concepts of melodic tradition and transmission: "It is in the variants alone that we can study the process of melodic tradition and transmission; and through them alone can we hope to arrive at sound generalizations as to the laws and forces that find expression in these forms."[27] Through his paring down of the Child material and his primary focus on the melodies, it seems that Bronson attempted to remake the definitive collection of ballads for future studies, and to influence subsequent studies of ballad material toward the melodic rather than the textual.

One important distinction in Bronson's approach toward ballad study was his belief that variations by the same singer on the same tune relate to a larger musical conception of that tune, one that would permit variation and still retain its identity. His theory of tune perception suggests that a reduction of all versions and variants of a particular singer would let us know what the singer "had in mind." In many ways, this concept relates to Saussure's ideas of *langue* and *parole* in linguistics: a ballad could have many different instances or performances, but would still adhere to an overarching idea of the ur-ballad, as Child had assumed.[28] [1.37]

D. K. Wilgus, in his *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (1959), suggests that any modern study of ballad or folksong should also turn to collected recordings.[29] In particular, his work focuses on the study of extant Anglo-American folk song collections, yet he manages to contextualize this area of study within the larger trends in Scandinavia, Europe, and Canada. One of the more important aspects of Wilgus's work is his discussion of the role of American archives and collections. Wilgus describes the current holdings in American archives, noting the predominance of textual transcriptions over melodic transcriptions and recorded materials. Writing from the perspective of 1959, he argues that the current approach toward folksong scholarship demands a reinvestigation of the interrelationship between melody and text. As the early collectors tended to oversimplify their transcriptions, Wilgus suggests that their documents would benefit from support from concurrent recordings. [1.38]

As an extension of this discussion, Wilgus wrote that the field should look beyond the standard studies of text and tune into the context of the songs and their performance (opening such research to field of ethnomusicology). He noted that the early collectors focused their studies exclusively on ballad text, only turning to melodic material after the Child ballads had been canonized and closed to further additions. He also suggests that the students of Child, including Cecil Sharpe and Tristram Coffin (1892–1955)—in using only the ballads collected by their predecessor—inadvertently acted to further isolate and canonize the Child ballads. [1.39]

With his call for contextual analysis, Wilgus suggests that the recordings collected in the field might have substantial impact on the study of [1.40]

ballads. From this position, Wilgus discusses the quality of different recording formats for the preservation of folksong, chronicling the use of wax cylinders and wire and disc recorders—leaning heavily on the recording efforts of Alan Lomax and espousing the creation of the Archive of American Folksong in the Library of Congress.

[1.41] Bertrand Harris Bronson, in his insightful collection of essays, *The Ballad as Song* (1969), presents his thoughts on ballad collection and scholarship surrounding the Child ballads.[30] With a predominant focus on transmission and variation, the essays function to reinterpret much of Bronson's previous work in the face of changing academic perspectives on ballad study. Bronson himself suggests that the book reflects "the author's persistent efforts to control the material collected and to gain a better understanding of various aspects of an inexhaustible field."[31] In a particularly important chapter, titled "The Morphology of the Ballad Tunes," he debates Sharpe's tripartite model of Continuity, Selection, and Variation as applied to Child ballads. Bronson argues that Selection should be removed from the discussion as is too closely related to the other concepts and suggests that the model should be reworked to incorporate a "norm of traditional variation" in folk song. In doing so, he encourages the field to drop the previous "evolutionary" ideas surrounding the variations in ballads as proposed by Sharpe and many of his students in favor of a current anthropological approach, allowing for change in performance and transmission as an important facet of culture.

[1.42] Another of Bronson's effective chapters, "Folk-Song and Live Recording" serves as a tirade against the death of Folk-Song by the recording industry. Bronson suggests that any tendency by a singer toward individuality in interpretation will be wiped out through repeated exposure to a recording of the same piece. He also mentions that recordings shape the performance of Folk-Songs, since the media of the record demands variety and number of songs, and both recording media and radio insist on precise timing. He also comments on the impact that recordings were having on the learning process, stating that "when it has become easier for a singer to sit in his own room in California and learn a song from an Orkney Islander than to go across the street and learn one from a descendant of the forty-niners, it is folly to waste time any longer over questions of who learned what from where."[32] Bronson also puts on his musicologist's hat to write briefly on modality, the interrelationship of text and melody, melodic variation, and melodic cataloguing practices. He also explores the area of variation between modes within particular ballads and within particular regions—an area relatively unexplored, yet a plausible vehicle for further investigations by scholars into his theories on "norms of traditional variation."

[1.43] With a new perspective gained from hindsight, Bronson's *The Singing Tradition of the Child Ballads* (1976) again attacks the Child ballads, trying to further reinterpret the monumental work for a new academic audi-

ence.[33] He offers a brief history of the post-Child attempts to gather melodies to the Child texts and comments that the return to the field by Child's followers reunited the study of printed music with its social and musical living tradition. Bronson links this historic return to the field by ballad collectors to the modern realm of the cultural anthropologists and ethnomusicologists in the following line: "Here, surprisingly, was uncovered a vast treasury of fresh oral versions, which in effect transformed the subject from an antiquarian study to a socio-musicological inquiry grounded in contemporary evidence."[34]

Bronson frequently comments on the role of variation in folksong scholarship, writing that ballad variants can rarely be found without substantial change over more than two or three generations, yet he argues that, in general, these tunes "cling to some sort of quintessential core of identity," and thus can be classified in families.[35] Legendary ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl has taken this line of thought and discounted the need for classification. Writing on the importance of studying ballads in the development of the field of ethnomusicology, he suggests instead that the nature of musical change should be the object of study: [1.44]

> I believe we should study change, record it, and preserve it. Change is, after all, a basic phenomenon of human culture. Its prevalence reminds us that we cannot look at culture as a stagnant group of "things." I would suggest that we abandon the musical artifact, the piece, the song, the individual situation as the focus of our study and begin to concentrate on the process of change itself.[36] [1.45]

In sum, Bronson offers reinterpretations of the Child ballads, making them more current and palatable for modern scholars, while opening the subject matter to researchers from more musical subfields. [1.46]

Seen as a movement, the aforementioned academic scattering, reinterpretation, and redefinition of the Child ballads by his acolytes came to be known as "the Ballad Wars." From it emerged a solidified theoretic concept of "the authentic" which assumed that authenticity was located in places beyond the text or melody. As scholars fetishized the work of particular folklorists and ballad collectors, an assumption arose that the inherent musical authenticity might be partly tied to the stature of the collector himself (and it usually was a him). Similarly, as Olive Dame Campbell proved through her ballad collecting efforts in Appalachia, authenticity could also be associated with region or even era. With so many academics involved in studying various aspects of balladry, a variety of academic fields other than English came to be involved. Folklorists were drawn to the individuals singing ballads and the stories told in them; musicologists came to see the melodies of the ballads as virtually tantamount to the texts themselves; ethnomusicologists embraced the nature of change and cultural context in song utterances; anthropologists [1.47]

used the ballads as a window into social structure and societal function. Such was the use of ballads by the academic set.

[1.48] FOLK REVIVALS

[1.49] Paul Stamler's chapter on Loraine Wyman (1885–1937) and Carl Sandburg (1878–1967) details an important shift in the use of ballads by the collectors themselves. His chapter explores the adroit blending of academic and popular work by two important collectors and brings us to the advent of commodification and an important folk revival. A number of studies have been presented on the topic of folk revivals, usually through the fields of ethnomusicology, folklore, or history, and often involving in-depth studies of the American folk music revival of the 1960s. Most of the relevant studies have been viewed through the popular academic lens of a political movement or labor struggle, as has been common in the fields of folklore and labor history. The influential essays in Neil Rosenberg's *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (1993) largely stem from the academic view that the American postwar generation had developed a collective consciousness and embraced music as a tool for social and political change.[37] Serge Denisoff's masterful work, *Great Day Coming: Folk Music and the American Left* (1971) documents the early folksingers of the generation as they engaged with the labor movement and the Communist Party, and brought songs and songwriting skills to those attempting to organize labor unions or broadcast their views in political protests from the post-Depression era to the late 1960s.[38] Many of the ballads, movements, and documents of the time were brought to the politically engaged (especially of the Left) through popular publications such as *Sing Out!*; *Hootenanny*; *Little Sandy Review* (American); *Hoot!* (Canadian); and *Broadside* (which dealt with both American and British political struggles).

[1.50] With the publication of such books as Whisnant's *All That Is Native and Fine* (1983),[39] Bogart's *Sense of Place* (1990),[40] McKay's *The Quest of the Folk* (1994),[41] and Filene's *Romancing the Folk* (2000),[42] this collective consciousness was conceptually subdivided into distinct yet interrelated geographic regions, as the subject matter is further subdivided into musical genre and political leanings. With the publication of (our series editor) Ronald D. Cohen's *Wasn't That a Time!: Firsthand Accounts of the Folk Music Revival* (1995), the accepted academic treatment of the folk revival shifted from the impartial academic treatise to that of involved informant.[43] Many of the authors represented in Cohen's work had been personally involved in the movement and were able to impart their own stories and academic training to the treatment of the subject. This new direction has influenced many of the works that have followed and seems to have shifted the academic standpoint of the folk revival scholar

from casual observer to that of participant/observer—mirroring a parallel shift in much of the academic social sciences world.

This new academic approach is also reflected in the aforementioned *Transforming Tradition*, in which the authors bring to their writings an ongoing engagement with ideas of authenticity and "cultural borrowing" as performers wear the identities of the music they perform and shift between musical styles. In addition, Robert S. Cantwell's *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (1996)[44] and series editor Ronald Cohen's *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Revival and American Society 1940–1970* (2002) reflect this new approach, mixing narrative and scholarly approaches with personal experiences and solid historical research.[45] [1.51]

Despite the strict interpretations of these works on the political nature of the folk revival, such studies have tended to break down in the post-revival era. As Gillian Mitchell mentions in her work on the North American folk movement (2007), the revival (and I would argue any study on the revival) breaks down with the protests surrounding the Chicago Democratic National Convention in 1968 and the impending invention of the World Music genre.[46] [1.52]

A FINAL NOTE [1.53]

Writing almost a century and a half after Child's groundbreaking *English and Scottish Ballads* and merely pages ahead of a series of fascinating stories surrounding the intervening years of collection and publication efforts, a few words must be said about longevity. First, the songs and memories of ballad singers long dead—entrusted to page, scratched into wax, printed in musty collections—are still singular sources of fascination, regardless of what has been done with them in the ensuing centuries. Second, I must mention that as a product of educational systems and student of professors so profoundly shaped by the Ballad Wars, I am honored to turn my attention back to the subject matter that brought me to my graduate studies and influenced me throughout my studies. In conversations with the other authors in this volume, we have collectively realized that despite our varied musical backgrounds and wide range of academic fields, we have all been profoundly influenced by those collectors of songs before us and would wish to thank them for their work. Personally, I owe debts of gratitude to many noted in this volume and feel (as many here do) that we are merely standing on the shoulders of the collectors who have come before us. That a handful of these deserving individuals finally have their stories told is all ample reward for this undertaking. [1.54]

Longevity takes many forms, and the various authors and editors surrounding this project know this well. Originally developed by Ed Cray, this project has been slowly shaped by series editor Ronald Cohen, [1.55]

rekindled by Dan Milner during a chance conversation on Child after a rehearsal in New York City, reshaped again by Ronald Cohen, and finally steeped in the patience and wisdom of Scarecrow's own Bennett Graff. Thanks should also be said to the digital prowess of Fergus Fahey at the National University of Ireland, Galway, who turned paper-based straw into digital gold with his magical scanner.

[1.56] NOTES

[1n1] 1. Ronald D. Cohen, ed., *Alan Lomax, Assistant in Charge: The Library of Congress Letters, 1935–1945* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011); John Szwed, *Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World* (New York: Viking Press, 2010); Ronald D. Cohen, ed., *Alan Lomax: Selected Writings, 1934–1997* (New York: Routledge, 2005). This volume includes introductory essays by Gage Averill, Matthew Barton, Ronald D. Cohen, Ed Kahn, and Andrew L. Kaye.

[1n2] 2. Deirdre Ní Chonghaile, *'ag teacht le cuan': Irish traditional music and the Aran Islands* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University College Cork, Ireland, 2010); and a forthcoming article for the *Journal of American Folklore*.

[1n3] 3. Austin E. and Alta S. Fife, eds. *Cowboy and Western Songs: A Comprehensive Anthology* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1960), xi.

[1n4] 4. C. E. Norton, "Francis James Child," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 32:17 (July 1897), 333–339.

[1n5] 5. Norton, *Proceedings*, 333.

[1n6] 6. Norton, *Proceedings*, 333.

[1n7] 7. Norton, *Proceedings*, 333; Sigrid Rieuwerts, "In Memoriam: Francis James Child (1825–1896)," in Tom Cheesman and Sigrid Rieuwerts, eds., *Ballads into Books: The Legacies of Francis James Child*: *Selected Papers from the 26th International Ballad Conference, Swansea, Wales, 19–24 July 1996* (Berne: Peter Lang, European Academic Publishers, 1977), 20.

[1n8] 8. Norton, *Proceedings*, 333.

[1n9] 9. James C. Turner, *The Liberal Education of Charles Eliot Norton* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 50.

[1n10] 10. Norton, *Proceedings*, 333.

[1n11] 11. Norton, *Proceedings*, 333; Turner, *Liberal Education*, 54.

[1n12] 12. Rieuwerts, "In Memoriam," 20.

[1n13] 13. Francis James Child, *Four Old Plays: Three Interludes: Thersytes, Jack Jugler and Heywood's Pardoner and Frere: and Jocasta, a Tragedy by Gascoigne and Kinwelmarsh, with an Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge, MA: G. Nichols, 1848).

[1n14] 14. Rieuwerts, "In Memoriam," 20. The others include Columbia and Harvard.

[1n15] 15. Rieuwerts, "In Memoriam," 20.

[1n16] 16. Francis James Child, *English and Scottish Ballads* vol. 1–8 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1857–1858); G. L. Kittredge "Preface," in Francis James Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, xxvi.

[1n17] 17. David E. Bynum, *Child's Legacy Enlarged: Four Generations of Oral Literary Studies at Harvard University Since 1856* (Cambridge, MA: Center for the Study of Oral Literature, 1974).

[1n18] 18. Walter Morris Hart, "Professor Child and the Ballad," *PMLA* 21 (1906), 756.

19. Tom Cheesman and Sigrid Rieuwerts, eds., *Ballads into Books: The Legacies of Francis James Child*: *Selected Papers from the 26th International Ballad Conference, Swansea, Wales, 19–24 July 1996* (Berne: Peter Lang, European Academic Publishers, 1977), 12. [1n19]

20. G. L. Kittredge, "Francis James Child," in F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. 10 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898), xxvii–xxviii. [1n20]

21. Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vols. 1–10 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882–1898). [1n21]

22. Sadly, Kittredge will get short shrift in this chapter as well. For more information, please see his biography, Clyde Kenneth Hyder, *George Lyman Kittredge: Teacher and Scholar* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1962). [1n22]

23. D. K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1959), 173–174. [1n23]

24. Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), 11–12. [1n24]

25. Bertrand Harris Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads: With Their Texts, According to the Extant Records of Great Britain and America* vols. 1–4 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959). [1n25]

26. Bronson, *Traditional Tunes*, xiii. [1n26]

27. Bronson, *Traditional Tunes*, xxiii. [1n27]

28. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, translated by Roy Harris (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1972). [1n28]

29. Wilgus, *Anglo-American.* [1n29]

30. Bertrand Harris Bronson, *The Ballad as Song* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969). [1n30]

31. Bronson, *Ballad as Song*, vii. [1n31]

32. Bronson, *Ballad as Song*, 147. [1n32]

33. Bertrand Harris Bronson, ed., *The Singing Tradition of Child's Popular Ballads* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). [1n33]

34. Bronson, *Singing Tradition,* xxii. [1n34]

35. Bronson, *Singing Tradition,* xxx. [1n35]

36. Bruno Nettl, "The Concept of Preservation in Ethnomusicology," in Irene V. Jackson, ed., *More Than Drumming: Essays on African and Afro-Latin American Music and Musicians* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 18. [1n36]

37. Neil Rosenberg, ed., *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (Bloomington: University of Illinois Press, 1993). [1n37]

38. R. Serge Denisoff, *Great Day Coming: Folk Music and the American Left* (Bloomington: University of Illinois Press, 1971). [1n38]

39. David Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983). [1n39]

40. Barbara Allen Bogart, *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures* (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 1990). [1n40]

41. Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill–Queens University Press, 1994). [1n41]

42. Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). [1n42]

43. Ronald D. Cohen, *Wasn't That a Time!: Firsthand Accounts of the Folk Music Revival,* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1995). [1n43]

44. Robert S. Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). [1n44]

[1n45] 45. Ronald D. Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Revival and American Society 1940–1970* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).

[1n46] 46. Gillian Mitchell, *The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada, 1945–1980* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2007).