

COLLEGE SONGS IN THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY
FOLKLORE ARCHIVES

Joseph Hickerson

The bulk of the new material contained in the Indiana University Folklore Archive has been collected and submitted by college students from Michigan State. (These new holdings were described by R. M. Dorson in the previous issue.) These students, with only a limited amount of time available for collecting, often turned to folklore materials with which they were already familiar. As a result, a large portion of the Archive contains a wealth of college traditions and lore. Prominent among the various kinds of college lore are the college songs, which constitute one of the chief sections in the entire Archive. This group of more than 1000 songs and over 3000 texts contains a great deal of interesting and valuable material for the student of folksong.

The songs are varied. They range from those usually sung in groups, such as drinking songs, sentimental ballads, and risqué songs, to those found in the repertoires of individual singers, such as parodies, bawdy songs, and nonsense songs. There are no sharp boundaries between the various kinds of college songs, and the degree of overlapping makes it almost impossible to divide the songs according to function or subject matter. Furthermore, many of the titles are also found in the high school, camp, and general-folksong sections. Therefore the college song section has been subdivided according to individual titles, with cross references to alternate titles and related songs in the other sections of the Archive.

Parodies are among the more widespread types of college songs. We find old and new popular songs such as DRINK TO ME ONLY WITH THINE EYES and HEY THERE being sung to new, off-color words. Much traditional material is also used; TOM BOLYNN is sung as ANNE BO-FLYNN, THE IRISH FAMINE SONG is the basis for THE EAGLES THEY FLY HIGH, and THE DYING HOBO becomes THE DYING OB-SERVER. Bawdy versions of traditional songs are also found, examples being THE CHISHOLM TRAIL, BELL BOTTOM TROUSERS, THE DARBY RAM, and OUR GOODMAN.

The following songs seem to be the most popular among college students: MIMI THE COLLEGE

Contributors to This Issue

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WIDOW, SILVER DOLLAR, THE SOUSE FAMILY, MINNIE THE MERMAID, MARY ANN'S, and THE LITTLE MOUSE. The most widely collected song, HER MOTHER NEVER TOLD HER, has over 120 texts in the Archive, of which the following is an example:

"O'Leary Was Closing the Bar"

It was a cold winter's evening,
The guests were all leaving,
O'Leary was closing the bar,
When he turned and he said
To the lady in red,
"Get out, you can't stay where you are."

She wept a sad tear in her bucket of beer
As she thought of the cold night ahead,
When a gentleman dapper stepped out of the
crapper

And these are the words that he said:

"Her mother never told her
"The things a young girl should know
"About the ways of college men
"And how they come and go.
"Now age has taken her beauty
"Sin has left its sad scar
"So remember your mothers and sisters, boys
"And let her sleep under the bar!"

(Turned in by Sumner Collins of New York City,
Fall 1951).

COMMITTEE SEEKS INFORMATION ON
FOLKTALE COLLECTIONS

A Joint Committee on the Folktale of the American Folklore Society and the Modern Language Association is gathering information on the folktale material available in M. A. and Ph. D. theses, archives, and private collections throughout the country. We are interested in collections of tale texts from all areas of the United States and from all ethnic, regional, and occupational groups, excluding the American Indians. The texts would include all forms of oral, non-musical narratives, including Märchen, legends, belief tales, jokes, and tall tales.

If you have any information on theses, archives, and individuals in your area with such collections, we would appreciate your notifying the Committee.

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