

Folklore Research in Atlantic Canada: An Overview

Richard S. Tallman

Volume 8, Number 2, Spring 1979

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/acad8_2rv02

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Department of History of the University of New Brunswick

ISSN

0044-5851 (print)

1712-7432 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Tallman, R. S. (1979). Folklore Research in Atlantic Canada:: An Overview. *Acadiensis*, 8(2), 118–130.

different as those of Martin and Quinn which are nonetheless complementary. Quinn's is lengthy, solid, self-effacing in tone, whereas Martin's ranges about voraciously and self-consciously. What they have in common is that both are vigorous, adventurous books. Both have delved courageously into a difficult period. Each has made full use of interdisciplinary techniques without compromising the author's integrity as a historian. And each has shed new light upon the sixteenth-century history of what was to become the Atlantic region. The combined force of the two books is considerable. On the Europeans, we gather much needed breadth of knowledge; on the Indians we gain depth. The result is to pose a challenge to future sixteenth-century historians of the region to undertake further explorations. There is a challenge too to seventeenth-century historians of the region to reconsider the history of the colonial period in a way that takes full account both of the hard-won European concepts which the previous century had bequeathed and of the social and cultural developments among the Indian people who still formed the majority of the permanent population. Quinn and Martin have given us two invigorating studies; they have also left us with invigorating prospects.

JOHN G. REID

Folklore Research in Atlantic Canada: An Overview

Fifty years ago, Helen Creighton was an aspiring young Nova Scotia authoress who wanted to find local color and background settings for her magazine articles and stories:

When it was suggested to me by Dr. Henry Munro, Superintendent of Education for the province, that I look for ballads in my search for literary material within this coast of adventure and romance, I thought the possibility of finding any such songs very remote indeed. . . . Yet be it said in defence that until the early summer of 1929 I had never heard a ballad sung in this my native province.¹

So began a career as a collector and popularizer of folklore that has spanned half a century. Creighton's autobiography, *A Life in Folklore* (Toronto, McGraw Hill-Ryerson, 1975), gives ample testimony to her achievements as a "pioneer" in the field of Maritime folklore. What is not made so clear is the true place of Helen Creighton in the history of North American folklore scholarship in general and of Atlantic Canada in particular.

1 Helen Creighton, *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia* (reprint ed., New York, 1966), p. ix. In her later writings, Creighton dates her folksong collecting as having begun in 1928, without reference to the discrepancy in dates.

When Helen Creighton began collecting folksongs in Nova Scotia, she was, indeed, something of a pioneer. Only W. Roy Mackenzie, a student of George Lyman Kittredge's at Harvard, had previously done significant work in the region. Kittredge encouraged his students to collect folk ballads and songs, and with this encouragement Mackenzie returned to his native Pictou County, Nova Scotia, beginning in 1908, to collect what he and most ballad scholars of the time thought must be the last surviving remnants of the oral tradition. He was, without question, one of the very best of many ballad collector-scholars who came under the influence of Kittredge in the first four decades of this century. His work in folklore was restricted to two books — *The Quest of the Ballad* (1919), an account of his folksong collecting in Pictou County, with many detailed character sketches of the singers and some valuable insights into the social contexts of traditional folksong, and *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia* (1928), a major achievement of accurate collection and comparative annotation with an excellent introduction, a work that towers above many other regional folksong collections from the same period. As a scholarly work, the latter also surpasses Helen Creighton's folksong collections. Mackenzie did no other work in folklore, and by the mid-1910s had settled into a comfortable position as a consummate Shakespeare scholar (again, the influence of Kittredge) and department chairman at Washington University in St. Louis.²

At about the same time that Creighton began her collecting, Elisabeth Greenleaf and Grace Mansfield, both New Englanders, collected songs in Newfoundland and published *Ballads and Sea Songs from Newfoundland* (1933). Maud Karpeles, the English folksong collector who had accompanied Cecil Sharp in 1916-1918 during his song collecting in the southern Appalachians, went to Newfoundland in 1932 to collect traditional British ballads, a field trip that Sharp himself had hoped to take before his death in 1924. The complete results of Karpeles' fieldwork finally appeared in *Folk Songs from Newfoundland* (London, Faber and Faber, 1971), the last non-analytical text collection to be published from the region.³ In Nova Scotia, Sister Mary L. Fraser gathered a miscellany of folklore in Cape Breton for a graduate thesis, which was published as *Folklore of Nova Scotia* in 1931 (reprint edition: Antigonish, Formac, 1975). This work is principally raw collectanea with little introductory, contextual, or analytical information. Arthur Huff Fauset, a black anthropologist who had done fieldwork in the southern United States, collected folklore from blacks in Nova Scotia. One of his primary

2 See the Foreword by G. Malcolm Laws to the reprint edition of *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia* (Hatboro, Pennsylvania, 1963), pp. i-ix.

3 Other recent text collections include Helen Creighton, *Maritime Folk Songs* (Toronto, 1962); Kenneth Peacock, *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports* (3 vols., Ottawa, 1965); MacEdward Leach, *Folk Ballads and Songs of the Lower Labrador Coast* (Ottawa, 1965); and Louise Manny and James R. Wilson, *Songs of Miramichi* (Fredericton, 1968).

purposes was to learn how the folklore of Nova Scotia blacks was similar, or dissimilar, to that of the southern Negro. He did collect a few Brer Rabbit-type stories, but he collected far more Pat and Mike jokes, which said something of the acculturation of blacks in Anglo-dominant Atlantic Canada. Fauset's work, *Folklore from Nova Scotia* (1931), is a miscellaneous collection organized along generic lines, one of many similar collections published by the American Folklore Society in the first half of this century. Creighton's own *Folklore of Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia* (1950), published by the National Museum of Canada, is a quite similar presentation of lore from German descendants in Nova Scotia — that is, reliable texts with limited comparative annotation and practically no analytical commentary.

While Helen Creighton was thus only one of several early folklore collectors in the region, unlike the others she was both a Maritime native *and* she continued to do fieldwork and to publish the results over a period of many years. Hers was not a brief sojourn in the Maritimes for the purpose of a single monograph or two. She lived here, knew and loved the people, and published a wide array of first-rate folklore collections out of this knowledge and love. Her perseverance in an area of scholarly research that still is largely ignored in Canadian academe is to be applauded; yet, her contributions are quantitative rather than qualitative.

A Life in Folklore outlines Helen Creighton's life and her work as a collector of Maritime folklore. The daughter of a well-to-do Halifax merchant, Creighton pursued her folklore research until 1947 as a private, gentlewoman collector supported by her parents. From then until the early 1960s, she was employed by the National Museum in Ottawa as a field collector. Her autobiography includes several charming vignettes about her informants and her wide collecting experiences, and a few useful insights on folklore collecting. Accounts of her early attempts to collect music as well as song texts, by taking a melodeon on her collecting ventures and painstakingly working out the tunes with the help of her informants, are particularly rewarding, and instructive to post-World War II collectors who so easily turn on a tape recorder without fully appreciating the ingenuity and labour of their predecessors. As a faithful, indefatigable collector of song tunes, Creighton was in the forefront of North American folksong scholarship. Few collections from the period included such a high percentage of tunes as her *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia* (1932).

Despite the interesting data on folklore fieldwork in *A Life in Folklore*, the book ultimately reveals more about the personal idiosyncrasies of its author as a person and as a folklorist than it does about the region's folk culture. It has been edited, poorly, by someone who knows little about folklore scholarship. Frequently, and embarrassingly, we are told of Creighton's delicate constitution, always without detail, and at least as often we are given a half-rationale, half-apology for her never having married. What might have been one of the more revealing anecdotes in the book, and of historical interest to Canadian

folklore scholars, never is completed. It has to do with the termination of her employment with the National Museum by Carmen Roy, then head of the folklore section at the Museum:

I knew I'd been pushing too hard, but how else could I do my job as president [of the Canadian Authors' Society] and keep up my work for the Museum? I suppose it is because I accomplish so much that nobody realizes the long hours I have always had to spend resting, and how limited my strength is. A new director had come to the Museum who left all folklore decisions in the capable hands of Dr. Roy. She has built up the Archives splendidly, and to her the Museum comes first; I knew she wasn't happy that I was giving it limited attention. I was not too surprised when the surgical axe fell, but before coming to that, let us go back a year (p. 229).

The digression leads to yet another digression, and the reader never learns why, exactly, Creighton stopped working for the National Museum.

Bluenose Ghosts (Toronto, Ryerson, 1957) became a bestseller in Canada and brought Helen Creighton the fame and recognition she has enjoyed for the past twenty years. A popular collection of supernatural legends and personal experience stories, it is one of the better such collections published in North America, and one of the first. *Bluenose Ghosts* also is unique among folklore collections for the kind of personal involvement the author brings to bear on her work. As early as *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia*, Creighton intimated her belief in foresight, her insistence that coincidence is always odd and never really coincidental. This belief, and the revelation of her own psychic experiences, became a major factor in the writing of *Bluenose Ghosts* and, recently, in *A Life in Folklore*. Her *Bluenose Magic* (Toronto, Ryerson, 1968), a collection of superstitious belief, also treats the subject of supernatural phenomena from a personal point of view.

Seen in the context of most legend and belief studies, which are ponderously objective, Creighton's approach was and is a refreshing change. It is not, however, folkloristic but parapsychological. The folklorist is not interested in whether or not ghosts actually exist and does not as a rule seek to authenticate or dismiss the validity of the supernatural tale. Rather, his interest in such legends focuses on the psychological truth of the stories to those who tell them, and on the extent to which the stories are a significant part of the expressive culture. If the people *believe* something unusual happened, or if they *like to think* that it *might* have happened, then they will tell the story: as simple entertainment, as vicarious danger, as admonition against certain conduct or behaviour, as education as to what one might expect to experience oneself. Creighton's published works on folk belief and legend, on the other hand, do not reflect these basic folkloristic interests, and consequently are misleading to the

general Canadian public, to whom Helen Creighton is *the* Canadian folklorist — from her many books, from her early CBC radio series on folksongs in Nova Scotia, from the National Film Board and CBC television films which have focused on her and her collecting, and from the many popular adaptations of the folklore she has collected.

Several accounts of her own psychic premonitions are included in *A Life in Folklore*. Also apparent from Creighton's autobiography is the extent to which she has been a popularizer instead of a scholar. Her principle interest when she first collected folksongs was to find local color material to enhance her own popular writing. In the process, she became an exceptionally successful field researcher, but she maintained a strong desire to reach a broad popular audience. Many passages in *A Life in Folklore* illustrate Creighton's interest in popularization, none better than her concluding remarks:

Now in 1975 I see our songs used in text books in Canada and abroad. Many have been arranged for solo and choral singing and appear in sheet music; others are combined with melodies from Newfoundland for orchestral playing. I am especially pleased that locally we have a band number composed by Kenneth Elloway, choral arrangements by Mona Maund, Eunice Sircom and others, and harp arrangements by Phyllis Ensher. We have two symphonies by Klaro Mizirit, conductor of the Atlantic Symphony Orchestra, and one by Alex Tilley as well as a mini-opera by Steven Freygood. Dave Woods and Dennis Farrell have made compositions from our melodies for Gary Karr which he plays on his extensive travels, and when the Men of the Deeps perform in China this year, our songs will be in their repertoire. From *Bluenose Ghosts*, the Nova Scotia Photographic Department has just released a twenty minute film using the title of the book and having stories performed by Neptune Theatre actors and actresses. It will be distributed by the Nova Scotia Tourist Bureau. At the St. Francis Xavier spring convocation I was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters, and at Dartmouth's Natal Day celebrations there was a presentation of a gold medal. Now, mindful of a rich, full life I can say in the words of the Psalmist, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (p. 244).

To the professional folklorist, the extent to which Creighton emphasizes the adaptation and exploitation of her collected works to other media is alarming, not because folklore should never be used in this manner but because popularizing tends to misrepresent the folk culture to the general public. Inevitably, popularization focuses on the quaint, the romantic, and the curiously rustic. It draws upon the personal, elitist aesthetics of the collector and the popularizer without due concern for the aesthetic judgments of the folk from whom the lore has come in the first place. In other words, it usually fails to represent the true

worth and meaning of the expressive culture to the people whose culture it is. Further, it fails to show that folklore is a legitimate academic discipline with its own methodology and guiding principles. Indeed, it encourages the common misconception that because folklore is so "popular" it has no rightful place in academe and has nothing to offer us in the delightfully serious business of understanding what makes man what he is, as a social and spiritual being.

In Canada, generally, and in Maritime Canada, particularly, folklore has not yet achieved academic respectability. Few Canadian universities offer any folklore courses; even fewer Canadian universities have professionally trained folklorists as faculty members. It is ironic that no university in the three Maritime provinces has a trained folklorist on the faculty, when this region has long been recognized as one of the richest fields for English-language folklore research in North America. The pioneering work of Helen Creighton has shown just how rich the region is. At the same time, her work does not illuminate the values of folklore as an approach to understanding the history and culture of the region.

Creighton never was trained as a folklorist, except for a brief visit to Indiana University in the summer of 1942, yet the dust jacket to *A Life in Folklore* announces that she certainly must be "our best-known and most deeply respected folklorist". Creighton is not to be faulted for lacking any analytical or theoretical framework in her work. This was not her purpose, nor her background. Edith Fowke, another Canadian who has made a name for herself in folklore without benefit of professional training, addressed herself to this dichotomy between "professional" and "amateur" folklorists in a talk to the Folklore Studies Association of Canada in 1978:

I object to the tendency of certain academics to distinguish sharply between what they term professionals and amateurs on the basis of their training. It is obvious that they would class me with the so-called amateur group: I have never taken any courses in folklore. However, I consider myself a professional — and I would point out that some of the most renowned names in folklore did not have specialized training in the discipline. . . . I would hold that the distinction between amateur and professional, if it must be made at all, should be on the basis of the work produced: those whose work is of professional standard are professionals; those whose work is superficial may be termed amateurs.⁴

While what Fowke says is true, a further distinction must be made and Creighton provides the example. She has been a successful, *professional* folklore collector, and the proof of her professional success is to be found in her

4 Edith Fowke, "A Personal Odyssey and Personal Prejudices", *Bulletin of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada*, 2 (September/November, 1978), p. 10.

many books. As a folklorist, however, she remains a distinguished amateur. For all her years of collecting and all the fascinating lore she mined in the Maritimes, she never placed the folklore she collected within a framework which would help to shed light on the social, psychological, or historical meaning of the material to the culture from which it came. This is a shortcoming she shares with many other noteworthy pioneers of North American folklore scholarship — understandably, since the first North American Ph.D. in Folklore was not awarded until 1953, and the first Folklore Ph.D's from an English-language Canadian university were not awarded until the mid-1970s.⁵ Previously, there had been excellent field researchers and comparative scholars, like Creighton and Mackenzie, but to learn what folklore has to offer to the student of Atlantic Canada we must look to the more recent research of professional folklorists.

Edith Fowke's *Folklore of Canada* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1976), an anthology of excerpts from published works with a few previously unpublished papers, is a well-annotated potpourri of collectanea representing many folklore genres. Maritime material includes short selections from Mackenzie, Creighton, Fraser, and Fauset. This work breaks no new ground and creates no theoretical base for the nascent field of Canadian folklore studies. One would do better to turn to the original sources. The bibliography to Fowke's book provides a starting point.

The groundbreaking in Atlantic Canada folklore research occurred several years prior to the publication of Fowke's *Folklore of Canada*. In 1962, Memorial University of Newfoundland invited the American scholar Herbert Halpert to join its faculty, with the intention of establishing a major centre of folklore research. Halpert was a past president of the American Folklore Society and an internationally recognized folktale scholar. His previous acquaintance with Newfoundland was brief: during the Second World War, with a brief layover when his U.S. Army plane landed in Gander, Halpert went "out around the bay" and collected folklore. He had done the same thing, more extensively, when he was stationed in Alberta. Within two years of his arrival at Memorial, research seminars on Newfoundland folklore were being organized. By 1967, the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive and the Department of Folklore had been established. In 1969, *Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland*, a collection of essays in folklore, history, linguistics, and anthropology, edited by Halpert and George M. Story, was published by the University of Toronto Press. The book had its origin in one of those early seminars, and its impetus was from Halpert. Several of the papers drew heavily upon the holdings in the folklore archive. The review of

5 A few doctorates in English, with dissertations and coursework in folklore, were awarded by Indiana University in the 1940s. The folklore programme at Laval University in Quebec also was organized in the 1940s, and has granted many graduate degrees in French Canadian folk culture studies. The researches in folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland are discussed below.

Christmas Mumming in the *Journal of American Folklore* described it as "probably the most successful collaborative effort at book writing since the original publication of the King James' Bible in 1611. Moreover, it should have, if sufficient scholars attend to it, as much influence on the study of folklore as the King James' Bible had on Christianity". The reviewer also stated that "This is a basic book, not because of its subject matter especially, but because of its method and the perspicacity of its editors".⁶ *Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland* is a fine example of collaborative scholarship, with much fascinating data and many suggestive insights on a particular Newfoundland tradition. Its influence on folklore studies, unfortunately, has not been so great.

Folklore publications from the Folklore Department at Memorial ceased after *Christmas Mumming* and did not begin again until 1975, after I had received my folklore doctorate from Memorial and relocated in Florida. In 1974, I edited and contributed to a curiously Canadian issue of *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, which focused on practical jokes.⁷ Two of the papers in this special issue, written by graduate students at Memorial, are of particular import to folklore research in Atlantic Canada. John R. Scott presented an analysis of the social functions of practical jokes to Newfoundland sealers; Monica Morrison delineated the social importance (and disfunction) of the wedding night prank, or shivaree, in the upper St. John River valley near Woodstock, New Brunswick. Both Scott and Morrison, as well as other contributors, showed in their work the deep influence of Halpert through their emphasis on the social and historical contexts of the folklore traditions. In 1975, another Memorial University graduate student, Michael Taft, who now teaches in Saskatchewan, authored the first of several recent folklore publications from Newfoundland, *A Regional Discography of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1904-1972* (St. John's, Memorial University). Obviously limited in its scope and applicability, Taft's discography is nonetheless a model for studies that bridge the gap between folk culture and popular culture. His folklore bibliography for Nova Scotia is another useful research tool for the region.⁸ Since the Taft discography, six other Memorial University folklore publications have appeared. None of these are epoch-marking like *Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland*; none are as carefully conceived as Taft's discography. Some are so esoteric to Newfoundland culture that their impact beyond the province can be only minimal.

The Little Nord Easter: Reminiscences of a Placentia Bayman (1975) by Victor Butler, edited by Wilfred Wareham, is an at times fascinating auto-

6 W. Edson Richmond, *Journal of American Folklore*, 84 (1971), pp. 255-6.

7 *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 38, 4 (December, 1974), pp. 251-323.

8 Michael Taft, "A Bibliography for Folklore Studies in Nova Scotia", in *Three Atlantic Bibliographies*, compiled by H.F. McGee, Jr., S.A. Davis, and M. Taft (Halifax, St. Mary's University, 1975), pp. 105-205.

biography written by an elderly fisherman, but the decision to let the work stand as Butler's rather than Wareham's turns out to be patronizing. The book lacks design or framework of any sort, and with 167 of the 262 pages as introductory and appended matter, Victor Butler himself and his cultural experience are lost. The attempt to maintain his integrity as the "author" results in a structural incoherence in the work as a whole. Gerald Thomas's *The Tall Tale and Philippe D'Alcriste* (1977), on the other hand, an annotated translation of a late-sixteenth-century French collection with an excellent introduction on the tall tale genre, is a major work. Unfortunately, the reduced photo offset of a final typescript of the work creates an unattractive volume with unjustified lines and no attempt at book design. The book deserved better, and care with such detail, I believe, is important if the Folklore Department at Memorial is to have the impact it should on Canadian academe. The Taft and Butler volumes were typeset, but *The Little Nord Easter* is a disaster in editorial design. Later volumes, with one exception, are not typeset. Gerald Thomas has also compiled a catalogue of *Songs Sung by French Newfoundlanders* (1978) from the archive holdings at Memorial.

Three collections of essays also have appeared in the last two years. The first, *Literature and Folk Culture: Ireland and Newfoundland* (1977), edited with an introduction by Alison Feder and Bernice Schrank of Memorial's English Department, is certainly the most ambitious of the three. It brings together seven papers from the ninth annual seminar in 1976 of the Canadian Association for Irish Studies, with contributors from both Ireland and Canada. The quality of the contributions varies, and several have no relevance to Atlantic Canada or to folklore, yet the work is cohesive. And there are some first-rate articles. Herbert Halpert's "Ireland, Sheila and Newfoundland" recounts with humour and thorough scholarship his research on an Irish Newfoundland weather belief associated with St. Sheila, the legendary wife of St. Patrick, whose own saint's day in popular tradition, on March 18, is often marked by a snowstorm. William Kirwin's "The Influence of Ireland on the Printed Newfoundland Ballad" is a careful linguistic study which helps to illustrate the extent of Irish influence on one aspect of the Newfoundland culture. The other five papers deal with specifically Irish literature and culture. One, Richard Walsh's "Aspects of Irishness", is a brilliantly suggestive study of Irish society and politics over the past several hundred years. Walsh, a linguist, views historical developments in Ireland as they are reflected in the various changes in and reactions to the Gaelic Irish language. It is an urbane and thought-provoking study.

For one like myself, who for several years has been mired in the morass of pretentious, self-conscious, and jargon-filled writing which distinguishes much of modern scholarship, the wit and urbanity of such scholars as Walsh and Halpert restores faith in academic values and pursuits. This is true, too, of some of the papers in *Folklore and Oral History* (1978), edited by Neil V. Rosenberg,

which includes papers from a meeting at Memorial University of the Canadian Oral History Association. After Rosenberg's useful introduction, which summarizes the current status of oral history research from a folklorist's point of view, the first two brief papers carry on the tone established in *Literature and Folk Culture* of scholars who wear their learning comfortably. Memorial's Dean of Graduate Studies, Frederick A. Aldrich, in his "Address in Welcome" shows himself to be a biologist who is at ease with Thucydides. Then Leslie Harris, the Vice President at Memorial University and an historian who was schooled with the dictum that "in the beginning was the written word", demures that he is "reasonably confident of my incompetence to meet your expectations" but nonetheless proceeds to delineate convincingly the great importance of oral history research. The remainder of *Folklore and Oral History* is uneven. Most of the papers pursue Newfoundland topics; some are brief reports of ongoing research; some are uselessly superficial or documents-oriented; at least one, Robert C. Cosbey's "The Psychodrama of the Interview Arena", is painfully contrived and silly. Among the cream of the crop, along with Rosenberg's "Introduction" and the two opening addresses, is John R. Scott's contribution. Its title is self-explanatory: "'I Don't Think There's Anything in the World That the Common Man Will Take a Bigger Chance [For] Than He'll Take For a Seal': Some Contributions of Oral History Toward an Understanding of the Newfoundland Disaster". Rosenberg's editorial introductions to each of the papers help to give the collection a unity that makes it useful to both the historian and the folklorist. And there are some valuable research approaches suggested in the book.

The same cannot be said for *Canadian Folklore Perspectives* (1978), edited by Kenneth S. Goldstein, for a short time the Head of the Folklore Department at Memorial. This slim volume, a collection of four papers from a recent American Folklore Society meeting, purports to "paint a picture of the state (and status) of folklore studies in Canada in 1978 in a way which indicates not only present perspectives, but also suggests, both by omission and commission, the directions which Canadian folklore studies will have to take in the future" (p. 2). The omissions are greater than the commissions, in particular, the lack of a survey of the status of folklore in Canadian universities.⁹ The best of the four papers is Neil Rosenberg's "Regionalism and Folklore in Atlantic Canada", a good but uncritical bibliographic survey of published folklore resources in the region. The other three papers, by Elli K  ng  s Maranda, Ban Seng Hoe, and Carole Henderson Carpenter, focus respectively on folklore activities in French Canada, culture change in Asian-Canadian communities, and govern-

9 For the kind of survey that is needed, see Ronald L. Baker, "Folklore Courses and Programs in American Colleges and Universities", *Journal of American Folklore*, 84 (1971), pp. 221-9; and "The Study of Folklore in American Colleges and Universities", *Journal of American Folklore*, 91 (1978), pp. 792-807.

ment influence on Canadian folklore research. Each is worth reading; they do not combine to present a clear picture of the state or status of folklore studies in Canada.

Folklore monographs and community studies now in preparation at Memorial University promise to add depth studies by individual scholars to the several essay collections and bibliographic works that thus far have come from this centre of folklore research in English Canada. One would hope, in the future, that some of Memorial's publications will focus on non-Newfoundland traditions. As Rosenberg's essay in *Canadian Folklore Perspectives* indicates, recent folklore research in Atlantic Canada is not limited to the activities at Memorial University.¹⁰ In fact, the most significant folklore work done in the Maritimes has been that of Edward D. Ives of the University of Maine.

Ives was a founder of the Northeast Folklore Society in 1958 and has edited the Society's journal, *Northeast Folklore*, since that time. Early issues of the journal included important regional bibliographies along with other short papers.¹¹ Then, in 1962, Ives changed *Northeast Folklore* from its original format as a periodical of short articles to an annual monograph, ranging in length from 70-130 pages. The first volume in the new format, *Eight Folktales from Miramichi as told by Wilmot MacDonald*, collected by Helen Creighton and Ives and edited by Ives, is a collection of seven long European wonder tales, like those in the Grimm collection, and one neck riddle. Wilmot MacDonald was known to both Creighton and Ives as a fine traditional singer of lumberwoods songs from New Brunswick. Independently, both discovered that MacDonald knew Old World folktales which today are found only infrequently in North America. The collaborative effort was successful. The next two issues of *Northeast Folklore* also dealt with Maritime topics: *Twenty-One Folksongs from Prince Edward Island* (1963), collected and edited by Ives, and *Malecite*

10 See, for example, Richard Bauman, "Belsnickling in a Nova Scotia Community", *Western Folklore*, 31 (1972), pp. 229-43; Bauman, "The La Have Island General Store: Sociability and Verbal Art in a Nova Scotia Community", *Journal of American Folklore*, 85 (1972), pp. 330-43; Martin Lovelace, "W. Roy Mackenzie as a Collector of Folksong", *Canadian Folk Music Journal*, 5 (1977), pp. 5-11; Neil V. Rosenberg, "Folklore in Atlantic Canada: The Enigmatic Symbol", in Kenneth MacKinnon, ed., *Atlantic Provinces Literature Colloquium* (Saint John, Atlantic Canada Institute, 1977), pp. 79-86; Richard S. Tallman, "'You Can Almost Picture It': The Aesthetic of a Nova Scotia Storyteller", *Folklore Forum*, 7 (1974), pp. 121-30; and Tallman, "Where Stories Are Told: A Nova Scotia Storyteller's Milieu", *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, 5 (1975), pp. 17-41. Also see the recently established journal *Culture and Tradition*, edited by graduate students at Memorial and Laval. Considerable regional folklore research also has been done on the Acadian French, the Gaelic Scots, and the native peoples, particularly the Micmac Indians. These groups are not within the scope of the present paper.

11 Edward D. Ives and Bacil Kirtley, "Bibliography of New England-Maritimes Folklore", *Northeast Folklore*, 1 (1958), pp. 19-28; 2 (1959), pp. 19-23; 3 (1960), pp. 20-3; Ives and Kirtley, "Selected Bibliography of New England-Maritimes Folklore Prior to 1950", *Northeast Folklore*, 1 (1958), pp. 29-31.

and *Passamaquoddy Tales* (1964), edited by Ives from unpublished tape and manuscript collections. Since then, with the exception of a collection of Cree Indian tales from northern Quebec, this annual has focused on New England, and especially Maine, folk traditions. In the last few years, *Northeast Folklore* increasingly has included studies in oral and local history, particularly lumberwoods history. All of these later monographs are pertinent to the Maritimes, both because the lumberwoods of northern New England were heavily populated by Maritimers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and because northern New England is closer to the non-coastal parts of the Maritimes, historically, economically, and socially, than it is to southern New England.

Despite the importance of *Northeast Folklore*, Ives' greatest contributions to folklore scholarship in the region are his three major works, on Maritimes-New England songmakers. Several issues of *Northeast Folklore* have been biographical studies and oral and written autobiographies on woodsmen, storytellers, and legendary heroes. These reflect the interest and influence of Ives, whose lasting contribution to folklore scholarship is his insistence on the value of studying the common man among us as a typical yet unique cultural being. His three books on songmakers represent a level of quality in folklore scholarship that few have achieved. *Larry Gorman: The Man Who Made the Songs* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1964) is a study of a satiric songmaker from Prince Edward Island who poked good-natured and nasty fun at neighbours in Prince Edward Island and at woods bosses in Maine. *Lawrence Doyle: The Farmer-Poet from Prince Edward Island* (Orono, University of Maine Press, 1971) tells of an Islander who composed songs about the life and the people of his community. *Joe Scott, The Woodsman-Songmaker* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1978) details the life, songs, and cultural milieu of a ballad maker from Lower Woodstock, New Brunswick, who left home for the lumberwoods of northern New England at about the age of twenty, in the late 1880s, and proceeded to chronicle his personal experiences and the trials and tragedies of others in narrative folksongs that have had wide currency in the folksong tradition of the Maritimes. Each of these books has much to offer on the social and historical contexts of folklore. They provide a social history of the region in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that is comprehensive and yet personally moving, because they are about people as individuals, a point of value in scholarship that Ives has insisted upon for years.

Ives' *Joe Scott* is the best folklore book I have read. It combines eighteen years of careful library and field research with much provocative theorizing on the cultural significance of folklore and on the significance of man as a cultural (and spiritual) entity. The conclusion to *Joe Scott*, on aesthetics and creativity and "moments of great integrity", touches upon both the essential value of folklore research and the essence of man the artist. It also will touch the reader. To say more would be to begin another essay at least as lengthy as the present one.

Folklore research in Atlantic Canada has come a ways since Helen Creighton first set out to collect folksongs in the late 1920s. The work of Creighton and other early folklore researchers still provides a solid base of data upon which more recent contextual and functional studies can stand. With works like *Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland* and Joe Scott, *The Woodsman-Songmaker*, the folklore traditions of the region have provided material for studies of rare excellence. Still, our knowledge of the region's folklore is quite uneven. Little work, for example, has been done by folklorists on the traditions of coal miners, and much remains to be done on the folk traditions of the inshore and offshore fishermen. Factory lore, community studies, ethnic traditions — the list is endless. A more comprehensive understanding of the regional folk culture can come only when folklore studies have become an integral part of the research and teaching in Maritime universities. One hopes that this will begin to occur soon. If it does not, the folk will always be with us, waiting, for we are all the folk.

RICHARD S. TALLMAN

The History of Maritime Literature

We have in this place a profound awareness of the importance of the past. At the moment this is reflected more in the work of historians I suggest, and to a much lesser degree in the work of literary historians and critics.¹

So spoke Douglas Lochhead at the opening of the Atlantic Canada Institute's Literary Colloquium in 1976. A review of books containing historical studies of Maritime literature reveals his words to be all too true. There are only two of any significance: Carl F. Klinck's *Literary History of Canada* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965; 2nd rev. ed., 3 vols., 1976) and Ray Palmer Baker's *A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation; Its Relation to the Literature of Great Britain and the United States* (New York, Russell & Russell, 1920). As their titles make clear, neither treats Maritime literature exclusively, but at least they are specifically literary histories and devote sections to the Maritime provinces. Other books yield biographical information on individual authors, and the pages of such periodicals as *The Dalhousie Review*, *Fiddlehead*, *The Journal of Canadian Fiction*, and *Canadian Literature* carry occasional articles on an author or a topic from the Atlantic past, but book-length studies on the subject simply do not exist.

What we have so far is Klinck and Baker, or we should say Cogswell and

¹ Douglas Lochhead, "The Literary Heritage", *The Marco Polo Papers: One* (Saint John, Atlantic Canada Institute, 1977), p. 3.