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THE RECORDING OF FOLK MUSIC IN CALIFORNIA

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The Recording of Folk Music in California

No DISCUSSION of folk music in the western United States should be undertaken without a reminder that the Anglo-Saxon tradition is very young there. This is particularly true of California, which has been a part of the United States for less than a hundred years, which still has a large Spanish-speaking population, and where Spanish place names and [locutions?] are a part of everyday speech. The first major influx of English-speaking people came with the Gold Rush; before that time "Americans" were numerically few and largely transient.

It is not generally remembered how many of the Forty-Niners came to California with the idea of making their "pile" and going home again. Until after the Civil War the pioneers who set out for California in Conestoga wagons with the entire family were a definite minority among adventurers of all ages and nationalities. It was not unusual for a man to start for the gold mines with the intention of going back for his family as soon as he was able, and many did succeed in doing this. Many more went home and stayed there, however, to fire the imaginations of their children and grandchildren with legends of the Gold Rush. A surprising number of the descendants of Forty-Niners now living in California were born elsewhere and came to California between 1880 and 1910. Such wanderings back and forth explain why so many topical ballads illustrating California history have been found as far from the scenes to which they refer as Maine, (1) Missouri, (2) and West Virginia, (3) and why California ballads currently discoverable in the State are so often sung by men and women born east of the Rocky Mountains. [md]

(1) Mrs. H. Eckstorm, Dr. Barry's distinguished collaborator, recently mentioned in a personal letter that about 1900 she took down words and tunes of perhaps a dozen Gold Rush ballads from a

returned Forty-Niner in Maine. These songs were turned over to Dr. Barry and must now be among his manuscripts in the Harvard Library. (2) Henry M. Belden, ed., "Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folk Lore Society," University of Missouri Studies, XV:7 (Columbia, 1940). (3) John Harrington Cox, Folk Songs Mainly from West Virginia (National Service Bureau of the Federal Theatre Project, Works Progress Administration, New York City, 1939). Contains 10 songs from California. ERRATA p. 7 -- author's name, Sidney Robertson Cowell, omitted.

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CALIFORNIA FOLKLORE QUARTERLY

Emigration to California has always reflected economic pressures: the present influx of families from the drought areas and the Dust Bowl is adding new elements to the folk culture of the State today; and probably not for the last time is this happening. Yet, economic pressures outside the State do not alone explain California's population. The growth of the State has been actively stimulated, since the first decade of the century, by propaganda. Rosy reports have been emanating from California for the past 25 years. If you live in a town where oranges are a rare treat at Christmas, accounts of a land where citrus orchards cover miles of the lush valleys can snowball rapidly to the point where it is said that not only do oranges grow wild, to be had for the lifting of a hand to pick them, but the more urgent necessities of life too. Such tales fast become an article of faith; the writer has seen, in Arkansas and Oklahoma, how facts are ineffectual beside them. Returning relatives who had had the most disillusioning firsthand experience, within the year were listened to with undisguised impatience and simply not believed, so powerful is legend when it supports one's hopes.

To anyone who like the writer has met the California legend along the bleak shores of the Great Lakes, on the Lower East Side, in Harlem and in Mississippi, in London and in provincial French and Italian towns, in Sicily, Greece, and Morocco, among sailors and loggers, petty officials, university professors, social workers, relief clients, factory hands, and bankers, it is not surprising to find that to the sunny picture of the Promised Land along the Pacific there has accrued a weight of folk legend powerful enough to set whole populations on the march even today, so many years after the discovery of gold. They come singly, they come in groups. Somewhere below the rational level the will-to-believe meets the descriptions of real estate and travel agents and gives birth to irresistible legends which no one intended to bring into being.

It is not possible to visualize accurately the pattern of folk music in California unless these facts are recognized. The situation with respect to traditional music among English-speaking people in the State is exactly like that among the newcomers from Europe and the Orient. Each group sings the songs it brought along from somewhere else. A California folk song is not yet, therefore, a song (in

whatever language) which has been sung long enough in the region to have taken on characteristics it didn't have when it came here; it can only be defined at present as a traditional song surviving in California today. Melodic modification is slight and cannot be said to be more characteristic of the Pacific Coast than of the 9 parts of the United States or the Old World from which the music came. The Spanish-California songs are something of an exception, as is to be expected from their relationship to the older culture of Spanish Mexico, with which they should be studied. The famous Forty-Niner ballads so prevalent in American songsters, many of which were printed in California in the 50's and 60's, adopted widely current popular tunes of the time almost without exception; many of the texts were simple parodies of current minstrel "hits," sung to the same well-known tune. (4) Such tunes were as little varied from performance to performance as the songs of Stephen Foster. They have little to offer to the student of regional melodic variation, though their texts are of interest to the student of folk poetry. Similar songs are found in the migratory labor camps of the California valleys today, set likewise to widely known tunes of popular and folk origin. They recount the experiences of the ballad writer in his trek to California from the Dust Bowl. Topical songs in Armenian, Gaelic (from the Hebrides Islanders), Hungarian, Norwegian, and Sicilian offer an exact parallel: well-known Old Country folk tunes are used to carry a contemporary account of immigrant life in the United States. Such songs are rare, however; even the Forty-Niner ballads about life in the mines are difficult to find today in the oral tradition - a fact not yet satisfactorily explained, but suggesting that comparatively few of the songs printed in the songsters were widely sung by the miners themselves. It is also possible that the miners' lively taste for the theater, which sprang up early in the history of the Gold Rush and sent vaudeville, minstrel, and opera troupes into every mining center, may have served to displace local balladry in the oral tradition by diminishing the importance of the folk singer's place in frontier society.

At this point it might be well to note the existing sources of information on folk music in California and to examine in some detail the recent collection best known to the writer.

The earliest known collection of California folk music is that made by Charles F. Lummis and now deposited in the Southwest Museum at Los Angeles. It consists of approximately 300 wax cylinders cut prior to 1904, chiefly in 1902 and 1903. Mr. Lummis' great interest was the music of the Spanish Californians (5) and this constitutes the major portion of [md] (4) Sidney Robertson, ed., *Check List of California Songs, Part One: Texts in Print* (Department of Music of the University of California and the Work Projects Administration, Berkeley, 1940). Lists titles and first lines of songs in 49 songsters and 500 broadsides, with indication for tune where given. Eleanor Black and Sidney Robertson, *The Gold Rush Song Book* (Colt Press, San Francisco, 1940). (5) Charles F. Lummis and Arthur Farwell, *Spanish Songs of Old California* (G. Schirmer, New York, 1923). 10 his collection. (6) Some recordings of singing by Mexicans and by Indians (in Spanish) are included, and it is believed there are a few

songs in English, though these have never been transcribed. A description of this collection appears below in the section entitled "Collectors and Collections."

Between 1918 and 1924 Professor Robert Winslow Gordon, of the Department of English at Berkeley of the University of California, recorded on wax cylinders 400 songs of the sea and the repertory of a family from Kentucky. Not only is Mr. Gordon's collection the earliest known recording of songs in English to have been made in California, but his collection of sea songs is probably the earliest recorded in this way. Only singers who had actually used the shanties as worksongs on a sailing ship, and who had learned them prior to 1870, were recorded. This collection includes a group from the last of the Whitehall boatmen on San Francisco Bay.

The department of Anthropology of the University of California, at Berkeley, has a large collection of California Indian music which has been built up over a period of many years. It was originally recorded on wax cylinders, which are now in process of duplication on acetate disks. A detailed listing of the contents of this collection is available in the survey of research in primitive and folk music in the United States which was made by George Herzog. The published survey also indicates the institutions, such as the Smithsonian, Yale University, etc., where further recordings of Indian music from the California area are deposited. (7)

Miss Eleanor Hague has at her home in Pasadena wax cylinder recordings of many of the Spanish-Californian and Mexican songs (some of them recorded in California) which she has published in the *Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society* and elsewhere.

In 1937 Mr. Tom Collins, then camp manager of the first Farm Security Administration camp for migratory labor in the San Joaquin Valley, included in one of his reports to Washington the texts of 30 songs. They had been dictated to him by residents in the camp after a community entertainment which had included a few of these songs. Some of them [md] (6) This group was published, a few songs at a time, in the bimonthly periodical issued by the Southwest Museum, *The Masterkey*, beginning with the number for January, 1934. There are two other collections of Spanish-Californian songs, both dictated, but not recorded, by folk singers, and published with accompaniments William J. McCoy, *Folksongs of the Spanish Californians* (Sherman, Clay & Co., San Francisco, 1926); Antoni van der Voort. *Old Spanish Songs as Sung by Sra. Da. Maria Antonio Jimeno de Arata* (Santa Barbara Music Shoppe, Santa Barbara, 1928). (7) George Herzog, *Research in Primitive and Folk Music in the United States*, American Council of Learned Societies, Bulletin No. 24 (Washington, D. C., 1936). 11 were obviously learned from hillbilly and cowboy radio singers, but others offered interesting evidence of an old folk tradition newly uprooted and transported bodily to California.

In December, 1938, Miss Margaret Valiant recorded some songs from migrant workers in the camps of the Farm Security Administration, in the course of preparations for a Christmas broadcast from one of the camps. A few of these recordings were made in California. Copies are in the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress in Washington.

In the summer of 1940 Charles Todd and Robert Sonkin, both on the faculty of the College of the City of New York, recorded several hundred songs in the migratory labor camps in California for the Library of Congress. Only a small proportion of them are descriptive of migrant life and its problems; the large majority are current folk and religious ballads from Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. This is an important record of a culture in migration. Its significance will be more clearly understood if one considers how greatly the lack of a similar record at the time of the Gold Rush is regretted by students today. The Todd-Sonkin collection, on acetate disks, is in the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress. About 200 disks were recorded during the summer of 1940; more were added in 1941. The songs have been transcribed, with narrative accounts and comments by the singers, and await publication.

In November, 1937, the writer began to explore the heterogeneous folk-music traditions currently surviving in California. The plan was to take a cross section which would include representative samples from as many different groups as possible. It was hoped that such sampling might provide an effective basis for the direction of further study. "California" folk music was defined in the widest possible sense as any music -- song or dance tune -- which is orally transmitted and current in California in the year 1938. Mr. Lummis was no longer living, Mr. Gordon had left California, and no one in the State was in a position to answer the questions that were beginning to be asked: Are there folk songs in California? What are they like? Who sings them, and why? At the end of October the cooperation of the Music Division of the Library of Congress and of the Work Projects Administration was enlisted to further the work. It went forward until March, 1940, under the sponsorship of the Department of Music at Berkeley of the University of California (Mr. Elkus and Mr. Lawton, advisers) and the supervision of the writer, who did the field work and directed as many as thirty-five workers in the project office in Berkeley. 12 The plan of the work provided for the collection of sound recordings, photographs, film books on 35-mm- film, and working drawings of folk and popular instruments, as the basis for the establishment of an Archive of California Folk Music at the University of California. Fifty-seven folk and national instruments were located in the State, and of these, working drawings to scale were made of twenty-five instruments. Recordings exist for twenty of the twenty-five. The film-book collection of 11,000 pages contains about 125 items. It includes, by courtesy of Dr. Carleton Sprague Smith and Stanford University, prints of the 32 manuscripts from Mission San Antonio which are in the Stanford Museum. The music library of William Broderson,

with his manuscript notebooks, was also filmed, by courtesy of Sutter's Fort in Sacramento. Mr. Broderson was a singing teacher who also fiddled for dances in Calaveras County about 1860.

The 200 acetate disks which were made by the writer between the summer of 1938 and the spring of 1940 (about 1200 items) are deposited in duplicate with the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress in Washington and with the Department of Music at Berkeley of the University of California. For convenience the collection is divided into two parts. Series E consists of singing, fiddling, mouth-harp playing, etc., by performers whose native speech is English. Series M contains music recorded by performers from the nationality groups whose native language is other than English, [viz?]: Spanish Basques, Hebrides Islanders, Icelanders, * Finns, Norwegians, Mexicans, Italians, Sicilians, Croats, Dalmatians, Hungarians, Spanish-Californians, * Puerto Ricans, Spaniards (Asturias), Armenians, Armeno-Turks, Portuguese (Azores).* (8)

In Series E the repertoires of three particularly interesting singers have been explored in great detail. The rest of the recordings in this series came from performers with small but representative repertoires, chiefly in Tuolumne County (the "Southern Mines") and near Placerville (the "Northern Mines").

Mr. George Vinton Graham, whose entire repertory -- almost 70 songs -- was recorded for the collection in the E series, is over seventy and has lived in Oregon and California since he was six. He was born in Iowa but says he has learned most of his songs on the Pacific Coast. They include a wide range of folk types: a dozen versions of Child ballads, ditties about hard times in Kansas, and songs about Quakers and Mormons -- the last named probably of stage origin but bearing evidence of oral transmission. [md] (8) A single star marks a fairly representative collection. 13 Mr. Graham is completely absorbed in music and was usually to be found singing to himself, guitar in hand, so intent he was deaf to all but the most vigorous knocks on the door. He frequently spends Sunday at Alum Rock Park, singing for the amusement of picnickers; he was, however, wounded at the suggestion that he might make a little money by passing around the hat on these occasions. When he decided to go to the Fair on Treasure Island in 1939, he took his guitar along and it passed him in without a ticket. This surprised Mr. Graham, who then felt under obligation to make some return for the favor. He therefore established himself in one of the courts of the Exposition and sang all day to anyone who would listen. This of course prevented him from seeing any of the exhibits, but, as he said himself, he liked singing better, anyway. His guitar playing is fragmentary; the instrument is tuned at random and strummed rhythmically to provide a percussive background to his singing, with no attempt to make the accompaniment conform harmonically or in tonality to the melody. This sounds so strange to his family and friends that they would not believe his account of singing for the recording machine, so he had cards printed, a device highly convincing to skeptics. They

read:George Vinton Graham Singer of Old Songs to the University of California and the Library of Congress Esq. Composer of Pioneer Poetry

A second good California singer, John McCready, is a miner in Tuolumne County, the son of a Forty-Niner who returned to raise a family in Kansas. John and his three brothers came to California as young men and were famous music makers around Groveland and Second Garrote for many years. One of them is gone now, however, and Spencer, the fiddler, is too arthritic to play any more, though his head is full of tunes he can neither play nor sing. John, however, knows many of the songs his father sang, and, though he is nearly seventy, he several times walked the rocky trail from his cabin to Groveland to sing to the recording machine, refusing every inducement to ride down in an automobile -- a modern invention it was apparent he'd had no truck with so far. His songs are 14 full of vigor and fun; a few of them are farther removed than others from the sage repertory of the 'seventies and 'eighties.

The third ballad singer, Warde Ford, traveled by rod and thumb to California in 1939, from Wisconsin, where his family's songs had interested the writer for several years, although only a few of them were recorded there. He is about thirty-five, and, in company with his brothers Pat and Bogue Ford, all construction workers on the Shasta Dam, he has recorded over eighty songs. Several of the same songs were recorded by more than one member of the family, showing interesting divergencies. Thirteen Child ballads are in the repertory of these singers, which is representative of the songs current in Wisconsin logging camps one and two generations ago: songs of the sea, Irish come-all-ye's, vaudeville ditties, local lumber-camp ballads, and so on. About a dozen of Warde Ford's songs were learned by his father in Idaho lumber camps about 1900. In addition to 50 songs or so which Warde had teamed from either his mother or his father, just prior to his departure for California he learned a verse or two of another 25 songs from the singing of his uncles, Charles and Robert Walker, in order to make it possible to record the Walker songs with their tunes. Arthur Ford, a fourth brother still living in Wisconsin, who has had more formal education than the others, had already written down the texts from his uncles' dictation so that Warde could use them in recording when he arrived in California.

These are of course technically Wisconsin, or at least Great Lakes, songs, recorded at their migrating point to California. Warde Ford's unaccompanied singing has been in such demand at dances and other small gatherings in Shasta County since his arrival in California, however, that it is evident that the Ford-Walker family songs are continuing to spread. Early in 1941 Warde was drafted, and he is now at Camp Roberts, where he is frequently asked to sing informally in the barracks and at entertainments. "The House Carpenter," "King John and the Bishop of Canterbury," and "The

Hampshire Bite" are his personal favorites, and they alternate with "The Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder" and "The Letter Edged in Black" on his programs.

Two California fiddlers, both born and trained in the State, deserve particular mention. The first is Mrs. Ben Scott, who lives at Turlock Stanislaus County, in the San Joaquin Valley. She competes successfully with the men in fiddlers' contests the length and breadth of the State; she can't read a note and is glad of it. You can't keep both feet on the ground when Mrs. Scott begins to play. She learned to play the fiddle as a child, 15 in the foothills of the Coast Range east of the Salinas Valley. There was an old violin in the family which her older brothers encouraged her to play by equipping it gradually, one string at a time. When she could manage the G string, they saved up enough to buy her a D. When she could get around on those two strings, they added the A, and so on. She played on that fiddle for several years before it had all four of its strings, and she hasn't yet forgotten what a great moment it was when at last her fiddle was as complete as anybody's. Her large repertory includes some of the best of the fine American fiddle tunes, with some Irish and English ones for good measure. A second fine fiddler is Mr. John Selleck, who lives at Camino near Placerville. He can read notes; he learned most of his tunes from famous dance fiddlers of the period of the Gold Rush. He is also a notable performer on the 5-string banjo. His father was well known as a singer of old songs. A collection of his father's songs, or at least of songs selected by his father as having been heard during the Gold Rush period, was made by the county supervisor of music at one time. (9)

Most of the singers whose rather slight repertoires make up the balance of the E series recorded more or less fragmentary versions of songs they remembered hearing Forty-Niners sing: "The Dark-Eyed Sailor," "Lilly Dale," "Ella Ree," "The Captain with his Whiskers," and "Aunt Jemima," for example. Leon Ponce and Aaron Morgan of Columbia contributed "The Days of Forty-Nine" and "I've Been Digging on the Lode," respectively, the latter a variant of an Irish stage song widely current in the oral tradition across the northern United States. These two are the only songs recorded in this collection which are both of and about California. (10) Two "contemporary" ballads of an earlier era also recorded in Tuolumne County are amusing as a sociological record: "The Keeley Cure," sung by Sam Bell, and "Dr. Ridge's Food," sung by John Stone, who learned it during a stage of his colorful career when he functioned as come-on man for a medicine show. The cosmopolitan character of the mines seems to have lent great point to songs in crude dialect: Swedish, German, Chinese, and Italian. Most of these certainly originated on the [md] (9) A photostat copy of this collection is under strict reservation in the California Room of the California State Library at Sacramento. The songs have been provided with piano accompaniments. According to the younger Mr. Selleck, his father helped in the selection and checked the melodies against those in his large library of tunes of the day. The texts appear to have been completed from the songsters. (10) It is gratifying to have Mr. Robert W. Gordon's experience confirm the writer's belief in the extreme scarcity of authentic California folk

songs. Mr. Gordon found only two such songs: one is the well-known shanty, *On the Banks of the Sacramento*; the other is a hammer song sung by a Negro in the mines. 16 stage, probably in minstrel shows. They are still fairly widely sung, and illustrate the popular-to-folk cycle in its early stages. A Cornishman now living in Marin County, who sailed into San Francisco Bay in 1888, has devoted loving effort for many years to a study of the sea shanties he has heard; he recorded 16 of them, with his most careful attention to the right tempo.

The largest group of titles in Series M is the Spanish-Californian. These songs were recorded chiefly in Contra Costa and Monterey counties. While they are certainly typical of the songs circulating among Spanish-speaking Californians during the girlhood of the informants [md] between 1865 and 1885 [md] they seem to be of popular rather than folk origin, with the exception of a single lullaby which was recorded in both counties: "Lo, lo, lo, lo, tata," or "Lullaby of the Coyote." Mrs. Antoinette Little, who was brought up on an isolated ranch south of the Sur River and is an authority on early Monterey County history, recalls hearing this melody sung by Indian mothers in the servants' quarters of California ranchos, as they pulled rhythmically at the rope which swung their babies to sleep in hammocks slung over the parents' bed. The song would die down as the mother drifted off to sleep; let the baby cry out in the middle of the night, and the melody would start up again drowsily. About half of the Spanish-Californian songs were identified by Mrs. Little and others as current sixty years ago among the young men who serenaded their ladies nightly along Alvarado and neighboring streets in Monterey. Mrs. Jessie De Soto, the chief informant in Contra Costa County, married a descendant of the Pacheco who at one time owned most of Contra Costa County, with Mount Diablo thrown in for good measure. Mrs. Espinosa of Pacific Grove sang the largest group of songs from Monterey County. Hilda Duarte Brown of Monterey added a few of her Spanish-Californian grandmother's songs. Mrs. Brown's father, who still runs his picturesque ship chandlery on Alvarado Street near the wharves, befriended Robert Louis Stevenson when he was ill in Monterey.

Other songs in Spanish include a group recorded at a Mexican wedding [md] a wedding which was undertaken as a preliminary to the request for a priestly blessing of a new house and which was attended by several children of the bride and groom. A particularly beautiful group of songs from northern Spain was recorded by Maria Garcia, who was born near Oviedo in the Asturias and now runs a little restaurant in the oldest brick house in California, in Monterey. Another small group of songs in Spanish was recorded by Negro women from Puerto Rico, in Oakland. These 17 include a number of children's game songs. In general, Spanish-Californian informants prefer to sing the nostalgic love songs popular in their youth. These are sometimes of folk origin, but in general they are drawing-room music and show the effect of the taste for things Italian which characterized Latin-American society in the last quarter of the 19th century. Further search for the songs sung by

children, game songs and so on, would probably unearth more material which has been longer in the oral tradition.

A recording of great interest to California history is one which was made at Pala Mission, thanks to the helpful courtesy of Father Julian from Mission San Luis Rey. Five Indian women at Pala know a melody believed to have been taught the Pala Mission Indians by the first padres who came from near-by Mission San Luis Rey to establish the Pala asistencia in the first decade of the last century. These women (only one of whom speak a little English) sang a "Santos" in Spanish, to a melody of evident Gregorian origin. The singers, as it happens, came to Pala about 1906 from another California reservation. They learned this melody at Pala from an old man whose father was one of the original converts there. Pala is the only one of the California missions which still functions in accordance with the original intention of the Franciscans, who came to California as missionaries to the Indians. Spanish is the only language of the older Pala Indians. During the afternoon the writer commented on the emptiness of the little town, for a fine summer Sunday. A handsome young Indian woman explained: "The old people have all gone up the mountain to the fiesta at San Ysidro; the young people mostly went down to Ocean City today to see the beauty contest on the beach."

The Portuguese in California take historical precedence, in one sense, over the Spanish, since the discoverer of California, Cabrillo, was a Portuguese citizen, although he took possession of California for Spain because he was in the employ of the Spanish monarch. The music of Portuguese-speaking Californians recorded for this collection includes a group of dance melodies which seem to have died out in Portugal proper but are still sung in the Azores and, it is said, in Brazil: the "Ladrao," the "Pezinho," the "Bravos," the "Tirana," etc. The "Chamarrita," another Portuguese figure dance, is common among the Portuguese in California, who with some reason believe it to be the first dance of European origin to have been performed in the State.

The recordings include material from five of the nine islands in the Azores. In addition to several fados, both in major and in minor, there 18 are several Christmas songs and songs for the festivals of St. John and the Feast of the Holy Ghost, th latter the greatest celebration of the year for Azores Islanders. It is celebrated most picturesquely, perhaps, at Pescadero. Folk singing to the accompaniment of the old instruments is still popular among Portuguese of all ages in California. Improvised verses to the tinkling fado accompaniment on the Portuguese guitar and the "viola" (another type of guitar) are still tossed from one singer to another in certain country bars on Saturday night. A few of these were recorded. The largest part of the Portuguese collection, however, was recorded by a single informant, Mrs. Alice Lemos d'Avila, who as a child learned many folk songs in the Azores at the suggestion of her father. While she is not a trained singer, she is a person of cultivation and her singing is not of course characterized by the hearty vulgarity of the country

singer. The songs she knows are of great interest, particularly those connected with Christmas and the festival of St. John, and the collection is greatly indebted to her for much assistance.

Another group of islanders, this time the Gaelic-speaking Scotch from the Hebrides who live around San Francisco Bay, contributed sea songs and old love songs of great beauty; a few examples of the unique Hebridean work song, the waulking song, are included. The enormous repertory of these informants was scarcely touched; a great many more of these songs could be recorded from the same singers and their friends without difficulty. Many of their songs are variants of those published in the Kennedy-Fraser collection. One of the songs in this group comes from Canada, which has a large population of Hebrides Islanders around Vancouver. The song in question has many verses, all comparing the immigrant Gael with the Chinese, to the disadvantage of the former. The Gaelic-speaking newcomer, according to the song, tries to make himself over into an imitation North American in record time, dropping the language and traditions of the Old Country as fast as he can, and losing no chance to join the gnorant in poking fun at them. The Chinese, on the other hand, remain proud of their ancestry and their culture, no matter what ignoramus chooses to laugh at them, thus retaining their dignity and the respect of all right-thinking people.

An extraordinarily beautiful group of songs was recorded by Mr. Reuben J. Baboyan, the Armenian chef at the Hotel Fresno in Fresno. He sang 16 songs from the mountains of Van, where the music has been little touched by any Turkish influence. About half of his songs are dance songs. One of them has an amusing contemporary text making fun of the 19 Armenian girl of today in the United States, who, despite the fact that she is herself the daughter of a farmer, disdains any husband but a professional man. No farmer for her, but a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer.

An interesting group of recordings of instrumental music from the Near East was made to accompany drawings of the instruments, with the invaluable assistance of Mr. Bedros Haroutunian of Fresno and his friends. The usual instruments such as the oude and the kemancha are included, as well as the saz, the kanoon, the surni, and an interesting Kurdish shepherds' pipe called "syrinx" by its performer, although as it is a single flute that cannot be its true name. There are a number of songs and instrumental pieces showing strong Turkish influence, some from country people and some from Constantinople. One instrumental group composed of the oude (the modern lute), the violin (substituting for the kemancha), the clarinet (substituting for the kimata), the kanoon (a plucked instrument which looks like the zither, with a full banjolike tone), and the dumbeg (an hourglass drum) had among its members three men who had played together before coming to this country. They announced they could play five kinds of music: Armenian, Turkis, Greek, Syrian, and American jazz! Unfortunately there was only time for a few Armenian pieces (which consisted of songs about Armenia or from Armenia, played in Turkish popular style, as it proved). More

recordings from this group would doubtless illustrate culture mixtures in ways of significance to musicologists. Another interesting group among the instruments drawn and recorded is that from the Balkans: the gusla, the bagpipes, and a single and double flute.

Musically the most extraordinary recordings in the M series are those made in the homes of Molekani and during an evening service at the Molekan Church on Potrero Hill in San Francisco. The Molekani are a picturesque group of Russian dissidents from the Orthodox Church; they broke away from Catholicism for the same reasons that Luther did, believing there should be participation in the service by the entire congregation and that the leader should express himself spontaneously in the language of the people instead of following a set ritual in a strange tongue. The word Molekani means "milk drinkers"; that is, they are puritans, who do not drink, smoke, dance, or dress elaborately. Catherine the Great exiled the Molekani and sent them off to the far reaches of her empire, and they settled at the foot of Mount Ararat, in what is now Soviet Armenia. They came to the New World in 1905, at a time of great political unrest in Europe and the Near East, seeking religious and civil freedom much as the Puritans did. The elders in the group, handsome old men with long beards, are not only the religious, but also the civil governors of the community. Decisions are made by a revolving group of three men, after open discussion in the community meetings which follow the religious services twice a week. The women speak out in these meetings and are heard with respect. The writer's request for permission to record the service was discussed in one such meeting; it created much excitement and some indignation. A few of the older people were inclined to consider a sound recording to be a type of "image," which is forbidden by the tenets of their sect. However, the conservatives were talked down, and when the recording took place the man who had shaken his fist in the writer's face with a dramatic demand that the "moneychangers be cast out of the temple" proved to be the most interested and determined singer of all. The services consist of three prayers, each followed by the singing of a "psalm" (a chapter of the Bible sung by the whole congregation). Any member of the congregation may be moved to say a few words on some religious, moral, or public problem close to his heart, or to pray alone, at various times during the service. Occasionally even current events are discoursed upon in this way. During the evening service when the singing was recorded, one man stood up to explain some of the problems involved in sound recording. He was a carpenter who had helped build one of the big radio stations in San Francisco and was listened to with the respect due to a specialist.

The singing of the "psalms," as they are called, has its own elements of spontaneity. Anyone in the congregation may start the singing; usually this is done by one of a dozen men of some repute as singers, though the younger men are encouraged to attempt it also. A few words of the Bible chapter chosen by the leader are intoned by him; after a few syllables the congregation has its clue to the words and the melody and everybody joins in. It is said that every chapter in the Russian Bible has its

appropriate melody, each different. Actually, the melodies heard by the writer during ten or twelve services number no more than twenty, though there are undoubtedly others connected with special seasons of the year, with weddings and with funerals, which must be in current use.

As the emotions generated by the singing intensify, the song leader is expected to raise the pitch of successive verses. This is done consciously and was explained as expressing increased fervency; it is, however, hard to do. One young leader who was unable to start the verse at the new pitch quickly enough -- it must come in while the voices are singing the 21 last two or three tones of the preceding verse - was smiled at by everybody present and helped out by one of the older men. The men's and women's sections are each divided into high and low voices. One of the men's sections will take up the melody started by the leader; then the other three parts come in, adding a more or less free counterpoint to the simple, choralelike tune, which resembles the folk hymns of the Reformation. Single voices among the women occasionally break away from the main body to sing a descant. The higher parts often come in a seventh or a ninth above the melody; successive sevenths are not unusual. Some of the psalms are fairly close musically to Orthodox Russian choir singing; others are extraordinarily primitive. The greatest contrapuntal freedom, of course, occurs after the singing has gone on for some time, when the congregation has achieved a high pitch of excitement. Unfortunately, it was impossible to record the full range of the congregation's ardent religious expression because everyone was so interested in the recording that the singers invariably stopped politely every time the record was changed. The service should be recorded from outside the church, unknown to the congregation, before the harmonium recently bought for the Sunday School can affect the congregational singing. Detailed study of this music may be expected to reveal much about a little-known phase in the historical development of harmony.

Certainly the most reserved group of folkmusicians in California are the Basques. Many Spanish Basques in Pacific Grove sang gladly for the writer after some months' acquaintance; but record, no. This was music of, by, and for the Basques. A friend might be permitted to share it, but fundamentally it was considered pure Basque business, not to be bandied about on records that anyone might hear. Finally, however, a teacher of Basque descent was able to persuade an old lady, the cook in a small restaurant near the railroad station in Fresno, to record with her son. The Basque reserve broke down the minute the singers heard their own voices, and they made many suggestions for further recording. It should not be difficult to follow the connections of this one family out among the migratory shepherders in California valleys who are said to have made up numbers of songs about life in the United States, not all of them complimentary.

A few of the recordings were made at a Hungarian New Year's Eve party in Oakland in 1939. These include an especially fine Hungarian carol. One of the singers whose acquaintance was made that

night later recorded more Magyar folk songs. Many more songs could be obtained from this group. 22 Other music, small in amount but of real interest to the folklorist, was recorded by Sicilian fishermen in Martinez, by a young man from an island off northernmost Norway, and by a Finnish masseur in Berkeley, who knew the traditional melodies to which the Kalevala is chanted, though it was impossible to be sure that he had not used his small capacity for note reading to dig them out of a book he owns which contained them. He also sang some hearty drinking songs, some lyric Finnish songs, and two ballads. A few Icelandic rimur and a half-dozen of the modal tunes for the Passiupsalmar are also in the collection. The series of forty texts for these Passion psalms, one for each night of Lent, were adapted from the Bible by Hallgrimur Petursson, a 17th-century mystic. Each one is a simple religious folk drama. They are still sung during Lent on remote farms in Iceland, with members of the family appointed as characters in the drama, though any real attempt to act it out is now rare. Mr. Einarsson, who recorded these songs, was for many years a strong man in an American circus. He is the son of the handsome Icelander whose picture appears in Stefansson's book about Iceland. The rimur are a type of improvised verse which is of astonishing technical complexity.

There are a number of set forms for them, one of the most difficult of which must read the same, syllable by syllable, forward or backward. Others require the reappearance of a given syllable at regular intervals in a four-line verse, which must of course also make sense. Almost no living man can accomplish such difficult feats of improvisation nowadays, but simpler forms are still current, to be heard in Icelandic families in America on birthdays and holidays. Guests take turns in offering one rima after another in compliment to the host, for example. The recordings by Sigurd Bardarson of Seattle, which were made in Carmel, illustrate this. Mr. Bardarson also recorded some of the tunes to which he believed the Eddas were chanted, and some songs whose texts he had himself improvised or composed in Old Icelandic, set to well-known Icelandic folk tunes.

It should be evident from what has been said that the recording of the many folk traditions in California has only just begun. There is material enough now in the collection at Berkeley to provide a sound point of departure for study of the music of the Spanish-Californians, the Azores Islanders, the Hebrides Islanders, the Molekani, and the Armenians; but more could advantageously be added for all these groups. An attempt should be made to include representative music from all the minority groups in the state. The Chinese the Japanese, the Pacific Islanders, the South and Central Americans, the Persians, the Assyrians, the Syrians, 23 and the Sephardic Jews all have important material to contribute and are not now included at all. For most of these groups no such recordings as are now possible with modern technical resources are known to exist anywhere. As for the Chinese and Japanese, from whom the commercial companies have long since made thousands of recordings in the Orient, there is still an important job remaining to be done, namely,

the establishment of a large group of recordings adequately demonstrating the effect on traditional music of exposure to the musical pressures of the New World.

Nor is the record of music brought to California from other parts of the United States as rich as it might be. Mendocino, Lassen, Shasta, and Siskiyou counties may be expected to make solid contributions to reward the inquirer. This is particularly true of Siskiyou County, which was settled by Confederate soldiers from the southern mountains after the Civil War. Consistent search of the whole State, county by county, may be expected to yield a few more authentic Gold Rush ballads, scarce though these are. In general the regions most likely to produce pioneer music which has been more than one generation in California lie along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. But search should not be confined there; among the old inhabitants of any community in the State there may prove to be unexpected memories of pioneer folk songs which, however fragmentary, may yet serve to retrieve from oblivion a tune at present unknown.