ROOT HOG

OR DIE
In 1960, in an article written for the *Silence*, "we are all morally, emotionally, and aesthetically"...

He felt passionately that his role was to be their advocate, and that inspired his near-constant labors to carve out space in the radio, on TV and the concert stage, and, later in his life, in Hypercard and CD-ROM. And it was, to use his word, his way of representing his opus adequately within these parameters; with perhaps 1000 songs and 60 LPs, we'd get course of his seven-decade career, and to his dedication to disseminating and promoting it. Of course, there is no *that's all we got, you know. We're just culture. Cultural equity should join all the other important principles of human dignity, freedom of speech, freedom of...
In 1945, Al Kapp, head of Decca Records, the popular music juggernaut, hired Alan Lomax to assemble a “Folk Music Series” for the label. Lomax had recently left his post at the Library of Congress’ Archive of American Folk Song, for which he had lately served as “Assistant in Charge” and to which he—with his father John A. Lomax—contributed hundreds of hours of field recordings for preservation in perpetuity. Alan had launched the *Folk Music In America* series in 1942, a production of the Library’s Recording Laboratory, which drew on those recordings and others made under the Archive’s auspices by fieldworkers (largely supported by the WPA and associated federal initiatives) for limited commercial release. Kapp, however, was looking to make a much bigger splash, so Lomax’s first issues for Decca featured some of the marquee names of that early folk-pop axis—Carl Sandburg, Josh White, Richard Dyer-Bennett, and Burl Ives. The records sold well enough to embolden Lomax, in 1947, to turn his attention to the extensive Decca archives, which included their own pre-war commercial 78-rpm records of American vernacular music as well as those of the Brunswick-Vocalion group. He compiled a selection of these records, originally produced for the so-called “hillbilly” and “race” markets, in an album called *Listen To Our Story*.

It wasn’t the first mainstream reissue of pre-war records—that was the 1941 album *Smoky Mountain Ballads* that Alan had assembled for RCA Victor on his father’s behalf—but it was the first to combine records drawn from both black and white sources. Five years later Harry Smith would take this tack, acknowledging the influence of Lomax, in his *Anthology of American Folk Music* for Folkways Records. *Listen To Our Story* also came with a sing-along book with lyrics and musical notations—certainly the first ever produced to accompany the 78-rpm era output of the likes of Dock Boggs and Furry Lewis.

Charles Seeger, musicologist and father of Pete, Peggy, and Mike, reviewed the set favorably, alongside another Decca archival release of Alan’s called *Mountain Frolic*, in the *Journal of American Folklore*. But, speaking of
himself in the third person, Seeger added that “he should take Alan to task for evidence of a distinct weakness in his valiant championship of folk music in the modern world—a tendency to sentimentalization of ‘the folk’ and of the social and cultural role he believes it is playing.” Seeger concluded on what he called “a hopeful tone”: “If popularization of Anglo-American [and, presumably, African American] folk music never strays farther from its serious study than in these efforts, we have much to be thankful for.”

Any thoughtful consideration of Alan Lomax’s legacy must take into account his purported “sentimentality.” It’s no secret that he felt passionately about the music to which he devoted his life, and the people who had made that music. Perhaps his frankest expression of this sentiment is a remark he made in an address to a group of largely academic folklorists assembled for the Mid-Century International Folklore Conference at Indiana University in 1950:
It was in this address, entitled “Making Folklore Available,” that Lomax nudged the assembled academics to take advantage of the newly developed long-playing record format as a means of disseminating their field recordings outside the ivory tower, in order to, in Seeger’s words, play vital social and cultural roles. Lomax continued:

It is my feeling that the role of the folklorists is that of the advocate of the folk…. We have seen the profit-motivated society smashing and devouring and destroying complex cultural systems which have taken almost the entire effort of mankind over many thousands of years to create. We have watched the disappearance of languages, musical languages, the sign languages, and we’ve watched whole ways of thinking and feeling in relating to nature and relating to other people disappear. We’ve watched systems of cookery (and if you’re a lover of food, it hurts you right where you live) disappear from the face of the earth, and I think we have all been revolted by this spectacle and in one way or another have taken up our cudgels in the defense of the weaker parties.

There’s a conversion narrative of sorts; an experience, full of sentiment, that Lomax considered the moment when his mission as a folklorist was revealed to him. It was during his first recording trip, in the summer of 1933, when John A. and 17-year-old Alan visited the Smither Farm, north of Huntsville in the rural northern tip of Walker County, Texas. John explained to the plantation manager that they were looking for “made-up songs” from the black tenant farmers; the manager then took it upon himself to compel all the tenants and their families to gather in the schoolhouse that evening. The scene was uncomfortable. A few spirituals were sung before an old gentleman called Blue bravely volunteered a song he claimed to have composed that afternoon in the field, and that addressed the iniquities of the sharecropping system. After a few lines, he began to address the president, presumably expecting that his message would be brought back to Washington through these white folks from the Library of Congress.
In 1960, in an article written for the *Hi-Fi Stereo Review*...

Now Mr. President, you don't know how bad they're treating us folks down here. I'm singing to you and I'm talking to you so I hope you will come down here and do something for us poor folks in Texas.

Alan recalled this experience in 1979:

“When the record was over, we played it back and there was immense joy in this group because they felt they had communicated their problem to the big world.... They wanted those people at the other end of the line to hear what life was like for them. That's why they were singing for us; they wanted to get into the big network.... That experience totally changed my life. I saw what I had to do. My job was to try and get as much of these views, these feelings, this unheard majority onto the center of the stage.”

Lomax has been taken to task—in his lifetime but perhaps even more since his death, in 2002—for this sense of mission. It could, and often did, express itself in epic terms, generalizing when it should have specified, romanticizing when it might have made cooler, more objective considerations. In many instances his field notes were thin and hurried. This embarrassed him, as he aspired to being a scientific folklorist. So he read all the time—folklore, ethnology, biology. He focused on primary source data and drew extensively upon the work of colleagues in the academy, whom he both admired and envied. And his observations were keen, with a sophistication that deepened with every recording trip.

As much as he was a documentarian, he was a tireless and prolific promoter of what he documented. His public output traced an arc of media and technological advancement across seven decades: from instantaneously recorded disc to magnetic tape to stereo tape to video tape; in books and records, over the radio, on TV and the concert stage, and, later in his life, in Hypercard and CD-ROM. And it was, to use his word, his fundamental feeling for folk culture and folk communities that inspired his near-constant labors to carve out space in the mass popular culture for site-specific expressive traditions. He felt passionately that his role was to be their advocate, and his advocacy was passionate. “Underneath,” he explained at IU (where, he would later recall, he was greeted with frigid silence), “we are all morally, emotionally, and aesthetically involved with our material.... and there is no escape from that.”

In 1960, in an article written for the *Hi-Fi Stereo Review*...
about his time recording in Spain (1952–1953), Alan Lomax displayed this sense of involvement alongside a remarkable foresight:

*It is only a few sentimental folklorists like myself who seem to be disturbed by this prospect today, but tomorrow, when it will be too late—when the whole world is bored with automated mass-distributed video-music—our descendants will despise us for having thrown away the best of our culture.*

That prescience was two-fold: the arrival of MTV was closer to the publication of that piece than it is to the writing of this one. And then came YouTube, which Lomax never lived to see, but would have rejoiced in. YouTube is as close to a democratic means of self-presentation, self-representation, and self-dissemination of expressive activity as our contemporary civilization has managed yet. (To say nothing of it being an incredible boon for Lomax’s collections—of this writing, the Alan Lomax YouTube channel has had over 8.5 million views and has garnered nearly 23,000 subscribers, and has without a doubt introduced more people in more places to his life’s work than any outlet before.)

In fact, Lomax’s attachment to his material was not at all that of an antiquarian; nor was his motivation a quixotic attempt to keep folk culture and its practitioners mired in primitivism or some imagined state of purity. Although many of the local folk traditions Lomax held dear might be unrecognizable to him today, culture is seldom “thrown away.” It gets plowed up, turned under, rediscovered, recycled, brilliantly reconfigured or cheapened beyond all reckoning, or both. It’s always in process, and Alan Lomax knew this better than anyone. As a young man he hated jazz, seeing it as a corruptor of the rural black vernacular music he and his father collected in the early ‘30s. But in 1938, he recorded eight hours of Jelly Roll Morton’s reminiscences of turn-of-the-century New Orleans, "where the birth of jazz originated." It struck Alan then that that city—its gallimaufry of races and classes with their rich and messy and fraught creolized culture—was an ideal of American culture at large, and it hit him with the force of revelation. He later heard this essence in Michael Jackson and Prince, whom he loved. He rejoiced over the early iterations of hip hop; record-scratching; breakdancing.

Lomax’s concern, then, wasn't cultural synthesis. It was a centralized mediascape through which was broadcast an industrial American monoculture. "Too few transmitters and too many receivers" was his central complaint, his frustration with the myopic unilateralism of corporate programming through an “over-powerful, over-rich, over-reaching” communication system. His answer to this was what he termed “cultural equity”: the right for folk communities—what he called these “little bubbles of song and delight and ways of life and cookery”; the “hundreds of thousands of these little generators of the original”—to have their voices heard and their traditions represented. As he told Charles Kuralt in 1991:
In 1960, in an article written for the *Folk Song* (1960), "we are all morally, emotionally, and aesthetically inspired by the folk songs and dances we have collected."

He felt passionately that his role was to be their advocate, and to promote their preservation in the face of the mass popular culture for site-specific expressive traditions. His prolific promoter of what he documented. His public output was a fascinating and compelling attempt to keep folk expressive activity as our contemporary civilization has managed yet. (To say nothing of it being an incredible boon for Lomax's collections—of this writing, the Alan Lomax YouTube channel has had over 8.5 million views and 100,000 subscribers.)

An attempt to keep folk expressive activity as our contemporary civilization has managed yet. (To say nothing of it being an incredible boon for Lomax's collections—of this writing, the Alan Lomax YouTube channel has had over 8.5 million views and 100,000 subscribers.)

Any thoughtful consideration of Alan Lomax's legacy must take into account his purported "sentimentality." It's concluded on what cultural role he championed and the influence it had on the field of folkloristics. Perhaps his tendency to sentimentality was a consequence of his dedication to the preservation of this cultural heritage.

This set—100 songs across six LPs—has been compiled in honor of Alan Lomax, born in Austin, Texas, on January 31, 1915, in his centennial year. It's a salute to the breadth and depth of music he recorded over the course of his seven-decade career, and to his dedication to disseminating and promoting it. Of course, there is no way of representing his opus adequately within these parameters; with perhaps 1000 songs and 60 LPs, we'd get there. Knowing, then, that such a project could only offer the most partial representation of Alan's life's work, we've made no attempt to be geographically, temporally, or stylistically thorough. We tried at first to mix so-called "seminal" performances with under-heard or unheard pieces, but were pulled in the direction of the unknown. The most arguably "seminal" of Lomax's recordings—those with the greatest influence on popular culture—are easily found on the websites of Lomax's Association for Cultural Equity and the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center, and in diverse iterations on records, tapes, CDs, public library shelves, YouTube playlists, iTunes, etc. Our feeling was that a more engaging, more exciting, and perhaps more appropriate tribute to Lomax would concentrate on voices and performances that have scarcely circulated or have yet to be heard.

We've omitted all but one* of the recordings made between 1933 and 1935 by Alan with his father, John A. Lomax. This two-year period was a prolific one for father and son, as well as for what was then called the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress, which received and continues to house all the discs....
they recorded in the field. It could easily be the subject of a 100-, or 200-, or 500-song set of its own. By excluding that material from consideration, the selection process became slightly less arduous, and we could focus on recording sessions in which Alan Lomax was the chief investigator.

This set could well be recompiled for the next 100 years, with no repetition of selections and no ebb of quality. This is proof of the fundamental subjectivity of the compilation you’re holding, which is nonetheless offered to you with the hope that it will delight, thrill, astonish, and enlighten. It’s offered to Alan Lomax, as a token of appreciation and awe of the life he led and the contributions he made. And most of all it’s offered as a tribute to the people who made this music; whose innate creativity and humanity impelled them sing it, play it, and dance it, with little reward past the churning, thumping, howling affirmation of being extraordinarily alive.

—Nathan Salsburg, Louisville, Kentucky. August 2015.

* “Go Down Old Hannah” (record 1, side 2, band 3) is included because it’s both particularly illustrative of the material recorded by the Lomaxes during their first year of field documentation (1933) and a remarkable and deeply affecting performance. Alan recalled it in 1991: “I had heard all the symphonies there were and all the chamber music and the best jazz and I said, this is the greatest music. There were fifty black men who were working under the whip and the gun and they had the soul to make the most wonderful song I ever heard.”
SIDE 1A
1. Alan Lomax: I'm A Rambler, I'm A Gambler
Lomax, vocal and guitar. 1959.

2. Sonny Boy Williamson, Memphis Slim, and Big Bill Broonzy: I Could Hear My Name A Ringin'
Williamson, vocal and harmonica; Slim, piano; Broonzy, bass.

3. Frederick McQueen and group: Sand Gone In My Cuckoo Eye
McQueen, lead vocal, with unidentified men, vocals. Sponge dock, Nassau, Bahamas. July 1935.

4. United Sacred Harp Musical Association: New Prospect
56th Annual United Sacred Harp Musical Association Convention, vocals.
Corinth Baptist Church, Fyffe, Alabama. September 12, 1959.

5. Abraham "Aapoo" Juhani: Finnish Waltz*

6. Rosa Lee Hill: Faro*
Hill, vocal and guitar. Como, Mississippi, September 25, 1959.

7. Jasimuddin: banshi instrumental*


4. Dennis McGee: Madame Young / Mon Chère Bébé Créole*
McGee, vocal and fiddle. Eunice, Louisiana, August 9, 1983.

5. Margaret Barry: Her Mantle So Green

6. Beatrice Dick and group: Meet Me On the Road (Carriacou 1962)
Dick, lead vocal, with mixed group, vocals and hand-clapping. La Resource, Carriacou, Grenada. August 2, 1962.

7. Luigino Scolo and Pietro Guerrasi: Nnuena (Christmas novena)
Scolo, vocal; Guerrasi, can flute; unidentified guitar, snare drum, and tambourine. Modica, Sicily. July 12, 1954.


9. Isla Cameron: Pu'in Bracken (Pulling Bracken)
Cameron, vocal. Glasgow, Scotland. August 1951.

SIDE 1B
1. Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton: Alabama Bound

2. Clark Kessinger and band: Sally Ann Johnson
Kessinger, fiddle; Gene Meade, guitar; Wayne Hauser, banjo.

3. Church of God In Christ congregation: Amen, Amen, Amen*

SIDE 2A
1. Neal Morris: Sing Anything

2. Banda de Castelló de la Ribera: Como Las Propias Rosas

3. Church of God In Christ congregation: Amen, Amen, Amen*

SIDEB
1. Skip James: Cherry Ball Blues

2. Son House: Downhearted Blues*

3. Baile de Ibio (Warrior Dance)*
Unidentified bigaro (warrior) and drums. Zaragoza, Aragón, October 13 or 14, 1952.
4. John Steven: Big Kilmarnock Bonnet.  

5. La Roux Chayopye: Chèz-O, Prete M Yon Chèz-O (Chair, Oh! Let Me Have A Chair) 
Unidentified vakin-s (single-note trumpet); tchatcha (rattle); grij (scrapper); sifle (whistle). Pont Beudet, Haiti. January 1937.

6. Wade Ward: Train On the Island* 

7. Elmer Barton: Arkansas Traveler* 


**SIDE 3A**
1. Almeda Riddle: Down In Arkansas* 
Riddle, vocal. Greers Ferry, Arkansas. October 6 or 7, 1959.


3. McKinley Peebles andJessie Jones: You Got To Reap What You Sow / A Little Talk With Jesus Makes It Right 

4. Harvey Porter: Since You Have Disdained Me I’ll Cross the Deep Blue Sea* 

5. Canray Fontenot, Bois Sec Ardoin, and Freeman Fontenot: Bonsoir Moreau* 

6. Bill Broonzy: In A Shanty In Old Shanty Town* 

7. Jimmy MacBeath: Tramps and Hawkers* 
MacBeath, vocal. At the Edinburgh People’s Festival Ceilidh, Edinburgh, Scotland. August 30, 1951.

8. Charles Barnett: Remember Jesus Died When He Was Young* 


**SIDE 3B**
1. John Davis and the Georgia Sea Island Singers: Read ’Em John* 
Davis, lead vocal, with Mable Hillery, Bessie Jones, and Emma Lee Ramsey, vocals. Central Park, New York City. August 1965.

2. Unidentified men: strigaturi* 

3. Unidentified women: Flirtation Dance* 
Unidentified, vocals, with Christopher Conner, guitar. Women’s League of the South Hill Methodist Church, South Hill Village, Anguilla. July 4, 1962.

4. Brendan Behan: Zoological Gardens* 

5. Pretty White Eagles, Mardi Gras Indians: Indian Red* 

6. Compagna Sacco: Lenga Serpentina (Serpent Tongue) 

7. Emma Hammond: Laura Lee* 

8. Elizabeth Austin and group: Sailing In the Boat When the Tide Run Strong 
Austin and unidentified women, vocals and hand-clapping. Old Bight, Cat Island, Bahamas. July 1935.


10. Fred McDowell: Lord Have Mercy 

**SIDE 4A**
1. Vera Ward Hall: When I Can Read My Titles Clear* 
Hall, vocal. At Alan Lomax’s apartment, Greenwich Village, New York City. May 23, 1948.

2. Fiddlin’ Joe Martin and group: Going to Fishing 
Martin, vocal and washboard; Willie Brown, guitar; Leroy Williams, harmonica. At Clack’s store, Lake Cormorant, Mississippi. August 24-31, 1941.

3. Harry Cox: Cruising Round Yarmouth†


5. Dawson "Little Daugh (or Daw)" Henson: Fare You Well My Little Annie Darling* Henson, vocal and guitar. Botto on Billy's Branch, near Manchester, Clay Co., Kentucky. October 11, 1937.

6. Herth Colaire and group: Join This Food Campaign* Colaire with Ursula Landa, Ruthie Phelbert, Bertina Vigilant, and Boniface Vigilant, vocals. La Plaine, Dominica, June 25, 1962.

7. Cedar Place children: My Gal's A Corker Unidentified among the following: Jack Mearns, Kathleen Mearns, Pat Cushnie, Jennifer Cushnie, Jim Hunter, Willie Hunter, Norma Watt, Tom Watt, Arthur Ronald, Christopher Ronald, and/or Gwen Ronald, vocals. At the home of John Mearns, 5 Cedar Place, Aberdeen, Scotland. July 15, 1951.


SIDE 4B

1. Uncle Alec (Eck) Dunford: Memories of the 1940 National Folk Festival / Fisher's Hornpipe* Dunford, vocal and fiddle, with Uncle Charlie Higgins, fiddle. At the Seventh Annual Old Fiddler's Convention, Felts Park, Galax, Virginia. July or August 1941.

2. Duke of Iron and group: Calypso Invasion Duke of Iron (Cecil Anderson), vocal and cuatro, with Gerald Clark and His Invaders: Clark, leader and guitar; Victor Pacheco, fiddle; Gregory Felix, clarinet; Albert Morris, piano; "Hi" Clark, double bass; Simeon or DeLeon (full names unknown), percussion. "Calypso AtMidnight" concert at Town Hall, New York City. December 21, 1946.


8. Sid Hemphill and group: So Soon I'll Be At Home Hemphill, vocal and fiddle; Lucius Smith, banjo; Alec Askew, guitar; Will Head, bass drum. At a picnic at the Funky Fives (a.k.a. Po' Whore's Kingdom), near Sledge, Mississippi. August 15, 1942.

SIDE 5A


7. Unidentified street vendor: Coco rico de la Habana (Good coconuts from Havana)* Unidentified man, vocal. At the San Agustin market, Grenada, Andalucia, Spain. September 8, 1952.

SIDE 5B

1. Babsy McQueen and group: Roll Roll Roll and Go McQueen, lead vocal, with mixed group, vocals. La Fortune, Grenada. August 5, 1962.


4. Cecil Augusta: Stop All the Buses

5. Troupe of Monsieur Mohamed ben Abderrahmane: Ya Malikna
     (Oh, Our King)*
     Tahar ben Larbi, lead vocal, with Abdelkader ben Abderrahmane,
     Mohamed ben Abderrahmane, Mohamed ben Lakhalifa, and
     Ahmed Benjilali, bendir, darbaka, nay, and hand-clapping (precise roles unspecified).
     At a wedding in Erfoud, Errachidia, Meknès-Tafilalet, Morocco.
     September 17, 1967.

6. Epifanio Capellán and group:
     Yo Sí La Quería*
     Capellán, vocal and accordion, with unidentified güira, tambora, and vocals.
     Dominican Republic. 1967.

7. Raphael Hurtault and group:
     Di Yo Pa Hele Pou Nou

8. Sophie Loman Wing and group: I'll Be Waiting There*
     Wing, lead vocal (although it has been argued that Zora Neale
     Hurston is the foremost lead), with mixed group, vocals. Frederica, St. Simons Island, Georgia.
     June 1935.

**SIDE 6A**

1. "22" and group: Early In the Morning
     "22" (Benny Will Richardson), lead vocal and axe, with "Tangle Eye" (Walter Jackson), "Hard Hat" (Willie Lacey), and "Little Red," vocals and axes.
     Camp B, Parchman Farm (Mississippi State Penitentiary), Mississippi. November or December 1947.

2. Rev. Olsie Cowan and Spiritual Baptist Congregation: Prayer/Doption*
     Cowan with John D. Smith (Priest), Medford Joshua (Priest), Bennette Baptist (Sexton), Percival Joshua (Treasurer),
     Florence Cowan (Mother Superior), Mary McSween (Mother Healer), Adris Matisse (Mother Assistant), Emelda Smith (Mother Assistant), Elena Paul (Nurse), and Sister Jacob (Nurse), vocals and hand-clapping. At the home of Louise St. Hill, Syne Village, Trinidad. May 1, 1962.

3. Jean Ritchie: Nottamun Town*

4. Inez Muñoz and Grupo de Cádiz: Fandango de Comares*
     Muñoz, vocal and castanets; Antonio de Avila, guitar; unidentified, bandurria.

5. Dennis McGee: Two Step de Eunice*

6. Belton Sutherland: Blues #2*
     Sutherland, vocal and guitar. At the home of Clyde Maxwell, near Canton, Madison Co., Mississippi.

7. Mark Anderson: High Force Agricultural Show*
     Anderson, vocal.

8. Unidentified Amazigh man: Al-Hamdulillah (Thanks Be to God)*

**SIDE 6B**

1. Southern Fife & Drum Corps: Little and Low (Oree/Ida Reed)*
     (NYC 1965)
     Ed Young, vocal and fife; Lonnie Young, Sr., snare drum; G.D. Young or Lonnie Young, Jr., bass drum. Central Park, New York City. August 1965.

2. Francilia: Mèt Kafou Men Djab-la (Master of the Crossroads, Here Is the Devil)
     Francilia (surname unknown), vocal. At the Môses compound,
     Carrefour Dufort, Haiti. April 7-12, 1937.

3. Kitty Gallagher: Keen for a dead child

4. Fred and Annie Mae McDowell: Jesus Gonna Make Up My Dying Bed
     Fred, vocal and guitar; Annie Mae, vocal. Como, Mississippi.
     September 25, 1959.

5. Ballinakill Ceilidhe Band: Grace's Favorite*
     Aggie Whyte, fiddle; Bridie Whyte, fiddle; John Dervan, fiddle; Thomas Rourke, accordion; Martin Grace, accordion; Eddie Moloney, flute; Jack Coughlan, flute. At the railroad hotel, Galway City, Co. Galway, Ireland. February 1, 1951.

6. Bascom Lamar Lunsford: Free A Little Bird*
     Lunsford, vocal and banjo. At the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, Asheville, North Carolina.
     July or August 1941.

7. John Strachan: Mormond Braes
     Strachan, vocal. At the Edinburgh People's Festival Ceilidh, Edinburgh, Scotland. August 30, 1951.

8. Bright Light Quartet: I'm Tired

9. Dolores Fernández Geijo: Duermete, niño angelito (Sleep, angel baby)*

10. Unidentified men: I Bid You Goodnight

*Previously unreleased
†Previously unreleased in its entirety
AN APPEAL FOR CULTURAL EQUITY
BY ALAN LOMAX

Alan Lomax at the Palma Festival, Palma de Mallorca, Spain, June 1952.


In our concern about the pollution of the biosphere we are overlooking what may be, in human terms, an even more serious problem. Man has a more indirect relation to nature than most other animals because his environmental tie is normally mediated by a cultural system. Since human adaptation has been largely cultural rather than biological, human subspecies are rather the product of shifts in learned culture patterns than in genetically inherited traits. It is the flexibility of these culture patterns—composed of technique, social organization, and communication—that has enabled the human species to flourish in every zone of the planet.

Man, the economist, has developed tools and techniques to exploit every environment. Man, the most sociable of animals, has proliferated endless schemes which nurture individuals from birth to old age. Man, the communicator, has improvised and elaborated system upon system of symboling to record, reinforce, and reify his inventions. Indeed, man’s greatest achievement is in the sum of the lifestyles he has created to make this planet an agreeable and stimulating human habitat.

Today, this cultural variety lies under threat of extinction. A grey-out is in progress which, if it continues unchecked, will fill our human skies with smog of the phony and cut the families of men off from a vision of
their own cultural constellations. A mismanaged, over-centralized electronic communication system is imposing a few standardized, mass-produced, and cheapened cultures everywhere.

The danger inherent in the process is clear. Its folly, its unwanted waste is nowhere more evident than in the field of music. What is happening to the varied musics of mankind is symptomatic of the swift destruction of culture patterns all over the planet.

One can already sense the oppressive dullness and psychic distress of those areas where centralized music industries, exploiting the star system and controlling the communication system, put the local musician out of work and silence folk song, tribal ritual, local popular festivities and regional culture. It is ironic to note that during this century, when folklorists and musicologists were studying the varied traditions of the peoples of the earth, their rate of disappearance accelerated. This worries us all, but we have grown so accustomed to the dismal view of dead or dying cultures on the human landscape, that we have learned to dismiss this pollution on the human environment as inevitable, and even sensible, since it is wrongly assumed that the weak and unfit among musics and cultures are eliminated in this way.

Not only is such a doctrine anti-human; it is very bad science. It is false Darwinism applied to culture—especially to its expressive systems, such as music, language and art. Scientific study of cultures, notably of their languages and their musics, shows that all are equally expressive and equally communicative. They are also equally valuable; first, because they enrich the lives of the people who use them, people whose very morale is threatened when they are destroyed or impoverished; second, because each communicative system (whether verbal, visual, musical, or even culinary) holds important discoveries about the natural and human environment; and third, because each is a treasure of unknown potential, a collective creation in which some branch of the human species invested its genius across the centuries.

With the disappearance of each of these systems, the human species not only loses a way of viewing, thinking, and feeling but also a way of adjusting to some zone on the planet which fits it and makes it livable; not only that, but we throw away a system of interaction, of fantasy and symbolizing which, in the future, the human race may sorely need. The only way to halt this degradation of man’s culture is to commit ourselves to the principle of cultural equity, as we have committed ourselves to the principles of political, social, and economic justice. As the reduction in the world’s total of musical languages and dialects continues at an accelerating and bewildering
pace, and their eventual total disappearance is accepted as inevitable, in what follows I will point to ways in which we can oppose this gloomy course.

Let me deal first with the matter of inevitability. Most people believe that folk and tribal cultures thrive on isolation, and that when this isolation is invaded by modern communications and transport systems, these cultures inevitably disappear. This “ain’t necessarily so.” Isolation can be as destructive of culture and musical development as it is of individual personality. We know of few primitive or folk cultures that have not been continuously in contact with a wide variety of other cultures. In fact, all local cultures are linked to their neighbors in large areal and regional sets. Moreover, those cultures in the past which grew at the crossroads of human migrations, or else at their terminal points, have usually been the richest. One thinks here for example of independent but cosmopolitan Athens, of the central Valley of Mexico, of the Northwest coast of North America, the Indus Valley, the Sudan in Africa where black culture encountered Middle Eastern civilization across millennia—such a list would include most of the important generative culture centers of human history. I say then that cultures do not and never flourished in isolation, but have flowered in sites that guaranteed their independence and at the same time permitted unforced acceptance of external influences. During most of man’s history contact between peoples did not usually mean that one culture swallowed up or destroyed another. Even in the days of classical empire, vassal states were generally permitted to continue in their own lifestyle, so long as they paid tribute to the imperial center. The total destruction of cultures is largely a modern phenomenon, the consequence of laissez-faire mercantilism, insatiably seeking to market all its products, to blanket the world not only with its manufacture, but with its religion, its literature and music, its educational and communication systems.

Non-European peoples have been made to feel that they have to buy “the whole package,” if they are to keep face before the world. Westerners have imposed their lifestyle on their fellow humans in the name of spreading civilization or, more lately, as an essential concomitant of the benefits of industry. We must reject this view of civilization, just as we must now find ways of curbing a runaway industrial system which is polluting the whole planet. Indeed, industrial and cultural pollution are two aspects of the same negative tendency.

It is generally believed that modern communication systems must inevitably destroy all local cultures. This is because these systems have largely been used for the benefit of the center and not as two-way streets. Today, artists everywhere are losing their local audiences, put out of countenance by electronic systems manipulated

*Spiritual Baptist service (Vol. 6), Syne Village, Trinidad, May 1962.*
force in man’s struggle for cultural equity and against the pollution of the human environment.

All cultures need their fair share of the air-time. When country folk or tribal peoples hear or view their own traditions in the big media, projected with the authority generally reserved for the output of large urban centers, and when they hear their traditions taught to their own children, something magical occurs. They see that their expressive style is as good as that of others, and, if they have equal communicational facilities, they will continue it. On my last field trip to the West Indies, I took along two huge stereo loudspeakers and in every village where I worked I put on a thunderous three-dimensional concert of the music of the place that I had recorded. The audiences were simply transported with pleasure. In one island, the principal yearly people’s festival, discontinued for a decade, was revived the next year in all its richness.

The flowering of black orchestral music in New Orleans came because the black musicians found steady, high-paying jobs and prestige in the amusement district and thus had time to re-orchestrate African style and then record this local music for export to the whole world.

The origin of the so-called “Nashville sound” is another case in point. Nashville was once the sleepy capital of the state of Tennessee. In the 1920s a Nashville radio station began to broadcast the music of the nearby Appalachian Mountains between advertising announcements. These particular local audiences bought products so enthusiastically that other southern radio stations followed suit by employing local musicians. This provided the economic base for the development of a vigorous modern southern rural musical tradition. Today it has several indigenous forms of orchestration which match the storied folk orchestras of Spain and Central Europe in virtuosity. Nashville has become the music capital of the U.S. because the once scorned style it purveys—reedy-voiced solo ballads accompanied by string instruments—has always been a favored style of the majority of white working-class Americans. This extraordinary event was taking place while most American intellectuals were bewailing the demise of American folk music. The reason that this tradition has survived was that talented local performers got time on the air to broadcast it to local and regional audiences.
Nashville and other such new folk culture capitals are, at present, exceptions and accidents, but it is our responsibility to create others. By giving every culture equal time on the air and its equal local weight in the education systems, we can bring similar results around the world. Instant communications systems and recording devices, in fact, make it possible for oral traditions to reach their audience, to establish their libraries and museums, and to preserve and record their songs, tales, and dramas directly in sound and vision without printing them in another medium. Over a loudspeaker the counterpoint of the Mbuti pygmies is just as effective as a choir singing Bach. Thus neither contact nor rapid communication need inevitably destroy local traditions. The question is one of decentralization. We must overcome our own cultural myopia and see to it that the unwritten, nonverbal traditions have the status and the space they deserve.

Another harmful idea from the recent European past which must be dealt with holds that there is something desirable about a national music—a music that corresponds to a political entity called a nation. In fact, state-supported national musics have generally stifled musical creativity rather than fostered it. It is true that professional urban musicians have invented and elaborated a marching music, a salon music, a theater music, and various popular song types, yet the price has been the death of the far more varied music-making of regional localities. Italy, a country I know well, is, in almost every valley, a local musical dialect of enormous interest, largely unknown to the rest of the country. Those myriads of song traditions are being drowned by a well-intended national communications system which, in the name of national unity, broadcasts only the fine art and popular music of the large cities. Cut off from its roots, Italian pop music, of course, becomes every day more and more dependent on Tin Pan Alley.

Nations do not generate music. They can only consume it. Indeed our new system of national consumption of music via national communications systems is depriving the musical creator of the thing he needs most next to money—a local, tribal or regional audience that he can sing directly for. I think it may be stated flatly that most creative developments in art have been the product of small communities or small independent coteries within...
large entities—like the Mighty Five in Russia, like the small Creole Jazz combos of New Orleans.

Real musicians, real composers, need real people to listen to them, and this means people who understand and share the musical language that they are using. It seems reasonable, therefore, that if the human race is to have a rich and varied musical future, we must encourage the development of as many local musics as possible. This means money, time on the air, and time in the classroom.

Furthermore, we need a culturally sensitive way of defining and describing musical style territories and thus providing a clear, existential rationale for their continued development. During the past decade, a system of speedily analyzing and comparing of musical performances cross-culturally has been developed in the anthropology department at Columbia University. The system is called Cantometrics, a word which means the measure of song or song as a measure. The measures comprising Cantometrics are those that we found, in actual practice, to sort out the main styles of the whole of human song. The rating scales of Cantometrics give a holistic overview of song performance: (a) the social organization of the performing group, including solo or leader dominance; (b) its musical organization, scoring level of vocal blend and the prominence of unison or of multi-parted tonal and rhythmic organization; (c) textual elaboration; (d) melodic elaboration in terms of length and number of segments and features of ornamentation; (e) dynamics; (f) voice qualities.

More than 4,000 recorded examples from 350 cultures from every culture area were judged in this way. The computer assembled profiles of style from those 250 outlines, compared them, and clustered them into families, thus mapping world culture areas. It appears that ten plus regional song traditions account for a majority of world song styles. These regional style traditions are linked by close ties of similarity into 4 supra-continental style horizons.
When each of the stylistic zones is subjected to multi-factor analysis on its own—that is, when the musical profiles of its representative cultures are compared—we find a set of about 50 cultural territories that match in an amazing way those already known to anthropologists and ethnographers. From this finding we can draw two important conclusions for the defense of mankind’s musical heritage. First, it is now clear that culture and song styles change together, that expressive style is firmly rooted in regional and real culture developments, and that it can be thought of in relation to the great regional human traditions.

Second, each of these style areas has clear-cut geographical boundaries and thus, a general environmental character and distinctive socioeconomic problems. The people within these areas can see themselves as carriers of a certain expressive tradition and, sensing their genuine kinship with other cultures of the territory, can begin to develop the base lines for the local civilizations that are needed to protect their often underprivileged and under-voiced cultures. These discoveries compensate somewhat for the recent tendency of folklorists and anthropologists to emphasize the distinctions between neighboring and similar tribes and localities to the extent that neither natives nor experts could develop a practical cultural politics. Local or tribal folk styles should receive support and an equitable share of media time, not only on their own part, but as representatives of these larger regional traditions.

In traditional music, then, we can discover a testimony to man’s endless creativity and a rationale for the advocacy of planetary cultural and expressive equity. We are impelled to a defense of the musics of the world as socially valuable because:

1. They serve as the human baseline for receiving and reshaping new ideas and new technologies to the varied lifestyles and environmental adaptations of world culture;
2. They perpetuate values in human systems which are only indirectly connected with level of productivity, and they give women and men—old and young—a sense of worth;
3. They form a reservoir of well-tested lifestyles out of which species can construct the varied and flexible multicultural civilizations of the future; since they are living symbol systems, they have growth potential of their own. As such they are the testing grounds for the social and expressive outcomes of human progress.

Practical men often regard these expressive systems as doomed and valueless. Yet, wherever the principle of cultural
equity comes into play, these creative wellsprings begin to flow again. I cite only a few of the many examples known to me: the magnificent recrudescence of the many-faceted carnival in Trinidad as a result of the work of a devoted committee of folklorists backed by the Premier; the renaissance of Rumanian panpipe music when the new Socialist regime gave the last master of the panpipe a chair in music at the Rumanian Academy of Music; the revival of the five-string banjo in my own country when a talented young man named Peter Seeger took up its popularization as his life’s work; the pub singing movement of England which involved a generation of young people in traditional ballad singing; the recognition of Cajun and Creole music which has led to the renewal of Cajun language and culture in Louisiana. These and a host of other cases that might be mentioned show that even in this industrial age, folk traditions can come vigorously back to life, can raise community morale, and give birth to new forms if they have time and room to grow in their own communities. The work in this field must be done with tender and loving concern for both the folk artists and their heritages. This concern must be knowledgeable, both about the fit of each genre to its local context and about its roots in one or more of the great stylistic traditions of humankind. We have an overarching goal—the world of manifold civilizations animated by the vision of cultural equity.
CHRONOLOGY OF FIELD TRIPS

This very cursory overview of Alan Lomax’s field-recording trips is culled from a comprehensive list of Lomax family recording activities spanning 1908 to 1991, compiled by Nicholas Fournier, Todd Harvey, Nathan Salsburg, and Bertram Lyons, and accessible through the American Folklife Center’s website, www.loc.gov/folklife. Refer to it for detailed location, date, and discographical information where applicable.

1933.

With John A. Lomax.
May. Texas.
June-July. Louisiana.
Aug. Tennessee, Kentucky.
Sept. Virginia.
Dec. Texas (1.B3).

1934.

With John A. Lomax.
Feb-June. Texas.
June-Aug. Louisiana.
Nov. Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina.
Dec. Washington, DC.

1935.

May. Texas.
Sept. With Mary Barnicle. New York City.

1936.


1937.

June-July. Washington, DC. (All instances of DC recordings were made at the Library of Congress)
Nov. New York City; Maryland.

1938.

March-April. With Elizabeth Lomax. Ohio; Indiana.
June. Pennsylvania.
June. With Kay Dealy. New Jersey; Washington, DC.
July-Nov. Michigan (1.A5; 1.B5; 4.B4); Wisconsin; and Illinois.

1939.

Jan. With Pete Seeger. Virginia; Washington, DC.
May. New York City.

1940.

Jan. Virginia.
March; July. With Jerome Wiesner. Washington, DC.
Aug. Washington, DC.

1941.

Feb. Virginia; Washington, DC.
May-June. With Elizabeth Lomax. Mexico (unknown locations); Texas.
Georgia; North Carolina; and Virginia (4.B1).
Aug-Sept. With Elizabeth Lomax and Lewis Jones. Mississippi (2.A3; 4.A2); Tennessee; Arkansas;
Virginia.
Dec. Washington, DC.

1942.

June. With Josephine Schwartz. Washington, DC.
Aug. Tennessee; Kentucky (with George Pullen Jackson); Virginia.

1943.

Aug. Washington, DC; Missouri.

1944.

Date unknown. New York City.

1946.


1947.

March. New York City.

1948.


1949.

April. New Orleans (1.B8).

1950.

[Date unknown.] New York City (1.A6).

1951.

[Date unknown.] Suffolk.
[Date and place unknown.] England (1.B7).
Jan-Feb. **Ireland**: Counties Dublin; Cork; **Galway (6.B5); Donegal (6.B3)**; Cavan.
Feb-April. London.
May. **Dublin (3.B4)**.
June-Aug. With Hamish Henderson. **Scotland**: Edinburgh (3.A7; 6.B7); Glasgow (2.A9); Invernesshire; South Uist; Benbecula; Barra; **Aberdeenshire (2.B4; 4.A7)**; Banffshire; Fife.

1952.

[Date unknown.] **London (3.A2)**.
April. Cornwall.
May. **Paris (3.A6)**.
Aug.-Dec. With Jeanette “Pip” Bell. **Spain**: Cataluña; Balearic Isles — Formentera; Ibiza; **Mallorca (6.A4); Valencia (2.A2)**; País Vasco; **Andalucía (5.A7)**; Castilla-La Mancha; Extremadura; **Aragón (2.B3)**; Asturias; Castilla y León (6.B9); Cantabria; Galicia; Murcia; Madrid; Navarra.

1953.

Jan. País Vasco; Navarra, Spain.
October. Norfolk; Suffolk, England.

1954.

July-Oct.; Dec. With Diego Carpitella. **Italy**: **Sicily (2.A7)**; Calabria; Puglia; **Campania (3.A9; 4.B5)**; Friuli-Venezia Giulia; **Lombardia (1.A4)**; Piemonte; Valle d’Aosta; **Liguria (3.B6)**; Emilia-Romagna; Abruzzi; Marche; Toscana.

1955.

Jan. With Diego Carpitella. Campania, Italy.
April. London.

1956.

[Dates unknown.] **London**.

1957.

Dec. **London (5.A4)**.

1958.

May. London.
July. London.

1959.

[Date unknown.] **New York City (4.A4)**.
1960.
   [Date unknown.] Soller, Spain.
   April-May. With Anna Lomax. Georgia; Virginia (3.A8; 6.B8); Puerto Rico.

1961.

1962.
   April-Aug. With Antoinette "Toni" Marchand and Anna Lomax. Eastern Caribbean: Trinidad (6.A2) and Tobago; Martinique; Dominica (4.A6; 5.B7); Nevis (1.A3); St. Kitts; Anguilla (3.B3); Guadeloupe; St. Lucia; Grenada (2.A6; 5.B1).

1963.

1964.
   Dec. New York City.

1965.

1966.

1967.
   [Date unknown.] Dominican Republic (5.B6); Sint Eustatius (4.A8).
   Sep. Morocco: Ouarzazate (6.A8); Al Hoceima; Azilal; Chefchaouen; El Haouz; Errachidia (5.B5); Fes; Larache; Marrakech; Merzouga; Ourika Valley; Tangier; Zagora

1978.

1979.

1982.
   May. Louisiana (3.B5).
   July. Alabama; Georgia; North Carolina (1.A7; 5.A3).

1983.
   July-Aug. Arizona; Georgia; Kentucky; Louisiana (2.A4; 6.A5); Brooklyn, NYC; North Carolina; South Carolina; Tennessee; Virginia; Washington, D.C.

1985.
   July. Louisiana.

   Feb. Carriacou, Grenada.
Alan Lomax: What is this "little pig, big pig, root hog or die"?
Neal Morris: "Big pig, little pig, root hog or die."
There's been a saying among the mountain people—that means if you don't work you don't get anything to eat. The pig's got to root if he gets anything to eat. The hog has to root if he gets anything to eat. That's the range hog, the wild hog. The hog in the wild stage.