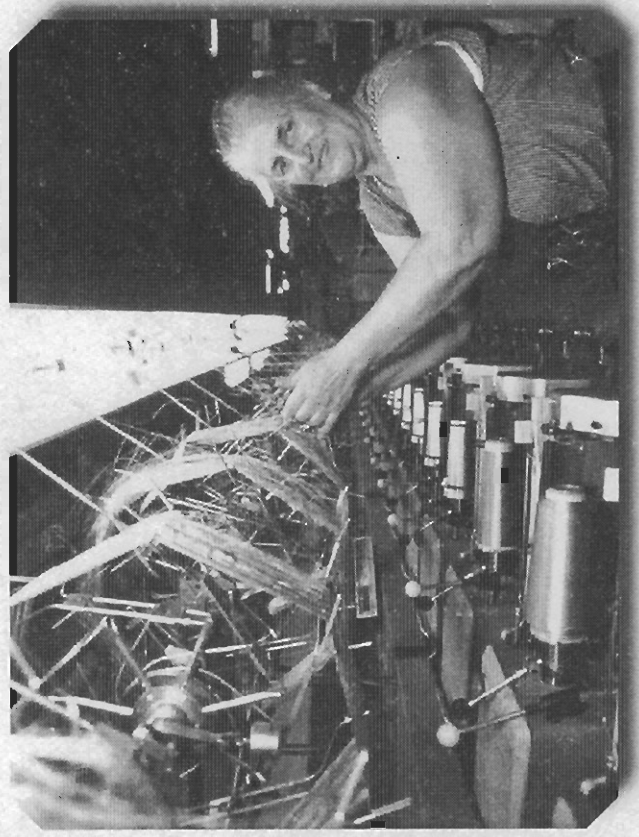


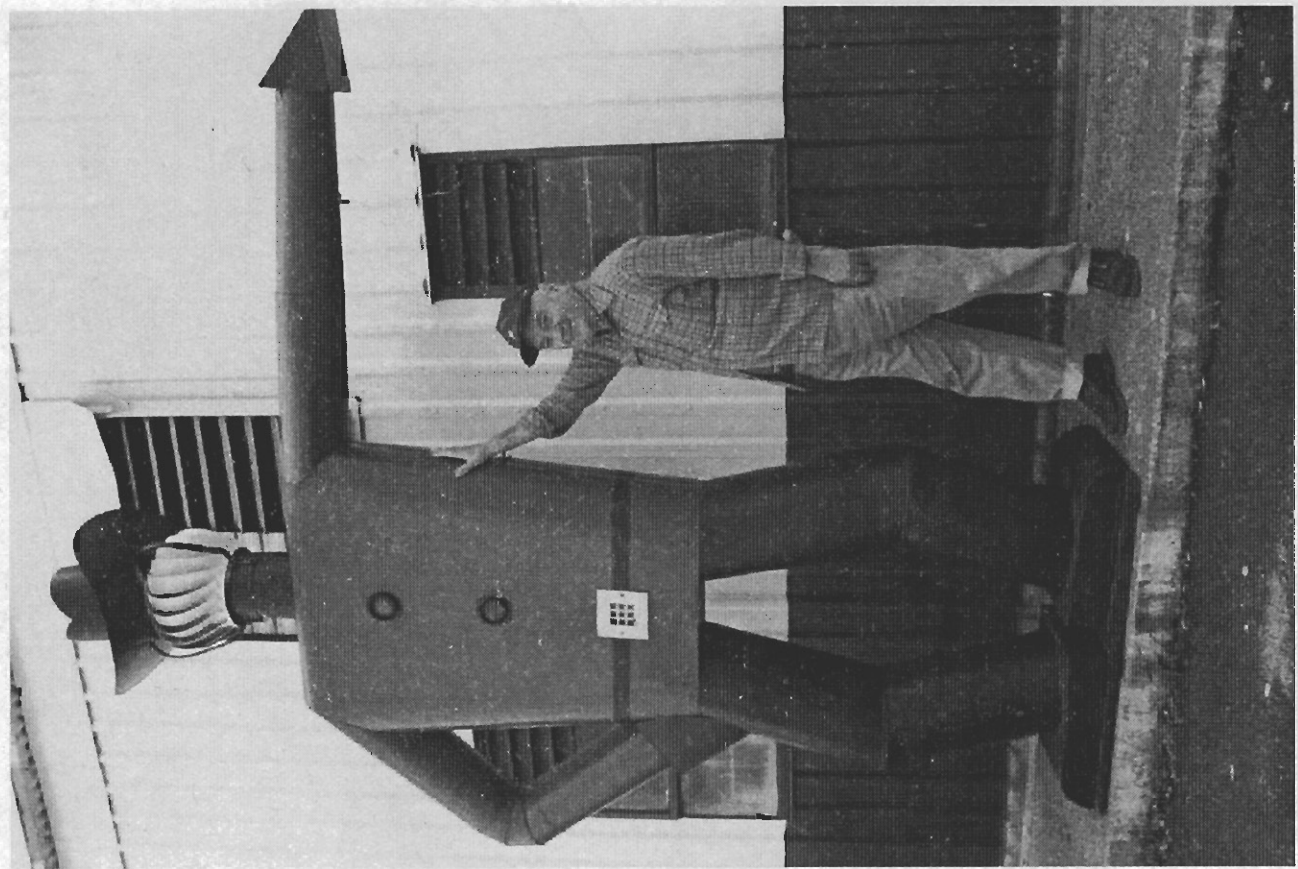
Laborlore Conversations IV:

Documenting Occupational Folklore Then and Now

Sponsored by the American Folklife Center
and the Fund for Labor History and Culture



August 15-16, 2007
Library of Congress, Washington, DC
Symposium Program Book



Laborlore expert Archie Green stands proudly beside "Mr. Dixie" at Dixie Sheetmetal in Falls Church, Va., November 1995. During the 1970s, Green lobbied for creation of the American Folklife Center. Photo by David A. Taylor.

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Front Cover Image: Jelina Cubic at work at the winding operation at Kalkstein Silk Mills, Inc., Paterson, New Jersey. Photo by Martha Cooper, 1994. From the Working in Paterson Folklife Project.

Laborlore Conversations IV: Documenting Occupational Folklore Then and Now

Introduction and Welcome

The American Folklife Center takes great pride in welcoming you to *Laborlore Conversations IV: Documenting Occupational Folklore Then and Now*.

American Folklife cannot be understood apart from American traditions of work. From field hollers to company picnics; from picket line songs to office photocopy lore; from harvesting techniques to production line practical jokes - laborlore is an essential ingredient of expressive culture.

The American Folklife Center and its archive have been documenting the traditions of work for over 80 years. In the early 1920s, Archive of American Folk Song Director Robert W. Gordon collected sea shanties from sailors in San Francisco. His successors, John and Alan Lomax, recorded the chants and work songs of African American prisoners in the American South. The traditions of fishers, loggers, miners, ranchers, railroad workers, and farmers have long been the concern of the Center. In the 1940s, Wayland Hand's work in Montana and George Korson's work in Pennsylvania and West Virginia explored the rich traditions of miners. From the 1960s through the 1980s, a number of collections have documented the life and work of coastal peoples from Maine to Florida, including the lore of fishers, fish plant workers, and boat builders, while the forestry and sawmill work of the Maine-New Brunswick Acadian culture was the focus of an early 1990s collection. From the 1930s to the present day, Carnival workers, street vendors, basket makers, soldiers, and a host of other workers have contributed their traditions to the Center's archive.

The Center has carried out major field projects on Nevada ranching life, the various occupations of West Virginia mountain folk, and the agricultural traditions of the Pinelands of New Jersey. Many of these collections explore the full range of traditional work—beyond songs and stories, to investigate the customs and rituals of work, the material culture of occupations, social aspects of worker identity, and the traditional patterns of work itself. In more recent years, the Center has turned its attention to urban and industrial workplaces, such as the textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, and the machine shops of Paterson, New Jersey. As well, the Center has always had an interest in the traditions of domestic work, whether quilt-making from across America, the foodways of Italian Americans, or the home crafts of ethnic groups in Chicago.

The Center has also documented the traditions of organized labor and the politics of work, especially through troubadours, such as Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and Joe Glazer, but also through the traditions of both Anglo and Latino/a migrant workers, strikers at a North Carolina shirt factory, and labor union flyers and tracts from Chicago, among other collections.

In 1942 the Center began its long history of publishing recordings of work songs, and it continues to do so through CDs and online presentations. In addition, the Center has published books, articles, and reports on its many explorations of American occupational life—from ranchers to ramp pickers. Through lectures, concerts, and symposia, and through its varied oral history and field-collecting projects, the American Folklife Center continues to preserve and present the lore of labor.

Michael Taft, Head, American Folklife Center Archive

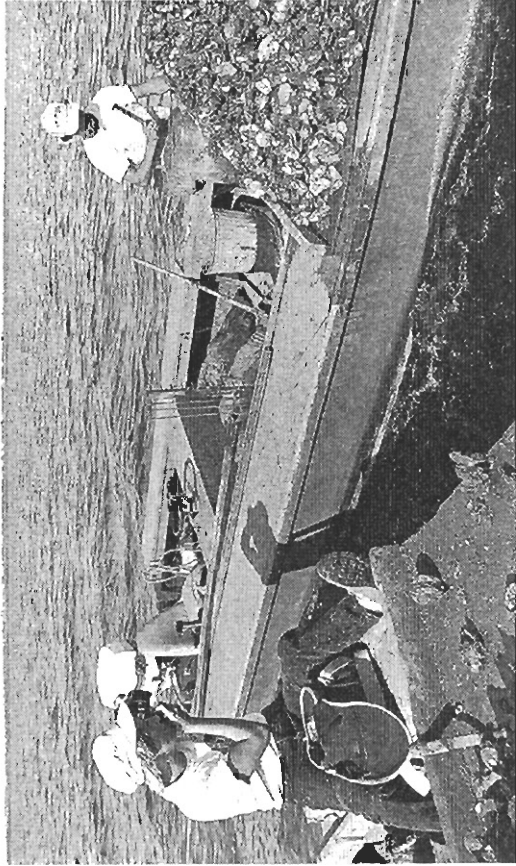


Myron Smart on the Ninety-Six Ranch, Nevada. AFC Buckaroos in Paradise Collection. Carl Fleischhauer; photographer.

About Laborlore Conversations IV: Documenting Occupational Folklore Then and Now:

This symposium aims to provide a forum within which to examine the work of several generations of documentary fieldworkers, explore the resonance of archival collections for contemporary research on work and community life, and critically analyze emerging issues that confront labor scholars, advocates and community members in a rapidly globalizing world.

The gathering will also provide an opportunity to honor the exemplary career of the "dean of laborlore," Archie Green. Green initiated the "Laborlore Conversations" series in 1995, and this is the fourth such symposium since then. On August 16, the Library will confer upon Green its Living Legend Award, which is bestowed on public figures that have made significant contributions to America's cultural, scientific and social heritage. Among the recipients of the Living Legend Award are Johnny Cash, John Kenneth Galbraith, Dolly Parton, Marian Wright Edelman, Alan Lomax, B.B. King, Hank Aaron, and Pete Seeger:



Fieldworker Nancy Nusz photographs oysterman Cletus Anderson, Apalachicola, Florida, November 1986. Photograph by David Taylor: American Folklife Center Florida Maritime Project.

From The Congressional Record:

Recognition of Archie Green

Hon. Nancy Pelosi of California
In The House Of Representatives

Friday, August 3, 2007

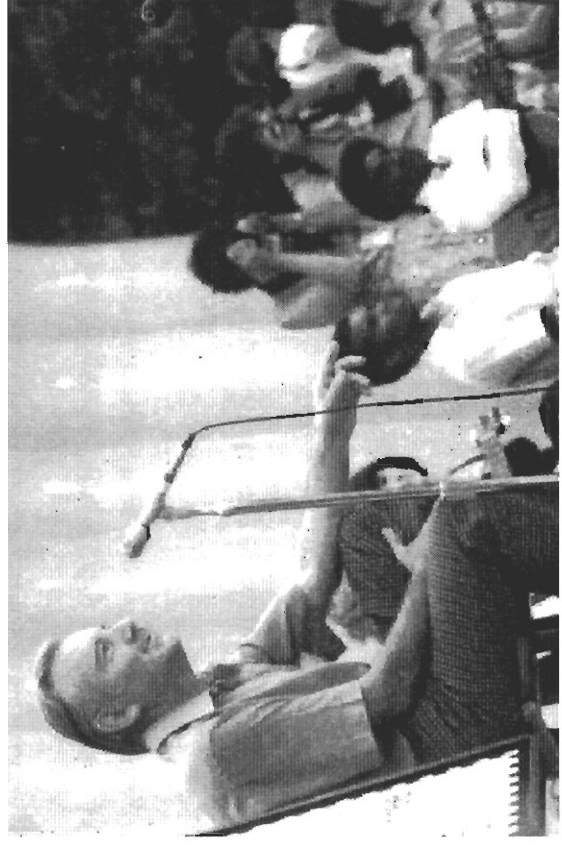
Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Archie Green, a distinguished San Franciscan and recipient of the Library of Congress' Living Legend Award.

Dr. Green has devoted most of his 90 years to the study and celebration of people, and to the texture and meaning of their lives as expressed in song, story, custom, belief, ritual, and craft. He

became a shipwright's apprentice in the Bay Area in the 1930s. After serving as a carpenter's mate in the Navy during World War II, he returned to San Francisco to become involved in veterans' affairs and to work in the building trades for another 15 years. Along the way he listened and observed and talked with people he met about their working lives and traditions. His passionate interest in workers and their traditions sparked an interest in research and writing that eventually earned him a Ph.D. in folklore. He became a university professor, and wrote seminal books and articles about grassroots culture and the folk traditions of work.

Archie Green's work has stimulated younger generations of scholars to become interested in "laborlore"—a term he coined. In the union ranks his writings in newsletters and journals have given members a renewed sense of their shared heritage.

Decades ago, believing that the Federal Government had a vital role to play in documenting, supporting, revitalizing, and disseminating America's grassroots knowledge and arts, Dr. Green envisioned a national center that would preserve and present Ameri-



Archie Green MCs the 1979 Labor Day Picnic on the South Lawn of the White House, hosted by President and Mrs. Carter. In the background are Hazel Dickens, John Jackson, and other musicians. Courtesy Sean Green

can folklife. He then spent 10 years walking the halls of Congress, explaining to every Senator and every Representative, and to their staffs, why the folk traditions in their States and districts mattered, and why the ordinary citizens who carry them on deserved our recognition. On January 2, 1976, President Gerald R. Ford signed into law the American Folklife Preservation Act, PL 94-201, which had passed unanimously by both houses of Congress, and established an American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

Thirty-one years later, the American Folklife Center is going strong. It carries out projects and initiatives that document, preserve, and share information about the diverse cultural traditions of the American people. Its archive, now with more than 4 million items, is one of the largest in the world. Its Veterans History Project—launched in 2000 by an act of Congress—is the largest oral history project in the Nation's history.

On August 15 and 16, the American Folklife Center is sponsoring a symposium on laborlore, and Archie Green—the father of laborlore in the United States—will take part. It is highly fitting that, during the symposium, he will be given the Living Legend Award in recognition of his work that has raised our awareness of how our traditions contribute to a larger history.

I join Dr. James H. Billington and the Library of Congress in commending Dr. Green for his contribution to our Nation's history.

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives.



Joe Kachler: milling an armature at Watson Machine International in Paterson, NJ. Photograph by Robert McCarl. Working in Paterson Folklife Project AFC 1995/028: WJP-RM-B008-24

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Wednesday, August 15, 2007

7:00-8:30 pm -- FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION
Mormistown (2007), with filmmaker Anne Lewis

Thursday, August 16, 2007

9:00-9:15 am -- Welcoming Remarks & Introduction
Peggy Bulger (Director, American Folklife Center)

9:15-9:45 am -- Keynote Address

Nick Spitzer Topic: "In Katrina's Wake: The Building Trades in New Orleans"

10:00-11:30 am -- Social Justice, The Environment & the Ethics of Collaboration

Convener: Bob McCarl Topic: "George Korson's Pioneering Field work & Research Ethics"

Brian McNeil with Elaine Purkey & Freda Williams Topic: "Organizing Coal Communities in West Virginia Around Issues of Environmental Degradation and Social Justice"

Anne Lewis Topic: "The 'Morristown' Project and Challenges in Community Documentation"

Bob McCarl and Barbara Miller Topic: "Labor's Deconstruction at Environmental Sites: Environmental Activism and the Consequences of Heavy Industry"

11:30-1:00 pm -- LUNCH

1:00-2:30 pm -- Collecting and Contextualizing Laborlore

Convener: Paula Johnson Topic: "Assessment of Waterways Work: Representing and Translating the Craft of Labor in the Museum"

Elaine Eff with Janice Marshall & James Lane Topic: "The Changing Nature of Work Traditions in a Watermen's Community: Issues in Collecting and Collaborating Between Community Scholars and Scholars"

Carl Fleischhauer Topic: "Collecting and Presenting Labor Techniques & Traditions in Paradise Valley, Nevada: Self-documentation Strategies and Methods"

2:45-4:15 pm -- Expressive Culture, Work Culture and the Art of Representation

Convener: Maribel Alvarez Topic: "Transnational Artisanal Culture on the US-Mexico Border"

Julie Ardrey and Mike Munoz Topic: "The Expressive Culture of Giacomo Patri"

Hal Cannon and Susan Church Topic: "Deep West Video Community Documentation project"

4:30-5:15 pm -- Summing Up

David Roediger Topic: "The Big Red Songbook and a Short History of Labor Song Collecting"

7:00-9:30 pm

Evening Reception, Award Ceremony & Performance -- Montpelier Room

Award presented by Deanna Marcum, Associate Librarian for Library Services

Special guests and speakers: Roger Abrahams, Daniel Patterson, and Judith McCulloh.

Music by: Hazel Dickens, Mike Seeger, and Elaine Purkey with special guest Joe Wilson.