

IN THE PAST...

EARLIER CANADIAN FOLK MAGAZINES

Canada Folk Bulletin had several predecessors, but it appears likely that its track record will prove better than theirs. None of them managed to maintain a regular publishing schedule, and all faded out within a comparatively short period. In the following survey I'll try to indicate the aims and coverage of each and mention specifically any items dealing with Canadian folk music.

SINGALONG

Strangely enough, the first Canadian magazine, like *Canada Folk Bulletin*, originated in Vancouver. It was a small 16 - page mimeographed pamphlet called *Singalong* of which Vol. 1, No. 1 appeared in February 1957; Vol. 2, No. 2 in July 1958. No editor was listed, but the editorial board included Ray Hull, Perry Friedman, and Searle Friedman throughout, with other names appearing in one issue or the other. Its declaration of purpose began: "This is a magazine devoted to the study and encouragement of folk music among people who want to play and sing," and went on to say: "This is, obviously, a Canadian magazine, but we shall not restrict ourselves to the discussion and reproduction of Canadian songs; ours is a multinational people, and we shall often look beyond this continent for music and words that are worth singing and hearing. Instrumentalists will get a fair share of our attention, and so will contemporary folk writers and composers."

Among the miscellanea from various sources were a few Canadian items of interest. "Making Hay," with words by J.S. Wallace and music by Searle Friedman, which appeared in the first issue was later recorded by the Travellers. "Beautiful Cedars" and "The P.G.E. Goes Through," composed by Keith Crowe, appeared in the last issue, as did also "The Bowser Boys of Seventy-two" from the famous 1912 miners' strike on Vancouver Island. Traditional Canadian songs included "Goodingan, A Haida Greeting Song" collected and translated by Lawrence Nowry, and "Poor Lonesome Cowboy" collected by Perry Friedman from a cowboy in the Cariboo.

SING AND STRING

The second magazine, *Sing and String*, subtitled "Folk Singing in Canada," was published under the auspices of the Centre for Adult Education of the North Toronto YMCA which for a time sponsored a folk-song class initiated by Sid Dolgay, one of the original Travellers. The first two mimeographed issues of 12 and 16 pages respectively appeared in 1959 and 1960. They were put together by a committee under the direction of Sid Dolgay. No. 1 included Wade Hemsworth's Blackfly song and "The Grand Hotel" (reproduced from *Folk Songs of Canada* without credit). I contributed an article on "Folksongs of Ontario" to No. 2, with three songs: "The Banks of the

Don," "The Poor Little Girls of Ontario," and "The Weaver," a version of "The Nightingale" (Laws P14).

No. 3, which appeared in 1961 under the editorship of Sydney Banks, had expanded to 28 pages and acquired a glossy cover. It included two previously unpublished songs from my collection: "Sault Ste. Mary's Jail" and "Life in a Prairie Shack." No. 4, appearing in February 1962, billed itself as "Canada's National Folk Song Magazine" and listed two editors: Peter J. Holloway and John Stricek. It included a folk club directory and news from Vancouver, Ottawa, and Newfoundland, a couple of songs reprinted from *Come A-Singing!*, and one previously unpublished, "The Slave's Song," collected by C.W. Webb from Charles Austin Lake of Prescott, Ontario.

No. 5, Winter 1962-63, edited by John Stricek, included several songs collected by Nellie and Cliff Webb: "When I Was Single," "Goin' Home," "The Ship That Never Returned," "If I Were a Blackbird," and "She Was A Funny Old Guy." No. 6, Spring 1963, gave Bob Leslie and Prunella Clark as editors. I contributed an article, "A Few Notes on Bawdy Ballads," along with two of Mr. Abbott's songs, "The Weaver" and "An Old Man He Courted Me," and it also included "The Lady on the Shore Oh" from the Webb's Prescott collection.

No. 7, Winter 1964, announced bravely "*Sing and String* is published quarterly," and included an article on "Folksong Collecting in Saskatchewan" by Barbara Cass-Beggs. No. 8, Spring 1965, listed

Paul C. Duchesne as editor and contained an article by Ray Hull on "Folk Songs and Politics," along with his song "Medicare." The final issue, Fall 1965, edited by Joyce Trevelyan, had a brief profile of Owen McBride and an article, "Political Satire in Nursery Rhymes" by Kathie Walsh which reproduced without credit various fanciful theories from Katherine Elwes Thomas's *The Real Personages of Mother Goose*.

HOOT

The most elaborate of the early magazines was *Hoot*, launched August 1963 by the Guild of Canadian Folk Artists "to spread interest in folk music among as large a segment of the population as possible." The first 20-page issue edited by Jo-Anne Hindley Smith devoted most of its space to items about Mariposa; it also contained Tom Brandon's "The Spree." The second issue, undated but in the fall of 1963, expanded to 40 pages under editor Roger Feather. It announced that it was "Published bimonthly," and that "Our subject, folk music, is international: in content and distribution *Hoot* magazine will be international." With that warning, it isn't surprising that most issues contained more American than Canadian material, along with news items and book and record reviews. Canadian material in No. 2 included an article about a song, "The Chatham Volunteers," by Peter Wyborn, and an article I contributed on the Child ballads, with two Ontario versions of "the Gypsy Laddie." The third issue, also 1963, had a profile of Merrick Jarrett and my article on "Broadside Ballads in Canada" with transcriptions of "Sir Charles

Lapier" and "Three Jolly Jack Tars," later published in *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario*.

After a gap of two years, Vol. 2, No. 1, a glossier somewhat larger *Hoot* of 44 pages appeared in January 1966. The editor was now Buzz Chertkoff, and it still claimed to be published bimonthly. Canadian content was limited to a profile of Tom Brandon and a couple of book reviews. Vol. 2, No. 2, March 1966, expanded to 62 pages, had profiles of Lotys Murrin and Gordon Lightfoot, songs by Gordon Lightfoot, Neil Young, and Gordon MacRae, and one traditional song, Tom Brandon's version of "Johnny Stiles," along with a song Tom wrote titled "Canadian Unity."

Vol. 2, No. 3, May 1966, had profiles of Ian and Sylvia and LaRena Clark, and songs by both Ian and Sylvia. Vol. 2, No. 4, July 1966, edited by Anne Hershoran, had songs by Lightfoot, Tyson, and MacRae, and a profile of Owen MacBride. Vol. 2, No. 5, September 1966, had a profile of Joni Mitchell and two of her songs. I contributed an article on children's rhymes and two Ontario songs: "Flora and I" and "A Bunch of Water Cresses."

There was no November 1966 issue; Vol. 3, No. 1, edited by Leigh Cline, was labeled Feb.—March 1967. It had a profile of Tom Kines, a song he collected, "Wheel of Fortune," and an article on Ontario songs. Still listed as bimonthly, still appealing for subscriptions, without any S.O.S., *Hoot* thereafter disappeared without a trace.

Both *Sing and String* and *Hoot* came out of the folksong boom of the early sixties and faded with it. Both were fairly well produced and warmly received at the time, and of course they contained a great deal more material than I have mentioned. However, their emphasis was as much on American music as on Canadian, and apart from my contributions they contained very little traditional material. The *Canada Folk Bulletin's* concentration on Canadian news and views gives it greater individuality, and judging by the record of *Come All Ye*, we can expect that it will appear more regularly and over a considerably longer period.

Edith Fowke



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