

## OBITUARIES

BARBARA CASS-BEGGS (1904-1990)

On September 13, 1990, Barbara Cass-Beggs died in Ottawa after a short illness. With her death the Canadian Folk Music Society lost a long-time supporter who was also an honorary member.

Barbara came to Canada from England in 1939 and settled in Toronto where her husband David taught engineering at the University of Toronto. She was already a well-known musician and was particularly concerned with music education for young children. Because she used folk songs in her teaching, she joined the Canadian Folk Music Society shortly after Dr. Barbeau founded it, and was an active member of the board until a few years ago. Barbara and I collaborated in preparing a Reference List on Canadian Folk Music in 1966, a list that has been revised and updated several times since. For a number of years she represented the Society in trying to get a Barbeau House established in Ottawa.

When her husband David went to Saskatchewan to head the Saskatchewan Power Commission they lived in Regina for several years and Barbara collected some folk songs, the first from that province. As a result she produced two little pamphlets, Eight Songs from Saskatchewan and Seven Metis Songs, and a Folkways record, Folk Songs of Saskatchewan which are still the main published sources of Saskatchewan songs. She also initiated a series of Junior Concerts to expose school-age children to live performances of music, bringing in musicians and singers, many of whom were folksingers. These led to the Saskatchewan Junior Concert Society which eventually expanded

to seventy centres throughout the province and celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 1987.

Later David headed the B.C. Power Commission so they lived in Vancouver for several years. In 1967 they were in Montreal while David worked for Expo '67. Later they moved to Ottawa where Barbara lived for the last twenty years. In all these cities she organized courses at various colleges. She developed her theories in books such as To Listen, To Like, To Learn, Your Baby Needs Music, and Canadian Folk Music Songs for the Young.

Music teachers to whom she taught her system organized a society based on her "Listen, Like, Learn" methods, which became internationally known. She gave papers at various meetings of the Music Educators' Association in Canada and Europe, and was invited to give courses on her method in the United States and Israel. The Association for Early Childhood Education gave her their Children's Service Award "for outstanding contributions toward improving the quality of life for young children."

Edith Fowke.

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HELEN CREIGHTON (1899-1989)

In December 1989, our society lost its honorary president, Dr. Helen Creighton of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. She was one of Canada's foremost folklorists, known throughout the continent for her pioneer work in collecting the songs and stories of the

Canadian Maritimes. She died after a short illness just a few weeks past her ninetieth birthday.

She began her collecting back in 1928 before there were tape recorders. In her early years she used a melodeon that she transported in a wheelbarrow; later she switched to a dictaphone. It was not until 1943 that she got her first tape recorder.

She collected over four thousand songs and their variants, and wrote vividly and with great warmth of her experiences with traditional singers who included such personalities as Ben Henneberry, Angelo Dornan, and Nathan Hatt.

Most of the songs came originally from Britain, but she also recorded some in French, Gaelic, Micmac, and German, as well as others composed in Canada. Several Canadian musicians have written compositions based on her songs, and they form the basis of a ballet, Sea Gallows, and an opera, The Broken Ring. She appeared on various radio and television programs and in two films: Songs of Nova Scotia and The Nova Scotia Song. In addition to songs, she collected fiddle tunes, tales, superstitions, games, riddles, proverbs, and customs, assembling the most extensive Anglo-Canadian folklore collection of any single individual.

She published nine major books, beginning with Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia in 1931, followed by Traditional Songs from Nova Scotia, Maritime Folk Songs, Gaelic Songs in Nova Scotia, and Folksongs from Southern New Brunswick. Only a few months before her death her collection of Nova

Scotia's Acadian songs appeared under the title of La Fleur du Rosier. Perhaps the best known of all her books were two presenting the supernatural tales and beliefs of Nova Scotians: Bluenose Ghosts and Bluenose Magic. In 1975 she described her long and interesting career in her autobiography, A Life in Folklore. Two records from her collection are available on Folkways: Folk Music from Nova Scotia, (4006), and Maritime Folk Songs (4307).

In 1967 she was elected a Fellow of the American Folklore Society, the first Canadian folklorist to be so honored. She received several honorary degrees and was a member of the Order of Canada. She was honorary president of the Canadian Authors Association and the Folklore Studies Association of Canada, as well as the Canadian Folk Music Society. Several Nova Scotia festivals celebrated her work, and many folksingers have sung her songs. Perhaps the best known of the many she collected is "Farewell to Nova Scotia," which has become one of the most frequently recorded of all Canadian folk songs. A mini-festival in her honour is planned for February, 1991.

Edith Fowke