

Tracie Wilson: This is Tracie Wilson. I'm with Archie Green in San Francisco in his home and it's [inaudible], and it's January 27th.

Archie Green: Right. Welcome.

TW: So I want to start off with how you became interested in traditional music.

AG: This is going to be a long story, but if you want to start there, okay. I'm about 90 now, 89 exactly. And I grew up in southern Los Angeles in the east side, that's Boyle Heights. It was an immigrant enclave of Europeans, Japanese, Mexicans, and assorted minorities, and very few Americans in the sense that we were all conscious that we were hyphenated Mexican-American, Russian-American, Jewish-American. I don't think we felt, we didn't feel isolated, we didn't feel discriminated against. Our parents on the whole were glad to be in America, and immigrants who were glad to be free and worship in the land of opportunity. So that was my origin.

And beginning in 1925, my dad purchased a battery set radio because I remember it was a huge console piece of furniture, but the battery was encased in a box of some sort and it was placed on the floor underneath the radio. And for some reason, the battery leaked acid and the acid disturbed the oak floor. And my mother was very, she liked the radio, but she liked the floor. And she was very disturbed. But in that period, I remember my first awareness of music, of categorizing music. That was classical music I could recognize. And hotel band jazz, which was Paul Whiteman sort of symbolized popular music. And then I don't recall any blues on the radio, but I do recall country music, but we thought of it as cowboy music growing up in the West. I don't remember hearing the term country until after maybe around World War II.

But I must have had a good memory of cowboy songs because the "Wreck of the 97," Vernon Dalhart and "The Prisoner Song" retained in my mind. And Carl Sprague, "When the Work's All Done This Fall," Haywire Mac, "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum." I categorized, or we categorized everything that has a string band or guitar or a nasal voice as cowboy. And it was much later that I learned other categories, other terms.

But in junior high school, that would be about '29 or '30, '31 perhaps, I helped the, worked in the library. And I remember the librarian's name, Miss Butterfield, Alice Butterfield. She was, all of our teachers were Yankees. All of the kids were foreign, and all of the teachers were American. We took it for granted. We didn't, as students, we didn't expect anything else.

[To other person] Where are you going? Okay, take it easy. Yeah, thanks.

We didn't expect that the order should be any, maybe some of the adults wanted members of minorities to be in the teaching profession, but the students, it wasn't conveyed to us. And I liked Miss Butterfield. She was intelligent and friendly, and she taught me a little about the Dewey Decimal System and how to barco B-A-R-C-O barco. It wasn't the barcode. Barco was a kind of, have you ever heard of it? Was a kind of [shellac?] that we put on the cover of, well, there were no paperbacks. All the books were hardcover. And when we put in the Dewey

Decimal number, we'd barco the book, painting shellac on the outside cover. And I like to barco books.

Anyhow, in that library on the shelf, I discovered John Lomax's *Cowboy Songs*. And it was either a 1910 edition, but it may have been a 1928 reprint. And in looking at the book and finding songs like the "Streets of Laredo," it meant that by the time I found the book, I knew enough of the songs from the radio that they were familiar. And since the book was a folk song book, my first awareness of folk song as a concept or category came in, I'd say about 1930 through the discovery of that book. But I remember vividly it was in Hollenbeck Junior High School under Miss Butterfield's tutelage and the discovery that the songs that I had heard on the radio had a certain status, were set apart from other songs or had literary value. That was an important step in my development.

And I think from then on, I would hear and listen, or hear songs on the radio, but also read about folk songs and eventually about folklore. And I would say the second part of the development came with reading books about Paul Bunyan, who was very, despite Dorson's antipathy to Paul Bunyan, and he's so completely wrong, you know, his whole life was built on the distinction that Paul Bunyan was fake lore. You know, he was crazy. Here I was a maybe 10- or 12-year-old boy, and these tales of a giant logger were, they were intriguing, not only as fantastic tales in themselves, but they were intriguing because I was developing a working-class consciousness or a consciousness of work.

And here I would have to digress by telling you a bit about my father. My father was a, he'd been a socialist revolutionary in the first Russian revolution of 1905. But my dad came from the Ukraine. The province was Chernigov, which are you know Polish? Well, Chernigov is black earth. It's a portion of the Ukraine. And it's recently been in the papers as Chernobyl. So I think my dad was born about maybe 10 or 20 miles from the site of Chernobyl. But the Jewish minority in the Ukraine played had an ambiguous role because they were a minority in czarist Russia, but they were also a minority in the Ukraine, and they suffered a certain amount of persecution at the hands of Ukrainians and Russians, as Jews in Poland and Lithuania, or what is now Lithuania, et cetera, so that when Ukrainian nationalists oppose the czar, they might not have been sympathetic to minorities within the Ukraine, and in a sense it put those people in a double bind or double minority.

So many of the young members of that community rejected Orthodox religion. This would be true all over the Czarist Empire. They rejected Orthodoxy and they also rejected bourgeois advancement in the business elite or the administrative elite, and they would turn to the arts and professions as a way of freedom. So when he was still a teenager, he joined, there were three or four parties or groups that weren't yet dominant, but the Marxists or Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. And then the various minorities had mixtures of, say, Polish nationalism and socialism or early forms of Zionism and socialism or other forms of escape. But also, there was apparently a lot of tension on the, there was both unity, they were all against the czar, but they had internal divisions between the, as my dad explained it to him, and I'm going by memory, the SDs were social democrats, the SZs were social Zionists, the SRs were social revolutionists, agrarian reformers, and there were nihilists and anarchists and all types of, if you study Polish history, the recent Polish revolution of solidarity was a duplication of efforts that they had

started much earlier with industrialization. But anyhow, after three or four days in his village in the Ukraine, the Cossacks came back and all of the young radicals, despite their affiliation, they were either shot or sent to Siberia or they escaped. And fortunate or unfortunate, but my dad escaped.

I have two sisters. As children, we were intrigued by his stories of the escape, which was a form of the Underground Railway. As we imagined it, literally railroad trains running underground, but it was less dramatic than that. And I think the comrades in all of these groups must have had friends all over Russia, and they would acquire forged passports or would forge passports, and they'd send their comrades up to Finland. Finland was a part of the Russian Empire, and they would eventually ship them out. So my dad went from the Ukraine to Finland and Finland to England, in Hull, England. I think he worked for a while in a textile mill and then to Canada where he worked in the Hudson Bay Lumber Company. And he would describe working with oxen as a harness maker. His skill was in demand because they would have many oxen, plus perch around horses, and they could constantly maintain the harness, I guess. Eventually move. What's that noise? Well, eventually he. Let me see what it is. OK.

Yeah, I just realized I forgot the headphones so I can't check it and see. Attempt to go get them on the table.

Well, can you play a little bit to see how do you figure it's...

Well I've never used it for an actual interview before.

Let's see if it works and you're taking notes and I can fill in later or do it over. But anyhow, I don't want to be too long-winded.

After my dad left, then my dad in Winnipeg brought, as all immigrants, Canada was growing, so it was easy to work and buy tickets for his sweetheart and family and then get married. But after World War I, it was too cold. My mother grew up in the Ukraine and she didn't like Canada. So my dad and mother bundled up the kids and we came to Los Bois Heights.

The whole point of that is when I came to the Paul Bunyan legends, I had a propensity to believe in Paul Bunyan because my dad had already told me about the teams of oxen and the Hudson Bay lumber camps. You know, it gave me a hook or a familiarity. So I had no reason to think that Paul Bunyan was fakelore. It was a story about something I knew and something my father had done.

Anyhow, my father retained his belief in, say, reform socialism. He was a, in America, he would have been a follower of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas. And he kept his politics until 1934 or kept socialist politics. But in '34, Upton Sinclair ran for governor of California under the EPIC ticket. And quite a bit is written about that campaign. EPIC meant end poverty in California. And in that period, the saying is that the Socialists voted with their feet. That is, they abandoned the Socialist Party and joined the Democratic Party as New Dealers. It was part of the whole growth of the New Deal. And it's manifested today. And I'd say if he were alive, my

dad would be a strong fan of Nancy Pelosi, as I am. I think Nancy Pelosi ought to run for president instead of Hillary Clinton. I think they have the wrong candidate.

But anyhow, so what I'm trying to sketch is that the combination of reform politics or New Deal politics and an early interest in cowboy music, or that became an interest in country music as it developed, plus a fascination with occupational folklore, not manifested under a title that early, but that's why I bring up Paul Bunyan. These combined at an early age so that for me the development seemed natural. There wasn't a time that I didn't like the material.

And I know that I went to a university. I've written some of this stuff appears in various books. I always throw in a little personal material. But at Cal in 1937, '38, '39, I graduated at '39. These things converge. I was in campus, the Young Democratic Club. We worked for Governor Olson, Culbert Olson, who had a, Sinclair was unsuccessful in '34, but Olson was successful in '38. And at Cal, in that period, there was, I suppose, I don't like the term folksong revival, but the early, early people like Lead Belly, Woody Guthrie, Josh White, Susan Reed, and so on. They began, or the record companies began issuing albums of six or seven, three or four, 78 RPMs record with liner notes. And Lead Belly had a good album, about '39, called, I don't know, he had a picture of a log cabin in a cotton field. But I bought the Almanac Singers, had deep sea shanties and sodbuster ballads. I bought those albums.

And I also started buying books, you know, labor history. And it seemed seamless, labor history, social reform, folksong. No one told me that they fit together. I don't even know that they fit together, but it seemed to me that they fit together. And then we were married, Luanne and I, and I went into the Navy. I left out one part. And when I graduated from Cal, I went to a CCC camp, Civilian Conservation Corps. And I knew I wanted to be a worker. I didn't want to be a doctor, lawyer. I didn't even know about graduate school. But I knew that if I would go to a CCC camp, I would learn to work, road building and surveying, firefighting. I was up on the Klamath River in the Siskiyou Mountains, a place called Happy Camp. It was an old gold mining town. And Happy Camp is important because in the saloon on Saturday night, they had a string band, a piano, accordion, fiddle, guitar, different instruments, a local band. And that was the first place that I heard *live* country music. Up until then, I had always heard it on the radio.

Now it's interesting, growing up in LA, beginning in high school, I heard live black music before I heard country music, and I heard black music in two forms. These names are important. There was a chorus called the Hall Johnson Singers or Hall Johnson Chorus. They may have made some records, but they were in LA and they sang a mixture of spirituals and work songs. When the WPA started, there was a Negro group in the WPA that did the hot Mikado and the swing Mikado. They did jazzy versions of the Mikado. And I think that music, if I'm not mistaken, culminated in a Duke Ellington "Jump for Joy." I think it was a West Coast stage version of blues and jazz that was supposed to go on to New York. But I mentioned the Hall Johnson chorus or choir. or singers and the "Jump for Joy" and the WPA as a good exposure to live black music, which wasn't my main interest. But I suppose if I had grown up in a ranching area or a rural area, I might have heard live country music. But growing up in the big city in an immigrant enclave, I wasn't destined to hear live country music until the CCCs. But from then on, there was no going back because I like the music.

I like to read about the music. I remember when the Lomaxes put out two books, the *Lead Belly* book, that was in '36. And they put out *American Folk Songs and Ballads* about '34 and *Our Singing Country* in 1941, I may be wrong, but I bought those books. I was an early book lover. I didn't buy any records until I came back from the CCC camp and I went to work on the waterfront as a shipwright's helper. And then when I started to make money, that is. Believe it or not, the first pay was \$20 a week. We worked 40 hours and apprentices got 50 cents an hour. And there were very few deductions, I think about 60 or 70 cents. So here with \$19 every week, I must have felt like a millionaire. I remember going to a record store in North Beach and buying Haywire Mac and Carl Sprague, flamenco and blues. So right from the start, my purchases were of traditional music on Hillbilly and race records and what we now call world music on ethnic records.

I think I've left out one element. In '41, I happened to, my first job to be assigned to a man named Benjamin Carwardine, a Scotsman. He was a Clyde Sider. That meant he worked on the River Clyde in Glasgow. And he was part of the crew of very advanced Scottish shipwrights who they fanned out all over the world, carrying their skill because they were the most skilled shipbuilders in Europe. And most of them, or at least the little group at Western Pipe and Steel, they were Scottish nationalists. Also, some of them were Marxists, they were revolutionists, and they were skilled craftsmen. And I think Benny is important in my development because although he was radical, he thought of himself as some kind of a revolutionist, he was a Scottish nationalist. So he was against British rule and against Soviet rule. He didn't want to be ruled by Moscow, and he didn't want to be ruled by London. If you're doing, Sean, well, I'm just, hope, if Sean ever finishes, he'll have the story down pat and the references. So it's just background. But there was no turning back.

So since my work with Benny, I've been some type of radical. I'm not very good at radicalism because I wouldn't be supporting Nancy Pelosi if I were a genuine radical, but I'll admit to contradictions. And if you know anything about the IWW, I'm closer to the Wobblies now than I am to any other form of political action or social radicalism. And by the way, my most recent book, which I'll show you later, is called *The Big Red Song Book*. It's a very orum edition. I don't want to warm a cockles of any librarian's heart. But if you can find some way to integrate being a member of an immigrant group, being against the system, being a good reader, believing in the workers' culture, liking the Wobblies, and that led to my interest in traditional music. I think that's enough of a personal story.

TW: I was wondering if there was a tie, were you ever interested in, say, Yiddish culture?

No, because my father and mother were emancipated. In the Jewish community, the Orthodox parents sent their children to Yiddish school and the completely assimilated or reformed Jews, they didn't teach any Yiddish, but the social democrats are reformists. They wanted to retain Yiddish culture. And there was a, in Boyle Heights, there was an afternoon school run by the Workman's Circle, which was socialist in orientation, but it dealt with Yiddish as a cultural phenomenon or phenomena. And it was halfway between Orthodox education and radical education. And I went to that school for a year or so but didn't like it because it was in the afternoon that infringed on playtime and was a poor student and didn't learn anything. So I have

a pretty good knowledge of Russian culture and Yiddish culture, but I don't have, I don't even, I don't, I think I must be recognize about 50 words. When I hear a program, a Yiddish program, it's like I recognize as many Mexican words, Spanish words, as Yiddish words. I'm pretty, I'm not good at language. I'm pretty good at the English language.

TW: I was just curious because this connection between being a member of this immigrant community, did your father, did he grow up speaking Yiddish?

AG: Oh yes, my father was a working class intellectual. He could speak Yiddish, write too, Russian, Ukrainian. He learned English and he knew a little Hebrew, basic. And my dad wrote a tiny script of Yiddish. He wrote his memoirs in Yiddish and my big sister translated that into English. It's available someplace so maybe I should tell Sean about it. You know, like immigrant families, my father and mother would speak Yiddish at home to each other, but English to us and we responded in English and they put no demands on us to speak Yiddish.

TW: But they spoke [together sometimes]?

AG: Oh, they spoke to each other in Yiddish.

TW: Your parents did.

AG: Yeah.

TW: Okay.

AG: Yeah. That was their natural or childhood language. They never, sometimes if a Russian-speaking person visited us or if any Slavic, Slavic immigrants, my dad knew enough basic Slavic to. I remember he could talk to Serbian people and Croatian people and Bulgarian people. He seemed to be able to converse with anyone that could speak English, or Yiddish, or Russian, any form of Russian. Compared to my dad, I'm illiterate.

TW: Very different backgrounds. I was planning to do my dissertation on Polish-Jewish relations so I studied Jewish Studies for awhile and took Yiddish but I don't remember very much of it.

AG: I remember when I was a boy my mother once said, "Du bist un amarchiste." Something like to the effect that you are, I was just naughty or disobedient, and she introduced me to the term of anarchism. I don't think, I don't think she knew what she was doing.

TW: So maybe I should move this microphone here just to make sure it's-

AG: Why not?

TW: The next thing I was going to ask you about is how you ended up at Illinois.

AG: Well, I mentioned that I had finished the CCC camp and gone to work. I didn't know anything about ships. That was not part of my family background. But under Benny's encouragement, I became a good shipwright. Of course, I wanted to be, if you're going to be a working-class leader, you have to know a trade. So I wanted, again, I'll reiterate, Benny, superb craftsmanship, social revolution and Scottish nationalism, which in America here would have translated to a form of pluralism because I was obviously not Scottish, and Benny didn't try to make me into a young Scot. But so I worked in '41 before Pearl Harbor in '42.

And then in the beginning of '43, you have to understand that our shipwright local was affiliated with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. And that was a very reactionary union. It was under Hutchison. He's known in the labor movement as a Republican. So our union didn't participate in the New Deal. And naturally, that caused a rift between all of the radical elements, radical and New Deal, radical and reform, and the administration of the union in Washington, initially in Indianapolis and then eventually in Washington. Our shipwrights local is it's an old local goes back to the gold rush that's local 1149 it was big in World War I and it declined down to about maybe 100 members. Poor, small local but it retained its charter, and in 1939, it began to grow again as the government developed a series of shipyards under the Maritime Commission, and they were building various vessels to Maritime Commission specifications. So as our local grew, by taking in new members, either youngsters like myself or whole groups of new members, and especially when the war came.

Now, here's an important thing, Tracy. Normally a shipwright apprentice serves, well a helper then becomes an apprentice, you serve four years and you can become a journeyman. But in the war, there was such a shortage of labor that everyone who knew anything about ships was jumped or leap frogging ahead. So apprentices became journeymen, journeymen became foremen or leadermen, leadermen became yard superintendents. And when a new yard was built, for example, the Kaiser, Henry Kaiser built the yards in Richmond, and he had no labor at all, and he would recruit from the existing yards. So with the influx of new members in our local in 1943, there was a revolt against the entrenched Republican leadership, and some of the old-timers asked me to run for secretary. I said, OK, and I won. So here I was, you know, still in my early 20s, and I was secretary of a huge union, the largest, one of the largest unions in the Brotherhood.

And I like politics. Now, the problem was the war was going on. And as a skilled worker in the war industry, I was deferred. But when I quit my job to work for the Union full-time, I knew that I would lose my deferment. But I was also an anti-fascist. You have to remember, any young radical worth his salt was against Hitler. And I was unmarried. So the prospect of quitting being non-deferred didn't bother me. And I said, well, I'll just stay in the Union as long as I can, learn what I can. I lasted about six months as Secretary of the Union. And then I was subject to the draft. I didn't want to be drafted, so I joined the Navy because I liked ships. And when I joined the Navy, I married Luanne. When I was faced with a prospect, a lot of GIs, you know were faced with a prospect of going overseas and you might end your life, your life might end itself. And whatever little, what your books and records, if you had a girlfriend, you'd leave the books and records and leave a baby or make a baby or start to make a baby.

And then I ended up in the Philippine Islands in China. But when I came back from China, it was after the atom bomb was dropped. After I came back from China, my job in the union was lost. That is, another fellow had taken over and entrenched himself, and he was a crook. And so I had the chance of a snowballing hill. And I went back to work on the waterfront. That was okay. There was a lot to learn, a lot to do.

I had one baby, David. We lived in Hunters Point. That's now a dilapidated rundown housing project, mostly African-American, high crime, but we lived there quite happily. And I went back to my local, and as the work declined, the local kept going down in numbers, and I knew that I had no, I believed in the local, but no future as a union officer. And in that period, I turned to the American Veterans Committee, which was a progressive World War II vets organization rivaling the Allegion and the VFW. And I was very active in the Berkeley chapter. One of the things that interested Sean, one of my buddies was Tim Leary, and he was in that chapter. And we were good friends. There were three factions in the AVC. There was a New Deal or Social Democratic faction, and there was a Communist Popular Front faction. A few of us in the middle were smart enough to see that, as the Cold War became intense, these two rival groups would kill the organization, as they did. So we started a Build AVC caucus, and it was essentially, in large ideology, it was a position of Yugoslavia when it was caught in the Cold War between the West and the Soviet Union, and Tito tried to develop a third position, and that was our position in AVC. Eventually, the organization died.

Oh, the one other name that's important, Michael Straight was an editor of the New Republic, and he was well known in political and literary circles. And he was our main candidate in Build AVC. So I worked at the trade and was active in the veteran's organization, went to national meetings. Gradually, the work declined. And then I had another son, Derek, we were living here. And most building tradesmen, when they work about 20 years, they develop some skill but their legs start giving out. So most active workers in the building trades are young, and the older workers become estimators or business agents or any SAC contractors, or they handle some phase of the work based on knowledge, but not so much on old labor. But in that period, I went through a lot of evaluation because I wasn't skilled enough, I wasn't entrepreneurial enough to be a businessman. I dreaded that. And I dreaded, I didn't like the money-making aspect, so business was out. And I wasn't skilled enough with blueprints to be an estimator or an inspector, and the prospect of working at the trade until I would be unable to work wasn't very pleasant. If I had been in another union and run for office and gone up through the musical chairs, I think that would have been a way out, but I was in this damn reactionary union, meaning the international, not the local.

And then one day, oh, I have to interject, my interest in records continued, and in 1952, two fellows, Bill Friedland and Joe Glazer in Detroit, made two 10-inch, well, first 78s and then LPs. One was called *Ballad for Sectarians*, and the other was *Songs of the Wobblies*. Joe Glazer just recently died in Washington. Bill Friedland is a retired professor of sociology at Santa Cruz, and they issued these records. And there was a notice of the records in *Nation* magazine, a little notion that I read. It seemed interesting. I didn't think much of it, but on a rainy day, I went over to East Bay to see Bob Burke, B-U-R-K-E, who was a history graduate working in the Bancroft Library. And Bob Burke and I talked about music and politics. And he brought out, oh, it was late 1953 because he had a copy of John Greenway's *American Folk Songs of Protest*.

He showed it to me, and I recognized it, but I hadn't read it, and I came back to San Francisco to the Mechanics Library, to a subscription library, and checked out Greenway's book. The reason I paused, just as he, I have a memory of cowboy songs as teaching me the parallels of song and written text. When I read Greenway's book, for the first time in my life I had the feeling that I knew as much as the author about folk song, because I had been in a union and I'd heard some of the songs, you know, sung by choral groups and individual singers.

And John was in Colorado at that time. I corresponded with him and he came out here and got acquainted, and the correspondents led to an interest in making my own contribution. And I just naturally turned to coal mining songs. These were 78s because coal mining songs gave me an area that I could add my reading on coal mining labor history to my interest in songs. And I thought I was always doing things that were natural or just inevitable. But later, a famous folklorist criticized me because I didn't write about my own trade. Well, it was Alan Lomax. And I thought of him as a evil man. I thought he had a lot of guts. He had never been in prison. He wasn't a Southern sharecropper. And what gave him the ability to work with Negro convict songs, but he had to tell me that I had no right to abandon my trade in favor of coal mining songs. But that was my first point of disagreement with a senior folklorist. But I held my, you'd be proud of me, I held my ground. I didn't take any guff from Alan Lomax. And later I didn't take any guff from Dorson. And I don't take, I'm easy to get along with, but there are certain people I don't like. Anyhow, they didn't like me that we were equal. But how do you focus it on the main points?

I started a coal song discography. I don't type, writing by hand. I was working at, we bought this house in 1950. So I started the discography about 1954 and I corresponded with George Corson in Washington and he encouraged me. It was good. I like a senior scholar encourage. He didn't write very well, but I could learn if he gave me tips, and I eventually met him in Washington. He was very friendly. So then, I suppose about 19... Oh, one digression. When I finished, about 1958, approximately, Bernie Karsh, K-A-R-S-H, he's still alive in Urbana, Champaign, look him up, because he came here for an academic meeting of the American Sociological Association, and Bernie had been a friend of Bill Friedland, I corresponded with everyone, Joe and Bill and Corson. And Friedland told Bernie to look up Archie.

He said there's this carpenter in San Francisco who has a good collection of books. Bernie came here and the first thing he did was, "Why the hell do you want to be a carpenter when you're actually an intellectual? And why don't you come to Illinois?" And classic remarks, I said, no, I'd rather be a shipwright in San Francisco than a professor in Illinois. That was prophetic. But he persisted. He said, "Look, I can get you a scholarship." Because he was in the new Institute of Industrial Relations and it had some money. He said, "You can come to Illinois and get a degree." Well, I had two kids at home. Then I think I had three. I had my daughter, Deborah. I had three kids and not much money. So Bernie said, "Well, come for a year and start on your degree and see what happens." And that's when I decided library science. Not that I had any skill, but I knew books backwards and forwards and had been collecting books. So I never thought of getting a PhD. The thought of a three-year commitment or a five-year commitment. But in a year, I could get a master's in library science and maybe get a job.

So Luanne and the kids stayed here. And she's a hero. We lived at a reduced standard of living. I went to Illinois. I did get a degree. I liked Bob Downes. You may have heard of him, the famous, he was a famous librarian and he was a North Carolina native who was interested in civil rights and he liked me. As a native of the mountains of North Carolina, he liked hillbilly music and a lot of things converge because at Illinois, I hated Illinois. It was so flat, it was so conservative, it was dreary. Coming from San Francisco, the hills, physically it was depressing and socially it was depressing. There were a few good people in the library school. There was a Joanne, you can look that up, Joanne something was the library school librarian. And since I was older, I had three kids, I was probably older than Joanne. And she was curious why, because the image of San Francisco then was hippies, Haight Street, Haight-Ashbury, drugs. And why the hell would this San Francisco, now Nancy Pelosi, San Francisco values, why the hell would this mature man abandon his family and come to library school?

Anyhow, Bernie had me working for Gil Donahue, who was the labor librarian. I learned quite a bit. The Institute was on 6th Street. But when the year ended, I came back to San Francisco and went back to my trade. And I worked.

TW: When was that?

AG: It must have been '59 or '60. You can look up the record, but I know I worked at the trade. I worked on the Crown Zellerbach building. I had a good job. And then Martin Wagner, he's still alive. If this thing develops, you could interview Bernie Karsh and Martin Wagner. Martin Wagner was director of the labor of the Institute. And this Gil Donahue resigned. He went to Monteith College in Wayne, was promoted and they didn't have a librarian. They phoned me. I had a library degree. And Martin said, "Come on back and you can be the librarian." And I told him, "No, I don't want to come back to Illinois." And he was very angry. As he said, "We invested in you. We gave you a scholarship. And we helped make you an intellectual. And now you're turning your back on us." Boy he just. I was bleeding and I was weak. I didn't have the courage to say no. That's always been my weakness: an inability to say no.

So what I did the second time, I didn't want to leave Luanne and the kids. And we packed up our household goods. We rented this house, and we went back in August to meet the September deadline. It was hot. The night we arrived in Champaign-Urbana, it was murderously hot, and the five of us were in, some friend let us use her apartment. No air conditioning. We suffered. Why the hell did we come here? But I was Librarian. I started out, and I got a few months later, the University of, it was 1960, February.

I must have been there in September of '59, the University of Chicago had a folk festival that was tradition oriented. And a coincidence, I had met on an airplane trip, Mike Fleischer, one of the students of the university festival. And as we talked about folk music, we both respected each other. And when they had the first festival, he phoned me. "Would I come up from Urbana and help at the festival?" I said, "Sure." And the festival, I was blown away, blew me away, you know, it had Court and Barker, Stanley Brothers, or Bill Monroe. It was a good tradition-oriented festival, and I knew a lot. And I met Bob Shelton, who was a critic for the *New York Times*, folk critic. We became friends. And Shelton was the brother of Ruth Shapiro, who had married Maury Kadish, one of my Boyle Heights friends. So friendship helps. And I mention

Shelton because the first time I was ever mentioned in the, maybe the only time I was mentioned in the *New York Times*, Bob Shelton reviewed the folk song festival at Chicago on the third night. And it should be easy to find under University of Chicago Festival. And he mentioned my name. So I was in the *New York Times*.

TW: He later wrote about the folksong club.

AG: He did?

TW: At least once.

AG: Oh, I didn't read that.

TW: Yeah, there's an article in the archive.

AG: Oh, good. Oh, that's fine. But anyhow, you can find that. No, let Sean find those articles. But anyway, here I was, interested in folk song. And after the festival, two students came to my office on 6th Street, the ILR library, and they were obviously hip. They were wearing Eisenhower jackets and khaki pants and saddles. They weren't button-down Midwestern fraternity boys. Dick Lucas, and he's available around Duke, and the other one was [Vick Canar?], and I lost touch with him, but his father was a big vice president at Motorola, so if he's alive, someone should turn him up. And these two youngsters said, "We went to Chicago, we heard you when you were MC, and we want to start a folk song club. And would you be our faculty sponsor?" I said, "Well, what does it entail?" "Nothing, just sign here." There was some dean of students who supervised all the clubs so they wouldn't step out of line.

But that innocent gesture sucked me into participation because the moment I became the advisor to the club, one of the first incidents we had to put a notice of our folk sing on the bulletin board and notices were restricted 8 1/2 by 11. We didn't know that. And the kids put up a big poster and the dean wouldn't let them, it had to be stamped before it could be put up. And they came back to the office, "Oh, the dean won't let us put these posters up." And it brought out all my revolutionary impulses. I said, "Fuck the dean." And we went marching into his office. He later turned out to be a friend, but we marched into his office. And "How come you won't let us put up these posters?" And he read the rules and regulations. "Well, we didn't know about the rules and regulations. Won't you cut us any slack?" A big showdown but he won. We made the posters over.

But I was hooked then that it wasn't just a faculty advisor being at a distance, I was involved with the club. And you might say that whatever I had learned in the Union and in the Young Democrats, I had learned a lot about parliamentary law and majorities and minorities and resolutions in the Young Democrats and in the Union. I had learned real politics because if a guy stepped out of line in the Union meeting, he might get thrown down a flight of stairs. But those two schools were good schools. It wasn't a conscious plan. I would not have started any activity. Dick and Vick get the credit for starting the club. And I would not have believed that I would give the club any direction, but it was spontaneous.

So that then my interest was in traditional music, and it was manifested on the American campuses, campi, or American schools at that time. There was a Kingston Trio possibility, a Joan Baez possibility, Bob Dylan possibility, and we rejected Pete Seeger. We rejected all of that in favor of deep tradition. And you can tell by our list of guests, Doc Watson, and Harry Oster provided blues artists and eventually we had Cajun and a gospel group. And I think the only deviation from that norm was the New Law City Ramblers who were interpreters of tradition.

And that's significant because in the distinction between Mike Seeger and Pete Seeger, I think there's a world of distinction, though they might have solidarity in terms of the family. But Pete's emphasis is on radical lyrics, the content of the songs. But I think a lot of his songs are marred by following the popular front ideology. But Mike Seeger pays attention to style, and he's good at imitating Appalachian style, and he's accepted by Appalachian singers. So no one has ever thought of Mike as radical, but in the scheme of things, Mike is more radical than Pete. Pete's music leads to the Kingston Trio, to Bob Dylan. Pete helps in the watering down of tradition or the pablumization. Pete takes grist, whole grain, grinds it down to pablum to feed it to babies. So I have a very negative view, but I have to be careful as to how I express it.

But Mike, because here I touch on philosophy, that if we have cultural pluralism, we give recognition to all of the groups in American life, and we say that the groups, the Cajuns, the hillbillies, the blues artists, the zydeco artists, the Cambodians, the Ruthenians, have equal access to the amplifiers, to the printing presses, and I don't want them to all sound like Bruce Springsteen or like Joan Baez. So my philosophy of politics that I began very early in childhood, it's a form of radicalism that's tied into cultural pluralism, or a word I always use is vernacularity. I'm interested in vernacular song, not in popular song. I guess I'm talking faster than you can write.

TW: So have you ever talked to Pete Seeger?

AG: No, I haven't, not directly, but indirectly, because a long time ago, when I was still living here before I went to Illinois, he asked me to write for *Sing Out* magazine, and I refused. I didn't, I didn't say, I didn't like *Sing Out's* approach, and he reprimanded me. He wrote another letter, you know, rather severe, and that got my dander up. I wrote a long three-page letter to him telling him why I rejected Marxism, the Communist Party, Popular Front, popular folk song, and *Sing Out* magazine, and I didn't want to have anything to do with it. And I think the letter was, at least was an indication to him that my opposition was principled. So since then, we've been friends from a distance. You know, when I've sent him books and articles and I buy some of his stuff and I've written, in *Wobblies Pile Butts*, I had a long case study on one of Seeger's songs, "Let Them Wear Their Watches Fine." He liked that. I think he respects my work, but thinks I'm odd. There's nothing I can do about it.

TW: And I guess, so you've had a lot of contact with Mike Seeger.

AG: Oh yeah, I like Mike.

TW: Which one is older?

AG: What?

TW: Is Pete older?

AG: He's the younger half-brother of Pete. See, the father was married and had several children, including Pete, then he separated from his [conscious?] and married Ruth Crawford, avant-garde musician, and Mike grew up as a little boy listening to field recordings that Ruth was transcribing for *Our Singing Country*. The guy that writes about country music is in Wisconsin now.

TW: [Inaudible]

AG: Sort of. Bill Malone. He's writing a book about Mike Seger, but that'll be written in time. I don't know that Mike has ever gone as far as I don't. Mike is not comfortable in talking about because he respects Pete. He recognizes the good work Pete has done and that would be an act of family disloyalty for him to even to criticize, but he's aware of my criticism, but we just don't talk about it.

I think Mike is the ideal singer. Mike has an album, *Tipple Lumen Rail*, that you make, I wrote the notes. That is an ideal way to present late work songs in traditional style. Now, it may be that we have a limited audience. You know, Tracy, did you see that film, *Oh Brother Where It Thou?* Our audience is that audience. It's the audience of old-time music. There's a magazine in Durham or Rally, *Old-Time Herald*. And so will we ever get the whole working class converted to old-time music? But I also mean Cajun or blues. No, just a small portion of it. But that doesn't necessarily mean that we have to abandon the working class to popular folk song. I'd rather have the workers go to a Britney Spears concert than go to a folk revival concert. You know, the main culture of the American workers is popular culture. Now, in a sense, any esoteric outsiders are fighting for the attention of the workers as a pluralist and a libertarian, I would say there's enough for us all to coexist.

So I don't want to be critical of a, if 95 out of 100 will listen to Britney Spears or Michael Jackson and that leaves 500, you know, out of 100 or 500. And if we're divided between the Bob Dylan and Dorsey Dixon or Glenn Orlin, you don't, I'll take my stand and until I, I'm not going to sell out at this age. I have too long, you know, this commitment, your opening question, how did I get interested? I would say when I first heard "The Wreck of the '97" on the radio and "Prisoner Song," that sound of the nasal voice and the guitar, even though in retrospect, Vernon Delhart was more popular than traditional, but when it came to Carl Sprague, you know his cowboy songs? Carl Sprague is like Glenn Orlin. And that would date to maybe '27 or '28. Well, it's a long time of commitment to a certain style and a certain rhetoric.

And when I throw in the fact that I thought of Paul Bunyan as a working-class hero rather than an item of fake lore, I never betrayed my father's reformist values if he went from socialism to the New Deal. I was obviously influenced by both. And I don't believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat. I don't believe in any, I don't believe in the dictatorship of Wall Street or of George Bush or of one party, one flag, one symbol. And I don't believe any country ought to be

powerful enough to fly an airplane to Baghdad. I would never have said, and I don't think Al Gore would have sent any troops to Baghdad, and I'm proud that I voted for Al Gore. See, there's a, I'm aware of the contradiction to the genuine Wobblies, anarcho-syndicalist, I'm a confused liberal. And to those guys, I'm sort of nut. But, you know, that's a problem you won't be. The youngsters who will inherit the politics and culture of this period, you will have to work it out.

TW: Well there's always a problem between the way you'd want things to be and [inaudible].

AG: The way they are. At least I recognize. I think I'm living in the world of reality.

TW: Some pragmatism.

AG: Yeah, I'm a believer, when I'm asked by philosophers, it's not Karl Marx, but it's William James and Horace Kallen. Do you know Horace Kallen's work? Horace Kallen, K-A-L-L-E-N, I wrote it. Do you know my collection that published at North Carolina on *Torching the Fink Books*? I have an essay on the, it's the archive of folk song, it's the Archive Shores. And I dealt with the philosophic underpinning of the archive. And do you know Deborah Kodish wrote a book on Robert Winslow Gordon? Gordon was the first director of the-

TW: I've been reading a book about him. Did somebody else write it?

AG: Is it a biography?

TW: Yeah.

AG: Must be Deborah Kodish. Well, Gordon was a predecessor of... He started the archive, but he didn't get along. Then Lomax's took over. But Gordon, Callan, and Ben Botkin, you know, I try to get a philosophy of the archive, but it also gives you mindful. Go read that essay. And when who phoned? We'll get it later. Do you have any more questions? Do you want to have some lunch? Are you hungry?

TW: I'm not too hungry but if-

AG: No, let's go on while this machine is on.

TW: Well you already talked about the next question which is about how you got involved with the folksong club.

AG: Yeah, that's how it happened.

TW: And so in your view, what was the role [phone rings] the club played on campus?

AG: Well, that's really an important... Excuse me.

TW: Has anybody ever asked you that?

AG: Yeah the significance of the club, it's nothing we anticipated. And we didn't plan it. Have you read Neil Rosenberg's essay on our club? And I think in the preface to his book, he made a good point for the first time that my work with the club anticipated my eventual lobbying for the folklife bill because I articulated some of the problems of bringing the campus, town and town together, bringing country artists to the campus, working politically. And I think he was right. That is, as I look back, I can see the commonality of experience.

When we started, it was really, we knew, there was a predecessor group at Cal that used to, Berkeley, that used to meet at the Unitarian Church. That's just across from the Music Hall, the Smith Hall. And it was a folksong club led by a fellow named Harry [Babbitt?]. And they were, called the Illini or something. And they were really Pete Seeger influenced. And a group of students that, in their various ways, were groping for tradition, one of them was these. Bill Becker, in addition to Dick and Vick. Bill Becker had been a member of that Unitarian group and was dissatisfied with it. See, a lot of kids were getting, they were getting into traditional style. And so they wanted our club to be distinct from the group that later, they formed a coffee club. They called it the Red Herring at the Unitarian, in the basement of the Unitarian Church.

TW: That's still there. It's a vegetarian restaurant.

AG: And is it a church anymore?

TW: I think it is but I'm not sure.

AG: Yeah, well, they just they wanted to get away from the weavers and group singing and kumbaya and the frog songs and all of that mindless. It's so, it's little baby stuff. It's making folk song, it's good for kids. It's telling simple stories and simple messages, and it gets out of the truth and the feeling. There is no passion in the weavers. You know, everything is like Tom Dooley, it's up-tempo. They take a murder ballad that's dealing with elemental human problems. Pregnant gal and the unfaithful lover of murder and escape across the mountains. And they take that deeply tragic story, and they give it a yell leader, pom-pom girl treatment. Everything comes out as celebratory. And that's not what folk song is all about.

But anyhow, this Bill Becker became a music metallurgist at Tennessee Tech. Assuming he's still there, probably Cooksville, you could phone the university and ask him. Tracy, if you interview ten people that have ten different reactions to the club, but they have their affection for the club in common, that's a potential book. And if it's exciting or truthful, can you write? Can you write? Did you write a thesis?

TW: Yeah.

AG: It passed?

TW: Yeah.

Show it. Write one essay and show it to Judy and let her help you and encourage you. And you've got to publish a book. There is no book on the folksong revival from the perspective of the rank and file. Okay.

The club started out of an interest on the part of the students in traditional music. Pretty soon, we started having folks sings, and then sing-along or hootenanny and they were open, fraternity boys, sorority girls. But very quickly, the leading kids in our club that were tradition-oriented, ostracized, or put down the Kingston Trio type, and they might do three numbers, but they were not welcome. They were shunned.

It was so, you know, but believe it or not, we made certain that in that period, you can't underestimate the strength of folksong revival with the Kingston Trio. Every fraternity had a trio and every sorority had one long-haired chick that imitated Joan Baez. But believe it or not, we did get members in those clubs. I can give you the name of one of them. I think the Alpha something. Big sorority across the street from Lincoln Hall. Her name was Ardy, Ardith, A-R-D-Y-T-H. Anyhow, she was going to a club, she was active, put on meetings, she became a blues fan, she married some guy in Colorado. But assuming that these people can be traced, you'd have a magnificent book.

Anyhow, as they say, what bound the kids together was an interest in performing traditional music, discovering. And they began making trips down south. They all began doing field work. They discovered art. They could go on a bus and they'd see some guy with a songbook or a guitar and follow him home. They began bringing them to the campus. So we became a student club that was involved with the community and gradually some of the deans, this Martin Wagner in the Labor Institute, he recognized what I was doing was good for the university because in a period at Cal, they'd had the free speech movement, alienated students, breaking down offices. It was unconscious that I was giving the students a chance to participate on the campus, to work out some of their radicalism, but not to be disruptive. He was wise. He recognized, in a sense, in political terms, I was not letting alienation take its natural form. That was, I was a sellout. I was inhibiting students by being part of the campus and teaching the students that they could influence campus policy.

Now I'd say, if you know Wobblie philosophy, It means that the university as a community should be governed by the faculty, the deans, students, townspeople, and the board of trustees, a plural leadership. The university doesn't belong to the regents. So it seemed to me that it was an exercise in participatory democracy. Even if some people thought it was phony. But we gradually, beginning with the dean who wouldn't let us put our stick posters on the bulletin board. We ended up with Dan Perrino. Was a musician, became a dean. He liked us so much that he facilitated our types of concerts. When Krannert Hall was built, we had one of the first folks on concerts in Krannert Hall, and we had Dewey Balfa, this Cajun group came up, and we had blues, a gospel group, the Holy Zioneers. Anyhow, Dean Perrino, he thought we were wonderful.

And we had the bursar of the university, a man named DeLong. DeLong was the head of the star course. They had big funds to invite Joan Baez and big stars. You know what I call that: sandbox politics. There was a group of fraternity boys and sorority girls that ran Star Course. It

gave them the illusion of participating in university affairs, but everything was programmed according to guys on the circuit. At Star Course, they'd meet, all university arts administrators would have an annual meeting, they'd have acts would be previewed, and then they'd sign them up. So from the point of view of the big star, it was like taking candy from a baby. But DeLong liked hillbilly music, so he'd come to our concerts, and here he was one of the high muckity mucks at administration, and he liked Archie Green, and he liked our students to drop into his office.

And there was one scandal, I complained, that Star Course had infinite funds to contact its people, but the campus folksong had no treasury, and I wanted to use a phone. "Would he let me?" And he said, "Yeah, you can use our phone and the Star Course number" or something. And at that time we were inviting the Blue Sky Boys to campus. Incidentally, there's a rounder record of the Blue Sky Boys that made an Illinois record. It was recorded by John Schmidt. You should get that LP. Judy has a copy. Anyhow, I made about ten long-distance phone calls to Hickory, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia, where the Blue Sky Boys were living, and we wanted them to come out of retirement and come up to Illinois. I don't know if they took the train or flew, but I must have racked up a big phone bill and DeLong called me in. He said, "How come you're making these long-distance calls?" I said, "Well, I'm just trying to get the Blue Sky Boys to the concert." He said, "Don't use the phone anymore, it's canceled because it'll get you in trouble." So we stopped using the phone, but he came to the concert and loved the concert. So he cut us a little slack. Anyhow, he was a great guy. His son, he must have a son that still remembers that activity. Doyle would remember him, and Judy would remember him, but that's part of the story.

So as we started to make an impact on the campus, and our folks sings every week, and they were free and open to the public, and, oh, you know, performed John Hartford. He became a big star in Nashville. John was a disc jockey and a [crow?], a little town to the west. It's a town to the west. What's a town to the west of Champaign that has a radio station? It's about 20 miles. Anyhow, Hartford liked traditional music, so Kanar and Lucas, they'd go out and meet him and invite him to our concerts. And we had another guy who was a printer. He helped us put together the Greenfields. Lyle Mayfield was a printer on the *Daily Illini*. So in other words, we just weren't attracting students and faculty, but some townspeople, and there was a group, the Bray Brothers, they were early into bluegrass and they made a record, and Vic knows a hell of a lot about the Bray Brothers.

So as we started bringing these people to our folk sings, and we came up with a good scheme, that membership in the club was real, I don't know, 50 cents or a dollar, just nominal, but it would admit you to four free concerts in addition to the paid folk sings. And as those became successful, and our influence spread on the campus. Then gradually we became known as far out. So when the drug scare started, I was unaware of it, but some of the students were into acid and they asked me to turn on. Yeah, that was a phrase. I said, "No, I'm already turned on." "Oh, it'll expand your consciousness." "I don't want my consciousness. It's too expanded. I want it-"

But anyhow, we discovered that one of our folk sings there was a plainclothes man that the university actually had a secret service, a Gestapo, and this guy was assigned to the folk sings to see if there was any drugs being passed. And I confronted him in the hall. And I really, I'm a

gentle person, but I have the capacity to get angry. And I told him that he had no right to be sneaking into our meetings under a false identity and spying on our students. And if there was any problem of behavioral, I would take care of it. I was a faculty sponsor, and if he didn't get his ass out of that hall where we were having our meeting. I turned him into the president of the university. It was a pretty dramatic showdown. Anyhow, it turned out that this guy was a fan of country music and he really liked the music and he wanted to come to our folk sings to hear the music, but I didn't know that. So in other words, Dan Perrino, Clift DeLong, the secret agent, you know, getting these, Lyle Mayfield, working Southern Illinois, Southern Baptist, getting all of these mixture of people with our students, it was a great achievement. And then I realized that we were, we were the, you might say, the San Francisco where Berkeley values come to the prairie. You know, that we were a, we helped leaven the bread that was rising. And we, you know, I don't remember what I didn't write down.

One of our best faculty friends was a librarian who wrote a number of books Brown something, I don't know his first name. He was the agricultural librarian. In his free time, he wrote books, and he eventually wrote a book on Indians, something to do with Wounded Knee or that became a bestseller. And he made some money. And then he retired from the library. He had a house on Urbana Street. He ended up just writing. His wife's name, Dee Brown, D-E-E Brown, looked him up in the catalog. And his wife's name was Sally. And they were down home from Arkansas. They were wonderful people. And Dee Brown had worked for Ben Bodkin on the WPA. So he liked folklore and folk song. And he came to all of our concerts. And his kids, his son later he made a film about our club or a film. It wasn't about the club. It was about the protest movement in Illinois. But he had a shot of me in a demonstration and something. Anyhow, that film is probably, it's someplace. Mike, I think his name was Michael, Michael. But Dee Brown's son made a film about the campus during the protest period. So we figured in that.

And what we were doing, we were giving the students that were radical or far out a chance to go to Illinois. They didn't have to go to Berkeley. They didn't have to stay in Chicago. They didn't have to go to the Ivy League. They could stay in Berkeley, make a good scene. The Wobblies want to make a good, wherever the job is, in addition to collective bargaining, clean up the latrine. You take five. That's quitting time. You quit a few minutes early. If you have a mean boss, you get rid of him and have a gentler boss. You see that tools aren't dangerous. Make your work. If you happen to be at Illinois for four years, quit bitching about it and help make it a good scene. Now, our club did, that to a genuine revolutionary. We were defanging radicalism and we were selling out. And I'm aware of that. I know that position.

But I had three kids. I knew that eventually I have to stay at Berkeley until my daughter finished high school. My kids, David and Derek, went up to Vietnam. And Deborah, Deborah was graduated from high school. Like many teenage girls, she was infatuated with horses. And you can do your own Freudian analysis. But Garman, Phil Garman, was on our faculty of the institute, and his daughter, Kathy, I think was married to a chap in Urbana that had a Western wood store, and Kathy raised horses on her farm. So Deborah got out of high school and went to work on the farm, helping with the horses and dogs. And she became a kind of a practical veterinarian without any higher education. Deborah was out of school in 1972. And I was a full professor in the English department, but my mind wasn't in the library science, and it wasn't in

teaching English. It was in folklore. I was active in the AFS. So in 1972, I went down to Washington and hear the story of Ralph Rensler. Do you know his name? Well, that becomes very important.

He was part of, I think we had a little group all over the country. Chris Rackwitz, Berkeley, Arhoolie Records. Dick Spottswood in Washington was a discographer, bluegrass fan. He later did a seven-volume discography of ethnic recordings in America. Spottswood, S-P-O-T-T-S-W-O-O-D. Mike Seeger, Ralph Rensler in New York City. Nick Spitzer in Austin, Texas. Nick is now doing a national radio. We had no national organization. We were record collectors, proprietors of record stores, teachers, fans, musicians. We had an informal, we were an informal band of conspirators on this deep tradition. That's what bound us together.

And Ralph had been working for the, Ralph was a buddy of Roger Abrams, who would know a lot about the story. You want to try to get a Guggenheim, get a year off to pursue this. It's a good story. Maybe Roger can help you. Anyhow, Roger at Swarthmore was a fellow student with Ralph, and they liked traditional music. And they'd have concerts. So I guess about 1958 or '59, I met Ralph in Greenwich Village, and we hit it off. We were good friends. I liked Ralph. He was tall, good-looking, well-dressed, spoke French like a native, had good manners. Ralph was a very sophisticated, he was like the French word, [unknown] for a bourgeoisie His father was a doctor, he had gone to Swarthmore, but he affiliated with Cajuns and hillbillies. He was instrumental with Doc Watson and Bill Monroe. He worshipped Bill Monroe.

Now, Ralph at that time was working for the Newport Festival, which was a big scam, but I won't go into all of that. But Ralph reached a point where he began to see that the form, the structure was inappropriate. It would feature Joan Baez singing for 30,000 people on the main stage and it would relegate Sarah Gunning to the little workshop and the rationale was, oh, if the people come to hear Joan and they happen to hear Sarah, they might get, they might learn about it. I say, "Yeah, 30,000 will leave Newport liking Joan and 30 will leave liking Sarah." We haven't changed the equation a bit. So anyhow, Ralph eventually, Ralph and I used to visit each other often and stay up and talk. We talked these things through and I like Ralph's aesthetic, but he liked my politics. I think if people like popular front politics, they would like Seeger and Woody Guthrie and the Weavers. There's a guy in Indiana now, Ronald Cohn, who's written four or five popular books on folk music. He knows, he said that all these books are available. He likes the Weavers. He thinks that that's like white bread and jelly, you know, and I can't stand the Weavers. So that's one sort of divide.

And Ralph took this job at the Smithsonian part-time to develop a festival on the Mall of traditional music. And Ralph had been a good friend with Mike Seeger, but they had a point of difference, Ralph would never invite Mike to perform because he felt that Mike was an interpreter of folk song and not the genuine folk singer. And that was the cause of a lot of tension between them. But I made an exception. I like traditional music, but I included Mike because I recognized Mike's educational function. I think of Mike as a superb teacher, not necessarily, I don't even think of him as a performer. But anyhow, Ralph caught on in the festival, which became big.

In 1972, when Deborah got out of high school and I went to Washington, I did some part-time work at the Labor Study Center that was under Fred Hepner, you know normal labor education. It was called the Labor Study Center, but now it would be the George Meany Center. And that's when I did part-time for the Labor Study Center, part-time for Ralph, the Festival of American Folk Life. Did you read my essay, "A View from the Lobby?" Dick Bowman helped me. He was involved. It's in my collection of the North Carolina book. It's called "A View from the Lobby." So the combination of the Smithsonian and labor movement and lobbying, the lobbying was full-time. So we finally passed the bill. It was signed by President Ford. The first bill in 1976, I think it was, the number is... The number is significant, 201 or something, I'll have to look at that. It was the first bill signed in the White House in that session, coming out of that session of Congress. And by then, I was getting a lot, I was getting close, I think I was 60 by then.

So that's when I had no, I had quit my tenure track at Illinois. I had no job in Washington, but part-time work. And I was ready to, I wanted to retire to come back here and write and study, but who had persuaded me to keep working until I was 65. And then Roger Abrams saved my life because Roger was chairman of the English department at the University of Texas. And he devised a scheme that I would, if I would, I must have been 61 years old because Roger said, if you come to Texas, we can sign you up as a visiting professor for one year and we'll renew it every year because we can't give you tenure. But you don't want tenure because when you're 65, you're going to quit anyhow. I said, "Great." And I loved Austin. And I wrote a good essay called "Austin's Cosmic Cowboys." You better, I think I must have that book. I'll give it to you. And that's where I met Nick Spitzer. He was a student in Austin. I taught, I think I taught the first class in public folklore.

I was pretty good friends with Dick Bowman, who took over from Roger and [Amerigo Peredes?]. At 65 when I was eligible for Social Security, Luanne and I came home and I started writing again. So right now I, have you ever seen one of these? Seven years ago, we started that fund and we're interested in labor education, but also vernacular music and preservation. Take that along. So that sums up my, in this organization, you might say that it is a culmination of my education and activity and everything I learned in the Young Democrats, the Navy, the Union, at the University of Illinois, at the University of Texas. So it's summed up in that group.

TW: How long has it been?

AG: It started in the summer of 2000. It's 6 1/2 years old. Judy knows about it. This guy that phoned me said he wanted to make a contribution to a university. I told him, hell, make a contribution to us. Let us distribute it. So, in essence, to the university administration, initially our club must have been seen as an avant-garde or a Berkeley contingent. The phrase wasn't used, but if they had used San Francisco values as a majority, it would have been used then. Locals like Lionel Greenville and faculty people like C.C. DeLong, as they became involved in it, was no longer a threat.

And anyhow, we haven't talked about the demise. When the Beatles became popular and the attention of young... There's a good song that epitomizes, I think it's an autobar. "I Traded My Banjo for a Bolex." No, "I Traded My Bolex for a Banjo." And it's a typical student who gives

up on the banjo with traditional music, and bolex is the name of a camera and becomes interested in experimental film. And I remember one of the kids in the club with a friend at the University of Chicago, he made a experimental film of the, it was all cut up in images and you couldn't really see what was going on, but he did it purposely because it was a sex act and he filmed it, then he broke it up so that it was all distorted and the music was distorted.

It was a period of light shows, and experimental films, and the avant-garde students turned to that and gradually the interest declined. I think it would have declined anyhow or the interest declined. I've been asked the question, "If you had stayed in Illinois, would you have kept a core group?" Probably there would have been a core group of old-time musicians and record collectors, maybe 20 or 30, who would want to gather, if only as records increased, and swapping records and tapes. But the pace, we were active. The pace we set, we had two paid concerts a semester, folk sings every Friday night. *Autoharp*, I think we had 32 issues or 33 issues, getting out the records and inviting people to the campus. See, there was no folklore program, so our club, we invited Ben Bach in. We invited D.K. Wilkus. We invited a famous MacEdward Leach, a famous folklorist. And he gave a marvelous talk. And one of my carelessness was taped by WILL at the station. And I went to get it a couple of years later, but they had already used it up. They didn't save it. Oh, it was a wonderful, wonderful speech. Because MacEdward Leach had gone to Illinois, and he was at Illinois in the First World War.

And he said there was a famous folklorist who studied Teutonic folklore- I think her name was Gert Shepherdley. It was before my time, but on the campus to, as a student of traditional music, to illustrate the theory of communal composition she would get the students out, they'd wear long dresses, and they'd dance on the mall in front of the auditorium, the little auditorium that with Jefferson, looks like Monticello. And when they were circle dancing, they'd chant, and they'd improvise, communally compose a ballad. He was intrigued by, I suppose, by the girls in the flowing costumes, dancing barefoot in the grass. But he said that's when his interest in folk song started at Illinois. But that was on tape. If that anecdote had been transcribed, but I give it to you out of memory and maybe other of his student. When he died, there was an issue of the *JAF* in his honor and I wrote a page or so, you want to look that up. But Roger remembered everyone loved MacEdward Leach and Chris Coffin was one of his students. Chris became the, I think Chris is still alive.

TW: He was alive two years ago.

AG: He died?

TW: No, I don't know.

AG: Yeah, I think I would like to, if he's alive, I'd like to phone him. So the club became a socially, a larger role, an ambivalent role in the education of a square university.

TW: [Inaudible]

AG: Let's ask the questions while we're here and set up, see how it's going, and then we can work out another strategy after we...

TW: Okay, so I was wondering and you've touched on this quite a bit but maybe [inaudible] about the political climate of the sixties and how much that had an impact on how its members perceived themselves.

AG: Well, I think that the active members, you know, I guess as a teacher, I don't think I was dictatorial. I taught by example how to, I took pride in, you know the phrase Jimmy Higgins work? Upton Sinclair wrote a novel a long time ago called *Jimmy Higgins* and Jimmy Higgins was a guy at radical meetings who pick up the speaker, Debs would come in, drive him to the meeting, clean, unfold the chairs, clean out the spittoons after the meeting and the big shots, the local party elite, they would take Debs off to a bar and they'd drink and hail a revolution. And Jimmy Higgins was cleaning the damned tobacco juice out of the spittoon. So it was a symbol for the person who did the grunt work.

And since I believed in that, you know, that is the Wobblies believed in the rank and file. They didn't believe in leaders. And every rank and filer ought to be able to handle parliamentary law, ought to be able to organize the logistics of the meeting, ought to be able to recognize good speakers and bad speakers. So the kids, I think I only wrote one or two pages for *Autoharp*. Later, a friend of mine, Ed Cannon, was a folklore student at UCLA, he thought I wrote all of that. I said, "No, that was written by the students." Some of them I helped them develop their ideas or their techniques, but it was a point of pride that it was a student club. It was their club. I might give them advice, and they might reject it, as they often did. But if you take the cadre of active people, they'll give you their own reaction.

Now, the people that came to the folk sings, the hundreds of people, I think they were sympathetic to the club because it provided something to do Friday night that was free, which was good. But I don't think they were involved in the politics. But the question is, to what extent did the kids who just came to the concert, to what extent were they aware that this was different than the Star Course or that. You know, since we were not a political club, it wasn't a condition of membership that they had to be politically on the left to join the club. They could be anything. And we had a number of graduate students. We had Preston Martin from Texas. I think he was conservative. Oh, I remember. I didn't like Lyndon Johnson. No, he didn't like Lyndon Johnson. And I voted for Lyndon Johnson and he told me Lyndon Johnson was a crook. I voted for him anyhow.

So there was no political. If a person liked folk song, he would be taught something. He could be taught. He could develop his talents to write an article or go to Tennessee or have a blues man stay at his house or raise funds. But if you interview some of these people, and you can even get three months off and go to Washington and see them in person and get their memories and check their memories against mine, you'll have a good book.

TW: You said if I could go to Washington?

AG: Well, that's Bob Sayers is in Washington. And Fritz Claus is in Wisconsin. I think he's in Milwaukee. Roger Ebert's in Chicago. Judy and Doyle are still in Illinois. John Schmidt is a veterinarian in New Jersey someplace. Vic Lucas is at Duke. And there must be others. The

only one that I keep in touch with now is Jarvis, who lives over the hill. They all keep in touch with each other, everyone. Oh, Jim Boyle, he had a group, the Philoglee and Mandolin Society. That was a spinoff of the New Law City Ramblers. And it was Jim Hockenhall and Paul Atkins. And they were art students. They're both probably teaching someplace. But until they're dead, everyone would have a memory.

TW: [You told me one of them is at Harvard now?].

AG: Maybe. Maybe.

TW: [Inaudible] Washington state.

AG: Yeah. But they could be traced. Some of them can be traced on the internet and some by telephone.

TW: I was wondering now, it seems like it's going to be hard to find women who were involved because they might not have the same last name.

AG: Well, there's Judy. John Schmidt had a girlfriend who was involved, and there was a freshman student who was from Southern.

TW: It seems the key participants were largely male students but there were some-

AG: Every semester of our eight or nine officers, we always had a few women who were somewhere. One woman was an anthropologist. She wrote her thesis at Illinois. If I looked through the *Autoharps*, I could get the names.

I remember this one woman was an officer and she was a freshman and she'd come from downstate Illinois and to her Urbana must have been Sodom and Gomorrah, to her. Excitement, nightclubs, kids drinking, and to me it was dull as dish water compared to Berkeley, but to her, from her small town on the farm, it was really great. So she started going around with John Schmidt and she quit studying and she got 4 F's and she didn't study and she dropped out of school, but she was a treasurer or something.

There was another girl who was really a good, but Larry Crowley's sister. Larry Crowley was bent. Jarvis, see, some of these kids were rebellious in high school, and Jarvis was telling me about Larry the other day. His sister married a guy into radio television in Austin, and I visited with that family in Austin, but I lost touch with her since. But I would ask Judy, in *Autoharp*, any name that you recognize, and ask all of these guys who were the other students in the club.

I don't think that we were discriminatory in terms of any kind of a policy of male chauvinism or anything, but the sorority girl Ardith came from a farm in upstate Illinois and I visited her parents and we conspired that every spring the sororities had some sort of annual at least house put on an entertainment in the armory or a big auditorium. And instead of doing something insipid, "Would she bring a traditional blues artist," because she liked the blues, and she said, sure.

And so she invited Johnny Shines, who's a big traditional blues man. And I think Alpha Phis or something like that are hosting this Deep South blues man that no one could understand. I think they put him up in the house. But if Ardery is, if we can find her name, if there, which we can.

TW: I'm sure someone else would.

AG: Judy would be able to help you find names of the, and she would tell you that as to why, if every sorority had a Joan Baez imitator, we would make a few inroads in the sororities. But I can remember Ardery and Larry, Larry's sister, and the blonde girl that dropped out of her classes, and the anthropologist, her name was Susie, I think, and Judy.

TW: I read an article in *Autoharp* by someone named Candy [Treffe?]?]

AG: Yeah, that's, she was an outspoken, real brassy girl. Women. I don't know what, they weren't women then. They were, if you're politically correct you have to say women, but they seem like girls to me. But Candy wrote an article on the, I can remember it, the ethnic, because ethnic was a code word for deep tradition, but it was reflective of our interest in traditional music. I don't know what happened to Candy. But, you know, if you go to *Autoharp* and write down every name of a student who wrote an article or appeared at a concert or was an officer, put him in alphabetical order and put it in your computer, and as you meet the guys and gals, if they kept in touch with anyone, they'll have the some lead, as many as you trace, it would really make a good book. What did Judy tell you?

TW: Well I haven't done a formal interview with her yet, I just sat down and talked to her.

AG: At the press or at home?

TW: Yeah, I met her at the press. We talked an hour or two.

AG: She's smart. She's a good folklorist, better than I am. She knows folklore backwards and forwards. She knows languages. She's a good musicologist. You know, her thesis was on "In the Pines Where the Sun Never Shines." Good thesis.

TW: Yeah, I was talking, she was telling me she had studied in Belgium and I was an exchange student to Belgium so it was nice talking to her about that.

AG: How did you get interested in folk song?

TW: Well, I came to folklore through an interest kind of, an interest in nationalism actually in Eastern Europe and actually my interest in a lot of these anti-Semitic beliefs that exist like the blood libel legend. I was studying Czech history and my Czech professor, I was in Prague for a semester, mentioned this Hilsner Case where this Jewish guy had been sentenced to like life in prison for killing this girl and he mentioned the blood libel legend and this belief people have that Jews killed Christians for their blood.

AG: Well, that's in an early child ballad. Sir [inaudible].

TW: Right, right. Exactly. And so I was stunned. I was like, what. This belief amazed me because I had never encountered it before so it was really interesting. When I was at Indiana already I did my master's there in Russian and East European studies and so they had this folklore program. So what I guess attracted me to folklore is that the freedom of the discipline is that you can study anything.

AG: Anything. There's a license to do anything.

TW: Right and I liked that a lot. So it's not, I didn't get into it first because of the music but being in that atmosphere, they have this ethnomusicology program and being around other students who are interested in world music, and bluegrass, and other traditional music had a big impact on me. And I also grew up in Missouri in a small town where you know that was popular.

AG: And you hear country music.

TW: Yeah, in my early life, but I think at some point I kind of rejected it. I was like, oh no, that's backwards.

AG: Yeah, hillbilly. Redneck.

TW: Yeah, but then I got to hear it more and I was like, "I really like some of this stuff." My grandpa and his brother Dan played traditional music. German, Catholic German.

AG: Are you married?

TW: Yeah, I'm married.

AG: What does your husband do?

TW: He's from Poland, I met him when I was doing my research, and he ended up doing a master's at Indiana in environmental policy.

AG: That's good.

TW: Natural resource management. I mean he's not liking living in Champaign very much because there aren't a lot of opportunities for his education but he just, they're gonna hire him as a researcher at one of these institutes on campus.

AG: On the campus?

TW: Yeah.

AG: That's good.

TW: Yeah, so he's looking at the core relation between democratization and environmental policy.

AG: Wonderful.

TW: Hopefully he'll be a little happier here now. I don't know. It's depressing in the winter when it's so flat and the trees are bare. It's a little better.

AG: That's why I didn't like Illinois.

TW: Indiana's much prettier

AG: Especially southern Illinois.

TW: Yeah.

AG: I mean southern Indiana.

TW: Yeah, yeah. And where I grew up there's like lots of rolling hills like southern Indiana.

AG: What part of Missouri?

TW: St. Genevieve. It's on the river. An old French town.

AG: Yeah, that's the old French. Do you know the name Patrick Huber?

TW: I'm related to some Hubers but I don't know.

AG: Yeah, Patrick Huber, his folks are from St. Genevieve. And he became a linguist. He's at Rolla now. He's a graduate. He took his PhD in North Carolina. I'll give you one of his reprints. He would be a good person for you to interview. He's interested. He wrote his thesis on textile songs. Do you know Norm Cohen's book, *Long Steel Rail* and my book *Only a Miner* and his book will be on textile songs. A lot of work with Dorsey Dixon. I met him. See, now, academically, I'm not a graduate. I'm a graduate of Penn, Cal, Illinois, and Penn, but I have a scholarship going at. I like North Carolina, and I'm sending all of my things to North Carolina, and I like Dan Patterson at North Carolina, so Pat was a student of folklore, or history at North Carolina, and he's in our club. And Judy, she was one of our contributors. But I don't. Ask a few more specific questions. We'll end this tape. I don't want to waste the tape, but I don't know what we've left out.

TW: So while you were there what would you think are one or two of the most significant accomplishments in the club?

AG: Well, the club was an accomplishment. It changed the- oh, the reason I was telling you about the Dee Brown and Sally. They used to read all of the fiction that was set in, apparently, three or four novels have been written by Illinois graduates or Illinois faculty. And every once in a while, Sally would tell me that there's a novel that describes the Friday night folk sing, that the novelist happened to be a student there who described learning about folks song. But at that time, I was busy and my mind was on research, so I never read the novels. But there must be someone in the English department who knows all of the novels set in Urbana, at the University of Illinois. And I would assume that any novel written if the person from 1955, say, to 1975, if he's reflecting, he or she is reflecting on student days, there might, maybe you can find what novel Sally referred to. But I would say, and in terms of achievement, just the club. As artifacts we learned learn to make records and put out records. We learned to put out a newsletter.

TW: [Phone rings] talking about something else.

AG: It's pretty hard to keep me on one. The ideas come out and memories are... We don't have to pick up. You could start on something else. The significance of the club. Oh, and then some of the people who wrote novels, at least two or three novels, did mention our club. And as I remember, the folks saying, or the impact. You know, our club bringing traditional music to the campus, it must have been an open sesame for a whole world of adventure, giving students of many backgrounds an opportunity to hear someone else's culture and get some. You know, our folk sings must have conveyed an area as compared to Star Corse and sandbox politics, we were free. We were spontaneous. We had all of the... You want to draw a contrast between a *Saturday Evening Post* cover and a surrealistic cartoon. We conveyed a sense of freedom. But the important thing here is to establish a contrast between, say, a Seeger fan singing a freedom song deeply committed politically to one vision of freedom and our more anarchic or anarchistic conception of freedom, freedom that comes out of doing your own thing. Did you meet any of the people in solidarity?

TW: No, I mean no. When I was studying was very post-solidarity. It would actually grow out of people who were interested in Buddhism. And a lot of people became environmental leaders who grew out of this interest in alternative religious traditions so that's pretty distinct from solidarity which at least part of solidarity had very Catholic orientation. But yeah, I have a friend who's writing her dissertation on solidarity.

AG: The reason I bring that up because solidarity in its rejection of the Communist Party and the cult of personality and the dictatorship of the proletariat, that would be closer. The kinds of young people who gravitated to solidarity and rejected the commissars were the kinds of people that had they been students or that were students at Illinois who saw in the Folksong Club that same rejection of authority. But see, the kids in our club, there were young radicals on the campus who didn't care about folk song. There's always a YCL, Young Communist League, YPSL, Young People Socialist League, there's Young Trotskyites, there's Young Anarchists.

TW: And there were those that were employed too?

AG: There were some, yeah, and they had some faculty members, and some of them liked folk song and some didn't. But there were also on the campus, some of the faculty people joined the

teacher's union, like Iguiznan and I and Bernie Karsh, we were in the teachers union, because we believed in working class endeavor. I don't, I think there were a number of members of the teacher's union when we started who knew about the Folksong Club, but not all of them. Some of them people never attended a Folksong meeting in all of the time we existed. This fusion of cultural activity and political activity takes many forms, and that's worth exploring.

TW: I don't know. I was going to ask you if there's anything else that comes to mind.

AG: Probably I'll keep thinking about it for the next few days.

TW: One planned outcome for this project is an oral history project for various people. I'd like to [room?] at an internet-based archive of the interviews and maybe featuring some highlights. Like if your audio excerpts from some things.

AG: Sure. We'll use some of the audio from our records. That's important. And some of the pictures of our posters. Because every *Autoharp*, we have more posters than *Autoharp*, but we put all, every issue had at least one.

TW: Yeah, I made some photocopies of some things from *Autoharp*, some random things that caught my eye. So, did Doyle do most of the posters then for the club?

AG: No, we had about six students who, Jarvis Rich did some, he could draw, and Doyle did some, and some were more amateurish than others. I think many are signed.

TW: Yeah there's some things in the journal that aren't signed. This I thought was interesting. Do you know who?

AG: Yeah, that's satiric, yeah. I'm going to have you phone Jarvis. Now I remember this drawing, but this would represent the Kingston Trio type, but I don't...

TW: And there's some text in the newsletter that wasn't signed. Is there...

AG: Right down there.

TW: In the very bottom? It's really hard to read.

AG: We'll ask.

TW: Maybe someone will recognize it.

AG: Ask Tarvis. [Mumbling] He did sign it, or she did sign it. It ends in ER.

TW: Okay.

AG: No, maybe it's an... maybe it's CH. Someone will figure it out. I wish I could tell you. It's a wonderful drawing. Well, that would tell you the nature of our club. We didn't think that we

should, we were just doing it. I didn't draw it. I can't draw. We were not dedicated to posterity. The kids were having a good time. It was big and Bob Dylan and Joan Baez were big. And I remember when the first student in our club, Bob Kitle, he discovered the when the Beatles did that album about Sergeant Pepper, and he made me come up to his room. He lived on not 6th Street, the street adjacent to the Champaign Street, right close to the campus in an apartment. And McCoy got to play this cool record for you. He played it. I said, "That's garbage. Why do you want to listen to that when you could listen to the real McCoy?" Because it was so obvious to me that it was these guys that built on early blues. And "Why do you want to listen to these English imitators of the blues?" He said, "They're exciting." And it shows you how little he was right and I was wrong, or he won eventually, but after the Beatles came in and most of the students switched over to the Beatles and similar music, our club was doomed, except being absorbed in the larger audience for *O, Brother, Where Art Thou?* The audience of old-time music.

TW: So, we're talking more about the late '60s when the Beatles started playing things that were influenced by Indian classical music, recording instruments?

AG: Later, but first they were picking up on Chicago Blues. I would date the time I first became aware of them about '67. I don't know if I should have become aware of them sooner or later, but I never was. I never followed. I have no interest. I'm content to stick with hillbilly music. There's so much that we don't know that there's still artists to be discovered and case studies to be written. There's still a lot of work to be done.

TW: I'm not sure how much, this is being recorded onto a kind of disc in the machine and I think it records three hours and I'm not sure how much time is left. I'll need to download it to my computer.

AG: Well, are you going to be here tomorrow?

TW: Yeah, I'll be here till Thursday afternoon.

AG: Do you have anything scheduled for...

TW: Nope.

AG: Well, maybe what you want to do is go over to Downhome Music. That's in El Cerrito. That, you know, we can tell you how to go there. And it's the biggest record store in North America. It has thousands of records, tapes, discs, posters. But I don't, you know, I'm thinking of what you can do to enjoy your time. You can come here.

TW: Is there anything- I know once on the phone I talked to you mentioned going to Berkeley or Stanford. Do you have anything particular in mind that would be useful?

AG: You know, I think just any student should. There's a graduate program in folklore at Berkeley and it's Dundis's influence, but if I mentioned it on the phone, it would be in terms of general interest. I didn't know, I don't think there's anyone that could help you specifically.

TW: I guess I was thinking you were referring to a library collection. [Inaudible] You didn't say that, but I guess I was just assuming.

AG: My collection is at North Carolina.

TW: Well that'd be good.

AG: I'm just trying to think of what could enhance your study. Oh, did I mention the librarian Downs? Bob Downs. I did mention. He was interested in free speech. I think the ALA, the American Library Association, has an annual prize in his honor. And he was from western North Carolina, that is the mountains. And he would come to our folk sings and concerts. That was significant because I had a joint appointment in the library and the Labor Institute. In the library, I was a head librarian of the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, ILIR. And in the library, I think I was assistant professor of libraries. I don't know. They have a certain rank.

But the fact that Martin Wagner, this guy that got me there, liked what I was doing, because he liked it in terms. Martin was very loyal to the University of Illinois. He was a liaison between the university and the labor movement, and he'd get grants and so on. And he was a New Dealer. He had worked for the NLRB in Harlem County, Kentucky. So Martin recognized that maybe, let's say I worked a few hours each morning and finished the library work and spent the rest of the day on the Folksong Club, and he'd come into my office, and the hippies they'd be in my office. He must have been disgusted at times, but he never, he never called me out. My work was exemplary. I knew labor history backwards and forwards, and I could handle the library assignments.

I had one episode where a professor, [Sturmfold?] he was a guy from Austria, very aristocratic and full of himself, and one day he brought some books into the ILR library and put them down right where I was sitting. And I didn't do anything. He stood there and sort of glared at me, and I didn't do anything. And he opened the book. It was due that day, but it was due in the main library. And he said, "I want you to return these."

And I said, "I'm not your servant. That's not part of my job description." So we were not friends. But if it was a library function, it was well-handled. And Bob Downs in the library, he liked me because as it turned out, the first time we bought the New Law City Ramblers, this is a good anecdote to the campus, one of the songs they performed was, "Oh Johnny Hare." It was a play on words of the hare of the rabbit, H-A-R-E, and H-A-I-R, and it had, Alan Dundas would have liked it. It had Freudian implications, and Downs recognized that as a song from his childhood. And boy, so after each concert, we'd usually have a party Lou Ann and I hosted, and Downs got Mike Seeger in a corner, and they traded verses, a [body?] verses on that song. So the fact that I could bring someone representing Bob Downs' childhood to the campus, as long as I did my work, was okay. I'm sure he thought it was an asset. He liked me. He gave me complete freedom.

But after he retired, his assistant was Lucian White, and he became the head librarian. And, you know, our ILIR library that you can go there. It's still there. It's very small. So Lucian asked me

if, he wanted to promote me either to the Commerce Library or something big. And I told him I was happy being in a little library because I had a lot of time to write. And he said, "Well, what do you want to be, a librarian or a folklorist?" So instead of being diplomatic, I said, "I want to be a folklorist." And he really burned up because it was a rejection of his profession. And he said, right now, "Well, if you want to be a folklore, you should pursue folklore and give up the library," which he probably thought as head librarian that he'd be influential enough to force my decision in favor of libraries. I said, "Okay, I'll resign." And six months later, I did. But I just bring up that kind of an anecdote to show the difference.

Part of the success of the Campus Folksong Club was that my two superiors gave me freedom. Now, if they hadn't, I would have gone elsewhere and the kids would still have been interested in folk song. I'm not going to take that away. I couldn't have started a club single-handedly, but I had good support. So I had Downs, Martin Wagner, Bernie Karshman. See if he's in the phone book, because he's the one who he sat on that couch and he asked me to. He said, "What are you doing working as a..." By then I was working. We make a distinction between waterfront work and uptown work, and uptown work is a pseudonym for heavy construction. Even if a big building is built across the street from the embarcadero, that's uptown work. But waterfront work is defined by place and function. So when shipwright work died down, then I had to work uptown as a house carpenter, but I didn't like it. Same thing, I didn't like it. Didn't have the, it wasn't the aura of Conrad and Melville, and it didn't read like a Eugene O'Neil short story.

Anyhow, I was working as a carpenter, and Bernie said, "No, you ought to come be an intellectual." Again, I'd rather be a shipwright in San Francisco than an intellectual in Urbana but come and try it. And everyone was mostly faculty. I taught in the summer school and I had a working-class ethos. They didn't have a PhD and I didn't dress. I never wore a tie. So I suppose in some secret way, I brought to the campus sort of an independent spirit that they hadn't. I don't want to be too personal, but something like that must have been optimal.

But the Folksong Club was fortuitous. Literally, if I hadn't participated in Chicago in the festival, and Dick and Vick went up there and saw me, they wouldn't have asked me to help sponsor their club. And it was new, so I did what everything that I had been taught to do about organization.

Is this meeting your expectation? Is this what you, or did you expect something? What did you expect?

TW: No, this is great. I just hope it's all working.

AG: Well, if it is, we'll find out today, and then we'll do it over tomorrow.

TW: A waste of time but it's very interesting.

AG: What did Judy say to you when you met her?

TW: I think she was kind of surprised I was interested in the club. Not because she didn't think that it's interesting, just that...

AG: You're the first person that has been interested in it since we organized it, and maybe that surprised her.

TW: I don't know. At first, when I just kind of heard about it in a vague way it wasn't-

AG: Well, how did you hear about it?

TW: People just kept mentioning it to me.

AG: Who?

TW: There's people on campus. Do you know Susan Davis, she said-

AG: Yeah, Sue.

TW: She's there.

AG: Suni Davis, she's a student of Roger Abrams. And Suni was in San Diego. Then she came up here one day and interviewed me about a guy named Ewing Basquiat. She wanted to write about him. He was a libertarian. He collected free-speech literature, and he donated it to the University of Illinois. And I knew him. Is she still there?

TW: She's been, I didn't think she's been there that long? I thought she had been at San Diego and now she's at.

AG: Well, this must have been about three or four years ago.

TW: Oh yeah, she's been there at least five years. Yeah. She's still there and she mentioned it. She was the main one but there were other people. Do you know Betsy Hearn? She's in-

AG: Who?

TW: Betsy Hearn. She's in the library, so she's retiring. She's a library professor but she teaches some folklore classes that are more literature oriented.

AG: Was she in our club? Maybe she remembers.

TW: I don't know if she was there then. She's about to retire so I guess she's in her late sixties right now. She has a daughter, Joanne. She does Native American folklore anthropologies. So I met with them together and they mentioned it. Gosh, who else did I talk to, suggested I talk to you? Well Dick Bauman suggested I talk to you.

AG: Yeah [crosstalk]. I was close to Bauman. I like Bauman. He has saved the Indiana program. That's what I think.

TW: Well, yeah, even when I was there, there were rumors that it was going to be merged with communication department or something like that.

AG: Well, he still, it survives. It might eventually be. He's a good man. His head's on straight. He's good in theory. He knows. I think his parents were radical, and he knows a lot about labor and folklore. But let me show you the... Take that home with you. It has my essay, "See If the Archive Shores."

TW: I checked it out from the library but I only went through a couple of essays.

AG: You can have a nice hardbound copy of that book. And that has my essay on Austin. And if you read those essays in order, that's where we're sitting at, right here.

TW: Oh yeah.

AG: And if you open the first essay, it's Bob, you know Bob Cantwell?

TW: I mean I've read his essays.

AG: Yeah.

TW: Is he in this book or an introduction to another book?

AG: That book. He knows more about me than anyone. He wrote it.

TW: Wow, right. Shawn was mentioning it.

AG: Yeah, Cantwell's brilliant. But in the first essay, it's "The Dutchman."

TW: I read that one.

AG: That's where I mentioned this, that's where I mentioned the Scottish shipwrecks, Benny Carberdine and Jimmy Allen. So it starts with my work in the shipyards, and it goes all the way through, and I end with an article on Peter Tammany, who was one of my informal teachers in San Francisco. He was a linguist and etymologist and, you know, American dialect.

TW: I think Shawn mentioned him too.

AG: Yeah. But, you know, you're stationed at Illinois now, and you have access, you know, if the novels can be traced and the other people can be interviewed, it'll lead to something that's really interesting.

TW: Yeah, unfortunately my position is a one-year position and I'm trying very hard to get it extended because I think I need another year [inaudible].

AG: Who's the head librarian?

TW: Well, that's part of the problem because the head librarian has taken a temporary leave. She's now the Chief Information Officer [inaudible]. The interim head director is Karen Schmidt.

AG: Do you have any friend that's a full librarian?

TW: Well, my supervisor is.

AG: What's his or?

TW: Nancy O'Brien. She's the education and subject specialist. And she's great. She's very supportive. I think there're problems with budget cuts and things like that. Illinois is not being, the current governor is a Democrat but he's not very supportive.

AG: You know what to do. Go to see this guy, Bernie Karsh.

TW: Okay.

AG: And ask if there's any possible loose change in the ILR. You know, someone has not shown up for a this or that. And if this thing involved Bernie bringing me to Illinois, and Martin Wagner is still alive. And if you could interview those two guys and ask them how they could see someone nominally in labor education. They don't educate labor guys, they manage them. Most of their graduates are personnel directors of big corporations. And a year ago, some guy phoned me out of the blue from North Carolina. He was a personnel officer at some major corporation, and his daughter was going to Duke. She was interested in folklore and wanted to write a thesis. And could his daughter interview me or write about me? I said, "Of course." But then his daughter was interested in something else, and I lost touch with this guy. But I think if you could exploit that connection, that might lead to some lead or some bucks.

TW: So ask him about-

AG: Well, why did he bring me to Illinois? And what did he think when I was working on the Folksong Club instead of the labor institute agenda?

TW: And so he still has ties to the institute?

AG: Well, they're both emeritus. Doyle has ties in the art department, and a lot of the people- See if Dan Perrino is alive, P-E-R-R-I-N-O. He became a dean of students at the end of my career there, and he was very much interested in music, ethno, and he might still be there. Oh, I knew all the music librarians. There was a Gene, some of the names are fuzzy, but Judy knows it. Richard Wentworth, he was at the head of the press, he's retired. But he published my first book, *Only a Minor*, and a very handsome book because he wanted, I started that series, *Music in American Life*.