

INTRODUCTION

THE reception of volume VI of the Brown Collection has been most enheartening, but it is difficult to judge the impact of the work without the present sequel volume. Only with the complete categories which volume VII provides and with the Index to the whole work, contained herein, will one be able to assess the usefulness of the North Carolina Collection as a general work of reference in the field of folk belief and superstition.

Within the categories and items contained in the Brown Collection the present two volumes give a comparative survey of typical materials around the United States and Canada. With regard to the total body of popular beliefs and superstitions in the whole North American area, however, one must estimate the possible percentage of existing North Carolina material not collected or presented in any way, and from these estimated data attempt to posit the extent of sources still untapped in North Carolina and elsewhere. In December, 1961, Professor Joseph D. Clark of North Carolina State College, Raleigh, published in *North Carolina Folklore* (ix, 4-22)¹ 306 superstitions (with variants running to over 500 items) from a larger collection of 1,600 items collected from many parts of the state. Even so, thirty-nine of North Carolina's one hundred counties are entirely unrepresented. Difficult to believe though it is, approximately 39 per cent of the published parts of Professor Clark's collection falls outside the material in the large and more representative body of beliefs and superstitions contained in the Brown Collection. This percentage in Clark, high though it is, comports well with findings in other shorter published collections that have been annotated against the Brown Collection: Hand, *Pennsylvania*, 42 per cent new material; Hendricks (Texas), 45 per cent new material; Hand (Nebraska: *Western Folklore*, xxi [1962], 257-278), 43 per cent new material. The only large-scale work for which comparative data are available, the Ray B. Browne Collection from Alabama (see Additional Bibliography) reveals that 51 per cent of Browne's material, by actual count, has no counterparts in the North Carolina Collection. Previous estimates of new material in this important Alabama collection have proved far too low, and this, notwithstanding the fact that in some categories relatively high correspondences are revealed. Of 74 items in Browne having to do with planting by signs of the moon and of the zodiac, for example, 69 are to be found in the North Carolina Collection (93.3 per cent); 35 of 60 items dealing with colds (58.3 per cent); 31 of 41 entries dealing with insect bites and stings (75.6

¹ This article is reprinted in the *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, xxvi (1962), 198-224.

per cent); skin poisoning, only one item in eleven (9 per cent); hants and ghosts, 9 of a total of 18 entries (50 per cent); witches, 14 of 33 references (42.4 per cent). The highest percentage of new material in the Alabama Collection is in Folk Medicine, which is often regarded as a special category of folk belief.

These few statistical studies—all of them involving states where tolerably good coverage exists—show the urgent need for additional work in many, if not most, states. On the basis of these statistical surveys, it is clear that questionnaires and finding lists must be devised to bring in material from untilled fields so that future studies will in their own way be even more complete than the great studies which have already provided an uncommonly rich store of folk beliefs and superstitions. For the projected Dictionary of American Popular Beliefs and Superstition, the Brown Collection will serve as the cornerstone, drawing liberally as it does in the notes from the great tributary volumes, such as Bergen, Brendle-Unger, Browne, Cannell, Fogel, Hyatt, Kittredge, Puckett, Randolph, Thomas, Whitney-Bullock, and the many long and basic articles from all parts of the country, too numerous to mention here. For the Dictionary project, and by way of giving representation to new areas as well as broadening the scope of the work in others, the following people have pledged standard collections for their respective states:

Arizona	Byrd Howell Granger, University of Arizona
Arkansas	Mary Celestia Parler, University of Arkansas
California	Wayland D. Hand, University of California, Los Angeles
Colorado	Marjorie M. Kimmerle (deceased), Ben Gray Lumpkin, University of Colorado
Florida	Bertha E. Bloodworth, University of Florida
Georgia	Ben W. Griffith and Wilson C. Snipes, Mercer University
Idaho	Jan Harold Brunvand, University of Idaho
Illinois	Edith S. Krappe, Southern Illinois University
Indiana	W. Edson Richmond, Indiana University
Kansas	S. J. Sackett, Fort Hays Kansas State College, and William E. Koch, Kansas State Uni- versity.
Kentucky	D. K. Wilgus, University of California, Los Angeles
Louisiana	Patricia K. Rickels, University of Southwest- ern Louisiana
Maryland	Dorothy Howard, Frostburg State Teachers College
Michigan	Richard M. Dorson, Indiana University, and Aili K. Johnson, Franklin, Michigan (rural); Thelma G. James, Wayne State University (metropolitan centers)

Missouri	William M. Jones, University of Missouri
Nebraska	William B. Gibbon, University of Nebraska
Newfoundland	Violetta M. Halpert and Herbert Halpert, Memorial University of Newfoundland
New Mexico	James H. Penrod, Eastern New Mexico University
New York	New York Folklore Society
North Dakota	John L. Hancock, University of North Dakota
Nova Scotia	Helen Creighton, National Museum of Canada
Ohio	Newbell Niles Puckett, Western Reserve University
Oregon	J. Barre Toelken, University of Oregon
Pennsylvania	Robert H. Byington, Lycoming College
Quebec	Luc Lacourcière, Laval University
Rhode Island	George Monteiro, Brown University
South Carolina	Louise Jones Du Bose, University of South Carolina
South Dakota	Wayland D. Hand, University of California, Los Angeles
Texas	George D. Hendricks, North Texas State University
Utah	Wayland D. Hand, University of California, and A. S. Cannon, University of Utah
Virginia	Arthur Kyle Davis, Jr., University of Virginia
Washington	Henry A. Person, University of Washington
West Virginia	Ruth Ann Musick, Fairmont State College
Wisconsin	Lee A. Burress, Jr., Wisconsin State College
Wyoming	Velma Linford, Cheyenne

It is hoped that these state collections will be compiled within five or six years' time, with all volumes scheduled to be in print within a ten-year period, as a maximum. These broader surveys will in no way obviate the need of special studies among occupational and ethnic groups. On the contrary, these larger studies should stimulate interest in many special ways; above all, they are bound to encourage the compilation of articles and monographs dealing with special subject fields. Furthermore, the general interest engendered should result in efforts to clarify the background and meaning of many individual folk beliefs with regard to their cultural setting. In short, whereas hitherto material has been collected mainly with a view to getting it in the record, now we are approaching a point in our researches where function and meaning can be studied with greater effect.

In the light of these extensive collecting plans, the Brown Collection should be viewed as the first comparative work to come forth, but not the last. It is likely, however—printing problems and costs being what they are—that there will not soon be a general

collection of the magnitude of the present collection from any single state. California collectanea, for example, will be issued in a series of shorter monographic studies. Other volumes planned around the United States will generally not contain extensive notes, even though it is hoped that all will treat special items exhaustively where the facts warrant. These studies are intended primarily to add basic data to the swelling reservoir of published materials, and thus to contribute to the shaping of reasonably full categories of American folk belief and superstition.

As for the general plans with regard to the Dictionary: excerpting goes on year in and year out, with the end only now coming dimly in sight. The searching for folk beliefs in legendry and in custom and usage has now begun, and is bound to yield many items now only little known. Efforts are also slowly turning to older historical materials now that modern folklore sources have been exploited, and are well on the way to being worked into the files of the Dictionary. Even so, it is a matter of profound regret to the Editor that some of the more promising of these folklore studies could not have been utilized in the Brown Collection.

The Editor will be grateful for communications leading to the discovery of fugitive materials likely to escape his view, and will give credit for such help. The Dictionary project will depend on the collaboration not only of the scholars whose names are listed above, but of specialists working in all branches of folklore where popular beliefs and superstitions are to be found. Mimi Clar's excellent article, "Folk Belief and Custom in the Blues" (*Western Folklore*, xix [1960], 173-189) is a good example of the kind of a study needed for the broader field of American balladry and folk song. Similar investigations might be undertaken for the proverb and for various genres of folk narrative. Folk beliefs exemplified in children's games and verses—as witness the work of Stückerath in Germany—also provide the possibility for fruitful study. The dramatic portrayal of folk belief in customs and ritualistic practices, likewise, will show how basic to these categories are the folk beliefs and superstitions that prescribe courses of action, whether to do certain things or to avoid doing them at all cost.

Correspondence on matters pertaining to folk belief and superstition will be welcome, and the facilities of the Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology at the University of California, Los Angeles, will continue to be available to interested parties.

The notes to volume VII are richer, of course, than in the preceding volume, if but by the fact that some 150 new titles have been brought under survey. As is common in works of this magnitude, a few individual items got lost in the vast body of material being processed. These strays are presented in a special section of Addenda, chapter by chapter, which has been made part of Chapter XIV, Miscellaneous. They are numbered in sequence beginning

with No. 8521, but numbers are also given in parentheses suggesting where these misplaced items might have fallen in the body of the work.

In a recheck of the original sources not used in the present collection, a small body of material has come to light which is made up of items coming from various states other than North Carolina. Since primary data are involved and since the material is valuable, it will be published as a special article in the *Southern Folklore Quarterly* in 1965. Newspaper clippings in the Brown Collection with no special relevance to North Carolina, undated items, feature articles, and articles otherwise not identified in any way, will be published later in various ways. Their connection with the Brown corpus will in all cases be properly indicated.