A Battle of the Ballads: Song Traditions of Michigan vs. Appalachia

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A short comparison of traditions between North and South may be in order, and to stack the deck slightly against myself – at least one might think – I will make the comparison in the realm of songs, with a particular focus on the "English ballad" of such Appalachian fame. Song is also the most convenient aspect of the tradition to compare; unfortunately, it is not as easy to mash-up fiddlers in the South as it is in Michigan – or at least not in the region of Appalachia where I have done the most Southern work. The efforts of the OMFA and the MFA and the organizationally- and preservationally-minded folks around the state of Michigan have helped to create a body of resources for study. While quite a few famous people can be studied in East Tennessee – the Southern area of greatest familiarity to me – the rank and file of fiddlers is largely missing in the record. It is perhaps best to look at song traditions, though, because the concept of the "unique" Appalachian heritage of Old English or Scots Irish balladry is one of the most treasured concepts of the Mountain South, bound up as it is with the inner workings of the settlement movement and with ethnic identity.

The Zeitgeist of early 20th century field collecting in the area of songs was heavily geared towards the Child Ballad. Yet, significant collecting took place in Michigan outside this limited milieu. For example, plentiful collections were made in the rich traditions of lumbercamp songs and sailing songs. Some of the lumbercamp songs will be mentioned below, but it would be worth taking a momentary look at sailing songs.

Dedicated field collector Ivan Walton spent at least three decades in the Great Lakes region of the early 20th century collecting sailing ballads from the aging generation of those who had worked and sailed the windjammers – the wind-powered sailing ships of the Great Lakes that had been outmoded by steam power. Great Lakes sailors in the past had used chanteys as means of coordinating the

repetitive work of the schooners and ships. They also used ballads as methods of storytelling. They left behind a unique legacy of international song in the border region between Canada and the United States. Again, ethnic mix is in evidence, with French dialect and Scottish melody apparent in the tradition.[1]

The huge culture of sailing on the lakes can hardly be stressed enough. Iron made its way far south from the Lake Superior iron mining range as coal came northwards out of Appalachia by train to meet in the steel manufactories of places like Pittsburgh and Cleveland.[2] On the downwards trip aboard sailing schooners, the iron ore in the holds heard songs such as *Red Iron Ore* or t*he E.C. Roberts*, recounting a voyage from Chicago to Escanaba to pick up iron ore, followed by a downwards trip to Cleveland to deliver. Different kinds of chanteys were used at the capstan than for the halyards, depending on the demands of the task.[3] As is traditional for work songs, the rhythms kept work steady and co-operative. Part of Ivan Walton's collection has been published with historical information by Joe Grimm and is now available under the title *Windjammers: Songs of the Great Lakes Sailors*, replete with a CD boasting a number of field recordings from my own home region along the St. Clair River.

Other descriptions of the sailing culture of the Lakes are colorful. One description by Ivan H. Walton, though lengthy, can hopefully be pardoned for its value in painting a picture of the varied avenues of sailing culture:

> [. . .] the crew, working 'watch and watch,' under ordinary weather conditions did not have much spare time, but, when they did, it was necessary for them to provide their own amusements, and storytelling and singing were the principal means. A good sailor was supposed to be able to provide his share of entertainment. Some vessel masters would even pay extra wages to sailors who were good entertainers. The sailor-singer was ever a popular man aboard ship, as well as in the waterfront gathering places. The crews of vessels windbound in harbors along their routes, such as those behind the sand dunes along the west Michigan shore, or under the lee of an island, would at times gather aboard one of the larger vessels, and each man in turn would entertain the group, or, if unable, suffer the humiliation of the incompetent. In the waterfront saloons in the larger lake ports, it was the custom for each man in the group to sing a song, play

1 Information for the above paragraph from the following locations: Ivan H. Walton and Joe Grimm, *Windjammers: Songs of the Great Lakes Sailors* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 9-10, 12, 155-164; Ivan H. Walton, "Marine Lore," in *Michigan: A Guide to the Wolverine State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 114.

2 Walton and Grimm, 119.

3 Walton and Grimm, 33, 57.

some musical instrument, tell a story, dance a jig, provide some other entertainment, or else buy the drinks. Some men became well known all about the lakes for their ability as entertainers.[4]

Here is seen industry-oriented folk music at its prime. Not quite able to represent the agrarian, isolationist mindset so well-beloved by nostalgic seekers-of-authenticity, it still provides a rather romantic image of sailing vessels, with all the elemental powers of wind and wave and holds full of red iron ore, armed with crews producing folklore in a vibrant setting central to the industrial life of the United States – the transportation of timber and ore over the inland seas.[5] One would expect that if gandydancer songs of the railroad crews or coal mining ballads see at least limited acceptance in the old-time music communities, then this pool of repertoire too would meet with recognition. Again, Malone's words, cited at the beginning of this thesis, are worth remembering.

> Here [in the north], as had been the case with the traditional British folksongs, factors came into play which served to destroy the simpler traditional music of the past. The growth of cities, economic prosperity, urban-continental-Nordic immigration, and European musical influences alienated the northerners from the more primitive rural music style.[6]

We have already looked at the kinds of notions prevalent that could have made it easy for Malone to think such a thing.

In keeping with perceptions of the prominence of the Child ballad in folk collecting, the following comparison between Michigan and Appalachia will be made primarily in that milieu. The first collection, that by Cecil Sharp, comprised work by himself, Maud Karpeles, and Olive Dame Campbell[7]. The original was published in 1917, but this study employs the expanded publication put out in 1932.[8] The second collection by Emelyn Gardner and Geraldine Chickering entitled *Ballads and Songs of Southern Michigan* was published in 1939, although despite its late date, the work was in process for a much longer duration, its original conception dating back to "the years immediately after

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4 Ivan H. Walton, "Marine Lore," 116.

5 Catton, *Michigan: a Bicentennial History,* 121-123

6 Malone, *Country Music U.S.A*., 16.

7 Cecil James Sharp, *English folk songs from the southern Apalachians, collected by Cecil J. Sharp: comprising two hundred and seventy-four songs and ballads with nine hundred and sixty-eight tunes, including thirty-nine tunes contributed by Olive Dame Campbell,* Ed. Maud Karpeles, (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), XII.

8 Ibid., XII.

1912."[9] The work states that inspiration came from Appalachian collecting, and the reason why the author of the introduction "thought that similar songs might linger in the minds of those who lived in the rural sections and who were direct descendants of the early pioneers in the state" was because of the belief that "there had been among the early white settlers of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan many people with the same historical background as that of the Southern informants."[10]

The initial questions of this study are quantifiable. Below is an attempt to determine how much of the Michigan collection would interest Sharp. A fairly safe way of doing this is by figuring how many of the songs are related to those Sharp himself published. This will likely give a safe but low estimate, because Gardner and Chickering were working within a similar collecting frame. Fortunately for the ease of this comparison, the Michigan collection contains references to other published versions of the songs, which forms the basis of my identification of shared content.[11] The edition of the Sharp collection in use contains 274 selections. In the Michigan collection are 201 with an extensive list of "other songs sung in Michigan" (128 of them) which are not included in the volume and do not play into the following figures. Of the songs listed as "ballads" in Sharp's work, related versions of 28 are present in the Michigan collection, leaving a difference of 44 ballads in the Appalachian collection not shared with the Michigan. However, of other songs in the Michigan collection, around 27 are present in the Sharp collection in other categories than ballads. Three others are referenced to the Campbell and Sharp 1917 publication, and two are referenced to English collections of Sharp involvement. The result is 60 songs that Gardner and Chickering cross-referenced with Sharp and which could be considered with fair confidence to be of identifiable interest to Sharp. Out of 201 songs in the Michigan collection, this is a significant margin, and it is further enlarged by inclusion of Child ballads present in the Michigan collection but not in the Appalachian collection, a number of around 12. The resulting rough

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9 Emelyn Elizabeth Gardner and Geraldine Jencks Chickering, *Ballads and Songs of Southern Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press), 3.

10 Ibid., 3.

11 The shared content has been determined by my own ability to count and record Gardner and Chickering's references and may contain some errors, but any errors would most likely be miniscule.

figure of 72 items presumably of interest to Sharp in Michigan should be considered something like a base figure, as the possibility of greater interest is certainly present. The number is significant, making up over a third of the Michigan collection.

Numerically, these figures are no surprise. In an article in *The Southern Folklore Quarterly* of 1937, "A Glance at the Ballad and Folksong Field with a Table of Traditional Ballad Survivals in America, 1937" tables are given as the title indicates. One statement in this article reads in reference to Sharp's limited range of "the Southern Appalachian highlands" that "other parts of America, however, have likewise been found to be rich in traditional ballads and folksongs, particularly New England, with special reference to Maine and Vermont; also Canada, with special reference to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland"[12] (16). The tables offered of ballad numbers – the numbers of distinct ballads, not how many versions collected or how many people sang them – depict a range fairly equal. In fact, 79 ballads were listed for "New England (including New Brunswick, Canada)"[13] and 86 for "The South."[14] So, it seems apparent that as far as this count of ballad collecting numbers, the South did not stand out as particularly wealthy with actual ballads found as compared to New England. Again, this does not indicate necessarily a culture of singing still extant, but the ballads were found.

Though while these quantitative similarities are interesting, some of the most interesting differences in the two collections of this comparison are qualitative. After all, Sharp's claim about Appalachia is not so much that he found ballads, but also that he found a culture of singing[15]. This plays a part in the conception of Appalachia as unique. In his preface to the Appalachian collection in use, Maud Karpeles writes that "Cecil Sharp spent a total period of 46 weeks in the mountains," though not consecutively.[16] In this time "[they] noted songs from 281 different singers, obtaining a total of

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12 Reed Smith, "A Glance at the Ballad and Folksong Field with a Table of Traditional Ballad Survivals in America, 1937," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 1 no. 2 (June 1937): 16.
13 Ibid., 9.
14 Ibid., 9.
15 Sharp, XXV.
16 Ibid., XII.

1,612 tunes, representing about 500 different songs."[17] The Michigan collection also gives such information. It reads that the authors "have continued gathering, cursorily rather than exhaustively it must be admitted, until at the present time we have obtained from approximately one hundred and twenty-three singers distributed over thirty counties in the Lower Peninsula around nine hundred ballads and songs, and about one hundred and twenty tunes which are probably representative of others yet to be collected"[18]. This work is the result of years, rather than 46 weeks. It may be impossible to determine how methods and intensity play a part. One might find interesting the flip-flopped proportion of tunes to songs in these accounts. In Michigan far more "ballads and songs" were collected than Appalachia, though in Appalachia, far more tunes were collected.

Since the methods of the collectors in Michigan and Sharp in Appalachia were so different, it may be hard to determine offhand what the presence of a singing tradition was like in comparable terms. The Michigan collection was done in part by a teacher and also by students.[19] This could be compared to the methods of Olive Dame Campbell, a teacher, whose work is included in the Sharp collection in question. There is some information given in the works themselves that offer a basis for a comparison of the "singing culture" as it may have existed. Sharp writes in his introduction, "I discovered that I could get what I wanted from pretty nearly every one I met, young and old. In fact, I found myself for the first time in my life in a community in which singing was as common and almost as universal a practice as speaking."[20]

On the other hand, it would seem that the singing culture in Lower Michigan was not so lively in the same time period, at least according to the collection. The introduction says "In Michigan, as elsewhere, it is unusual to find people under the age of fifty who remember the words of many of the songs which they have heard members of preceding generations sing. And very few of the young

17 Ibid., XII.
18 Gardner and Chickering, 4.
19 Ibid., 3-4.
20 Sharp, XXV.

people are in the least interested."[21]

For the moment, we will take Sharp's description at his word, though other statements in his introduction could easily validate a level of doubt. In the case of Michigan, the entire Upper Peninsula is not included, and no sailing songs were included in the collection. It stands to reason that song-type was restricted. In his forward to the collection, Albert Friedman wrote "One reviewer complained that only seven of the sixty counties of Southern Michigan are represented. To this, Miss Gardner points out correctly that the seven counties sampled are in four different localities and fairly 'box' the peninsula."[22] Furthermore, no non-English songs were included, even though the year before the book was published, Alan Lomax travelled through Michigan and recorded numerous songs including in French, Polish, Finnish and others.[23] Again, in his forward, Friedman wrote,

> The failure to include songs of the large non-English-speaking population in Southern Michigan (Poles, Czechs, Greeks, Armenians, Belgians, French Canadians, Germans, Dutchmen, Swedes, etc.) has also been remarked. 'But this, [Gardner speaking] after all, was a collection of songs in English, which meant I recorded songs from people of English, Scottish, and Irish stock, most of whom (or their forebearers) came to Michigan by way of Canada or New England—maybe a few from Virginia.'"[24]

Furthermore, the collection process took place during a period known to have seen significant popularity of square dancing in regions of Michigan and a lively instrumental tradition. While the collection might indicate – if in fact the fieldwork was carried out effectively -- that an old Anglo-Celtic ballad-singing culture was fading, it does not necessarily indicate a *singing* culture coming to an end, as the collection makes it clear that certain kinds of songs were not accepted, encountered, or sought out by the collectors. The collecting process was also carried out "cursorily rather than exhaustively it must be admitted,"[25] and in a limited geographical range.

Further, one of the collectors, Emelyn E. Gardner, also collected among the play-party song and

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21 Gardner and Chickering, 12.
22 Gardner and Chickering, vii.
23 The American Folklife Center, "Michigan Collections in the Archive of Folk Life," Library of Congress http://www.loc.gov/folklife/guides/Michigan.html (accessed October 13, 2011).
24 Gardner and Chickering, vii.
25 Gardner and Chickering, 229.

game tradition in Michigan, producing a number of texts and an article in *The Journal of American Folklore* in 1920. In her article she writes that "play-party games are still popular in small towns in Michigan."[26] Gardner briefly discusses localization as seen in some of the games and songs[27] and provides many pages of texts with some tunes and game descriptions. This tradition also points to a livelier song tradition than the collection in question indicates, though there is a "Nursery" section in the collection. This collection serves as a good example for how a region can be skewed when only one foot of a tradition is put forward in the face of a tradition almost too-complex and multi-faceted to be easily addressed.

The Michigan collection offers a "list of informants," or at least those "who have contributed three or more items."[28] In the short biographies provided of these informants, mention of the origin of their songs is included. Most of these origins point to having learned from parents or relatives. What is interesting is that many of these parents and relatives, and many of the singers themselves, are immigrants to Michigan from places like Ohio, New England, Canada, or overseas. This reflects, perhaps, on a more recent settlement of Michigan, although it also reflects that the immigrants carried their songs with them and passed them on. However, as already discussed, the introduction states that this culture was going out of vogue. Yet it is also apparent throughout the introduction that a culture of singing did exist popularly in the past, recollected by the older generation. One informant contemporary to the collectors is of particular interest.

> We had been told of a good singer who spent long summer days herding his cows while they grazed on the unfenced pine barrens in Oceana County. Riding in a sulky behind a staid old nag, he would while away the hours from milking time to milking time, keeping the animals within bounds as he sang old ballads and songs which he had loved in his youth.[29]

Unfortunately for the collectors, a religious spouse looked down on the singing of tawdry songs rather

26 Emelyn E. Gardner, "Some Play-Party Games in Michigan," *The Journal of American Folklore* 33 no. 128 (April-June, 1920), 91, http://www.jstor.org/stable/534953 (accessed October 16, 2011).
27 Ibid., 91.
28 Gardner and Chickering., 485.
29 Ibid., 10.

than religious ones, keeping the collectors from a second collecting visit.[30] Interestingly, Sharp writes, "So closely, indeed, is the practice of this particular art interwoven with the ordinary avocations of everyday life that singers, unable to recall a song I had asked for, would often make some such remark as, 'Oh, if only I were driving the cows home I could sing it at once!'"[31] Sharp also mentions religious sentiment against secular song in Appalachia – " . . . who are attached to what is known as the 'Holiness' sect, with whom, however, we had but little truck, as their creed forbids the singing of secular songs."[32]

This little comment, of itself, gives warning that Sharp's collection understandably represents the music of a selected portion of Appalachia, even if it were a majority. However, there is reason for pause. Sharp acknowledges how song is tied up with "the ordinary avocations of everyday life,"[33] but one of the most notable elements of the Michigan collection is entirely absent in the Appalachian collection, and one must ask why.

Lumbercamps, Lumbersongs, and Lumbermen and women are celebrated in the Michigan collection; 16 out of 22 songs in the Occupations section of the Michigan collection are lumbercamp related. Many of the profiles of the singers from the collection refer to their having learned songs from lumbercamps or lumber workers, including women; two of the women worked in the lumber industry. What is extremely apparent in this collection is the effect that lumbercamps had on spreading songs. The introduction says, "Indeed, it would be hard to overestimate the service of the lumber camps in Michigan in preserving and distributing all manner of folk music throughout the state."[34] Further, this spread was multicultural. The introduction quotes a passage from James Bowman's "Life in the Michigan Woods," which reads as follows:

> Almost every nationality was represented, with the Irish, the Scotch, the English, the German, and the Canadian French leading the lists. . . . After the evening meal, the men

30 Ibid., 10-11.
31 Sharp, XXV.
32 Ibid., XXIII.
33 Ibid., XXV.
34 Gardner and Chickering, 6.

> returned to their bunk shanty, tugged off their heavy wet German socks, hung them on the drying line over the stove, pulled on dry footwear, and sat down along the "deacon's seat" outside their bunks to "chaw tobaccer" and to swap yarns and sing songs.[35]

Michigan was not of homogenous ethnic background. In the 19th century, German immigrants arrived, among others, as their descendants in my home region informed me during a graveyard walk of a local Lutheran Church cemetery. Those folks were quite aware of their German heritage. Appalachia had German influence, but as has been seen, the Anglo-Saxo-Celtic has been historically advanced as the dominant perception. Immigration to Michigan is apparent in the profiles of the singers of this collection. Also, African American influence is present in the collection. The extent is limited, but the presence is acknowledged. Some sources even derive from Detroit, a major city. One collector was even African American: "Miss Helen Jackson, a young colored student in Wayne University, obtained from her friends in Detroit songs which they had learned from their relatives and friends."[36] In *Appalachia On Our Mind*, Shapiro writes, referring to the "1920s":

> . . . the mountaineers were defined by ethnicity and history as an 'American' folk. Unlike the lumberjacks and riverboatment and cow-boys, unlike the banjo-picking-spiritual-singing-tap-dancing blacks of the southern plantations and the northern ghettoes, unlike the Polish or Italian or Jewish children playing counting games on the sidewalks of New York or Chicago or Philadelphia, the mountaineers now appeared to be both in and of America.[37]

The Michigan collection claims that in these "lumber camps of the old type, which had their golden age in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century . . . . they approached the singing, dancing throngs thought by the older scholars to be responsible for the communal composition of ballads."[38] Just after this period described, Cecil Sharp was collecting English ballads in the mountains. Also, during the period between 1890 and 1920, according to dates given by Ronald Eller, the "timber boom" took place in Appalachia.[39] In fact, a number of the companies that operated in Appalachia during this

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35 James Cloyd Bowman, "Life in the Michigan Woods," *Michigan History Magazine* 21 (Summer-Autumn, 1937), 275, 278, quoted in Gardner and Chickering, 6.
36 Gardner and Chickering, 487.
37 Shapiro, 260.
38 Gardner and Chickering, 7.
39 Ronald D Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 93.

period had origins in Michigan.[40] Now, as quoted above, though the Michigan collection may claim that the "old type" of lumber camp may have already had their "golden age," this might refer simply to the decline of the Michigan lumber boom. Eller writes, "by the late 1880s, the timber resources of the Northeast and Great Lakes had begun to diminish as a result of industrialization and population growth, and northern lumber producers began to search other areas of North America for their timber supplies."[41] Eller also discusses the presence of "company towns" and "timber camps" in Appalachia.[42] Then again, Michigan historian Bruce Catton describes the lumber boom in Michigan or "the great years of this industry" as "roughly from the early 1840s to about 1910."[43]

Taking Eller's cut-off date of 1920 for the Appalachian lumber boom, Cecil Sharp's collecting falls within the scope. And yet there is an apparent absence of the presence of an overt lumbering repertoire in Sharp's collection, though there is the comment made in the introduction which reads:

> The pressing need of the moment is to complete our collection while there is yet the opportunity . . . . Already the forests are attracting the attention of the commercial world; lumber companies are being formed to cut down and carry off timber, and it is not difficult to foresee the inevitable effect which this will have upon the simple, Arcadian life of the mountains.[44]

Except for the problem of dates. Sharp collected in the years 1916, '17, and '18, and the first edition was published in 1917.[45] Judging from Eller's dates, the lumber boom was reaching its conclusion; lumbering had been having an effect in Appalachia for decades. According to the Michigan collection's introduction, the Michigan lumbermen also sang traditional songs, not just topical lumbering songs.[46] Presumably, some of the songs in Sharp's collection could easily have been, and probably were, sung by the Appalachian lumbermen just as they were sung by Michigan lumbermen.

If the singing scene in Michigan had reduced after the passing of the lumbercamps, as the

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40 Ibid., 94-95, 101.
41 Ibid., 87.
42 Ibid., 122.
43 Catton, 143.
44 Sharp, XXXVII.
45 Ibid., XII.
46 Gardner and Chickering, 7.

collection might suggest, perhaps there was something to Sharp's fears. But could this mean that Appalachia was not necessarily an isolated, unique region, but simply representative of a decades' difference? It is a question worth the speculation.

Sharp *may* have collected in areas not influenced by lumbering. Yet as it is apparent from the Michigan collection that traditional ballads were sung in the camps, so presumably there would have been material to interest him – the same songs he collected elsewhere.

But there is also a seeming absence of African American culture – at least in the introduction to Sharp's collection. One article on the topic of African influence in Appalachia writes that "it came as a revelation to many that there had always been a significant African-American presence in the southern Appalachians."[47] The article goes on to describe the same types of Anglo-Saxonizing that I have briefly cited previously, while discussing African American influences in Appalachia. In the Michigan collection, as seen briefly earlier, there are a few different mentions of an African American presence. As already cited, a contributing collector was African American. The Michigan collection, despite its focus on English language ballads, does not have a smokescreen of racial purity. Perhaps Sharp collected in areas without an African American presence, or perhaps he was not so interested in publishing references to African American music.

For Sharp, the focus of his study was not just on songs or ballads. He makes this clear in his introduction.

> Moreover, remembering that the primary purpose of education is to place the children of the present generation in possession of the cultural achievements of the past, so that they may as quickly as possible enter into their racial inheritance, what better form of music or of literature can we give them than the folk-songs and folk-ballads of the race to which they belong, or of the nation whose language they speak?[48]

With this in mind, Sharp may have found reason for African American children to learn African American songs, but not for Anglo-Saxon children to learn African American songs. As this passage

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47 Fred J. Hay, "Black Musicians in Appalachia: An Introduction to Affrillachian Music," *Black Music Research Journal* 23 (Spring-Autumn 2003): 1, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3593206 (accessed October 22, 2011).

48 Sharp, XXXVI.

claims, each race should learn the "the folk-songs and folk-ballads of the race to which they belong." In defense of Sharp regarding immigration, he does write "that the educational authorities of some of the larger cities in the United States are too ready to ignore the educational and cultural value of that national heritage which every immigrant brings with him to his new home . . ."[49] and also that "the education given to every foreign colonist" should be "directly based upon, and closely related to, his or her national inheritance of culture."[50] Now, Sharp was an Englishman and consequently it is no surprise that he was in Appalachia to search out English songs, and he writes that "the tunes in question would quite correctly be called English."[51]

Judging from this, Sharp would not have valued the creolization found in the Upper Midwest, where people learned the folk heritage of other ethnicities. Whether Sharp would have been adverse to collecting songs from the Michigan lumber camps or communities of mixed ethnic origins or not is perhaps an unanswerable question, though he viewed lumber camps with a sense of apprehension. Certainly his personal interests drew him towards the "English" tunes of the Appalachian region. The nation, as has been seen, was already focusing on Appalachia as a region of "Anglo-Saxon" stock. But, whether the Appalachian region exhibited a singing culture different from other areas in the country can hardly be established on this basis. It seems from comparing accounts from the two collections in question that the studied parts of Appalachia in the early twentieth century possibly did have a more lively singing culture of a certain type of song than the studied parts of Michigan – or at least one a decade or two behind. Yet when the sailing collections made at the same time are factored in, along with the selectivity of the ballad collectors, their methodology, and the modern influences of radio and recordings, the resulting picture strongly challenges this assertion. Even where the specific ballad collection is concerned, it does appear that Michigan did have a lively singing culture within the memory of the singers, and we have seen that the numbers of ballad texts were in no wise lacking in

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49 Ibid., XXXVI.
50 Ibid., XXXVI.
51 Ibid., XXXIV.

the upper regions of North America, even without Michigan included. As the introduction to the Michigan collection states, "Our entire collection is evidence that Michigan pioneers were singing folk. . ."[52]

The lumber boom in Michigan occurred prior to that in Appalachia. While in Michigan the lumber camps provided a boom also of traditional balladry, like the lumber industry itself, the lumber camps did not provide much for continuity. While songs were no doubt shared and disseminated, as the accounts of those from the Michigan collection attest, it appears at first glance that singing the types of songs in question did not perpetuate itself in widespread fashion for long afterwards. This is not to say that singing did not continue. And again, this is a collection from "Southern" Michigan, not including the Upper Peninsula – a remarkably different area.

So, could Sharp be correct in his apprehensions toward the coming of industry? It appears that lumbercamps themselves may not have spelled the doom of song. Rather, the end of the lumbering era may have had more to do with it, at least in Michigan. The end of communal living and working tended to end communal entertainment. Further, the era succeeding Appalachian lumbering would see recorded music playing a role, and popular music of the day always plays a part in musical continuity. In question is not the "end" of music or singing but rather a change in role and type.

Beaver Island, Michigan was discovered as early as Ivan Walton's time as a community of song. However, with the influence of Country music, Hank Williams songs began to supersede Irish traditional songs and sailing songs. Now, though the pubs on Beaver Island regularly hear the singing of early Country music by locals, older Great Lakes singing is rare. Still, it is possible to hear, mixed in with songs like "Jambalaya," the singing of traditional Beaver Island songs. The author has encountered the singing of a Child ballad on the island, as well as a classic lumbering song, a local moonshining song, and more. Still, the concept of itself as a tradition bearing island seems to be growing weaker.

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52 Gardner and Chickering, 13.

In conclusion, it appears that for Sharp's purposes – the discovery of so-called "English" traditional songs – Appalachia was a good field which maintained in the regions he explored a singing tradition which, taking his account at face value, was not as strong in Michigan – a singing tradition of a specific ethnic and sociological import. One wonders what Sharp's experience, enthusiams, and collecting methodology in Michigan could have produced. If a difference in song tradition did exist among English speakers, it might have a lot to do with a few decades difference in the place of community-building work and entertainment, but even so, Michigan's song traditions could never represent to America the kind of racial purity that Appalachian culture came to represent – wrongly or no. A great number of Michigan's lumbermen and camp women would presumably still have been alive in the early 20th century, and the Michigan collection exhibits the wealth of song derivative of these traditions.

We are nevertheless fortunate to have both of the collections in question. In closing, it may be worth noting that the Michigan collection is "Southern Michigan," and as the article on the 1937 "Ballad and Folkong Field" shows, fields of collection existed in other areas of North America.[53] The conception of Appalachia as a unique ballad field cannot fully be examined without comparisons of all these fields from a range of angles, not just ethnicity, race, and industry.

In Appalachia, activist movements, schools, and those merely trying to get in touch with their heritage find it easy to turn to old-time music. There are plenty of outlets for engagement. In Appalachia, old-time music and ballad singing are part of a perceived cultural heritage. Those wishing to identify themselves as Appalachian can do so by espousing the traditional music of Appalachia.

In Michigan, this is not the case to nearly so strong a degree (though in Canada, it is perhaps even stronger than Appalachia). While some Irish may espouse their heritage by playing Irish music, they look to Ireland for the music and not local tradition. The same seems to happen some with Finnish

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53 Smith, 7-18.

music in the U.P. People look to Finland, not just local Finnish-American traditions. The traditional repertoire and styles of Michigan, representing an ethnic mix and a unique culture, are not generally perceived as part of the modern Michigan cultural identity. Further, those who espouse fiddling and folk music tend to espouse that which is accessible and marketed – Bluegrass and Southern old-time. Often, people embedded in generic Southern folk music in Michigan demonstrate a lack of awareness that Michigan even possesses its own traditions of folk music.

Without the concept of Michigan identity rooted in Michigan traditional music, the traditions will continue to suffer and fail. Appalachia has been fortunate to be on the receiving end of cultural preservationism in the big picture of American Folk Music scholarship, if even from a historical foundation of errant reasoning. Consequently, its folk music has remained part of the popular Appalachian identity to this day. People can make a statement about their identity simply by playing old time Appalachian music. Yet, at the same time, other regions of the country have been in some way victimized by Appalachian and Southern music through the imperialism of Anglo or Anglo-Celtic elites embedded in folk music studies throughout the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.