

Olive Campbell came to this seasoned artistic wisdom in the best way: as amateur collector, then as scholar, and finally—a happiness given to few—as the central figure in a community where folk music was a part of the philosophy of rural education, which builds on inherited culture. No empty sentiment lay behind her choice of the school motto, “I sing behind the plough.” The story of her part in the recovery of American folk song is well known: how she began to collect casually, as her husband’s companion on his trips to mountain schools (he was for ten years Director of the Southern Highland Division of the Russell Sage Foundation); how she became increasingly aware of what should and could be done by the right editor; how her interview with Cecil Sharp led him to work in the Appalachians, and how, as the result of most happy collaboration, her name appears with his on the title page of *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (1917).

But to-day, although we talk about Mrs. Campbell’s tangible accomplishments—her long direction of the folk school, her publishing, her directorships and committees, her founding of the Southern Handicraft Guild and her development from infant to major proportions of the Council of Southern Mountain Workers, we know that they are not enough to explain her influence. It is to her person that we pay tribute. We remember, through countless contacts, our dependence upon her wisdom, our confidence in her judgment and common sense, our admiration of her courage, our enjoyment of her humour. We remember her unflinching appreciation of whatever troubled or interested us. We sorrow that we shall not meet her again, but we know that we have been most truly enlightened and enlivened by knowing her.

E. K. W.

RUTH CRAWFORD SEEGER

(1901–1953)

The death of Ruth Crawford Seeger at 52, in November, 1953, interrupted a career of unique fertility.

As a young woman in Chicago and New York, Ruth Crawford established easily the most distinguished reputation among the few women in the United States who have been composers of fine-art music, and she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for musical composition, among other honours. After her marriage to Charles Seeger, who had been her teacher in New York, she joined him in his efforts to bridge the gap between traditional American country music and American composers.

Mrs. Seeger’s attention was first called to folk song and the problems of relating it to conventional music when, about 1925, Carl Sandburg invited her to join other young composers in the Middle West in writing piano accompaniments for the folk songs he was publishing in *The American Songbag*. She did four of these, but later felt she had gone at them in the wrong way for lack of familiarity with the traditions out of which they grew. This lack her subsequent work as music editor for several of the Lomax folk song collections was to remedy: she transcribed thousands of authentic field recordings during the 1930s, playing and replaying some of them a hundred times. She met the problems of folk song notation by pointing out that *all* music notation is imperfect, and so more than one compromise between the eye and the ear is possible, each legitimate in its way. This is illustrated in her series of transcriptions for the old shaped-note hymn “Amazing Grace” (interleaved with George Pullen Jackson’s book *White and Negro Spirituals*).

The instant attraction that the songs she was transcribing had for her own children and their friends, and the children’s urgent demands for more such songs to sing, gave Mrs. Seeger new confidence in the appeal of authentic folk song and turned her energies to the problem of circulating it outside its generating environment. After some years of experiment with school groups in the use of folk song, she devised a fresh manner of presenting her material in print, one that does not change nor obscure the significant character and beauty of the musical vernacular and yet is acceptable to teachers to whom our authentic native traditions are unfamiliar. Her wealth of creative suggestion for making folk song part of children’s lives, and her contagious delight in the musical variety

and vitality of folk songs, have given her three published collections—*American Folksongs for Children*, *Animal Folksongs* and *American Folksongs for Christmas**—their special appeal and authority. The last one appeared only a few days before she died. She left material for one and perhaps two more such collections.

Mrs. Seeger's musical settings are not unlike Bartok's in their bareness and in their rigorous musical relation to the generating musical style, and they are utterly plain and unexacting technically, as Bartok's folk song settings were in the beginning. They do not derive from a pianistic concept of accompaniment at all, but from the nature of the instruments traditionally used in the United States to accompany folk song: the banjo, fiddle, guitar and so-called "dulcimer." About 1950 Mrs. Seeger began to feel she would like to write symphonic music again, and she was looking forward to more elaborate creative use of musical elements from folk song. Meanwhile, one of several pieces entitled *Diaphonic Suite* was published along with music of Charles Seeger in an issue of the quarterly *New Music* (it appeared posthumously) and Columbia Records is to issue her String Quartet in its American Chamber Music Series (a work she never heard performed).

The Seeger home in Washington was an unforgettable centre of warmth and hospitality to musicians, especially those working with folk music anywhere in the world. The stimulus of an evening with the Seegers has been described over and over again by foreign visitors as their most important musical experience in the United States. For all her great creative gifts and wide musical knowledge, Mrs. Seeger was a sturdy personality of the utmost simplicity and naturalness. She had the widest possible sympathies, the quickest loyalty and kindness—a memorably rich and generous human being who was a most rewarding friend.

SIDNEY ROBERTSON COWELL.

JOHN LINTON MYRES

(1869–1954)

Sir John Myres, Emeritus Professor of Ancient History in the University of Oxford, died at his home in Oxford in 1954. Born in Lancashire in 1869, he emerged from Winchester and New College with much more than the usual Wykehamist fund of classical learning, with a boundless interest in the modern as well as in the ancient world; and with a lightning curiosity, linking the basic conditions of life with the innumerable crystallisations of art, which made him not only classical scholar and archaeologist but also geologist, anthropologist, and folklorist. He left Oxford in 1907 to become Professor of Greek at Liverpool, but returned in 1910 as Wykeham Professor of Ancient History. He held that Chair till 1939, but continued to serve New College as fellow and librarian till the end of the War.

In the First War he had served in the Mediterranean, and Compton Mackenzie in one of his books has recorded the remarkable appearance side by side on a wave-washed deck of two new officers of the R.N.V.R.—R. M. Dawkins with his brilliant red hair and Myres with his black Assyrian beard streaming in the Aegean gale.

Many years after Myres had left his mark on the archaeology of Cyprus, and Crete, and Zimbabwe, his memory was stored not only with the scientific facts but with all the anecdotal embroideries; and only a year or two before his death he was writing letters about the Easter customs of his Lancashire boyhood. He will be sadly missed in Oxford where a certain pressure exists to confine enquiry to one department. He was an exciting teacher, tolerant of ignorance, and intolerant only of those who look at antiquity through a religious haze of false analogy. His most important books were his *Who Were the Greeks?*, fruit of a year's lecturing in California (1930), and *Herodotus Father of History*, published the year before he died. He was also an astonishingly good administrator; founder and editor for many years of *Man*, and a prolific writer; organiser of numerous international conferences; who blessed any number of learned societies with commonsense as well as uncommon learning.

*See reviews in this *Journal*: II, 75; IV, 91; and p. 75 of the present volume.