The collection of the folk tunes contained in this work was made possible by a research grant from The American Philosophical Society.

PREFACE

So far as I am aware, this is the first collection devoted exclusively to American instrumental folk tunes which has been edited with special attention to the provenience and history of the music and accompanied by some attempt at a general description of the players' methods and the processes of instrumental folk music tradition. Obviously, however, no one is competent as yet to describe this music and these processes over the whole country; for instrumental folk music is a department largely unexplored by musicologists and unexploited by field workers in North America. We suffer from a paucity alike of collectanea and descriptive data, and may truly be said to know amazingly little about what seems to be one of our most vigorous and fertile traditional arts.

I hope, therefore, that any observations on the currency of these airs in various other parts of America are couched in language careful enough to avoid all misleading overstatements. I may, it is true, have some reason to surmise that no profound difference exists between tunes and conditions in other regions and those in western Pennsylvania, where the present versions were collected. But the tradition and practices here described are intended to apply only to this limited area. Definite statements about the local tradition are made solely on the basis of what has been seen, heard and noted down in the field; theories or other general and inclusive utterances are signalled as tentative or frankly conjectural. For inevitable errors I accept sole responsibility—hoping only that in time the increased knowledge which a greater accumulation of material is bound to give us will expose and correct what is wrong in these remarks, and vindicate what is right. It will be seen that my field experience in western Pennsylvania is not limited to the gathering of the material offered here. Were that the case, my opinions would be advanced much more diffidently; for one hundred melodic items gathered from

nine informants scattered through four counties make hardly a broad enough basis on which to construct a description of any local instrumental tradition.

The melodies here assembled were noted down by ear, as circumstances did not permit the use of machinery. It goes without saying that this is not the best way to record folk music. But it may be stated that every means which field experience could suggest, or earnest effort bring to the task, was employed to assure the comparative accuracy of these transcriptions. The notations include as many of the players' drone effects and other harmonizations as could be captured. Small notes in the tune copies are harmonizing tones sounded above the melodic line. All the tunes are noted in the keys in which they were played, except the few taken down from singing or whistling, or copied out of a manuscript made by one fiddler.

Only two special signs used in notation require comment. The sign ⟋, ⟍ before or after a note indicates a rapid slur made by sliding the finger along the violin string. The sign ↑ or ↓ above a note signifies a change in pitch of less than a half-tone: the tone is slightly sharp when the arrow points upward, and slightly flat when it points downward.

It would be gratifying to be able to say that the references to other published versions of tunes given here, and to related airs, were complete; but such is far from being the case. Only such collections of folk dance music as were accessible could be used in compiling the editorial notes, although copies of tunes, and data about them noted from sources previously available, have also been used. Still, enough material may be assembled to indicate that some of these tunes are old, widely diffused, and British or European in origin, while others apparently cannot be traced outside the localities where they were taken down. These untraceable melodies furnish one of the basic problems in the study of American instrumental folk music.

I offer no apology for making such extensive use of commercial collections of popular dance music in compiling the notes. The deficiencies of these compilations, as reference sources for the scientific study of traditional music, are obvious, and require no enumeration. At the same time such volumes do contain a large mass of genuine folk dance music belonging to the British-American tradition. Apparently not all of their music is reprinted from older collections; they have obviously obtained excellent and interesting versions of many tunes directly from folk musicians. They provide us, therefore, with additional material. More significantly, they enable us to realize the popularity, wide diffusion and varied forms of a number of tunes which some of the great collectors of the recent past — as, for example, Joyce and Petrie in Ireland — seem to have ignored completely. Yet many of these airs appear to be highly important and influential in the tradition today. Presumably they were neglected in the past for the precise reason that they *were* so common and universally known.[1]

My chief sources of information about instrumental folk music in the southern United States were the collections of Ford and Adam, replete as they are with tune versions of unmistakably rural American character and name.[2] The tune-titles quoted in the notes form only a small proportion of the numerous local names under which variants appear. As a general thing, they are quoted here only when the nature of the source makes possible a mistake in identifying the melody cited. When a tune plays many parts in the tradition — when, for instance, it is even more widely known as a song-tune than as an instrumental air — only such of its vocal sets have been included in the references as would help to identify versions, clarify some aspect of its history, or illustrate its diffusion. A key to all abbreviations used in the notes accompanies the bibliography.

[1] Compare the passage in which Petrie derides Bunting for "gravely" acquainting the public with the fact that he took down "the tune called 'Patrick's Day,' in 1792, from 'Patrick Quin, harper,' as if he could not have gotten as accurate a set of it from any human being in Ireland that could either play, sing, or whistle a tune . . ." Petrie, p. ix. It is true that Petrie was condemning Bunting not for taking down the tune, but for recording it from a *harper*, with undue pomp and circumstance; yet it is noticeable that sets of the air "Patrick's Day" do not appear in Petrie's own collection, as edited by C. V. Stanford (see bibliography).

[2] Unfortunately, these two compilations are nearly as deficient in detailed information as the publishing houses' collections just discussed. From Ford's introduction and Adam's place of publication, I gather that a respectable number of the tunes in each book come from Missouri. In this, however, I may be mistaken.

My thanks are extended to Dr. S. K. Stevens, State Historian of Pennsylvania, whose interest in preserving Pennsylvania folk culture inspired the collection of this material; to the American Philosophical Society, whose grant-in-aid of research made the work of collecting possible; to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Bayard, Pittsburgh, Pa., who allowed me to use their home as headquarters while engaged in the field work; to my wife, Georgia F. Bayard, who patiently read and copied the text of this study, offering valuable suggestions and criticism; to Mr. Albert B. Lord, Member of the Society of Fellows of Harvard University, who also read and discussed the text with me; and finally, to the folk musicians named in these pages, who accorded the collector a kindness, hospitality and cooperation almost without bounds.

SAMUEL P. BAYARD

INTRODUCTION

In order to discuss the folk instrumental music of Pennsylvania most fruitfully, we should be able to examine it in connection with the same sort of material elsewhere in this country. This is hard to do because so little from other sections has been made available. It must be admitted at the outset that we know little about instrumental folk music in the United States, and study of it cannot yet go far because the tunes themselves remain largely uncollected. Interest in the folk dances has revived lately, but we possess as yet no large quantity of musical material gathered from many different parts of the country — nothing comparable with the mass of our recorded traditional song melodies. Also, observations on the technique of our folk musicians are few. The following remarks, therefore, must be understood to depend on the writer's observations in western Pennsylvania, and to apply primarily to the tradition found in that region, although there is evidence that they might also hold true over a considerably larger area.

The amount of published instrumental folk music collected from undoubted American traditional sources is lamentably small and scattered. Our unpublished collections of this material greatly exceed the printed ones in importance as well as size. Instrumental music is included in the collections of several independent field workers, in folk music archives, and in manuscripts possessed by several libraries. It is to be hoped that more such collections may be made, and that the material will find its way into print.

Undeniably, our tradition of this sort of music has been — and still is — a rich one. A single fiddler may know scores of melodies, including many unknown to other players in his community. Often the fiddlers and their music survive in Pennsylvania communities where folk songs — so far as we know now — have disappeared. Indeed, instrumental music may perhaps be termed the most tenaciously pre-

served and most persistently neglected of the folk arts still surviving in the country generally. Although the art, in its vigorous natural state, is passing away, it seems likely that collectors may still recover much through a little investigation in almost any region. The notes to individual tunes in this collection will furnish testimony that in Pennsylvania we are dealing with a tradition firmly rooted in an ancient and wide-spread old-world *repertoire*.

It is certain that many recently introduced national groups in Pennsylvania preserve and to some extent cultivate their native music.[1] Of them and their music this discussion can take no account, except to say that they share fully in the general neglect. The material which concerns us here is that of our dominant — and oldest — imported tradition: the British-German. In this compound the latter element has much less importance than the former, since the Germans seem generally to have adopted and continued the cultivation of the British tradition which they found already flourishing, or still taking root and growing, when they arrived. Apart from the contribution of a few traceable melodies, the influence which they exerted on our folk instrumental and vocal music is hard to put one's finger upon in our present state of knowledge. Yet their effect on the whole musical idiom — not only in Pennsylvania, but over the country at large — may possibly have been far from slight.

In western Pennsylvania, settled mainly by British and German stocks, fondness for the old folk music still characterizes many people in rural and industrial communities, and the fiddler is still in demand to play at dances. A musical instrument of some sort hangs on the wall of many a countryman's dwelling. Formerly, in our backwoods and rural communities, the instruments were frequently homemade; now they can easily be procured from factory or store.

At the present day we may sometimes hear folk music — and much nineteenth century stage and sentimental music as well — played on the saxophone, ukelele, piano, accordion or parlor organ, while modern swing tunes are intruding more and more into erstwhile purely folk performers' homes through their agency. But older

[1] The Serbs, Czechs, Hungarians, Poles, etc. as well as Scots and Irish, hold National Days, when native music and dancing form part of the programs.

and better folk musicians still use the traditional instruments; guitar, banjo, dulcimer, fife and fiddle. The guitar and banjo, though sometimes used for solo playing, serve mainly to accompany songs. So do the dulcimer and zither, which, whether of domestic or factory make, are now rare and apparently passing out of use. Fifes used to be played a great deal, and many of our traditional tunes are marches for that instrument. In rural communities of former times there were numerous fife and drum corps called "martial bands." A few of these may survive. Like the fiddlers, the fifers occasionally held playing contests. Beside fife music, the writer has also heard tunes played on small, end-blown pipes or flutes, which have a tone resembling that of a soprano recorder, though a trifle shriller. Bass violins and 'cellos occasionally were used as parts of string ensembles to play at dance pavilions — and may be yet in some neighborhoods. The tunes in the collection here presented were all taken down from the tradition of folk fifers and fiddlers.

The chief folk instrument in Pennsylvania today is undoubtedly the fiddle — almost indispensable for "old-time" dancing, and cultivated by many countrymen who do not make a practice of playing for dances. It may be emphatically stated, likewise, that as the old folk-dance music and march tunes were played chiefly on the fife and fiddle, so also they are mainly preserved and transmitted by means of these instruments. In this tradition the instruments, the technique pertaining to them, and the airs played on them all hang together. Even though we occasionally hear old airs played on the saxophone or modern pieces fiddled in the countryside, the opposite — however it may be explained — is generally true: when new instruments are adopted, new tunes come in with them, and when a player lays aside his fiddle to take up some more popular "dance orchestra" instrument, he simultaneously, as it were, lays aside (and in time forgets) his repertory of old folk tunes. The writer has seen this occur too often not to be convinced of the connection between instruments and musical repertory in our tradition; and despite occasional exceptions, it seems quite safe to say that where fiddles and fifes are still played in the countryside, old folk music is remembered; where they are not, the traditional music is forgotten.

Fifing is now becoming rare, and the writer has had little chance to observe traditional players' performance. The rural violinist learns to use his instrument by trying to play the tunes he hears, not by practising exercises; although he undoubtedly learns much by observing and taking informal lessons from other fiddlers. Like the folk singer, he most often sits down to perform. Apparently his principal intent is to master the notes and rhythms of his airs; tone-quality, as we understand it, is incidental, and his violin (which is apt to have all metal strings) often emits a strident sound. The country musician is by no means always indifferent to good tone, however — clear, sweet voices are appreciated and fine violins much cherished.

Individual playing mannerisms abound. Fiddlers will often ignore chin-rests, and hold their fiddles in one or another of a number of ancient positions. They may hold the violin against the chest; on the left shoulder, or against the arm just below the shoulder; on the lap; or on (or between) the knees, with the fiddle-belly turned outward, as a 'cello is held. At fiddlers' contests some players do tricks with their instruments, sawing out tunes while they hold the fiddle above the head, behind the back, or between the legs. Since they have to steady the fiddle by grasping it firmly at the neck, it must be difficult for them to change rapidly to positions higher than the first; yet many can "play all over the fiddle," as they express it — though needless to say, they do not learn any series of positions by an order of *points de départ*. Some of them use the fourth finger hardly at all in playing; others use it continually; and minor variations of the usual fingering may often be seen.[2] It may be added that actually the traditional player seldom needs to go above the first position on the violin, due to the limitations of range in most of the country dances and marches.

Indeed, individual habit and fancy appear to rule or modify traditional fiddling technique in practically all details. The fiddler sometimes bows with a straight wrist, moving his entire arm; sometimes arches his wrist above the bow, and moves his forearm only.

[2] As, for example, stopping both F-sharp and G with the first finger on the E string; not in order to go higher, but simply as a matter of habit.

He generally holds the bow some distance from its end — perhaps to facilitate the short, vigorous strokes with which he often plays. He tunes the instrument ordinarily in the regular series of fifths (without reference to concert pitch), and plays in G, D, A, C, and sometimes E and B-flat — or rather, in what would be those keys if the fiddle were always tuned at the conventional pitch. Sometimes, instead of tuning in fifths, he sets the strings in a fourth-fifth-fourth relationship, putting the G-A and D-E strings in octaves: and also sets the G string a tone higher (to A), leaving the other strings at their usual intervals from each other.[3] Since he nearly always plays by ear alone, the traditional fiddler often does not know in which key he may be playing a tune: he learns to finger it out at a certain place, and seeks to know no more about it. Some fiddlers while playing an air in the key of D will aver that they are playing it in G — similarities and differences of fingering in the various registers being noted and mastered, the player cares nothing for the terms. Of the keys mentioned above, each fiddler is apt to have an especial liking for one or two, in which he plays most of the tunes he knows. When a fiddler knows in what key he is playing, it is no sign that he knows anything about reading music; and when he is able (as a few are) to read notes, the effect of printed music on his repertory and playing habits is still likely to be slight, if he has been an ear-player at first.

A common practice among country fiddlers is to use the open strings as drones. Often they shave down the top of the violin bridge until the strings are nearly on the same plane, making continuous double-stop playing easier; and performing in this manner they call "cross-bowing" or "playing the old way." This feature, combined with the steady rhythm and absence of dynamic change in their playing, produces an effect much like that of bagpipes, of which it may possibly have been an imitation. Whatever its origin, the practice is now a familiar part of conventional folk

[3] Of the many special methods of tuning practised among country fiddlers in the South, the two just described are the only ones observed by the writer in western Pennsylvania. There may be others. The first method of those given above is described for Irish fiddlers by Rev. Richard Henebry in *A Handbook of Irish Music* (London: Longmans Green & Co., Ltd., 1928), p. 67. Apparently these special tunings are employed to facilitate fingering and harmonizing when certain airs are played.

fiddling technique. Of course, not all players practise this double-stop droning — some prefer it, others avoid it, while still others take advantage of harmonic possibilities as much as their tunes will allow, but do not produce the drone effect. One player told the writer that a maxim of his father's was "Keep your fiddle *full* (i.e., of sound or vibration, no doubt), and harmonize all you can." Thus the individual player's preference obscures the observer's perception of what conventions may obtain in the folk manner of violin-playing. Many fiddlers habitually tie two contiguous notes of equal pitch on the up and down beats. Whether this practice be due to rapid, careless playing, or to convention, it is hard to say. For obvious reasons, the fiddlers, when playing quick tunes, do not much follow the practice of pausing arbitrarily on a note from time to time, to break up the rhythm. This habit, called "dwelling," is a favorite device of folk singers, and it may be noticed that when fiddlers play song tunes they "dwell" on tones precisely in the manner of traditional vocalists.

Of course the quality of individual performances differs considerably; there are slipshod, careless players (called "rough-and-tumble" fiddlers) as well as gifted and skillful ones. The style of some players is exceedingly smooth and rapid; of others, more deliberate, more markedly rhythmic, and garnished with simple ornamentation, such as grace notes and tremolos. Fiddlers almost never learn the use of the *vibrato*. Some players bow with long sweeps or slow runs from end to end of the bow; some use many short strokes. They syncopate infrequently, the rhythms of the tunes being straightforward like those of our song airs and Irish reels. Even the "Scotch snap" is rare in Pennsylvania fiddle tunes, although the fifers make some feature of it. The playing of dance tunes is usually marked by great vigor, and leaping, nervous animation.

Fiddlers generally introduced variations into the successive repetitions of their tunes. The presence of widely differing versions of many tunes in our tradition, with alternation of melodic formulae (cadential and otherwise), occasional translation of a dance tune from one mode into another, and frequent rearrangement and reassociation of widespread strains, all testify to a long established practice

of melodic re-creation among players in the past. No doubt fiddlers might still be found who have made considerable alterations in some of the melodies they have learned. But such drastic variation is always hard to trace to any definite person, and may even have been unconsciously made in large part; while evidence for it in the tunes themselves is vitiated to a considerable extent by the certainty that slight, note-by-note variation is going on all the time. And, carried on over a long period, such minute changes could well accumulate and produce as much alteration in a tune as the sweeping revisions of some very individualistic and gifted player.

Variations of the slight, elusive sort are the ones which we hear in the playing of all traditional fiddlers, and which the individual players' variant renderings of single tune-items in this collection primarily illustrate. But even in the case of these tiny and fleeting changes in the notes of a tune-variant we may not always be completely certain that the player is experimenting or expressing *deliberately* his preference as to how the melody should go. Some of these variations have every appearance of being caused by mere inadvertence — a stroke of the bow omitted, a finger not laid down on time, an additional tone stopped through mechanical fingering habit. Moving pictures of the players accompanied by recordings of many repetitions of each tune played would alone give us the material to inquire adequately into this "technique" aspect of traditional variation. At present, unless variations recur often or regularly, we cannot tell accurately which variations may be accidental and which are reflections of the player's skill, tendency toward experimentation, or recognition of more than one way of rendering a particular passage.

Undoubtedly most players have a fairly clear idea of the notes of their melodies. Some are found who insist that there is but one correct way for the tune to go — but the writer has never been able to observe that these performers were less apt to introduce slight variations than others who made no such profession. Probably each player has in mind several alternate possible ways in which certain passages in some of his tunes may be played. On the other hand it is certain that some fiddlers may carry a tune in mind one way,

yet always render it another way when they are playing it on the fiddle. The fiddler Emery Martin, for example, whistled, played slowly, then played rapidly, his version of "The Cuckoo's Nest" (No. 8), and at the writer's request he did this several times. When whistling or *when playing slowly* he always gave the penultimate bar of each part of the tune in one manner; when playing at his usual speed, he *invariably* rendered it in another form. Both variants are registered in the present collection, and, so far as the writer can discern, one presents no greater technical problem or difficulty than the other.[4] Perhaps enough has been said to bear out the statement that the factors in traditional variation of instrumental folk tunes are by not means few or simple.

A degree of specialization is discernible among Pennsylvania folk musicians: fiddlers are not likely to know many songs or song tunes, and folk singers do not often play instruments. However, we occasionally find a person who sings and plays traditionally, or who is able to accompany his singing on some instrument. Sometimes a player will be equally expert on the fiddle and fife — and of course, many tunes in the tradition serve alike for song, march and dance purposes. Fiddlers are fond of holding contests; in some southwestern Pennsylvania communities, for example, they have held them almost annually, with non-competing traditional players as judges. Occasionally groups of violin, guitar and 'cello players have formed ensembles and played for dances, or performed at theaters and given radio programs. These groups usually remain purely local, but sometimes attain some note and travel about.

As stated already, most traditional fiddlers are unable to read music, and play wholly by ear — they call themselves "air-players," as distinguished from "note-players," or those who can "play the music" (meaning printed music, of course). Their attitudes toward music-readers are diverse. Some feel a certain contempt for the man who learns from the printed page and studies the violin in the manner of the music school; others regard him with admiration. Some prefer their own music, and stand up for their own versions

[4] Exactly the same thing happened in the second bar of Emery Martin's "McClellantown Hornpipe," No. 11B.

of the old tunes, while others modestly consider their versions apt to be wrong because they are not printed. This reverence for the printed page — "the notes," as they often call sheet-music — is becoming more widespread in Pennsylvania, and is a sure sign of the decadence of traditional art.

It is as difficult to make statements at once comprehensive and accurate about the music played by our folk instrumentalists as about their technique. This music, of course, forms a large and important part of a very rich melodic tradition and, in many aspects of its content and development, is hard to consider apart from our entire folk music body. Each different air has its own separate history; so may each variant of any air follow its own independent course; and every tune has as many variants as it has players. Many of the airs also turn up in a number of quite distinct *versions,* having possibly several functions; and, as in all musical traditions, melodies and melodic variants flourishing side by side in the folk repertory are mutually interactive. Accidents of variation, confused associations in the players' minds, the contagion of certain formulae (melodic turns and cadences) affect them all, and cause variants to diverge and different airs to converge from time to time in the streams of tradition.

Perhaps the number of actually different melodies or strains is not great; but in their aggregate, and with their varied and recombined forms, they furnished quite a large musical store — and one which melodic re-creation gradually augments, no doubt. Concerning the exact number of distinct melodies that may be — or may have been — in the western Pennsylvania tradition, it is, of course, useless to make any conjecture. Suffice it to say that the writer has never yet encountered a fiddler of good repertory who did not play him a number of tunes which he had never heard from anyone else. Thus far there has been no slackening in this continual discovery of new melodies; and at this rate we can at least presume that there must have been some hundreds of tunes in the memories of our old-time local folk musicians. At the same time (as might be expected) the music gives the listener a feeling of its homogeneity, due to the strong impress of the characteristic melodic style and manner of execution.

Nearly all the individual tunes which can be traced are British — Anglo-Scottish or Irish — and numbers of others show the same construction and melodic traits as these.[5] Yet some fiddle tunes and versions (like various song-tunes) have a flavor or quality that seems to distinguish them from the music played in the British Isles.[6] Whether this is a distinctive American stylistic contribution is impossible to say as yet. It may be that the German musical influence in this country has caused the melodic idiom to undergo changes. Nor can anyone pretend to know how many of our tunes may have been composed in this country, or how many old-world tunes may have been modified in tradition until they are no longer recognizable, and have become new tunes in America. Discussion of matters like these is useless until more information becomes available, for we are only beginning the collection and study of our instrumental folk music. The writer's guess at the moment is that the majority of our instrumental airs (like our song tunes) are imported. American compositions, however, would naturally be couched in the musical language of the old-country tunes, when they were not composed recently and strictly along modern lines. And since our fiddlers have been able to vary and re-create melodies so tastefully, it seems fairly safe to assume that some of them could produce good new tunes also.

The fiddlers' repertories contain some German and German-sounding airs, and one or two of French origin. Undoubtedly some dance airs not of folk origin have entered our tradition, exerted their influence on late compositions, and undergone change like the older folk airs. These also may have assisted in modifying the melodic style. Among them are waltzes and schottisches which for the most part must have been learned ultimately from sheet music, although sometimes we see a variant of an older dance air worked over into one of these forms. There are also some late tunes, obviously com-

[5] The individual tune-notes of this present collection would seem to indicate that on the whole the Irish influence was strongest in Pennsylvania; which would not be surprising. It may or may not be the case, however: field work and research have not gone far enough to enable us to say definitely what constitutes the dominant "national" element in our folk instrumental music, if there is one.

[6] See Sharp-Karpeles, *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, I, xxix, for mention of a similar quality in song tunes.

posed for simple fingering on the violin, involving tonic-dominant modulations in a modern manner, and generally inferior in quality. These are American without much doubt. But British music predominates everywhere in Pennsylvania — even in German-speaking districts, from which the writer has heard radio programs of fiddlers with Teutonic names playing Irish and Scottish reels![7] This British music, as we have been able to observe it, consists of tunes which form part of a basic and strongly-established repertory, and which often give evidence of being quite old.

Our dance tunes are prevailingly in duple time: time that can be indicated as 4/4, 2/4, or 6/8. Thus far the writer has never heard in Pennsylvania any tunes in 9/8 time, although these form a fairly large class in the British Isles. Airs in 2/4 and 4/4 time are variously called "jigs," "reels," "hornpipes," "quadrilles" and "hoe-downs," and 6/8 airs are termed "quadrilles" and "cotillions." Practically the only triple-time melodies current are mazurkas or waltzes, except when a fiddler plays a song air in 3/4 time.

Like similar music in the British Isles, the ordinary fiddle or fife tune consists of two parts of equal length (four to eight bars), each part repeated in playing. The internal melodic design of the phrases in this frame varies considerably, but the frame itself serves alike for airs of simple or complex structure, and for dances or marches. The mid-point (and sometimes the entire first part) of a tune is called the "turn," as it is in the British Isles. The second part is named variously the "high part," "fine part,"[8] or "chorus," and is usually pitched higher than the first. Often, in playing, a fiddler shortens the final bar of the first part in his haste to go on to the second. This practice, called "cutting," is frowned upon by the better performers. Of course it upsets the even rhythm characteristic of our dance tunes.

The foregoing is a description of the normal instrumental air; but there are many tunes and versions containing three or more parts, and some which are not evenly divided in the way described. Possibly a few of the latter may be the descendants of tunes for "set

[7] Of course the Scotch-Irish poured into these regions in early days, preceding or accompanying the Germans. Their influence, therefore, was doubtless exerted from the times of earliest considerable settlement.

[8] "Fine" in the sense of high-pitched: a common country expression.

dances," of which the special steps are no longer remembered; but it is more likely that structural irregularities are due to corrupt tradition. Longer tunes consist of actually different strains (which, however, may all share the same closing formula): the elaborated development of a single basic strain charasteristic of some "fancy" British fiddling and piping is not found. Our tunes change by variation in detail, by modal transposition, or by alteration in pace — not by studied elaboration.

And, in general, our tunes seem less complex in their melodic figures than the Scots and Irish, and less difficult actually to bow and finger on the violin. Versions of old-country airs show among us more correspondence with simpler English than with ornate Gaelic versions, despite the strong Scotch-Irish influence on our music. Whether this simplicity points to a more antique tradition surviving in America, or to a falling-off in technical skill among our players, is uncertain. In the rough, unleisurely life of a pioneer or backwoods community, some deterioration of the art would not be surprising; and tune-versions often seem definitely to reveal an unimproving simplification — a lessening of melodic variety and quality for the sake of greater ease or speed in performance. Yet there are also a number of cases where the simpler American versions show no inferiority to the British. And many a nameless and untraced dance tune of western Pennsylvania possesses (in the writer's opinion) a gayety and grace which no product of the tradition elsewhere has surpassed. After all, we must expect an oral tradition to include contributions from performers of different grades of ability and taste. There are poor or broken-down melodies and versions beside the fine ones in tradition on both sides of the sea.

Mr. Phillips Barry, whose death deprived this country of one of its most acute folk-music scholars, once stated that instrumental folk music in America was dance music.[9] Probably the greater part of it might be thus classified, and doubtless it is predominantly quick and energetic. But in western Pennsylvania, at least, it must be remembered that the fiddlers' and fifers' repertories include likewise a

[9] See his "American Folk Music," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* (Gainesville: University of Florida and Southeastern Folklore Society), I, No. 2 (June, 1937), p. 44.

number of marches, and of animated but irregular pieces (some of them perhaps broken-down dance tunes) which must now be played for pleasure since they cannot serve for dancing. In addition, there are some slow tunes — most of them were song-tunes, doubtless, and some still are — and a few "program" pieces like No. 80 in this collection. The original status of some of our tunes (*i.e.*, whether they were at first songs or dances) cannot be determined, since they exist in both vocal and instrumental settings of equal merit and popularity. That dance tunes — either entire or in part — have been set to words and circulated as song tunes, and that song tunes have been revamped and used for dancing, are facts for which evidence may be adduced from many collections of traditional song and music. Some of our country nonsense ditties in western Pennsylvania are set to melodies indistinguishable from fiddle tunes.

In former days, when fiddlers were unavailable for a local dance, the company *sang* dance airs in simplified — sometimes abbreviated — forms, to improvised or traditional rhymes.[10] Many tunes now have these rhymes associated with them, sometimes giving the tune its title, sometimes weaving the title into the verse. In singing games and play-parties these tunes were also used freely. Thus, in western Pennsylvania, the distinction between play-party tunes (sung) and dance tunes (played on instruments) is very tenuous, if it exists at all.

The incessant variation of our fiddle and fife tunes has made their interrelations enormously complicated; perhaps more so than in the case of song tunes, for the instrumental airs, unmolded and unstabilized by textual associations, seem to be even more fluid. They are constantly altering in time and tempo, exchanging parts, and merging strains, with results which practically defy description. Some few are relatively stable and stay together rather constantly, but even their component strains are apt at any time to be recombined with parts of other tunes, or with wandering fragments. General similarities in pace, form and rhythm probably aid improvization and the unconscious mingling of parts of separate melodies. At

[10] This was quite a common occurrence in southwestern Pennsylvania. The writer has heard it alluded to on many occasions.

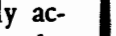
times it can even surprise us to reflect on the way in which some melodies have retained their identity and integrity, when we consider what could happen to them at the hands of any expert fiddler with a head full of airs and strains and a good traditional artist's leaning toward experiment and improvization.

The tunes have a nomenclature as shifting and variable as their content is apt to be. It appears that, just as there are certain tunes which seem to be known everywhere, so likewise there exists a widespread stock of titles, some of which are current alike in the British Isles and in America. New titles (usually picturesque and humorous) are constantly being coined, and all of them, new and old, travel about freely by word of mouth, supplant each other, undergo variation and corruption, and get applied to tunes practically according to the caprice — or faulty memory — of the player. In the resulting confusion, one title may do for several tunes in any community; tunes may have various titles in some districts, and go nameless in others; while some airs may, conceivably, fail to receive any names at all. The title of a tune is the most casual and least permanent thing about it, and the naming of any melody really depends upon the individual player. Some fiddlers recall names accurately as they have received them orally; some get them mixed up and let many slip out of their minds. Some insist on a name for each tune they may know, while others do not care to learn or give tune-titles at all. Any player is apt to have in his repertory a number of airs for which he knows no name — but for which his nearest musical neighbor may be able to supply local titles.

Published lists of tune-titles, like those given by Odum and Carmer,[11] are therefore useless for identifying or tracing melodies, but they give an amusing insight into the fiddler's fancy. And they also furnish us with useful information concerning the diffusion of a number of "stock" titles as an independent, or semi-independent, element in the tradition.

Among the countless tune-titles — nearly all vividly pictorial and vibrant with a captured moment of life in the field or forest — we

[11] See Howard W. Odum, *An American Epoch* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1930), pp. 201-206; and Carl Carmer, *Stars Fell on Alabama* (New York, 1934), pp. 275*ff*.

find a number which share common patterns of construction. Some depend on alliteration for their effect, as in the cases of "Tiddle Took Todfish" and "Susan Lick the Ladle." But many more have a definite (if simple) structural design which may be formulized as *Y in the Z*. The preposition may change, but the title-formula itself is tenacious. Thus we have "Sugar in the Gourd," "Maggots in the Sheep Hide," "Natchez under the Hill," "Nigger in the Woodpile," "Hogs in the Cornfield," "Fire in the Mountain," "Billy in the Lowlands," "Hell among the Yearlings," "Dogs in the Dishes," "Frog in the Millpond," "Rooster on the Strawpile," "Possum up a Gum Stump," "Coonie in the Stubble Field," and numerous others. Their underlying beat is evidently conditioned by the rhythmic pattern  , which resounds continually through the versions of our traditional dance melodies.

The majority of the fiddle tunes are in a major mode, although a fair number appear cast in dorian or mixolydian, or have about them something of minor tonality. But the major scales of the fiddlers are not those of art-music, for they admit alternating pitch at some places. We have no space to discuss folk scales adequately; but it is certain that the fiddlers quite often play a high C, a high G, and a low F-sharp; that they habitually raise the fourth and lower the seventh notes of their major-scale tunes; that they note instantly a divergence toward the fixed-tone scale (so that faulty ear and fingering cannot be blamed for the intervals they play);[12] and that they disapprove of the conventional fingering, because, as they say, it is out of tune and spoils the music.[13]

One or two further observations may be set down *pro tempore* concerning instrumental folk music in western Pennsylvania. It has been stated that the tunes in our local repertories belong to a tradition basically British, but seemingly affected also by an indeterminate

[12] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions* (London: Novello & Co., 1907), pp. 84, 85, for notes on such practices among English fiddlers and singers. Similar statements about the tonality of Irish playing and singing occur *passim* in the works of Rev. Richard Henebry: *Irish Music* (Dublin: An Cló-Chumann, 1903), and *A Handbook of Irish Music* (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1928). The remarks of Prof. R. W. Gordon about fiddling in the southern United States are in the main true also of the art in western Pennsylvania—see his articles quoted in *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, I, No. 2, p. 46.

[13] Art-music in general, which they call "classical music," they sometimes characterize as "all classical and no music."

amount of influence from imported German folk music; and that the traceable British material belongs in large part to groups of cognate airs which would appear to be not the least ancient in the British traditional stock of tunes. But we should give some attention to another trait of our folk instrumental tune-stock — or at least a seeming trait, since actually it may be described only with some uncertainty, due to our present ignorance of such music over the country as a whole.

As some of the individual tune notes show, our meager store of published instrumental music from rural American sources indicates that certain airs have a wide currency in this country. These widespread tunes include both the demonstrably older and the presumably newer types; some derived from British tradition, others possibly of American origin, for all we now know to the contrary. The fact that tunes in fair numbers thus turn up in widely scattered localities suggests that actually they may be known everywhere; and suggests further that many others may possibly be equally popular. Thus we have the possibility that our folk musicians all over this country share a great common instrumental tune repertory, aside from what distinctively local repertories may exist. Such a universally-known stock of tunes is indeed demonstrable for the singers of folk *songs* in the British-American tradition. Whether the like has also been true of our folk instrumentalists can be discovered only by more investigation and collection. If the existence, or non-existence, of such a large common stock of tunes could be demonstrated by an abundance of data, the fact would teach us something of significance about folk instrumental tradition in our culture. Material from Pennsylvania thus could not help but be valuable in any attempt to reconstruct the history of traditional musical activity in this country. The importance of this material for the cultural history of the commonwealth itself certainly needs no vindication.

To whatever extent our great folk music tradition may flourish or languish in other parts of the country, in Pennsylvania it seems now to be gradually disappearing. The danger is that it may fade away entirely before any representative amount of it can be recorded. The writer's collections from the southwestern regions may be fairly

representative, but they can lay no claim to thoroughness or exhaustiveness. Other parts of the commonwealth appear to be practically unexplored, and some of these sections may contain fully as great a wealth of traditional music as the southwestern corner. In the view of a field worker, this lore cannot hold out much longer against the cumulative influences of changes in tastes, manners and activities. In western Pennsylvania a break in the tradition has already occurred: the failure of younger people to take up the fiddle or fife and learn the technique and music of past generations assures us that those who now keep the old music in mind will have no successors. The old-time fifers, whose playing gave life to parades on election days, Independence Day, and other public occasions, have nearly all passed away; the fiddlers are following them, more slowly, but just as inevitably. To all appearances, the folk art which up to the present day has been perhaps the most completely preserved surviving element of our pioneer culture will soon pass from the scene, leaving little trace of its existence, to say nothing of the one-time copiousness, variety and excellence of its products.