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Richard M. Dorson

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RICHARD M. DORSON

Is There a Folk in the City?

NORTH UIST LIES AMONG THE OUTER HEBRIDES in the Atlantic coastal sea, a Scottish outpost on the western edge of Europe. When the plane from Inverness swoops down toward the airport at Benbecula, the isle looks like a lonely crater of the moon, pockmarked with hollows and lifeless lakes, striated with mountainous ridges, coated with vapor. A nearer view is no more encouraging. There are no hotels, no villages, nothing but solitary crofters' stone cottages scattered at long intervals over the empty moors. A driving rain and wind blow across the moors, stinging the face and dampening the clothes. Trousers do not keep a press long in the Hebrides. Roads are primitive, and cars when they meet must jockey to find a "passing place," a widened shoulder of the road located at intervals, because the roads are all one way, whichever way you are going. Gaelic is the tongue everyone speaks from birth, and English is the second language.

This is the country and here are the folk known to folklorists. No richer tradition in the western world has been uncovered than the Gaelic treasure found in the Hebrides. John Francis Campbell of Islay gathered his classic four-volume *Popular Tales of the West of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1860–1862) from the Hebrides and Highlands. Alexander Carmichael amassed five volumes of folk blessings, hymns, charms, and incantations from the same area in his *Carmina Gadelica* (Edinburgh and London, 1928–1953). At the present time John Lorne Campbell, laird of the Isle of Canna, continues to mine the isles, with book-length collections from single narrators on Barra and South Uist, while his wife, Margaret Fay Shaw, has brought forth a substantial sheaf of folksongs from South Uist. Even the hoard of Campbell of Islay and his collectors is still being tapped in the twentieth century, with two posthumous volumes of folktales and the impressive cache of local historical traditions titled *The Dewar Manuscripts* (Glasgow, 1964).

North Uist and the Hebrides are the case I offer as a classic illustration of the terrain of the folklorist and the concept of the folk. I was there the end of August 1967, accompanying a collector from the School of Scottish Studies in the University of Edinburgh, John MacInnes, himself island born and raised. Although the Hebrides have been so amply collected, and although only some two thousand

souls remain on North Uist, John says there are layers upon layers of tradition still to be peeled, a lifetime of work. The people of North Uist are all one; their names begin with Mac, they appear all at some point to be interrelated; they have inhabited this isle for ten clear centuries. In common they speak Gaelic, farm the land, cut peat, and tend the sheep; and they visit each other in sociable *ceilidhs* in which they recall marvelous events of yore occurring on the isle. The name of almost every locality and landmark involves a tradition. Only in faith are they divided between Catholics and Protestants.

If the remote countryside, symbolized by North Uist, has provided the questing ground of the folklorist, what business has he in the city? One ready answer is that the folklorist deals with people, and the people have left the country and flocked to the cities. While North Uist has dwindled to a couple of thousand crofters, Gary in northwest Indiana has risen from empty sand dunes in 1906 to become a metropolis of 200,000, peopled by over fifty nationalities. To Gary and its neighbor East Chicago, one-third its size, I went in February 1968, to live under field conditions. Knowing no one, I sought to form contacts and interview representatives of the dominant ethnic groups. Gary received nation-wide publicity when it elected a Negro mayor, Richard G. Hatcher, on November 7, 1967, an election reflecting the rise in the city's colored population to over 50 percent. The other major groups in Gary are the Serbian, Croatian, Greek, and "Latin," a term that includes Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. Throughout Lake County as a whole the Poles predominate. East Chicago has proportionally a smaller Negro and a larger Latin element, with its mayor, John B. Nicosia, representing an earlier, now established Italian colony. When speaking of East Chicago the commentator must include Indiana Harbor, a community within the city; before they were combined, East Chicago and Indiana Harbor were known as the twin cities. They are still physically separated by a forest of giant oil drums and installations lined along Route 20. Close connections bind the two—or three—cities, for they are all part of the steel kingdom that has sucked into its fiery vortex the manpower of many peoples. Inland and Youngstown in East Chicago and U.S. Steel and Bethlehem in Gary are the regal plants that must be fed twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, with iron ore and coal and tended by men and women. The need for laborers in the mills is never sated. First it was met by East Europeans from every Balkan country, then by southern Negroes, then by Mexicans and Puerto Ricans brought up in truckloads and planeloads concurrently with southern whites, who streamed north from Kentucky and southern Illinois, Virginia and Tennessee, Alabama and Louisiana. "Eighty-five percent of them around here is from the South," one Kentuckian observed airily.

Such a complex of ethnic and regional groups is bound to attract the folklorist, especially when the groups involved derive from the peasant-farmer and laboring classes. Linda Dégh and her husband Andrew Vaszonyi first penetrated Indiana Harbor in the winter of 1964–1965 and again in the summer of 1967, speaking with the sizable body of emigrants from their native Hungary. They had soon realized that one ethnic group led into another, and my mission was to explore in a preliminary way these other groups. Born and schooled in New York City, living in London for three stretches totaling two years, and in Tokyo for ten months, I had experienced the world's largest cities, but never as a collector

of folklore. My folklore field trips had taken me to the country towns. My present purposes were threefold: to ascertain if the folklorist could ply his trade in the city; to contrast the vitality of the traditions among the various ethnic and racial groups; and to observe the effect of life in an urban, industrial center upon these imported cultures.

Obviously a stay of twenty-three days can only begin to probe these questions. But experiences in the field can be intense and concentrated, they may yield intimate revelations into lives, experiences, hatreds, fears, and cherished symbols that one may never encounter in years of routine living. By "the field" I mean an area in which the folklorist lives completely divorced from his own usual schedule, occupation, and residence—a period in which he devotes all of his waking moments to making contacts, interviewing, recording, listening to and observing the people with whom he is concerned. In this sense I lived in the field in Gary, staying downtown in the environs of the Negro ghetto, in the recently bankrupt Hotel Gary, an integrated, gloomy structure no longer patronized by middle-class travelers.

Gary lies in northwest Indiana hard by Lake Michigan, a city created overnight on flat dunes in 1906 to house steelworkers and now grown to over 200,000 souls who live off steel. The reputation of Gary matches the sullen glow of the ever-lit furnaces in the mills, for, thanks in good part to a *Time* article, Gary symbolizes the urban jungle, crime-ridden, race-wracked, and cultureless. One's first impression driving into Gary along the endless central avenue of Broadway bisecting the city confirms the worst—particularly if the day (February 2, 1968) is rainy and drear, the surrounding countryside brown and muddy, and the roadsides deep in water. Broadway is lined with one-story joints, bars, liquor stores and increasingly crummy shops as one gets further down town into the Negro ghetto. A movie marquee reads "Greek movies on Saturday, Spanish on Sunday." Polluted air envelops the city, dust and grime cover the buildings, litter fills the alleys. Gloom, ugliness, and apprehension set the tone of Gary. Armed guards stand on the ready in every bank, and the buses cease running in the early evening because of knifings of waiting passengers. Drivers lock their car doors and sweat out the red lights. "We were held up here last month on payday at noon by four Negro gunmen, when the guard stepped out for a coffee break," a welfare agency director told me my first day in Gary. "I'm hoping to move the office away from here [16th and Broadway] soon; we're right in the midst of the pimps, queers, dope pushers, and whores. Even while I've been talking to you someone has been observing the layout." And he nervously wiped his white brow and looked at the sea of black faces.

One of the quests of this trip was to see if and how a folklorist could operate in a strange city among a number of ethnic and racial groups. To make contacts I visited Negro Baptist churches on four successive Sundays; called on Harold Malone, father of a Negro student of mine in Bloomington; dropped in on the International Institute of Gary, where a Serbian, a Greek, and a young black woman all introduced me to people; made the acquaintance of William Passmore, head of the Job Corps office in East Chicago, who kindly offered me a wealth of leads; looked up likely informants from student folklore collections turned in to a folklore course at the Northwest Campus in Gary; hung around the dilapi-

dated Baltimore Hotel opposite the Inland Steel plant; followed suggestions from a trustee of Indiana University living in Gary, Robert Lucas. It was the old story of developing contacts through all likely means, chasing around town, calling people up to make appointments, trying to explain my mission. But I found persons in every group hospitable and friendly and often anxious to talk of their experiences and of life in the "Region," as this pocket of northwest Indiana is locally called. The following pages, some extracted from my field diary, attempt to convey a sense of the cultural pluralism in urban folklore.

The Negro

My few weeks in Gary and East Chicago did not uncover a master folk narrator, although one may well be there. In no group indeed did I encounter a narrator of this type, though I did meet excellent talkers. Let me consider Negro tradition under the heads of proverbs, tales, voodoo, and the folk church.

On two occasions I heard northern-born, educated Negroes—who had looked blankly at me when I asked about Old Marster and Brother Buzzard—employ patently Negro proverbs to crystallize an idea and drive home a thought in the course of a tense discussion. The first situation developed in the Job Corps office on Columbus Avenue in East Chicago, where I met Willie P., both of whose legs had been amputated while he was in his teens because of a spinal disease. His mother, Laura, 73, a snowy-haired fragile old lady born in Alabama, granddaughter of a slave, related to me with quavering voice and perfect command of dates the series of long hospital sieges and near-fatal operations that Willie had endured patiently and even cheerfully. The Déghs had put me in touch with Willie, who knew all the civic leaders in East Chicago and gave me every assistance. This morning Willie—boyish, studious-looking and gentle, who at times had double-dated with Mayor Hatcher—was giving a little moralizing talk to three Negro boys of fourteen and fifteen, dropouts and potential delinquents. The boys squirmed and twisted uneasily as Willie lectured them from his wheelchair behind his desk. Willie had lapsed into the soft, slurred tones that colored people frequently use with each other. He reiterated the need for them to stay in school, to train themselves for their future jobs, to learn discipline. "A hard head makes a hard bed," he said climactically.

No proverb could have been more appropriate. "Hard head" is a phrase current among southern Negroes, who use it in jocular ghost tales about revenants that return in answer to a relative's prayer but outstay their welcome; hence the comment, "Brother, that's how come you dead now, you so hard-headed." The teller explains parenthetically, "Head hard or head long means you go looking for trouble."[1] Willie summarized and capped his message with this pithy saw.

Another day I was in the Children's Public Library of East Chicago talking with Mrs. Edna W., college-educated, precise in speech, decorous in manner, a world away from Old Marster. She began speaking about the conditions of the Negro and the election of Mayor Hatcher, but in a note rarely reported. This was a note of mistrust of Negro aggressiveness, a fear of consequences stemming from Hatcher's election, distress at the stridency of Negro youths no longer respectful of their elders. "There are one-third of us who feel this way, but our

[1] See Richard M. Dorson, *American Negro Folktales* (New York, 1967), 328.

voice won't be heard. I won't be heard in Washington." She was telling me more than she had ever told anyone. Mrs. W. was opposed to open housing. Let the whites and the blacks each live by themselves; people are not comfortable in surroundings they are not used to. "I don't want to be a fly in the buttermilk," she said. And so, to dramatize her opposition to the open-housing ordinance, so strong an article of faith to Negro militants and white liberals, the librarian had recourse to a Negro proverb with apt color imagery.

The tales that seemed to me so much a touchstone of Negro folk tradition were slow in coming. At first I was the carrier and the teller. But in the course of two evenings (one in the home of the Reverend H. J., pastor of a store-front church, with an evangelist preacher and a deacon present, the other in the home of the Reverend B. G., pastor of a Baptist church, along with his deacon L. T., southerners all and steelworkers all) tales came to the surface, one triggering another. They were old favorites: "The Coon in the Box," "Dividing Soul," "Poll Parrot and Biscuits," "Why the Fox Has a Short Tail." But as I was going out the door, the Reverend H. J. thought of one entirely new to me, "The Train Going Uphill and Downhill," employing slow, drawn-out phrases for the uphill climb, and fast, chug-chug phrases for the descent.[2] Charles K. of the Gary Human Relations Commission told me a number of civil-rights stories with which he and his companions had whiled away the time during his six jail confinements for demonstrating. One was a television variant of the old Negro down South who hollers "Help!" on the radio when urged by southern governors to tell how well he is treated.[3] Another was a Negro variant of a Jewish joke about the would-be radio announcer with a dreadful stutter who claims he is the victim of bias. Civil-rights stories (the phrase is the informant's) are one segment of the southern Negro repertory which thrives and expands in northern cities.

One interview disclosed a displacement of tale tradition by book tradition, albeit not a learned book tradition. Todd R., 70, who had come from Alabama to Gary in 1922 and worked for forty years in the steel mills before retiring, remembered nostalgically the South and "country living" as the best in the world. But he told only one tale, "The Race" (Type 1074), in the shortest version I ever heard: "The rabbit and the turtle had a race; the rabbit stopped to pick berries and the turtle won." He stirred briefly to the legend of the snake and the child and said he had heard in Alabama that the girl died when her father killed her pet snake. Todd's real interest lay in reciting names, dates, and facts about Negro Americans, garnered from two battered and tattered booklets he showed me: *Afro-American World Almanac*, and *A Tribute to Achievement* issued by the Pfeiffer Brewing Company.

Voodoo or cunjer seemed at first as invisible as folktales. Harold M. took me calling on a family friend, Mrs. Katie S., a school matron born in Memphis, friendly, poised, and proper. The only element of tradition she displayed dealt with cuisine, "soul food," the Negro diet of turnip greens, chitterlings, corn bread, cabbage, sweet potatoes, which kept together bodies and souls of colored folk in the South. The cheaper cuts and leavings of the hog and cow—neckbone, pig feet, pot licker—were nutritious. Old Marster gave them to the slaves, and

[2] Compare "The Mean Boss," Ibid., 156–157.
[3] See "The Governor's Convention," Ibid., 319–320.

the slaves throve, while the white people fell prey to rare diseases. To my question whether she liked the food of other groups in Gary, Mrs. S. replied that she enjoyed *tacos* until she heard that the Mexicans were cutting up cats for the meat. When we left her house I asked Harold Malone about her husband. Andrew S. had been born in Coldwater, Mississippi, had come to Gary in 1943, and was now laid up in the hospital, claiming he had been voodooed by his son, who had given him canned corn that turned to worms.

Another voodoo case was headlined in the Chicago *Daily Defender*, the only American Negro daily, on February 20, the day I drove into its offices with Bill Passmore, who wrote a weekly column for them on East Chicago news. The city editor, Thomas Picou, a severe young intellectual, talked to me about his paper's philosophy of cohesion and adequate news coverage for the Negro. He did not have much to say about the banner headline of the day, "Possessed by 'Voodoo': Mother Charged in Triple Slaying," blazoned on the front page. The news story appeared on page three and is reproduced below.

MOTHER OF FOUR CHARGED IN 'VOODOO' SLAYING

Husband, Two Aunts
Killed at Reception

By Donald Mosby
(Daily Defender Staff Writer)

A 27-year-old mother of four, who thinks she is possessed by "a voodoo lizard," was charged yesterday with killing her husband and his two aunts at a suburban wedding reception.

Held without bond is Mrs. Ruby Luckett, 107 Riverview Ave., Lockport, whom, one wedding guest said, "looked as if she were in a daze," moments before she reputedly shot the trio Sunday night. Mrs. Luckett is accused of killing her husband, Peter, 29, a laborer, and his aunts, Mrs. Sadie Porter, 62, of 404 E. 72d St., and Mrs. Lisa Harper, 43, of 118 Oak Ave., of Lockport. Luckett died yesterday in St. Francis Hospital.

According to Dixmoor Ptl. John North, the shooting deaths grew out of an argument between Mrs. Luckett and her husband in the basement of 14337 S. Honore, Dixmoor, where a wedding reception for Luckett's sister was in progress. The home belongs to Sullivan Wright, brother of the groom.

North said Mrs. Luckett shot her husband during the height of an argument and repeated the attack upstairs when she saw Luckett's aunts—Mrs. Harper and Mrs. Porter—sitting on a couch.

Luckett was shot in the chest, Mrs. Harper, in the chest and Mrs. Porter in the head.

According to the suburban policeman, Mrs. Luckett feared her relatives were practicing some kind of "voodoo power" against her.

Mrs. Luckett was driven to Dixmoor police headquarters by some departing wedding guests, who were apparently unaware of what had happened inside the home.

According to police, Mrs. Luckett admitted shooting the trio, and handed over to police a .38 calibre revolver, believed to be the death weapon.

In court yesterday, she told a judge her relatives had put a lizard in her stomach as part of a voodoo spell and that she had to keep salt and water under her bed to satisfy the voodoo curse. Mrs. Luckett is scheduled to appear in Midlothian Court March 21.

The *Daily Defender* story called to the mind of one of my companions, Larry J., an account he had heard of a girl who voodooed the man of her desire. This man was paying her no heed, so on the advice of a girl friend she obtained two pairs

of his pants and hung them up in her closet, and now the couple were living together.

For the core of Negro traditional expression, behavior, and belief we must turn to the church. Gary possesses over two hundred Negro churches. On successive Sundays I visited the First Baptist, the Calvary Baptist, and the St. John Primitive Baptist churches; these represented, in descending order, the scale of affluence, status, prestige, and denial of southern Negro culture. The First Baptist Church building was brand new, facing a pleasant park, cathedral-like in its dimensions, upper-class white in its service. Professional people attended this church—doctors, lawyers, teachers. The women vied with each other in the loftiness and dazzling colors of their hats. All was decorous and efficient; the congregation sang from hymnbooks, the minister preached with dignity, and only the faintest responses of "Amen" and "That's the truth" echoed his words. But with the Calvary Baptist Church—also in a new but much less pretentious building—the institutions of southern Negro folk religion came into view. Here was a highly personal, joking, exhorting, chanting pastor, F. Brannam Jackson, recalling the days when he was a little old barefoot boy on the bayou, and mosquitoes were so large they were called gallinippers, and when they stung you, you felt as if you had lockjaw. Here was a swaying, throbbing choir, singing without hymnbooks, reinforced by pianist and organist and the responsive congregation, spurred on by ecstatic soloists, who would interrupt their songs to cry "Shout out." In the front row sat a uniformed nurse, who sprang into action when a heavy woman a few rows back "got happy" and with some others fanned her vigorously back into normalcy.

A news item in the Gary *Post Tribune* had caught my eye, "Negro Plight is Theme," announcing the "annual Homecoming Day" at the Calvary Baptist Church in honor of Negro history week, with a full program of service, chicken dinner, panel speakers, and a slavery-time play, in honor of Negro History week. The three speakers were each in his own way highly articulate and impressive. Twenty-four-year-old Bill Joiner, first Negro manager of a branch of the Gary National Bank, was modest and quiet-spoken; Mrs. Nancy Brundige, an urban sociologist for the city of Chicago, was positive and direct; and Charles H. King, director of the Gary Human Relations Commission, was a performer of shattering eloquence. These were Negro intellectuals telling the Negro folk about business opportunities, historical achievements, and spiritual strengths of their race with a conviction and force deeply admired by the one white auditor. The whole day was indeed a testimonial to the facility of Negro oral expression in singing and speaking. As King said, Negroes were the greatest singers in the world because church singing was their one permitted mode of utterance. He rocked the audience with illustrations of phrases from spirituals taken in their innocuous literal sense by the slavemasters, but intended in quite specific and material ways by the singers (a matter often debated by white scholars). King made a number of effective points: that segregation began after, not during, slavery, for the slave could attend the same church as his master, even though he had to sit in the gallery (hence Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was the biggest lie in American history); that the church was the center of Negro fellowship and community

life, for it was the Negro's only social organization ("The Negro stays in church all day, while the white man comes for an hour and leaves; isn't that so, Professor?"); that the Baptist church was most available to the Negro, for it required no superstructure of outside authorities.

After these speeches and a comment I was called on to make, the chairs were rearranged, and an informal playlet presented, "De Lawd, the Negroes' Hope in a New Home." The scene was ostensibly laid on a slave plantation, and the appearance of members of the congregation in cotton dresses and sun bonnets, idly stroking a butter churn and a wash board, sent the spectators into spasms of laughter. Most of the action was confined to a chorus singing such spirituals as "Climbing Jacob's Ladder," "Deep River," and "There'll be a Great Day When We All Gather Home." At the conclusion the attractive young wife of the pastor made a statement on the zeal of the performers (one had canceled a trip to New Orleans in order to be present) and the historical relevance of the drama. "I would rather be the persecuted than the persecutors." Negro church songs were often hard to follow. I asked a Negro friend about this, and he said he himself could not be sure of the words, since the singers picked up words listening to each other.

The Primitive Baptist Church represented still another aspect of Negro worship, the extended family unit with aspirations for autonomy. A dozen adults and a dozen children were present the two Sundays I attended, and the obese woman who led the choir of five—and supplied one daughter to the choir and five to the Sunday school—was the pastor's sister-in-law. Yet the group met in a neat, fresh-painted room in their own small building, acquired four months before for five thousand dollars. Previously they had held services in a dingy store-front up the block. Elder George M. had carpentered and plastered the new church himself. He had worked in the steel mills for eleven years and made thirty-seven dollars a day instructing crane operators, although he could neither read nor write. When I expressed surprise he called his wife, "Tell this guy how I can't read." He had been born in Arkansas and educated at Muncie Central on a football scholarship, apparently doing well in classes in spite of his handicap. He received special instruction from a white teacher at Ball State University. He had possessed the gift of preaching since he was five, being ordained by the Lord.

Handsome, athletic, still young, he preached with fervor and intensity, dipping his knees, holding a handkerchief or book to his right cheek, intoning phrases in a rising cadence with closed eyes, sometimes opening out and shaking his palms. The Primitive Baptists believed in "making a joyful noise unto the Lord" and in footwashing, which they practiced one Sunday in the month. Elder M. gave me permission to record the service the following Sunday, and asked me to play it back in church. Listening intently, he remarked, "That sounds just like country singing." Any listener would marvel at how so small a group could fill the room with song, chant, and response in swelling harmony. The elder had served as minister for five years and commented about himself, "I'm the most unlearned pastor they had, and carried them the furthest." He obtained historical references from a book his wife read to him, which he showed me, *World's Great Men of Color, 3000 B.C. to 1946 A.D.* by J. A. Rogers, published at 37 Morningside Avenue in New York.

Negro folk religion or traditional worship, as characterized in these observations, is directly connected with civil rights and urban politics. This point was ingeniously made by Charles H. King when I recorded a talk with him in his basement office in the Gary Municipal Building. King was forty-two, dark and mottled in complexion, burly in physique. His mother had been born in Boston, his father in Atlanta, and he himself in Albany. A regular contributor to *Negro Digest* with perceptive articles on the Negro church, King had shown me an autobiographical chapter of an unpublished manuscript in which he described the attempt of his father, a preacher in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to have young Charles "get religion" through exposure to a visiting revivalist. Charles was not converted and was painfully embarrassed. He ended the chapter by saying he later experienced religion in his own way. When I asked him how, he related an experience that had befallen him when he was eighteen as a sailor in the United States Navy on shore leave. Two shore patrolmen, southern whites, ordered him, "Boy, straighten your cap," and when he reacted too slowly, poked him in the ribs and called him nigger. King slugged one, and they dragged him off to the guardhouse and lashed him two hundred times with a belt, the buckle leaving permanent scars on his back. At his trial, the ship's captain mocked him publicly, saying, "So they called you nigger. Well what did you expect them to call you?"

After that episode King felt a need for faith, but he developed his own concept of social relevance in his ministry, employing the techniques of the southern Baptist preacher while rejecting the escapism into heavenly hopes. King pointed out that Negro civil rights leaders—and he named a string, beginning with Martin Luther King—were all former ministers. He too belonged to this sequence, having pastored for three years at Clarksville, Tennessee, and for ten years at Evansville, Indiana. Negro civil rights agitators used the same devices on the platform they had employed on the altar—the incantatory repetition (Jees-us, Jees-us), the encouragement of shouting, the emotional singing—but now it was all channeled into the specific goals of earthly recognition for the Negro. King cleverly illustrated the mincing, polite singing of an all-white church at Miller whose choir had practiced a spiritual in his honor the day he came as guest preacher, and his own booming, leather-lunged rendition he demonstrated to them as a corrective. "When I was finished, there were at least eight people with wet eyes." Such expertly manipulated sounds induced in the Negro congregations the mass hypnotism or cataleptic trances popularly known as "getting happy," and now Negro social reformers and politicians were arousing their audiences with these traditional means. King himself decried unbridled emotionalism for either theological or extremist ends, and gave me an article he had just written, "The Specter of Black Power," describing a Black Power symposium he had attended, and sharply criticized, at Howard University.[4]

An extraordinary opportunity to see a concrete illustration of King's thesis came the evening of February 14, when I found myself in a crowded basement room where the Political Alliance Club of Northwest Indiana was meeting. This was an organization for minority groups, but the members were all Negro save for one or two Puerto Ricans. A tense, chunky white woman, obviously under con-

[4] *Sign: National Catholic Magazine* (February 1968), 13–17.

siderable strain, sat in the speaker's chair. This was Marion Tokarsky, now a celebrity for revealing the vote fraud attempted against Mayor Hatcher.[5] That very day she was on the front page of the Gary *Post Tribune*, in a garbled story saying the prosecutor was dropping charges against her—her punishment by the machine for her public revelations—in return for her turning state's evidence. The only white person present besides myself was a policeman, appointed by Hatcher as part of her twenty-four-hour protection. Mrs. Tokarsky spoke a rough and sloppy English, not the clumsy English of the immigrant but the street English of the little-schooled American. She delivered her recital of the attempted vote fraud, and her decision to break with the Democratic Party machine and support Hatcher, in the form of a divine revelation.

"I am no saint," she began, "just an instrument of the Lord," and she repeated this thought at intervals. Her tale was a melodrama which would make Hollywood thrillers seem plausible. She had been a staunch Democratic committeewoman for twelve years in Glen Park, the residential center of the anti-Negro east Europeans. The machine turned against Hatcher, not because he was a Negro but because he would not do their bidding. Last July they had given her a sample voting machine with instructions on how to split the ticket and vote against Hatcher. She smuggled a sample voting machine in her shopping bag to show Hatcher, who had a picture taken of it. Democrats and Republicans alike were working to defeat Hatcher; some 5,280 names were removed from the voting rolls. Marion Tokarsky went through a period of doubt and confusion, at one time questioning Hatcher's loyalty. "I prayed as I never prayed before." The federal government flew in, and assured her she would not be involved or have to go to court.

Then one day the subpoena came. She turned over the matter all day Saturday, and at twelve o'clock Mass the Sunday before election she prayed directly to God. She explained to her Baptist audience that as a Catholic she had always before prayed to Saint Anthony or the Blessed Virgin, who could get the ear of the Lord in her behalf. But now she prayed directly. " 'God, please just give me the courage to go to court tomorrow. If I find just a few words in this missal I'll have courage'. And it was as if He had come right down from heaven." She opened the missal, and right before her eyes, in the Book of Psalms, was the word she had requested: " 'In the midst of the Assembly he opened his mouth. . . . The mark of the just man tells wisdom and his tongue tells what is right.' And I thanked God. Now I asked God to show me that Hatcher would win. 'Cause I knew I was crucified if he didn't."

Again the Lord answered her with an apt quotation.

And the next day when I went to court I didn't have to think, the words came right out of my mouth. And the defense lawyers asked me questions that I gave answers to, made them look like jackasses. So it was someone bigger than me doing it. They asked, "Mrs. Tokarsky, will you testify that a Democratic official asked you to do something illegal?" "Yes," I said, "if you'll name them one by one." "Why won't you name them, don't you know them?" "Yes," I answered, "but I don't know if you do." At that they reddened and asked two names, to which I said yes, and then they stopped. I called the mayor Sunday evening and said, "Dick, this is Marion. You know, you're going to win the election." And I read to

[5] *Time*, November 17, 1967, p. 26.

him out of the missal. He said to me, "Ever since the primary I knew I was going to win. But this is the most glorious thing that has happened to me."

There was a good deal more in this vein. Mrs. Tokarsky was fired from her job, arrested and jailed, her children spat on, her husband, who had just renovated his gas station, threatened. But the Lord sustained her throughout. "The day that I was arrested and they put me in jail, I didn't feel one ounce of sorrow or regret. I felt elated." This was on December 29, and on New Year's Eve, alone with her children, she asked God for another message and found it in Psalms 19:13, "O Lord, you heard His voice cry to you from the temple . . . devising a plot and they will fall into it themselves."

Throughout the narration, the listeners interjected the customary responses of Baptist congregations, especially when Mrs. Tokarsky underlined her points with such precepts as "'Faith can really move a mountain" and "God helps those who help themselves." At the end of her talk an elderly gentleman in the front row cried out, "That's the gospel. It should be heard all over the world." Defying all the rules, the representative of the Slavic groups in Glen Park had made common cause with the ghetto Negroes. Their medium of communication was the political revival meeting, and together they saw Mayor Hatcher as blessed by the Lord in the battle against the forces of evil. Marion Tokarsky was the prophet through whom God has spoken. In recompense for her sacrifice, the Negro community is heavily patronizing her husband's gas station.

Serbians

"The Serbians live on tradition and heritage," observed one of my new Serbian friends. More than any other ethnic group in Gary and East Chicago, the Serbians do indeed cherish and abide by their Old World inheritance, an inheritance vivid and sorrowful in their minds, from the battle of Kossovo in 1389, when they sank heroically in defeat before the Turks, down to the Chetnik battles against Nazi Croatians and Tito's Communists. This is not book history but live and remembered history, as Americans rarely remember and identify with their own. Several Gary Serbs explained that orally recited history kept alive the Serbian spirit during five centuries of Turkish oppression and darkness. When the Turks blinded the learned clergy, the priests sang from memory heroic recitations of the Serbs, accompanying themselves on the one-stringed fiddle, the *gusle*, which they improvised from a stick and a strand of horsehair after the Turks confiscated their musical instruments. All the Serbs I met were proud and sad. Eighty-year-old George R., still erect and twinkling, recited emotionally a *gusle* song he had learned over seventy years before in Serbia. Thirty-one-year-old Walter T. has been in the States only since 1956, with his wife Milly (Miholjka), whom he brought over in 1963 from his native village, making sure she wasn't "brainwashed." Red-haired Milane S., a fiery Montenegrin with an Ll.D., rushed at me when I came into her boss's office carrying a tape recorder and asked if I was a Communist spy; but I ended by taping her experience as a Chetnik fighter who escaped through Communist lines. Dragich B. ("Blaz"), an ex-waiter and former Chetnik, thrust his story upon me in the Chetnik-run Europa cafe. Rade R., the oak-chested leader of the mother church group in East Chicago, wept three

times while recounting atrocities committed against his people in the second World War.

These and other Serbs showed the effects of a common tradition. They shuddered at the crimes of the hated Ustashis, who allegedly had butchered two million Serbs during the last war. Walter T. gave me a booklet, *The Crime of Genocide*, published by the Serbian National Defense Council of America (Chicago, 1951), that contained shocking pictures of mutilated women and children and a decapitated priest's head held by grinning Ustashis as well as an introductory anecdote about Ante Pavelich, the Croatian Ustashi leader, exhibiting on his desk a wicker basket filled with forty pounds of human eyes. Rade R. gave me a copy of the book *Genocide in Satellite Croatia, 1941–1945* (Chicago, n.d.) by Edmond Paris, translated from the French, and documenting these horrors. I recorded eye-witness atrocities related by Walter T. and his godfather; by Milos R., who had lost fifteen members of his family during the war ; and by Rade R. and his wife, Mira, born in Novi Sad. Rade, as a Belgrade policeman, had been called to pick up the bodies of eight children floating down the Sava river with the head of their mother nailed to a board, under a sign reading, "A present from the Ustashis." Mira had seen the Hungarian troops bomb the Danube ice and push Serbian and Jewish families into the water underneath. Overwhelming bitterness against the Croatians, the Nazis, and the Communists filled their talk. The Communists especially aroused their passion, and they saw signs of communism and communist propaganda everywhere in America—among the Negroes, the hippies, the clergy.

A great split rent the solidarity of American Serbs in 1963, over the so-called mother church issue. One wing rejected the authority of the mother church in Belgrade and its edict redistricting the American diocese, whose seat was in Libertyville, Illinois. They called the opposing faction communists, and were in turn labeled schismatics. The issue resulted in bitter litigation, still in progress, and divided the Gary and East Chicago Serbs into two churches in each city. Rade represented the mother church faction in East Chicago, and he minimized the differences between Serbs and Croats, saying both fought equally with the Chetniks and Partisans. He himself had been born in Croatian Bosnia but belonged to the Serbian church. He told of Ustashis so hungry they ordered the camp cooks to fry livers of young boys. Both factions presented their case vigorously to me, and the only sure conclusion one could draw was that the most cohesive of all the ethnic groups in Steeltown had fallen into civil war.

National and folk traditions blend in the lives of the Serbian steelworkers. *Gusle* singers perform in Gary at saint's day family parties and recite the old heroic lays. Draža Mihajlovich, the Chetnik leader whom the Serbs feel was betrayed by Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta, is the most recent of the venerated heroes extending back to Marko Kraljevich and Miloš Obilich. The analogy between oppression under the Turks and under the Communists is often drawn. Historical plays presented in Saint Sava Church so excited emotions that members of the audience pelted the Turks, played by their own friends. George R. recited for me in Serbian the "Gusle Song" describing a renegade Serbian who joined the Turks. One day finding a *gusle,* he attempted to play it but could not, because "the *gusle* does not lie." He bent tearfully over the instrument, imploring

forgiveness, and a Turk whacked off his head. In the basement of Saint Sava Church I observed a program of Serbian songs, dances, and speeches with not a word of English used. After the stage program young and old joined hands in the traditional *cola* dance to the accompaniment of two thumping accordion players.

The most striking example of Serbian cultural nationalism in Gary is the story of Bishop Varnava Nastich. He was born in Gary on January 31, 1914, the son of an immigrant barber, and was baptized Voislav in the Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Church. As a child he excelled at *gusle* performances, and clippings refer to him as a youthful prodigy in reciting Serbian folklore and old ballads, even being taken on tour to Serbian communities in other cities. He also served as altar boy in Saint Sava Church. At the age of nine, in 1923, he left Gary with his parents, brother, and sister for Yugoslavia. His father operated the popular "American Restaurant" on King Alexander Avenue in Sarajevo. Within three or four years after their return, Voislav had won the gold medal awarded by King Alexander to the best boy *guslar*. At eighteen he undertook theological studies and graduated from the theological faculty of the University of Belgrade in 1937. Three years later he took monastic vows in the monastery at Mileshevo and changed his name to Varnava. During the war years, 1941–1945, Varnava refused a bishopric in the so-called Croatian Orthodox Church of the Nazi puppet state under Ante Pavelich. In 1945 he was ordained a priest, and in August 1947 he was consecrated a bishop. Within a year he was arrested and brought to trial by Tito's government, actually for speaking against communism, ostensibly for collaborating with the Ustashi, an infamous charge. There followed eleven years of imprisonment, harassment, surveillance, brutality, and death by poisoning, according to half a dozen informants, including Saint Sava's priest, Father Peter Bankerovich, who with others tape-recorded for me a statement about Varnava. Father Peter recalled how a telegram announcing the death of Bishop Varnava was delivered in the midst of the high celebration in church on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Saint Sava, November 14, 1964. He gave me a copy of the 368-page commemoration book printed in Gary in both Serbian and English, and concluded his taped remarks by reading from the communication sent by Bishop Varnava from Monastery Beocin on September 3, 1964. One paragraph reads:

> "I rejoice, because your Feast is my personal feast also, for I was among the first of your Altar-boys, and I was the first one after the formation of your Church congregation to whom was given the rank of 'Chtec'—Reader—under the arch of your Church. Under the blessed heaven of your Church Community, my first formation of my physical and graceful-spiritual life sprouted."[6]

A play was written and produced in Gary in January 1965 about Bishop Varnava, "Martyr to Communism," acted in the Saint Sava Church auditorium by children, to acquaint them with his heroic life and death. I read the typescript of the play in the home of its author, Daisy Wuletich, Gary-born, who had visited the Bishop in 1961 in Beocin Monastery with her mother, born in Montenegro.

[6] *St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church Fiftieth Anniversary: Our Religious Heritage in America, 1914–1964; November 14–15, 1964.* (Gary, n.d.)

Daisy had drawn from personal letters of the Bishop, from an account of the trial in the booklet *Our Spiritual Hero*, and from her personal observations. The play itself was simple fare, a first act depicting the trial, in which the bishop defied the communist judges to the cheers of the crowd, and a second act set in the hospital showing him in familiar scenes before receiving a fatal injection. Thus he talks with his uncle about the car "pesho," a Peugeot given him by the Gary church so that he could travel around the country. He writes in a letter to his Gary friends, "I realize that at any time my car can turn into a Cross for me. This is its Cross-aspect and this Cross-aspect, too, is one and not the least of the reasons for my loving it so." The car became a symbol of his persecution, for it was exorbitantly taxed by the Communists. In the play this dialogue takes place:

Uncle: How sentimental you are about the car! You take better care of it than some people do of their own children.
Bishop: My little Pesho is important to me.
Marko: How fervently you speak of your car!
Bishop: I do speak of it fervently and I love it fervently! One reason being, of course, the American-red blood in me.

In another place in the play Bishop Varnava alludes to a visit he made to the shrine of Saint Basil (Vasilije) at Ostrog in Montenegro to pray for his sick mother. Daisy and her mother, Cveta, had also visited Ostrog, and Cveta, a sickly old woman, now told in Serbian, and Daisy translated, a miracle she had heard in Trebinje, the town where she was born in 1893.

A Turkish girl in Trebinje was all doubled up. No doctor could help her. So her parents finally took her to the shrine of Saint Basil in a basket up the mountain. They left the basket there all night. And when they came in the morning she was perfectly well and straight and walked down the mountain. The basket was placed at the foot of the coffin. The girl left a necklace of gold ducats in the chapel as her gift.

Then the people asked her what kind of a doctor is this Vlasha (a derogatory term used by the Turks against the Serbs). She answered, "No doctor, just a stiffened Vlasha." And that night when she went to bed, her body was deformed again. In the morning she found the ducats under her pillow.

She went back two or three times again but was never cured.

The Wuletichs showed me pictures of the monastery of St. Basil carved out of the mountainside, and Cveta graphically illustrated, with sudden animation and sweeping gestures along the wall, how the Nazis had bombed all around the shrine without ever effecting a direct hit. So the modern legend of Bishop Nastich has formed a link with the historic legend of Saint Basil. There is also a connection with Saint Sava, the patron saint of children, since the play was performed by children on January 31, the birthday of Bishop Nastich and the nearest Sunday in 1965 to January 27, the death day of Saint Sava.

Another evening found me in the home of Mrs. Emily B., a first cousin of the bishop, who had in her possession boxes full of letters, photographs, clippings and memorabilia of Varnava's career. Her father had come to Gary in 1906 from a town in Montenegro near that of Varnava's father and helped lay tracks for the streetcar. Her husband Djordje had fought with the Chetniks alongside Milane Spadijer. Emily, a sad, darkhaired woman of fifty-six with a slight hunchback, confided to me that Montenegro was the cradle of Serbian culture, language,

and songs. Her mother was the sister of Varnava's father, who founded the Saint Sava Church in Gary, and Emily herself had taken care of the boy, a few years her junior. It was clear that the bishop's tragedy was her obsession. She showed me a photograph of Varnava—ascetic, bespectacled, talking to another bishop, with a dim figure from the Udba, Tito's secret police, in the background beside an automobile—and another of his funeral (sent her by her uncle), his body resting in a plain open casket, while the patriarch-german can be seen in white cap instead of black, an obvious mark of disrespect. Emily told of the cruel "accident" planned by the Communists in 1949 when Varnava was being taken from the prison of Sjenica to that at Srem. The guards placed the prisoners in a car on a siding, and at about 1:00 A.M. the engine rammed into it at full steam. All but eleven were killed. Varnava was thrown out of the window with both legs and one arm broken. A witness immediately telephoned his brother. However the militia put a guard at the scene of the accident, and the Udba prevented medication being given or the insertion of metal pins in his heels. Varnava was placed in an army train without mattresses or covers and taken to a hospital in Srem.

Emily and her fellow Serbs in Gary had worked ceaselessly to obtain the release and return of the bishop, through pressure on the State Department and the Indiana senators. The Saint Sava group hoped that Varnava might even succeed Dionisije as the American bishop at Libertyville. After the 1963 edict of the mother church creating three North American bishops, Varnava entered the controversy with letters supporting the anti-Communist stand of the Serbian Free Church. Emily showed me some of his letters, written in mixed Serbian and English; the English prose was eloquent and idiomatic. Varnava never lost his American spirit, Emily said; when he first went to Yugoslavia he wrote how he missed his movie idols Tom Mix and William S. Hart, chewing gum, the funny papers, and electric light switches.

Had a *gusle* song been written about the Bishop? I asked Emily. She produced a three-and-a-half-page typescript, running fifty-seven lines a page, titled *Smrt Vladike Varnave,* "The Death of Bishop Varnava," composed by Milisav Maksimovich, of Cincinnati, Ohio, and dated April 3, 1965.

The mother church group with whom I met at Rade Z.'s house in East Chicago promptly deflated Varnava, saying the Gary people had made a legendary figure out of hot air. It was a myth that the Communists beat him up; actually he had jumped off a train. He was not a true diocesan bishop but an assistant vicar bishop. The fact was that by his fruitless outcries he had proved an embarrassment to the Serbian Church.

In the life story of Bishop Varnava Nastich, all the elements of Serbian-American tradition fuse. He was born in Gary and died in Beocin, reversing the usual immigrant process. Letters and visitors kept his memory green in Gary. He recited *gusle* legendary songs as a youthful singer, and after his death he became the subject of a *guslar* bard. A play was produced in Gary about his martyrdom. His life and death struggle against the Communist oppressor reenact the heroic tragedies of earlier Serbians against the Turkish tyrants. He has become a potent symbol in the fateful church issue now splitting friends and families in Gary and East Chicago.

Croatians (from diary)

My next appointment was with Nick E., seventy-eight, retired, a great-grandfather. He lived out in the Glen Park section beyond the Northwest Campus. Nick was in the center of organized Croatian activities; he had been president of the Croatian Fraternal Union for a dozen years and was still honorary president. Although Nick called the Serbs Oriental and the Croats Western, he had an Oriental look about him, with a large oval face. He did not speak or volunteer readily but seemed content to answer questions. Finally he remembered a ghost story he had heard on one of his five visits to Croatia. The spark ignited when I asked him about the Serbs. Now he uttered all the counter-charges to refute Walter T.'s venom of the day before, and I got this on tape. The Serbs had assassinated Stepan Radich, leader of the Peasant Party for an independent Croatia, in Congress House in Belgrade. Serbia was trying to dominate Croatia, which had formerly held Bosnia-Hercegovina and Dalmatia, within the second Yugoslavia. The Serbs were taking over the Croatian language. Serbia took the money from Croatian factories to rebuild Belgrade at the expense of Zagreb. Croatians pay twice as much tax as the Serbians, and in Yugoslavia a friend had denied this publicly but told him privately it was true. Nick would not associate with Serbians in Gary. They were fanatic royalists for Peter, the son of King Alexander now living in Paris. Alexander was assassinated in Marseille by Croats in revenge for Radich. Serbia had taken the rich Vojvodina from Croatia. Nick showed me the "Croatian Voice," *Hrvatski Glas*, published in Winnipeg. An issue of February 10, 1968, had an article about a Croatian priest, Professor Draganovich, being kidnapped by the Serbs from Rome and taken to Belgrade, and another entitled "Separation of Croatia from Yugoslavia," all in Croatian.

As I was getting ready to leave, Nick put on records of sweet *tamburitza* music he had purchased in Zagreb, brought out two *tamburs* he had ordered from Kos Slavko, near Zagreb, and showed me large color photographs of the *tamburitzan* groups he directed, about thirty young people. They would take part in a national festival in Des Plaines, Illinois, on July 7. He rehearsed them every Friday night in the Croatian Hall and also gave lessons in Croatian. A man in Gary, Milan Opacich, made *tamburs,* but Nick could get one from Yugoslavia for $50 instead of paying $175 for one here. The name of one song on the record was "Three Days She Was Picking the Corn," and Nick said most were folksongs.

A phone call came and Nick said he had to witness the signature of the will of an old friend of eighty-two, Zlatko K., who would be dead of cancer within three months. He insisted on taking me to the house nearby. Zlatko was toothpick thin, his skin tight; he was gaunt, hollow, emaciated, hairless, but spry of mind and ready to be interviewed. He began telling of his immigrant experiences, being fired the first day on his job in a sausage factory in Chicago for stepping on a lever that sent the meat flying all over the room. An attorney showed up to draw up the will, and after the business advised me to leave, but with the understanding that if Zlatko felt in the mood I could return. Two middle-aged tearful daughters were present. (*end diary*)

Croatian tradition proved a good deal thinner than Serbian. One Croatian told me that he had married a Lithuanian and that his children were ethnic mon-

grels; but the Serbs remained clannish and tended to marry among themselves. The comic experience recounted by Zlatko K. belongs not to Croatian but to general immigrant lore about mishaps on first landing in America. Bessie M., of Serbian descent, related how her father ate a banana, skin and all, his first day in New York and exclaimed he had never tasted anything so horrible. A Romanian restaurant owner, John N., recounted an involved saga of his arriving in Detroit in the middle of the night with forty dollars strapped around his waist, not a word of English at his command, and waiting for the cab driver to locate a Romanian speaker. These comparable incidents, at once ludicrous and pathetic, in totality comprise one large chapter of immigrant folk history.

Greeks

At the International Institute I met the staff member who dealt with Greek families, Mrs. Stella D., a short, matronly, worried-looking woman born in Chicago but raised in Gary and active in Greek organizations there. Her father had been born in Athens and her mother in Smyrna. As president of the local Ahepa chapter, Stella had gone to Athens for the international congress in 1964. She enumerated a long list of Greek societies and clubs in town, saying they were often organized according to the regions or islands from which people came. I asked her about the evil eye, and she responded excitedly, saying she had learned the prayer to overcome its effects from her grandmother, but indirectly, by overhearing, since the prayer could only pass from man to woman and woman to man. It was necessary to burn three cloves and repeat the prayer; when the clove sparked, the spell was broken.[7]

"I've tried it on my daughters," Mrs. D. continued.

When I was young my grandmother did it to me often. I was sick and I'd perk up right away. Grandmother told me that a horse had fallen down on the street in Smyrna because someone had put the evil eye on it, without meaning to; she said the prayer and the horse got up. In Chicago a doctor friend used to come when he was feeling low and say, "Stella, tell me the prayer," and after it was said he'd feel better right away. Three cloves should be burned and placed in a little wine glass of water. Then say the prayer, bless the water with the sign of the cross and sprinkle it around. The prayer is repeated three times, with a count, 5–10–15–20–25 and so on. She could not utter the prayer.

On another occasion Stella introduced me to a client of hers, Emmanuel V., a friendly, clean-featured newcomer of thirty-eight who had been in Gary only four years, joining his father who had come from the isle of Kalymnos in the eastern Aegean in 1923. Emmanuel sold sponges and worked part time in the steel mills. In halting English, with the aid of Stella, he related an event that had caused a great stir on Kalymnos.

It happened in 1908 or 1909. There was a diver named Latare, he has a big rock in his hand weighing over thirty pounds, to weight him down, and no clothes. They drop him over the side of the ship, and he goes straight down about 175 feet. And a big shark was lying on its side, and its mouth was open. Latare went right through the mouth and the rock hit the stomach. And the shark threw the man out. The man on top pulls up the rope, so Latare came up, with marks all over his back. They had a big picture of him and the fish in the city hall. The king went to see him. People paid one Italian lira to look at him. Jim Z.,

[7] See Richard M. Dorson, *American Folklore* (New York, 1959), 163, for a similar account.

who came here six years ago from Kalymnos, when he was 27, saw the picture. It was a miracle, the only time it ever happened.

Emmanuel invited me to the East Side Coffee House off 7th Avenue that evening, where Greek men met to play cards, talk, and have light refreshment. When I arrived, he had stepped out, and I sat conspicuously alone, eying and being eyed by the groups of dark-haired, dark-complexioned men sitting around tables reading Greek newspapers, conversing in Greek, and eating a sweet Greek pastry called *galakton baurike.* The men were all ages, in working-class clothes; women were not permitted, and one came to the door, but no further, to signal her husband. After a while the owner, Denos K., heavy-set and serious of mien, sat at my table and began conversing in passable English. Denos had been born in 1918 in Tarpon Springs, Florida, the transplanted community of Greek sponge fishermen, but lived in Kalymnos from 1921 to 1933, when he returned to Tarpon Springs and became captain of a sponge fishing boat. He moved to Gary with his brother in 1947, when some chemical killed off the sponge beds.

While we talked, Emmanuel entered and joined us. Then others crowded around, and suddenly our table was the center of excited conversation about Kalymnos, about Latare the lucky diver, about Saint Nicholas, patron saint of fishermen. A pleasant young barber, the Jim Z. who had seen the picture of Latare, counted twenty men from Kalymnos around the room. One was a famous diver, now converted into a railroad switchman, a cousin of Emmanuel, burly and impassive, and out of the conversation because he had no English. Over the mantel rested an elegant ship model called the *Kalymnos.* From somewhere in the room Jim brought a couple of prize sponges, one long and tufted and shaped like a helmet. Now Denos produced a treasured book with a torn blue paper cover showing a suited diver holding a large sponge in one hand and a claw-like instrument in the other. It was titled *Strangers at Ithaca, The Story of the Spongers of Tarpon Springs,* written by George Th. Frantzis and published by the Great Outdoors Publishing Company in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 1962. He looked through it lovingly, the others clustering around, as he pointed to persons he knew in the photographs. One was of his mother, "Eleni Georgious K., one of the first Greek beauties to come to Tarpon Springs," showing just her head. She was strikingly beautiful, with madonna-like features framed in black hair. In an emotional gesture Denos gave me the book, along with a postcard picturing a rugged peak and sheltered bay of Kalymnos.

In my notebook Denos drew a rough map of the inland coast of Florida to illustrate how in 1935 the hurricane had hit every city from Palmyra to Pensacola save Tarpon Springs.

The sponge fishermen in Kalymnos give the sponges they get on their last day to Saint Nicholas. In Tarpon Springs they say Saint Nicholas saved them from the hurricane. In 1935 my uncle, who was in the Bahamas as a sponge buyer, came to visit us in Tarpon Springs. The radio announced the hurricane coming. My uncle had had experience with the hurricane every year in the Bahamas. He called my father, "Get up and get prepared." And my father said, "Don't worry, Saint Nicholas is going to take care of that. Go back to bed." And the hurricane hit all the other cities, went out to sea about a hundred and fifty miles and came back and hit Pensacola, below Tarpon Springs.

These Gary Greeks no longer knew the *paramythia*, the old folktales with which they used to while away evenings on the sponge boats. But traditions enveloped the East Side Coffee House, conveyed in the pictures of Kalymnos, the ship model, the sponges, the true tale of Latare, and the faith in Saint Nicholas.

Mexicans (from diary)

I was introduced to Victor L., a young, positive fellow with pockmarked skin, who promptly invited me to his Adult Citizens English class at Riley School that evening. Then I was off to William M., who had invited me to a Mexican meal when I called at 4:00 P.M. His wife, Tilly, was an attractive dark-haired girl about thirty years of age, with boys of two and four. Bill was sturdy, full-faced, serious, darker than she. Tilly did not look Mexican, except for a slight olive complexion. They were second generation but filled with tradition, or aware of it. Tilly was one of thirteen children. Her dad had come from Mexico at twenty-six, fifty-three years before, from Yuriria, Guanajauto, which she had visited, and was thankful she had been born in the States. Her mother came from Jalisco, and recalled being helped off a train by Pancho Villa. Tilly had once dated a Greek boy of means, but with the understanding that both their parents would arrange their marriages. Tilly and Bill began telling me various Mexican folklore matters: about the *mariachi*, popular singing groups with stringed instruments bringing seventy-five to one hundred dollars an hour in the area; how Thomas Alva Edison was really Mexican; an account of La Llorona mixed with the female ghost of Cline Avenue, actually seen by Tilly's brother, a cab driver, who was interviewed on TV; the potato water cure of Tilly's mother to preserve her black hair and save that of her brother-in-law, which was coming out in patches. "She advised him to use water from boiled potatoes for three months." I recorded them.

Dinner was a regular Mexican meal of stew beef, yellow rice, and beans. Tilly and Bill told me that *enchiladas* and *tacos* were only used on special occasions. Everything they said I found of interest. Their church, "Our Lady of Guadalupe," in the Harbor, was having trouble keeping its parishioners, though it was the only Mexican church in town. The priests were Irish (Father Flanagan) or English (Father Meade), and when Tilly's family sponsored Father Frias from Mexico, well-spoken and handsome, the people flocked to hear him. A substantial sum was raised to send to Mexico, for a church or hospital, whereupon Father Flanagan got mad and refused to let Father Frias speak again. Tilly said that at the *mariachi* dances the "Mexican would come out" even in Americans, in the *grito*, a protracted yell. The church was losing parishioners because the younger people —and older ones—were moving out, and the Texans planned only to stay ten years and then return. Her family kept going to the old church for sentimental reasons, although they were closer to St. Mary's. Tilly remarked that the Mexicans did not stick together, as did the Serbians. Two rivals had lost out in the election for state representative to a non-Mexican, by one hundred votes. She and Bill had had to leave their Ivy Street apartment because the Serbian landlord was renting to Serbs. Pride and stubbornness were downfall traits of the Mexicans. Tilly mentioned a University of California book, *Mexican-Americans in a Mid-*

west Metropolis, that was so inflammatory—it described Mexican laborers being loaded into boxcars—that it could not be sold locally.[8]

After dinner I followed Bill across town to his foster mother's, around the corner from the old church in Indiana Harbor. Mrs. Tomasita G., a tiny, wrinkled, Indian-featured old lady, had been born in 1893 in Doctor Arroyo, south of Monterrey, and had come to East Chicago in 1917. Later Bill told me that she took a raw egg with garlic every morning, washed her eyes with lemon juice, had all her teeth, and had begun to wear glasses only two years before. She was a *curandera*, and her cures were based on faith. "She must be a devout Catholic," I observed tritely. "No, she's a Mormon," said Bill. "She goes to Highland to services there twice on Sunday, morning and afternoon." And not to the Catholic church next door, that Bill and Tilly drove across town to attend.

Mrs. G. had raised Bill and his three siblings, Texas-born, by herself, since he was three. When he entered her miniature apartment, he kissed her respectfully on the hand and cheek. We sat in a tiny dressing area in front of her four-poster bed, and she related cures for *susto* in Spanish, which Bill then translated. He volunteered a cure she had done for him when he was eight ("I was leery of it until then"); she had bathed him in a raw egg at night, which was cooked in the morning, and the fever gone. Another charm, involving a prayer written on paper strips and placed on four corners of the bed, drove away cockroaches. We only had a little time before the 7:00 P.M. class, which by coincidence the old lady was attending. A friend came in, a funny old gal with expressive gestures, Elisa D., from Michoacan, Mexico, and she told a comical *cuento* into the tape, a noodle tale, which Bill translated. Then we all drove off to Riley School. It turned out that Victor L. and Bill M. had gone to school and worked in the mill together. Victor pulled out of the class a grizzled Mexican, and found a classroom for us to talk in. He was Ray A. of East Chicago, born in La Barca, Jalisco, in 1901; he came to Arizona in 1921 and to East Chicago the next year. His English was fair, but he preferred Spanish. After some questioning I struck responses with La Llorona, *susto, brujería,* and Pancho Villa. His mother had given him a cure for *biles*, a virulent kind of *susto* causing throwing up and eventually death. A main ingredient was sour tamarind. After he left, Bill M., who had been translating, spoke of his difficulty in following the Spanish; he was just too much out of practice, although he sometimes used it at the mill or with the old folks. But in Mexico he felt at a loss. Puerto Ricans spoke very rapidly when they first came. He mentioned hybrid words, English with Spanish endings, like *watcheli.* He had learned to read Spanish by reading the Bible three times in Spanish.

Now Victor L. joined us and spoke in a very interesting and informed way about the language business and Puerto Rican-Mexican conflicts. He was the son of old Mexicans; and his sister, two years older, had had a terrible time learning English in school until her teacher told her father to speak English to her. Victor then had no trouble. He had kept up his Spanish with his parents later, in the store and in the mill. He had an A.B. and an M.A. in Education from Indiana University. His wife of four years was Puerto Rican, of a high-rank family. He

[8] Julian Samora and Richard A. Lamanna, *Mexican-Americans in a Midwest Metropolis: A Study of East Chicago* (Los Angeles, 1967).

had flown at Christmas time to San Juan to get parental consent, while his brothers-in-law on the island had been afraid to approach the father. A couple of aunts, who were around her constantly, were from Spain. Victor attacked a number of stereotypes: that the Puerto Ricans all had Negro blood (his wife was a redhead, and there were plenty of blondes), that they didn't practice discrimination (there were ghettos in Puerto Rico), that they spoke so rapidly. Every other Spanish-speaking group was supposed to talk rapidly. He agreed with Bill M. that Harbor Spanish was a thing unto itself (citing a master's thesis by a Freddie Maraville), and he gave examples. He would use *autobús* in San Juan and be corrected to *huahua* and then be laughed at back home. He spoke of the warmth and hospitality of the Puerto Ricans, and also of the Mexicans. He had never expected to marry a Puerto Rican girl. Mexicans felt they could look down on Puerto Ricans because of their Negro blood. All Latins loved their mother and their country. Pride was one reason for their not learning English, and another was housing discrimination forcing them into Mexican ghettos. Two-thirds of the Puerto Ricans put their country first; they were the nationalists and territorialists. Mexicans were good workers and could take the heat in Open Hearth #2 at Inland. (*end diary*)

Puerto Ricans (from diary)

In Gary I had an appointment with A. M. in the National Bank Building. I arrived before he did in his plush office on the 9th floor—one of the few such offices I had encountered. He turned out to be youngish, yellow-skinned, square-faced, deliberate, and slow-speaking. He was an upper-class Puerto Rican, with French and Spanish blood, he said. He had an A.B. from Northwest Campus of Indiana University and his law degree from Valparaiso University, with other education in Europe. Our conversation was halting; I asked questions and he gave slow answers. He did not see much difference between Puerto Ricans and Mexicans; the food was pretty much the same. (But Mrs. Carmen R., a Puerto Rican married to a doctor from the Dominican Republic, had given me a long list of typical Puerto Rican dishes.) Puerto Ricans were not used to cold weather when they came to Gary. Most came from the small towns, not San Juan, and had been agriculturists, but since the 1940s, under Operation Bootstrap, 185 new industries had opened in Puerto Rico. Mexicans were nationalistic; they think they will make money and return home. I began cautiously to ask him about *brujería,* and finally drew a spark. "I had a client the other day that said her husband's girl friend was trying to destroy her with the *brujería,* and that she had heard voices. They stick pins in a doll, with the person's name on it. I tried to talk her out of it." He knew of the *botánica* shop that sold herbs, seeds, candles, and *escapularios* of cotton with the Virgin or a saint on them, to use against the *brujería,* and gave me the name of a former owner, Mrs. Pilar F., who was herself accused of being a *bruja.* I asked about *susto,* and he did not know of any connection with *brujería* but called out to his secretary, a pretty young Mexican, if she knew of such a connection and was surprised to hear her say yes. He gave me a note of introduction to take to Mrs. F.

On the way out I asked the secretary, Carmen M., about *susto.* Her mother had

a recipe: suspend the egg over the sick person, then place it in a glass of water, and drop in crosses made of broom straws or toothpicks, which will float. In the morning the egg may be cooked, depending on the sickness. But she had not tried it. "I don't want to get involved."

Now I decided to try Pilar F., who lived in the Brunswick section of Gary, a quiet neighborhood with small homes and plots of ground between them. An enormously fat, blubbery dark woman, slightly Oriental in aspect and somewhat sinister looking, was carrying a bundle of clothing out the door. She called Pilar when I showed her my letter. Pilar was a half-sister to this one, lighter, fat but not so fat, with more regular features, open and pleasant, and with good English. She took me right inside and after reading A. M.'s note answered everything I asked, while trying to silence an unquenchable two-year-old, an adopted son, Carlito. She gave me an LP record of Puerto Rican music, containing traditional *plena* songs (like calypsos), and said that a local orchestra played such songs at the Puerto Rico Demo Club at birthday parties—piano, trumpet, guitar, saxophone, soloist. Yes, they made up local *plenas*. Now I questioned Pilar about her life history. She was born in 1932 in Santurce del Barrio, in a very poor section called Tras Talleres, the only child of parents who had each been married before, giving her stepbrothers and stepsisters. In 1949 she went to live with her half-brother in New York, and attended P.S. 101, at 111th between Lexington and Madison. Pilar retraced her career in close detail: a return to Puerto Rico to attend her sick mother, a course in New York in practical nurse's training, while living with her half-brother, who was a cook's helper for twenty-five years in the Hotel Vanderbilt; a decision to move to Washington, because of unspecified trouble in her brother's family; her failure to get a nurse's position in Walter Reed Hospital because she arrived ten minutes late for the test, not knowing the Pentagon was across the Washington, D.C., boundary in Virginia; her loneliness in Washington, where there were only twenty to thirty Puerto Ricans; her job in charge of linen at the Shoreham Hotel—she was ever after soured against nursing; the return to New York, and her decision, because of the noise, to find another place where she could live with Puerto Ricans; the move to Gary in 1957, as a result of a letter from a home-town friend living there; her first income from using her fifteen-dollar jalopy to drive Puerto Ricans and colored people daily to a clinic at Michigan City, making fifteen dollars a day by charging each $3; a move to East Chicago and a job there as typist with the city; a year in Chicago at Oak Forest Hospital; a return to East Chicago to work in politics for Mayor Nicosia on behalf of the Puerto Ricans; laborer in Inland Steel, in the tin mill; marriage in 1963; present job as jail matron, which she enjoyed. Her husband Lorenzo had worked in Youngstown seventeen years, knew no English, and even spoke Spanish poorly, but he had made $11,000 the past year as second helper in the blast furnace, where only he could speak Spanish. When it was necessary to communicate in English, he wrote messages. While we were talking, he came in, a slender, sallow man with a small mustache and a furtive look, but he offered me a cup of coffee in friendly fashion.

In all this Pilar had not mentioned the *botánica,* so I brought it up, and she looked a little surprised but giggled and spoke most openly about the whole business. So I brought in the tape recorder, and she told all her secrets to it. A. M.

said I should not mention *brujería* but let Pilar bring it up, but she showed no hesitation at all in talking about the matter. "The Spanish people believe in voodoo, and they come buy herbs and take a bath in it and say it will bring good luck." There were about twenty-five *botanicas* in Chicago, and many in New York. Her own, run by her sister in East Chicago, had had to close as a result of the criticism of the churches, Catholic and Protestant. The Catholics imposed a course called *curcillistra* [*cursillo*], which cost $37 to $40 for three days, and which even her half-sister took. Pilar regarded the *botánica* as a drugstore, to sell supplies to people affected with *brujería*. While we were talking she brought out charcoal, incense, and seeds and burned them in a little dish, describing the procedure for the tape-recorder. Usually she did this Fridays at midnight, and she always stayed home Fridays (hence I had come on the right day). She said giggling—and she giggled all the way through—that her husband told her the incense was to make him stay at home. Pilar had learned about voodoo—she fumbled for the word on the tape—from a spiritual meeting she had attended as a young girl in Puerto Rico, which she described graphically. At the end she mentioned a fly from Spain, *moscas cantareas*, black and blue, which made a z-z-z-sound, and was considered very lucky. Well, she and other *botánicas* would sell substitute flies, or substitute incense, when they couldn't get the real articles, and this led to a crackdown by the government. These articles were used to bring good luck in the numbers game; even snakes were sold, and she mentioned one good-luck snake that would curl up on the sofa. She said all this frankly into the tape. On leaving I offered to pay Pilar for the record, but she refused any money. (*end diary*)

Conclusions

A field trip of twenty-three days cannot of course answer the theoretical questions framed at the outset of this inquiry. Still from the numerous interviews and the data obtained in notebooks and on tape and in the form of donated publications and other materials, plus of course the strong impressions derived from personal observation, I put forward the following concepts of modern urban folklore. How well they will stand up after further work in the Gary-East Chicago area and to what extent they may apply in other metropolitan localities remains to be seen, but I advance them with some conviction.

1. PAUCITY OF CONVENTIONAL FOLKLORE. The old familiar genres of folklore, particularly the tale and song, do not seem abundant in the city. Even jokes, the modern folktale, are forbidden in the steel mills for fear their ethnic slurs may arouse hostility. One can of course find storytellers and folk-singers in the city, and in the country village not every soul is an active tradition carrier by a long shot. But genre folklore has become increasingly displaced by other kinds of oral tradition, which deserve the attention of collectors. A good example was my evening in the Greek coffee-house, that might as well have been on the Aeagean isle of Kalymnos, which indeed most of the men present claimed as their birthplace. They were eager to tell me all they knew of Greek life and lore, and other people had told me no group was so clannish as the Greeks. None could tell *paramythia*, the popular fictions with which the sponge fishermen had regaled each other in the old days and in the Old Country; yet traditions of other

kinds retained a powerful hold upon them. Among the Negroes and other ethnic groups I encountered a generally similar response. My closest Negro friend, Harold M., Mississippi born and bred, was exceedingly articulate but not on matters of southern lore. The steelworkers' union of which he was an official dominated his thoughts and conversation. He finally did tell me two anecdotes; one was a civil-rights joke and the other dealt with an eccentric millworker. When tales and songs are collected, as in the Polish folksongs recorded by Pawlowska and the Armenian folktales recorded by Hoogasian-Villa in Detroit, they may belong to an inactive memory culture rather than to a vigorous living growth.[9]

2. RICHNESS OF CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND PERSONAL HISTORIES. If the conventional genres are hard to come by, folklore, or perhaps better folk culture, is nevertheless present and pervasive. American folklorists—and this certainly includes myself—have sought for texts and largely overlooked other kinds and forms of cultural traditions less easy to report. Among the Negroes, the Baptist church is in most of its manifestations a folk institution transplanted from the South. I was told there were over two hundred such churches in Gary. The ethnomusicologist and student of folk music can have a field day analyzing the combination of choral and instrumental, country and city, gospel and rhythm elements in these church performances. For the Serbians, calendar feast days play a pivotal role in their lives, both the saints' day celebrations associated with each family and the great church holy days. In a number of ethnic societies, choral and dance groups perform regularly, such as the Croatian *tamburitzan* club. On my last evening in Gary I attended a Serbian entertainment in Saint Sava Hall, the basement auditorium of the church, and saw local girl dancers, a singer, and two flailing accordionists; and finally, with the chairs cleared, a circular *cola* dance with adults and children all joining hands. The whole program was in Serbian, and one could see before one's eyes youngsters absorbing Serbian traditional song, music, and dance. To the religious and social occasions should be added the celebration of national holidays, like the Mexican one on September 16, a festal pageant with floats and a proud team of *charros*, the costumed horsemen.

Ethnic cuisine is still another flourishing form of tradition among every sizable group: the southern whites, the southern Negroes, the east Europeans, the Latins. A truck driver for Inland Steel from Kentucky discoursed rhapsodically in Mrs. Green's hotel about the heaping platters of farm fare back home. As noted above, one Negro middle-class lady from Memphis said that soul food kept the colored people from getting the rare diseases of the whites. A Puerto Rican housewife indignantly denied that Puerto Ricans had no dishes of their own to compare with those nationally publicized by the Mexicans, and she reeled off a string of recipes. The best restaurant in Gary, now enveloped by the Negro ghetto, was Greek. Ethnic restaurants tended to take on the character of social clubs. From southern hillbilly to Romanian, the people of Steel City cherished their foods.

Another dimension of folk culture to be fathomed is personal history. There are thousands of sagas created from life experiences that deserve, indeed cry for, recording. The folklorist need not worry about their relation to the oral genres.

[9] Harriet M. Pawlowska, *Merrily We Sing: 105 Polish Folksongs* (Detroit, 1961); Susie Hoogasian-Villa, *One Hundred Armenian Folktales* (Detroit, 1966).

Here are precious oral narratives dealing with a series of great folk movements—from the southern states, from Mexico and Puerto Rico, from eastern Europe—and this migration should be described in terms of humanity as well as of mass statistics. No discipline other than folklore looks in this direction. Oral history is concerned with the elite, anthropology with underdeveloped countries, sociology with social organization. The personal history may well be a genre of its own, honed and structured through periodic retellings. It is at any rate a fluent oral form on the lips of a number of tellers. Several memorable life stories came to my ears with virtually no prompting. The relation by seventy-three-year-old Laura P., the frail mother of a double amputee, Bill, about the long travail and cheerful endurance of her son, fits into no known formula. It was a heart-rending account of hospitalization and surgery, despair and grief, but without particular overtones of prejudice or poverty. On reflection the history seems to belong with what Charles Keil has called the role of the Negro in America as one long sacrificial ritual. Victor L., who had come from Mexico in 1906; Edward B., who had been born in the Guiana forest; Zlatko K. from Croatia, dying of cancer at eighty-two—all launched promptly into detailed life histories. Certain incidents are clearly traditional, such as the comic misadventures of the newly arrived immigrant.

3. THE ROLE OF THE SPOKEN WORD. The culture of Gary-East Chicago is largely an oral culture, in the sense that talk flows freely. Television has not displaced conversation; the Book-of-the-Month Club pretensions of the middle class are little in evidence. Especially is this true for the Negro, bearing out the claims of Abrahams and Keil that the black ghetto is an auditory and tactile as opposed to a visual and literate culture, with the man of words as the culture hero. In the immigrant groups the potential man of words is often hampered by his inadequacy with English, although the desire to communicate will not be denied. I think of the long evening with Walter and Milly T. in which they conveyed all kinds of information through a limited English vocabulary. The Negro man of words appeared as preacher-entertainer, gospel singer turned preacher plus steelworker, athlete turned preacher plus steelworker, and preacher turned civil rights leader. The three superb speeches given in the Calvary Baptist Church during Negro history week, by a young bank manager, a lady sociologist, and a city official stand out in my mind in contrast to the suffocatingly dull seminar on Gary's Model City project held at Bloomington, at which professional educators mouthed their irrelevant jargon.

4. THE ROLE OF THE BOOK. If this is not a highly literate society, nevertheless it is a society that greatly values special book publications for their symbolic value. In one group after another I encountered references to, demonstration of, and sometimes even the bestowal of a cherished tome. These books shared two common factors: they were far off the main stream of American publishing, often being issued with obscure imprints, and they served to reinforce cherished elements of the folk inheritance. When Chetniks spoke of their sufferings at the hands of the hated Ustashis and recorded on tape examples of atrocities they had personally beheld, they regularly alluded to and produced printed evidence to substantiate their statements, such as the pamphlet Walter T. gave me, *The Crime of Genocide*, and the book, *Genocide in Satellite Croatia*, men-

tioned previously. My last evening in Gary I saw Walter at the dance entertainment in St. Sava Hall, again distributing paperback books in Serbian. They were by Lazo Kostich, now living in Switzerland, and author of over fifty books documenting the atrocities that had taken the lives of two million Serbs in World War II. "He is defending my blood," said Walter simply. In the Greek coffeehouse, owner Delos K. proudly brought forth a history of the Greek settlement of sponge fishermen at Tarpon Springs, Florida, *Strangers at Ithaca.*

Another kind of book reinforcement supported ethnic pride in historical achievements customarily ignored in majority group histories. An eloquent Polish patriot in Gary with his own Polish-language radio program, T. Stan Dubiak, told me that there were 127 Polish-American organizations in Lake County. He complained about the Poles being left out of American history and triumphantly produced a volume, *Jamestown Pioneers from Poland 1608–1958*, documenting the presence of Polish colonists at Jamestown. In my interview with seventy-year-old Todd R., a retired Negro steelworker born in Alabama, I was astonished at his ability to produce little-known facts, names, and dates of Negro history, coupled with his dearth of folklore. Eventually he showed me two battered booklets, an *Afro-American World Almanac* and *A Tribute to Achievement.* Similarly Elder George M. in his preaching at the Primitive Baptist Church, although he could not read, relied for his impressive citations of Negro accomplishments on a book his wife read to him, *World's Great Men of Color 3000 B.C. to 1946 A.D.*

Books could be feared as well as cherished. The study by Samora and Lamanna, *Mexican-Americans in a Midwest Metropolis: A Study of East Chicago*, is a case in point. The fury it aroused in the Mexican community made the sale of the work impossible. The concept of the book in these instances is wholly different from the attitude toward books of casual bookbuyers and book readers. These books have a talismanic character, and they are unique, not simply titles in a library.

5. Other artifacts of tradition. If a symbolic book serves as an artifact tangibly reinforcing the traditional culture, it can be joined by many other artifacts of more than sentimental worth. These physical objects decorate the home or clubroom and fill the closets and drawers, and the ethnofolklorist should seek to inventory them. They may take the form of old country costumes for ceremonial occasions, portraits of national heroes like Draža Mihajlovich, musical instruments like the *gusle* and tambour, or recordings obtained from the old country. Walter T. played for me a tape recording he had made in Belgrade of a record of a Serbian folksong being played on a local radio station. In the Greek coffeehouse a ship model named *Kalymnos* and two giant sponges refreshed club members' memories of their island birthplace and occupation. As the folklorist today is enlarging his vision to include folklife, so in dealing with nationality groups he should pay special heed to the transported and imported items of material culture that help to bridge the chasm between the Old World and the New.

6. Reinforcement. The two preceding points lead into a related matter, the idea of reinforcement of the parent culture through continuous contacts. This concept, which I earlier suggested in *American Folklore*, contradicts the stereotype of the immigrant, northern Negro, Appalachian white, urban Puerto Rican, or Mexican as cut off abruptly and irrevocably from his traditions in an

alien and hostile environment.[10] In one instance after another, in every one of these groups, the evidence accumulates as to the continuing links with the *heimat,* through visits—by the American-born as well as the foreign-born or northern-born—correspondence, bringing of relatives or mates to the metropolis, and subscription to foreign-language periodicals and newspapers. The case of Bishop Varnava Nastich is a classic example of the linkage between Europe and America, reversing the immigration pattern as the Gary-born Serb returned to Yugoslavia to become the first American bishop in the Serbian Orthodox Church and a rallying figure for Gary anti-Communists. The bishop's cousin in Gary, Emily B., possesses extensive files on Nastich—reams of eloquent letters, half in English, half in Serbian; photographs; and clippings from American newspapers and Serbian publications. Daisy Wuletich and her mother described to me in close detail their visit with the bishop in the monastery in Beocin. The Nastich episode of course involves high drama, but in the regular course of events the dwellers in Gary and East Chicago scheduled trips to their places of birth or those of their parents.

The effect of this intermittent but consistent reinforcement needs to be measured. Once Harold M. told me that the pastor at his church, Trinity Baptist, had noticeably reverted to southern-style preaching after a vacation in Arkansas. Further inquiry can lead to subdivisions within the transplanted cultures. The Gary Greeks meet in separate coffeehouses according to their islands or mainland communities of origin; the Negroes join churches whose pastors come from their own southern states; the Croats in northwest Indiana address each other by nicknames designating the valleys and hillsides of their youth. Presumably reinforcement from these distinguishable backgrounds will show different shadings, just as dialects vary between regions.

7. CULTURAL PLURALISM. The generalizations offered under the preceding headings must be countered by another generalization, that each cultural group is unique in terms of its folklore retentions and pattern of assimilation and acculturation. Negroes may look upon all white people as "Whitey," northerners may lump Mexicans and Puerto Ricans together as Latins, WASPs may speak in the aggregate of eastern Europeans, city dwellers may call all southern migrants hillbillies, and these terms themselves are revealing of cultural attitudes and stereotypes. One does not need to spend much time in the field to appreciate the considerable differences that exist between ethnic and racial groups in their degree of folk-cultural tenacity.

The Serbs and the Croats provide a good illustration, since they are usually conjoined in the minds of outsiders, and their language, although written in different alphabets, is called Serbo-Croatian. But the Serbs are much more tradition-oriented than the Croats. One reason is the Church and another is the State. The Serbian Orthodox Church unites the American Serbs—or disunites them into two warring factions in the present ecclesiastical dispute—but it at least keeps aflame their national conscience. The Croats are swallowed up in the Roman Catholic Church and will mingle more with other Catholic ethnic groups such as the Poles and Italians. Serbia has its history as an independent state and a subjugated

[10] *American Folklore,* 156.

nation under the Turks to inspire her expatriates with heroes, legends, and tragic epics; but Croatia was a province submerged in the Austro-Hungarian empire, with little historical tradition to call its own. As John Sertich put it, the Croats were tribal rather than national, never having had their own king. The legend of Bishop Varnava Nastich grew out of the Gary Serbian community and could never have developed among the Gary Croatians. This is not to deny the American Croats their ties to old country and their interest in folk music and costume, as in the *tamburitzan* ensembles. The question here is one of degree and density of cultural conservatism.

Similar contrasts came to the surface after some inquiries about differences between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. The latter fitted more easily into Gary-East Chicago because they had already lived under the American flag. The former supposedly worked better in the steel mills because they were accustomed to heat. Mexicans wed Indians and Puerto Ricans wed Negroes. In terms of tradition, the Mexican seemed much stronger, again because of a national history as a frame of reference. Mexican ethnic cuisine has become part of the national restaurant business, while Puerto Rican dishes are unknown.

One factor in assessing cultural pluralism and its effect on folklore is the dilution that occurs, or may occur, through intermarriage. A Croat who had remarried to a Lithuanian said that his children had no tradition. A young Mexican woman related she had once dated a Greek boy, but with the understanding that they would never marry, for the Greeks always stayed together. Marty G., the son of a Mexican father and a southern Appalachian mother whom I recorded for a long pleasant hour, called himself a "Mexican hillbilly," but his inheritance appeared to be all on the hillbilly side. He spoke with intimate knowledge, sympathy, and wit about the "stumpjumpers," "ridgerunners," and "crackers" of the South. My own judgment, until other evidence appears, is that ethnic traditions do not blend in a mixed marriage but either cancel each other out or result in one triumphing.

8. ETHNIC SEPARATISM. The present urban field experience supports my previous findings in rural areas that the strong force of what I call ethnic separatism keeps the in-group folklores apart; they cannot cross into each other's zones. It is the individual who must cross into the life experience of another group to absorb the traditions of that group. Twice I recorded tales in East Chicago from Puerto Ricans married to Negro women who had never heard, and expressed astonishment at, their husbands' narrations. Puerto Ricans and Mexicans share the same language and faith, but their folklore follows different channels. The Puerto Rican *botánica* or magic-herb store and the Mexican *curandera* or magic healer are separate and distinct. *Susto* has special connotations to Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, who believe that *susto* is induced by some supernatural or magical means; but the Puerto Rican lawyer representing the Latin American organization of Gary and East Chicago and who knew all about the *botánica,* drew a blank on any special significance of *susto*, and was astonished to learn that his Mexican secretary did react to the word.

Folk prejudices as well as cultural inertia contribute to ethnic separatism. In a conversation with Katie S. about the soul food prized by the colored people, I thought to ask her if she had ever tried Mexican dishes. Yes, she had tried *tacos*

and rather liked them until she heard they were made from dead cats. Calling on a Slovak celebrating his fiftieth wedding anniversary, I elicited no folklore but did receive one double-barreled folk hatred: "I never see a picture like mine [of his golden wedding] for a Czech; they have twenty wives, like niggers."

9. THE URBAN SYNTHESIS. Yet if the migrant groups in Steel City never penetrate each other's folklore, or perhaps even each other's homes, they do share the environment, the living experience, and perforce the lore of their new abode. People are marked by living in Gary or East Chicago, for these are uncommon cities, just as the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is an uncommon region leaving its imprint on all its inhabitants. The pervasive themes of Gary-East Chicago binding its people into a new folk community are steel, crime, and the racial-ethnic mix.

Steel created Gary, and the great mills whose furnaces must burn twenty-four hours a day is the number one fact of life in Gary and its environs. Some day perhaps an urban folklorist will write a "Folklore of the Steel Industry" to match Mody Boatright's *Folklore of the Oil Industry*. Meanwhile anyone can hear little stories about steelworkers, for instance about problems in communication. A Romanian crane operator worked for thirty-nine years in Inland Steel without learning English. During my stay an injured worker brought to the infirmary at Inland could not make his ailment known, although a nurse present tried speaking to him in Polish. The staff had to send back to the patient's unit to learn he was a Serb. These incidents get talked about and lay the ground for a new body of anecdotes based on the age-old motif of language misunderstanding. The human side of steel inevitably involves ethnic and racial humor and *blason populaire*. Crime stories and fears are an outgrowth of the contemporary industrial city and the Negro ghetto. Everyone is apprehensive—whites and blacks—and talk swirls around hold-ups, beatings, and murders. One of my informants, Marty G., father of seven, was murdered with his wife not long after I recorded him: no clues, no motives. One evening when I was interviewing a group of East Chicago Serb adherents to the mother church, one man present, a policeman, interrupted the thread of our discussion to tell about several recent crime incidents. At the time I was impatient to get back to our main topic, but now I realize that he was dealing with a central theme of Gary-East Chicago lore. One incident dealt with the refusal of a storeowner and his wife, who had just been robbed, to identify their Negro assailant, found with their goods and the owner's wallet in his car. After the suspect's release, the police officer asked the couple why they had refused to make the identification. "Well, we have to live there after you leave. Let them have a few bundles of clothes. Better than to have his friends come back and burn the place down."

A brief summary of a long evening's conversation with three southern-born Negroes, all steelworkers, may further illustrate the newly evolving urban synthesis. They were my friend Harold M., an official in a labor union; Ben D., a former professional gospel singer now preacher at the Macedonian Baptist Church; and Ben T., his former manager and now his deacon. The first half of the conversation turned on life in the South, on methods of cotton-picking, frauds in the poultry business run by Italians in New Orleans, and managing spiritual singers. During these recollections I was able to record half a dozen familiar folk-

tales, such as "Dividing Souls" and "Why the Fox Has a Short Tail." For the second part of the evening the talk shifted to northern life, the labor unions, the Syndicate, and the political machine. Ben T. made sweeping and authoritative pronouncements: eighty-five percent of the people in Gary were from the South; Gary, and the world at large, were run by syndicates. He and Harold fell to comparing personalities in the unions and swapped accounts of the attempt by Democratic party forces to bribe union officials to swing votes against Dick Hatcher. Union grievance committeemen had each been given $250; half of them simply pocketed the money without acting. Ben talked at length about "snitching." Down south the black snitcher ran to Uncle Charlie, who protected him from the law, but up north the whites were the worst snitchers. The snitchers often had done the job themselves. One who was caught begged not to be sent to the "Peniten" but to the State Prison, because he knew he would be killed by the people he had snitched on. Ben ended these remarks by saying that Gary is the city of steel and that life revolved around the pay check every two weeks. Harold, a good talker but no storyteller, did think of two steel mill stories, one about an eccentric worker called "Old Man Shouting Robertson" and another about a lazy dog named Superintendent.

This full measure of talk, grossly synopsized here, suggests the shift from southern memories to northern conditions in the minds of migrants from the South, and the dominant themes of the races—petty and major crime and work in the steel plants, generating factual and finally fictional anecdotes. In the course of my sojourn I heard two fantasies in what may be an evolving legend of Richard Hatcher, the first Negro mayor of Gary. The more naturalistic ascribed to him a romance with a Jewish woman in Glen Park, which had gained him the Jewish vote, ordinarily bitterly anti-Negro. The second, propounded by a visiting television personality calling himself Psychic, held that Hatcher was actually the reincarnation of a southern white slave owner. This I heard from Harold M. Separate and divided as are the ethnic-race groups of Gary, all share participation in, and reaction to, the election of their Negro mayor. From this shared experience emerges the lore of the city.

These currents of city talk sometimes carry floating seeds of legend. On three occasions I heard the related legends of the Vanishing Hitchhiker and La Llorona, localized on Cline Avenue in East Chicago and the swampy Cudahy strip between East Chicago and Gary. A young Mexican-American, Tilly L., told me that her brother, a cab-driver, had been interviewed on television after picking up a woman often sighted and picked up on Cline Avenue by passing motorists, who found her gone from their vehicles when they arrived at the address she gave them as her destination. The newspapers had publicized the story. The related incident concerned a passionate murder of a woman in Cudahy whose wraith was frequently seen and identified by the Mexicans with La Llorona, the weeping lady-ghost mourning her lost children. An elderly but vigorous Mexican, Victor L., who narrated to me his life story for two hours without drawing breath, knew at firsthand the Cudahy murderer, a fellow-worker in the mill, and had seen his shooting of a husky man who tried to stop him the night he ran amok. Victor's son, born in East Chicago, explained that La Llorona was adapted to local events.

10. EXCEPTIONS TO STEREOTYPES. A plurality of cultures exists in Steel

City, going their own ways and not simmering in a melting pot. But if it is a mistake to treat all these folk cultures as equal in their rate of acculturation, it is a comparable error to treat all the individuals in the same cultural group as interchangeable parts. In the American scene—with its high mobility and unexpected juxtapositions, accentuated in urban settings—endless surprises occur. The individual breaks out of his stereotype frequently enough so that deviation itself becomes an acceptable concept.

A number of examples came to my attention in the Gary-East Chicago field trip. The most dramatic involved the Polish precinct-worker of the Democratic party, Marion Tokarsky, who broke with her ethnic, political, and religious allegiances to make common cause with the ghetto Negroes and support the Negro mayoralty candidate. Here was an unpredictable phenomenon, the Polish Catholic immigrant befriending her Negro enemies and explaining to them the supernatural-Catholic basis of her decision, to which they responded in the style and manner of the Baptist congregation. Other illustrations of deviancy can be given. The seventy-five-year old Mexican *curandera* in Indiana Harbor, Mrs. Tomasita G., who dictated formulaic cures for *susto* in Spanish into my tape-recorder, proved to be a Mormon. On Sundays she made two trips to Highland to attend services at the Mormon church there, although the old Catholic church was just around the corner, and her foster-son and his wife came across town out of loyalty to that church, when they could have gone to a nearer Catholic church in East Chicago. The president of the Northern Indiana Political Action Alliance that Marion Tokarsky addressed was not a southern or northern Negro but a native of British Guiana, who in his youth identified with the British ruling class and looked down upon the East Indian servants on his plantation. When Edward B. came to the United States, he was astonished to discover that Negroes were second-class citizens. He had married a Negro woman from Georgia.

In the *Indiana Alumni Magazine* I read about Fedor C., who had come to America as a refugee from the Nazis and Communists, knowing no English. He had worked in the steel mills, taken courses, and become chairman of the political science department at the Northwest Campus of Indiana University. In Gary I spent an evening with Fedor and his wife Astrid and discovered that, while no fact in the magazine account was untrue, the stereotype presented was completely false. The couple were gifted and attractive intellectuals, university-trained, cosmopolitan, and sophisticated. Their life stories, which they told readily into the tape recorder, are extraordinary human documents; but they have no relation to the conventional saga of the immigrant. Again, from Victor L., Jr., I heard contradictions of the Puerto Rican stereotype, for instance, that all Puerto Ricans had Negro blood and hence would move into and marry within the American Negro community. There were indeed Puerto Rican Negro couples whom I met in East Chicago. But Victor knew whereof he spoke, for he was an Indiana-born Mexican married to a redhaired, fairskinned Puerto Rican girl, whom he had to court in the face of protective Castilian-type chaperones.

The answer to the original query, "Is there a folk in the city?" must clearly be yes. Perhaps it is best to say that there are many folk groups, who in Gary and East Chicago are becoming a city folk. But city folk are different from the country folk of yesteryear, and the folklorist exploring their ways must drastically revise

his own traditional concepts of the folk and their lore. Yet the city is indeed a proper field for him to cultivate. If in North Uist, with its population decimated and a century of intensive collecting already achieved, John MacInnes can still say that he will never plumb all the layers of tradition, imagine how many lifetimes would be needed to explore the multiple folk cultures of Gary and East Chicago.

APPENDIX

The tangible results of this field trip—on which this paper is based—are nine tapes of twelve hundred feet played at one and seven-eighths speed and one tape of choral singing played at seven and one-half; notes on some fifty-three interviews; a diary written each evening running to ninety typed pages; and a box of books, pamphlets, leaflets, typescripts, and even a Puerto Rican straw hat and record album, given me by my new acquaintances—often books cherished and dear to them—as evidences and documents of their traditions and assertions. The interviews are divided as follows: Negro 15, Serbian 8, Mexican 7, Puerto Rican 5, Croatian 5, Greek 3, other 10. "Other" includes a Romanian couple, three Poles, two Italians, two Slovaks, one "Mexican hillbilly," and a daughter of a Sioux Indian mother and an Italian father. "Interview" is a formal word covering all kinds of meetings, sometimes with one, sometimes with several persons present, sometimes a chance encounter, sometimes an arranged appointment. Besides personal talks of some intimacy, I should also include attendance at four Negro church services on successive Sunday mornings, at a Negro choral performance, and at a program on Negro history given in Negro churches on two Sunday afternoons; a tour through Inland Steel, a luncheon-seminar and convocation lecture for and by Mayor Hatcher, for which I flew from Gary to Bloomington and back one day on the Indiana University plane; a spirited local production of "The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd," which as a review pointed out, curiously fit into the Gary milieu; and a Serbian musical program at St. Sava Church.

Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana