From what we have said it is abundantly clear that neither the future nor the past exist, and therefore it is not strictly correct to say that there are three times, past, present, and future. It might be correct to say that there are three times, a present of past things, a present of present things, and a present of future things. Some such different times do exist in the mind, but nowhere else that I can see. The present of past things is the memory; the present of present things is direct perception; and the present of future things is expectation. If we may speak in these terms, I can see three times and I admit that they do exist.

By all means, then, let us speak of three times, past, present, and future. Incorrect though it is, let us comply with usage. I shall not object or argue, nor shall I rebuke anyone who speaks in these terms, provided that he understands what he is saying and does not imagine that the future or the past exists now. Our use of words is generally inaccurate and seldom completely correct, but our meaning is recognized none the less.

—Saint Augustine, *Confessions*

From Edward Ives
George Magoon and the Down East Game War: History, Folklore, and the Law

# Introduction: Folklore, History, and Heroes

## I

The events with which we will be concerned in the following chapters played themselves out in an obscure inland wilderness of eastern Maine almost a century ago. The ripples they made in the waters of human destiny dissipated before they reached any significant shore, and I would not presume to offer this account to a reader's attention were it not for three considerations. First and foremost, the events and the people involved in them I have found fascinating in their own right, and I am confident others will find them fascinating as well—which is to say it is too good a story simply to let pass without telling. Second, that story is an excellent illustration of how a particular community reacted to a set of laws ostensibly passed for its own benefit, legislation that most of us (without thinking twice about it) would consider enlightened, forward-looking, and humane—which is to say it is another chapter in the irreconcilable conflict between society and the individual. Finally—and here is the fascination for the folklorist—it shows us how a community, chiefly by creating suitable heroes, used its past as a weapon in that conflict or, to put it a little more moderately, how it shaped that past into narratives that made inevitable changes more bearable.

I will go about my work in two quite different ways, involving two different approaches to history. First, I will play the standard historian's game as strictly as I know how. That is, through a disciplined marshaling of such documents as court records, the census, vital statistics, and newspapers—along with a very selective use of oral testimony—I will

try to onstruct what really happened, and I will try to set that in the wider context of political, social, and cultural developments of the time, particularly as those developments were reflected in new laws. In my second approach I will not be concerned with "what really happened" (or with whether anything happened at all) but with what people *think* happened, with the stories they tell about their past. But, the question comes, how can these tales, these popular conceptions, be thought of as history at all? Are they not irrelevant or even inimical to the historian's task, the darkness he or she seeks to dispel? To find out the truth—"what really happened"—isn't that what history is all about? The answer to all those questions is of course yes, but that yes raises a nasty epistemological problem and leads to an interesting paradox.

That problem was never more uncomfortably stated than by George Orwell in *1984,* when, deep in the bowels of the Ministry of Love, he has party member O'Brien interrogate a prisoner, Winston Smith, party member 6079:

> "There is a Party slogan dealing with the control of the past," he said. "Repeat it, if you please."
>
> " 'Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past,' " repeated Winston obediently.
>
> " 'Who controls the present controls the past,' " said O'Brien, nodding his head with slow approval. "Is it your opinion, Winston, that the past has real existence?" . . .
>
> O'Brien smiled faintly. "You are no metaphysician, Winston," he said. "Until this moment you had never considered what is meant by existence. I will put it more precisely. Does the past exist concretely, in space? Is there somewhere or other a place, a world of solid objects, where the past is still happening?"
>
> "No."
>
> "Then where does the past exist, if at all?"
>
> "In records. It is written down."
>
> "In records. And—?"
>
> "In the mind. In human memories."
>
> "In memory. Very well, then. We, the Party, control all records, and we control all memories. Then we control the past, do we not?"[1]

Party member 6079 Winston Smith could neither understand nor accept that at first, but he learned, just as, cleansed of Thoughtcrime in heart and soul, he learned to love Big Brother.



O'Brien had it about right, but I would modify formulation in two important ways. First, history, not the past, is the issue. If we mean by the past everything that has ever happened, it is a huge and indiscriminate bolus barely within the limits of comprehension if indeed it is within those limits. Most of us can command only minuscule purviews of it, and even those purviews become existent for us only as we see pattern and coherence within them. It is that coherence that we mean by history: the backward look, the past as conceived and patterned in the present. Second, the past—or rather, as I have just qualified it, history—exists *only* in our minds. Written records, physical remains, and oral traditions are no more than the raw materials from which history may be created and given whatever existence it does have, which brings us at last to the paradox I spoke of: Since the past exists only in one's mind, it exists only in the present—a congeries of electrochemical impulses. History, then, never was; it only is.

Yet it is part of the perversity of human nature that by means of history we have reified the past just as we have reified that other congeries of electrochemical impulses anthropologists call "culture." We know that (in O'Brien's terms) it does not "exist," yet we act in every way as though it did. We talk about our history as if it were a solid track we have laid down as we move through time as if it were "there," although where "there" is we cannot say. We "explore" it, "shed new light on" it, and even "reconstruct" it, and before we know it we are betrayed by our own metaphors into accepting its reality. But if that is perversity—actually it's a kind of "saving the appearances"[2]—I will go one step better and say there is nothing wrong with it. If it is a charade, it is a useful and perhaps necessary charade. We have learned a tremendous amount by assuming the reality of the past, and that assumption underlies at least half of this book.

In the other half I will do my best to argue the logic of O'Brien's basic position. Rather than assuming the reality of the past itself let us accept the reality of the *concepts* of that past as they exist in the present, turning away from an interest in the past for its own sake toward an interest in how that past is a living reality in our minds, to *narrations* of events rather than the events themselves. This is anything but a new approach, and it has labored under several different names—traditional history, folk history, even oral history

(thus turning a useful technique into a bogus genre)—in attempts to show that its subject matter is different from standard academic history. Folklorists have long been studying it under such rubrics as myth and legend. But whatever label we give it, it is an approach that looks for patterns in the narratives, not in the events themselves, and it is an approach that can tell us a great deal about ourselves, since, as William A. Wilson said, "What actually happened is often less important than what we think happened. We are motivated not by actual fact," he continues, "but by what we believe to be fact. And if we believe something to be true, that belief will have consequences in our lives and the lives of others."[3] The past, echoing in the present, reverberates in the future.

One further point needs emphasis. As far as I am concerned the stories that I and my students have collected have absolute equivalence under the stars with my reconstruction of "what really happened." All of them, including my reconstruction, are *interpretations,* based on the best authorities available to the narrator. All of them, including my reconstruction, are the past in the present. Scholars in their wisdom may know that a particular narration is mere myth or mere legend or even mere folklore or whatever other mere they may invoke to camouflage their myopia. The narrator in *his* wisdom knows that his account is history and that grandfathers and those on the ground know things you don't find in books or that never get into the record. *Sub specie aeternitatis,* they are the same. Nothing in the following pages is presented with any motive of dispelling the dark vapors of myth with the clear light of history. From time to time I will be comparing my standard historical account with what certain traditional accounts have to say, but at no time is this done with any condescension or with any desire to show the vagaries and untrustworthiness of oral tradition. It is my contention—no, it is my faith—that the two approaches can be used not only to illuminate each other but also to cast their combined light on our human condition to help us answer jesting Pilate's question.

## II

For more than a quarter century, I have been encouraging people to tell me stories about George Magoon and his friends. Any time



I saw a likely opportunity I would mention his name just to see what reaction I would get, and I got plenty of reactions. For instance, there was Henry Doten, the University of Maine's purchasing officer. I knew that he came from that part of Washington County, and one day—soon after the wonderful Saturday at Lewis Lund's I will describe in the next chapter—I saw him coming across campus toward me. "Hello George Magoon," I said as we met. I walked on by; then I turned around to see how he took it. Henry had stopped dead in his tracks and was looking after me, smiling with puzzled recognition. "Now who's been telling you about George Magoon?" he asked. I told him. "Did he tell you about the time . . ."; and he told me the one about George trying to get Wilbur Day to shoot the game warden. Another time I called a lawyer friend on some business matter, and, knowing he had strong Washington County connections, I asked him if he'd ever heard of a man named Magoon. "*George?*" he shouted. "Sure I have." And he went on to tell a story or two. That's the way it went, time and time again. Unfortunately, I didn't always write down what I heard, sometimes out of bone laziness, sometimes out of an intention to go back and see the person again and get the stories on tape (an intention that all too often became just one more paving block on the road to hell). Despite my multitude of folkloric lapses, I would still say I was reasonably diligent and *did* note the stories down and *did* get back with the tape recorder. The results of that tempered diligence fill the following pages.

Not all of the stories are ones I collected myself, though. Back when it all began in the fall of 1959, I was teaching a course in American folklore at Calais High School through the university's Extension Division, and I asked my students (each of whom was making his or her own collection) to keep their ears open for stories about George Magoon. They found them all right, and over the years that I have taught folklore courses, some of the best stories have come to me through such student collecting work. Kathleen Church, for example, was teaching in the Crawford school and collected some marvelous stories from Victor Archer and others. And then there was Chris Hastedt. She wanted to do something a little more intensive than average in fieldwork, and I liked her straightforward and open manner. I told her to head up Crawford way and see what she could find, and she did a wonderful job. Ron Bea

found George Smith up in Lincoln and collected several fine stories from him. I could mention many more, but three is a fair sample.

It wasn't long, however, before I began to have some qualms about the way I was going about this study: to what extent was I creating the legend of George Magoon by the very act of looking for it? Was I overemphasizing the significance of what had happened that day at Lewis Lund's? Since I had heard Magoon's name there, I began asking other people for stories about him—and I got them. Had I started out at another point, say at someone else's house, might another name have come up, and might I then have gone on to collect stories about that person instead? I tried to correct for this imbalance along the way by asking for stories about other poachers ("Was there anyone else around here like him?"), and other names did indeed turn up from time to time (Wilbur Day and Calvin Graves are the prime examples), but I still suspicioned that my finding so many stories about George Magoon was to some extent a function of my specifically asking for them. In addition, I had, as I say, set my students to looking, and it began to dawn on me that it should have been no surprise that they found them, both because they, like me, were specifically looking for them and because students often tend to find things they know will please their professor. Of course I always told them to collect stories about other poachers, too, but certainly the emphasis was as clear for them in their fieldwork as it was for me in mine. I knew that this observer influence was almost impossible to avoid in any research involving fieldwork, but in the matter of Magoon was it a windage for which I could make allowances or was it the shot itself? That's what I wanted to know, since (I told myself) I had no interest in studying something that was simply my own creation.

Along about 1971 I worked out a plan that would practically eliminate this observer influence. I set up what I called the "Airline Oral History Project," in which I let it be known I was interested in talking to people about old times along this historic old road. I would specifically *not* ask about George Magoon; in fact, I would not even ask about poaching at first, but when I finally worked around to it, I would see whether or not George's name came up on its own. It was a splendid scheme, and I even wrote into an article that I was thus by indirection going to find direction out, but by the time that article appeared in print I had pretty well abandoned the idea.[4]



For one thing it was too cold-blooded and even a little dishonest. I had never lied to informants before about what it was I was looking for or what I was planning to do with what I found, and I didn't much like the idea of doing it now. Besides, there were too many people around who knew perfectly well what I was *really* interested in anyhow, and I worried that my misrepresentation might come to create more problems than it would solve. For another thing it was a painfully inefficient method. Fieldwork always involves mountains of effort for molehills of usable data, but this method made the mountains Himalayan. Twenty to thirty years earlier I might have had world enough for such dalliance, but now I had to make much of time. Finally, I simply did not possess the necessary discipline. I couldn't keep my mouth shut long enough, and, almost before I knew what I was doing, I'd be asking about George Magoon. Even when I *was* able to wait until someone mentioned George's name, I almost never had the patience to sit back and see whether any stories would be forthcoming; I'd follow right up on my own. Under some circumstances the approach required of something like the "Airline Oral History Project" might have been appropriate and even effective. That's hard to say, but given the existent circumstances—and the existent investigator—it was a noble idea best forgotten about, and forget about it I did. Common sense cautions that my data may be skewed, but twenty-five years of research convinces me that the following stories represent a viable tradition. I'm willing to leave it at that—and take my chances.

## III

To make some semblance of order out of the hundreds of narrations that go to make up this body of data, I have pulled many of them together under some common rubric—all those that tell of George's escape from jail, for example, or those about him trying to catch a pig under the barn—and, after arranging them roughly in the order in which they came to me, I have assigned them numbers for easy reference. That makes them look like "versions" or "variants" of the "same story," and I suppose, in a manner of speaking, that's what they are. But *only* in a manner of speaking. Actually their "sameness" has an entirely different basis from the sameness of, say, versions of a ballad or a *Märchen*.

My own studies of the ballads of Joe Scott are good cases in point. When I listed versions of "Guy Reed," for example,[5] I could safely assume that each version was a manifestation of an original work of art created by Joe Scott at a particular place and time out of materials furnished (at least partly) by a particular historical event. They are versions, that is, of an *account* of an event and are in that sense genetically related, since each of them could (had we the data) be traced back to that account. In such a study I could compare what the ballad *said* happened with what I was able to determine *really* happened, but all I was doing was comparing two separate accounts of the same event, one created by Joe Scott, the other by me. Occasionally I speculated on why Scott "distorted" the truth (i.e., as I had come to understand it), but it never occurred to me to criticize some singer's version of the song as "wrong" because it reproduced Scott's distortions. Nor would one singer criticize another's version for that reason, but he might well criticize it if stanzas were omitted, the tune was changed, or lines were garbled. Fidelity to an art product, not to an event—that was what mattered. And each singing was therefore truly a version of that art product.

In the present study we should think of each version as a completely separate account. That is, its referent is not an intervening work of art but the event itself. In claiming that someone has "got it all wrong," a narrator means that the other person's version is not an accurate account of what really happened while his or her own version is. It is possible, of course, that some narrations may be versions of the same account, as when the same informant tells the story several times or when we have both a father's and his son's version and it is clear that the son learned his version from the father. But even here the emphasis is not so much on some sort of significant form but on content, not on a preexisting *representation* of events but on the events themselves. Therefore, when I speak of several narrations as versions of the same story, I mean only that they all seem to refer to the same event. To put it another way, we are dealing not with art but with history.

In no way does this mean that history is any less artifice than art is or that in history we are no longer dealing with a shaping spirit. History is not the past, nor is it events; it is a shaped conception of the past existing in the present. Try as we will to deny it, and act as we will as if it were not true, history is ineluctably just as much a *representation* of events as is any work of art. But there is a large difference between the two; it is a question of emphasis. The work of art is self-contained, needing nothing essential outside itself to give it significance. History, on the other hand, requires two further things: a belief in the reality of the events described (this in spite of their obvious nonexistence) and a conviction that one's own account of those events represents them accurately. In art the account is its own reality; in history it is simply a device through which we see the reality, which is to say the past events themselves. In effect the account itself as good as disappears.



When informants tell me a story about George Magoon or Wilbur Day, they are telling me about something they believe really happened. A few stories may be eyewitness accounts, but most of them are not, being built up from one or more preceding oral accounts. These individuals probably won't even think of themselves as storytellers and certainly not as artists. They are giving me *information,* frequently in response to my specific request for it, on the local past as they remember or have heard about it, and the stories will emerge only as part of the flow of general conversation and commentary.

Yet while a story may be part of that flow, it is at the same time easily separable from it, being very much a thing in itself. First of all, it is "framed," with a clear beginning and ending often marked by rather formulaic phrases ("One time . . . and so they never did catch him"). In addition, the material within those limits is structured both chronologically and causally, involving both the characters and the listeners in a movement from a situation of rest through a creation of tension to a resolution of those tensions and finally back to a situation of rest again. We are, that is, not only *told* the story is over by the presence of some traditional demarcating phrase, we *feel* it is over because the described action is complete. All such matters of framing and structuring are in the domain of art, or, to put it another way, they are artificial. No event was ever as neat and simple as a description of that event, which means that while any of the informants in the present study were primarily or perhaps exclusively concerned with telling about "what happened," they were inevitably involved in the processes of art.

This involvement, of course, is never a matter of choice on anyone's part. In fact, it all seems so "natural" that it is hard to

imagine how else those past events might be presented. The shaping of a story probably goes on at about the same level of consciousness as does the shaping of a sentence, and in the sense that art is conceived of as involving conscious processes, the term is probably not appropriate in connection with the present corpus of stories, and I certainly won't insist on it.

On a different level, however, these stories not only transmitted information about the past but the telling of them gave pleasure, and that pleasure was heightened when the telling was skillful, as, in my judgment, it frequently was. Yet it *was* in my judgment, in terms of *my* aesthetic, that certain informants were better storytellers than others. It was not the judgment of the community, and my judgments are at best tangential—and at worst irrelevant—to the study of the aesthetic matrix of traditional storytelling. Had I spent more time looking for and asking about people who were "good storytellers," I might have learned more about this matrix, but since as a rule I was seeking out people who could "tell me about George Magoon," I will have very little to say about performance and aesthetics in the following pages. My subject, after all, is history—the way the people of a particular time and place have interpreted and come to understand one aspect of their past, and the ways that understanding has become part of their lives. But, as I have said, the shaping spirit is always there, sometimes on several levels at once, and, inevitably and rightly, I will comment on it where I can.

## IV

So much, then, for the relationship of past and present, event and narration, history and art. Earlier I spoke of communities "creating suitable heroes," and the word *creating* strikes an important note by emphasizing once again O'Brien's paradox: the flesh-and-blood human being is not the hero. Even though his or her chronicled deeds may have a very solid basis in historical fact, those deeds are nothing but the raw materials from which the community, for reasons of its own, *confects* the hero.[6] The living individual may find an assigned persona exasperating or enjoyable and may even work actively to build or destroy it, but he or she will have to deal with it. Historians may do the same for the dead hero, showing that the person was or was not what was alleged, but all historians can really



do is substitute their construction for the accepted o... They do not, that is, destroy or dispel the "myth" by the simple act of confronting it with the "truth." What they do is to offer a contrast, and while in time their work may deeply affect the myth, that does not alter the fact that, just as history is not the events it chronicles, the hero is not the person he represents but (in the root sense of the word) a fiction based on that person.[7] The study of such individuals for their own sake has value—if I didn't believe that I wouldn't be writing this book. It may, for example, tell us something about the hows and whys of apotheosis, but an individual is *not* his or her apotheosis, and we must be careful to keep that distinction before us as we go about our work.

How, then, do I define the word *hero?* Actually that is too vast a concept for my needs, and there is already a voluminous literature not only on heroes in general but on culture heroes, legendary heroes, national heroes, popular heroes, antiheroes, and other heroic categories real or imagined. Rather than going full tilt at another general discussion, I will limit myself to what Richard Dorson and others have called the "folk hero." Even with that limited term, though, it is hard to keep one's feet on the ground, as Orrin Klapp found when, in trying to determine "whether there is a universal folk hero," he wound up discussing every type of hero imaginable, from Ajax to Paul Bunyan by way of Billy the Kid.[8] The panorama from the top of the mountain is splendid, but for the present I'll settle for the view from the porch.

No one that I know of took more interest in or wrote more about the folk hero than the late Richard M. Dorson, and it is from one of his earlier works that I take my lead. "When a close-knit group of people," he said in his *American Folklore,* "spins tales and ballads about a character celebrated in their locality or occupation, a true hero of the folk comes into existence."[9] That gets at the most important points, but by far the most important is the matter of spinning tales, something Dorson reemphasized a couple of pages later: for someone to qualify "as a true champion of the folk," he said, "he *must* be the subject of their tales."[10] That means that first of all folklorists should listen hard to what's going on around them to find out who it is that a particular group of people do in fact tell stories about. I, for example, have never collected a story about Paul Bunyan from a Maine woodsman, although Bunyan

has often been called an American folk hero.[11] On the other hand there have been thousands of stories collected here in Maine about people like Barney Beal, George Knox, Jones Tracy, and Dingbat Prouty.[12] Which brings us to four troublesome methodological problems.

First, as Dan Ben-Amos has pointed out, in collecting stories we are apt to mistake the part for the whole: "The collection of things [e.g., stories] requires a methodological abstraction of objects from their actual context. No doubt this can be done; often it is essential for research purposes. Nevertheless, this abstraction is only methodological and should not be confused with, or substituted for, the true nature of the entities."[13] "The telling is the tale," he goes on to say, and only insofar as what we are studying is the item in its natural context—told by someone who normally would tell it to those who would normally be the audience in a circumstance where it would normally be told—can we be sure that we are in touch with the reality of our discipline. And that reality is something we almost never find in our Maine data. The stories have almost always been elicited, usually by inquiring outsiders armed with notebooks and recorders—a far cry, it would seem, from normal context.

At the same time, I have often wondered if such eliciting doesn't create a context that is more normal than it might seem at first glance. I have sometimes defined myth and legend as stories that don't have to be told because they are *known*. Any member of the group can assume that its other members are familiar with the information contained in these stories, and while a particular legend may for that reason not need to be told, it is very much a living part of that group's worldview, so much so that any member can evoke it for other members by even the most glancing allusion—a proverbial comparison, say, or a turn of phrase. All such allusions will be lost on the outsider, and thus the untold story can be a powerful force in promoting group cohesion.

On the other hand it *will* be told to those who do *not* know it—the young, for example, or a visiting outsider who, puzzled by a passing reference in a conversation, requests enlightenment. This is not to say that within the community there won't be occasions when such stories will be told and enjoyed. The hero's name coming up in conversation might well lead to an exchange of stories, since different people present would probably know different stories or



slightly varying versions of the same story (*"That's not the way I heard it. What my father said happened was . . ."*). If what I am saying is correct, though, it leads us to the interesting paradox that while the *knowing* of these stories is central to the group, which renews them by allusion, the *telling* of them (as complete stories) takes place largely on its periphery, and thus the cycle is maintained by a sort of convection within the group, surface to center and back again. Far from creating an artificial context for collecting, then, elicitation may create a very natural one or, at the least, what Kenneth Goldstein called an *induced* natural one.[14]

The second problem is also contextual, involving as it does the disparity that often exists between the collector's and the narrator's perceptions of the story's essential worth. Frequently collectors are after "good ones"; they are interested in the story and its performance as art. Narrators, on the other hand, are more apt to see themselves as passing on information, their interest being in the story as history. Seldom, of course, is the contrast quite that glaring. Collectors usually realize that the story is an account of a person's deed and is, at the very least, "believed to be true,"[15] while narrators may hugely enjoy yarning and may take great pride in their ability. Nevertheless, my experience here in Maine tells me that what I call folk-hero stories are almost never told for their own sake. Either (as I have suggested above) they are elicited from the knowing by the unknowing or they simply come up in the course of conversation; whichever way it is, in their normal context these stories are thought of more as information than performance—a conversational rather than presentational genre.[16] There is an implicit recognition that their reality is not self-contained but lies beyond them in events that "really happened" in "the past." However much they may entertain, they represent knowledge, and the telling of them is less art than enlightenment.

The third problem is one of dimension: what constitutes a viable cycle or corpus of tales? To reduce it to its simplest terms, can one story constitute a folk-hero cycle? That sounds like a contradiction in terms, and most of the time it is anything but a problem. There are plenty of stories about Barney Beal, for example, and even larger canons for George Knox, Jones Tracy, and any of a dozen other Maine folk heroes I could name. But how about Dingbat Prouty? Although he was acknowledged to have been one of the best boat-

men and river-drivers on the Penobscot, his legend consists of no more than one or (at the most) two stories—how he caused the drowning of a boat's crew of Indians and how he dynamited Aunt Hat's whorehouse—fleshed out by a number of personal reminiscences. Yet his has become a name to conjure with, and the stories are so widely and variously known they frequently don't need to be told at all. Witness one man I asked about him: "Yes," he said, "but my father claimed he really wasn't responsible for killing them Indians," leaving me to fill in the rest of the story (which I could and did). Sam Schrager reports that in his logging fieldwork in the Pacific Northwest he found several men whom he would call heroes whose legends consisted essentially of one basic story.[17] All other things being equal, I have no problem with a one-story corpus from the point of view either of theory (where a restriction would be arbitrary) or of practice (where it seldom arises).

The fourth and final problem grows out of the field-collecting research endeavor itself, which always tends to create—simply by looking at it and for it—the very thing it claims to be observing. It is not a new problem, and I have alluded to it before in these pages. Michael Owen Jones suggested that one of the factors necessary to the creation of a hero is a "credulous biographer,"[18] and others have spoken of this "observer influence" as an application of the so-called Heisenberg Principle.[19] I raised it in my book on the songmaker Lawrence Doyle, wondering whether my search for information on his life and works might have led me "into the rather natural error of exaggerating his importance, even (to some extent, at least) of creating the very pre-eminence I expected to find?"[20] But this unintentional creativity goes far beyond mere method and its effects. The relationship between a scholar and whatever it is he or she is investigating is so personal and complex as to make any claim of objectivity suspect, the best we can hope for being a reasonable objectivity about one's subjectivity.

These four problems need not stop us in our tracks, but they will have their effects on establishing the existence of a corpus of tales about some particular person, and scholars must do the best they can to consider what those effects are and make appropriate allowances for them. None of the Maine examples I mentioned are in any way invalidated by them. All four—Barney Beal, George Knox, Jones Tracy, and Dingbat Prouty—can be said to be the



subjects of a community's stories, and it is time now to move on to other matters.

Dorson's brief description of the folk hero quoted above speaks also of these stories being told by "a close-knit group of people," and the question now is what constitutes such a group, which is essentially to ask what is meant by the term *folk*. A rather time-honored definition involves designating some particular class of people as "folk," setting that class apart from other "classes" in society, urban, elite, bourgeois, and so on. I could probably make such a designation fit my material—that is, I could conceivably define the people who told stories about Beal, Knox, Prouty, and Tracy as some kind of "folk" (rural, isolated, unlettered, homogeneous, whatever)—but I have never been comfortable with the application of such a designation to the realities of American culture. Besides, if we are reaching out for a definition that will have some general applicability, we must be careful not to confuse that which is local with that which is universal. Since Maine *is* a rural (or at least not urban) state, its folklore should reflect that, and since the bulk of the collecting work on the four cycles in question was done at a time when folklore fieldwork *was* largely being directed to isolated rural areas, the materials collected should reflect that too. But these reflections are not substance, and making them part of a definition confounds accident and essence. The old class definition of *folk* never really did define anything anyway, being, as much as anything else, a convenience created by academics to allow themselves, by a neat separation of scholar and subject, the illusion of objectivity.

But I'm attacking a straw man, since no responsible folklorist of my acquaintance still defines *folk* in that way. Alan Dundes's definition of the term as referring to "*any group of people whatsoever* who share at least one common factor" is a far more workable simplification. "It does not matter," he goes on to say, "what the linking factor is . . . but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own."[21] Dan Ben-Amos, in establishing his small-group definition of folklore, expands on that some in speaking of the participants in that small group: "They speak the same language, share similar values, beliefs, and background knowledge, have the same system of codes and signs for social interaction. In other words, for a

lore communication to exist as such, the participants in the small group situation have to belong to the same reference group, one composed of people of the same age or of the same professional, local, religious, or ethnic affiliation."[22] What is needed, then, is a very specific delineation of the "folk" in question: the group for which this or that person is or was a hero.

In theory, as Dundes said, the sharing of one common factor may be enough to define a group, but in practice the factors are almost always multiple. Geography alone is never enough. For example, in a very limited area of Maine's southern Aroostook County, Roger Mitchell made an extensive collection of stories about the wizard George Knox, but it is easy to go into that area and find plenty of people who had never heard of Knox. On the other hand, among the older subsistence farmers, especially those who had lumbered in the Meduxnekeag watershed, it would be very difficult to draw a complete blank. Thus the reference group is defined here by geography, occupation, and age.[23] Geography may, in fact, be the least important factor, especially with more contemporary examples. In the late sixties Richard Dorson made an extremely interesting collection of stories about a man by the name of Owsley, celebrated by street people and college students in the San Francisco Bay Area as the "hip hero manufacturer of the best LSD tablets available,"[24] and while certainly the Bay Area was the focus of the cycle, both Dorson's notes and his commentary suggest that "stories about Owsley [were] told throughout the hip drug culture." I have talked with several young people who had been involved in that culture in Bangor, Maine, and all of them had either heard Owsley stories or at least knew of the man and his reputation. At the same time, I had never heard of Owsley until I read about him in Dorson's book (as Dorson says, "The straight world knows not the name of Augustus Stanley Owsley III").[25] For both the Knox and Owsley cycles, then, geography was a factor, but it was no more important than membership in a particular subculture. The folk hero is a hero only to a specific group, and in any study of his legend that group must always be carefully defined.[26]

Having established that within a specified group there is a corpus of stories (whether actively *told* or simply *known*) about a particular person, we must further establish that this individual is believed to be a real person by those who tell about him or her. Our subject



cannot, that is, be a fiction like Paul Bunyan or Mose the Bowery B'hoy, no matter how widely known, nor can he or she simply be a type, like the Yankee.[27] These figures have their own importance to the cultural historian, but they are not folk heroes in the working sense I am trying to give that term here, because they are not understood to have, or to have had, flesh-and-blood reality.

I am talking here, of course, about the attitude of the people who tell and listen to these stories, not about whether the person in question was or was not "really real." Nine times out of ten, in fact ninety-nine times out of a hundred, a little digging around in the records will show that there "really was such a guy," and while further digging may well show that he "never really did all those things," that is beside the point. Both the narrators and their audiences know that what they are dealing with is history, not fiction, and any suggestion that it *is* fiction can lead to trouble for the suggester—anything from contemptuous annoyance (*"Well I don't know what you're getting at, Mister, but my father told me . . ."*) to a sound drubbing (as those twelfth-century retainers of a Norman cleric found when they laughed at the English for saying that Arthur would come again).[28] That doesn't mean that there won't be disagreement over details or that certain stories won't be rejected by some (*"Naw, that's just a story"*) or only accepted conditionally by others (*" 'Course I don't know, but that's what they say, anyway"*). But about the person's essential historicity there will be no question at all, and under most circumstances he will turn out to be someone who is known to have lived "right around here."

And now for a red herring. In his discussion of Owsley, Dorson claimed that his cycle meets "all the specifications of heroic legend *except that of duration over time.*"[29] I have italicized the final phrase not because it is important but because it raises a spurious issue. All hero cycles are mortal. They exist in time just as they exist in space, and it is part of the folklorist's job to determine the limits of any particular cycle in both and, having done that, to search out the reasons for those limits. It is conceivable that a cycle might flourish only a few weeks and then disappear entirely. It is no less a cycle than one that has lasted many generations. William Hugh Jansen, in his study of Oregon Smith, concluded that a tall-tale hero's cycle would probably last two or three generations at the most, and while I would accept that as a pretty good average for

*any* folk-hero cycle—and while I will admit that most such cycles *do* persist for more than a generation—persistence through time should no more be used to define this genre than it should to define, say, folksong.[30]

It would be possible to let our definition of a folk hero rest at this point and leave it that anyone about whom a particular group tells stories is a folk hero. I could defend that definition, but I am not entirely comfortable with it, largely, I suppose, because of the overtones I always hear sounding in that fundamental word *hero*. I cannot, for example, see Captain Horace Smith of Jonesport as a *hero*. Too many of the stories about him are like the following:

> Oh, the kids used to have fun, that is fooling, plaguing him a little, but not much because they all liked the old fellow. So it was getting along towards haying time, the herd's grass was awful tall and tough. So he started for the well for a pail of water. Well, the kids, you know, they'd go ahead of him and tie this herd's grass in across the path, see, tie the two heads together. When the old fellow come along, he was lame, of course every ten feet he would fall down. And when he come back he said, "By Jesus, chum," he says, "I seen a good many fields of grass, but I never saw a field where the grass all growed in staples."[31]

Nor would I use the term to describe Davy Perkins of Smyrna Mills, Maine, who evidently thought he was a horse:

> *He was out in the woods and he had a young fellow with him. It was winter time and he heard, I don't know what it was, probably a screech owl or something, making a noise and it scared him. So he got this young fellow on the sled and he cut a big stick. "Now," he said, "you put that right to me. You lick me hard, 'cause," he said, "the harder you lick me, the faster I can run. We gotta get out of here before that thing catches us."[32]

Both Smith and Perkins are the centers of small tale cycles, but neither I nor those who told stories about them would consider the term *hero* at all appropriate. In folk taxonomy they would be called *characters,* a term broad enough to encompass anyone whose actions were different, unusual, offbeat, or odd enough to make them tale-worthy. Richard Dorson described the *character* very well:

> The qualities of low cunning and rustic ignorance distinguish the local eccentric, who thus conforms to the world-wide figure of the trickster and the fool. His eccentric behavior may include, on the positive side, low cunning, effrontery, chicanery, verbal cleverness at making sharp retorts, or special offbeat talents like a genius for gadgetry. On the negative side, local characters display shiftlessness, parsimony, degeneracy, stubbornness, stupidity, and gullibility.[33]



Presumably, then, anyone from the local giant to the village idiot will qualify as a character, and that is the way the term is commonly used, not only here in Maine but elsewhere as well. But Dorson goes on to make an important qualification, claiming that "as cycles of humorous anecdotes cluster around the local character, so do *more serious anecdotes* swell the reputation of the local strong man" (italics mine), and he cites Barney Beal as an example, calling him "truly a folk-hero, lauded in the living traditions of a regional community."[34] Patrick Mullen, too, in the best consideration of local character yarns I have yet seen, describes a cycle of tales about two local eccentrics, the Taylor boys, but adds that occasionally the Taylors "take on some of the characteristics of heroes in the anecdotes because they symbolize the values of freedom for the community."[35] Obviously for both men the term *hero* is a scholarly construct, not a folk category, but of course there is nothing wrong with that. Dorson seems to be suggesting a rather sharp hero/character distinction, while Mullen suggests a shading, the hero being the character with a difference, as it were, and I will follow Mullen's lead.

Hero and character should not be thought of as mutually exclusive categories but as extremes along a continuum. The character is someone to whom the narrator—and the listeners—can feel comfortably superior; his or her actions are told about with anything from amusement to contempt to (occasionally) disgust.[36] Captain Horace Smith and Davy Perkins are both good examples, although to some extent Captain Smith is redeemed from mere foolishness by his sharp, funny retort. Yet in both stories the central character is not much more than a victim, a butt for our laughter. At the other end of the continuum is the folk hero, someone whose deeds inspire awe, respect, even wonder. Take the following story about the strong man Barney Beal:

> Yes, I've heard that story told many a time, that he went into Peak's Island to get water for his fishing vessel, and the bully of

> Peak's Island met him on the beach and challenged him to a fight. So he told him that as soon as he filled his water barrel why he would accommodate him. So he went and filled his water barrel. And they used to use these large molasses tierces for water barrels. So he brought the water barrel down on the beach, and he said, "Well," he said, "I guess before we start, I'll have a drink of water." So he picked up the water barrel and took a drink out of the bunghole, set it down on the beach, and the bully of Peak's Island walked up, slapped him on the shoulder, and he says, "Mr. Beal, I don't think I'll have anything to do with you whatever."[37]

In a culture where physical strength was extremely important, Barney's act was awe inspiring, especially when the narrator added that an ordinary man couldn't possibly have lifted that barrel. Barney Beal, then, could be called the quintessential folk hero.

Having established the metaphor of a continuum, I would like to draw back from it or at least qualify it insofar as it implies some sort of inverse function, the comic aspect attenuating the closer a figure approaches the "purely" heroic. I have no evidence that would support such a neat gradient. All I want to make clear is that within the limits of the folk category "character," one finds such extremes as Davy Perkins and Barney Beal, types for which I suggest the analytic categories of "folk character" and "folk hero" respectively. Nor should we be surprised, as Mullen suggested above, to find aspects of both combined in one person.

The folk hero, then, is someone who is admired and looked up to, but admiration is a complex matter. As Roger Abrahams pointed out, hero stories "reflect the values of the culture in two ways: as a guide for future action in real life and as an expression of dream-life of wish-fulfillment."[38] He goes on to say that these two expressions are frequently simultaneous, and he is quite right. In fact, it is often hard to tell just what the mix may be in any given case. Barney Beal, for example, was an immensely strong man, and while the stories about him show that immense strength is something admirable, they can hardly be seen as having any normative function at all. Take the following instance: "Barney Beal could lug a barrel of flour under each arm. He was a giant—a real giant. No one could lay him on his back. He heard a horse whicker in town and he said, 'You do that again and I'll kill you.' The horse whickered again and he went back and hit it with his fist and killed it."[39] First,



obviously there is no way any member of the group can or could perform such a feat. Second, it is very doubtful if the narrator or anyone else in the group would in any way approve killing a horse for such a whimsical reason. The story is almost pure wish fulfillment, providing narrator and audience with the vicarious experience of such huge physical power that even a destructive and antisocial act becomes for the moment acceptable. In a sense, then, the story, or rather the telling of it, may be normative in that symbolic (hence safe) replaces direct (hence dangerous) expression. Be that as it may, Barney Beal is clearly a folk hero, much admired, even though he can hardly be said to offer a role model.

That same vicarious association with power can be seen in the cycle of stories about the Aroostook County wizard George Knox:

> *[George and his father] were standing there talking and there was a big rock laying there in the barn door. They had to go around the rock to go into the barn. I don't know why they built a barn in front of a big rock, but anyway it bothered them getting in and out of the barn. George said to his father, he says, "Father, that rock has bothered you all your life"; he said, "You tried to move it and you couldn't move it." His father said, "That's right." Said he tried to blow it; guess it was too handy the buildings for to put enough charge under it to move it. Said George started walking toward the rock, and every step he took, the rock got a little smaller; and when he got up to the rock he reached down, picked it up and put it in his mouth and walked over across the road and spit it out.*[40]

Knox had supernatural power, something presumably even less available to the other members of his culture than the physical power of a man like Barney Beal, yet, like Beal, Knox awed those around him with the things he could—and just might at any time—do with that power. That awe is admiration. And while—again like Beal—his power set him apart, he was still very much a member of the group. Other members could identify with him and, by telling stories about him, symbolically solve their problems by assuming that power for the moment, and that momentary assumption is wish fulfillment.

Now for a change in direction. Barney Beal and George Knox are both examples of folk heroes whose cycles center in deeds they are reputed actually to have done. They are strong men, or, to broaden that some, they are men of action, and as such they are

representative of many American folk heroes ranging from the well-known Jesse James and Billy the Kid to such lesser-knowns as San Francisco's Owsley and Minnesota's Otto Walta.[41] But there is another equally large group of folk heroes, of whom Jones Tracy is an excellent Maine exemplar, whose cycles are composed not of their actual deeds but of stories they told about themselves. These are the Munchausens, the "liars," the tellers of tall tales. During their lives they developed local reputations for their skill in lying, and after their deaths people continued to tell these stories about them, frequently identifying them with their original narrators' names: "Bob Hamilton stories," "Townsend's lies," and so on. While it is all but impossible to come up with any reliable statistics, it is a safe bet that a good half of the local tale cycles in America are of this kind. On the face of it, these cycles are far different from those we have been considering; after all, they are fictions, while the others told of things that "really happened." Yet they have a certain similarity. The Munchausen told his stories *as if* they were true, and while I doubt that he expected anyone but the most verdant greenhorn to believe him, by the rules of the game his audience did not challenge him; their part was to accept the stories *as if* they believed them. Thus the *fiction* of veracity was maintained. Later narrators preserved this fiction, not in their own posture but in remembering his (*"he'd tell 'em just like they was true, you know"*). Thus he lived on as one whose remarkable deeds had a kind of ritual acceptance as truth and as one who could get away with lying in a culture that valued forthrightness and probity. Like the men of action we have been discussing, he was not a model for conduct so much as he was an expression of dream-life. That the line between the two kinds of heroes was not always clear can be shown by the fact that their repertoires sometimes mix.[42]

There is one further characteristic of folk-hero cycles, and while I don't consider its presence absolutely definitive, it is certainly diagnostic: there is almost always an addition of traditional or legendary material. That is, the cycle will have at its center certain deeds that are historical, that "really happened." Sometimes these deeds can be satisfactorily documented, but (given their nature and the nature of what does not get into the documentary record) the evidence is more often circumstantial, although it is usually convincing enough to make doubts academic. There are no documents,



for example, to prove that Barney Beal did or did not bring down a horse with a blow of his fist, but it is perfectly possible for a strong man to do that, and, knowing what we do about Barney's ways, it is at least reasonable to assume that he might have.

In every folk-hero cycle I know of, there is always this "kernel of truth." It is made up of the deeds that made the man remarkable to begin with, and it is around this core that the accretion process begins. The actual mechanisms through which a story becomes part of a particular cycle have never, to the best of my knowledge, been thoroughly demonstrated, but their presence is undeniable, since almost every hero cycle contains material that is not historical. It may be that a narrator simply made a mistake, attributing to one person the act of another; it may be that for private reasons the narrator deliberately told a story he or she had heard as if it were about the hero in question; but accidental or intentional, such additions get canonized, and the cycle grows.

At this point I am going to take a small flight of fancy by creating a scenario. Assume that a stranger is being regaled by two locals (call them Bob and Bill) with stories about a local hero named Charlie. Assume further that he has heard a similar story, perhaps even in the same neck of the woods, and, wanting to hold up his end of the conversation, he has brought that story in as something of a query:

> ". . . . And so he got clean away, they said. Now I don't know, of course—I forget what they said the guy's name was, but do you suppose it could've been this same Charlie you've been talking about?"
>
> "Well, I never heard that one, but it sure as hell *sounds* just like him, doesn't it, Bill? Did you ever hear that one?"
>
> "No, I never did either. But it's the kind of thing Charlie *would* do, all right. Could've been him at that. . . ."

Assume still further that at a future time Bill is telling someone else about Charlie and includes the new story, perhaps even adding, "Now I heard this one from a guy, but I don't know it for sure." Disclaimers have a way of getting ignored, and the next thing we know a new story is solidly in the canon. As I say, the scenario is pure fancy, pure speculation on my part, but I submit it for whatever light it may shed on the accretion process.

Just as some of the stories told about a particular hero may be

demonstrably historical, some may—on the other end of the spectrum—be demonstrably traditional. They may be, that is, versions of widespread tale types or well-known motifs. George Knox's cycle is rich with material about pacts with the Devil, black books, and marvelous magical feats, most of which have parallels throughout European and American tradition, and the same is true for several of Barney Beal's great feats of strength.[43] At first blush there would seem to be nothing particularly surprising about accretion; if any stories are going to gather around a remarkable man, these widely traveled tales would be extremely likely candidates. Yet what I find interesting is that there are not more of them when we go below the general motif to the level of a specific tale. It is one thing, that is, to cite Motif F628.1, "Strong man kills animals with own hands," but quite another to find stories telling about a man killing a horse with a blow of his fist, and still another to find stories about a man who did that because the horse whinnied. By their very nature folklorists have tended to look for general patterns and, when they found them, to call attention to their presence as significant. I am not about to deny that significance; but to demonstrate the way the accretion process works, we need much closer parallels, and available indexes and archives are simply not geared down to that level of specificity. I am a folklorist, but my emphasis has always been on the local and particular; in the matter at hand my interest would be in how the general item or pattern *becomes* local and particular. That the data for such study exists is something more than a mere matter of faith but something less than an amply documented truth.

Once again, the situation with the Munchausen cycles is both very much the same and strikingly different. The "kernel of truth" consists of those stories the Munchausen really did tell on himself, while the accreted material would consist of stories that later became attributed to him by subsequent narrators, more than likely for the same reasons and by the same mechanisms I have suggested in regard to stories about "men of action."[44] In this way the two kinds of cycles are the same. Their differences lie in the fact that individual stories in the Munchausen's cycle are reports not of events but of narrations, of yarns the Munchausen is said to have *told* rather than of deeds he is said to have *done*. Furthermore, many of the items in a Munchausen cycle will truly be traditional tale types, resembling



versions told about other Munchausens in considerable detail. That is, they will be versions of "Shingling the Fog" (Motif X1651.1) or "The Wonderful Hunt" (Motif X1110), not simply stories on the same general subject (like Motif F631: "Strong man carries giant load"). To sum it up, the Munchausen's cycle is its own reality; there is nothing beyond the telling itself. The man of action's cycle, as I pointed out earlier, simply *represents* a reality; the words are only a vehicle for putting us in touch with it.

One final matter, which will bring us back to history again: a folk-hero legend does not exist in a vacuum. That statement may come off a bit sophomoric (it certainly should be cruelly obvious) but in the fun and fascination of simply retelling the story, it is all too easy to forget that its subject—the protohero—lived and acted at a certain time and in a certain place, and that then, for reasons of its own, the subject's community chose to confect a folk hero based on his or her actions. If we are going to understand what the legend is all about or what it had to say about the world in which the folk hero lived, we have to see it in the context of that world. We must try to see why people chose *this* person and not some other for local apotheosis; what was it about this individual that caught their attention? Then, in the process of that apotheosis what did they choose to make of him, and how did their creation speak to their specific needs? Finally, assuming the legend has its own history, we must see it in the context of those succeeding worlds through which it moved, since clearly it spoke to their needs too.

While this approach can be applied to any type of hero, it is especially important with outlaw heroes, who, as Richard Mey said, "arise in a time and locale of economic and social crisis and become symbolic champions of one segment of this highly particularized society."[45] Since that is the kind of folk hero (or folk heroine) we will be dealing with in this book, the historical background will get heavy attention, so that we may identify both the crisis and the championed segment clearly.

A folk hero, then, is the central character in a corpus of stories told in small-group situations by members of an identifiable community for whom the hero is a real person (usually one of the number) and by whom he or she is in some way admired—narrated deeds being either direct models for action or expressions

of wish fulfillment for that community. Quite obviously, this definition has grown out of my special needs and my constant concentration on the local scene, but there is no reason why it cannot accommodate such well-known figures as Davy Crockett and Mike Fink. Theoretically, the "community" in question could be a nation or a whole culture. But it is more than likely under such circumstances that the context will undergo major shifts, and what was local and the stuff of small-group exchange will become national and the stuff of print and film. Such shifts can be extremely interesting, and their study is a perfectly legitimate extension of the folklorist's purview. But it *is* an extension, away from the center, and my concern is with that center, with tales told in the small group—at the corner store, in the hunting camp, or around the kitchen table over cups of coffee. There the true folk-hero cycle is born, lives, and dies. And that is scope aplenty for me.

We have been up in the air long enough. It is time now to descend into that "obscure inland wilderness of eastern Maine" to see how it is lighted up by the lives and legends of three men who, a forest-dark century ago, played their small part in an eternal and deep-down worthy conflict. We will enter this past through the present (its only home anyhow), and to begin I choose the present in which I found myself back in that golden October of 1959, when it all began for me.

## NOTES

1. George Orwell, *1984* (New York: New American Library Signet Classic, 1949), 204–5.

2. So far as I know, the best concise explanation of this important concept is in Edward Grant, *Physical Science in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 85–90.

3. William A. Wilson, "Folklore and History: Fact amid the Legends," in *Readings in American Folklore,* ed. Jan Harold Brunvand (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 462.

4. Edward D. Ives, "Common-Man Biography: Some Notes by the Way," in *Folklore Today: A Festschrift for Richard M. Dorson,* ed. Linda Degh, Henry Glassie, and Felix J. Oinas (Bloomington, Ind.: Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies, 1976), 262–63.

5. Edward D. Ives, *Joe Scott, the Woodsman-Songmaker* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 140–77.

6. Some readers may see in this statement vague stirrings of the old spirit of *das Volk dichtet.* Not so. I do not believe that communities or cultures can do



anything; whatever is done is done by individuals within these groups. To speak of a community's actions is simply a shorthand, a manner of speaking. For more on my own views on culture and the individual, see my *Lawrence Doyle: The Farmer-Poet of Prince Edward Island, a Study in Local Songmaking,* University of Maine Studies, no. 92 (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1971), esp. 251–52 and *Joe Scott,* esp. 371–72 and 420, although both books in their entirety are testimonials to my individualist position. See also Rosemary Zumwalt, "Arnold van Gennep: The Hermit of Bourg-la-Reine," *American Anthropologist* 84 (June 1982): 299–313. For something on "manners of speaking" in this regard, see Michael Owen Jones, *The Handmade Object and Its Maker* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 207–9.

7. For another use of the word *fiction* in a similar way, see Jeff Todd Titon "The Life Story," *Journal of American Folklore* 93 (1980): 288–92.

8. Orrin E. Klapp, "The Folk Hero," *Journal of American Folklore* 62 (1949): 17–25. For some general attempts at definition and description, see Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949; repr. New York: Meridian, 1956); Jan de Vries, *Heroic Song and Heroic Legend,* trans. B. J. Timmer (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); Marshall W. Fishwick, *American Heroes: Myth and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1954); Lord Raglan, *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama* (1936; repr. New York: Vintage, 1956); Otto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero: A Psychological Interpretation of Mythology,* trans. F. Robbins and Smith Ely Jelliffe (New York: Brunner, 1952); Archer Taylor, "The Biographical Pattern in Traditional Narrative," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 1 (1964): 114–29; Dixon Wecter, *The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero-Worship* (1941; repr. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963).

9. Richard M. Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 199. The whole chapter, "A Gallery of Folk Heroes," is very much to the point. See also his *America in Legend* (New York: Pantheon, 1973).

10. Dorson, *American Folklore,* 201.

11. Ibid., 216–26. See also Daniel G. Hoffman, *Paul Bunyan: Last of the Frontier Demigods* (1952; repr. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

12. For Barney Beal, see Dorson, *American Folklore,* 124–28; Richard M. Dorson, *Buying the Wind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 40–5. For George Knox, see Roger E. Mitchell, *George Knox: From Man to Legend,* vol. 11 of *Northeast Folklore* (1969). For Jones Tracy, see C. Richard K. Lunt, *Jones Tracy: Tall Tale Teller from Mount Desert Island,* vol. 10 of *Northeast Folklore* (1968). For Dingbat Prouty, see Harriet Connors et al., "Dingbat Prouty: An Excursion into Communal Scholarship," *New York Folklore Quarterly* 26 (Dec. 1970): 243–62.

13. Dan Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," *Journal of American Folklore* 84 (1971): 9.

14. Kenneth S. Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, for the American Folklore Society, 1964), 87–90.

15. See Robert Georges, "The General Concept of Legend: Some Assumptions to Be Reexamined and Reassessed," in *American Folk Legend: A Symposium,*

Wayland Hand (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 4ff. The whole essay is, in fact, relevant.

16. See Edward D. Ives, *The Tape-Recorded Interview* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980), 53–55. See also Roger D. Abrahams, "The Complex Relations of Simple Forms," *Genre* 2 (1969): 104–28.

17. Samuel Schrager, letter to the author, Mar. 17, 1983. For another example of a one-story corpus, see Edward D. Ives, "The Man Who Plucked the Gorbey: A Maine Woods Legend," *Journal of American Folklore* 74 (1961): 1–8.

18. Michael Owen Jones, "(PC+CB) × SD (R+I+E)=HERO," *New York Folklore Quarterly* 27 (1971): 243–60.

19. See, for example, Barre Toelken, *The Dynamics of Folklore* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 51.

20. Ives, *Lawrence Doyle*, 181.

21. Alan Dundes, ed., *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 2. The italics are his, not mine.

22. Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," 13.

23. Mitchell, *George Knox*, esp. 50–54.

24. Dorson, *America in Legend*, 278. The whole section from pp. 278 through 288 is devoted to the Owsley cycle.

25. Ibid., 283–84. See also n. 39 below.

26. For an interesting comment on this matter as it applies to cycles about college professors, see Bruce Jackson, " 'The Greatest Mathematician in the World': Norbert Wiener Stories," *Western Folklore* 31 (Jan. 1972): 1–22.

27. Dorson, *America in Legend*, 99–121. See also Roger D. Abrahams, "Some Varieties of Heroes in America," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 3 (Dec. 1966): 341–62, although at no point does Abrahams limit his discussion to folk heroes.

28. See E. K. Chambers, *Arthur of Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 18, 249; Roger Sherman Loomis, "The Oral Diffusion of the Arthurian Legend," in *Arthurian Legends in the Middle Ages*, ed. Loomis (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 53–54.

29. Dorson, *America in Legend*, 283.

30. William Hugh Jansen, *Abraham "Oregon" Smith: Pioneer Folk Hero and Tale-Teller* (New York: Arno, 1977), 343–44. For commentary on this matter of persistence in time in defining folklore, see Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," 7–8.

31. Dorson, *Buying the Wind*, 66–67.

32. Mitchell, *George Knox*, 10.

33. Dorson, *Buying the Wind*, 23. See also his analysis of local characters in his essay "Legends and Tall Tales," in *Our Living Traditions: An Introduction to American Folklore*, ed. Tristram Potter Coffin (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 155–64.

34. Dorson, *Buying the Wind*, 25.

35. Patrick B. Mullen, *I Heard the Old Fishermen Say: Folklore of the Texas Gulf Coast* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 123. The entire chapter (113–29) is relevant to this discussion.

36. See ibid., 114. See also Roger E. Mitchell, *I'm a Man That Works: The Biography of Don Mitchell of Merrill, Maine*, vol. 19 of *Northeast Folklore* (1978), 27–28.



37. Dorson, *Buying the Wind*, 50–51.

38. Abrahams, "Some Varieties of Heroes in America," 341.

39. Dorson, *American Folklore*, 125. See also Dorson, *Buying the Wind*, 4, 47.

40. See, for example, Mitchell, *George Knox*, 48–49.

41. See Michael J. Karni, "Otto Walta, Finnish Folk Hero of the Iron Range," *Minnesota History* 40 (1967): 391–402.

42. See, for example, Mitchell, *George Knox*, 48–49.

43. For Knox, see Mitchell's complete motif index for his book on pp. 69–71. Dorson cites motifs for Beal in a headnote to each story in *Buying the Wind*, 40–54.

44. Lunt's "basic" and "secondary" canons get at this distinction. See *Jones Tracy*, 22–23, 42.

45. Richard E. Meyer, "The Outlaw: A Distinctive American Folktype," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 17 (May-Dec. 1980): 116.