

Public Folklore Programs in the United States

By Tina Bucuvalas

Prologue

I would like to thank Villy Fotopoulou and Yiannis Drinis for the very kind invitation to share information about the field of public folklore in the US—and thanks are also due to my colleague Vassiliki Chryssanthopoulou for facilitating the emerging dialogue about public folklore and ICH policy and practice.

It is a great honor to have been asked to speak tonight. One reason is that I have tremendous respect for the work of Greek scholars in sustaining their cultural heritage. A decade ago, I was fortunate to receive a Fulbright award to research what I saw as public folklore programs in Greece. While most were not directly government-sponsored, I interviewed and explored the work of many who worked with impressive and innovative programs—in museums, local and private organizations, universities, and other places. For those of you who work in this arena, I think you will find that we have much in common.

Introduction

To introduce the field of public folklore, I will cover the training of public folklorists, then explore our institutional infrastructure, and provide you with examples drawn from my work. As in most nations, our discipline focuses on living traditional culture as practiced among families, communities, and folk groups during everyday life—and now as it is presented on stages, at public events, and in museums. While most traditional activity occurs outside institutional settings, some intersects with commerce and popular culture and other portions are supported by public and private funding.

American folklorists are usually trained at the graduate level and work either in the academic or public sectors—and many have worked in both. Since public folklorists receive graduate training in folklore or related fields such as cultural anthropology or ethnomusicology, we are grounded in disciplinary methodology and theory and many of us produce books or essays that contribute to the literature of the field. Currently, I believe that only one academic program allows a specialization in public folklore, though most offer one or more courses about it. While it is important to have public folklorists grounded in disciplinary perspectives, the lack of formal training in public folklore skills and methodology is somewhat problematic. Most of us must learn these on the job.

Today a majority of members of the American Folklore Society identify as public folklorists. They work in government or non-profit arts, cultural, or educational organizations, such as arts councils, historical societies, libraries, museums, or organizations devoted specifically to folk culture. The foundation for their work is continual field research—in fact because of their relative numbers and the nature of jobs whose output is based on fieldwork, they undoubtedly conduct the vast majority of primary research into folk culture in the US.

Public sector work often results in the representation and application of folk culture in contexts outside the communities in which it originated through collaboration with tradition bearers (Baron and Spitzer, 1). This provides a platform for tradition bearers to interpret and represent their culture so that it can receive greater acknowledgement and appreciation from other sectors of society. Some folklorists also work within their own communities to document traditions, ensure their survival, or enhance the presentation of cultural elements.

Public Folklore and the ICH Convention

Before exploring the establishment and florescence of the field, I would like to say a few words about public folklore and UNESCO's ICH Convention. As most of you know, the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in 2003 and entered into force in 2006. As of February 2018, 176 nations have ratified, approved or accepted it. To briefly summarize, its purpose is to safeguard intangible cultural heritage (ICH); ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of communities, groups and individuals; raise awareness of its importance at all levels; and provide for international cooperation and assistance.

The US government has not ratified the Convention, somewhat isolating US-based public folklorists from global conversations about ICH (Baron). But the American Folklore Society (AFS)—our primary professional organization—sends delegates to meetings and is an accredited NGO for the Convention. Moreover, the Convention website lists the AFS “Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibility” as an example of professional ethical codes.

Although ICH is not part of the daily discourse for most public folklorists, we have been working towards similar goals since the beginnings of the field in the 1970s. Because public folklore often addresses the key concerns of the global movement to safeguard ICH and because it has constructed community-driven models for representation, its approaches would be a positive addition to the global discourse (Baron). For instance, the work of public folklorists has much to contribute to the dialogue about sustainable local development because most work directly with tradition bearers and folk groups—and are thus knowledgeable about their economic and development status, needs, and resources.

The AFS ethics statement is worth further examination because of its many similarities with that of the ICH and because it grounds our efforts: “Folklorists, more than most other professionals, work with peoples from many different communities and socioeconomic backgrounds.[and] Because folklorists study issues and processes that affect general human welfare, they are faced with unusual complexities and ethical dilemmas. It is a major responsibility...to anticipate these and to plan to resolve them in such a way as to do least damage to those with whom they work and to their scholarly community.” The statement goes on to specify: “In research, folklorists' primary responsibility is to those they study....Folklorists must do everything in their power to protect the physical, social, and psychological welfare of their informants and to honor the dignity and privacy of those studied” (UNESCO). This includes communicating intentions and anticipated consequences of research; safeguarding the rights, sensitivities and interests of subjects; and not exploiting individuals for personal gain. In addition, folklorists are advised to be responsible to the consumers of their professional efforts through truthful research results and opinions. And finally, they are warned against accepting positions with employers who might use their research data for ethically questionable purposes.

History/Development of Public Folklore in the US *National/Federal Programs*

American folklore studies coalesced in the late nineteenth century. This coincided with the use of folk traditions by many groups to represent themselves to outsiders. From inception, folklore research and theorizing were undertaken by individuals at both academic institutions and government agencies (e.g., Bureau of American Ethnology or Works Progress Administration).

In 1933-35, in response to the Great Depression, the US government enacted the New Deal, a series of programs, public work projects, and financial reforms to help the unemployed get back to work and stimulate the economy. Workers from the Resettlement and Farm Security Administrations, and Works Progress and Work Projects Administrations (WPA) programs such as the Federal Writers' Project and Joint Committee on Folk Arts, documented the music, speech, and artistic efforts of ordinary Americans throughout the Southwest, Midwest, and South, as well as New York City and California. They generated extensive collections for the Archive of American Folk-Song at the Library of Congress—now part of the American Folklife Center. Most materials are field recordings of African American and Anglo-American traditional music, but they also include the first substantial folk music collections from other ethnic groups—as well as photos, drawings, field notes and reports, and correspondence.

Academic folklore departments granting graduate degrees began appearing in the 1960s; before that, folklorists were trained or employed in related disciplines. As I mentioned, until recently most graduate folklore programs did not substantially address the training needs of public folklorists for skills in grant writing, administration, public policy, technical equipment, or repertoire literacy.

In the 1960s, an upsurge of political and cultural activism, combined with concern about cultural heritage and the establishment of government agencies that could provide funding, paved the way for the creation of public folklore programs. In the late 1960s and early 1970s several important national organizations were founded—each with a different orientation. It started in 1967 when the Smithsonian Institution—the world's largest museum, education, and research complex—developed the Festival of American Folklife, now the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The festival, which takes place over two weeks in June and July on the National Mall in Washington DC, presents fascinating examples of traditional culture from the US, world, and selected folk groups. From what I've seen, it is the best culturally based festival in the US. Presentations are based on original research by staff and local cultural specialists and organizations—who collaborate to formulate presentation content and modes.

But the activities of what is now the Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage have extended much further. The Center produces exhibits, documentary films and videos, symposia, publications, educational materials, and major national events, such as the First Americans Festival for the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian. They also maintain the Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, conduct ethnographic and cultural heritage policy oriented research, and provide educational opportunities through fellowships, internships, and training programs. Their philosophy is to combine scholarship with community participation and educational outreach, leading to activities that affect cultural heritage policies and practices at local, national, and international levels. They also strive to protect, develop, and promote cultural expressions and environmental resources, and to foster self-representation and cultural democracy in which cultures coexist without any dominating or disappearing (Smithsonian Center).

One Center component is Folkways Recordings. Their mission is the legacy of Moses Asch, who founded Folkways Records in 1948 to document "people's music," spoken word, and sounds from around the world. Since acquiring it in 1987, the Center has maintained Folkways' commitment to cultural diversity, education, increased understanding, and engagement with the world of sound (Smithsonian Folkways).

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is an independent federal agency whose funding creates opportunities to participate in the arts. In 1974, it established the Folk & Traditional Arts Program and piloted the first state-based folklife programs at arts agencies, leading to a robust network of state programs and partnerships with regional resources and archives. According to folklorist Burt Feintuch, the Program “legitimized the traditional arts in the eyes—and budgets—of agencies around the nation, democratizing and pluralizing the concept of the arts. NEA seed money rooted most of the state programs, resulting in a national network of public sector folklorists who, in turn, began to till the soil of their own states.” (Feintuch)

The Folk & Traditional Arts Program offers competitive grants to non-profit agencies throughout the country—sometimes the only direct funding available to support local cultural expressions. It also offers Partnership grants that have helped create and maintain state, regional, and local programs. From 1975-2015 they granted \$125.8 million. Overall, the Program has had a major impact on the field by strengthening its infrastructure and creating new programs. And it has supported field research to identify cultural practices—the results of which are often placed in public archives, creating lasting resources for cultural communities and the public. Fieldwork has also enabled state arts agencies and nonprofits to engage in meaningful ways with underserved communities.

The National Heritage Fellowships were initiated in 1982 by Bess Lomax Hawes, director of NEA’s Folk & Traditional Arts Program. Based on the Japanese designation of expert artisans as National Treasures, the National Heritage Fellows receive a one-time award recognizing artistic excellence and preservation of traditional arts. Fellowships are bestowed on those who have “made major contributions to the excellence, vitality, and public appreciation of the folk and traditional arts.” It has become the most important honor in the field—giving folk arts greater recognition and helping maintain the vitality of the traditions in culturally distinct communities. In honor of her legacy, in 2000 NEA inaugurated a new category of Fellowships: the Bess Lomax Hawes Award for the advocacy of folk arts. There have been over 400 Fellowships throughout the US in over 200 artistic traditions. Before the awards, many of these arts were seldom considered “American.” The awards have assisted and reflected the acceptance of new ethnic communities into national life and many regard it as more than personal recognition. Cajun fiddler and Fellow Michael Doucet said: “...it’s a national award but it really comes down to your community and what you do for your community. I was very fortunate to be around when a lot of people born before 1900 were still alive. It’s really a process of a continuation—I wouldn’t be getting this award if it wasn’t for people who came before me.”

In 1976, the American Folklife Center (AFC) was created at the Library of Congress. It was tasked to “preserve and present American folklife through research, documentation, archival preservation, reference services, performances, exhibitions, publications, and training” (American Folklife Center). It also provides online resources and guidelines for cultural documentation methods and techniques. AFC develops innovative projects such as the collaborative pilot training program on cultural documentation with the World Intellectual Property Organization, Duke University Center for Documentary Studies, and Kenya’s Maasai Cultural Heritage Center. There have been numerous oral history initiatives, including the Veterans History Project, which collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of war veterans so that future generations may better understand the realities of war, as well as the Occupational Folklife Project and the Civil Rights History Project. AFC also has a long-term collaboration with StoryCorps, which records and shares the stories of the nation’s people.

The AFC Archive, first established in the Library of Congress Music Division in 1928, is one of the largest archives of ethnographic and historical materials from the US and the world, encompassing millions of items from the 19th century to the present. The AFC preserves its collections in state-of-the-art facilities and researchers may access the collections in person and sometimes online.

Since I am using Florida as an example, I will mention one particular online resource. In 2002 AFC launched a comprehensive Website that interprets and provides access to ethnographic materials generated by the Works Project Administration in the 1930s in Florida. *Florida Folklife from the WPA Collections* is a multi-format collection based on research in a wide range of communities by respected scholars such as Zora Neale Hurston, Stetson Kennedy, and others for the WPA's Federal Writers' Project, Florida Music Project, and Joint Committee on Folk Arts. On-line materials include traditional music, tales, interviews with tradition bearers, recording logs, transcriptions, correspondence, essays, a bibliography, and a guide to Florida ethnic groups.

The National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the presentation and documentation of traditional arts. Founded in 1933, it is the nation's oldest such organization. Through festivals, tours, symposia, exhibits, media productions, school programs and cross-cultural exchanges, they have showcased the myriad folk, tribal and ethnic cultures that comprise our diverse nation while stressing excellence and authenticity. NCTA essentially originated the format of a multi-cultural festival based on ethnographic research. It created many festivals in conjunction with communities around the country (Lowell Folk Festival), which still draw large crowds—thus continuing to deliver economic benefits. NCTA has also worked with the National Park Service to develop entities such as the Blue Ridge Music Center. It has produced public radio and television programs, and innumerable recordings of musicians representing a broad range of traditions. Their audio lab has preserved and digitized over 7,000 hours of recordings, which are now in the AFC Archives. They also champion the interests of traditional arts in the arena of public policy.

Another national non-profit folk arts organization is the Association for Cultural Equity. Inspired by the example set by ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax, whose recordings of world music form the basis of its collections, its mission is to stimulate cultural equity through preservation, research, and dissemination of the world's traditional music, and to reconnect people and communities with their creative heritage. They have developed an innovative online resource called the Global Jukebox, which is an interactive website offering insights into the distribution patterns of song, dance, and other expressive traditions. ACE is also a leader in repatriation of cultural documentation—most recently to Italy.

In addition to national agencies are arts organizations that serve various regions of the country—such as South Arts in the southeast. They generally have one staff member who specializes in traditional arts, and most offer funding or special initiatives for folk arts (e.g., Traditional Arts Touring Grants; PAE).

So, following the models developed by the Smithsonian Festival and NCTA and supported by NEA's Folk & Traditional Arts Program and the American Folklife Center, most public folklore representations of folk culture in the U.S. are ethnographically based, framed by community and scholarly interpretation, and consist of non-stylized community-based demonstrations and performances.

The model contrasts with public presentations that are shaped by nationalistic ideologies, feature stylized or theatrical representations (folkloric dance), focus on folk culture no longer practiced, or based on authenticity as established by outside authorities (Karras, Mylonas). While these approaches sometimes preserve forms that might otherwise be lost, they tend to ignore or dismiss the complexities of natural evolution in styles or genres, or syncretism between folk and other styles or between cultural traditions (Cajun music; rebetika).

State Programs

State and local programs are more directly engaged than federal ones in ongoing dialogues and productions with cultural groups—often leading to a high level of sophistication in public representations of folk culture (Baron & Spitzer). As I noted, state folk arts programs were established by NEA Folk & Traditional Arts soon after its creation. After several decades, the nationwide public folklore infrastructure of state programs is still sustained largely through public funding—particularly NEA Partnership grants. Without public support, many state programs would be eliminated or drastically reduced during economic downturns.

While almost every state has an on-going public folklore program, compared with other arts disciplines, they are far smaller—and most function with just one or two permanent staff. The majority operates within state organizations, most often an arts agency (33), but also in history or humanities agencies (4), universities (4), museums (2), non-profits (4; Alliance for California Traditional Arts), and regional arts organizations. Their level of support, amount of activity, and number of partner organizations varies greatly among the states, and may be dependent on economic or political situations or individual expertise. In addition to partnering with local colleagues, state programs work closely with the national ones.

Several basic assumptions underlie state programs; one is that working with traditional artists and communities is essential to bridging cultural differences and building respect, understanding, and civility. Another is that folklorists help their agencies to ensure cultural sensitivity, and provide proper documentation, stewardship, and engaging interpretation of traditions for diverse audiences. State folklorists frequently conduct new research, then make it accessible to the public through exhibits, musical performances, festivals, workshops, media productions, apprenticeships, educational collaborations with schools, and demonstrations. These programs may focus on the folklife of the state as a whole, specific group cultures, or particular topics like boatbuilding, music, or textile traditions. Only a few state programs have dedicated physical venues, though several are associated with formal museums or archives.

State-based folklorists often use their skills to enable local communities to present, document, and interpret their own traditions (e.g., training community scholars). Many create programs that serve communities on the margins of society: immigrants, laborers, people of color, speakers of English as a second language, and the elderly, among others. Their efforts may include technical assistance on everything from grant writing to connecting master artists with apprentices—activities vital for preserving traditional arts.

Most state programs offer apprenticeships in which a master artist teaches a traditional art form to an interested student. NEA/Folk & Traditional Arts first awarded grants for individual apprenticeships in 1978, but their 1983 pilot programs in Florida, Mississippi, and New York encouraged the growth of these programs throughout the country. Most such programs are still consistently funded by NEA, which awarded \$2.6 million to support them from 2007-2016. They cost relatively little: the master artist is paid for

teaching and the apprentice receives a smaller amount to cover travel and materials. Most states fund multiple apprenticeship teams each year.

Among the advantages of apprenticeships is that they can adapt to the rural South, Indian reservations, inner-city Detroit, or suburban California—and intergenerational teaching is generally respected. Thus the programs have included a great diversity of arts, peoples, and regions—and a majority of apprenticeships have gone to people of color (Auerbach 26).

Folklorists value apprenticeships as important tools in promoting cultural conservation because they stress not only the continuation of skills, but also of the values and knowledge that provide the context. Thus master and student must both be part of the same folk community, so that they understand the context, use, and significance of the art and the apprentice will sustain the tradition within community. At the same time, programs try to accommodate local needs. For example, most allow out-of-state master artists to teach students if the tradition exists within their community but there are no longer master artists.

The impact of apprenticeship programs continues beyond the original period of study. Teams may continue working together; and some apprentices become professionals or teachers. Due to recognition from these programs, artists often receive further honors or invitations, and sometimes organizations (e.g., Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance). And arts that might have died are given new life (Auerbach 26).

Local Organizations

At the local level, folklore programs operate in numerous organizational contexts—from those who identify themselves solely as folk arts organizations (e.g., Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago or John C. Campbell Folk School in North Carolina) to local arts agencies, ethnic associations, community-based arts or social service organizations, and cultural centers. Many see folk arts as a vehicle for building relationships with communities and a catalyst for intercultural or intergenerational dialogue and understanding. For example, when their community was torn apart by racial division, Mississippi Cultural Crossroads found that a focus on local traditional culture not only rebuilt a sense of community, but also served as a strategy for revitalizing African American folk culture and preserving cultural autonomy against homogenization.

Public Folklife Programs in Florida

To provide more in-depth examples of public folklife programs on state, regional, and local levels I will turn to Florida, where I have worked for the last 30 years. Located in the southeastern corner of America, it is a fascinating semi-tropical state with major influences from Latin America, the Caribbean, and northern US.

Florida Folklife Program

Florida is the only state with an official state folklorist (I served in that position for over a decade). It also defines folklife in state statutes as an integral part of historic preservation—and I believe that this official presence status has endowed it with greater long term stability than most programs.

The Florida Folklife Program is one of the oldest public folklife programs in the nation. It began in 1975 when the Stephen Foster Memorial in tiny White Springs, which was run by the Federation of Music Clubs, received a grant from NEA to hire a folklorist to conduct a one-year survey of Florida folklife to improve the Florida Folk Festival. That folklorist, Peggy Bulger, was not only retained, but by 1978 other positions opened.

Bulger (who eventually became director of the American Folklife Center and President of AFS) and others completed substantial fieldwork and developed an Artist Residency Program.

In 1979 the legislature created the Florida Folklife Program in the Department of State. It eventually expanded to six folklorists who conducted research and implemented presentations at the Folk Culture Center in White Springs. In 1995 it was moved to the state capital, where it is unit of the Bureau of Historic Preservation. Today, with only two staff positions, it continues a wide range of activities and projects designed to increase awareness of Florida's traditional culture: Folklife Apprenticeships, Folk Heritage Awards, exhibits, radio shows, publications, research, and special events or projects. The Florida Folklife Program has served as an incubator for many folklorists who went on to lead such programs throughout the country.

Florida State Archives/Florida Memory Project/Florida Folklife Collection

In 2005, the Florida State Archives completed a project to enhance access to and provide educational tools based upon the Florida Folklife Collection, which consisted of field notes, images, and sound recordings created by the Florida Folklife Program through 1995. Many materials were added to the award-winning Florida Memory Website. In addition to Folklife Program research files, the Collection also includes recordings and images from the WPA and the annual Florida Folk Festival. The fine team of specialists at the Archives has also released several CDs of music from the Florida Folklife Program files.

HistoryMiami/Historical Museum of Southern Florida

HistoryMiami (formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida) has documented and presented south Florida folklife for over 30 years, resulting in a plethora of exhibitions, short publications, recordings, and events, as well as acquisition of artifacts for their permanent collection. In 1986, the Florida Folklife Program partnered with the Museum to obtain an NEA grant that placed a folklorist at their institution. I was that folklorist. Between 1986-1991, I established the Folklife Program; conducted and/or administered folklife surveys of the Florida Keys, and Latin American, Caribbean, African diaspora, and Jewish communities; and curated exhibits such as *Tropical Traditions: South Florida Folklife* and *Haitian Sign Art in Miami*. Over the years, I hired many outside scholars to conduct research, write interpretive essays, and present artists at events. Since then, several excellent folklorists have brought to bear their own unique blends of expertise and interests for research and public programming—creating a constantly changing and exciting program in a remarkable city and region.

Central Florida

There have been several attempts to develop regional folklore programs in central Florida. One stands out for its technologically innovative projects. In the late 1990s, Kristin Congdon at the University of Central Florida in Orlando formed the Cultural Heritage Alliance, a team of cultural and digital media specialists who presented folk culture through new media such as *Folkvine*, an interactive Website about Florida folk arts and artists. In particular, their *Cultural ByWays* project documented folk culture along a bus route in downtown Orlando then brought to the a series of mini-documentaries keyed to the bus GPS system so that passengers could learn about local folk culture as they passed the sites.

Tarpon Springs

I will now turn to examples from my work since 2009 in Tarpon Springs on the central Gulf Coast. After working with the HistoryMiami and Florida Folklife Programs—both of

which served millions of constituents, I wanted to utilize my professional skills to create a more holistic, substantial, and lasting impact upon sustaining traditional culture—which meant working in a relatively small community. I took the job as Curator of Arts & Historical Resources in Tarpon Springs, where I had been conducting personal research into the sponge industry and occasional Folklife Program research into other aspects of Greek American culture. Tarpon Springs has a rich heritage based on its strong Greek community (the most concentrated Greek population in the US) that is associated with the sponge industry. But some traditional arts had declined in recent years, and there was little publicly available information on its culture.

I should note that while I am not from Tarpon Springs, my work has been facilitated because I am Greek American and have generally been accepted as a member of the Greek community (albeit not a typical one). As my social network within the community expanded, so did my opportunities for research and programming. It was also important that the person who hired me was trained as an ethnomusicologist and we had served together on the state's Folklife Council—so she supported and understood my work.

I attempted to create a multi-pronged approach to cultural sustainability through documentation, preservation, and presentation of local history and traditional culture—primarily Greek culture, though I also deal with other communities. To that end, we created the Center for Gulf Coast Folklife, which focuses on local, Gulf Coast region, and Florida folk culture through exhibits, festivals, workshops, performances, historic preservation, and other activities founded in ethnographic research. While some programs were onetime events, others were intended to have longer or even permanent lives and a positive economic effect. Examples:

- ***Greek Community Documentation Project*** – The goals of this project are to collect materials that reflect the history and cultural heritage of the Greek community, make them available to the community, and educate the public through interpretive websites, programs, and exhibits. Documentation includes images, recordings, archival materials, and a limited number of artifacts. Through an agreement with the University of South Florida Library in nearby Tampa, we created an online exhibit featuring historical images and other items collected from community members as well as more recent photos and videos. The partnership with USF ensures adequate long-term preservation and availability.
- ***Exhibits at the Folklife Gallery*** – The Gallery has offered both original and traveling exhibitions that interpret local, state, and regional folk culture. I have curated about 8 original exhibits for the gallery, some of which are *Greek Music in America*, *Latin American Folk Culture in Florida*, *Sacred Arts*, *African American Folk Arts*, *The Greek Communities of Tarpon Springs and the Bahamas: An Intertwined History*, and others. I also work with a talented local photographer who has produced several exhibits focusing on the Greek community. And I recently updated the permanent exhibit that I curated on *The Greek Community of Tarpon Springs* at the Heritage Museum. [photos]
- ***Night in the Islands*** re-creates the atmosphere of a *panigiri* with outdoor dining on the Sponge Docks, performances by the best local bands, and Greek social dancing. It has become an important community event—bringing together local audiences and visitors monthly from April through October. This has been embraced by Greeks throughout the Tampa Bay area and elsewhere. One reason for its success is that in earlier days community celebrations took place at the Docks—and it is reminiscent of those events. [photos]
- ***Folklife Workshops*** preserve significant local traditions by making the skills and knowledge more available to the community. Offerings have included Greek bouzouki, violin, percussion, *klarino*, *laouto*, *tsabouna*; Greek and Latin American community cooking classes; Byzantine chant; and Kalyrnian songs. The bouzouki workshops have

been particularly successful: several students who have studied for 8 years now perform publicly. We also recorded three of the highly respected workshop leaders to create learning materials, documentation of musical forms and musicianship, and professional recordings that the musicians could use for their own advancement. I have emphasized music as an area to strengthen because it is an essential component of community events and the number of younger musicians was declining—though dance was in a good state due to long-term efforts by local individuals and organizations like Levendia.

- ***Gulf Maritime Festival*** - As one of Florida's few remaining working waterfronts, Tarpon Springs is the perfect venue to showcase maritime folklife of the Gulf of Mexico coast. This free one-day festival has featured demonstrations of and interviews about sponge diving and processing; diving helmets, cast nets, mullet fishing and nets, shrimping, stone crab traps; fish smoking, clam farming, boat building; foodways, and other maritime skills; and associated music.
 - **Occasional programs** have included concerts, film showings (Tikas, America America), folk festivals, salsa street dances, Latin dance lessons, and many other events. I also frequently partner with a local Greek dance group to bring from Greece traditional musicians who give concerts and lessons.
 - ***Tarpon Springs Greektown Walking Tour app*** - With a grant from the Florida Humanities Council's Florida Stories program, I developed a walking tour that provides a widely accessible way to learn about the history and culture of the Greek community and Greektown area. It is available through an app that can be downloaded onto a phone or tablet. It then provides images as well as narration about history and culture for 10 different stops along the tour route. [photos]
 - ***Historic Preservation*** is an important arena for preserving both tangible and intangible cultural heritage through formal acknowledgement of its importance by listings on the National Register of Historic Places (NR). For many years, Tarpon Springs had a strong historic preservation emphasis, yet except for a few individual entries, by the time I arrived, the city had not surveyed or listed Greektown, the most unique and historically significant district—which has tenaciously maintained its traditional culture.

Although it known for emphasis on historic buildings, in recent years, the NR has encouraged the submission of non-Native American Traditional Cultural Property nominations in addition to the usual historic property listings. A traditional cultural property is defined as “eligible for inclusion in the National Register because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that (a) are rooted in that community's history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.” In 2014, I submitted a nomination to the NR and Tarpon Springs' Greektown Historic District became Florida's first Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) listed on the NR and the nation's first non-indigenous TCP district.

For the nomination, I worked closely with staff at the NR and the state historic preservation office because there was no previous model for such a TCP district nomination. I also worked closely with community members. For instance, it was necessary to determine district boundaries, document the history and continuation of traditional culture, and relate cultural practices to specific physical sites in a residential and commercial district with about 400 resources—mostly buildings but also sponge boats. I formed a working group of residents in order to pinpoint the current boundaries. Several walked the entire district with me—describing its history, the movement of people within it, changes in boundaries, lives of residents, and structures that no longer existed. They even identified a building type unknown outside the district: tiny sponge divers' cottages, known colloquially as *skylla spitia* (dog houses) because they lacked plumbing—the residents spent all their time either on the boats or at nearby *kafeneia* so they did not need such amenities.

After completion of the nomination, it was circulated for approval to the Greek community, municipal Historic Preservation Board and the Board of Commissioners, and Florida Historic Preservation Review Board before submission to the NR.

Conclusion

Certainly the greatest strength of the field of public folklore lies in the unequivocal importance of traditional culture itself. But the key to sustained effort in this field may be the creation of a network of allied organizations addressing fundamental needs for funding, research, public presentation, and archival preservation—as well as the field's ability to position itself as valuable to a wide range of host organizations. And not to be underestimated is the work of the many public folklorists, each of whom has toiled in their own way and place to forge a body of knowledge and practice that contributes to the documentation, sustainability, promotion, and preservation of our cultural heritage.

References

American Folklore Center. <https://www.loc.gov/folklife/aboutafc.html> . Accessed May 29, 2018.

American Folklore Society. February 1988. Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibility. *AFSNews*, New Series, Vol. 17:1. <https://www.afsnet.org/general/custom.asp?page=Ethics>. Accessed May 28, 2018.

Auerbach, Susan. Investing in the Future of Tradition: State Apprenticeship Programs. In *The Changing Faces of Tradition: A Report on the Folk and Traditional Arts in the United States*. Written, edited, and compiled by Elizabeth Peterson. Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 1996. Pp. 24-31.

Baron, Robert. 2016. Public folklore dialogism and critical heritage Studies. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22:8, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2016.1150320>. Accessed May 28, 2018.

Feintuch, Burt. 1988. *The Conservation of Culture: Folklorists and the Public Sector*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;cc=acls;view=toc;idno=heb05637.0001.001> . Accessed May 28, 2018.

Public Folklore. 1992. Edited by Robert Baron and Nicholas R. Spitzer. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage. Mission & History. <https://folklife.si.edu/mission-and-history/cfch-strategic-plan/smithsonian> . Accessed May 28, 2018.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Mission & History. <https://folkways.si.edu/mission-history/smithsonian> . Accessed May 28, 2018.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>. Accessed May 28, 2018.