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Sharon Hibbard

*Ouachita Baptist University*

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Honors Special Study

Folklore a study and tales from the Ozarks

by Sharon Hibbard

Spring 1975

advisor: Mr. Holt

From its inception, folktale research has had a two-pronged aim: it has been interested, on the one hand, in the nature and origins of oral narration not fixed in writing; and it has been interested in folk culture as expressed in the content and form of the folktale. These two points of view have resulted in two different kinds of research methods. One has sprung essentially from comparative literature and has been established as a new branch of that discipline; the other has developed from the French sociological and the British anthropological schools, which consider of folk tradition--to which the folktale belongs--merely as a means, a point of departure, for researching the folk community.

The key questions in folktale study are these: How was the tale shaped, and how does its form originate? The search for answers focuses on the creative person, or, in a given case, the person at hand who passes on the tradition.

Even before folktales were systematically collected, the talents of extraordinary storytellers--servants, nurses, soldiers, etc., who told stories as part of their professional pursuits--were known. Authors of storybooks and editors of literary folktale collections, however, preferred to credit some imaginary storyteller with telling the tales. Although even the first collectors, such as the brothers Grimm, who deemed it necessary to rework the material stylistically, expressed their admiration for the storytellers, it is not rare to find in later folktale collections that the storyteller is mentioned.

Three principal factors are equally essential to the existence of the folktale, and their interrelationship forms the core of our own research: (1) tradition, or the communal contribution of past bearers of tradition; (2) the present storytelling community; and (3) the narrator.

Simultaneous interaction of these basic factors is essential for the creation of the folktale.

Research, to a great extent, stresses the communal character of folklore. This concept is valid for both traditional collaboration or past bearers of tradition and the collaboration of the present folk community. First, we will consider the meaning of tradition.

Though the myths of communal creativity or collective authorship of works were quickly exploded, and though it has been proven beyond any doubt that there is no one work which cannot be traced back to a single individual, even though during the course of time many others have added to and continued the work, many researchers still believe that emphasizing individual contributions to folklore would be opposed to the real aim of the discipline--that is, the understanding of the traditional substance of culture.

Every invention in art is individual; the only question to be raised is whether it is possible to localize the first author as an individual in folklore. Can he be called "popular," since the forms of folklore are not individual but form a link in the chain of tradition?

Neither in literature nor in folklore does it make sense to overestimate the "original concept," though we have to take its existence into account. By paying attention to the limited possibilities of folklore, by considering its forms of existence and the variations of a certain theme, we must state carefully the relationship of the individual to the community, and determine what is contributed by tradition and what by the individual.

Doubtless the individual is the point of departure, be he a creator of folklore or of literature, or simply the individual who first gave words to a certain story at a certain moment. It is certain that, without his contribution, the text would have been formed differently or would not have been created at all. But it is equally certain that his work was not created in isolation and independent of the community.

When we contemplate the series of traditions which pass on the theme from mouth to mouth, we have to agree with the argument of Sharp, who sketches the passage of transmission of a work by a chain of individuals as follows: "The authorship belongs equally to all those who have taken part in the transmission. Thus the authorship, originally individual, has become communal. The individual has vanished, and the community has slipped into his shoes...."

The traditional folktale, which enters the life of a community at a given moment, thus acts as a model. It does not have an author; the folk community--or, as Anikin calls it, the chain of "collective authorship"--has produced it. Many texts have been lost in the course of transmission, but what has

survived has become increasingly richer and more beautiful.

Thus, tradition originated through the chain of individual contributions which, at the very moment when the folktale is being narrated, comprise the substance as well as the immediate situation of a given community. Tradition which has become latent continues to live and work as the property of a community and determines the creator and the audience in the present moment. Gorki speaks several times of this collective substance when he mentions that every creation of a great artist is at the same time the creation of the people, for in it the entire culture of a people has resonance.

The traditional material fetters the creative individual. A group's common traditional stock of oral literature--which distinguishes it from other groups--usually manifests itself not in the creations but in communal knowledge. The average person knows the communal stock of folktales, the tale body; he may be able to narrate but he is not accustomed to doing so, and he is not able to perform fluently in public. The narrators choose from this communal and well-known material the parts they want to narrate and which the audience likes to hear over and over again, and which as a result become more and more polished. These narrators, always unusually gifted, stand at the center of our study, and with them rests the actual fate of the folktale. It is upon their shoulders that the narration in the community devolves.

It is hard to find a narrator who keeps the folktale alive, embroiders it, and popularizes it in the community. What is

required is not only a good memory--so that no details are omitted from the long narration--but the ability to compose, a rich vocabulary, dramatic power, etc. The position of the narrator within the village community in general differs very little from that of the creative artist: he either enjoys great respect or is shunned as an outsider. For the most part, the narrators are poor people who have been around, who have learned their folktales in various working communities and have narrated them there, and who, in their declining years, have settled in a village--if they were lucky, in the village of their origin--and have become a member of the village community. The individual situation, then, accounts for the narrator's remaining active or becoming passive.

I am convinced that social recognition of a folktale depends above all on the storyteller's ability to formulate it. In view of the fact that the individual can develop only with the cooperation of the community, researchers have been correct in observing the limits of individual capabilities and in constantly stressing the importance of the community where the tales are told. Every narrator is the vessel for the tradition of the community which he represents.

Since the new creation which develops during storytelling and the telling performance itself can happen only publicly, the importance of the audience must not be overlooked. Functionally, both the individual telling the story and the listeners take part in the new creation. The structure of the community, its attitudes and moods, the nature and the time as well as the place of the gathering can influence the narrator fashioning his

text in such a way that one and the same folktale, recorded under different conditions, often shows decisive modifications.

Even the folklorists who focus their attention on the storyteller do not consider the individual alone to be responsible for the creation of the folktale. And it is precisely the casting of light upon this ambiguity which they consider to be the aim of folklore research. Such research can be practically carried through only by actual observation of outstanding storytellers in the midst of their audiences. We are thus equally interested in tradition, narrator, and the community attending storytelling sessions: all three combined should yield the key to the origin of the folktale, to the ethnic and individual changes in it, and to the role and the essence of the community. The concurrent relationship between individual and community is a much better guide to the variations and the formation of ethnic subtypes of orally transmitted folklore than the whole of the international narrative material evaluation by formal, statistical comparison.

The new trend in folktale research is working with fundamentally new methods: it wants to capture the nearly palpable social function of storytelling on the basis of intensive collecting in the field. Such collecting should not stop at the literal transcript of the text, but should consider the close relationship between the text and the individuals and should record the general atmosphere in which the text is transmitted. Such collecting must be carried out with highly authentic scientific thoroughness in order to serve as a basis



for scholarly analysis of the material. The folklorist must be an experienced fieldworker, whose starting point in building up a study would be his own collection.

Intensive collecting involves (1) reliable recording of the material--taping and recording of the entire material of the individual narrators; (2) gaining a conception of the ~~life~~ and the type of the creative narrator based on sociological and on exact psychological observations; (3) examination of the storytelling community from the viewpoint of the local narrative tradition, with attention to its structure and composition; (4) observation of the narrative process--the simultaneous cooperation of the narrator and his community; (5) repeated recording of this procedure over a span of several years. Each creative individual is a good object, whether he lives in a storytelling community or has dropped out of it.

Raw material collected according to these principles is apt to throw light on different types of creative tale-tellers as well as on the ethnic features of the tale variations. It is not of decisive importance whether the tale stock is elicited from a displaced narrator who had lost his audience or from one of a smaller or larger, still viable, storytelling community. Evaluation centers on the question of the traditional and individual contributions in the tale formulations of individual narrators. Investigations will thus stem primarily from analysis of style; this means that, among other things, the composition technique of the narrator will have to be closely examined.

The folktale arises from a need experienced at a certain stage of development in human society. It is the circumstances which generate a folktale, which form its conception, its shape, and its narrative style; as long as these circumstances prevail, the folktale will endure.

Evidences of the folktale can be found all over the world; they are quite ancient, and even if these narratives arise from different conditions, depending on place and time, they all have something in common; they have their origin in a social need.

The oldest written records contain indications of the function of folktale narration. People everywhere have listened to storytellers with the greatest of interest. They brought news of exciting events, praised heroic deeds, and thus aroused interest in history; they provided models of religious and ethical perfection of the people to emulate. The narrators banished the drab monotony of everyday life by entertaining their hearers with exciting, adventuresome, and highly imaginative stories. It was from these premises, before the invention of written literature, that oral narrative forms originated.

We can classify the following types of storytelling communities according to occupation:

1. Migrant working communities outside the village.
  - a. Nonpeasant groups:
    - craftsmen
    - soldiers
    - sailors
    - fisherman; other professions depending on mobility
  - b. Landless peasants:
    - construction laborers
    - seasonal laborers in agriculture
    - day laborers, hired hands
    - lumbermen
    - herdsmen

2. The village. Opportunities occur for storytelling in the village during:
  - a. communal work, and
  - b. winter entertainment.
  
3. Involuntary work communities of short duration.
  - a. hospital
  - b. jail
  - c. military service, including those
    - (1) drafted in war, and
    - (2) prisoners of war.

In examining these groups we are struck first of all by the fact that the great majority of storytellers come from the poor segment of the people, and that their professions and places of work provide the opportunity to exercise faculties.

Storytelling is a very old tradition with craftsmen. When the different crafts began to organize their guilds, each apprentice was obliged to go out wandering. The village craftsman went out not only to learn his craft, but he went from village to village and accepted work to make a living. All wandering apprentices were obliged to entertain their landlord; thus some folklorists believed that storytelling was decidedly a nonpeasant occupation.

Like the apprentice, the soldier, too, left his native village. The serf's son who became a soldier was sent to distant regions either to fight or to man a garrison city. Many who had been called into the service as young men did not return until they were discharged twenty years later. Several folklorists point out that the soldier played an important part in the transmission and the spread of the folktale. His adventures and his boasting are known all over Europe. He himself has even assumed the proportions of a folktale hero.

Many folktales and anecdotes begin with the statement that a soldier, discharged from service after many years, starts on his way home--and here the plot begins.

All narrators who were soldiers are unanimous in stating that they heard a considerable number of their folktales in the barracks. It seems to have actually been a requirement to know tales. Some remembered having received an order of the day that after "lights out" at night, each one, following the sequence of their beds, had to tell a tale; anyone who was not able to do so was the butt of scorn.

Among the itinerant storytellers we must also count sailors, boatmen, and fishermen, especially where people lived along the coasts, since they often spent weeks on the water. Sometimes when a storm would keep them from fishing they would pass the time telling tales. Fishermen mending their nets have been known to send for a storyteller to help while away the time.

To this group belong the narrators for whom the art of storytelling has become a valuable trade. The itinerant apprentice, the discharged soldier, and the peddler are typical folktale tellers. The storytelling of waterpower station workers is worth mentioning here: often more than thirty people lived together on the floating barges. When they arrived in a village, they sought shelter for the night, and in exchange for this, told their tales.

Nearly every kind of work in the fields which is not excessively strenuous can be an occasion for storytelling--hacking, weeding, cutting roots, gathering potatoes, planting,

sheafing. Storytelling is done during work like this by one of the workers, who sits down near a ditch and entertains the others.

Another occasion for storytelling in the village is the stringing, smoothing, and sorting of the tobacco leaves. On the estate farmsteads, the families of the hired tobacco growers did this work, and anyone who could tell stories did so to keep the others from falling asleep in the big, dark barns. The narrator was in great demand, greatly sought after, because he entertained those who worked as well as those who just listened; wherever such a narrator was available, everybody liked to go and work.

Seasonal labor provides other occasions for storytelling. Although storytelling is not of minor importance for seasonal workers, tales cannot be told during work--only after dinner at night in the communal barracks or hostels. The good storyteller will keep on telling his story, regardless of how tired he himself may be, until all his listeners have fallen asleep.

In wooded areas, the most important storytelling occasion is woodcutting and sawing. The narrator was so highly respected for his knowledge that he did not have to worry about food or tobacco, and he was even given lighter work.

As we turn to the examination of the village storytelling communities, we must state right from the start that fall and winter are the main seasons for storytelling, when the strenuous work in the fields is interrupted. There are two occasions for storytelling: (1) communal work connected with entertainment and

(2) festive or regular get-togethers during the evening.

On both occasions storytelling is enjoyed as an agreeable pastime, an entertainment. However these occasions do not necessarily demand a folktale or a long prose narration; the folktale is one among many kinds of entertainment on such occasions--party games, dancing, and singing, riddle telling, question and answer games, and the telling of anecdotes or scary stories. The folktale, of course, is not prevalent when there is no specially gifted raconteur. But even when a good narrator is available, such communities cannot tolerate an overlong folktale. The good narrator tries to adapt himself to these circumstances. He narrates shortened fairy tales, entertaining fables, or short horror or prank stories, but not the voluminous magic tales. In general, however, the great and talented narrators are not as popular during the winter tale occasions as the articulate funny men, who not only tell stories but sing and crack jokes. These men always have a stock of jokes or stories about magic experiences, and although they also know the folktale body and can narrate a tale on request, they tell only short excerpts. The average village narrators belong in this category. The average village narrator likes to narrate because he loves to play a role, but it soon becomes apparent that he merely reproduces what he knows and that his knowledge is quickly exhausted. There are many such men in the village, and they hold the threads of the entertainment in their hands. The situation is quite different when a definite narrator is invited to be present during communal work, as was the custom when

spinning and quilting were occupations for women as well as for the young. Yet these narrators belong for the most part among the entertainers at communal agricultural work outside the village, and they take over the role of narrator during winter when there is nothing to do. The narrator is always the center of the community and enjoys the rights of a sib elder. The place of narration is the house or the stable around the fire. He is the first to drink from the bottle and he is offered the best tobacco. When an old woman tells stories, the whole household is at her command, even when she is not in her own house. This is her right.

During the day stories are told while the villagers are shucking corn, quilling feathers, and spinning; during the evening the family and their guests sit on the benches around the stove and listen in the dark. In former times stories were told in the heated stables and in the spinning rooms as well as in the family circle. Since traditional communal work has faded into the background, the folktale has been restricted to the family circle and is told only when company comes.

The storytelling villages known to folklorists were the result of coincidence involving good narrators, and that a special situation was created by the passing on of the tale treasure through several generations, causing the folktale to become very highly regarded.

## NARRATIONAL OCCASIONS

As we have seen, storytelling, in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, became mainly an entertainment of the poor, of the socially underprivileged classes. This is to be seen in the content of the tales--in their social tendencies, in the message they express, and in the fact that the work occasions of the poor generally furnished the storyteller with the framework of his tales which appeals to the imagination of the storytelling community. The well-to-do peasants in the village have little respect for the folktale. They will tell anecdotes during their get-togethers but only laugh at the long magic tale. The respectable peasant wants to hear something "true," a historical event; he reads newspapers and no longer listens to "lies." His way of thinking is rational. He has access to modern mass media, education, and a comfortable standard of living, and as a result he is able to seek more than oral entertainment. The women, on the other hand, tell stories to the children, as they do in the cities. Indeed, the working conditions of the peasants who possessed land never provided the same conditions for storytelling as occurred with the agricultural workers and other day laborers. Under these circumstances, we should not say that the folktale is



alive mainly among European peasants, but rather that it lives among the lowest social ranks of the people.

Within some communities two systems of storytelling have developed: several persons may narrate one after the other, or one single individual may narrate for the whole evening.

Storytelling by several persons, one after the other, is the more frequent system. As if following the rules of a game, each member of the community is obliged to tell a tale, or the most skillful storytellers take turns. The former practice can be found where there are no specially good storytellers, as for example in the barracks room, where anecdotes and jokes take the place of the folktale. Usually several good narrators can be found who alternate with each other--two or three tell tales during one evening. It may happen that there is an extremely gifted storyteller present who listens for a while and takes the stage only later, when his superiority can shine by contrast. In general, however, the outstanding storyteller does not let others take the limelight; he demands the undivided attention of his listeners.

The second system of narration presupposes the presence of an outstanding narrator personality. The raconteur must have the ability to prolong his tales; he must be able to fill an entire evening and, if necessary, to continue his tales on

several evenings in succession.

Both narrative methods have a strong impact on the formation of the folktale. If the narrators follow each other or if several individual storytellers take turns, the individual tale naturally is shorter, for each narrator wants to be heard. This also causes a certain kind of competition: one will try to outdo the other in telling something better, funnier, and more exciting. What is decisive is not the length of the recital but the variety, for the listeners and all those who are waiting their own turn to narrate can hardly wait for each one to finish his tale. Often a storyteller challenges another storyteller who is present to compete against him by jokingly including him in the terminal phase of his tale, and if the other storyteller cannot rise to the challenge, he "remains in the tale," which is a great shame.

The long tale is a daring flight of imagination and variety. We know the introductory and concluding formula which, in general, answer questions about the magic tale to be told or are meant to dissolve the listeners' doubt. The narrator refers to something, confirms it, testifies for it, and wishes his listeners good luck and himself ample rewards. To fashion these formulae ingeniously and to alternate them is an indispensable part of composition for narrators in work communities outside the village. The scant material garnered so far permits us to conclude that the collector will find a treasure of possibilities not yet exhausted. That we know so little about this process is the consequence of an, as yet, undeveloped methodology of collecting.

Having investigated the modes of narrations, we must not neglect the atmosphere of tale-telling, from which springs the need for the folktale. There were and still are situations in which people live in small groups or closed communities, cut off from the outside world. One day passes as unevenful as the next. The folktale is the only spiritual nourishment for this kind of community, forged together by work, and is its only form of recreation and entertainment; it eases work, releases tension, and helps induce a refreshing sleep. Relaxation after work, the overheated air in the hostels, the tobacco smoke, and the flickering lamp create an atmosphere conducive to the acceptance of the folktale. It forms a bridge from reality to illusion, from the state of wakefulness to that of the dream, as many folklorists have pointed out.

The fundamental law of the folktale is this: Lie, narrator, but do not be found out; swear that you have dished up the truth. Berzè Nagy is right when he says, "The folktale is only considered a beautiful lie by our people." But as soon as the narrator enters into its spirit, his creative consciousness forgets that the tale is not the truth, and he himself shares the adventures of his imaginary heroes. There is a strange ambiguity in folktale narration: the storyteller has recourse to all the tricks of the trade to make his listeners believe what both he himself and his listeners know are lies; but at the same time they are trapped by the effect of the tale and will live through it, reacting with tears and laughter to the individual situations.

When they get hold of themselves, the folktale is once again just a story. But this is not only the aim of the storyteller; it also is the artistic law of the tale, which is served by the introductory and the concluding formula. To make everything credible, the folktale has to be placed in a far, distant time, and this is the reason that the storyteller uses the first person in the introductory and concluding statements. To bear out the credibility of his words, he conjures witnesses, cites those from whom he has heard the tale, those who were there, and even refers to imaginary books from which he got the story. Sometimes he represents as having come from where all the action has taken place, and to make this credible, he gives an exact description of the place and quotes certain statements.

This ambivalence of "true" and "untrue" is shown in some of the playful introductions: "Damned be he who will not believe my stories, but he who will believe them will not be blessed;" "Who does not believe me, search for himself;" "Who does not believe my story should stay in it." Or joking statements like this: "I see it before me, as if it were happening now;" or "I myself was there when this was told."

The truly creative narrator considers the folktale as his spiritual property. The lesser talents see it as the property of the person from whom they have learned it and thus endeavor to render it without change to honor the other's creation. It has been said that today the folktale is no longer true, but once it was. The different evaluations of the folktale--

the conscious "I don't believe it" and the unconscious "I believe it"--stem from one natural fact: the story is not just entertainment or recreation for the folk community, but more than that--contentment, an outlet for protesting social injustice and fulfillment of the hopes and wishes of man generally, especially of the poor man in backward, rural communities.

In community storytelling the narrator often has his own repertoire, which is respected by other narrators. This applies even more to the gifted raconteurs, though they, too, tell stories they originally learned from others.

Like the literary work of art, the folktale, too, can be the property of an established storyteller. This occurs in primitive societies and among European peoples. Berze Nagy points out this phenomenon and says:

Storytelling is done one after the other; everybody narrates a story which he has learned to perfection on precisely such occasions, and which he has recounted several times. Thus the narrator or the "folktale tree" who increases his skill by having been forced to be the sole storyteller during winter evenings reaches such artistic narrative perfection that people say, "That is his story." And if the person in question did not know the tale he would say, "So-and-so told this; he knows it." I had to wait a whole evening for a man who, according to the narrators and the listeners, was the only one who could tell the story and know the way it had to be told. The mere appearance of the man was greeted by "Ohs" and "ahs," to say nothing of the effect the telling of the tale had on everybody.

How far is storytelling in Europe limited according to sex? There is no doubt that the earliest notes in folktale literature mention wet nurses and old women. They are the old narrators, the fictitious and the real ones, of world

literature, of whom poets revive their childhood memories in the magic tales.

The main burden of proof, however, convinces us that storytelling is not a specific occupation for women. There are stories destined mainly for children which, of course, are told by women. It is the task of women to tell stories for children, but this does not mean that women are true storytellers, recognized by the community. It is quite possible that there were among these women some extremely gifted storytellers, but this cannot be stated with certainty today due to the scarcity and stylization of the available documentary evidence. Surely we are not dealing here with the true storyteller. The Hungarian documents show clearly that the household tales for children told by women were never taken seriously by adults. True storytelling is adult entertainment having an important social role. Sandor Pinter writes, "It would be a serious mistake to think that only children listened to tales; on the contrary, the tales were mostly told for the entertainment of adults."

Researchers are split in their opinions about which sex is prevalent among storytellers. Wisser says:

As to the sex of the persons who...contributed to my collection, the number of male narrators (190) exceeds that of the female narrators (50) to a striking extent. Therefore we have simply thrown out the dogma, prevalent until now, the female storytellers are superior to male storytellers and will assume the contrary. This assumption is borne out by the fact that the male narrators usually knew much more than the female ones. Among those only one woman knew more than 40 stories; among the rest only one more than twenty. Among the male narrators two knew more than 60 tales, one more than 50,

one more than 40, five more than 30 and six more than twenty.

Wisser not only bases his observation on statistics but points out than the "female" theme in the stories do not indicate female storytellers.

It was variously stated that the true magic tale was told by women, the anecdotes by men. This statement, which is probably based only on an assumption, does not apply with regard to my own collections. In these there are only the tales about the bad stepmother, five stories in different forms...which were told me by women only, and only four...where the number of female narrators is greater than that of the male. With all other types that of the male narrators exceeds--to a great extent... That women, therefore, are the guardians of the tale treasure is only a nice thought. About anecdotes we cannot say more than state the fact that they were mostly told by men.

Older and newer collections show that the role of women in storytelling is less significant than that of men. Numerically too, the male storytellers are preponderant and the repertoire of the good female storytellers is much smaller than that of their male counterparts.

The folklorists are unanimous in demonstrating that the tales of the women are much shorter and less colorful, that women limit themselves to the mere recital of the necessary details, that they stick to what they have learned, whereas the narration of the men is colorful and moves along well, and men recite details, describe with epic depth, and often dramatize, striving to attract the biggest possible audience through exceptionally good storytelling. The women are also in the background because they are much more homebound and have very few occasions to leave the village in order to collect adventures and to learn.

Doubtless it is the men who are the storytellers among European peoples. There have been cases where men, when telling stories, excluded not only the children but the women. The storytelling of women is only a secondary matter in the estimation of folk society; it is limited to the family, to the entertainment of children, and to the communal work of the women.

The proofs are, in the main, favorable for the men, and yet we should examine the individual cases carefully: How far is it a question of gifted storytellers? What kind of narration is being investigated? Thompson says that men and women alike can be narrators, that this is determined by the prevailing customs.



In general, the listeners are interested in the folktale, and that is why they sit down together around the narrator. Those among the listeners who like to make fun and attract attention can hardly resist the temptation to interrupt. They are known for this and influence mainly the narrator, who voluntarily answers all their questions and who sees encouragement in every commentary, even if it is derisive or expresses doubt. But the listeners who follow the recital in silence also influence the narrator, by their strict attention and by the interest which mirrored in their faces. Often it is with them that most tales are deposited, and one fine day a new storyteller from among their ranks appears in public.

Of course there are things which disturb both narrator and listeners: crying children; impatient people who suddenly start laughing or whispering and thus detract the attention of others from the narrator. This can be observed in the tale and in the interruptions as well. It sometimes also happens that an interruption is answered not by the storyteller but by another listener. Even a third listener may assert himself, and while the tale is being developed, a small dispute originates.

Some interruptions during narration of a folktale could be some of the following:

- 1-Spontaneous exclamations, triggered by wonder about some part of the tale.
- 2-Playful or serious commentary on a single episode of the tale.
- 3-Questions about details which were not understood, and responses to them.
- 4-Connecting of individual experiences with the tale elements.

- 5-Praise and encouragement for the narrator.
- 6-Playful remarks directed to the narrator or other listeners.
- 7-Impatience: When will the tale be finished?

The pioneer hates a liar. In the early days there was little cash in the country, and there were few written contracts. People depended upon each other, and a man's word had to be good or the neighbors would have nothing to do with him. The hillfolk live close to the pioneer tradition, and liar is still a fightin' word in the Ozarks. But there's no harm in "stretchin' the blanket" or "lettin' out a whack" or "sawin' off a whopper" or "spinnin' a windy" when they involve no attempt to injure anybody. "A windy ain't a lie, nohow," said one neighbor, "unless you tell it for the truth." And even if you do tell it for the truth nobody is deceived, except maybe a few tourists.

The Ozark Mountain people are without material wealth, but they have inherited a leisurely way of life. There is still time for conversation, and Ozark speech is unhurried and reminiscent. Hillfolk love to tell of minor marvels past, and little things are long remembered. The people do not read much. Their stories are shaped and polished by the hazards of oral transmission. Some of these tales derive from clans or families rather than individuals, and many were known to the great-grandparents of the present generation. That doesn't matter at all, because novelty is not important in a frontier culture. One never hears an Ozark humorist say, "Stop me, if you've heard this one."

The ignorance and credulity of city folks provide a constant temptation to the village cut-ups. In 1947, a fat man from Jasper County, Missouri, stopped at a hotel in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. He was alone, but the only available room had two beds in it, one double and one single bed. A tourist from Chicago noted this, and the Missourian remarked that such rooms were furnished especially for newlyweds. "It's one of our old Ozark customs," he said soberly. "The bride's mother always goes along on the honeymoon. Sleeps in the same room, too." The tourist had seen many strange sights in Eureka Springs, and was prepared to believe almost anything, but this story seemed so outlandish that she asked the manager of the hotel about it. The manager crossed his fingers and confirmed the fat man's tale. Perhaps the tradition is not always observed nowadays, he admitted. But no Arkansas hotel would offer a bridal suite which did not have a place for the mother-in-law in the bedroom. The hotel-keeper's serious manner convinced the tourist, so she told her friends about it, and soon all the "furrin" guests were giggling over the quaint marriage-customs of the hillfolk. They spread the hilarious news back in Chicago, too. And now, every so often, some visitor from Illinois stops a native and asks him about this mother-in-law business. Most of the local people have heard the tale by this time and are glad to give it a boost. That's the way a lot of odd stories about Arkansas got started.

The best windies in the Ozark country are told by men. Backwoods women don't care for such yarns. Much of the other folk-material that has been collected in this region--folksongs, riddles, proverbs, and superstitions--was obtained from women. But the grotesque hyperbole of the tall tale does not appeal to the feminine sense of humor. It seems to me that most country women fail to see the distinction between a whack and an outright falsehood. "Never trust a windy-spinner," said a pious lady in Noel, Missouri "Why, old Buck Turney will tell the truth an' then lie out of it, just to keep his hand in!"

It is a mistake to assume that backwoods humor is merely a matter of grotesque exaggeration. The Ozark story-teller appreciates understatement too, and knows more of irony than many sophisticated comedians. Our summer visitors are accustomed to people who appear more prosperous than they really are, but rustic who makes light of his wealth is new to them. "Come out to my shack, an' stay all night," said a shabbily dressed cattleman. "The roof leaks a little, but we always let the company sleep in the dry spot." The city feller accepted the invitation, and his eyes popped when he saw the "shack." It was a big stone ranch house of perhaps thirty rooms, with a swimming pool, golf course, and so forth. The roof was made of green tiles, and didn't leak ary drop.

The best story-tellers work in groups, and their smooth team-play is fascinating to witness. The chief narrator speaks slowly to a picked group of listeners, who know exactly when to put the proper questions and when to hold their peace.

The whole thing seems delightfully casual, but every word is weighed, and the timing is perfect. Some of the finest windies are never told directly to the tourist; it is better to allow him to overhear them, as if by accident. Frank Payne and W. D. Mathes, of Galena, Missouri, used to make a specialty of this technique. They would talk together in low tones, very seriously, with their backs toward the "furriner" to whom the story was really addressed. These men were artists, and people came from miles around to see them do their stuff.

There are few stronger ties than those of some fantastic tradition held in common, and hillmen who appreciate the old-time humor are bound together in a sort of brotherhood. These fellows are not much inclined to formal organization, but it appears that several "windy circles" had regular meetings in the 1880's and early 1890's.

It has been said that the Missouri Foxhunters' Assoc. began as "a kind of liar's syndicate, with headquarters at Rushville," but this is vigorously denied. Foxhunters' conventions used to be held at least once a year in every Ozark county, and that goes for Arkansas and Oklahoma as well as Missouri. Everybody knows that liars' contests were sometimes featured in connection with these affairs. A typical convention lasted four or five days, with one evening devoted to the telling of windy stories. Foxhunters' meetings were generally well attended, but "Liars' Night" always brought out the biggest crowd from town. At Bartlesville, Oklahoma, the merchants used to donate valuable prizes for the champion story-teller, and doubtless the same custom was followed elsewhere.

The most important windy circle in the Ozarks nowadays is the Polk County Possum Club. Founded at Mena, Arkansas, in 1912, this outfit still throws an annual banquet at the Mena Armory. The event takes place early in December, and the date is announced in newspapers all over Arkansas. Every guest gets a serving of possum if he wants it, but most of 'em eat roast turkey. Hillfolk in overalls and calico rub elbows with city people in evening dress. Funny stories and wisecracks have their place, but tall tales are always a feature of the meeting, and the chief reason for the Possum Club's existence. Ed Watkins, aged ex-mayor of Mena, presided at the banquets for many years. The president's chief function is to stop any speaker who says anything that might conceivably be true. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, sometime governor of Oklahoma, was booed and hooted to his seat in 1938, when he attempted to make a serious political speech. Congressmen and other notables have been joyously howled down, while a ragged tie-hacker who can spin windies is received with honor and acclaim. In 1946 the Possum Club met with an attendance of more than five hundred, and John Ab Hughes, of Hatfield, Arkansas, was elected to the presidency. On this occasion the man who brought the biggest possum was given a prize, and the club sent the possum to a Missourian named Harry S. Truman. The best published account of the Polk County Possum Club is in John Gould Fletcher's book, but many of the finest Possum Club stories have never been published.

## Steep hills and Razorbacks

Some of the backwoods farms in the Ozarks are pretty steep, and steep also are the stories that the natives tell about them. Many of the wildest of these tales are true, at that. The old gag about the farmer falling out of his cornfield sounds like a tall tale, but people who live in the Ozarks know that such accidents are not uncommon.

A reporter asked a man near Fayetteville, Arkansas, how he ever managed to dig the potatoes in his almost perpendicular patch. "We don't have to dig 'taters in this country," was the answer. "We just cut off the end of the row, an' let 'em fall out."

One hears of an orchardist near Rogers, Arkansas, who never bothers to pick his apples at all. He selected the site for the house very carefully, and landscaped the hillsides a bit. So now, when the fruit is ripe, he just opens the cellar door. Then he goes out and shakes the trees, and the apples roll right down the hill into the cellar.

At St. Louis newspaperman once declared that he had visited a place in Baxter County, Arkansas, where the farmers put spiked boots on all their goats, as otherwise the critters couldn't git to the pasture.

In a particularly rugged part of Van Buren County, Arkansas, it is said that the hogs always travel in pairs. "Them hills is so damn' steep," so it is told, "that one pig has to scotch whilst the other'n does the rootin'. They spell each other, O'course. You turn a razorback out by himself, in that country, an' he'll starve plumb to death."



Eureka Springs, Arkansas, is probably the hillest town in the Ozark region, and the folk who live there tell some pretty rugged stories. "The old-timers here are the windiest people I ever seen," said old man Dennis, standing beside the big spring Basin Park. "Take three drinks of that water, an' you'll never speak the truth again." In Webb's restaurant on Spring Street they've got a mural painting by a local artist who signs his work "By Golly." Just below the picture is a large sign: ALL THE LIES YOU HEAR ABOUT THE OZARKS ARE TRUE. People in this community like to recall the man who could look up his big chimney and see the cattle feeding in a neighbor's pasture. The old residents still laugh about a citizen who was digging a well in his back yard, but suddenly busted through the bottom of it and fell right out into the big road.

Once there was a drunken farmer who got lost in the streets of Eureka Springs. The pavement is not level by any means, and the poor fellow was staggering along with one foot on the sidewalk and the other in a deep gutter. A woman came along, and the farmer called to her for help. "You're just drunk," she told him. "Is that it?" he said, much relieved. "By Gosh, I though maybe I was crippled."

The country down around Oden, not far from Pine Ridge, Arkansas, is a bit precipitous in places. "This part of Arkansas is so rough," writes N. L. Hopson (Arkansas Gazette, May 10, 1942), "that when lads around here go hunting they take a dog, a gun and a spade. They use the spade to shovel out a place in the mountains, so the dog can stand and bark at the squirrel."

Related to the yarns about the steepness of Ozark farms is a whole cycle of tales about rocks and hard times. One often hears the remark that a certain piece of land is so rocky you cain't raise a fuss on it. Richard Pilant, of Granby, Missouri, once said about a farm so infertile that "two red-headed women couldn't raise a ruckus there." One neighbor said, "the soil is so thin you couldn't raise hell on it with a barrel of whiskey!"

Under certain conditions, wild razorbacks will attack human beings. Bert W. Brown declares that the onslaught of a wild sow in Stone County, Arkansas, forced him to climb a tree and remain treed for several hours, despite the fact that he fired twice at the animal with a pistol. And the redoubtable Spider Rowland says that once in Sharp County, Arkansas, "wild hogs kept me up a tree all afternoon."

Though stoutly contending that the razorback does not exist "outside the imagination" and that Ozark hogs are just like hogs in any other part of the United States, the guide-book Arkansas comments on the razorback anecdotes:

Like all true folk-myths, the razorback stories have an unknown origin. Assume that someone commented on a temporary scarcity of acorns and the consequent thinness of his hogs. A second man would agree, saying that his sows were able for the first time to squeeze through the garden gate. A third would testify that he could now hang his hat on the hips of his hogs. The next would aver that his swine had to stand up twice in order to cast a shadow. One man was almost bound to swear that his hogs were so desperately starved he could clasp one like a straight razor and shave with the bony ridge of its back.

What the scientific folklorists would think of this theory I don't know, but it's in the official guidebook of the State of Arkansas, and I quote it here for the sake of the record.

It is a **strange** thing that the backwoods farmers, the boys who actually raise hogs, should delight in telling windy stories about how small and thin and puny their animals are. While the Chamber-of-Commerce people, who live in town and do not raise hogs at all, should be in such a perspiration to deny these tales.

Wild hogs are sometimes seen with what appears to be a big ball of dried mud on their tails. There is an ancient wheeze to the effect that this weight causes a razorback to "sleep himself to death." As the ball grows large and heavy, according to the tale, it pulls the hog's skin back so tight that the animal can't get its eyes open. Being blinded, it cannot find food enough to keep alive.

Not far from Eureka Springs, Arkansas, there are several round pot-holes in the bed of a little creek. It is said that the pioneers threw heated stones into these pits, and scalded hogs there. The place is known as Hog Scald to this day.

For the logical ending of all big-hog stories we cite a tale attributed to Bod Burns of Van Buren, Arkansas, although the old-timers say the yarn was old before Burns was born. Bob, repeated what he called a "legend" that the Ozark Mountains owe their very existence to the activities of great prehistoric razorbacks. In ages past, according to this theory, the Ozark country was flat, covered with giant oaks. The acorns were much bigger than they are now, and the hogs which fed upon the acorns grew to gigantic size. When the mast failed one season, these colossal beasts became desperate with hunger, and went raging up and down the land in search of food. They rooted

deep in the ground, scattering rocks and trees and gravel every which way. This "tearin' up the earth" produced the deep hollers and high ridges that we call the Ozark hills today.

#### Fabulous Monsters

There are many legends of gigantic beasts and fabulous varmints in the Ozark country. Hillfolk tell them to their children, just as parents elsewhere used to entertain their offspring with yarns about dragons, centaurs, griffins, mermaids, and the like. Perhaps the children don't really believe all this, but it sometimes amuses them to pretend that they do, and thus the tales are preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next. Some of these items seem to be local, confined to certain clans or family groups. Others are much more widely known, and have even been published in the newspapers.

One of the latter is concerned with an extraordinary reptile called the gowrow which terrorized rural Arkansas in the 1880's. Several stories about the gowrow were attributed to Fred W. Allsopp, sometime editor of the Arkansas Gazette. According to the legends, the gowrow was a lizard-like animal about twenty feet long, with enormous tusks. There is a persistent report that gowrows hatched from eggs, soft-shelled eggs as big as beer kegs. Some say that the female carried its newly hatched young in a pouch like a possum, but the old-timers do not agree about this. The gowrow spent most of its time in caverns and under rock ledges. It was carnivorous, and devoured great numbers of deer, calves, sheep, and goats. Perhaps the creature ate human beings, too.

A traveling salesman named William Miller was credited with killing a gowrow somewhere near Marshall, Arkansas, in 1897, and many wild stories were told about this exploit. There is no record that Miller ever showed the carcass of the animal to any local people. Miller once declared that he shipped the gowrow's skin and skeleton to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. But a newspaperman who interviewed the officials at the Smithsonian was unable to confirm Miller's claim.

Down near Argenta, Arkansas, the old-timers used to speak jokingly of a mythical anachronism known as the jimplicute. This was a kind of ghostly dinosaur, an incredible dragon or lizard supposed to walk the roads at night, grab travelers by the throat and suck their blood. It is said that the jimplicute was invented by white people shortly after the War between the States, to frighten superstitious Negroes.

A man who worked in the timber near Waldron, Arkansas, said that the lumbermen down that way were always joking about the whistling wampus, also known as the whistler. This was supposed to be an immense black cat with supernatural intelligence, which lured woodsmen to their doom by whistling at them from dark cedar thickets. When a timber worker was asked where he had been or required to account for an unexplained absence, he answered that he'd been out hunting the whistler. Another fellow in the same vicinity said that lumbermen all over the country belong to a secret society called Hoo-Hoo and that the name represents the beguiling cry of the whistling wampus. According to the guidebook Arkansas (1941, p. 214) the "Concatinated Order

of Hoo-Hoo" was organized at Gurdon, Arkansas, in 1892. Old newspaper files tell of a national convention held by the Order of Hoo-Hoo in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, January 29, 1906. A street parade was followed by a banquet at the Hotel True-lock, where "twenty-three Kittens were initiated and the degree of Black Cat was bestowed upon them."

It is said that the hickelsnoopus and the ring-tailed tooter are members of the wampus or hoo-hoo family, enormous cats which go screaming through the forests at night. But so far there has been no definite information about these creatures.

The Arkansas newspapers gave a great play to the "behemoth" which appeared in White River, early in June, 1937. A farmer named Bramlett Bateman rushed into the town of Newport, Arkansas, crying that there was a whale in the river "as big as a boxcar, like a slimy elephant without any legs." A lot of people hurried out to look, and several reputable citizens declared that they saw the creature. Newspaper reporters described the beast at great length, but the press photographers drew a blank. The Newport Chamber of Commerce combined with Bateman to fence in the place, and then charged twenty-five cents admission. Signs were put up along the roads for miles around, THIS WAY TO THE WHITE RIVER MONSTER.

The snawfus, according to some backwoods folk, is just an albino deer with certain supernatural powers, puzzling to human beings, but not dangerous. Some hillmen in Arkansas say that it can make tremendous leaps into the treetops; one man told a story of a snawfus that was a big white buck which

could "fly through the timber, quiet as a God damn' hootowl." A woman near Protem, Missouri, said that as a girl she heard the snawfus described as a deer-like creature "that hollers hallyloo in the pineries of a night" and is never seen by ordinary human beings at all. If a man should see a snawfus it's a sign that he ain't long for this world. "Most of the stories you hear about the snawfus is lies," she added, "like these here fairy-tales that folks tell their children."

Rich soil and big vegetables also belong the Ozark story-tellers yarns. There are extravagant tales of cornstalks as big as trees, with ears and grains in proportion. The Ozark people also claim to have the biggest pumpkins, sweet potatoes, turnips, apples, enormous trees, and watermelons.

Our local tales of big watermelons always make the tourists laugh, but melons do grow pretty large in Arkansas. I have seen growing melons that looked as big as barrels, and was told that one of them would weigh about 150 pounds. A man near Hope, Arkansas, according to Time (June 22, 1936), raised a watermelon that weighed 195 pounds, and there are stories of much larger melons.

Many of the wildest hunting stories begin with an old-timer exaggerating the abundance of game in the early days. It is not easy to tell just where the truth leaves off and the truth leaves off and the exaggeration begins. The old hunters all say that in the 1870's wild pigeons came to the Ozarks in vast flocks that actually darkened the sky, almost like an eclipse of the sun. There were so many birds that they sounded like a cyclone a-coming. They alighted in such numbers that they broke big branches off the hardwood trees.

Turkeys, ducks, coons, squirrels, rabbits, and big black bears are some of animals found in the Ozarks of enormous size and number.

Some of our most striking stories about serpents, lizards, turtles, arachnids, and insects are folk beliefs rather than tall tales. But there is often an intimate relation between the superstition and the windy story. Consider the case of the joint snake, by way of an example.

The common glass snake, or joint snake, is a legless lizard with a long brittle tail. When the creature is attacked, the tail snaps into several segments which wriggle about and attract attention while the reptile creeps away unseen, to grow a new tail several months later. This much is true, as any scientific snake man will testify.

Many hillfolk have seen joint snakes break apart, and most of them believe that the pieces join together again as soon as the danger is past, so that the joint snake goes on its way as good as ever. This is pure superstition.

The legend of the hoop snake is common in the Ozark country. Nearly all old-timers believe that a certain kind of snake puts its tail in its mouth and rolls hoop fashion through the hills. They also believe that the hoop snake has a deadly sting in its tail. It is true that there are snakes with horny appendages on their tails, but scientists say that these snakes are not poisonous, nor do they roll about like hoops. There have been honest farmers who swear that they have seen hoop snakes rolling through tall grass, and there is no doubt in my mind that they are telling what they believe to be the



truth. But the herpetologist are all agreed that the hoop snake is a myth.

Perhaps many of the hoop snake stories and others were told to children in order to keep them out of the high grass. Or maybe some hillfolk really believed that hoop snakes and other varmints were somehow connected with the powers of evil.

#### Most Famous Backwoods Superman--Davy Crockett

Tellers of tall tales require heroes of superhuman strenght and colorful accomplishment. "It has been said," writes John Gould Fletcher "that in a society which is not industrial, the usual folk tale is one of physical prowess, and it is true that such are extremely common in the Ozarks." Apparently many of the backwoods demigods are somehow evolved from historical characters. Sometimes the storytellers just borrow a great man's name, but often they make free use of his outstanding peculiarities as well. Some of the wildest windies ever heard in the Ozark country are based on the adventures of Colonel Davy Crockett, the bear-hunting Congressman from Tennessee.

Whether or not Crockett ever spent much time in the Ozarks I do not know, although he certainly stopped in Little Rock on his way to join the Texians in 1835. No matter, for it was not the historical Crockett who came to the country "a-ridin' a catamount, with a b'ar under each arm"; who always killed buffalo with his bowie knife, to save ammunition; who ate a bear-skin for breakfast, and rode a wild razorback from Fayetteville to New Orleans; who made a fire by whacking one of his important members against a flint-rock and catching the sparks in a piggin of elbow grease.

Even today many Arkansas notables speak of Davy Crockett with a kind of wondering affection, almost as if he were a native Arkansawyer. They feel that a man who could twist the tail off a comet, and do the other stunts credited to Colonel Crockett, must have grown up in the Bear State. The old-timers still call Arkansas by the old name, although the panty-waist legislature of 1923 changed the official title to the Wonder State. Some writers point out, however, that Arkansas was quite a place, even before Colonel Davy came to the territory. Avantis Green repeats an old tale that when Crockett visited a Little Rock saloon he asked: "What are thos slippery things all over the floor?" The bartender answered: "Oh, them's nothin' but eyes. The boys had a little fun gougin' last night, an' I ain't swept up yet."

High wind and funny weather

The hotel-keepers and Chamber-of-Commerce people tell the tourists that there is no really bad weather in the Ozarks. But the truth is that it gets pretty hot sometimes. John Gould Fletcher, a native of Little Rock, the only distinguished literary figure that Arkansas has yet produced, gives the real low-down when he writes:

The Ozarks, though having six peaks of over two thousand feet, will never be a successful summer resort...Summer, as any native son or daughter can testify, often starts in May, and does not end till the middle of November. Its first part is usually humid, with tremendous thunder-storms; its last part is usually intensely scorching and dry...In summer, all is an overpowering blaze of humid torpor under an eternal scorching sun.

A business man in "ena, arkansas, said that it got so dry here one summer that his office girl had to fasten stamps on

envelopes with a stapler. "It's so dry here right now," he said earnestly, "that the cottonmouths carry little vials of water to prime themselves before they can spit cotton."

"It got so dry here last summer," a farmer said, "that our old sow went all to staves, and wouldn't hold slop unless we soaked her in water over night. The hell of it was," he added, "that we didn't have no water to soak her in."

"Just before the wind hit our place," an old tie-hacker said, "I was a -settin' out by the corncrib. The smokehouse just fetched one big jump, an' then flopped its wings an' sailed off like a ragged-tailed buzzard. When I come to myself I was down the well, a-straddle of a churn, an' I warn't hurt a bit. The house an' all our buildin's was plumb gone, an' it rained shingles all evenin'."

#### Fish stories

Many backwoods communities harbor vague and ancient tales of a big fish, which is often glimpsed but seldom clearly seen. There is a definite impression that this fish is somehow supernatural and that a fellow who sees it is a changed man from that day forward. Some go so far as to identify the big fish with the Devil, or at least with one of the Devil's agents. "That there fish," said an old deacon with a wry grin, "has made liars an' sabbath-breakers an' blasphemers out of half the men in our settlement." Sermons have been preached against the fish, much to the amusement of the ungodly, by visiting clergymen who did not realize that the monster was only a humorous legend.

Probably these old stories have a grain of truth somewhere in their depths, for there really are some mighty big fish in

the Ozark streams. alligator gars weighing 100 pounds are not uncommon, and much bigger ones have been reported occasionally. Elton Daniel caught a gar 7½ feet long, weighing 204 pounds, in the Ouachita River near Camden, Arkansas. According to Ozark Life a 300-pound gar was taken in Green's Lake, Bradley County, Arkansas. Avantus Green says "it is the gospel truth that alligator gar in White River go as heavy as 300 pounds and as long as twelve feet." But these are real flesh-and-blood fishes, not to be compared with the monsters celebrated in the fireside legends.

Guides on the lower White River used to tell stories about a giant gar known as Big Al. There was a general notion that Big Al was immortal and had other supernatural characteristics. One man said that he had seen this fish three times in the Arkansas River, and that it was not a "natural" gar at all, but some kind of a demon in disguise. It was about thirty feet long, he said, and was known to have killed many swimmers, being especially fond of Negro children. In some sections, when a young woman mysteriously disappeared the neighbors used to say "Big Al must have got her," meaning that she had run off with a stranger. Old rivermen say that this monster has been known as Big Al for more than a century, and is believed to have preyed upon Indians before the white man came. Big Al sometimes ascends the Arkansas River as far as Little Rock. The great gar's real home is in the Mississippi, somewhere above Natchez.

In the Black River country one may still hear tall tales of a monstrous redhorse called Jube, captured after a struggle which involved more than one hundred men and boys, and almost

assumed the proportions of a little war. The flesh of this great fish, pickled and dried and salted down, fed whole villages for several years. The natives saved the scales and used 'em for shingles, so that there was a new roof on every house in the valley. They even say that a blacksmith near Newport gathered up some of the smaller scales, riveted wooden handles on them, and sold 'em for shovels. Some of these shovels are still used, it is said, in Jackson and Independence counties, Arkansas.

And so, the folktales have been since the beginning of time. The habit of telling stories is one of the most primitive characteristics of the human race. The most ancient civilizations, the most barbarous savages, of whom we have any knowledge have yielded to investigators clear traces of the possession of this practice. The specimens of their narrative that have been gathered from all the ends of the earth and from the remotest times of which we have written record show traces of purpose, now religious and didactic, now patriotic and political; but behind or beside the purpose one can discern the permanent human delight in the story for its own sake. So long as there are people there will be a need for entertainment, and none can be found or created more unique than that of folktales, passed down for generations by word of mouth.

Even though folktales are not entirely true, it is nice just to relax and get taken away by them into the part of one's imagination that does say yes-I believe. Therefore, finding yourself able to laugh at unrealistic situations and for a time being able to be transported away from the harsh realities of life.

Material taken from the following sources:

- 1-Folktales and Society by Linda Degh
- 2-The Folktale by Stith Thompson
- 3-We Always Lie to Strangers collected by Vance Randolph
- 4-The Talking Turtle collected by Vance Randolph
- 5-Tall Tales of Arkansas by James R. Masterson
- 6-American Folk Humor edited by James N. Tidwell
- 7-Who Blowed Up the Church House? collected by V. Randolph
- 8-Folklore of Romantic Arkansas by Fred W. Allsopp
- 9-Arkansas Gazette
- 10-Arkansas
- 11-Time
- 12-Ozark Life

## Upcoming festivals

Can you give me a list of the folk and craft festivals that will be held in Arkansas in 1975?



Here's a list that we took from the first draft of the calendar that the state Parks and Tourism Department puts out each year. Since the calendar wasn't complete, the events and dates still are tentative, so be sure and check with the town's chamber of commerce or with the county's cooperative extension office before packing up to go to a festival that might have been postponed.

Here are the festivals, by month:

### MARCH

Flintstock Arts and Craft League Show, Marshall, late March or early April; Cleveland County Crafts Festival, Rison, 14-16.

### APRIL

Arkansas Folk Festival, Mountain View, 11-13, 17-20 and 25-27; Arts and Crafts Fair, Malvern, 4-6; Ozark Foothills Handicraft Guild Show, Mountain View, 18-20; Pioneer Days Arts and Craft Festival, Monticello, 20-26; Third Annual Suggin Folk Life Art Show, Newport, 20-30.

### MAY

Arkansas Territorial Restoration Crafts Show, Little Rock, 3-4; Sidewalk Arts and Crafts Show and Sale, Eureka Springs, 23-25; Ouachita Arts and Crafts, Mena, 24-25; Arkansas Blue Grass Festival, Heber Springs, 23-25; Eighth Annual Prints, Drawing and Crafts Show, Arkansas Arts Center, May 16 to June 15.

### JUNE

Greenwood Arts and Craft Fair, Greenwood, 13-16; Ozark Native Crafts Fair, Mt. Gaylor, no date.

### AUGUST

Art show, Hope, 18-23; Prairie Grove Clothesline Show, Prairie Grove, Aug. 31 to Sept. 2.

### SEPTEMBER

Craft Fair, Siloam Springs, no date; Grand Prairie Festival of Arts, Stuttgart, 13-15.

### OCTOBER

10th Ozark Frontier Trail Festival and Craft Show, Heber Springs, 10-12; Village Arts and Crafts Show, Bella Vista, 17-19; War Eagle Arts and Crafts Show, Hindsville, 17-19; Arts and Crafts Fair, Perryville, 24-26; Arts and Crafts Fair Show, Hot Springs, no date; Ozark Treasures Arts and Crafts Fair, Fayetteville, no date.

### NOVEMBER

Arts and Crafts Fair, Russellville, 1-2; Ozark Folk Center Craft Forum, Mountain View, 3-30 (Saturday and Sunday Music); Little Rock Arts, Crafts and Design Fair, Convention Center, no date, and Antiques and Crafts Show and Sale, Conway, no date.