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An Amazing Adirondack Music Opportunity

by Sandra Hildreth

4 Comments



In a recent Mountain Lake PBS e-newsletter, something caught my eye. Like many, I suppose, I get too many emails and often give many nothing more than a quick scan, if that, before hitting the delete button. But there was a little, green, Adirondack summer image with the words "Songs to Keep" superimposed. What's this?

The teaser text read "The story of a woman who traveled the Adirondacks collecting rare folk songs that are being rediscovered

and rerecorded 60 years later. Help make this project happen by investing in it!". It hooked me and I clicked. Not only am I very glad that I did, but I wanted to share it with *Almanack* readers because it is definitely worth your attention.

Mountain Lake PBS, Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY), SUNY Plattsburgh and The Adirondack History Center Museum have partnered on this multi-platform project to increase awareness of and access to the Marjorie L. Porter Collection of North Country Folklore. You can click on the link for yourself and read all the details, but here it is in a nutshell. This woman did a lot of research 60 years ago, recording and interviewing musicians. Remember, this is way before the internet and mp3 songs and digital recordings, etc. It's even before there were many television sets here! These were people who perhaps had learned these folk songs from their grand parents – loggers, miners, farmers trying to pick a living out of our rocky, Adirondack soil.

So, the above mentioned partnership is working on bringing this music back to life with a documentary, a songbook, and a series of concerts. The project involves not only regional Adirondack singer-songwriters and musicians like Sue Grimm, Celia Evans, and Dan Berggren (I recognized them in the video clip), but some more nationally known performers like the Bacon Brothers and Peter Yarrow and Paul Stookey from Peter, Paul & Mary (most baby boomers should remember them). The video clip that explains this much better than I and you can hear some of the music performed as well. I want to be at one of those concerts!

The best part of all is that this endeavor has been accepted as a Kickstarter project. That's where you can read about it. Kickstarter is a web site that only accepts what it feels are genuine, worthwhile fund-raising efforts. I'm going to take a chance that this is such a unique thing, that the Adirondack Almanack won't mind me using it as a way to spread the word. Kickstarter allows worthy projects to post a description of exactly what they want to do and how much money they need to raise. "Songs to Keep" needs to raise \$15,000 in 30 days. They offer a list of premiums for sponsors at the various levels.

You can sponsor a project that you would like to see succeed very easily, at any financial level you wish. No money will be collected or charged to your credit card until the number of pledges meets their stated goal. A win-win situation. You're not contributing to an uncertain venture that if it doesn't succeed, you have lost your investment. Your money goes to something that has been reviewed and deemed likely to succeed – plus, you will receive a premium in return for your contribution. You do have to register with the web site, or sign in via Facebook. I must have registered a year or more ago and totally forgot about it because I never receive any annoying emails or announcements or anything from them. So when you visit the web site and see that there are a number of supporters at the \$75 level, I'm one of them. If you are at all uncertain about Kickstarter, click on the "What is Kickstarter?" button at the top of their home page.

If you are interested in the history of the Adirondacks and the people who lived here – and the songs they wrote and sang, then I urge you to give "Songs to Keep" your attention and hopefully your support. They only have 30 days to raise the funds. Spread the word and let's make this happen!

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