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Listening For A Life

Patricia Sawin

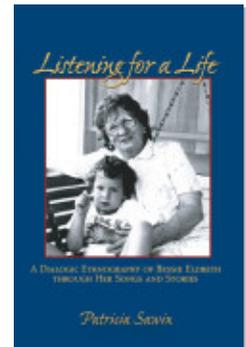
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NOTES

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. Authors of works recognized as classic fine-grained analyses of both text and context tended actually to have acquired a record of both through some special entrée. For example, Bill Ellis relied on tapes made by students who told the ghost stories he had required them to collect but then unselfconsciously reflected on those stories—thus providing natural context—while the recorder was running (1987). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett was able to reproduce from memory a parable she observed her brother employ in conversation (1975). More recent work on context has, however, taken an approach like mine in recognizing that the text can tell you about its previous contexts. Janet Langlois, for example, traces the transmission of a contemporary legend via comments in the story about the person from whom the current teller heard the story, comments that are a crucial part of the truth claims necessary to such stories (1991).
2. I observed that Eldreth employed a similar approach in other poorly defined situations with people she did not know, notably an Elderhostel performance, where she asked, “What do you want me to sing?” and a music teachers’ workshop, where she began by asking, “Is there anything special you might like to hear?” and, receiving no answer, got more specific, “Would you like to hear a hymn or some kind of ballad?”
3. Two recent examples of the effectiveness of daring to express one’s opinions and press interlocutors for what one wants to know come from Matthew Gutmann, who gained some of his most important insights into the multiple “meanings of macho” from passionate outbursts evoked when he argued with his Mexican male friends (1996), and Elaine Lawless, who discovered battered women’s principled resistance to telling the part of their stories in which only their batterer has agency precisely by pressing them when they appeared reluctant to tell her about the physical violence they had suffered (2001).
4. As Billie Jean Isbell notes, additionally, it is usually simply the case that our ethnographic subjects are far less interested in us than we are in them (1995).
5. Richard Bauman pointed this out to me at a juncture when I myself was frustrated with Eldreth’s apparent unwillingness or inability to reflect upon the stories she had told me.
6. This may be another explanation for Eldreth’s lack of interest in stories of my own novel doings, even though she professes to care very much about me.

7. The festival is now known as the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, but I retain the name used when Eldreth performed there.
8. Folklorist Cecelia Conway, videographer Elva Bishop, and I collaborated on a half-hour video, “Bessie Eldreth: Songs and Stories of a Blue Ridge Life,” funded by the North Carolina Arts Council.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett cites an article by Daniel Goleman published in the *New York Times* that suggests that this kind of gap occurs in men’s as well as women’s life histories and is a product of the memory process: “Memory is selective not only for certain kinds of events but also for certain periods. The middle years in particular tend to fade” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1989:126; Goleman 1987:C1). Even if this is the case, however, women’s narrative neglect of their husbands holds a different political significance than the reciprocal situation.
2. Patricia Beaver points out that the egalitarianism is reinforced by Calvinist religious traditions, according to which humans are inherently sinful and there is no possibility of improving one’s real worth through individual effort, so everyone should be seen as equal (1986).
3. Greenhill notes that interviewees often supply such accounts in response to researcher questions, as was indeed the case when Eldreth told these stories in response to my attempts to understand her early history.
4. Eldreth’s repeated insistence on her own truthfulness and her backup reliance on the word of elders whom she constructs as authoritative speakers were not necessary for her immediate listener, me, since I was prepared to take anything she said as gospel. Her approach strikes me as a preventive measure designed to fend off anticipated challenges to her veracity. In the next chapter I take up the implication that these bespeak her continued involvement in discourse with prior interlocutors.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Puckett is careful to point out that her exacting empirical study characterizes only the specific community in eastern Kentucky that she studied (2000). However, many of her descriptions also seemed very reminiscent of speech behaviors I had observed Eldreth, her family, and neighbors engage in. I do not want to make blanket claims about “Appalachian speech ways” or to overgeneralize Puckett’s specific findings. When our observations coincide, however, I have taken the liberty throughout the book of citing her comparable findings to identify ways in which Eldreth is probably employing a conventional way of talking as a resource (rather than inventing a pattern unique to herself).

2. During the 1990s I was involved in research both with dairy-farming families in the Catskills of New York state and with rural Cajun households in south Louisiana. I wondered how people managed to feed large families on modest salaries or slim profits from a family business. In both instances I learned that a primary strategy for making do with less cash was to produce food oneself from a much earlier stage, whether that meant growing a garden and freezing or canning produce, raising and butchering a pig or beef steer, drinking some of the milk from one's own cows, collecting and boiling maple sap for syrup, enlisting children to pick fruit at a pick-your-own farm for jams or desserts, or making items like ice cream for which even purchased ingredients cost significantly less than the final product.
3. The distinctions among (1) a strictly labeled narrative or story, that is, an account of something that happened on a particular occasion and that is evaluated so as to make a point (Labov and Waletzky 1967); (2) a generalization narrative concerning the kinds of things people regularly did (Greenhill 1994); and (3) what one might term merely a discussion of past practices tend to blur both in the conversational settings among familiars in which many stories are actually told (Polanyi 1985) and even more so in the semi-interview situations in which Eldreth engaged with me and other folklorists and anthropologists.
4. Given that models of "women's personal narrative" and "women's talk" were derived largely in the 1970s and 1980s and largely on the basis of middle-class European and Euro-American women's speech (for example, Coates 1996, Johnstone 1990, Kalčík 1975, Langellier and Peterson 1992, Tannen 1990; while Yocom 1985 and Baldwin 1985 offer exceptions only insofar as they treat rural working-class women) and that such models have since been criticized as overly general and essentializing, it should probably not surprise us that Eldreth has different implicit notions of both appropriate topic and effective form (see Sawin 1992, 1999).
5. In Sawin 1999 I discuss Eldreth's rejection of my tendency to respond to her stories with what I saw as supportive analogous cases. There I argue that the differences between Eldreth's narrative practice and the practices that seem so comfortable to me and other women of my cohort have more to do with working-class versus middle-class experiences, with the fact that she grew up in the 1920s and 1930s, while I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s, and with her desire to depict herself in a particular way in conversations with particular listeners, me among the most recent, than with any difference between "Appalachian" and "mainstream" narrative models.
6. Note again the difference between Eldreth's practice and earlier observations that women are more likely than men to narrate their ordinary labors (Baldwin 1985; Yocom 1985).
7. Holland teaches in the Department of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (where I am now fortunate to be her colleague); Conway in the Department of English at Appalachian State University in Boone. When Eldreth

performed at the Festival for the Eno in Durham, North Carolina, on July 3, 1988, Conway invited us to spend the night at her home in Chapel Hill. She wanted Eldreth and me to meet Holland and fortunately suggested that we videotape our conversation. In the transcript of this conversation, CC is Conway and DH is Holland.

8. The story that begins in this way will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.
9. In her apparent obliviousness to stereotypes of the hillbilly, Eldreth contrasts with her granddaughter, Jean Reid, who frequently sang with her grandmother. Reid, a nurse, is alone among Eldreth's thirty-plus grandchildren in having wanted to learn the old ballads in her grandmother's repertoire. At the Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C., in 1987, Reid reports, she constantly found herself battling images of mountain folks as ignorant, uncouth, impoverished, and premodern. She recalled as typical a question (during a cooking demonstration) regarding whether they had microwaves, to which she responded in a parodically exaggerated hillbilly accent, "Yes, maaa-am!"
10. I am grateful to Terry Evens for this observation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. As we will discuss in the next chapter, Eldreth's experiences of wordless communications—visions and physical sensations—from a supernatural or spiritual source were so convincing that they enabled her to challenge her husband's skeptical authority on at least some issues, and her role as a singer and teller of ghost stories has allowed her to interact with educated, middle-class people and with listeners who responded to her as audience to entertainer in ways that would not have been possible with family members and local friends.
2. Elmora Messer Matthews notes that in the Tennessee ridge community she studied, it was very common to name children after living family members, especially the parents' siblings and cousins, and that such naming within a family showed a "lack of sex differentiation" (1966:28).
3. Eldreth also tells a few stories in which her mother made similarly direct positive remarks, for example, as reported in the chapter on work, "Prettiest little porch I ever had was the one you built for me." Most often, however, these remarks in Eldreth's stories are made by men. An older woman's participation, in fact, bespeaks the kind of transformation in women's speech interactions over time that the remainder of this chapter discusses.
4. As we shall see in the chapter on singing, Eldreth has upon occasion had to weather accusations of being "proud" since she started being involved in public performances.
5. This kind of nonreciprocal naming between employer and employee has a double valence, of course. The employer's elaborate care to use the respectful form of address actually reinscribes inequality while—or by—attempting to deny it. But Eldreth is either unaware of or chooses not to explore this aspect of the practice.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Will Cramer, a student in my Folk Narrative course at the University of North Carolina in the spring of 2003, collected stories of personal experience with the supernatural for his paper, “‘Have you ever seen a ghost?’ Reconciling Real Experience with Disbelief.” Cramer observed that his sources made the explicit assertion “this is true” only in instances when the listener was not well known to the teller. Eldreth similarly seems particularly inclined to attest to the veracity of a story when performing for a public audience—see the “Bad Girls” story in this chapter—and to me, whom she thus marks as someone she expects to be skeptical.
2. In this chapter I use versions of “Pointing Hand” and “Bob Barr House” that Eldreth told to Spitzer and Cornett, versions of “First Married” and “Bad Girls” that she told for the performance organized by Thomas McGowan at ASU, and versions of “Aunt Polly Reynolds,” “Doctor Graham House,” “The Flood,” and “Light in the Bedroom” that she told to me.
3. See Baughman 1966: motif E411.10, Persons who die violent or accidental death cannot rest in grave; E413, Murdered person cannot rest in grave; E231, Return from dead to reveal murder.
4. For example, it seems to be regarded as regrettable but not particularly remarkable, indeed almost inevitable, that young men will drink with their buddies, drive recklessly while drunk (endangering themselves and others), get into fights, and threaten each other with bodily harm. By contrast, a woman who were to do these things would excite substantial comment. During the period of my fieldwork, a young man in the community shot and killed a man with whom his wife had been “running around.” This was regarded in the community as a *tragedy* for both the killer and the victim, but as a *scandal* as far as the woman’s behavior and involvement were concerned. The differential response suggests how much more remarkable and condemnable it seemed for women to behave in violent or antisocial ways than for men to do the same things. (Although nationwide statistics from a much later period cannot be applied directly to the mountains sixty or more years ago, they are suggestive. According to the FBI, during 1991 only 10 percent of the documented murderers in the United States were women [Miller 1993:E1].)
5. In some tellings, Eldreth even implicitly contradicts this denial, associating the song with a protective light whose source is divine:

I’ve got a little song that I sing about the light.

Did I ever sing it to you?

PS: Unh uh.

BE: It’s | now this is the one that I sang on the broadcasting station in Winston-Salem; I told that story about the light? and then I sung this song:

Oh, a glorious light is dawning

That I see, that I see

And it shines, and it shines

Over me, over me.

It is glowing, Jesus, showing
 Love to me, love to me
 Ceasing ever, resting ever [sic]
 That I see, that I see

And within its holy border
 I can go, I can go
 Ne'er again my feet shall stumble
 That I know, that I know

There's a light, there's a light
 That I see, that I see
 And it shines, and it shines
 Over me, over me.

PS: You made that song?

BE: No, that was an old song I used to sing years ago.
 A long, long time ago I used to sing that song.

6. Significantly, Baughman's motif index (1966) only offers two alternatives: E321, Dead husband's friendly return and E221, Dead spouse's malevolent return to protest with spouse for evil ways. The idea that a dead husband would return out of spite to torment a wife for having been more virtuous than he was does not seem to make sense to Anglo-American storytellers, although one might speculate that this omission could reflect collectors' preference for male tellers, male bias among cataloguers, or the reluctance of female tellers to make such a point to male collectors.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. My dissertation (Sawin 1993) did not mention Eldreth's practical jokes, and one of the most memorable events of my defense was Beverly Stoeltje's insistence that I include this facet of Eldreth's personality in any future account.
2. On several occasions Eldreth or one of her adult children explained to *me* how much they wanted to convince another member of the family to go to the doctor for an evident health problem, all the time lamenting that they could not, of course, bring the matter up with the person concerned.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. These recordings, along with those of all my interviews with Eldreth, have been archived in the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
2. My dissertation (Sawin 1993) includes a complete list of the songs Eldreth and I

- recorded, with annotations on their authors or traditional provenance and on well-known recorded versions.
3. For many, I have determined known authors and dates of composition; others I so identify from stylistic or anecdotal evidence.
 4. Frank C. Brown called this lyric a “purely North Carolina product,” and Belden and Hudson second his analysis on the grounds that practically all versions available to them had been collected from North Carolina or adjacent areas of neighboring states (Belden and Hudson 1952: vol. 3, 334). Songs in *The Frank C. Brown Collection* will be indicated by the abbreviation “FCB,” followed by the volume number (2 contains ballads, 3 contains folksongs) and the song number.
 5. It would be more accurate to say that Eldreth sings one version of this extremely variable and well-studied song cluster. See McCulloh (1970) for a full discussion. Norm Cohen (1981:491–502) summarizes McCulloh’s argument.
 6. Such memories do not, of course, guarantee that a song was of great age. Nolan Porterfield recounts the instance of Jimmie Rodgers and “My Mother Was a Lady,” which Eldreth sings. As far as Rodgers was aware, this was a traditional song. Under pressure from recording executive Ralph Peer to provide copyrightable material, Rodgers concluded that he had “fixed the song up” enough from the oral versions he had learned to take out a copyright. Edward B. Marks, a New York songwriter who had created the song a little over thirty years previously (1896) threatened to sue (Porterfield 1979:119).
 7. Belden and Hudson note: “This piece rather strikingly shows how a merely sentimental song may be taken up by tradition. No doubt a parlor song originally—its author and history are not known—it has become a traditional song in the South and Midwest” (1952: vol. 2, 631).
 8. Mary Greene shared this information on the basis of field research she did for an exhibit at the Appalachian Museum at Appalachian State University.
 9. For a more detailed discussion of Jenkins and the adoption of his songs into the rural oral repertoire, see Wilgus (1981).
 10. My name is Ticklish Reuben from way back in old Vermont.
And everything seems ticklish to me.
I was tickled by a wasp; I was tickled by a ‘jacket;
I was tickled by a yellow bumble bee.

Snoops the lawyer, never had a dollar.
Snoops the lawyer, charges an awful sum.
Snoops the lawyer, never wore a collar.
No one ever took a word of his advice.

Both songs seem to have northeastern connections. “Ticklish Reuben” was recorded, with brass accompaniment, by the singer Cal Stewart (in character as “Uncle Josh”) on Victor 1637 sometime between 1902 and 1919, probably relative-

- ly early in that time range. Eldreth's version resembles Stewart's except for a couple of minor verbal changes and one omitted line, so this recording seems the most likely source, if her memory of how she learned the song is accurate. The song was also recorded by North Carolina musicians Charlie Poole and Frank Luther, who were active in the northwestern part of the state but not until the 1930s. (I am grateful to David Camp, who traced the history of this song for me on the basis of his extensive work in the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North Carolina.) I have not been able to locate a recording or any other documentation about "Snoops the Lawyer."
11. Sidney Killens returned to North Carolina after a stint at coal mining in Kentucky or West Virginia. Archie Green explains that although Collins was not a miner, newspaper photographs of the miners who helped with the rescue effort forged a link in many people's minds (Green 1972:125). Eldreth recalls Uncle Sidney crying when he sang the song, and it appears either that he made up a story to impress his twelve-year-old niece or that she has rationalized a connection over the years, since she remembers him claiming that he and Collins were "real good buddies" from working together in the mines.
 12. Conway cites a number of examples from the generation of Eldreth's parents: "Tommy Jarrell's father, Ben, bought the first record player in the Round Peak community. In Kentucky, Jean Ritchie's father was the first to own such a machine in his mountain community. . . . A photograph of the West Virginia Hammons family ancestors shows one holding a fiddle, one holding a shotgun, and the third holding an Edison player" (Conway 2001:36).
 13. This tendency is not in evidence when Eldreth sings hymns in church, where she is accustomed to the piano finishing out a line before it is time to start singing again.
 14. I observed such instances at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, when Glenn Hinson gathered the western North Carolina participants for informal "kitchen picking" sessions, and at a party Mary Greene gave for me just before I left Boone at the end of the summer of 1988, when the "old time" musicians with whom I had made friends through Greene urged Eldreth to sing with them.
 15. I am indebted to David Whisnant for sharing his reflections on Eldreth's style of vocal production.
 16. Eldreth does not sing all the subtypes of songs of love and death that Abrahams and Foss enumerate, notably, no songs of lovers' separation by family, but she does sing songs of "separation of lovers by their own devices" (for which Abrahams and Foss give "Knoxville Girl" as an example) (1968:114–115) and "American [that is, sentimental] songs of death" including (among ones they list) "Little Rosewood Casket" and "Letter Edged in Black" (1968:120–121), as well as religious folksongs in which "death is seen as something to be desired as an end to the struggle, and as a way of becoming reunited with loved ones," for which they give "Wayfaring Stranger" (1968:125).

17. The chorus runs:

I'd be so happy, with treasures untold
If teardrops were pennies and heartaches were gold.

18. Woody Guthrie wrote this satirical song, set in Reno, Nevada, in which the lawyer tries to woo a Hollywood starlet and is killed by her cowboy husband.
19. Exceptions include a few purely upbeat songs, like the Carter Family's "Keep on the Sunny Side of Life" and Jimmie Rodgers's "Peach Picking Time in Georgia" and, interestingly, her version of "Pretty Polly"/"Wagoner Boy." Belden and Hudson describe this as "one of those folk lyrics of unhappy love" (1952:275). Eldreth, however, sings a variant (closest to FCB vol. 3, #250C) in which the boy, as usual, declares his intention to leave because the girl's parents do not approve of him, and the girl responds by deciding to run away with him.
20. In terms of favorite themes, Eldreth's repertoire is markedly similar, though not identical, to that of Almeda Riddle, although Eldreth (fifteen years younger) sings far more twentieth-century compositions and far fewer Child ballads. Roger Abrahams discovered that Granny Riddle knew, but did not care to sing, several types of songs that existed in the oral repertoire of her region, including "courting dialogs, forlorn-lover lyric songs, good-time and frolic songs, songs of mockery . . . , ballads of sexual embarrassment, and 'coon songs' . . ." (Riddle 1970:157–158). He further notes,

But if a theme or situation conforms to her standards of interest and beauty she will learn every song she encounters which explores the subject. This is why she sings so many dying soldier, cowboy, graveyard, railroad, and parted-lover ballads, shape-note and brush-arbor songs. Her repertoire is all of a piece. (Riddle 1970:158)

Eldreth likes many of the same kinds of songs, and her repertoire is similarly "all of a piece." As the following discussion will reveal, however, her reasons for choosing particular pieces and rejecting others are more complex than the simple "standards of interest and beauty" Abrahams attributed to Riddle, though perhaps not more complex than Riddle's actual reasons.

21. A review of titles reveals the dominance of this theme:

"I Won't Have to Worry Anymore"
"I've Got a Home in Glory Land That Outshines the Sun"
"Mansions over the Hilltop"
"My Name Is Written There"
"Victory in Jesus"
"When I've Gone the Last Mile of the Way"
"Where the Soul Never Dies"
"Where We'll Never Grow Old"

22. Swensen (1988) and Jones (1988) observe, respectively, that heaven as home and meeting loved ones in heaven are among the most common themes in the religious music of

Appalachia. And Jeff Todd Titon reports that, in the independent Baptist church he studied, many members recount having been saved as the result of a promise to a dying relative who wanted to be able to see them again in heaven (1988:175–177). It is interesting to note, however, that this belief is not universal. Beverly Patterson reports that the Primitive Baptists she studied talk rather about having a “home in the church” and place great value on the nurturing of family and friendship ties on earth because “there will be no recognition of one’s family members in heaven” (1988:69). I would speculate that the appealing image of a family reunion in heaven may have been introduced into southern religious discourse by the popular revivalists at the end of the nineteenth century, which would explain why it was not picked up by the most conservative sects, ones that intentionally held to the old ways at that time.

23. I am indebted to Bron Skinner for sharing his insights into changes in his reasons for adopting certain pieces as he shifted from singing for his own pleasure to performing.
24. These are texts of the three religious pieces Eldreth has composed:

“Someone’s Last Day”

words by Bessie Eldreth, borrowed tune
written 1980s

I was standing by my window one bright summer day
My thoughts of tomorrow seemed so far away
And then I remembered, it was someone’s last day
They’ve gone up to heaven, they’ve gone there to stay.

chorus:

Someone, yes, someone’s last day
Some soul has drifted away
They’ve gone up to heaven, I know there to stay
For, yes, it was someone, yes, someone’s last day

Mother has gone and left us here below
We’re bowed down in sorrow in this world here below
We’ll meet her up yonder in heaven to stay
For, yes, it was someone, yes, someone’s last day.

chorus:

Someone, yes, someone’s last day
Some soul has drifted away
They’ve gone up to heaven, I know there to stay
For, yes, it was someone, yes, someone’s last day

I know I have loved ones that’s gone on before
We’ll meet them up yonder on that beautiful shore
And when we see Jesus, “Well done,” he will say
For, yes, it was someone, yes, someone’s last day

chorus:

Someone, yes, someone's last day
Some soul has drifted away
They've gone up to heaven, I know there to stay
For, yes, it was someone, yes, someone's last day
Oh, yes, it was someone, yes, someone's last day

"Someday I'm Going to Heaven"
words and music by Bessie Eldreth
written circa 1985

Someday I'm going to heaven
A place I've never been
I'll live up there forever
In a world that will never end

Thank God I'll have a new body
I'll live forever more
I'll sing and shout with the angels
Over on the golden shore

So many clouds are gathering
Sometimes I can hardly see
But I got a glimpse of heaven
What a wonderful sight to see

I could hear the saints all shouting
Around God's great white throne
Thank God, I am so happy
We'll soon be going home

I can hardly wait for tomorrow
When we will all be together again
I'll get to see my mother
And take her by the hand

We will stroll through the gates of glory
We'll be singing a brand new song
Thank God, I am so happy
We'll soon be going home

“There Are Times When I Am Lonesome”

poem

There are times that I am worried
And there are times that I am blue
There are times that I am lonesome
And know not what to do

And when I look around me
And see someone in despair
Then I look up to Jesus
And I know he answers prayer

There's someone out yonder
If I could lend them a hand
To tell them about my savior
And lead them to the promised land

Tell them that we love them
Try to show them the way
Tell them about our savior
Kneel down with them and pray

I know I love my Jesus
And I know he understands
And I know he walks beside me
And he takes me by the hand

I know he will go with me
Through heaven's open door
Then we will all be together
Over on the golden shore

Don't weep for me, my children
Don't weep for me, I say
For I have gone to be with Jesus
On that great Judgment Day

I will meet you over yonder
Over in the glory land
Then we'll all be together
We will all understand
Yes, we will all be together
And then we will all understand

25. Jimmie Rodgers sings this line as, “And yours, you would allow.” Given his pronunciation (“an—ee—urs”), his version could have functioned as transitional step between the original and Eldreth’s wording.
26. “Our Home Is So Lonesome Tonight”
 words by Bessie Eldreth, borrowed tune
 written 1977

One morning my husband told children goodbye
 Our home is so lonesome tonight
 I know he has gone and left us alone
 Our home is so lonesome tonight.

Our home is so lonesome tonight
 The lamp won’t be burning as bright
 He’s gone up to heaven, that’s one thing I know
 Oh, it is so lonesome down here.

He told me on Sunday that he had to go
 Our home is so lonesome tonight
 He’s gone up to heaven, I surely do know
 Oh, it is so lonesome down here.

Our home is so lonesome tonight
 The lamp won’t be burning as bright
 I know he has gone and left us alone
 Oh, it is so lonesome down here.

I know I have loved ones that’s gone on before
 Our home is so lonesome tonight
 We’ll meet them up yonder on that beautiful shore
 Our home is so lonesome tonight.

Our home is so lonesome tonight
 The lamp won’t be burning as bright
 I know he has gone and left us alone
 Our home is so lonesome tonight.

27. Eldreth refers to a neighbor and member of her church, also a widow, who apparently had a very loving marriage and who often talks about how much she still misses her husband.
28. At the beginning of the tape, her singing sounds self-conscious, but I believe she fairly quickly forgot that I was recording and during most of the time was not performing for the recorder. I went into the living room and wrote field notes so as not to distract her.

29. Compare Karen Baldwin's remarks on women's conversational "visiting":

A visit can be easily engaged and just as easily interrupted for the doing of other things. . . . the artistry of visiting can be put down at any time a diaper needs changing, a quarrel needs unsnarling, or a batch of chicken needs turning in the oven. A visit can be picked up again after interruption without any loss of coherence, or it can be accomplished right along with the washing of dishes after a meal (1985:154).

30. Mary Greene—a neighbor of Eldreth's as well as a scholar—stressed that, as late as the 1970s when she started playing in a bluegrass band, she worried that she would bring scandal on her family by being seen in the kinds of seedy bars where her band was contracted to play. She soon realized that she was safe because the kind of people who would be bothered by her being in a bar would be extremely unlikely to go into those places themselves. This illustrates, however, how strongly self-segregated are the musical/social activities of religious and nonreligious people.

31. Gerald Pocius documents an interestingly comparable interaction between Newfoundlanders Vince and Monica Ledwell. "Mr. Vince" was a recognized singer in the community, although he himself admitted that his wife was the better singer and knew more songs. He would sometimes seek his wife's advice about songs, although he ignored her attempts to offer corrections (1976:112–113). Pocius became interested in collecting from "Mrs. Mon" as well but discovered that this was a delicate matter: "In another instance, Mrs. Ledwell began to sing 'That's What God Made a Mother For.' Mr. Vince soon got up and started to bring out plates for tea, rattling them near the microphone on the table. He showed little interest in the singing of his wife, and felt that it was time to shift our attention to other matters" (1976:117).

The situation here is complicated by the challenge that the ethnographer's interest in the wife presents to the husband's status as singer. As with the Eldreths, however, it appears that the husband tolerates the wife's singing around the house and begins to object only when her home singing starts to be transformed into a kind of semipublic performance.

32. Eldreth told me that Mary Greene had found the words to "Voice from the Tombs" for her a few years before I got to know the two of them. In April of 1990 she asked me to look for the words to two songs: "The Old Crossroad," which I was able to find almost immediately in Leonard Roberts's *In the Pine* (1979), and "Sweeter than the Flowers," which I finally discovered in Dorothy Horstman's *Sing Your Heart Out, Country Boy* (1975) while doing research on the sources of her repertoire.

33. In some parts of the South such a presentation is actually called "a special" or "a special song" (see Titon 1988:214), although Eldreth and the members of her church do not use this term in a marked sense.

34. Mary Greene and others recall Shea's performances. I have not been able to confirm her recollection via written documentation.

35. Compare Charles Briggs's analysis of Holy Week rituals in Hispanic Northern New Mexico: "As the texts are performed, a tremendous amount of formal elaboration is focused on these sign vehicles. . . . however, *estuvo muy bonito*, 'it was very beautiful'

- refers to the success of the performances in generating profound religious feeling; form per se is not singled out for comment” (1988:327).
36. Eldreth employs the phrase “I don’t care *to . . .*” where a speaker of Standard American English would say “I don’t care *if . . .*” In other words, she means that she does not object to doing whatever she is discussing, not (as I, for example, would mean if I employed that locution) that she does not like to do it or would prefer not to do it.
 37. In recent years, folklorists have turned their attention to the issue of whether the people who participate in folklife festivals actually benefit from this involvement (Camp and Lloyd 1980) and, more specifically, how participants understand and frame their experience (Bauman and Sawin 1991). A study of other participants in the 1987 Festival of American Folklife, in which I was involved, suggests that the “folklife festival” frame is sufficiently unlike any other within which participants have operated that festival participants often struggle to understand “what it is that is going on here” (1991:296). Some find grappling with and arriving at a formulation of their frame to be an enlightening exercise; others experience uncomfortable confusion and distress as a result of not understanding how they fit in and what they are supposed to be doing. In Bauman, Sawin, and Carpenter 1992 we suggested that the people who were most satisfied with their activity at the festival had arrived at relatively complicated understandings of multiple frames and laminations—for example, the difference between work and a demonstration of work—and that those who failed to make these distinctions were the most likely to be confused and unhappy. Eldreth exemplifies how the opposite approach can also have positive results.
 38. I am indebted to Eric Olsen, former librarian of the Appalachian Collection at Appalachian State University, for showing me a videotape of one of Williams’s lectures (at Sue Bennett College, probably in the 1970s, although the tape was undated) and advising me that Williams had given essentially the same lecture on many occasions.