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Congratulations to the editors, Graham Seal and David Hults, and to the Centre for Australian Studies at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Western Australia. Subscription details are printed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

One of our friends overseas, Iris Davey of Llandaff North in Wales, has sent us a Daily Mail report (5th May 1987) about the Jump Rope for Heart Campaign conducted by the British Heart Foundation - and about some of the mixed feelings and responses to adults taking over children's traditional play. Bob Hughes, an educationalist who runs a consultancy for play workers in Lancaster is quoted as saying 'It's one thing for adults to supervise play, to teach children new or lost skills and then stand back; (it's) quite another to prefabricate and control their games'.

We agree. Many of us who are seriously involved in children's folklore have often agonised about the thorny problems of adult intervention and appropriation. Yet children sometimes can't get by without 'a little help from their friends' in the form of friendly adults. In the case of 'Hightown Primary School' in Melbourne, the subject of Heather Russell's Play and Friendships in a Multi-Cultural Playground, the natural playground culture had been disrupted by immigration and high population turnover at the school, and adult intervention was directed towards helping children retrieve their traditional games and pastimes.



EDITORIAL

We dips our (juvenile) lid to a new publication in Australian folklore, the first edition of a badly needed journal Australian Folklore, No.1. We well remember No.1 of this Newsletter (did we write it all ourselves?)*

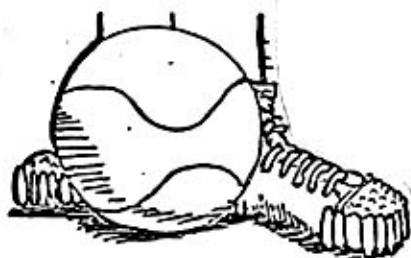
Australian Folklore had no such need, as five different contributors have provided scholarly articles on topics such as the folklore of women, Derbyshire well-dressing in Australia, Italian traditional music in Adelaide, Azaria Chamberlain and the media charivari and a survey of 'bush' literature since Russel Ward. There are also a number of interesting notes of which two relate specifically to children's folklore: David Hults comments on the growth of American Halloween customs in Western Australia in Trick or Treat? and Graham Seal's note Cabbage Patch Dolls - Folklore in the Making? refers to Perth television reports about the 'mysterious powers of cabbage patch dolls', and queries whether this is an urban legend in the making.

The introduction of a 'Jump Rope Challenge Trophy' in the British campaign is as obnoxious in concept as it is in terminology ('jump rope' is neither a British nor an Australian term - what's wrong with 'skippy'?). Children do and will skip for fun and for the benefit of their heart and health in general, with or without a small amount of adult encouragement. It is not necessary to introduce yet another competitive element into children's lives.

Gwenda Davey
June Factor

(* We didn't write issue No.1 by ourselves - it just felt like it. Our pioneering issue also contained an article by S. Wishart, R. Chapman and A. Carmody.)

Rebound



A recent ABC series 'Talking History', included two programs on folklore. One of the editors of ACPN (June Factor) was the studio guest for the program on children's folklore, and she has since received a number of letters from interested listeners. Below we publish a few extracts. Readers comments for subsequent issues are welcomed.

My husband's recollection is not so much to do with an actual game, but acquiring the where-withal! During the Depression in the early 1930's, he was at school in Kilburn, where the Australian Glass Manufacturers had their big glass factory, making - in this instance - cool drink bottles. At various intervals, these were smashed (presumably for treatment and

re-use) in huge heaps, and left until required. The Dad of one of the boys knew when this happened - he worked there of course - and told his son, who passed the word round. As soon as possible, lunch-time or after school, the place would be inundated with young lads all making their way over the piles of glass - no shoes of course, no-one in those areas could afford them. It has made Fred shudder and wonder why no-one cut an artery - at least - but he can't recall any injuries at all, despite the fact that they smashed bottles which were unbroken. For what reason did they do their death-defying act?? (Well -- not quite.) Because in those days a glass marble was put into the top of the bottle under the lid, I guess to equalise the pressure when the bottle was opened. Again, no-one could afford to buy them, so they used their initiative - and goodluck.

My sister and I, in a Perth suburb, used to spend hours making a 'house' - under a large tree, with no low branches; we'd clear all the sandy soil, mark out rooms, 'build' furniture with the sand, or boxes, or whatever - yet I can't ever remember actually playing in them; we'd talk all the time we were making the house but we never seemed to have time to organise a game in it. But I can't remember feeling any lack of that, so I guess our game was simply in doing all the preparations!

Pat Fraser

When, as a teenager, I helped at an evening activities centre for poor children in Bristol during the time of the Abdication crisis in 1936, I used to hear the children sing the following not very nice little rhyme -

*Hear them coming down the street,
Mrs Simpson's stinking feet,
She's been married twice before,
Now she's knocking on Teddy's door!

* or perhaps "Smell" - I can't remember exactly.

Also as a child growing up in Hertfordshire in England, we used to say CAVE to warn of someone coming (either an adult or another child) whom we didn't wish to see our game, but we pronounced it "CAVEY".

My husband assures me that as a little boy at primary school in country W.A. he and the other small boys, used to skip with a skipping rope, though this is generally regarded as a girls activity. It would be interesting to know whether there is any more or less interchanging of boys' and girls' games since the advent of more talk (though comparatively little action) of the equality of the sexes.

Fay Hisberd

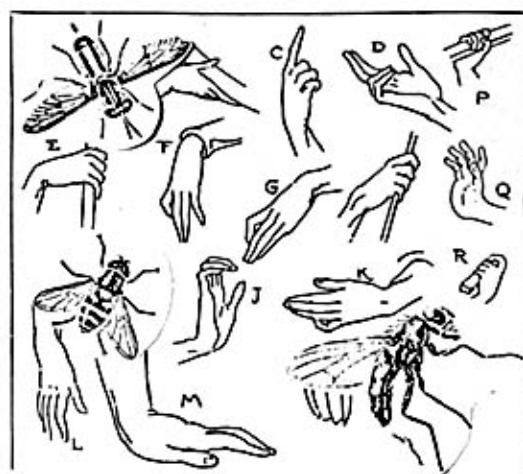
A letter from Newfoundland

It was kind of you to send me the "walking and tickling rhyme. I was much interested in the use of the rhyme for tickling since I only know it as a singing game. A variant of the rhyme produced the title for Edith Fowke's book of Canadian children's rhymes, games and songs: Sally Go Round The Sun (Toronto/Montreal, 1969; also published in New York).

But, but, but - it's not the kind of tickling rhyme that I am studying and searching for. In mine the out-stretched forefinger describes a large circle in the air (see P.S.) (while the baby or small child watches) then continues in gradually decreasing spirals and ends with a poke in the child's belly or a tickle under the chin. The words can be baby talk nonsense, "Gitchee, gitchee, gitchee, goo!" or "Bore a hole, bore a hole, bore a hole, bore!" Sometimes there's a more elaborate spoken chant: "Gonna get you (3 times) - Got you!"

or

Windy bow, windy bow,
Punch her in the belly-o!



or

Fly around, buzzard,
Where you going to land?
Right here - and get me a bite!

Any flying creature: fly, mosquito, bumble bee, hawk, crow - can be used as the hand circles. There are many variations about its landing, or biting, or stinging, or picking up a chicken. I've several versions about an airplane circling and landing.

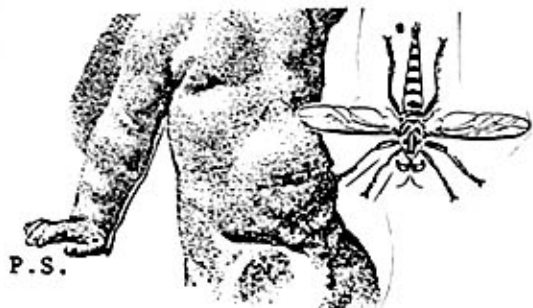
Objects that have some circling possibilities can also be used: clock, spinning wheel, etc.

A hot auger is described as boring a hole in the baby's basket (i.e. bread basket, i.e. belly) in Scottish rhymes. A little pig is to be slaughtered in German and Swedish rhymes, and so on.

And, I've found that some of the rhymes or chants used in counting-out rhymes, or certain children's games, e.g. "Tap on the Icebox", can be utilized for circling and poking. A very few of my texts are adapted from the game rhymes in which you make circles on a child's palm before tickling.

In other words the circling gesture with the forefinger and decreasing spirals in the air before "landing" to poke or tickle is the basic element: all the verbalization is added. I'm charmed by the enormous variety of the verbalization.

Besides many American and a few Canadian examples in English, I have Spanish-American and Pennsylvania German ones, two or three from England, a handful from Scotland, only one from Ireland, but ten or more each from Germany and Sweden.



P.S.

The width of the first and largest circle of the spiral probably varies very considerably. If the text is about a hawk, buzzard, bumblebee or mosquito, all high flyers that circle around, the initial circle may be quite large. If the rhyme is about boring with an auger or stabbing with a knife, it may start much smaller.

Although I have stressed the great variety in the texts, I suspect that this may be true primarily in the United States and possibly also in Australia. In older national traditions I have the impression that though there are many variations the topics for each country are more limited, e.g. the baby described as a pig to be killed seems typical of Germany and Sweden, but is not common elsewhere.

What this note has failed to include is: any discussion of (1) who uses this gesture-plus-verbalization; (2) on whom, and (3) with what reaction on the part of the victim? Most of the time it would be

an adult playing with a baby in a crib or perambulator. I've seen a Nova Scotia grandmother do it to the small grandchild she held in one arm. I've also seen a little girl do it to a baby in a crib, but I think the girl was imitating something she learned from an adult. The victim can range widely in age. If it's a baby, it has to be old enough so that its eyes can focus on following the circling gesture. Children not yet of school age are the best victims. They watch with delighted apprehension while the activity is going on and then squeal, usually with laughter, when they are poked or tickled.

It would be especially helpful if anyone kind enough to contribute an Australian version would give the age of the do-er as well as that of the victim, and also describe in detail the child's reaction. Many of my rhymes are completely without context.

Herbert Halpert

(Emeritus Professor Herbert Halpert is writing from the Department of Folklore at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada.)

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Children's clothing in the early part of this century

by Ethel Beed

When one thinks of the clothing babies wore in the early part of this Century, we wonder how the little things survived.

Firstly, they wore a stiff binder to support their backs, then a flannel chemise, then the necessary napkin with a flannel one over that. A flannel petticoat and a madapolam one came next. (Madapolam was a cotton material between calico and lawn.) The madapolam one was trimmed with embroidery. Then of course a dress (often smocked) and an elaborate pelisse. (A pelisse was a very full coat with a very big collar, almost a cape.) This was made of flannel or silk, according to season and

was worn out of doors. This was always embroidered with hand work. Then, of course, no baby ever went out without a bonnet of some kind, and a silk handkerchief over the baby's face.

Babies wore long clothes beyond their feet until they were about six weeks old, when they were "shortened". Of course the Christening robes were always very long and elaborate.

When I was a baby in arms I had lovely smocked cream cashmere dresses with a pelisse to match.

As my sister and I became older we wore darker clothes, but always with a white



Our underwear consisted of a white madapollam chemise, drawers and petticoats of the same material. These always had embroidery edging, and on Sundays we had pink or blue ribbon threaded through the beading on petticoats and drawers. The drawers were buttoned on to a "liberty bodice", I think they were called.

I might mention that all these garments (with the exception of the drawers) had to be starched, and ironed with a flat iron which was heated on a fire stove (even at the height of summer).

As I had no brother I didn't know a great deal about boys' clothing. I know that boy babies were dressed similar as girls until they walked. When I was at school the boys seemed to wear navy serge trousers and some had sailor suits. On the whole I think they dressed as men. The boys wore lace up boots to school and some of the girls wore button up ones, although some of the boys came to school barefooted in summer. My sister and I always wore shoes. My grandmother always seemed to be making little boys' trousers for neighbours and needy people out of the legs of their fathers trousers.

At about the end of the First World War (1918) Fuji Silk was introduced and this became very popular for underwear. Most girls used this material for their trousseau. Also "bloomers" were introduced about this time too, I think. Then came "scanties", and the nether garments have continued to decrease in size.

(Mrs Ethel Beed was born in Sydney in 1904)

...

pinafore over same. These were very attractive and had embroidery insertion and beading for threading ribbon through.

We were lucky, as my mother and grandmother were both very good needlewomen.

On Sundays, for Sunday School, we had a special outfit. In Winter we had velvet dress with Maltese lace collars. I remember having a dark blue, brown and a wine colour. In summer we had hailstone muslin trimmed with lace and tucks. With these dresses we had a pink or blue sash and white shoes and sox. We also had white muslin hats very stiffly starched and trimmed to match the frocks and with blue or pink bows.

Growing up in the early 1900s -- Conclusion

by Nancy Malseed

In the early days of this century, life was much harder on the farms. Before cars and good roads, the only transport was horse and buggy. Children learnt to ride almost as soon as they walked, and helped with jobs on the farm. In those days, most farms were handed on from the parents, farming being the only way of life they knew or wanted.

Two of my interviewees, brothers, remembered starting school for the first time in 1910. Before school, they each milked a cow, and separated the cream. Then walked 2½ miles to Drik Drik school. When they arrived, it was closed. No-one there. So, the elder one having learnt to write at home, left a note, pushed under the door, to say they had attended, but no-one there. Then they walked back the 2½ miles to find that on that day, school was at Greenwald, 2½ miles in the other direction. These were called part time schools, and school held alternate days at Drik Drik and Greenwald. These two very small places are in the Western District near Dartmoor. The teacher usually boarded with the parents of one of the pupils and rode about seven miles.

Drik Drik school had only ten pupils. They played football, cricket, rounders, and all the games mentioned in the town schools, but they had one game peculiar to Drik Drik. In the schoolground, there were two plum trees, a few feet apart. Teams were chosen, and every pupil armed himself with a long stick. The winning side was the one which knocked most opponents out of the tree. One of my interviewees told of the serious eye injury he received when poked in the eye with one of these sticks. He was taken to a nearby house, kept in the shade for a couple of hours, then taken home. His eye has never been the same! The nearest doctor was 40 miles away in Portland.

These boys helped with the farm from their earliest days, as did all others in similar circumstances. The story was told, for many years, of the landowner, riding along the road, who saw a mob of Herefords, a horse, but no rider in charge. "How could this be?" he mused -- rode up closer, and saw a very small boy, about four years old, behind the horse's ears, taking the Herefords from one part of the property to another.

As in the towns, Church was a highlight of their lives. In that area, there was a saying -- "Two things they NEVER forget to do -- milk their cows, and go to Church on Sundays."

As well as the religious aspect (and Sundays were as strictly observed as in the towns, in the early days), Church was a special occasion, when people from outlying farms got together and heard news of one another. After the service, the men gathered at one side of the Church door and the women at the other. Children played together. People took it in turns to have the minister to Sunday dinner.

At night, just as their town cousins did, they sang hymns around the piano or organ.

Properties were often scattered, and there was no time for boredom -- everyone had so much to do. The girls, as they grew up, helped in the house -- large breakfasts, then fresh cakes to be baked for morning tea -- a solid midday meal -- large afternoon tea, then substantial night meal. Some girls helped with the farm work too, and the garden. Needlework done through the year, by kerosene lamp, was put aside for the Glory Box, but in the meantime, exhibited at the Pastoral and Agricultural Shows. As in the towns, these were highlights of the year. Before cars, many boys rode to the shows -- 18 or 20 miles was nothing.

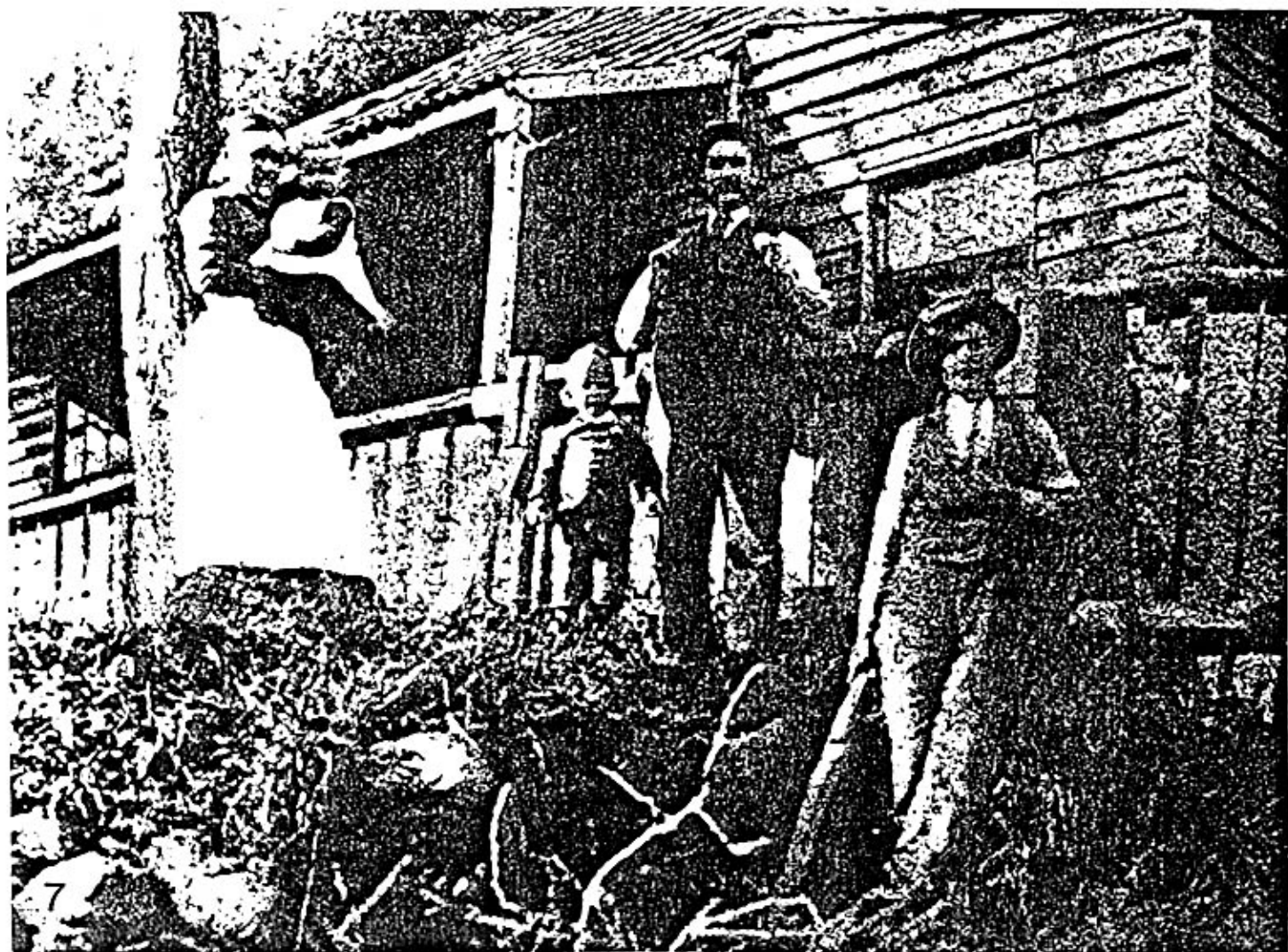
A personality at the Western District shows was the fine looking aboriginal, Mulga Fred. He was an expert whipcracker, and the crowds would watch, fascinated, as he flicked the ash from the cigarette in a man's mouth. One boy tried to emulate him. He could find no-one willing to volunteer with a cigarette, so he went into the bush, found a tall gum tree, and selected the smallest newest leaf. Then he practised until he could click off that leaf with his whip. This sort of skill showed the determination of the boys on the land to succeed.

There was often a dance after the Show. One young farmer, who had been given a ride in a neighbour's buggy, stayed for the dance, as they did. After a good night, the neighbour dropped him at his home, leaving the boy to walk the last two miles. He arrived home at 5.30 -- had breakfast, changed, and went straight to his farm work. "It was the way of life" he said.

A story was told of the early 1900's, which typifies the loneliness of the farms in those days.

A woman was alone on the farm, her husband away on business. Her baby died. She had no telephone -- no transport except a horse. So she put her little dead baby in a kerosene box, saddled the horse, and drove 25 miles with the box in front of her, to take it to the Undertaker in Portland.

Some farmers had two or three properties, some distance apart. This necessitated some of the sons living away for weeks on end. One boy, who left school at 14, was driving a springcart, laden with three months provisions, when the horse stumbled on a tree root, and everything was tipped out. Jars of plum jam spilled over clothes, bedding, bags of potatoes and onions.



Nearly 70 years later, my interviewee has memories of that winter at the coast property, trying to get plum jam out of food and clothing.

Conditions at the huts were primitive. No running water -- a tap and a water tank outside. An open fireplace, a straw palliase on a four poster bed, and a camp oven, on which damper was made. The camp oven was made of cast iron, round, with a diameter of about 14" or 15". It had a cast iron lid. The oven had a handle which was fastened to it, then hooked on a chain attached to a bar across the chimney. A fire was lit under the camp oven, and hot coals placed on top. The damper, a scone-like mixture of flour and water, was cooked in this. My interviewee described damper as being "like bread gone wrong."

He, and others in the district lived alone in the huts, riding home at weekends. At night, the boys would ride to one another's huts, and play cards before a roaring log fire. Conditions were primitive, but the friendships made in those days have lasted all their lives.

Of course, not all left school early. Some went away to school -- boarding school in Melbourne or Hamilton, or boarded in town while attending High School.

With a good horse it was sheer delight.

Sport played a big part in their lives, mainly football and cricket. There were no football coaches, no training sessions. Their active lives must have provided the training. One interviewee said he often had to go around 120 rabbit traps, skin about 30 rabbits (he did two a minute) then ride 15 miles to get home in time to change and catch the special train to the Football. "I didn't bother to open the five gates on the way" he said "just jumped them. With a good horse it was sheer delight." (He played in a football team.)

Not only the football teams, but the spectators too, used the special train to the football. Because of time, the matches didn't start until 3 pm. Footy fever was as strong then as now, but with a difference. Players would never change teams. Team loyalty was strong. There was no payment, and they bought their own clothing and paid their own expenses. Shorts were to the knee, and one very very tall thin man, who felt the cold, insisted on wearing long underpants under his shorts.

To start the game, a piece of iron was struck with a stick. Later, a cowbell was used. If there was a death in any player's family, they wore black armbands during the game.

The teams in the association were Dartmoor, Winnap, Myamyn, Wallacedale, Heywood, and a team of aboriginals from Condah Mission. Sixteen of them were aboriginals -- excellent footballers and good sports. They were known as "The Wanderers".

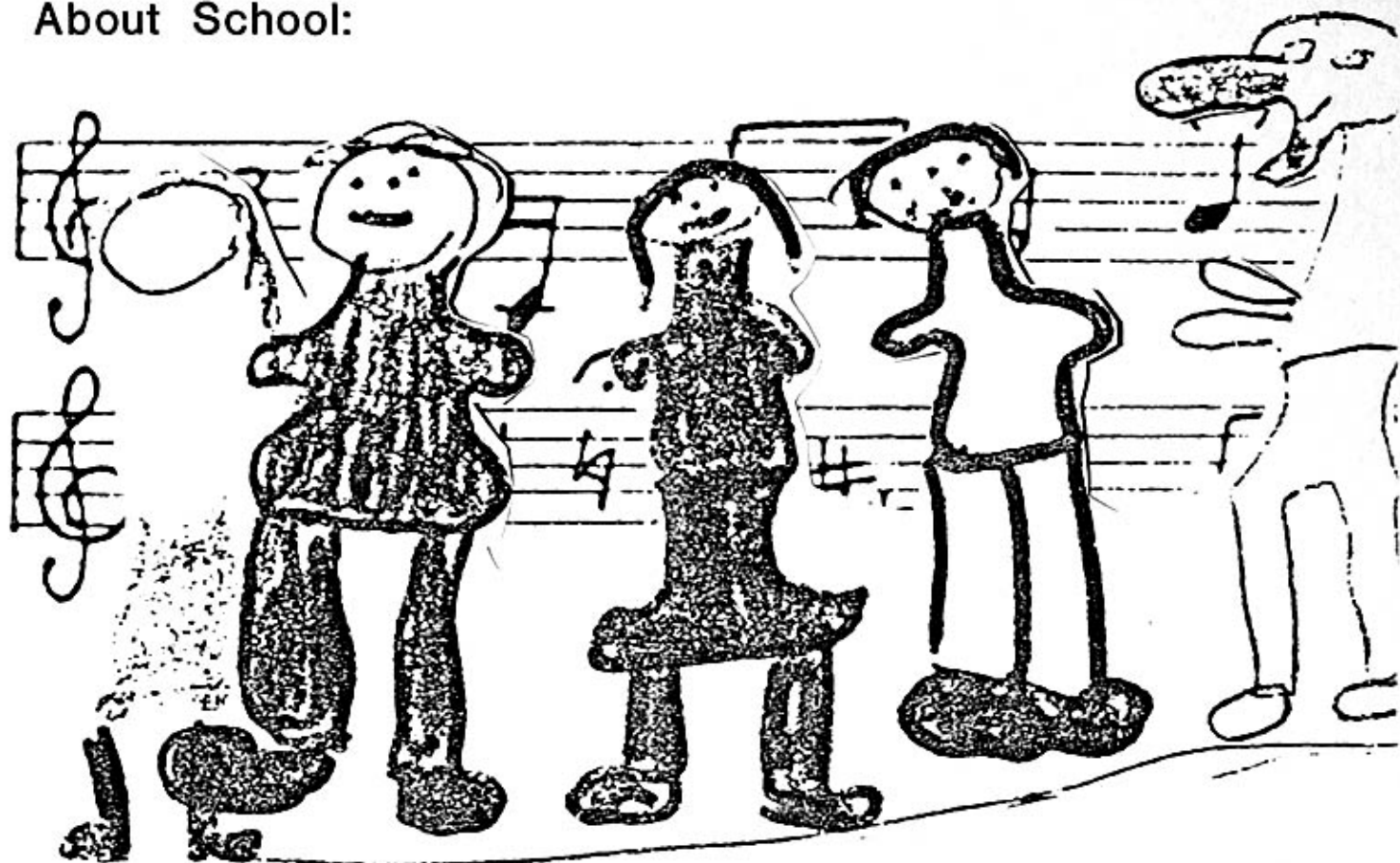
In the summer, cricket was played with the same emphasis on good sportsmanship. Two prominent families played a "grudge" match every shearing season. Their teams consisted of their own big families, plus some workmen. Looked forward to every year!

Thinking over all my interviews, the picture emerges of a happy contented childhood, and satisfying life. No-one mentioned illness, or boredom, in spite of hard conditions.

Perhaps they really were the "Good Old Days".

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About School:



rhymes, songs and other childlore about school

Hazel S. Hall

1. Discussion of rhymes

This paper summarises one section of a larger study which was made between 1978 and 1984, in which children's playground lore was considered in the overall context of children's poetic and musical development. I was interested in the way the children used the rhymes, and the effect of function and use on the structure of the rhymes.

All the texts are recited or sung in a ritualistic setting. In ritual, repetition is extremely important, thus the level of semantic redundancy is considerably higher than that of casual speech.

Of the 712 playground rhymes recorded, the thematic content of 59 rhymes was based on school and teachers. Most of these were traditional parodies on well-known songs, but sometimes the opportunity arises for a new creation, for as Newell (1883) demonstrated a hundred years ago, children are conservative, but they are also creative. The following is based on a popular television commercial:

Come on school, blow up, blow up,
Come on school, blow up, blow up,
Come on school, blow up, blow up.
(H5B 020)

The performers delight in relating fitting punishments for the teacher who has allegedly forced them to suffer. This suffering is often imagined rather than real, which emphasises the ritualistic atmosphere. Some of the tortures designated for the teacher include being bitten on the toe, shot with a gun, pelted with hand grenades after burial, thrown overboard from a boat, and being set alight on a bonfire. Apparently recent moves towards the abolition of corporal punishment have not influenced the brutality of the rymes; if anything, verbal violence seems to have increased. Or has it? The following "Old Smokey" variation was passed on by some secondary school informants who appeared to enjoy both the recitation and the anticipation of my possible reaction:

On top of Old Smokey,
All covered in shit,
I fucked my poor teacher
With a forty foot dick,
I shot her with pleasure
I shot her with pride,
I couldn't have missed,
She was forty foot wide.
I went to her funeral,
I went to her grave,
Instead of throwing flowers
I threw hand grenades.
Her body went up (appropriate gesture),
Her body went down,
Her body went plurpp (rude noise)
All over the ground.

(H16 003)



These rymes do not always mean that children dislike their teachers intensely and wish to harm them, although unfortunately this is occasionally so. More importantly, the rymes help to alleviate the frustrations of schooling by verbal violence which is defused through a ritualistic, non-violent medium. Since the victim is often unaware of the existence of the rymes, the performers enjoy a secret advantage over the teacher.

When children say, as they do quite often, that something or someone "sux", the meaning may be either general or specific. Generally speaking, the term "sux" simply means that a person or thing is boring. More specifically, the speaker's anger and contempt is expressed in the words "sux severely". Most insulting of all is the detailing of what is sucked, as in "sux shit", "sux dicks" and the like. However, when "School sux", the usual interpretation is "School is a drag and a bore". Peer pressure is such that groups usually agree that school sux, although individuals may confess that they enjoy school.

2. General observations

Rhymes relating specifically to school and teacher from my study are performed mostly by senior and middle school children: Grade 5/6 (11 examples), Grade 5 (16 examples), Grade 4/5 (5 examples), Grade 4 (18 examples), Grade 3/4 (3 examples), Grade 3 (3 examples) and Grade 2/3 (3 examples). It can be seen that most recordings came from the Grades 4-5 level, and least from the younger grades. Since most rymes were relatively long, this supports the theories of Sanches and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1976) that the verbal art of children is limited by the degree of syntagmatic development as related to overall lesser short-term memory span when compared with adult verbal art (p.80-81). Sexes are relatively evenly distributed: girls (16), boys (19) both sexes (24).

Children preferred to sing the rhymes rather than say them (7 spoken rhymes, 5 spoken and sung, and 47 sung), with 26 rhymes vocally performed and 33 chorally. Although the rhymes are classified as playlore, many probably began in the schoolroom where children enjoy parodying songs during a dull music lesson. It must be remembered that not so long ago, most music programs in Primary Schools were based solely on singing, hence the unusually high incidence of parodies in the present collection. Only 6 of the 59 examples were not parodies on well known texts and/or songs. The melodies used for parodies are shown in Table 1.

Parodies imply a framework on which children can build their own creations. With only a few words of the original changed, the children take over authorship of the text: "We made it up." Parody is also a practice period where children experiment with longer texts and melodies of more diverse tonal structures, hence the parody stage may be regarded as the transition between childlike and adultlike rhymes.

TABLE 1 MELODIES USED FOR PARODIES IN RHYMES ABOUT SCHOOL

ORIGINAL MELODY	FIRST LINE OF PARODY	RECORDING NUMBER
Row row row your boat	Row row row your boat	H1A 017, H1A 037, H1A 055, H1B 006, H1B 038, H5A 015, H8B 012, H8B 019
Dwarves song from "Snow White"	Hi ho hi ho	H1A 019, H5B 048, H5B 049
This old nan	We break up we break down	H1A 018, H4A 001
	We break up we break up	H1A 064, H5A 031a, H5A 031b
On top of Old Snokey	On top of Old Snokey	H1A 020, H1A 045, H1A 062, H4A 006, H4A 022, H4B 009, H5A 001, H5B 024, H5B 026, H5B 027, H5B 028, H5B 034, H5B 038
	On top of spaghetti	H1A 054
	On top of the hillside	H4A 007
	Build a bonfire build a bonfire	H1A 044a, H1A 044b, H1A 060, H4A 015, H4A 017, H5A 004, H5B 029, H7A 006
John Brown's Body	Come to Scoresby come to Scoresby	H1A 059, H4A 018,
	Glory glory Hallelujah	H1A 068a, H1A 068b, H4B 030
	Alle alle allelulia	H4B 029, H7A 060
	My eyes are filled with glory at the burning of the school	H5B 047
Frere Jacques	Maths and spelling, maths and spelling	H4A 053, H7A 015
Come on Aussie come on	Come on school blow up blow up	H5B 050
Po Kare Kare Ana	Kardi Kardi ana	H8B 013

Melodies = 51

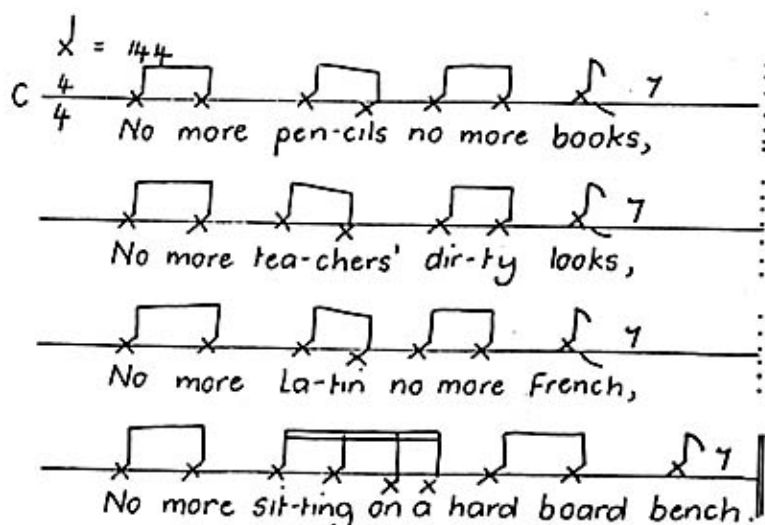
3. Poetic structures

These rhymes are more likely to be longer than rhymes which are more urgent in nature, for example, count-out rhymes. Thus rhymes less than 4 lines in length are extremely rare, and extra verses are found in 24 sung examples. Interestingly, the spoken rhymes tend to be much shorter in length.

4. Rhyming and rhetorical variables

Like most rhymes from this collection, texts are likely to be end-rhymed (42 examples) rather than internally rhymed (10 examples). Unison rhyming, or consonance (6 examples) is scarce, but rhyming by assonance (31 examples) is common. Some frequent combinations are blood/slug, grave/grenades, top/lot, hallelujah/ruler and rat/back. The songs tend towards parallelism (35 examples) rather than repetition of single words (10 examples). The following example shows parallelism in the initial section of each line of the rhyme. This redundancy is echoed in the intonation patterns of the choral performance.

H5B 030: No more pencils no more books.



In only four instances are whole lines repeated, only one refrain is found. This is mainly due to the high level of parallelism in the rhymes, which renders further redundancy unnecessary. Thus if one type of redundancy is used excessively in a group of rhymes, it is unlikely that other forms of redundancy will be frequently exploited.

5. Concatenations expansions and formal rituals

Since the rhymes are longer, and mostly borrowed from the adult genre, the types of concatenations found in games rhymes are rare. Six brief codas or tags are found, but no floating or additive texts are used, and formal ritualistic exchange is absent from all rhymes.

H8B 013: Kardi kardi ana.

H8B 013

Boy: Kar-di kar-di a-na I had a squashed ba-
na-na I threw it at the tea-cher, The
tea-cher said "Come here." I said, "No
fear," With a bot-tle of beer.
Original melody: IV

A noticeable feature in these adult created songs is repetition of rhythmic lines. Triple meter, rare in children's music, is found in three of the parodied tunes. Some of the children had difficulty in keeping time at cadence points as did the young performer of H8B 013, quoted above.

6. Scansion and rhythmic variables

Most of the rhymes (37) are scanned in trochaic feet, but anapestic feet are found in the "Old Smokey" variants. Iambic and dactylic scanning are infrequent, and combinations of scanning are rarely used. Songs beginning with anacrusis are very common (31 examples).

7. Melodic variables and patterning

In general, songs have a wider range and contain more diverse clusters of tones than the songs used for games, which tend to be chanted on a few tones.

Only one chant is tabulated. Extended clusters of five tones are found in 8 examples, with 10 examples using heptatonic clusters.

Most common are clusters of 6 tones (33 examples), which demonstrates the children's ability to choose relatively simple but highly lyrical songs to parody. As the Opies (1959) have suggested, "It is, perhaps, only to be expected that the most memorable verses should turn out to be the work of professional humorists and song-writers" (p.14). It is equally true that children often have the knack of choosing the most memorable verses and songs for parody, and that, when parodied, this material is likely to endure in the oral tradition. Contrary to the belief of some adults, many children have a high level of aesthetic perception.

Melodic redundancy is emphasised in the initial intervals, where 35 songs commence on repeated tones. Most examples (46) commence with repeated tones, but whole repeated lines of melody (4 examples) are uncommon.

Although children choose well-known songs to parody (most of the tunes are folk classics), these are not always chosen within the vocal ranges and capabilities of the performers, hence transcriptions show many inconsistencies with the original melodies.

To young children, the quality of one's singing is of little importance, and they do not always attempt to reproduce a melody accurately note for note. The tune, however popular, is an aid by which the performer can render some amusing lines and gain social mileage, hence the popularity of a melody does not necessarily imply a tuneful performance.

Whether all these melodies are suitable for youthful parody is doubtful. By adult standards, most of the tunes chosen are simple with simple intervals, restricted range, and little or no chromaticism. But it would be true to say that in general the more simple the melody the better the performance.

8. Conclusions

The distinguishing features of these rhymes might be summed up as follows:

Thematic content:	School and teachers
Medium:	Verbal violence
Performance mode:	Sung, choral
Type:	Parodies on traditional songs
Grade/Year level:	4+
Sex:	Both
Length of text:	Longer rhyme with verses
Rhyming:	End-rhymed, rhyming by assonance
Rhetorical devices:	Parallelism
Concatenations:	Rare: occasional codas
Scansion:	Trochaic, some anapestic feet
Anacruses:	Common
Vocal range:	6 tone clusters, sometimes extended
Melodic redundancy:	Repeated tones to commence song; Repeated tones throughout
General:	Show gradual movement towards adult structures in verse and melody



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(Dr Hazel Hall is a musicologist now resident in Canberra. This paper was delivered to the First National Folklore Conference held at I.E.C.D. [Melbourne C.A.E.] in November 1984.)

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