

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

CECIL SHARP APPALACHIAN PHOTOGRAPHS ON DISPLAY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE UNITED STATES

From 1916-1918, English ballad collector Cecil Sharp and his associate Maud Karpeles, both from London, England, traveled the Appalachian region to document the music and photographed some of the singers who shared their songs. *These 24 rare photographs* offer a stunning window into the life of Appalachian people in the period and will be on display for the first time in the United States at *Through This Lens* in Durham at 303 E. Chapel Hill Street from January 20-February 11, 2017.

Exhibition of Historic Photographs

Cecil Sharp traveled the Appalachian Mountain region of the Southeast collecting traditional English ballads during 1916 through 1918.

Traveling with his associate **Maud Karpeles** he made a series of photographs of the people who invited them into their homes and sang.



January 20 Through Feb 11, 2017
Through This Lens
303 East Chapel Hill Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701
919-687-0250
cecilsharpinappalachia.org

The Background Story

One hundred years ago, in the wake of a massive flood of the French Broad River, with stifling heat and disruption, Cecil and Maud set out, with the assistance of John C. and Olive Dame Campbell, and Helen Storrow of Massachusetts, to travel the Appalachian region, first in Madison County, North Carolina, then in subsequent months and years to other counties and other states, including Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia.

Sharp was careful to provide us with a trove of information – we have the names, locations, dates, and personal commentary in his diaries about each singer. Each song and variant was meticulously transcribed by Sharp in music notation, and Karpeles took down the words in shorthand and each evening would type them out. These documents survive at the Vaughn Williams Library at Cecil Sharp House in London. He became friends with many families, dined and stayed with people during the travels. The photographs were not the primary reason for visits, but they have become an important history of the effort to document the ballad tradition. Sharp sent copies to many of the people he and Karpeles visited.

July 25, 2016 marked the centennial of the beginning of the Appalachian song collecting. The result was a strong appreciation of the influence of traditional English music within Appalachian culture, a regard that continues to this day. As with all things American, this influence blended with many other traditions in forming the very vibrant state of music throughout the region.

The North Carolina Folklife Institute and the Country Dance and Song Society are sponsoring the celebration and recognition of this important work. The English Folk Dance and Song Society is providing generous support, and the project is made possible in part by the North Carolina Humanities Council, a statewide non-profit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For more information on the work and travels of Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles visit our website: cecilsharpinappalachia.org.



Cecil Sharp in Appalachia Project
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