

# **CAPTAIN PEARL R. NYE COLLECTION**

**AFC 1937/002**

**Guides to the Collections in the Archive of Folk Culture**



**LIBRARY OF  
CONGRESS**

**American Folklife Center, Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
December 4, 2012**

Contact information:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/folklife.contact>

Additional search options available at:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/eadafc.af012006>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lccn.loc.gov/2004447752>

Prepared by Marcia K. Segal

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Captain Pearl R. Nye Collection

**Bulk Dates:** 1937-1944

**Call No.:** AFC 1937/002

**Creator:** Archive of American Folk Song

**Creator:** Nye, Pearl R., 1872-1950

**Extent (Manuscripts):** 18 folders total (Folders 1-16 and Folder 18 in 1 box, plus Folder 17, oversize).

**Extent (Sound Recordings):** 22 sound discs : analog ; 12 in.

**Extent (Graphic Materials):** 7 photographic prints : black and white, color ; various sizes.

**Language:** Collection material in English.

**Repository:** Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/folklife.home>

**Abstract:** The collection is comprised of field recordings made in Akron, Ohio, by John A. Lomax (on June 27-28, 1937), and Alan Lomax and Elizabeth Lomax (on November 3, 1937), of songs performed by Pearl R. Nye related to life on the Ohio and Erie Canal, plus photographs of canal life (some hand-decorated by Nye), and correspondence between Nye and Harold Spivacke of the Library of Congress, and manuscript and typed transcriptions of song lyrics sung and collected by Pearl R. Nye.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject and listed alphabetically therein.

### People

Lomax, Alan, 1915-2002, collector.

Lomax, Alan, 1915-2002--Correspondence.

Lomax, John A. (John Avery), 1867-1948, collector, interviewer.

Lomax, John A. (John Avery), 1867-1948--Correspondence.

Nye, Pearl R., 1872-1950, collector, interviewee.

Nye, Pearl R., 1872-1950--Correspondence.

Waterhouse, Helen Stocking, 1892-1965 -- Correspondence.

### Organizations

American Folklife Center.

Archive of American Folk Song, collector.

Library of Congress.National Digital Library Program.

### Subjects

Ballads, English--Ohio.

Canals--Ohio--Songs and music.

Field recordings--Ohio.

Folk music--Ohio.

Folk songs, English--Ohio.

Popular music--1931-1940.

Revival hymns--Ohio.

### Places

Ohio--Akron--Social life and customs

Ohio and Erie Canal (Ohio)--Songs and music.

### Titles

*Captain Pearl R. Nye, life on the Ohio and Erie Canal*

*Pearl R. Nye collection*

### Form/Genre

Correspondence.  
Photographic prints.  
Sound recordings.  
Interviews.  
Field recordings.

## Administrative Information

### Arrangement

Organized by format into the following series: I. Manuscripts; II. Sound Recordings; III. Graphic Materials.

### Acquisition

Subsequent to the field trips, the sound recordings were accessioned at the Library of Congress. Communications between Pearl Nye and Library of Congress staff accumulated as they were received at the Library (rather than being sent as a unit, at a later date). According to correspondence, in the 1940s Nye sent more transcriptions to the Library, which were microfilmed, then returned to him. These are presumed to be the documents on the microfilm reel.

### Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

### Processing History

The collection was processed by the American Folklife Center staff between 2003 and 2009. Marcia K. Segal revised and coded the collection finding aid in EAD format in December 2012.

### Related Material

Autograph manuscript containing song texts by Pearl R. Nye, with a few letters to Alan Lomax and to Harold Spivacke is available on microfilm [Songs of the Ohio canal, 1938], Library of Congress Music Division, MUS-12.

### Electronic Format

A substantial portion of the collection is available as "Captain Pearl R. Nye, life on the Ohio and Erie Canal," an American Memory online presentation compiled by the National Digital Library Program of the Library of Congress. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/collafc.af000019>

### Access and Restrictions

Collection is open for research. To request materials, please contact the Folklife Reading Room at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/folklife.contact>

### Preferred Citation

Captain Pearl R. Nye Collection (AFC 1937/002), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Collection Concordance by Format

Quantity	Physical Extent (original)	Item Numbers
<b>Manuscript Materials</b>		
17	folders	Box 1, Folders 1-16, 18
1	folder	Folders 17, oversize
<b>Sound Recordings</b>		
22	12-inch lacquer-coated aluminum audio discs	AFS 01001-01009, AFS 01603-01615
4	12-inch aluminum audio discs	AFS 01005_dupe, AFS 01007_dupe, AFS 01605_dupe, AFS 01606_dupe

<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Physical Extent (original)</b>	<b>Item Numbers</b>
<b>Graphic Materials</b> 7	photographic prints : black and white, color ; various sizes	Box 1, Folder 18

## **Scope and Content**

The Captain Pearl R. Nye Collection consists of materials that document the professional relationship between Pearl R. Nye and the Library of Congress, as well as the personal relationship between Nye and Alan Lomax. The collection is centered on Nye's documentation of and contribution to folk songs about the Ohio and Erie Canal. It includes sound recordings of Nye, recorded by John A. Lomax, and Alan and Elizabeth Lomax in Akron, Ohio in 1937, correspondence between the Library of Congress and Nye, and photographs of Nye at his home on the canal.

Nye's desire to collect canal folk songs and sing them for the Lomaxes stemmed from his childhood growing up on the canal, his own career as a canal captain, and his later years when traditional activities on the Ohio and Erie Canal were supplanted by more modern technologies.

Nye's transcriptions of song lyrics provide an invaluable research tool. These transcriptions include those songs he sang (included on the recordings), as well as songs he knew (and were not recorded). These lyrics reflect not only popular sentiments of the times, but enduring values and traditions, as they provide a snapshot of a way of life for trade and travel that was becoming obsolete through technological advances.

## **Biographical History**

Pearl R. Nye was born on February 5, 1872 aboard the canal boat "Reform." He spent his life on canal boats on the Ohio and Erie Canal and researched and documented the songs and traditions of canal life. He died in 1950.

## Description of Series

*Container*

*Series*

Series I: MANUSCRIPTS

Series II: SOUND RECORDINGS

BOX-FOLDER 1/18

Series III: GRAPHIC MATERIALS

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
<b>Series I: MANUSCRIPTS</b>	
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/1</b>	Collection finding aid 8 pp.
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/2</b>	Documentation for sound recordings 6 pp.
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/3</b>	Documentation for digitization of sound recordings 65 pp. Various documents detailing the digitization process, including hardware and software used, plus any problems with the source recordings.
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/4</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms01	Correspondence, 1937
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/5</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms02	Correspondence, 1938 (Folder 1 of 2)
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/6</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms02	Correspondence, 1938 (Folder 2 of 2)
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/7</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms03	Correspondence, 1939
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/8</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms04	Correspondence, 1940-1941
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/9</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms05	Correspondence, 1942
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/10</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms06	Correspondence, 1944
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/11</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms07	Correspondence, undated
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/12</b>	Various correspondence, 1937 and undated 9 pp. Items of correspondence formerly alienated from the collection, which were returned to the collection but not digitized. The undated items may have been written in 1936.
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/13</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms08	Transcriptions (Folder 1 of 4)
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/14</b> <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_ms09	Transcriptions (Folder 2 of 4)
<b>BOX-FOLDER 1/15</b>	Transcriptions (Folder 3 of 4)

## Series I: MANUSCRIPTS

### Container

### Contents

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**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_ms10

**BOX-FOLDER 1/16**

Transcriptions (Folder 4 of 4)

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_ms11

**FOLDER 17**

Various manuscript materials

13 items

Manuscript items formerly alienated from the collection, which were returned to the collection and subsequently treated by Conservation Division staff, but not digitized.

## Series II: SOUND RECORDINGS

**disc:** AFS 01001

Recorded on June 27, 1937

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr01

Side A: [Spoken segment, no. 1]

The House Carpenter

[Spoken segment, no. 2]

The Scioto Valley Mills

Side B: Johnny and Molly

[Spoken segment, no. 1]

My horses ain't hungry, they won't eat your hay

**disc:** AFS 01002

Recorded on June 27, 1937, in Akron, Ohio.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr02

Side A: Perry's Victory

Side B: The Girl with the striped stockings on

Barbara Allen

**disc:** AFS 01003

Recorded on June 27, 1937, in Akron, Ohio.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr03

Side A: James Bird

Side B: Hush-a-bye-baby

[Spoken segment]

The jolly boatman

**disc:** AFS 01004

Recorded on June 27, 1937, in Akron, Ohio.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr04

Side A: Lord Vanifer's wife

[Spoken segment, no. 1]

When I was single

[Spoken segment, no. 2]

Side B: The bold bolster

[Spoken segment, no. 1]

Julianne Johnson

**disc:** AFS 01005

Recorded on June 27, 1937, in Akron, Ohio.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr05

Side A: We'll end this war down by the river

## Series II: SOUND RECORDINGS

### Container

### Contents

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	[Spoken segment, no. 1] The resurrection car
	[Spoken segment, no. 2] Side B: [Spoken segment, no. 1] Lord Vanifer's wife
<b>disc:</b> AFS 01005_dupe <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_sr06	Duplicate of recording made on June 27, 1937. Duplication date unknown.
	Side A: We'll end this war down by the river
	[Spoken segment, no. 1] The resurrection car
	[Spoken segment, no. 2] Side B: [Spoken segment, no. 1] Lord Vanifer's wife
<b>disc:</b> AFS 01006 <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_sr07	Recorded in 1937, in Akron, Ohio.
	Side A: [Spoken segment, no. 1] Dutch jollification song
	[Spoken segment, no. 2] Edward Bold
	[Spoken segment, no. 3] [Edward Bold] St. Peter at the gate
	[Spoken segment, no. 4] Side B: Keep that baby still
	[Spoken segment, no. 1] Over in the promised land Oh, glory, hallelujah
<b>disc:</b> AFS 01007 <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_sr08	Recorded in 1937, in Akron, Ohio.
	Side A: Lord Lovele [sic] [Spoken segment, no. 1] Jones' hospital
	Side B: Irish washerwoman Dark-eyed sailor
<b>disc:</b> AFS 01007_dupe <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_sr09	Duplicate of recording made in 1937. Duplication date unknown.
	Side A: Lord Lovele [sic] [Spoken segment, no. 1] Jones' hospital
	Side B: Irish washerwoman Dark-eyed sailor
<b>disc:</b> AFS 01008 <b>digital ID :</b> afc1937002_sr10	Recorded in 1937, in Akron, Ohio.

## Series II: SOUND RECORDINGS

### Container

### Contents

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- Side A: Little red bird in the tree  
Old woman under the hill  
Side B: [Willy Reilly]  
**disc:** AFS 01009  
**digital ID :**  
afc1937002\_sr11  
Recorded on June 28, 1937, in Akron, Ohio.
- Side A: Mr. Frog  
[Spoken segment, no.1]  
Side B: Mary, don't you weep  
[Spoken segment, no. 1]  
Little Sally Waters  
[Spoken segment, no. 2]  
**disc:** AFS 01603  
**digital ID :**  
afc1937002\_sr12  
Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.
- Side A: The Clever Skipper  
Side B: Gentle Little Jenny (The Wife Wrapped in the Wether's Skin)  
**disc:** AFS 01604  
**digital ID :**  
afc1937002\_sr13  
Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.
- Side A: Take a Trip on the Canal If You Want to Have Fun [continued on Side B]  
Side B: Take a Trip on the Canal If You Want to Have Fun [continued from Side A;  
continued on AFS 01605a]  
**disc:** AFS 01605  
**digital ID :**  
afc1937002\_sr14  
Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.
- Side A: Take a Trip on the Canal If You Want to Have Fun [continued from AFS 01604b]  
William was a royal lover  
Side B: The Cumberland's crew  
**disc:** AFS 01605\_dupe  
**digital ID :**  
afc1937002\_sr15  
Duplicate of recording made on November 3, 1937. Duplication date unknown.
- Side A: Take a Trip on the Canal If You Want to Have Fun [continued from AFS 01604b]  
William was a royal lover  
Side B: The Cumberland's crew  
**disc:** AFS 01606\_dupe  
**digital ID :**  
afc1937002\_sr16  
Duplicate of recording made on November 3, 1937. Duplication date unknown.
- Side A: On the banks of Salee  
Side B: In the shade of a tree  
We'll outshine the sun  
**disc:** AFS 01606  
**digital ID :**  
afc1937002\_sr17  
Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.
- Side A: On the banks of Salee  
Side B: In the shade of a tree  
We'll outshine the sun  
**disc:** AFS 01607  
Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.

## Series II: SOUND RECORDINGS

### Container

### Contents

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**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr18

Side A: Riding on the elevated railroad  
The cruel ship carpenter [continued on Side B]  
Side B: The ship's cruel carpenter [continued from Side A]  
Lord Ullin's daughter

**disc:** AFS 01608

Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr19

Side A: Between me and the wall  
Side B: Between me and the wall  
Pretty Sally [continued on AFS 01609a]

**disc:** AFS 01609

Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr20

Side A: Pretty Sally [continued from AFS 01608b]  
The Jew's daughter/The Butcher boy  
Side B: The gospel chariot  
The dying cowboy

**disc:** AFS 01610

Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr21

Side A: The roving gambler  
Erin's green shore  
Side B: Dandy Jim of Caroline

**disc:** AFS 01611

Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr22

Side A: The old skipper  
Side B: Early in the spring

**disc:** AFS 01612

Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr23

Side A: Rosin the bow  
My father's broke the ice and gone  
Side B: Who killed Cock Robin  
I won't marry at all

**disc:** AFS 01613

Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.

**digital ID :**

afc1937002\_sr24

Side A: I owed ten dollars to O'Grady  
Boys, keep away from the girls  
I say [continued on Side B]  
Side B: Boys, keep away from the girls  
I say [continued from Side A]  
Just one penny

## Series II: SOUND RECORDINGS

### Container

### Contents

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disc: AFS 01614  
digital ID :  
afc1937002\_sr25

Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.

Side A: We're going to pump out Lake Erie  
In the storm at sea  
A canal dance (One Night in Cleveland)  
Side B: Moonlight Dance (Yellowbud gals)  
Canal boat wedding  
Down the river

disc: AFS 01615  
digital ID :  
afc1937002\_sr26

Recorded on November 3, 1937; location uncertain.

Side A: The gospel train  
When the old sun was a-crawlin'  
Jawbone (Jawbone walk, jawbone talk)  
Side B: The banks of the sweet Dundee

BOX-FOLDER 1/18  
digital ID :  
afc1937002\_ph01

### Series III: GRAPHIC MATERIALS

Portrait of Captain Pearl R. Nye

Black-and-white photographic print (3" x 4.5")  
Captain Pearl R. Nye with B.F. Goodrich buildings in background

digital ID :  
afc1937002\_ph02

Black-and-white photographic print; hand-tinted, with a collage effect, plus a manuscript item affixed to the lower back edge of the item (4.5" x 3.5" for the photo; 2" x 3.5" for the manuscript item)

digital ID :  
afc1937002\_ph03

Captain Pearl R. Nye at Camp Charming (view from water)

digital ID :  
afc1937002\_ph04

Black-and-white photographic print (5.5" x 3.5")  
Captain Pearl R. Nye at Camp Charming (view from land)

digital ID :  
afc1937002\_ph05

Black-and-white photographic print (5.5" x 3.5")  
Captain Pearl R. Nye at Camp Charming (view from water, at a distance)

digital ID :  
afc1937002\_ph06

Black-and-white photographic print (5.5" x 3.5")  
Captain Pearl R. Nye at Camp Charming (view from water, at a distance)

digital ID :  
afc1937002\_ph07

Black-and-white photographic print (5.5" x 3.5")  
Portrait of Captain Pearl R. Nye outdoors, with women in the background

Color photographic print, incorporated in a collage on top of an outline of a moose (3.25" x 4.75")