

Many of the games had delightful names. There was one called "hoppo-bumpo", naturally enough a combination of hops and bumps, and "tip cat" in which a small piece of wood, sharpened at both ends, was struck with a stick so that it jumped into the air where it had to be hit again.

Then there was "Tally-ho toto!" For this, two teams of boys spread out in long lines facing each other across an open space, the larger the better. A boy in one of these lines carried a token agreed upon beforehand and his task was to reach a home base behind the defenders. These, not knowing who had the token, had to chase everybody, those who were caught being marched off solemnly to "prison".

The start of the game was the shouting of "Tally ho!" with the "toto" being added for no particular reason other than we liked the sound of it.

Perhaps these games may seem strange to the boys and girls of today but we really enjoyed them and remember them with pleasure.

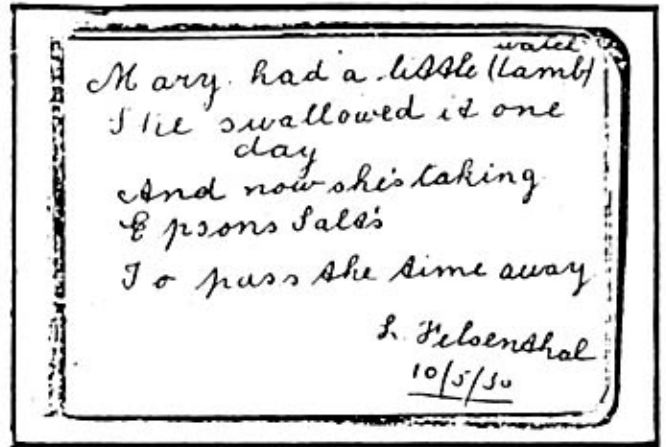
B.C. Dean, Melbourne, Vic.

RHYMES

Edel Wignell, from Burwood, Vic., has sent in the following children's rhymes.

Ladies and gentlemen, reptiles and Crocodiles, I come now before you to stand Right behind you, to tell you a story I Know nothing about.
Last night, at six o'clock this morning, an Empty house full of furniture caught fire. The people being out, rushed downstairs and Fell into a bucket of cold water, and were Badly scalded.
They now lie in the Hobart Sydney Hospital In the best of health, but are expected to Die at any moment.

(from my childhood at Wharparilla West Rural School, 1941-1949)



Extract from Autograph Album, circa 1930. On display in Children's Folklore Collection, I.E.C.D.

It was midnight on the ocean
And not a tramcar was in sight
The sun was shining brightly
For it had rained all day that night.

(from my childhood - as above, 1941-1949)

Grace Before Meals
Heavenly Pa
Ta.

(from my nieces, Jaki and Kirsty Fisher, Princes Hill Primary School, 1981)

Mary had a little lamb
She tied it to a heater,
And every time it wagged its tail
It burned its little seater.

(told to me by my father when I was a child. He attended Wharparilla West rural school - near Echuca - between 1910 & 1920)

Mary ate peaches, custard and jelly
Mary went home with a pain in her -----
Don't be mistaken and don't be mislead
Mary went home with a pain in her head.

(told me by my father - as above)

God save our biscuit tin,
Don't let the flies get in,
Spray with Mortein.

(from my nieces Jaki and Kirsty Fisher, who attended Princes Hill Primary School. Told to me, 1980)

Rats in the pantry,
Mouldy, old bread.
Meadowlea ...
The kids are all dead
You ought to be exterminated.
Wait until they taste it.
Ugh!

*(Jaki and Kirsty Fisher,
Princes Hill Primary School, 1980)*

America has Ronald Reagan
Bob Hope and Johnny Cash.
Australia has Mr Fraser
No hope, no cash.

*(Jaki and Kirsty Fisher,
Princes Hill Primary School, 1980)*

A FORGOTTEN PIONEER : Dorothy Howard

This article was first published in The Educational Magazine Vol.37, No.6, 1980, a quarter of a century after Dorothy Howard visited Australia. We have decided to reprint it in the A.C.F.N. in order that a wider audience may have an opportunity to learn something of Dorothy Howard's work in Australia.

When the first edition of Cinderella Dressed in Yella: Australian Children's Play-Rhymes was published in 1969, Ian Turner remarked in the Introduction:

...in the absence of folklore studies in Australian academic institutions, it seems unlikely that anyone will make and publish a systematic study of Australian games.

And then there is a footnote:

Dr Dorothy Howard of Frostburg State College, Maryland, U.S.A., spent a year in Australia in 1954-55 as a Fulbright scholar "collecting and studying Australian children's traditional playways". Dr Howard has published some valuable articles from her Australian studies.

Turner's tribute to the American scholar - albeit only in a footnote (he had seen no more than three of her articles) - was well deserved. Dorothy Howard was the first person to systematically collect, collate, transcribe, annotate, and publish a comprehensive sampling of Australian children's games. It seems that it required a "foreigner" to focus our attention on an important but neglected aspect of Australian cultural life. Another American

academic, Louise Rorabacher, performed a similar service to Australian literature by editing two short story collections. The first is concerned with the immigrant experience in Australia (Two Ways Meet, Cheshire 1963) and the second focuses on the Aboriginal people (Aliens in Their Land, Cheshire 1968).

Dorothy Howard in Australia

Dr Howard came to Australia under the auspices of the School of Education at the University of Melbourne. She received her doctorate from New York University in 1938 with a thesis entitled "Folk Rhymes and Jingles of American Children". Her visit to Australia was part of her post-doctoral research, and she set out to study "the traditional play customs of Anglo-Australian children".

Until Dr Howard began her Australian research, there had been no Australia-wide study of children's games and rhymes, nor of their riddles, jokes, parodies, oaths, nicknames, warcries, initiation rites, swap card collections, autograph albums, and so on - the list is very long, and attests to the remarkable variety and richness of children's folklore. In Britain, folklorists from Strutt and Chambers in the

early nineteenth century had conscientiously collected such material from children and from the memories of adults. In America, Bolton and Newell had similarly begun the attempt to sample the range of children's play in that vast continent. A number of European countries had a history of archival research and collection of children's folklore. But Australia, apart from occasional articles in newspapers and chapters in memoirs, was not represented in this worldwide effort to understand and record the lore and language of children.

What brought Dorothy Howard to Australia? In a paper she presented to the Victorian Institute of Educational Research in February 1955, she said:

Over the twenty-five year of my research in children's folklore I became increasingly interested in the subject of Australian children's play customs and increasingly aware of the absence of evidence that the subject had received any attention here. The great silence from "down under" finally aroused my academic curiosity to come and explore.

Her arrival was greeted with the same expressions of regret about the supposed demise of children's folklore in this country as confronted the Opies when they began their research in Britain in the 1950's:

Upon landing in Australia I was kindly cautioned that most Australian adults believe first, that their children have no folklore; second, that any traditional games ever known here came from the British Isles and are therefore not Australian; the third, that most of the old games which came from the British Isles are dead now.

The outcome, of course, confounded these predictions. Although her research was still incomplete, Dr Howard was able to assert quite confidently in February that:

Folk tradition still exists in the play ways of Australian children (evidently to a greater extent than many Australian adults have supposed). Variation exists from one locality to another - variation in terminology, rules, kinds of games, age at which certain games are played, seasonal popularity, and sex relation-

ships in games ... The most important question answered by the present collection and study is the first question put to me upon my arrival. "Do Australian children have any folklore?" The answer is that they do; and that there is an important phase of child life, which Australian adults, who are interested in children's growth and development, can profitably study and understand.

More specifically, she listed the material she had collected up till then, based on information from eleven- and twelve-year-old children (useful informants because "they are at the end of the childhood game age and have lived through the whole range of playground tradition"), correspondence from adults, and some interviews:

My findings, to date, (after having worked in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania) include over 700 game names; descriptions of about 400 games; 175 autograph album rhymes; 50 rope skipping rhymes; 40 counting out rhymes ...; the words for about 15 singing games (with music notation for 8); a few riddles, tongue-twisters, trick rhymes; hand, finger, and toe rhymes; rhymes for taunting, swearing an oath, bouncing ball; and nonsense rhymes. All this is folklore - transmitted from children to children without benefit of printed book or adult sponsor.

Universality of basic motifs

A quarter of a century later it is both fascinating and instructive to examine Dr Howard's findings, although the bulk of her research in Australia has not yet been published. (A list of her published articles is included in the references following this article.) Operating from belief in "the universality and great antiquity of basic motifs, types and ideas", she noted that "most traditional play customs in Australia migrated here from the British Isles". Most of the games she collected were similar, though not always identical, to the games of British and American children. Thus she recorded a variety of games under the heading of "knucklebones" or "jacks" - games which were known to Aristophanes and the ancient Egyptians. In Australia the children