

Reading comprehension 2

Class objective: I will be able to practice reading properly and answer the questions.

Concept A: Read the below paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

The Dollar-a-Year Man

How John Lomax set out to record American folk music

A. In the early 1930s, folklorist, platform lecturer, college professor and former banker John Avery Lomax was trying to recapture a sense of direction for his life. For two decades he had enjoyed a national reputation for his pioneering work in collecting and studying American folk songs; no less a figure than President Theodore Roosevelt had admired his work and had written a letter of support for him as he sought grants for his research. He had always dreamed of finding a way of making a living by doing the thing he loved best, collecting folk songs, but he was now beginning to wonder if he would ever realise that dream.

B. Lomax wanted to embark on a nationwide collecting project, resulting in as many as four volumes, and 'complete the rehabilitation of the American folk-song'. Eventually, this was modified to where he envisioned a single book tentatively called American Ballads and Folk Songs, designed to survey the whole field. It called for firsthand field collecting, and would especially focus on the neglected area of black folk music.

C. In 1932, Lomax travelled to New York and stopped in to see a man named H.S. Latham of the Macmillan Company. He informally outlined his plan to Latham, and read him the text of an earthy African American blues ballad called 'Ida Red'. Latham was impressed, and two days later Lomax had a contract, a small check to bind it, and an agreement to deliver the manuscript about one year later. The spring of 1932 began to look more green, lush and full of promise.

D. Lomax immediately set to work. He travelled to libraries at Harvard, the Library of Congress, Brown University and elsewhere in order to explore unpublished song collections and to canvas the folk song books published over the past ten years. During his stay in Washington, D.C., Lomax became friendly with Carl Engel, Music Division chief of the Library of Congress. Engel felt that Lomax had the necessary background and energy to someday direct the Archive of Folk Song. Through funds

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