

Presentation commemorating Wendy Lowenstein

Sunday 8th October 2023, 1.00pm to 2.30pm

PRESENTATION: Documentary about the early Australian Folk Movement and the first National Folk Festival in Melbourne 1967, followed by a Q & A with director and producers, Richard and Martie Lowenstein who were involved in most early VFMC activities.

"What Wendy Found" is a 25min documentary film, produced by Martie Lowenstein as a result of receiving the [2023 National Folk Fellowship](#) from the National Library and the National Folk Festival. It is edited and directed with the very generous contribution of her brother, [well-known Melbourne filmmaker, Richard Lowenstein](#).

SYNOPSIS: The film tells the background story of collecting, recording, researching and publishing early Australian Folk music and dances resulting in the 1950-70's Australian folk music revival from 1965's/60's. Two formidable women, Wendy Lowenstein and Shirley Andrews were integral to organising the early folklore and folk music clubs which revived early Australian social music and dances. The film shows the 1st National Folk Festival held in Melbourne in 1967 which both Martie and Richard attended using archival photos, film footage, festival recordings and interviews. It celebrates the early folk revival in Australia using the archival resources in the NLA, and the Bush Music club as well as Wendy Lowenstein's extensive collection of early oral history interviews and events recorded at the First National Folk Festival by Norm O'Connor.

Wendy Lowenstein edited and published "Australia Tradition" and took her family on the 1969 outback "Australian Folklore Expedition", one year spent collecting local memories of the Australian Outback. Shirley Andrews researched and published the early colonial dances and was chairperson/director of the first National folk festival held in Melbourne Teacher's College in 1967. She was often the "caller" and teacher of colonial dancing at VFMC events.

Martie Lowenstein grew up immersed in Australian bush music, bush dances and "Singabouts". She is the daughter of Wendy Lowenstein, who started the Folklore Society of Victoria in 1953 and edited the early VFMC newsletters and journals. Wendy became a pioneering Australian Oral Historian and author of "Weevils in the Flour". The National Library holds her collection of interviews of everyday people from 1966 -1997 covers over 800 life stories. As Shirley's executor, Wendy also organised and donated Shirley Andrews' archives to the NLA.

This film is now listed on [Documentary Australia's website](#) for funding to extend this folk history of Australia documentary into a one hour film which includes more material on the broader early folk movement in Victoria, and more material on Shirley Andrews whose archives were inaccessible during the original fellowship.

We also hope to find the original archives of the early VBMC 1950's-60s which appear to be lost. Any hints on whereabouts?--

Martie Lowenstein . Mobile 0415320295
Community Singing Leader /Historian / Occ. Therapist
[2023 National Library of Australia Folk Fellowship Award](#)