

Hudson, Arthur Palmer ^[1]

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by Daniel W. Patterson, 1988

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Arthur Palmer Hudson, folklorist and teacher, was born in the Hesterville community of Attala County, Miss., the son of William Arthur and Lou Garnett Palmer Hudson. Despite the handicap of growing up on a farm in difficult times, Hudson qualified for study at the University of Mississippi where he received the B.S. degree in 1913. For the next seven years he served in secondary schools in the state, first as principal of the Gulfport High School from 1913 to 1918, then for one year as a teacher of English at the Gulf Coast Military Academy and for another year as superintendent of schools in Oxford.

In 1920 Hudson returned to the University of Mississippi for an M.A. degree and began to teach in its English department. While continuing his studies (he was awarded a second M.A. degree by the University of Chicago in 1925 and a Ph.D. with the Smith Prize for Graduate Research by [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[2] in 1930), he rose to the rank of professor and head-elect of the department. In 1930 he accepted an appointment as associate professor of English at The University of North Carolina, where he taught for the rest of his academic career. Hudson was promoted to professor in 1935, received a Kenan professorship in 1951, and retired as Kenan Professor Emeritus in 1963. He taught principally the literature of the English Romantic period and [folklore](#) ^[3], his chief interest. From 1950 to 1963 he was executive secretary of the university's Curriculum in Folklore.

Hudson's enthusiasm for folklore had first been aroused at the University of Mississippi by E. C. Perrow. Later he studied under Louise Pound and Archer Taylor at the University of Chicago; his doctoral dissertation at The University of North Carolina was on Mississippi folk songs. His major publications included *Specimens of Mississippi Folklore* (1928); *Folksongs of Mississippi and Their Background* (1936); *Humor of the Old Deep South*, with George Herzog (1936); *Folk Tunes from Mississippi*, with H. M. Belden (1937); two volumes of *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*, with John T. Flanagan (1952); and *Folklore in American Literature* (1958). He also published several monographs and many articles on folklore. From 1954 to 1964 Hudson edited *North Carolina Folklore*, the journal of the [North Carolina Folklore Society](#) ^[4], which he served as secretary-treasurer from 1943 to 1964. His manuscripts and sound recordings, donated to The University of North Carolina at the time of his retirement, form the nucleus of its [Southern Folklore Collection](#) ^[5].

In 1916 Hudson married Grace Noah of Kosciusko, Miss., and the couple had three children: William Palmer, Margaret Louise, and Ellen Noah. Both daughters survived him.

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Educators ^[11]

Folklore and Legends ^[12]

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1 January 1988 | Patterson, Daniel W.

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