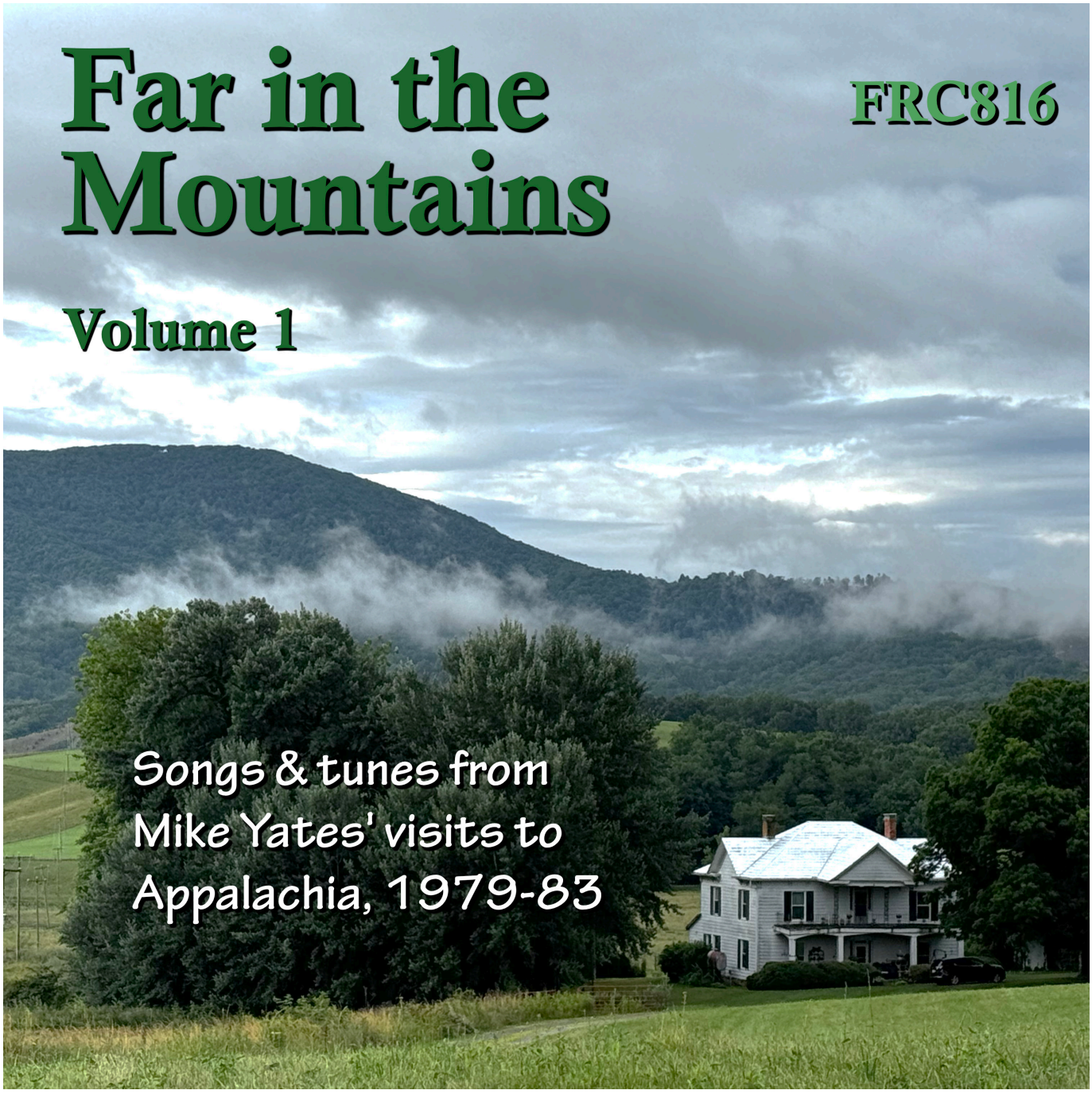

Originally issued in the United Kingdom by Musical Traditions Records (MTCD 321-2)

Far in the Mountains **Vols. 1 & 2**
FRC816; FRC817

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This is a reissue of an extraordinary 5-CD set of field recordings made by Mike Yates in the southeastern United States over the years 1979-83. Originally issued in the United Kingdom by Musical Traditions Records, *Far in the Mountains* received very limited distribution outside of the UK. Somehow, I heard about *FITM* and had the great fortune to purchase my own CD copies. Few albums have affected me as deeply as this rich assortment of songs and tunes, performed by musicians almost all of whom were new to me. This is the musical heritage of the Middle South! Through a collaboration with Mike Yates, the Field Recorders' Collective is extremely pleased to offer *Far in the Mountains* to a new audience.

— *John Schwab*

[The following notes were written in 2002. Although they've been updated in a few places, some of the specific references may not be entirely up to date.]

Far in the Mountains:
Volumes 1 & 2

There is a well-known American fiddle tune called *Fire on the Mountain*. In 1929 the Red Headed Fiddlers recorded a version of the tune which somehow became mistitled as *Far in the Mountain* when it was issued on a gramophone record. As I flew repeatedly across the Atlantic

to make these recordings the title came into my mind, and I began to think about how far I was traveling to be in these mountains.

Introduction:

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It is no exaggeration to say that some of the hours / passed sitting on the porch (i.e. verandah) of a log-cabin, talking and listening to songs were amongst the pleasantest I have ever spent. Very often we would call upon some of our friends early in the morning and remain till dusk, sharing the mid-day meal with the family, and I would go away in the evening with the feeling that I had never before been in a more musical atmosphere, nor benefited more greatly by the exchange of musical confidences.

Cecil Sharp. Introduction to *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*. 1917

Cecil Sharp was not the first person to collect folk music in the Appalachian Mountains of North America. Sharp, an Englishman, had been invited to the mountains by Olive Dame Campbell of Asheville in North Carolina, a fact that he frequently acknowledged. mountains in 1916, Sharp first visited the mountains in 1916, staying with Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, before setting out on collecting trips with his secretary, Maud Karpeles. During the period 1916-18 Sharp and Karpeles spent 52 weeks in the mountains, collecting a total of 1,625 songs and ballads. Professor Bertrand Bronson has called Sharp's collection ‘the best regional song collection ever made in America' and readers seeking further details of Sharp's activities are referred to my article *Cecil Sharp in America*, published in 2000 on the *Musical Traditions* website.

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But, as I said before, Cecil Sharp was not the first Appalachian song collector. Mrs. Campbell had been collecting songs and ballads since at least 1907, and State Folklore Societies had been founded in North Carolina and Kentucky in 1912, in Virginia in 1913, and in West Virginia in 1915. In 1889 James Mooney published a paper 'Folklore of the Carolina Mountains' in the *Journal of American Folklore*. Later *Journal* articles include 'Some Real American Music' by Emma Bell Miles (1904), 'Ballads and Rhymes from Kentucky' by George Kitteridge (1907), 'Folklore of the North Carolina Mountaineers' by Haywood Parker (1907) and 'Ballads and Songs of Western North Carolina' by Louise Rand Bascomb (1909). Two years later, in 1911, Hubert Gibson Shearing titled a paper that he contributed to the *Swanee Review,* 'British Ballads in the Cumberland Mountains.' New York collector Josephine McGill spent the summer of 1914 searching for songs in Knott and Letcher Counties in Kentucky, although she did not publish the results of her work until 1917 and in 1916. Sharp was probably aware that Loraine Wyman and Howard Brockway were also collecting in several Kentucky counties.

I first became aware of Cecil Sharp's Appalachian activity in 1963, when I worked at Cecil Sharp House, the London headquarters of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, although it was not until 1979 that I first made it to the mountains myself. Recently divorced, and feeling that there was little or no purpose to life, I needed something on which I could focus my mind. Over the years I had collected every album of Appalachian music that I could find and, seeking a complete break, I decided to fly to America in order to meet some of the people that had so

impressed me on their albums. (These included *Old Love Songs and Ballads* (Folkways 2309), *Traditional Music of Grayson and Carroll Counties* (Folkways 3811), *Bluegrass from the Blue Ridge* (Folkways 3832), *Ballads and Songs of the Blue Ridge* (Folkways 3831), *Ballads from British Tradition* (Blue Ridge Institute), *Old Originals* (Rounder 0057, 0058), *High Atmosphere* (Rounder CD 0028) and *Songs and Ballads from Beech Mountain* (Folk-Legacy FSA-22, FSA-23). Almost all are now out-of-print, although Folkways – now Smithsonian/Folkways – offers Folkways and Folk-Legacy albums as digital downloads or as custom CDs.

I spent two weeks in Virginia before returning to London. Eleven months later I was back for a further three weeks in Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee. Finally, in 1983, I returned for a six week visit. Like the folklorist Mellinger Henry once said about the Appalachians, I had been 'drawn to them again and again irresistibly.'

During my Appalachian trips I had taken a small portable tape-recorder with me in the hope of making a few recordings. As it turned out I came across quite a number of singers and musicians who were more than ready to let me record some of their songs, ballads and tunes. In 1981 I issued some of these recordings on the album *Appalachia–The Old Traditions* (Home-Made Music LP001). A second album, *Appalachia–The Old Traditions, Volume 2* (Home-Made Music LP002) appeared in 1983, while a double cassette of material, *Crazy About a Song* (EFDSS VWML-07) followed in 1992. These recordings were only available for short periods of time, and I am told that the albums soon became collector's items, often changing hands for quite large sums of money.

The albums and double cassette were generally received well by listeners and reviewers. However, one reviewer did make two points with which I disagreed. Firstly, he felt that Vergie Wallin's version of *The Worrisome Woman* (on *Far in the Mountains*, Volume 3) should not have been issued, as the singer was not a particularly good singer. (The reviewer did, grudgingly, admit that it was a rare ballad, and that probably explained why I included the track). This was part of the reason why I issued the track. But, I had made a promise to Vergie that I would include something by her on the second album, and I like to keep my promises. This was the real reason why the ballad was included. Secondly, the reviewer did not like the vocal duets by the Kimbles and the Arwoods (who can be heard on Volume 2 of *Far in the Mountains*), thinking them poor examples of this type of singing. I think that this was unfair. These singers were not professional singers. They sang because they liked to sing and they were singing me songs that they had not sung together in a long time. There was no time to practise. I just asked them what 'old' songs they knew, and these were the songs that they came out with at that time. Of course, they don't sound like the Carter Family, the Blue Sky Boys, the Louvin Brothers, or all those other tight-harmony groups, that the reviewer was probably comparing them to.

This [five] CD set, *Far in the Mountains*, contains almost all of the previously issued recordings, together with some of the recordings that I was unable to include due to space restrictions. The CDs are arranged geographically, beginning in Virginia and then moving into North Carolina and Tennessee, and this is roughly how I travelled through the mountains during my trips.

Notes: *Far in the Mountains*, Volumes 1 & 2

My first Appalachian trip was based at Ferrum College, in Franklin County, Virginia, and all of the recordings were made within easy driving distance from Ferrum. Dan Tate, Rob Tate, Calvin & Viola Cole, Howard Hall and William Marshall were all living in close proximity to one another, on both sides of the Fancy Gap to Hillsville Road in Carroll County; while fiddler Sherman Wimmer and banjo players Ted Boyd and Charlie Woods were living in Franklin County, close to Ferrum College.

Ballad singer Eunice Yeatts McAlexander was probably the furthest away, living in a beautiful part of Patrick County, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Clarice Shelor, one of Eunice's neighbors, remembered Cecil Sharp collecting songs from her father, Dad Blackard. It seems that Sharp and Karpeles had arrived at their cabin during a heavy rainfall. The pair were soaked through, and the Blackard family wrapped them in blankets while drying their clothes by the fire. Clarice, who played the family piano, remembered her amazement at Sharp's ability to harmonize her father's tunes on the piano, almost as soon as he had noted them in his tune book.

Other people that I recorded that trip included Sam Conner and Dent Wimmer, Stella Kimble, and her sister Pearl Richardson.

A few weeks after I returned to England, Paul Brown arrived in London on a visit from North Carolina and, calling in at Cecil Sharp House, was given my address. We met up and agreed that on my next trip he would try to accompany me and introduce me to some of the performers that he knew in the mountains.

I returned to America a few months after our meeting, and we headed off to Augusta County, VA to record some of the songs and tunes that Pug Allen knew. Then, before setting off south on my own, I took Paul to meet Dan Tate and Calvin & Viola Cole, in Fancy Gap. We recorded a few more songs from Dan, although he seemed to have weakened over the previous winter, and we also managed to persuade Viola to sing to us, even though she was extremely nervous about doing so.



Paul Brown and Pug Allen (by Mike Yates)

Moving south, I stopped over on Beech Mountain in Watauga County, NC, where I met and recorded some songs and stories from Hattie Presnell (who can be heard telling one story on Volume 3 of this set). Three years later I returned to 'the Beech', this time to meet and record Stanley Hicks. Eventually, I reached Madison County, the home of Evelyn and Douston Ramsey and many other singers (who can also be heard on Volume 2). Evelyn and Douston lived in the area to which Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles had first been directed in 1916. Sharp and Karpeles toured the communities of Allenstand, Allegheny, White Rock, Carmen, Big Laurel and Rice Cove, and within their first month had collected over 160 songs from this small region. According to Sharp, 'This field is a far more fertile one upon which to collect English folksongs than England itself. The cult of singing traditional song is far more alive than it is in England or has been for fifty years or more.'

Like Sharp, I too was to find 'a nest of singing birds' in Madison County, and elsewhere, and the story of my Appalachian journeys continues in the booklet notes to Volumes 3 & 4 of *Far in the Mountains*.

Michael Yates - February, 2002

Volume 1:

Child Numbers, where quoted, refer to entries in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* by Francis James Child, 1882-98. Laws Numbers, where quoted, refer to entries in *American Balladry from British Broadsides* by G. Malcolm Laws Jr, 1957.

Roud Numbers quoted are from the databases *The Folk Song Index* and *The Broadside Index*, continually updated, compiled by Steve Roud. Currently containing more than 235,000 records

between them, they are described by him as "extensive, but not yet exhaustive." Copies are held at: The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, London; Taisce Ceoil Dúchais Éireann, Dublin; and the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh. They can also be purchased direct from Steve at Southwood, Maresfield Court, High Street, Maresfield, East Sussex, TN22 2EH, UK.

Recording dates are shown in the sequence month/day/year.

L.G. 'Pug' Allen and Ed Weaver

I met up with Paul Brown in August, 1980, at Roanoke airport, and we drove at once to the Shenandoah Valley, where we stayed with Pug Allen and his wife at Stuart's Draft in Augusta County, VA. I recorded Pug playing fiddle, with his son, George, on guitar and Paul on banjo. Later we visited one of Pug's neighbors, Ed Weaver, and Pug switched to playing the banjo while Ed played one of his home-made fiddles. Again, like Sam Conner and Dent Wimmer, there was a closeness that could only come from a lifetime of playing together. I knew that Maud Karpeles had visited Stuart's Draft in September 1950, and that she had recorded three songs – *Turly-Urly*, *Paper of Pins* and *I Had a Little Sweetheart* – from Mrs. Mathy S. Dameron. Pug had known Mrs. Dameron for most of her life, but again, I found that her family had not remembered her songs. One day we drove into the settlement of Nellysford. I mentioned that Dol Small, one of Sharp's singers, had once lived there. Pug had also known Dol, who ran the local store, and was amazed that I could talk about somebody who was 'Just an ordinary sort of guy.' Sharp has left us this memory of Dol and his family: 'A most delightful family, Dol and his wife and twelve children, all smiling. They sang to us and then adjourned to the next house, where there was a new and quite good piano upon which I operated greatly to the delight of the family, who smiled more than ever. They are really a delightful and happy lot and it was a great pleasure to be able to return them something.'



Pug Allen (by Mike Yates)

Notes: *Far in the Mountains*, Volumes 1 & 2

1. Beano
(Played on the fiddle by L.G. 'Pug' Allen, the guitar by George Allen, and the banjo by Paul Brown at Pug's home in Stuarts Draft, Augusta County, VA, 8/16/80)

Beano is Pug Allen's title for the fiddle tune that eastern fiddlers call *Sally Ann*. Elsewhere it goes under such titles as *Great Big Taters in the Sandy Land* (see Eck Robertson on County reissue CD CO 3515 or Stan Jackson on Rounder CD 0435), or *Sail Away Ladies* (see Uncle Dave Macon on another County reissue, CO-CD 3505, or Yazoo 2029). Freeny's Barn Dance Band, from Mississippi, have a good version on County CD CO 3514. Cecil Sharp noted the following set of words from Mrs. Dellie Hughes of Crane River, Burnsville, NC, on 10/9/18.

> O where are you going, Sally Anne (x3)
> I'm going to the wedding, Sally Anne.
>
> O shake that little foot, Sally Anne (x3)
> You're a pretty good dancer, Sally Anne.

The tune seems to be especially popular in the Galax area, maybe as a result of it being recorded in 1925 by the Hill Billies (reissued on Document DOCD-8039), who were local to the area, as were the Blue Ridge Highballers, whose version, titled *Darneo*, has been reissued on Yazoo CD 2046.

2. Christmas Holiday
(Played on the fiddle by L.G. 'Pug' Allen, the guitar by George Allen, and the banjo by Paul Brown at Pug's home in Stuart's Draft, Augusta County, VA 8/16/80)

> Come on down to your house,
> It's a Christmas holiday.

A number of Appalachian tunes serve a seasonal function, and *Christmas Holiday* was only played, as its name suggests, during the Christmas period. Other related tunes are *Christmas Morning* played by Melvin Wine of Braxton County, WV and *Old Christmas Morning* which used to be played by Clay County, WV musicians French Carpenter and Wilson Douglas. Musicians in the Galax area of Virginia also have their own tune, *Breaking Up Christmas*, which was traditionally only played at dances held on January 6th.

According to Pug, there were several verses sung to this tune, although he was only able to remember the lines:

> Come on down to my house,
> It's a Christmas holiday.

Hobart Smith's *What Did the Buzzard Say to the Crow?* (Rounder CD 1799) seems to be related.

3. Cluck Old Hen (Roud 4235)
(Played on the fiddle by Edward Weaver and the banjo by L.G. 'Pug' Allen, at Edward's home in Stuarts Draft, Augusta County, VA 8/17/80)

Ed Weaver played this unusual variant of an otherwise common tune on a beautiful homemade fiddle. He knew the following three verses:

> Cluck old hen, you'd better cluck,
> Hawk's gonna eat your chickens up.
>
> Some lays one, some lays two,
> Some lays enough for the whole darn crew.
>
> Good, old hen, good old hen,
> You lay eggs for the railroad men.

Usually performed as a banjo tune, the earliest text that I know (dated 1886) can be found in the article *South Texas Negro Work-Songs*, which is included in *Rainbow in the Morning* (Dallas, 1926, reprinted 1965 & 1975). Other, more standard recordings include those by Grayson & Whitter (Gennett 6656, recorded 1928) reissued on Document DOCD-8054, Bill Cornett (Smithsonian Folkways SFCD 40077), Wade Ward (Rounder CD 1702), and Tommy Jarrell & Fred Cockerham (County CD 2702).

4. My Man Will Be Home Some Old Day
(Played on the fiddle by Ed Weaver and the banjo by L.G. 'Pug' Allen at Pug's home in Stuarts Draft, Augusta County, VA 8/17/80)

Ed had no idea as to the origins of this tune. However, with such a title, I would suggest that this was once a song, the verse of which could have ended with the line 'My man will be home some old day.'

5. Fire in the Mountain
(Played on the fiddle by L. G. 'Pug' Allen, the guitar by George Allen and the banjo by Paul Brown at Pug's home in Stuart's Draft, Augusta County, VA 8/16/80)

Fire in the Mountain is one of a broad family of early nineteenth century (or earlier) tunes that shades into one another and are as old as *Hey Betty Martin, Tip Toe*. Sam Conner and Dent Wimmer also used to play it, but under the title *Ten Little Indians,* and Sam had the following verse to the rune:

> All my little Indians don't drink liquor,
> All my little Indians don't get drunk.

which is similar to the lines sung by Fiddlin' John Carson in his 1926 recording of the tune (Okeh 45068, reissued on Document DOCD-8017).

It has been suggested that the tune originated from eastern European migrants, some of whom made commercial recordings in New York in the early part of the 20th century. There is also a Norwegian tune, printed in *Southern Folklore Quarterly* vol. vi, number 1 (March, 1942), p.9, that shows some similarity. A. L. 'Red' Steeley and J. W. 'Red' Graham – known as the Red Headed Fiddlers – made a spirited fiddle/banjo recording in 1929 (reissued on Document DOCD-8038) that is well-worth hearing. For some reason, the engineers titled this recording *Far in the Mountain*. (Chances are they were Yankees from the North, unaccustomed to Steeley & Graham's accents). The Camp Creek Boys, from the area around Galax, VA, play a good version on County CD 2719, as did Theron Hale (reissued on County CD 3522).

Dan Tate

Dan Tate was born in 1896 and must at one time have known a phenomenal number of songs and banjo tunes. Though frail and almost totally blind, his welcome to a complete stranger was as warm and genuine as could be. After recording many of his songs in 1979 and 1980, I called to see him again in 1983. "Did I sing you *Lily Monroe*?" he asked when I walked through his doorway. "It must be about England, 'cause they send for a 'London' doctor to heal up his wounds." He also recounted how one recent snowfall had almost ended his life. "I thought I was a goner, Mike. I woke up and it was quiet, real quiet; and cold, real cold. The stove had gone out, and I had no wood inside. I tried to open the door, but it just wouldn't open. The house had just about disappeared in the snow. Well...I wrapped some blankets around me and sat in the chair, expecting to die. And do you know? It wasn't long before I heard my friends coming to dig me out!" Strength of character, tenacity and sensitivity are words that I'd use to describe Dan and his neighbors.



Dan Tate (by Mike Yates)

Dan had been recorded for the Library of Congress by Professor Fletcher Collins, of Elon College, NC. Library records date these recording to 1941, although Dan was adamant that they had been made in 1938. I had heard one or two of Dan's recordings prior to meeting him and found that he still just loved to sing. One morning he began to talk about the war. I thought that he was talking about the Great War, until he began to describe the American Civil War Battle of Shiloh. As a young man he had known people who had fought in the Civil War. Never before had history seemed so real!

6. Bugerboo (Roud 558/1118, Laws 03)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA 8/11/79)

Come all you jolly boatman boys,
Who want to learn my trade.
The very first wrong I ever done,
Was courting of a maid.

I courted her the winter's night,
And a summer season too.
And when I gained her free good will
I knew not what to do.

Last night I lay in a fine feather bed,
With the squire and a baby.
Tonight I'll lay in a barn of hay
In the arms of Egyptian Daisy.

Wake up, wake up, my pretty little miss,
Wake up, for day has come.
Wake up, wake up, my pretty little miss,
For the bugerboo has gone.

Yes, I went to see this little girl,
I loved her as my life.
I took this girl and I married her,
And she made me a virtuous wife.

But I never tell her of her faults,
And dog me if I do.
But every time the baby cries
I think of the buggerboo.

In its original form, an apprentice seduces his master's daughter with the help of a friend disguised as a ghost (or *bugaboo*). Somehow or other the term *bugaboo* became changed – at least in English versions of the song – into the phrase *the foggy dew*, sparking off all kinds of

fanciful explanations for the meaning of this term. A full, and far more accurate, history of the song will be found in Bob Thomson's article *The Frightful Foggy Dew* (*Folk Music Journal* IV:1, 1980, pp. 35-61). In Dan's version, verse 3 is a 'stray' from *The Gypsy Laddie* (Child 200). Dan's comment to me that the boatman 'must have been a Lord or something' suggests that the stanza was present when Dan first heard the song.

Doug Wallin sings his version of *The Foggy Dew* on Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40013, while an English version of the song can be heard on the album *Songs of Seduction* (Rounder 1778), where it is sung by Phil Hammond of Norfork. The accompanying booklet notes for the latter were clearly written without knowledge of the Thomson article mentioned above. Burl Ives' well-known recorded version of the song was probably learnt from Carl Sandburg's *American Songbag* (1927).

7. Cindy (Roud 836)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA 8/15/79.)

Railroad, a plank road,
A river and canal.
If it hadn't have been for Doctor Grey,
There never would have been any hell.

Chorus:
Get along home Cindy,
Get along home I say.
Get along home Cindy girl,
For I am a-going away.

A railroad, a plank road,
A river and canoe.
If it hadn't have been for old John Jones,
They never would a-killed old Jude.

Spoken: Jude became pregnant. She was a slave. She was one of Doctor Grey's slaves and they tried to make her tell who the father of the child would be. And she wouldn't tell, and they said they'd make her tell. Well, they beat her as long as they could, and old John Jones must have helped them out in beating that lady to death. So, she crawled to the stream of water to drink, and died. So. That's the way that slaves was treated by people in this country. And she told them she wouldn't tell them who the father of the child was. She told them it was a white man and a gentleman!

Dan's song, based on the well-known *Cindy*, appears to be unique, although Mark Wilson compares his verses with the following play-party verse that Fiddling Powers recorded as part of the song *Did You Ever See the Devil, Uncle Joe?* (Okeh 45268):

Railroad, steamboat,
River and canal.
Hadn't been for Kaiser Bill,
There never wouldn't have been no hell.

Hobart Smith plays a good piano version of the tune on Rounder CD 1799.

8. Fish on a Hook / Walk Jawbone (Roud 752, 7728)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA 8/6/79.)

Fish on a hook, fish on a line,
Fish no more 'til the summer time.

Throw my hook to the middle of the pond
Fish for the girl with a josie on.

See that catfish a-going upstream,
What in the hell does a catfish mean?

Fish that catfish by its snout,
Turn that catfish wrong side out.

Oh, my wife died in Tennessee,
She sent her jawbone back to me.
Walk jawbone and walk on by,
Walk jawbone, can't find me.

Saw an old man come riding by.
I said, 'Old man, your horse will die.'
'If he dies, his hide I'll tan,
And if he lives, I'll ride again.'

Walk jawbone and walk on by,
Walk jawbone, can't find me.

Spoken: I reckon that's all the words I have to it.

Fish on a Hook is often called *Hook and Line* or *Shout Lula* by banjo players and may be based on an early minstrel tune, *My Old Dad*. Hobart Smith fiddles a spirited version of the tune, titled *Katy Went Fishing with Her Hook and Line*, on Rounder CD 1701 ('It's a real old piece, handed down from my fathers,' according to Hobart). Cecil Sharp collected a version in 1918 from Ebe Richards of Callaway, Franklin County, VA. Mr. Richards called it *The Jackfish,* and his chorus, 'O de lor de gal sindy, sindy, Lor de lor gal sindy sue' suggests a black origin. For another recording, listen to Louis Foreacre singing *Shout Little Lulu* on Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40097.

Jawbone is, of course, the minstrel song *Walk Jawbone*. When the song was sung on stage it would often be 'accompanied' by the jawbone of a horse, ox, or mule. The teeth would be left in and when a key, or other piece of metal, was pulled across the teeth, the bone made 'a queer sound,' to quote the Ozark folklorist Vance Randolph. Similar instruments are known in Africa, and it may be that the idea of playing the jawbone comes originally from African slaves. A Kentucky banjo player, Willie Chapman, was recorded playing a tune called *Jaw Bone* (Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40077), but this appears to be different from Dan's tune. Pope's Arkansas Mountaineers, however, recorded a similar tune in 1928 (reissued on County CD-3506), as did the Carter Brothers and Son, a Mississippi stringband, this time under the title *Old Joe Bone* (reissued on Document DOCD-8009). A 1997 recording by fiddle player Cecil Goforth, on volume one of Rounder's *Traditional Fiddle Music of the Ozarks* (CD 0435), suggests that it is still popular with Ozark musicians, and, on several tracks of this CD, you can actually hear a jawbone being played behind the fiddle).



Photo by Paul Brown

9. Roustabout (Roud 16965)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, Virginia, 8/6/79)

Roustabout, my bare-footed child,
Take your boat to the shore.
There's a hundred-dollar bill, and I've got no change.
Oh, don't you want to go?

Walkabout, on Sunday, my boys,
What pleasure can I see?
When I've got a woman in New Orleans,
And she won't write to me.

So roustabout, my bare-footed bums,
Take your boat to the shore.
There's a hundred pretty women on the other side,
Oh, don't you want to go?

A roustabout was an unskilled laborer, especially one who worked on the oil rigs, and, according to Cece Conway (notes to *Black Banjo Songsters* – Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40079) the tune *Roustabout* 'is one of the most important showpiece tunes in the Black banjo repertory.' It seems that the tune probably originated in Virginia, under the title *Long Steel Rail*, and is nowadays equally well-known among both black and white musicians. Dink Roberts performs a good version on the above-mentioned Smithsonian Folkways CD, while Fred Cockerham can be heard playing his version of the tune on Rounder CD 0439.

10. The Wind and Rain (Roud 8, Child 10)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA. 8/6/79)

Two loving sisters was a-walking side by side,
Oh, the wind and rain.
One pushed the other off in the waters deep,
And she cried a-dreadful wind and rain.

She swam on down to the miller's pond,
Oh, the wind and rain.
She swam on down to the miller's pond,
And she cried a-dreadful wind and rain.

Out ran the miller with his long hook and line,
Oh, the wind and rain.
He hooked her up by the tail of the gown,
And he cried a-dreadful wind and rain.

Well, they made fiddle strings of her long black hair,
Oh, the wind and the rain.
They made fiddle screws of her long finger bones,
And he cried a-dreadful wind and rain.

Well, the only tune that my fiddle would play
Was oh, the wind and rain.
The only tune that my fiddle would play
Was she cried a-dreadful wind and rain.

Dan's short version of *The Cruel Sister*, which he learnt from his sister, revolves around the musical instrument that is made from the girl's hair and bones. In the original (?) version, when the instrument is played it sings of the young girl's murder by her sister. Kilby Snow, who lived not too far away from Dan, also sang the ballad (Asch LP 3902), and it could be that Dan's sister and Kilby had the ballad from a common source. Still relatively common in America (Eunice Yeatts McAlexander sings another version on track 26 of this CD). Lee Monroe Presnell sings a lovely version, titled *The Two Sisters that Loved One Man* on Appleseed APR CD 1036, and Phyllis Marks has a more straightforward version on Augusta Heritage 008. [But] it is seldom heard today in England, although I did record a good version from the late George Fradley of Derbyshire, which can be heard on the cassette *One of the Best* (Veteran Tapes VT114). There are also a number of recordings of Scottish singers, including Betsy Whyte (on *The Muckle Sangs* – Greentrax CDTRAX 9005), Jock Duncan (Springthyme CD 1039) and John Strachan, Dorothy Fourbister & Ethel Findlater (Rounder CD 1775), although these latter three recordings have been edited almost beyond recognition.

11. The Devil's Grandmother (Roud 437)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/10/79)

Oh, I married me a wife, oh then (x3)
She's the joy of my life, and I wish I was single again.

My wife taken sick, oh then (x3)
And the fever being quick, and I wish I was single again.

My wife she died, oh then (x3)
And I laughed till I cried, and now I'm single again.

(Oh) I married me another, oh then (x3)
The Devil's grandmother, and I wish I was single again.

She bought her a rope, oh then (x3)
And she swung me up, but I wish I was single

My heart did ache, oh then (x3)
And the rope it did break, and now I'm single again.

[Repeats verses 2 and 3]

Spoken: It's all there, I tell you.

Common in Britain, where it is usually called *I Wish I Was Single Again*, it was in the repertoire of Johnny Doughty, among others (Topic 12TS324). The song's popularity is probably due to its frequent appearance on the Victorian stage and, in America, the minstrel show, although it is also known from a version that appeared in *The Westminster Drollery* of 1672. Another version,

sung by Leonard Emanuel, is available on Rounder CD 0071, although earlier recordings by Vernon Dalhart and Riley Puckett do not appear to be currently available on CD.

Sam Conner and Dent Wimmer

Sam Conner lived at Copper Hill in Floyd County. After recording a number of his fiddle and banjo tunes, he insisted that we [go] to the small town of Floyd to meet his friend, the banjo player Dent Wimmer. Dent had just come out of hospital, following a serious operation, and I was hesitant about him playing. But as soon as he saw Sam getting out of the car with his fiddle case, I heard him call to his daughter, asking her to bring his banjo. Their duets were breathtaking, and it was hard to realize that Dent was still very ill.



Dent Wimmer & Sam Conner (by Mike Yates)

12. Massa Run Away
(Played on the fiddle by Sam Conner at his home in Copper Hill, Floyd County, VA, 8/7/79)

Also known as *Kingdom Coming* or *The Year of Jubilo*, it was composed by Henry Clay Work, who also wrote *Marching Through Georgia* – in 1861, at the outbreak of the American Civil War. As such, it predates Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation by a year or so. Further details appear in Newman White's *American Negro Folksongs* (1928, reprinted 1965, pp. 170-1), and collected versions are included in Byron Arnold's *Folksongs of Alabama* (1950) and Ira Ford's *Traditional Music in America* (1940, reprinted 1965). Sam & Kirk McGee's 1927 recording *Old Master's Runaway* (Vocalion 5167) has been reissued on both County CD 3522 and Document DOCD-8036, although Frank Crummit's very popular Victor waxing (Victor 21108) appears to be currently unavailable.

13. Ricketts' Hornpipe
(Played on the fiddle by Sam Conner at his home at Copper Hill, Floyd County, VA, 8/8/79)

Ricketts' Hornpipe is thought to have been named after John Bill Ricketts, an early circus entrepreneur. Ricketts left England for America in 1792, and circuses bearing his name appeared in New York, Philadelphia, Norfolk, Charleston, Albany, Boston, Hartford and Montreal. The tune first appeared in an untitled version, labelled '*Danced by Aldridge*' in McGlashan's *Collection of Scots Measures* (Edinburgh, c. 1781). In America, the tune was actually more popular in the northern cities and is one of the few tunes that is played in the south as a hornpipe. Other fine recorded versions include those by Luther Strong of Kentucky (Rounder CD 1518), Georgia's Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers (reissued on Document DOCD-8060), Shaw & Overton (Marimac CD 9064), Benton Flippen (Rounder CD 0326), and the American/Irish Dan Sullivan's Shamrock Band (Traditional Crossroads CD 4284).

14. Don't Get Trouble in Mind
(Played on the fiddle by Sam Conner and the banjo by Dent Wimmer at Dent's home in Floyd, Floyd County, VA, 8/8/79)

A very simple tune that follows a widely employed metrical pattern. Other similar tunes are *Quit That Ticklin' Me* (a laughing song from the late 1800's) and *Run, Molly, Run*. The Ward Family of Galax, VA. recorded it a couple of times – once as the Bogtrotter's Band and once as Crockett Ward and His Boys (Okeh 45304, recorded 1927). Fields Ward's later (1929) recording was unissued by Gennett, although it did appear on an old Historical album (HLP 8001). Rufus Crisp also performed a good version on Folkways LP 2342.

15. Pig in the Pen
(Played on the fiddle by Sam Conner and the banjo by Dent Wimmer at Dent's home in Floyd, Floyd County, VA, 8/8/79)

Another popular and well-loved piece, which usually has a verse similar to the following:

> Wish I had a pig in a pen, corn to feed him on,
> Pretty little girl to stay at home, feed him when I'm gone.

Pug Allen included the same verse in his version of the tune *Trader Boatman,* which is included on Volume 2 (track 21). Charlie Woods' *Pretty Girl Down the Road*, also on Volume 2 (track 7), is also related.

Fiddling Arthur Smith claimed that *Pig in the Pen* was one of his tunes – he often played it on the radio, and it is now difficult to trace the exact origins of the piece, although some of the verses seem to predate Smith.

16. Western Country
(Played on the fiddle by Sam Conner and the banjo by Dent Wimmer at Dent's home in Floyd, Floyd County, VA, 8/8/79)

Sam called this *Little Piggie* from his verse:

> Run the old hog over the fence
> And the little pigs through the cracks.

whilst Dent uses the title *Western Country* from the verse:

> When I was in the western country,
> Where the weather was so dry,
> The sun came out and froze me,
> Suzannah don't you cry.

Other Appalachian musicians call it either *Fly Around My Pretty Little Pink* or *Blue Eyes Run Me Crazy* because of another common verse:

> Fly around my pretty little pink,
> Fly around my daisy.
> Fly around my pretty little pink,
> Your blue eyes run me crazy.

Kentucky banjo player Lee Sexton plays a good, if short, version on the album *Mountain Music of Kentucky* (Smithsonian Folkways SFCD 40077), and the North Carolina banjo player and singer Frank Proffitt can be heard on Appleseed APR CD 1036; while Hobart Smith of Virginia played a stunning version on the piano (Rounder CD 1702). The Bogtrotters, from Galax, VA, recorded it for the Library of Congress, and The Hillbillies, a '20s stringband also from the area around Galax, called it *Blue-Eyed Girl* on their 1926 recording (Vocalion 5017), which has been reissued on Document DOCD-8039. They also included the 'little piggie' verse in their 1925 recording of *Whoa' Mule* (Okeh 40376), which is available on the same Document CD. A fine version from Frank Blevins and His Pilot Mountaineers has been reissued on Yazoo CD 2028, while Bradley Kincaid's *Pretty Little Pink*, reissued on Yazoo CD 2051, contains a number of similar verses.

17. Baby-O
(Played on the banjo by Dent Wimmer at his home in Floyd, Floyd County, VA, 8/8/79)

What Shall We Do With the Baby-O? has been on the go for quite some time. Cecil Sharp noted a version in Kentucky in 1917, and Jean Ritchie's Kentucky version is well-known in the folk revival. A 1929 recording by G.B. Grayson & Henry Whitter is available on a re-issue CD (Document DOCD-8055), and Tommy Jarrell's version was available on County LP 778.



Grayson County (Elk Creek, VA) Fiddlers Convention (by Paul Brown)

18. Cumberland Gap
(Played on the banjo by Dent Wimmer at his home in Floyd, Floyd County, VA, 8/8/79)

Cumberland Gap, in eastern Kentucky, one of the main openings to the west, is the subject for this sprightly tune. Dent gives the following couple of verses at the end:

> Me and my wife and seventeen chaps,
> Walked all the way to Cumberland Gap.
>
> Cumberland Gap's an awful dry place,
> You can't get water to wash your face.

According to Bascom Lamar Lunsford, *Cumberland Gap* is a speeded up version of the tune normally associated with the ballad *Bonny James Campbell* (see Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40082). There seem to be no early printings of the tune, although Neil Gow's *Skye Air* (Gow 559) carries a faint suggestion. In 1773 Daniel Boone led a band of pioneers into Kentucky along the so-called Wilderness Road, which passed through Cumberland Gap, and the story of Boone's journey may have helped to popularize the tune, which must have been known in the early 19th century. An early Edison Bell cylinder recording by Allen Sisson certainly sets the tune in a 19th century sounding context.

There are two reissues available of 1928 recordings. The Skillet Lickers are on Document DOCD-8057, and Burnett & Rutherford can be heard on Document DOCD-8025. A slightly earlier recording, made in 1926 by the Hill Billies, has also been reissued, this time on Document DOCD-8040. Kentucky fiddle player Luther Strong can be heard on Rounder CD 1518, and two later North Carolina recordings, sung by George Landers and Frank Proffitt, will be found on Rounder CD 0028.

19. Half-Shaved
(Played on the banjo by Dent Wimmer at his home in Floyd, Floyd County, VA, 8/8/79)

This is something of a rarity – at least on record. The late Wade Ward of Independence, VA played a similar named – though different – piece on the album *High Atmosphere* (Rounder CD 0028). However, Fields Ward, who knew and played Dent's tune, told us that Uncle Wade was confusing two tune titles and that the item on the *High Atmosphere* album is incorrectly titled.

20. Salt Creek
(Played on the banjo by Dent Wimmer at his home in Floyd, Floyd County, VA, 8/8/79)

Salt Creek is Dent's version of a tune that Hobart Smith called *Pateroller*. (See Rounder CD 1799 for Hobart's version.) Or did he? This is not the tune that usually goes under the title *Pateroller*, or *Run, Nigger, Run* as it is sometimes called, and it may be that John Cohen, who wrote the Rounder booklet notes, was confusing a couple of tunes which share a basic flattened seventh tonality. (Just to confuse matters further, John Morgan Salyer's *Lonesome John* [Appalachian Center cassette AC003] also seems to fit somewhere or other into the scheme of things!) Sam Conner tries to join in at the beginning of the recording, but soon gives up, commenting, "We never could play that together," at the end.

Other versions, under the title *Salt River,* include Snake Chapman (Rounder CD 0418) and the 1929 Kessinger Brothers version (reissued on Document DOCD-8011), which influenced bluegrass musicians such as Don Stover and Bill Monroe.

21. Georgie Buck
(Played on the banjo by Dent Wimmer at his home in Floyd, Floyd County, VA, 8/8/79)

> Georgie Buck is dead, those words he said,
> 'Don't give a (?) if he die. Don't give a (?) if he die'
>
> Oh, Georgie Buck is dead, last word he said,
> Take me to my grave on a (sled?). Take me to my grave on a (sled?).

Spoken: That's about George ... there's a lot of 'em short verses ... but I don't know but a few of ‘em any more.

Georgie Buck belongs to what Cecilia Conway calls 'the banjo song genre'. Such songs are usually characterized by the following five musical features: 1) rhythmic and syncopated

playing throughout the performance, especially when singing; 2) elaborated instrumental interludes; 3) compressed vocal lines of two or more syllables per beat; 4) occasional but irregular interruptions by instrumental interludes within the stanza; and 5) varied repetition of instrumental elements. (*American Banjo Echoes in Appalachia* by Cecelia Conway, 1995).

A single verse, *Barbara Buck*, collected by Cecil Sharp from Laura V. Donald of Dewey, VA, shows some similarities.

Recordings by Dink Roberts and Joe Thompson & Odell Thompson (Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40079) and Odell Thompson (Rounder CD 0439) clearly belong to Conway's banjo song genre, although a 1927 recording by The Hill Billies (reissued on Document DOCD-8041) treats it more like a regular song. A rather odd-sounding field holler version by Leonard Emanuel (Rounder CD 0071) is indicative of another way in which this song was used.

Eunice Yeatts McAlexander

Cecil Sharp visited Meadows of Dan (so-called because it is the headwater of the Dan River) in Patrick County, on August 27, 1918, and noted a number of songs from Dad Blackard, the local 'banjer-man'. Eunice Yeatts McAlexander's parents knew Dad Blackard, and some of her ballads, inherited from her father, were similar to those sung by Blackard to Sharp. Eunice had worked in the mountains as a teacher in a one-room, log cabin school and told me, with some embarrassment, how she had entertained the school children by singing to them, their favorite song apparently being *The Preacher and the Bear*, which was originally from the minstrel-stage. Some of Eunice's ballads were recorded in 1932 by Arthur Kyle Davis, on behalf of the Virginia Folklore Society.



Eunice Yeatts McAlexander (by Mike Yates)

22. Little Massie Grove (Child 81, Roud 52)
(Sung by Eunice Yeatts McAlexander at her home in Meadows of Dan, Patrick County, VA, 8/7/79)

Spoken: This song, in this area, was called *Little Massie Grove*

My high, my high, my high holiday,
And the very first day in the year.
Little Massie Grove to the church did go,
The Gospel for to hear, to hear,
The Gospel for to hear.

The first one in was a lady fair,
And the next one was a girl.
The next one was Lord Barnard's wife,
The fairest of them all. [etc.]

Little Massie Grove was standing near,
To him she cast an eye.
Saying, 'You must go home with me today,
All night in my arms to lie.' [etc.]

'Oh no, no,' said little Massie Grove,
'I dare not for my life.
For I see by the ring that you wear on your hand,
That you are Lord Barnard's wife.' [etc.]

"Why should I hold those vows sacred,
When he's so far away?
He's gone on the top of King's Mountain,
Prince Henry for to see.' [etc.]

So they went home, a-hugging and kissing,
And then they fell asleep.
And when they awoke on the next day's morning,
Lord Barnard stood at their feet. [etc.]

Saying, 'How do you like my new coverlid?
And how do you like my sheet?
And how do you like my fair young wife,
Who lies in your arms and sleeps?' [etc.]

"Very well do I like your new coverlid.
Very well do I like your sheet.

Much better do I like your fair young wife,
Who lies in my arms and sleeps.' [etc.]

'Rise up, rise up, little Massie Grove,
Put on your clothes as quick as you can.
It shall never be said in this wide world,
That I slew a naked man.' [etc.]

'Oh no, no,' said little Massie Grove.
'I dare not for my life.
For around your waist you have two swords,
And me not so much as a knife.' [etc.]

'If around my waist I have two swords,
And you not so much as a knife,
You may take the best of them,
And then I'll take your life. [etc.]

"You may strike the first blow,
Now strike it like a man,
And I will strike the second blow,
And I'll kill you if I can.' [etc.]

Little Massie struck the first blow,
It wounded deep and sore.
Lord Barnard struck the second blow.
Little Massie couldn't fight no more. [etc.]

Lord Barnard took his fair young wife,
And he set her on his knee.
'Now which one did you love the best?
Little Massie Grove or me?' [etc.]

'Very well do I like your deep blue eyes.
Very well do I like your chin.
Much better did I like little Massie Grove,
Than you and all of your kin.' [etc.]

According to Professor Child, who lists fourteen versions of this ballad, there is a 1630 entry for the ballad in the records of the Stationers' Registers. He also mentions that the ballad can be found in several blackletter broadside collections from the middle of the 17th century. Most British versions have the *Mattie Groves*/*Musgrave* title, whilst a good number of North American ones use *Lord Daniel*/*Banner*.

I wonder if other listeners have noticed the similarities in this story with those in the legends of King Arthur. Arthur, like Lord Daniel, carried two swords (Excalibur and Caliburnus) and, again like Lord Daniel, discovered his wife Guinevere to be having an affair, in this case with Lancelot. Arthur did not, of course, kill Lancelot, but did, nevertheless, send other knights to kill him in what is now France. I am sure that this is coincidence... well, almost sure!

While still quite popular with American singers (Cas Wallin sings his version – titled *Lord Daniel* – on Volume 3, track 29, of this set, and Dillard Chandler, one of Cas Wallin's neighbors, sings his version of the ballad on Folkways LP 2309), this is one of the ballads that has all but disappeared from the British tradition – although the late Jeannie Robertson had not one, but two versions! (For one of these, see volume one of *Classic Ballads of Britain and Ireland* – Rounder 1775). According to Mark Wilson, many American singers who had heard the song in their youth – such as Buell Kazee and Almeda Riddle – refused to learn the piece because of its perceived 'smutty' content.

23. Wild Hog in the Woods (Child 18, Roud 29)
(Sung by Eunice Yeatts McAlexander at her home in Meadows of Dan, Patrick County, VA, 8/7/79)

Spoken: I'll sing *There is a Wild Hog in the Woods* as my father used to sing it.

There is a wild hog in the woods,
Diddle-o-down, diddle-o-day.
There is a wild hog in the woods,
Diddle-o.
There is a wild hog in the woods,
Kills a man and drinks his blood.
Cam-o-kay, cut him down, kill him if you can.

I wish I could that wild hog see,
And see if he'd take a fight with me.

There he comes through yonder's marsh,
He splits his way through oak and ash.

Bangum drew his wooden knife,
To rob that wild hog of his life.

They fought for/four hours of the day,
At length that wild hog stole away.

They followed that wild hog to his den,
And there found the bones of a thousand men.

Wild Hog in the Woods is an Old World ballad which has now, to all intent and purpose, disappeared from the lips of European singers (although it was collected in the UK from six singers between 1850 and 1905), but which has nevertheless survived quite well in North America (there are 4 versions in Sharp's Appalachian collection). Professor Child, who called it *Sir Lionel*, linked it to the Medieval romance of Sir Eglamour of Artois, as well as to various Scandinavian ballads of the 16th century.

The Kimble Family – who can be heard singing on Volume 2 of this set – recorded an instrumental version of *Wild Hog in the Woods* (Marimac cassette 9036 and County LP 746).

24. The Miller's Will (Laws Q21, Roud 138)
(Sung by Eunice Yeatts McAlexander at her home in Meadows of Dan, Patrick County, VA, 9/4/80)

The miller called his oldest son,
He said, 'My race is nearly run.
If I should leave to you this mill
Tell me what toll you intend to steal.'

Chorus:
Ranktum-day, ranktum-doe, Ranktum-a-diddle-um-a-daddy-o.

'Oh, father you know my name is Rex.
Out of six bushels I'll take six pecks.
Corn to steal, the mill to grind.
I think a good living I'm sure to find.'

'The mill's not yours,' the old man said.
'The mill's not yours,' the old man said.
'The mill's not yours,' the old man said,
'You'll starve to death when I am dead.'

The miller called his second son,
He said, 'My race is nearly run.
If I should leave to you this mill
Tell me what toll you intend to steal.'

'Oh, father you know my name is Ralph.
Out of each bushel I'll take one half.
Corn to steal, the mill to grind
I think a good living I'm sure to find.'

'The mill's not yours,' the old man said.
'The mill's not yours,' the old man said.
'The mill's not yours,' the old man said,

'You'll starve to death when I am dead.'

The miller called his youngest son.
He said, 'My race is nearly run.
If I should leave to you this mill,
Tell me what toll you intend to steal.'

'Oh, father you know my name is Wright,
And stealing corn's my chief delight.
I'll steal the corn and swipe the sack,
And cuss the little boys if they ever come back!'

'The mill is yours,' the old man cried.
'The mill is yours,' the old man cried.
'The mill is yours,' the old man cried,
And closed his mean old eyes and died.

In European folklore cheating millers are as old as Chaucer, if not older. Our present song appeared on 17th and 18th century blackletter broadsides, one of which is preserved in the Roxburghe Collection, and was subsequently reprinted by Victorian printers such as Catnach and Pitts. Cecil Sharp collected versions in Kentucky and North Carolina, though he seems to have missed it in Virginia. I thought that I had exhausted Eunice's repertoire when she telephoned my motel to say that she had remembered a few more songs, including this fine version of *The Millers Will,* which her father had originally sung to her when she was a child.

Jumbo Brightwell, from Suffolk, sings a good version on Topic TSCD 664, and Ola Belle Reed has a version on the *Land of Yahoe* CD (Rounder 8041). A 1929 recording by the Carson Brothers and Sprinkle (who may have been from Texas) has been reissued on the CD *Times Ain't Like They Used to Be*, vol. 1 (Yazoo CD 2028).

25. Over the River to Charlie (Roud 729)
(Sung by Eunice Yeatts McAlexander at her home in Meadows of Dan, Patrick County, VA, 8/16/79)

Your weevly wheat's not fit to eat,
Neither is your barley.
All I want is the best of rye,
To bake a cake for Charlie.

Chorus:
Rise you up in the morning,
All together early.
You need not be at all afraid,
Indeed I love you dearly.

Over the river to feed my sheep,
Over the river to Charlie.
Over the river to feed my sheep,
And measure up my barley.

Usually known as a 'play-party' piece, it is thought by some that the song refers to the Jacobite 'Bonnie' Prince Charlie, whose troops were defeated by the English at the Battle of Culloden, near Inverness, in 1746. Jean Ritchie, the well-known Kentucky singer, used to sing it, and a recording by Granville Bowlin, also from from Kentucky, can be heard on Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40077. The Ozark fiddle player Art Galbraith played a fiddle version in 6/8 time (Rounder 0157).

26. The Cruel Sister (Child 10, Roud 8)
(Sung by Eunice Yeatts McAlexander at her home in Meadows of Dan, Patrick County, VA, 8/7/79)

There was an old woman who lived by the sea,
Bow-down.
There was an old woman who lived by the sea,
Bow-so-bend-to-me.
There was an old woman who lived by the sea,
Daughters she had, one, two, three.
I'll be true to my love if my love will be true to me.

There was a young sailor to see them came.
Chose for his love the youngest one.

He gave to her a beaver hat.
The oldest she thought hard of that.

He gave to her a ring of gold.
That made the oldest one scold.

Sister, sister, come down to the shore,
And watch the waves come rolling o'er.

As they were walking by the briny brim,
The old one pushed the young one in.

'Sister, sister, give me your hand.
I'll give to you my house and land.'

I'll give you neither hand nor glove,
All I want is your true love.'

If we combine Dan Tate's *The Wind and the Rain* (track 10) with Eunice Yeatts McAlexander's *The Cruel Sister* we have the almost complete story of the ballad of *The Two Sisters*; one in which a jealous sister's treachery is revealed by the singing instrument made out of the victim's bones and hair. Some scholars have suggested a Scandinavian origin to the piece, which, at one time, was widespread throughout Europe. Eunice's tune, by the way, seems like a variant on that used for the song *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*.

Horton Barker, from Virginia, had a wonderful version (available on Rounder CD 1516), as did the Ozark singer Charles Ingenthron (Rounder CD 1108).

William Marshall and Howard Hall

When I went to find the banjo player Calvin Cole I knocked at a house for directions. Seeing a banjo case in the hallway, I asked the man who had answered the door if he played. This was Howard Hall. It turned out that his house was opposite Calvin Cole's home, and, having taken me to meet Calvin, he later said that I should meet William Marshall. Although [in his mid-sixties], William still worked on his farm and was feeding his chickens as we walked up to his house. William and Howard represent the older fiddle and banjo duets that were once popular in the Galax/Hillsville area before the arrival of the full string bands.



William Marshall & Howard Hall (by Mike Yates)

27. Pretty Little Girl
(Played on the fiddle by William Marshall and the banjo by Howard Hall, at William's home near Hillsville, Carroll County, VA, 8/4/79)

Pretty Little Girl belongs to the *Little Rabbit/John Brown's Dream* family of tunes. It seems to be especially popular along the 'Great Divide' – that part of the mountains that separate North Carolina and Tennessee – but, in truth, it turns up in one form or another all over Appalachia. Other currently available recordings include *Pretty Little Girl* by the Camp Creek Boys (County CD 2719), *Cotton Eyed Joe* (surely a mis-title?) by Taylor and Stella Kimble (Rounder CD 0439), *Johnny* by Lonnie Robertson (Rounder CD 0375), *Little Rabbit / Rabbit Where's Your Mammy* by Crockett's Kentucky Mountaineers (Yazoo CD 2200), *John Brown's Dream* by Da Costa Waltz's Southern Broadcasters (Document DOCD-8023 or Yazoo CD 2046), *Brownlow's Dream* by Ed Haley (Rounder CD 1131/1132, Spring Fed Records SFR-113), *Devil's Dream* by Hobart Smith (Rounder CD 1706) and *Stillhouse Branch* by Buddy Thomas (Rounder CD 0032). Interestingly, Buddy Thomas knew the piece alternately as *Brown Stream* and believed that the title referred to the stream of whiskey that emerges from a moonshine still – which may help explain why Clark Kessinger recorded it in 1929 as *Johnny Bring the Jug 'Round the Hill* (reissued on Document DOCD-8010), a title that often carried words such as: *Old Jimmy Johnson, bring your jug round the hill / If you can't bring the jug, bring the whole damn still / If you can't bring the jug, bring a ten dollar bill.*



Photo by Paul Brown

28. Back-Step Cindy
(Played on the fiddle by William Marshall at his home near Hillsville, Carroll County, VA, 8/4/79)

Back-Step Cindy (or *Virginia Cindy* as it is sometimes called) differs from the North Carolina *Rockingham Cindy*. However, just to confuse matters, many North Carolina musicians include *Back-Step Cindy* in their repertoires!

Another recording of this tune by William and the banjo player Glen Smith is available on a Folkways LP (Folkways 3832).

29. Polly in the Kitchen
(Played on the banjo by Howard Hall at William Marshall's home near Hillsville, Carroll County, VA, 8/4/79)

Howard had the following verse for this tune:

> Polly in the kitchen, Polly in the hall.
> Polly in the kitchen, eating it all.

I know of no other version, although parts of the tune do sound a little like *Cotton-Eyed Joe*.

Ted Boyd

Ted Boyd, in his early seventies, was sitting on the veranda of his home when I arrived. He quickly agreed to let me record him, and as he began to play, a younger neighbor, 'Junior' Shivley, walked over to join us, guitar in hand. Ted lived at Endicott, a place visited by Cecil Sharp on August 21, 1918. Sharp collected 27 songs and ballads that day from the Cannady family. A photograph taken by Sharp shows Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cannady sitting on the steps of their log cabin. There were still Cannadys living in the area sixty years later, though none that I spoke to claimed to be a singer.

30. Sweet Sunny South
(Played on the banjo by Ted Boyd at his home in Endicott, Franklin County, VA, 8/5/79)

The tune to a sentimental minstrel song from the mid 1800's. Printed versions, under a number of titles, were usually credited to either 'Raymond' or else 'W. L.' Bloomfield. Surprisingly, Cecil Sharp noted three versions of the tune. The song usually begins with the following words:

> Take me home to a place where I first saw the light,
> To the sweet, sunny South, take me home.
> Where the mockingbirds sing me to sleep every night,
> Oh, why was I tempted to roam?

Both Roy Harvey and Da Costa Woltz's Southern Broadcasters recorded the song commercially in 1927 (reissued respectively on Document DOCD-8050 and Document DOCD-8023), but it was Charlie Poole's 1929 recording that really popularized the song (reissued on County CD 3501). The cover of an 1850's music sheet is reprinted with the notes to the version recorded by Kentucky fiddle player Buddy Thomas on his album *Kitty Puss*

(Rounder CD 0032). Listeners may like to compare this with the similar song *Bright Sunny South* as performed by Dock Boggs (Smithsonian-Folkways SF CD 40108).

31. Mississippi Sawyer
(Played on the banjo by Ted Boyd at his home in Endicott, Franklin County, VA 8/5/79)

A 'Mississippi sawyer' is the name given to a submerged log in the Mississippi River, such logs having the capacity to rip out the bottom of a passing boat (although very few musicians today seem to know this!). Ted's version is interesting, in that he omits a number of melody notes. I suspect that this is the way that he played the tune when backing a fiddle player.

One tune, titled either *The Downfall of Paris* or *Love From the Heart*, was printed in the 1830's, and many writers cite it as an early form of *Mississippi Sawyer*, although it is not actually that close to our present tune. Just about every American fiddler of note has it in his, or her, repertoire. I especially like Earl Johnson's wild 1929 recording that is reissued on Document DOCD-8006 and Charlie Acuff's version on Cleff'd Ear CD 114.

32. Sally Goodin
(Played on the banjo by Ted Boyd and the guitar by 'Junior' Shivley at Ted's home in Endicott, Franklin County, VA, 8/5/79)

Sally Goodin turns up all over the upland south of America, but I have included Ted Boyd's gentle version because of his unusual 'high' part of the tune. His banjo is tuned to a relative double-C tuning (gCGCD), and he gets this third part by fretting the first string on the 10th fret with his little finger, bringing an unexpectedly delightful effect to the tune.

According to North Carolina fiddler Bruce Greene, the tune was originally called *Boatin' Up Sandy* (referring to the Big Sandy River in eastern Kentucky) and was renamed by Civil War Confederate soldiers in Morgan's Raiders while they were camped on the Big Sandy in Pike County, Kentucky. Sally Goodin ran a boarding house there and allowed the soldiers to camp and play music. To show their appreciation of her kindness, Morgan's men renamed the tune in her honor.

It should, perhaps, be pointed out that there are several other tunes which are today also titled *Boatin' Up Sandy*. There is also another Kentucky tune, played with the fiddle tuned ADAD, called *Red Top Boots, Pocket Full of Money* which is similar to *Sally Goodin*.

There are a couple of good early recordings available on Document DOCD-8011 (The Kessinger Brothers) and Document DOCD-8043 (Fiddlin' Doc Roberts), although it was Eck Robertson's 1922 recording (reissued on County CO CD 5515) that really popularized the tune across America. For some reason, Earl Johnson & His Clodhoppers recorded it in 1928 as *Nigger in the Cotton Patch* (Document DOCD-8006).

33. John Hardy (Roud 3262, Laws 12)
(Played on the banjo by Ted Boyd and the guitar by Junior Shivley at Ted's home in Endicott, Franklin County, VA, 8/5/79)

Cecil Sharp collected a fine set of this song from Ellie Johnson of Hot Springs in North Carolina in 1916, even though he considered it 'clearly a modern production.' Sharp's text begins:

> John Hardy was a brave and des-pe-ra-ted man,
> He carried his gun every day.
> He killed him a man in the Shunny Camps,
> This day he's condemned to be hung, I do know,
> This day he's condemned to be hung.

According to some popular traditions, John Hardy, like the better-known John Henry, was a black steel-driving man who worked for the Shawnee Coal Company in West Virginia and was hanged for murder in 1894 in McDowel! County, WV. A song about his exploits quickly began to circulate among both black and white mountain singers. Doc Boggs, the almost legendary Appalachian singer and banjo player, recorded a version in 1963, (Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 4018), which should be compared with the version recorded a decade later by the black singer and banjo player Dink Roberts (Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40079), who was from North Carolina. It was also in the repertoire of the Kentucky singer and banjo player Buell Kazee (Rounder CD 0394) and the Carter Family, whose recorded version (reissued on JSP CD 7701A) has influenced many later singers.

Dan Tate



Dan Tate (by Mike Yates)

34. John Hardy
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/6/79)

John Hardy was a rough and rowdy man,
He carried two razors and a gun.
He shot a man in Shiloh Town,
And they say John Hardy will be hung.

So they took John Hardy to the river side,
They took him there to be baptized.
And the very last words that poor John Hardy did say
Was, 'I want to go to Heaven when I die.'

'So, dig my grave with a silver spade,
And a rope to let me down.
So men and women all pray for me,
I'm a-standing on my hanging ground.'

The notes to this song are given above, with Ted Boyd's version.

35. Old Grey Goose (Roud 3619)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/16/79)

Johnny Gordon lost his cow,
And where do you reckon he found her?
He found her up that rocky branch,
With a hundred buzzards ‘round her.

Chorus:
Look here, look there,
Look away over yonder.
Don't you see that old grey goose,
A-smiling at that gander.

Johnny Gordon lost his wife,
And where do you reckon he found her?
He found her up that rocky branch,
With a hundred men around her.

The Old Grey Goose was a minstrel song, possibly written in 1844 by A. Fiot. It was published that year in Philadelphia, with the note that it was 'sung by Aken, the celebrated banjoist.' Four years later, the song was in the repertoire of the well-known Christie Minstrels. A set collected by Norman Cazden appears in his book *Folk Songs of the Catskills*, vol. 1, p. 554 (1982).

In 1971 Roy Palmer noted the following two related verses from Mrs. Cecilia Costello of Birmingham:

> Saturday night I lost my wife,
> And Sunday morning I found her.
> Behind the pump, a-scratchin' her rump
> With all the men around 'er.
>
> She jumped over the chimney pot,
> I jumped over the timber.
> She cried out 'er back was broke,
> And I cried out, 'My finger.'

....and Bob Patten noted this verse from Harry Adams at Ile Abbots, Somerset, in 1978:

> Saturday night I lost my wife,
> And where do you think I found her?
> Up in the moon, playing a tune,
> With all the girls around her.

This latter verse was also used as a mnemonic for a version of *The Kingsbury Jig*, a variant of *The Oyster Girl* (see Sharp MS, M59).

36. Lightning and Thunder (Roud 329)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/23/80)

> Oh, Nancy my dear, won't you come to bed to me?
> Oh, Nancy my dear, won't you come to bed to me?
> Oh, Nancy my dear, won't you come to bed to me?
> She snored, she replied, 'I'm afraid you'll undo me.'
>
> Sing fol-de-rol-day.
>
> My britches is buttoned and I cannot undo them (x3)
> She snored and replied, 'There's a knife in the window.'
>
> Sing fol-de-rol-day.
>
> The knife it was got and the britches cut asunder (x3)
> And then they went at it like lightning and thunder.
>
> Sing fol-de-rol-day.
>
> Well the babe it was born, and they did all wonder (×3)
> That it hadn't a-been killed by lightning and thunder.

Sing fol-de-rol-day.

Usually titled *The Knife in the Window*, it is a song that has survived best in East Anglia. Cecil Sharp called it *Sally My Dear* and found it associated with the song *Hares on the Mountain* (see Cecil Sharp's *Collection of English Folk Songs,* edited by Maud Karpeles, Vol.1, pp. 430-36), which Bertrand Bronson suggested was derived from the ballad *The Two Magicians* (Child 44). A version that I collected in 1972 from Bill Whiting of Longcot in Berkshire can be heard on the CD *Up in the North and Down in the South* (Musical Traditions MTCD311-2), while other versions from Dickie Lashbrook and Harry Cox can be heard on Rounder CD 1778. American versions can sometimes be somewhat 'rawer' – see, for example, Jim Garland's version on the album *Just Something My Uncle Told Me* (Rounder LP 0141). Asa Martin & James Roberts recorded a less forthright version, *Crawling and Creeping*, in 1934, which was issued on a number of 78's (Banner 33400, Melotone M13367, Oriole 8452, Perfect 13130 and Romeo 5452).

37. Little Fisherman (Roud 149)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/11/79)

Hey my little fisherman, I wish you mighty well.
Hey my little fisherman, I wish you mighty well.
Have you any sea crabs here for to sell?

Chorus:
To my wack, to my foddle and ca-divy.

‘Yes sir, yes sir, I've one, two, three (x2)
And the best one of them I'll sell to thee.’

He picked/took it up all by the backbone, (x2)
He throwed it 'cross his withers and he wagged off home.

Well, the old man got home, for the want of a dish (x2)
Spoken: Excuse me ...
He threw it in the pot where the women went to piss.

Well, the old man got up to piss as you might suppose (2)
Whack went the sea crab and caught him by the nose.

John for the flesh fork and Sal for the ladle (x2)
And they beat the old man clean off to the navel.

As *The Sea Crabb*, this is to be found in Bishop Percy's famous folio manuscript of c. 1660 and remained unprinted until 1868, when John Furnival included it in his *Loose and Humorous Songs* (reprinted 1963). According to Gershom Legman, it was first known as a joking tale of

Levantine origin that appeared in Italy c.1400, and Roger deV Renwick lists many other examples in chapter 5 of his book *Recentering Anglo/American Folksong* (2001).

Nora Cleary from Co. Clare sings a lovely version on volume 7 of *The Voice of the People* (Topic TSCD 657), as does Mickey Connors on the cassette *Songs of the Irish Travellers* (European Ethnic Oral Traditions - no number), recorded and edited by Tom Munnelly. English singers include Harry Cox, Percy Ling, Charlie Stringer, Charlotte Renals (Veteran VT119) and Cyril Barber (Veteran VT102).

38. Muck on My Heel / Molly Van (Laws 036, Roud 166)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/6/79)

Muck on My Heel

I looked at the sun,
And the sun it looked high.
I looked at my boss,
And my boss he looked shy.

Chorus:
So it's muck on my heel,
Muck on my toe.
There's a muck so hard
That my shovel won't go.

I asked my boss,
And he said that I might
Go see my girl
Next payday night.

Molly Van

Come all you young men
Who handles a gun,
Beware of your shooting
Just after set sun.

Jimmy Randle was a-hunting,
It was all in the dark.
He shot at his sweetheart
And he missed not his mark.

Jimmy Randle was a-hunting
And the night was coming on.
With her apron pinned around her

He shot her for a swan.

Jimmy Randle went home
With his gun in his hand.
Saying, 'Mother, dear mother,
I have shot Molly Van.'

'Yes, I've killed this fair maiden,
And I've taken her life.
And I always intended
To have made her my wife.'

Come all you young women,
And stand you in a row.
Molly Vanders in the middle
As a mountain of snow.

(i) *Muck on My Heel* may, at one time, have been a distinct song, or, perhaps, part of the song *Roll On Buddy/John* which dates from the 1870's - 1880's. The verse 'I looked at the sun, And the sun it looked high'– which appears in almost all known versions of *Roll On John* – was also recorded by Palmer Crisp (Folkways 2342) and Aunt Molly Jackson (Library of Congress L61), two Kentucky singers.

Mark Wilson adds that several white banjo players have told him that they'd heard black convicts singing songs such as on the road (whilst members of chain gangs), and that the banjo players had then adapted the songs for their own usage.

(ii) *Molly Van* An American version of the 'Swan Maiden' theme, so beloved by romantic poets. It is a version of the Greek myth of Cephalus and Procris in which Procris, suspecting that her husband Cephalus is about to visit a mistress, hides in a thicket to watch his progress. In fact Cephalus was out hunting, and, mistaking Procris for a deer, he killed her with a magic dart.

However, some scholars, including Hugh Shields, believe that this specific song may, in fact, be based on an actual event that occurred in Kilwarlin, Co. Down in the early 1800's. (See Hugh's Ulster Folklife article '*Some Songs and Ballads in Use in the Province of Ulster...1845.*')

There are two versions of the ballad on Topic's *Voice of the People* series, *Molly Vaughan,* sung by Phoebe Smith (Topic TSCD 653) and *Molly Bawn,* sung by Packie Manus Byrne (Topic TSCD 656), as well as recordings from Maggie Murphy – *Molly Bawn* (Veteran VT134CD), Walter Pardon – *Polly Vaughan* (Musical Traditions CD 305-6) and Harry Cox – *The Fowler* (Topic TSCD 512D). American versions may be heard sung by Phyllis Marks (Augusta Heritage cassette 008) and Hazel Stover (Augusta Heritage 009). Surprisingly, there seem to be no recordings from Scotland.

Eunice Yeatts McAlexander

39. It's Hard to Love (Roud 824)
(Sung by Eunice Yeatts McAlexander, at her home in Meadows of Dan, Patrick County, VA, 8/22/80)

It's hard to love when you can't be loved,
It's hard to love in vain.
But the worst of love is a broken heart,
Did you ever feel the pain?
Did you ever feel the pain, dear one?
Did you ever feel the pain?
The worst of love is a broken heart,
Did you ever feel the pain?

Look up, look down this lonesome road,
Hang down your head and cry.
The best of friends must part sometime,
So why not you and I?
Why not you and I, dear one?
Why not you and I?
The best of friends must part sometime,
So why not you and I?

Eunice learnt this from her mother. Like many Appalachian songs, it is made up of 'floating' verses which can move easily from one song to another. A 1920s recording by Hayes Shepherd ('The Appalachian Vagabond') of Kentucky has been reissued on the album *The Music of Kentucky* volume 2 (Yazoo 2014). Also in the '20s, Gene Austin recorded a 'pop/folk' song which used the 'Look up/look down' lines and which became something of a standard.

40. The Three Little Babes (Child 79, Roud 196)
(Sung by Eunice Yeatts McAlexander at her home in Meadows of Dan, Patrick County, VA, 8/7/79)

Spoken: This song, my mother called *The Three Little Babes*. She learnt it from her mother. It's very old.

There lived a lady, lady gay,
And children she had three.
She sent them away to a northern school,
To learn their gramarie.

They had not been gone but a very short time,
Scarcely three weeks to the day.
'Til death, cold death, came stealing along

And stole those babes away.

'There lives a King in Heaven,' she cried,
'A King of a high degree.
Oh, send me back my three little babes,
Oh, send them back to me.'

Christmas time was drawing nigh,
The night being clear and cold.
She saw her three little babes coming back,
Coming back to their mother's home.

She spread them a table of bread and wine,
Just as neat as it could be.
'Come eat, come drink, my three little babes.
Come eat, come drink with me.'

'We can't eat your bread,' said the oldest one,
Neither can we drink your wine.
For the Saviour Dear is standing near,
To Him we must resign.'

She made them a bed in the far back-room,
Put on it a neat white sheet.
And over the top spread a golden spread,
That they might better sleep.

'Take it off, take it off,' cried the oldest one,
'Take it off, take it off,' cried one.
'What's to become of this wicked world,
Since sin has first begun?'

'Cold clay, cold clay, hangs over my head,
Green grass grows over my feet.
And every tear that you shed for me,
But wets my winding sheet.'

Professor Child called this ancient piece *The Wife of Usher's Well*. It is still rather common in parts of America, although it seems to have faded from British tradition. The idea that excessive grief disturbs the dead is also to be found in the ballad of *The Unquiet Grave* (Child 78), and I am tempted to believe that, ultimately, the ballads are giving out sound advice on how to cope with bereavement – and this long before psychologists had been heard of! In other words, whilst excessive grief might harm the dead, it can certainly be as harmful, and probably more so, to those still living. David Atkinson, in the fascinating study *History, Symbol, and Meaning in* '*The Cruel Mother*' (Folk Music Journal vol.6, no.3. 1992, pp.359 - 380), links

The Wife of Usher's Well to a number of other ballads, including *The Cruel Mother* (Child 20), on the grounds that in these ballads the revenant children establish a connection between their respective mothers and Christ.

The final word in verse 1, *gramarie*, is often translated as meaning witchcraft. I comes from the Scottish word *glamourie*, meaning the ancient world of *Glamoury*, which comprises Celtic lore connected with the natural world of animals, plants, seasons, the weather, etc. It can also imply the casting of spells, of charming the eye, and of making objects appear more beautiful than they really are (in the 18th century Alam Ramsay used the expression '*glamourit sicht*') and it can mean *witchcraft*, but, in this case, probably refers more to sympathetic magic.

Eunice recorded a version of this, and other ballads, for A. K. Davis of the Virginia Folklore Society on August 10, 1932.

Texas Gladden, a fine Appalachian singer, can be heard singing versions on two Rounder albums (CD1702 & CD1800), and Buell Kazee's version is included on the Smithsonian Folkways *Anthology of American Folk Music* (SFW 40090).

41. I Know a Pretty Little Girl
(Sung by Eunice Yeatts McAlexander at her home in Meadows of Dan, Patrick County, VA, 8/22/80)

I know a pretty little girl,
And I want her for my wife.
She's neat, she's sweet, she's pretty little feet,
And she's never kissed a boy in her life.

I ask her for a kiss.
She says, 'You're such a beau.
I'll kiss you now, but I'll vow and declare,
I'll never do so anymore.'

'For I'm going to be a better girl,
And never kiss again.
For fear my momma might find it out,
And cause her, oh, such pain.'

'You may walk, you may talk,
You may hold my hand.
But kissing is a crime.
I never expect to kiss you again,
Until the next time.'

I went to see her the other day,
But I didn't go to stay.

She leaned her head upon my breast,
Saying, 'The old folks are far away.'

I kissed her a dozen times,
'Til someone came to the door.
She kissed me then,
And there declared she'd never do so anymore.

Repeat verse 3, Repeat verse 4

Rather like the Scottish song *Some Say that Kissing's a Sin*. I can find no trace of the song elsewhere. Eunice learnt it as a young girl from a neighbour's daughter, who may have picked it up from the 1935 version recorded as *Kissing Is a Crime* by the Carter Family (ARC 6-05-53, which has been reissued by Bear Family in a boxed set of all the Carter Family recordings).

42. Lord Bateman (Child 53, Roud 40)
(Sung by Eunice Yeatts McAlexander at her home in Meadows of Dan, Patrick County, VA, 8/7/79)

Spoken: I'll sing the ballad of Lord Bateman.

There was a rich man lived in England,
And an only son had he.
He never, never could be contented,
'Til he set sail upon the sea.

He sailed to the East and he sailed to the West,
He sailed 'til he came to the Turkish shore;
And there he was taken and put in prison,
Where he could see nor hear no more.

That old Turk had an only daughter,
And she was beautiful to see.
'What would you bestow upon any fair maiden,
Who out of this prison would set you free?'

Oh I have land and I have living,
And I have a castle of high degree.
All this I bestow upon any fair maiden,
Who out of this prison would set me free.

She took him in her father's parlour,
She gave him of her father's wine.
And every health that she drank unto him,
Was, 'I wish'd Lord Bateman you'd be mine.'

'Seven long years I'll wait with patience,
Seven long years and one day more.
And then if you don't cross over to me,
Some other woman I must adore.'

Seven long years had passed and gone,
Seven long years and three weeks beside.
Then Susan gathered up her silks and finery
And thought she would cross the rolling tide.

She sailed ‘til she came to Lord Bateman's castle,
Then she made the valley ring,
Saying, 'If this is Lord Bateman's castle,
Surely there's a noble heart within.'

Downstairs ran the proud young porter,
Open and bade the (?) come in.
Saying, 'Yes, this is Lord Bateman's castle,
And today he's taken a new bride in.'

'Go ask him for three cuts of his bread,
And a bottle of his wine so strong,
And ask him if he does remember
Who freed him from his dying thong?'

Upstairs ran the proud young porter,
Down before Lord Bateman on his knee,
Saying, "At your gate is the prettiest creature
That ever my two eyes did see.'

Then up started proud Lord Bateman,
And a mighty oath swear he.
'I'll forfeit all my land and living,
If Susan Pye has crossed the sea.'

Then up spake the new bride's father,
Saying, 'Today I would rather she'd have died.
To think that for some other woman
You would forsake your lawful bride'

'It is true I've married your daughter,
But she is none the worse of me.
While Susan came with her horse and saddle
And paid my way across the briny sea.'

Professor Child prints fifteen versions of this ballad, all but one from Scotland. He also mentions a number of European examples from Spain to Scandinavia.

Cecil Sharp noted a tune for this ballad from Joe Blackett of Meadows of Dan, VA on 8/28/18. In 1916 he collected a single verse and tune from Mrs. Zipporah Rice (then a fifteen year-old girl) of Sodom Laurel, whom I met in 1980. The ballad was printed in some early American songsters and, according to Mark Wilson, was heard on the radio fairly often. After collecting a very full set of *Lord Bateman* from a Sussex gypsy some years ago, I was intrigued to hear the singer's three daughters arguing among themselves as to whether it really was possible for a man to marry two women on the same day.

Roby Monroe Hicks, of Beech Mountain, NC, sings a version of *Lord Bateman* on the Appleseed CD *Her Bright Smile Haunts Me Still* (APR CD 1035), and Ozark singer Ollie Gilbert sings it on Rounder CD 1707. For a version from New Jersey, see Everett Pitt's rendition on Marimac 9200. A Library of Congress has issued a recording by Pleaz Moberly on *Folk Music Of The United States* (AAFS L12). Campbell MacLean and Bella Higgins sing Scottish versions on *The Muckle Sangs* (Greentrax CD 9005), and Jeannie Robertson, Bella's half-sister, can be heard singing part of her version on volume one of Rounder's *Classic Ballads of Britain and Ireland* (CD 1775), which also includes part of Thomas Moran's version. English singers include Joseph Taylor, Ben Baxter, Tom Willett and both Wiggy and Denny Smith (Musical Traditions MTCD307).

Some people believe that the folksong *The Turkish Lady* is a variant of the ballad. For this song, see Rounder's Harry Cox CD *What Will Become of England?* (CD 1839).

Volume 2:

Calvin and Viola Cole

Calvin and Viola Cole lived in a mobile home across from Howard Hall's home. They were an extremely friendly couple, only too willing to let me listen to their music. During my first visits I recorded Calvin's banjo playing. But I had to wait until the following summer before I could persuade Viola to let me record some of the ballads that she had learnt from her mother. Calvin, a small, wiry man, was one of the people who taught me to play clawhammer banjo. Like Dan Tate, who only lived a mile or so from Calvin & Viola's home, Calvin was also recorded for the Library of Congress by Professor Fletcher Collins.

Notes: *Far in the Mountains*, Volumes 1 & 2



Calvin Cole (by Mike Yates)

1. Fall On My Knees
(Played on the banjo by Calvin Cole at his home near Hillsville, Carroll County, VA, 8/4/79)

This is quite a common tune in the Hillsville-Galax-Mt. Airy area (for a string band version, listen to the Camp Creek Boys on County CD-2719 or the banjo/fiddle duet by Fred Cockerham and Tommy Jarrell on County LP 741) and gets its name from the verse:

> Fall on my knees,
> And beg you, 'Please,
> Little girl, can I stay with you?'

Actually, Calvin calls it *Lonesome Road* after another verse:

> Look up, look down
> This lonesome road

which Eunice Yeatts McAlexander includes in her song *It's Hard to Love* on Volume 1, track 39.

2. Molly Put the Kettle On
(Played on the banjo by Calvin Cole at his home near Hillsville, Carroll County, VA, 8//4/79)

This locally well-known piece is named after the nursery rhyme *Molly/Polly Put the Kettle On,* and Appalachian players often sing this verse to the tune:

Molly put the kettle on,
Jenny blow the dinner horn.
Molly put the kettle on
We'll all take tea.

although on the album *Close to Home* (Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40097) Wade Ward of Independence, VA, sings/says the following words at the end of his performance:

Head like a coffee pot,
Nose like a spout.
Handle on the other side,
To pour the coffee out.

The Skillet-Lickers recorded a boisterous version in 1931 (reissued on both County CD-3509 and Document DOCD-8060) that deserves to be heard.

3. It Rained, It Mist (Child 155, Roud 73)
(Sung by Viola Cole at her home near Hillsville, Carroll County, VA, 8/23/80)

It rained, it mist, it rained, it mist,
It rained all over the town.
And two little boys went out to play,
To toss their ball around, around
To toss their ball around.

It was first too high and then too low,
Till they tossed it into the jury room,
Where no one was allowed to go, to go,
Where no one was allowed to go.

Pretty soon, pretty soon, there came a pretty miss,
All stylish and dressed in green.
'Come in, come in, my dear little ones,
You shall have your ball again, again.
You shall have your ball again.'

'I shan't come in, I won't come in,
Unless my playmate comes too.
For I've often heard of the one's going in,
And never coming out anymore, anymore.
And never coming out anymore.'

At first she showed him a red rosy apple,
And then she showed him a chain.
And then she showed him a diamond ring,

To entice the little one in, oh, in.
To entice the little one in.

She took him by the little white hand,
She led him through the hall.
She led him into the dining room,
Where no one could hear his call, his call.
Where no one could hear his call.

She pinned a napkin over his face,
She pinned it with a pin.
And then she took her little penknife,
And took his little heart in, oh, in.
And took his little heart in.

'Oh, spare my life, Oh, spare my life,
Oh, spare my life,' he cried.
'If ever I live to be a man,
My treasures shall all be thine, oh, thine.
My treasures shall all be thine.'

"Oh, place the prayer book at my feet,
The Bible at my head.
And when my playmate calls for me,
You can tell him that I am dead, oh, dead.
You can tell him that I am dead.'

This once popular European ballad has survived well in the upland south of America, although I doubt that Viola really understood the full horror of the tale. The abduction and murder of Christian children by the Jews was a well-known idea in the Middle Ages. In England, the story of Hugh of Lincoln was included in the *Annals of Waverly* (1255), and Chaucer took the idea for *The Prioress's Tale*. But there are many other similar tales scattered throughout Europe. According to Professor Child, 'Murders like that of Hugh of Lincoln have been imputed to the Jews for at least seven hundred and fifty years, and the charge, which there is reason to suppose may still from time to time be renewed, has brought upon the accused every calamity that the hand of man can inflict, pillage, confiscation, banishment, torture, and death, and this in huge proportions.' Bernard Malamud's novel *The Fixer* is but a retelling of this very ancient theme, and James Joyce incorporates the ballad (as a short song) in his novel *Ulysses*. Other American recordings include those by Ollie Gilbert on Rounder CD 1707 and the curiously named Nelstone's Hawaiians on Smithsonian Folkways *Anthology of American Folk Music* (SFW CD 0090), while there is a Scottish set sung by Margaret Stewart on Greentrax CDTRAX 9005 and an Irish version sung by John Byrne on the European Ethnic cassette *Early Ballads in Ireland* (no issue number), edited by Tom Munnelly and Hugh Shields.



Photo by Paul Brown

Charlie Woods

Like many of his neighbours, Charlie was a tobacco farmer who was equally adept on both banjo and fiddle. He was the first Appalachian instrumentalist that I recorded, and I was unsure how I would be received when I drove up to his home in the late afternoon. Charlie and his wife came out onto the veranda as I explained my interest in old-time music. I asked him if I could hear him play and was taken aback when he said, "Sure. Have you got one of those recording things? Why don't you go get it." It was as easy as that!

4. Cripple Greek & Shooting Creek
(Played on the banjo by Charlie Woods at his home in Hogpatch HIll, near Ferrum, Franklin County, VA, 8/7/79)

Although some writers place Cripple Creek in Colorado – a spot made famous during a 19th century gold rush – most Virginian musicians believe that it relates to a location in Wythe County, VA. An influential 1925 recording by the Hill Billies (OK 40336) has been reissued on Document DOCD-8039. Kentucky banjo player Roscoe Holcomb has a set on Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40077. Hobart Smith from Virginia can be heard playing a version on Tradition TCD 1061, while Galax banjo player Wade Ward plays it on Rounder CD 1701.

5. Chilly Winds
(Played on the banjo by Charlie Woods at his home in Hogpatch Hill, Franklin County, VA, 8/7/79)

Wade Ward, a superb banjo player from Independence, VA, considered *Chilly Winds* to be his calling card, and a version by him may be heard on part of a six CD set (Atlantic 7 82496-2). It is really a version of the song *Lonesome Road Blues*, an unissued Okeh test-pressing of Wade Ward (where he sings the verses) having been found. A version by the black banjo player John Snipe, titled *Going Where I've Never Been Before*, can be heard on Smithsonian-Folkways SF CD 40079, while another black singer and banjo player, Sidney Stripling, from Georgia, can be heard singing it as *Oh Lawdy Me, Oh Lawdy My* on Rounder 1828. Galax musicians Ernest Stoneman & Kahle Brewer made an early recording which has been reissued on Yazoo 2029, and Blanche Coldiron plays a set on her Rounder album (CD 0395), which, like Uncle Wade's version, is played up the banjo neck.

6. Hogpatch Hill
(Played on the banjo by Charlie Woods at his home in Hogpatch Hill, near Ferrum, Franklin County, VA, 8/7/79)

Charlie had no name for this tune, which he learnt from his father, and so suggested that we should title it Hogpatch Hill, after his home.

7. Pretty Girl Down the Road
(Played on the banjo by Charlie Woods at his home in Hogpatch Hill, near Ferrum, Franklin County, VA, 8/7/79)

Charlie gave me the following verse for this tune:

> All I want is a cow and a calf, corn to feed 'em on,
> Pretty girl down the road, feed 'em when I'm gone.

which links this to the tune *Pig in a Pen* (Volume 1, track 15). I really like Charlie's banjo playing. I was only just beginning to play banjo myself when I met him, and it is only with hindsight that I realize just how fine a player he was.

Dan Tate

8. Old Dan Tucker (Roud 390)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/15/79)

> Old Dan Tucker was a fine old man,
> He used to ride around on our old ram.
> He pulled by its mane and he pulled by its tail,
> And he spurred it up with his big toe nail.
> Hey, away, old Dan Tucker,

You've come too late to get your supper.

Old Dan Tucker was a fine old man,
He started to heaven in a frying pan.
Pan got hot and it did bust,
And he went to hell in a whirly-gust.
Hey, away, old Dan Tucker,
Come too late to get your supper.

Breakfast is over and dinner is a-cooking,
And old Dan Tucker just stood there looking
Hey, away, old Dan Tucker,
Come too late to get your supper.

Old Dan Tucker he was good.
He got lost in a piece of wood
It turned cold and he did suffer,
And it froze the heels of old Dan Tucker.
Hey, away, old Dan Tucker,
You've come too late to get your supper.

Although *Old Dan Tucker* is attributed to the minstrel singer Dan Decatur Emmett, Dan Tate's set of words has little in common with the version published in the 1840's by Emmett. Versions printed in minstrel books often carried different sets of words, sometimes in the form of political satire.

Emmett wrote a number of songs that entered the popular repertoire, including *The Blue-Tail Fly*, *Early in the Morning,* and *Boatman's Dance*, but it was his song *Dixie*, written in November, 1859, that became his biggest 'hit' when it became the unofficial anthem of the Confederate South during the Civil War. Uncle Dave Macon made an influential recording in the early 1920's (reissued on Old-Homestead CD 4184), and two 1928 recordings, by Al Hopkins & His Buckle Busters and The Skillet Lickers, have been reissued on Document DOCD-8041 and Document DOCD-8058. A version by the black Golden Gate Quartet, who were actually from Virginia, recorded by the Library of Congress in 1940, can be heard on Rounder CD 1827, while a 1942 recording of the black fiddle and banjo players Nathan Frazier & Frank Patterson, from Tennessee, can be heard on Rounder CD 0238. Several fiddle players have said that *Old Dan Tucker* was the first tune that they learnt to play.

This was one of the songs that Dan Tate sang most often, and many of his neighbours would refer to him as 'Old Dan Tucker.'

9. Old Mister Rabbit (Roud 8081)
(Sung and played on the banjo by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/4/79)

Oh, what you gonna do when your meat gives out, baby?
What you gonna do when your meat gives out?
Sit in the corner with your mouth stuck out, babe.

What you gonna do when it comes a-snow, baby?
What you gonna do when it comes a-snow?
Catch them rabbits as they go, babe.

Catching rabbits ain't no sin, baby.
Catching rabbits ain't no sin.
Turn them loose and pick 'em again, babe.

Old Mister Rabbit's a-setting by a log, baby.
Old Mister Rabbit's a-setting by a log.
Yes, by jove, I'm a-watching for a dog, babe.

Old Mister Rabbit your hair is mighty thin, baby
Old Mister Rabbit your hair is mighty thin.
Yes, by jove, I split the wind, babe.

Old Mister Rabbit your tail's mighty white, baby.
Old Mister Rabbit your tail's mighty white.
Yes, by George, I'm siccin' out of sight, babe.

Old Mister Rabbit your eyes are mighty red, baby.
Old Mister Rabbit your eyes are mighty red.
Yes, by George, I'm darn nigh dead, babe.

Old Mister Rabbit is in the repertoire of a number of Virginian singers. It is set to a tune that has carried several different songs, the best known being *The Crawdad Song*, and many singers follow the set recorded by Lulabelle and Scotty (reissued on Rounder CD 0439).

10. Once I Lived in Old Virginia (Roud 3396)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/16/79)

Once I lived in old Virginia,
To North Carolina I did go.
There I spied a beautiful damsel,
Her name I never did know.

Her hair was black as any charcoal,
Her eyes were of some diamond blue.
On her bosom she wore white lilies,
Oh my poor heart most broke in two.

Every day I'm a-thinking about her,
Every night 'til I can't rest.
Every moment seems like an hour,
Oh what a pain across my breast.

Oh bring me a razor and a pan of cold water,
Bring me a hammer to beat out my brain.
For the old corn liquor has got me surrounded,
And the women have run me deranged.

Shall I go to Alleghany?
Shall I go for loving you?
Or shall I go to some far country,
And bid a sad adieu?

One of the most characteristic products of the Appalachian song tradition is that of the lament which comprises any number of so-called 'floating' verses. Similar versions of *Old Virginia* will be found in volume 3 of Frank Brown's *North Carolina Folklore* (1952), p.327 and Cecil Sharp's *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (1932) vol. 2, pp. 232-4. Dan's verse 4 has also turned up as far away as Mississippi where it forms part of the song *Wild Bill Jones* (see Arthur Palmer Hudson's *Folksongs of Mississippi* (1936), p. 240). Roscoe Holcomb sings a fine version on *Mountain Music of Kentucky* (Smithsonian Folkways SFCD 40077), and Lee Monroe Presnell, of Beech Mountain, NC, has his version on *Nothing Seems Better to Me* (Appleseed APR CD 1036). Other versions include those by Art Stamper (County CD 2729), Lily Mae Ledford (June Appal 0078), Morgan Sexton (June Appal 0066), and Buell Kazee (Smithsonian Folkways *Anthology of American Folk Music* - SFW CD 40090). There are also a number of early 78 rpm recordings, usually bearing the title *Greenback Dollar* (from the lines 'I don't want your greenback dollar/I don't want your watch and chain/All I want is your love, darling/Won't you take me back again?').

11. Sugar Hill
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/6/79)

Sugar Hill's a big old hill,
Forty miles around.
Take my broad axe in my hand
And hew the mountain down.

Run little Betty run.
Run little Betty run.
Run little Betty, poor girl,
I'm bound to have some fun.

Missus had an old blue cow,
I know the hour she was born.

Take a jaybird forty years
To fly from horn to horn.

Sugar Hill was a term used to denote the rough part of town where anything was available – at a price! Tommy Jarrell and many of his contemporaries had the following verse, which makes this clear:

Do you want to get your eye knocked out?
Do you want to get your fill?
Do you want to get your eye knocked out?
Then go to Sugar Hill.

Sugar Hill is believed to have been composed by George Washington Dixon some time prior to 1827, and a version of Dixon's song is included in *Christy's Negro Songster*, a collection of minstrel songs that was published in New York in 1855.

It is sometimes found in the Ozarks, under the title *Bunker Hill*, and is related to the Kentucky tune *Jenny Get Around*. Dan's second verse also appears in the song *Run, Mollie, Run* that was recorded in the 1920's by Henry 'Ragtime Tex' Thomas (reissued on Yazoo1080/1), whilst the third verse – which is similar to verses found in the song *The Derby Ram* – has also turned up occasionally on the lips of black singers, such as Homer Walker of Glen Lynn, VA (Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40079), and others from as far away as Mississippi and Alabama.

12. The Sailor's Song (Child 289, Roud 124)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/14/79)

Oh, the first on deck was the captain of the ship,
A fine young captain was he.
He formed a song, 'We've all done wrong,
As we sailed on the lonesome sea'.

The next on deck was the lady of the ship,
A fine young lady was she.
She formed a song 'We've all done wrong,
As we sailed on the lonesome sea'.

Well, the next on deck was the doctor of the ship,
A fine young doctor was he.
He told his patients on their beds so low
They would sink to the bottom of the sea.

The next on deck was the drunkard of the ship,
A wicked old cuss was he.
He said he didn't give a damn if the boat would never land,

Let her sink to the bottom of the sea.

Stormy winds, let them blow,
Raging seas, let them roar.
Stormy winds, let them blow,
While these poor sailors all a-running up the ropes,
And the landlord a-crying out below.

Professor Child called this *The Mermaid* because, in most versions, the sailors sight a mermaid, a sign of bad luck, before their ship is wrecked. It was published in a Newcastle garland, dated 1765, as *The Seamen's Distress*, although later broadside printers often called it *The Sailor's Caution*. In America the song was often treated comically in 19th century college glee books, and it may be that sometimes the American folk versions are serious reinterpretations of these one-time comic versions! Other currently available recordings include those by North Carolina singer Bascom Lamar Lunsford (Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40082), William Howell, from Pembrokeshire (Rounder CD 1776), and Bob Hart of Suffolk (Musical Traditions MTCD301-2). Emma Dusenbury's wonderful Ozark Library of Congress recording was once available on LP (*Child Ballads Traditional In The United States (II)*, AAFS L58).

A 1928 recording of the song by Ernest V. Stoneman (*The Raging Sea, How It Roars*), who lived a few miles away from Dan's home, was reissued some years ago on a now out-of-print album (Rounder 1008). A transcription of the Stoneman recording can be found in volume 4 of *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* by Bertrand Bronson (1972, p. 378).

13. Who's On the Way? (Roud 8080)
(Sung by Dan Tate at his home in Fancy Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/23/80)

Oh, the seven stars a-rising,
And the moon's a-getting low.
Have my banjo on my knee
And seven long miles to go.

Chorus:
Who's on the way?
Who's on the way?
Who's on the way?
I wish I had a dram.

They have a house in Jockey Town
Sixteen stories high,
So I can see that pretty little thing
As she comes riding by.

Oh, if I had as many dollars
As gravels in the sea,

I'd give them all to that little girl
If she would marry me.

One morning I took Paul Brown to meet Dan Tate. I mentioned that Paul was a fine banjo player, and Dan responded by singing the couplet:

Have my banjo on my knee
And seven long miles to go.

I'd never heard him sing this before, and, needless to say, we soon had it down on tape. I later heard two of Dan's neighbours sing the following variations for verse two:

(a) There is a house in Jockey Town,
Sixteen stories high.
All the girls they smile at me,
As I go riding by.

(b) There is a house in Johnson,
Sixteen stories high.
Every room in that house,
Is filled with chicken pie.

A version of this verse can be heard on a 1941 Library of Congress recording of *Coon Ci'nt (Coonjine)* that was recorded from Sidney Stripling, a black singer and banjo player from Georgia (Rounder CD 11661-1828-2).

Rob Tate

Rob Tate, a distant and younger relative of Dan Tate, lived further up the mountain from Dan. Rob preferred to play songs and tunes from the 1920s and '30s, such as *Wildwood Flower*, *More Pretty Girls Than One,* and *The Lawson Family Murder*. However, my first visit prompted him to think about the clawhammer tunes that his father had played, and at our second session he remembered a dozen or so 'old ones,' including *Sally Ann*, *Old Molly Hare*, *Baby-O*, *Fortune*, and *Old Corn Liquor*.

14. Fortune
(Played on the banjo by Rob Tate at his home between Fancy Gap and Pipers Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/11/79)

Fortune gets its name from the Anglo/ American verse:

Once I had a fortune,
I locked it in a trunk.
Lost it all a-gambling
One night when I was drunk.

and is extremely popular in the Galax/Hillsville area of Virginia. Like many local banjo players, Rob uses the open 5th string to play a G note (rather than fret the 1st string on the 5th fret) whenever he can. The Camp Creek Boys play a good stringband version on their County CD (CD 2719), and Fred Cockerham, from Low Gap, NC, plays a beautiful fretless banjo version on the album *High Atmosphere* (Rounder CD 0028).

15. Piper's Gap
(Played on the banjo by Rob Tate at his home between Fancy Gap and Piper's Gap, Carroll County, VA, 8/6/79)

Piper's Gap is a spot on the Fancy Gap/Galax road. Rob played *Piper's Gap* among a group of tunes that his father had played. At the time I was unable to place it. However, I now know that the pivotal fiddle player Emmett Lundy (b. 1864), who was from neighbouring Grayson County, recorded it for the Library of Congress in 1941 under the title *Cleveland's March*. A recording by a North Carolina banjo player, Bertie Caudill Dickens, who called it *Cleveland's Marching to the White House*, can be heard on Rounder CD 0439/40. Grover Cleveland was twice elected President of the United States of America, in 1885 and 1893. The tune probably dates from one of his election campaigns.

Sherman Wimmer

Sherman Wimmer was yet another tobacco farmer. He lived alone on a wooded hillside overlooking Boones Mill and played me a number of tunes that he had first performed for mountain dances in the 1920s.

16. Hounds in the Horn
(Played on the fiddle by Sherman Wimmer at his home in Boones Mill, Franklin County, VA, 8/5/79)

Spoken: Well now, here comes Wimmer with an old fiddle tune called *Hounds in the Horn*.

Usually titled Forked Deer, this fiddle tune has become rather standardized over the years. It was printed c.1839 in George Knauf's *Virginia Reels,* and early versions often comprised as many as four or five separate parts (see, for example, Ed Haley's version on Spring Fed Records SFR-113 or J.P. Fraley's on Rounder CD 0037, both of which have five parts). *Forked Deer* shares some slight similarity to a Scottish tune, *Rachael Rae*, composed by one Joseph Lowe in 1815, and is also similar to a tune that O'Neill titled *The Moving Bogs*. Other American titles include *Forked Ear* (presumable referring to the notching of an animal's ear for identification purposes), *Forkedair Jig* (this published in 1876), *Fork Adair* (the title used by Dan Emmett) and *Forked Air* (a title suggesting that it had a 'crooked' melody). Some American fiddle players link the tune's title to a story where a hunter leaps on the back of a huge buck, and Wimmer's title, *Hounds in the Horn*, may once have been linked to such a story.

Other recordings include those by the Kessinger Brothers (Document DOCD- 8010), Taylor's Kentucky Boys (Document DOCD-5167), Edden Hammons (West Virginia University Press CD SA-1), and John Rector (Rounder CD 1518).

Stella Kimble and Pearl Richardson

I went to Laurel Fork in search of fiddle player Taylor Kimble. Taylor was extremely ill and, though confined to a wheelchair, insisted on playing me a few tunes. Sadly, his strength had gone and none of his recordings is issued here. However, Taylor's wife, Stella, and her sister Pearl Richardson were prompted by my visit to try to recall some of the songs that they had learnt in their youth, such as *Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender*, *First Come In Was a Bumblebee,* and *Fair and Tender Ladies*. Stella and Pearl were originally from the deep mountains of western North Carolina, where Stella had also learnt to play the banjo from her father. "It should sound like a chicken picking up corn," was how her father described it.

17. Come All You Fair and Tender Ladies (Roud 451)
(Sung by Stella Kimble and Pearl Richardson at Stella's home in Laurel Fork, Carroll County, VA, 8/l14/79)

Come all you fair and tender ladies,
Take warning how you love young men.
They are like a bright star in a summer morning,
They will appear, and then they're gone.

They'll laugh and talk and tell you stories,
Declare to you that they'll prove true.
Straightway they'll go and court another,
That is the love they have for you.

I myself once had a lover,
Indeed, I thought he was my own.
Straightway he went and married another,
Then left me here in storms to mourn.

I wish I'd have known before I courted,
How hard a thing love is to win.
I'd lock my heart in a chest of golden,
And seal it up with a silver key.

But since I'm filled with grief and sorrow,
I'll sit and sing my life away.
There's many a dark and stormy morning,
Turns out to be a bright and pleasant day.

Spoken: Thank goodness I got that again!

Once a popular Appalachian song (Cecil Sharp alone collected eighteen sets), it contains a number of verses that are found in various English songs. Fred Jordan, for example, includes the final two lines in his version of *The Dark Eyed Sailor*. Martha Hall sings a fragmentary set on the double CD *Mountain Music of Kentucky* (Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40077).



Photo by Paul Brown

Pug Allen and Ed Weaver

18. Take a Drink on Me
(Played on the fiddle by Edward Weaver and the banjo by L. G. 'Pug' Allen, at Edward's home in Stuarts Draft, Augusta County, VA, 8/17/80)

Ed's tune is not quite the same as that used for the song *Take a Drink on Me,* which has the chorus:

> Take a drink, take a drink,
> Take a drink on me.
> Everybody take a drink on me.

Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Rambler's 1927 recording is available on County CD 3501.

19. McKinley (Roud 787)
(Played on the fiddle by L. G. 'Pug' Allen, the guitar by George Allen, and the banjo by Paul Brown at Pug's home in Stuarts Draft, Augusta County, VA, 8/16/80)

William McKinley (1843-1901), 25th President of the USA, was fatally shot on September 6th, 1901, by Leon Czolgosz, an anarchist factory worker, while visiting the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo. Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers recorded an influential version of the song in 1926 (*White House Blues,* reissued on County CO-CD 3501), and the Carter Family's 1930 *Cannonball Blues*, on Victor V-40317 (reissued on JSP CD7701B), was also influential. A detailed listing of related tunes can be found in *White House Blues McKinley Cannonball Blues* by Neil V. Rosenberg in the *John Edwards Memorial Foundation Newsletter,* IV:2, no.10 (June, 1968). Doug Wallin can be heard singing a version of the song on volume 3, track 9 of *Far in the Mountains*.

20. Up Jumped the Devil
(Played on the fiddle by L. G. 'Pug' Allen, the guitar by George Allen, and the banjo by Paul Brown at Pug's home in Stuarts Draft, Augusta County, VA, 8/16/80)

Pug's tune is a cross between a nice strain of *Wake Up, Susan* and the second strain of the well-known *Black Mountain Rag* (whose missing high part requires a different fiddle tuning for proper execution). As I have also heard Pug's tune played by Oscar 'Red' Wilson of Ledger, NC, who calls it *Up Jumped Trouble*, I suspect that there must be a common source.

21. Trader Boatman
(Played on the fiddle by L. G. 'Pug' Allen and the banjo by Paul Brown, at Pug's home in Stuarts Draft, Augusta County, VA, 8/16/80)

Trader Boatman is a tune that Pug learnt 'way back' from his father and appears to be distantly related to the tune *Julie Ann Johnson,* as played by Emmett Lundy of Galax, VA. Pug remembered the following verses:

> Nigger trader boatman, now mammy don't you cry.
> Hug and kiss you 'fore I go, and call you honey pie.
>
> When I was a little boy about six inches high,
> I used to climb the table leg and steal my mother's pie.
>
> Great big hog in the pen, corn to feed him on.
> All I want is a pretty little girl, to feed him when I'm gone.

Glen Neaves and the Virginia Mountain Boys recorded a version (Folkways LP3830) which has more content about the slave trade, and Paul Brown and Mike Seeger play a great version on their Rounder album *Way Down in North Carolina* (CD 0383).

22. Gold Rush
(Played on the fiddle by L. G. 'Pug' Allen, the guitar by George Allen, and the banjo by Paul Brown, at Pug's home in Stuarts Draft, Augusta County, VA, 8/16/80)

A tune usually attributed to the Kentucky bluegrass player Bill Monroe. Pug, however, was adamant that he knew the tune years before Monroe's influential recording was made.

Stanley Hicks

Stanley Hicks was living on Stone Mountain in Wautauga County, NC, close to Beech Mountain. A singer, storyteller and instrument maker (banjo and dulcimer), Stanley was a delight to be with. He had a sideline selling arrow-heads, which he found scattered around the mountain sides. One afternoon Stanley took me to Watauga Lake on a 'flint hunt.' There were some large slabs of rock at the side of the water where the Native Americans had once sat making stone tools. We found a number of scrapers and arrowheads and had a wonderful time together. I recorded Stanley playing both the dulcimer and the banjo. He had to borrow a banjo from a neighbour for our recording sessions, having just sold his own and not yet having built another. The dulcimer had once belonged to his father and held special memories. In her book *American Banjo Echoes in Appalachia* (1995), Cecelia Conway gives the following quote from Stanley:

> *My daddy's gone on; my grandpaw's gone on; my great-grandpaw's gone on. But they still live - you know, the spirit's still here. Your folks can die and go on, but they're still here. I don't know whether you ever thought about it like that or not, but I can show you. Here is my Daddy's dulcimer. That's his dulcimer he built years ago; it still lives, it's still here. You see, it's still here, it's not gone. And same way by myself – when I'm gone, there's some of my stuff that the young 'uns...you know, it still lives.*

And, of course, Stanley still lives, through his recordings.

23. Sourwood Mountain
(Played on the fretless banjo by Stanley Hicks at his home on Stone Mountain, Wautauga County, NC, 5/10/83)

> *Spoken*: This is *Chicken's a-Crowing on Sourwood Mountain*. (Plays tune) That's *Chickens a-Crowing on Sourwood Mountain*.

Compare this with Stanley's sung version, which he accompanies on the dulcimer, on track 30, below.

24. Groundhog
(Sung and played on the fretless banjo by Stanley Hicks at his home on Stone Mountain, Wautauga County, NC, 5/10/83)

> *Spoken*: Now this is *Groundhog,* and that's what the banjo hide is made out of, you know. That's what George [a neighbour] made [it] out of...so I'm going to try and play a little at it.
>
> Hunt up your mattocks, whistle up your dogs. (x2)
> Going up the holler to catch a groundhog.
> Groundhog.
>
> One in the rock, one in the hole. (x2)
> Great God almighty, what a big groundhog.
> Groundhog.
>
> Run here Sal, run here quick. (x2)
> This old groundhog'll make me sick.
> Groundhog.
>
> One in the rock, one in the hole.
> Run here Sal with a ten-foot pole,
> [Gouge?] this groundhog out of its hole.
> Groundhog.
>
> Groundhog! Whistlepig!

Groundhogs are large burrowing mammals that can often be seen warming themselves in the early morning sunshine at the side of country roads in Appalachia. Many people call them 'whistle-pigs,' because of the sound that they make, while in the northern American woods they are known as woodchucks. Cecil Sharp noted a version of the song in Burnsville, NC, in 1918, and subsequent sets have turned up all over the place. Currently available recordings include those by Doc Watson (Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 40012) and Frank Proffitt, Jr. (Appleseed APR CD 1036), both from North Carolina, and Burl Hammons from West Virginia (Augusta Heritage cassette 019), while a version recorded in 1928 by Jack Reedy and His Walker Mountain String Band (Brunswick 221) has been reissued on both Old Hat CD-1001 and Yazoo CD 2052.

25. The Irishman and the Squirrel
(Story told by Stanley Hicks at his home on Stone Mountain, Wautauga County, NC, 5/10/83)

> Way back, years ago, when I was a very small kid, very little, there was Irishmen go(ing) a-peddling, take cloth and everything and peddle. Had a little old monkey and then a cup that'd turn a crank and make a racket, you know, and they'd get people to put in money. So, as they'se going along the road and he's getting awful hungry, a trail went through the woods, and they just starved about to death, and, uh, come into the woods and the

maple seed had got out, and grey squirrels strutting in the timber, cutting the maple seed. One said, "Path me Chath." Said, "Path me Chath," said, uh, "you go get a kettle." Said, "Path me Chath, to cook it in." Said, "While you're gone," said, "Path me Chath, I'll go up and get it." He said, "I know my big, long legs, go where short legs go." He said, "OK, I'll go get it." Path me Chath (said), "I'll be back." So, he went down the path and he come back to an old log house. An old woman there, she was awful old, and he told he wanted to get a kettle to cook a grey squirrel in, and he would bring it right back. So she got him the kettle, and got him a piece of cornbread. An he went on back, and when he got back, the old Irishman he was laying there on the ground, blood running out of his mouth. And other Irishman said, he thought he'd caught the squirrel and eat it raw. And he said, "Path me Chath," said, "You must have got awful damn hungry," he said, "eating it raw." And got to looking, and he'd made a jump to get where the squirrel was at, his long legs didn't reach the limbs, and he'd hit the ground, just busted the hell out of himself, blood running out of his mouth.

This is Tale-Type 1227 in Aarne/Thompson *The Types of the Folktale* (1961), where it is called, *One Woman to Catch the Squirrel; Other to Get the Cooking Pot*. Leonard Roberts prints a Kentucky version in his Sang Branch Settlers (1974)

Interestingly, Roberts was unable to trace the story back to England, Ireland, or Scotland. He did, however, note its prevalence in Finland (75 versions), Estonia (7 versions), Sweden (20 versions), Norway (3 versions) and Slovenia (also 3 versions).

A further note on the 'Irishman' tales will be found with Ethel Birchfield's story *The Irishman Learning to Talk* on *Far in the Mountains*, Volume 4, track 21.

26. Down the Road
(Sung and played on the fretless banjo by Stanley Hicks at his home on Stone Mountain, Wautauga County, NC, 5/10/83)

Spoken: This here 'un here is ...

Down the road a mile and a half,
Catch little Liza riding a calf.
Ida Red, Ida Blue,
I've got a girl named Ida, too.

It is, I suppose, debatable whether or not this should be titled *Down the Road*, *Ida Red,* or *Over the Road I'm Bound to Go,* as all three names are used equally for this piece. I really love the way Stanley's homemade fretless banjo comes into its own when he slides from one note to another as he plays behind his voice. Doc Watson and Gaither Carlton sing and play a fine version on *The Doc Watson Family* (Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 40012). Early recordings include those by Uncle Dave Macon (County CD 3522) and Cannon's Jug Stompers (Smithsonian Folkways *Anthology of American Folk Music* - SFW 40090) - where it is titled *Feather Bed*. Flatt and Scruggs made an influential bluegrass recording in the 1950s.

27. Here Goes a Bluebird (Roud 7700)
(Sung by Stanley Hicks at his home on Stone Mountain, Wautauga County, NC, 5/10/83)

> *Spoken*: This 'un here, I was about 9, 10 years old, I guess, something like that, so here's one of the songs that we used to sing, you know, when I went to school.
>
> Here goes a bluebird through the window,
> Through the window, through the window.
> Here goes a bluebird through the window,
> High, low, high.
>
> Take a little girl, go hop, skip, jump.
> Hop, skip, jump. Hop, skip, jump.
> Take a little girl, go hop, skip, jump.
> High, low, high.
>
> Take a little boy, go hop, skip, jump.
> Hop, skip, jump. Hop, skip, jump.
> Take a little boy, goes hop, skip, jump.
> High, low, high.

The bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) is common throughout central and eastern North America, and so it comes as no surprise to find this song scattered all over America and Canada. Early English settlers thought that the bird resembled the British robin, in shape if not in colouration, and so named it the American robin. (Just to confuse things, the bird that is now called the American robin, *Turdus migratorius* – actually a thrush – is a different bird).

Interestingly, the song also turns up in Britain. See, for example, a version from the Elliott family in *Come You Not from Newcastle?* by Gwen Polwarth (1972).

28. Riddles & Where's the Ox?
(Told by Stanley Hicks at his home on Stone Mountain, Wautauga County, NC, 5/10/83)

> I'm tell you a riddle here...about, uh...see if you can answer it now.
>
> What goes all over the field in daytime and sets on the table at night?
>
> Do you know what that is?
> Goes all over the field in daytime, now, and sets on the table at night?
>
> And if you can't answer, I'll tell you. It's cow's milk. (*Repeats riddle*). And here's another one. It sounds kind of funny and all, you know, but it ain't no bad at all...
>
> It's black without, red within,

You cock up your leg and stick it in.

That there, it ain't bad at all, ‘cause that there's a boot. You know, it’s black on the outside, it's red in, you cock your leg up and stick it in. There was another one here now, and it sounds bad, but it's not bad at all.

Back to the ground, belly to the sun,
Wiggle and wiggle 'til the goodie begins to come.

And that's an old sow, with a gang of pigs, you know. It’s a-sucking the milk out, you know. And here's another one, it sounds real bad, but it's not bad. Old people used to tell us young 'uns, you know, but it's not bad at all.

The old man he went out,
He shook it, and shook it, and shook it, and shook it.
And the old woman she came out,
Pulled up her dress,
And took it, and took it, and took it.

And, it sounds real bad but it's, he was shaking apples off, and she was catching 'em you know, picked up her dress and catching these apples. There's several of them that way you know, and that's about all I know right at the time now. No, there was another one here...

It's round as a biscuit,
And busy as a bee.
And if the cat's in the cupboard,
You can't see me.

(*Repeats riddle*)... That's a pocket watch. You know, if the cat's in the cupboard he couldn't see it.

There's another one here...
It's an ox, you know.

Where's the ox?
Butcher killed it.
Where's the butcher?
Rope hung him.
Where's the rope?
Rat gnawed it.
Where's the rat?
The cat caught it.
Where's the cat?
In behind the church's door,

Fee-Fo-Fum,
Crack a smile,
Show your teeth,
Give ye two big rouses,
Box and a pinch.

And then you got to do something to get 'em to laugh or show their teeth, so you can get to give 'em two big rouses, a box and a pinch.

Riddles form an important genre in the Appalachian folk tradition. Maggie Hammons Parker, from West Virginia, can be heard telling a number on *The Hammons Family* CD (Rounder 1504-05), including the one about the watch that Stanley tells here. This riddle is also to be found in Leonard Roberts' book of Kentucky folklore *Sang Branch Settlers* (1974, pp.258-65). For further details about riddles, see Archer Taylor's *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* (Los Angeles & Berkeley, 1951).

29. Barbara Allen (Child 84, Roud 54)
(Played on the dulcimer by Stanley Hicks at his home on Stone Mountain, Wautauga County, NC, 5/10/83)

Spoken: Here's Barbara Allen, you know... (plays tune). that's about as old a one as we've got...about the oldest song as we have.

This is, of course, the tune to the well-known, and much-loved ballad *Barbara Allen*, which Professor Child included in his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. The ballad can be heard sung by Garrett & Norah Arwood on *Far in the Mountains*, Volume 3, track 11.

30. Sourwood Mountain
(Sung and played on the dulcimer by Stanley Hicks at his home on Stone Mountain, Wautauga County, NC, 5/10/83)

Chickens crowing on Sourwood Mountain,
Hey-ho, shad-a-link-a-day.
She won't come and I won't follow,
Hey-ho, diddle-um-a-day.

Big girl'll court, little girl'll fight you,
Hey-ho, shad-a-link-a-day.
Chickens a-crowing on Sourwood Mountain,
Hey-ho, diddle-um-a-day.

Big dog'll bark, and little one'll bite you,
Hey-ho, shad-a-link-a-day.
Chickens crowing on Sourwood Mountain,
Hey-ho, diddle-um-a-day.

She won't come, and I won't foller,
Hey-ho, shad-a-link-a-day.
Chickens crowing on Sourwood Mountain,
Hey-ho, diddle-um-a-day.

My true-love's a blue-eyed daisy,
Hey-ho, shad-a-link-a-day,
Chickens crowing on Sourwood Mountain,
Hey-ho, diddle-um-a-day.

Sourwood Mountain is almost the archetypal Appalachian song, although it is equally popular as a dance tune. It may well be related to the minstrel standard *Oh Lud Gals, Give Me a Chaw Tobacco*, a version of which was recorded in 1928 by a great Mississippi family band, the Carter Brothers and Son (reissued on Document DOCD-8009). The Hill Billies recorded a superb stringband version in 1926 (reissued on Document DOCD-8040), while Clark Kessinger's fiddle version, recorded three years later, is also outstanding (reissued on Document DOCD-8011). The Fruit Jar Guzzlers also made an early recording (reissued on Yazoo CD 2051). Boone Reid, a North Carolina banjo player can also be heard playing the tune on Tradition TCD 1061.

Evelyn and Douston Ramsey

Evelyn and Douston had a small tobacco farm in the deep mountains of Madison County. Douston was the brother of the well-known Madison County singer and banjo player Obray Ramsey. Some years before my visit, Evelyn had organized a small annual music festival, but after about three years it began to get out of hand. Someone was stabbed during a fight, and the festival folded. I stayed with Evelyn and Douston for a few days and really enjoyed being driven through the neighbourhood by them, listening to them singing and telling local stories. They reminded me of something that Cecil Sharp had once said about the Hensley family of Carmen. "My experience has been very wonderful, so far as the people and their music is concerned...I spent three days, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a family in the mountains consisting of parents and daughter, by name Hensley. All three sang, and the father played the fiddle. Maud and I dined with them each day, and the rest of the time sat on the verandah while the three sang and played and talked, mainly about the songs." One ballad, collected from Rosie Hensley, was *Fair Ellender and Sweet William*, a version of which I recorded from Evelyn.



Evelyn Ramsey (by Mike Yates)

31. The Girl I Left Behind (Laws P1b, Roud 262)
(Sung by Evelyn Ramsey at her home in Sodom Laurel, Madison County, NC, 8/29/80)

My parents treated me tenderly,
They had no child but me.
But my mind was bent on roving,
And with them I couldn't agree.
When I became a rover
It grieved my heart most sore,
To leave my aged parents,
To never see no more.

There was a noble gentleman,
In yonders town drew nigh.
He had one only daughter,
On her I cast my eye.
She was young, tall and handsome,
Most beautiful and fair.
There was no other girl
With her I could compare.

I told her my intentions,
It was to cross the main.

It's, 'Love will you be faithful?
Till I return again?'
She said she'd be true to me,
Till death did prove unkind.
We kissed, shook hands, and parted,
And I left my girl behind.

When I left old Ireland,
To Scotland I was bound.
Everyone was friendly,
They showed me all around.
Where work and money was plentiful,
And the girls to me proved kind.
But the dearest object of my heart
Was the girl I left behind.

As I was a-rambling around one day
Down in the public square,
The mail-coach had arrived;
I met the mailboy there.
He handed me a letter
That gave me to understand
That the girl I left behind me
Had wedded another man.

I turned myself all round about,
Not knowing what to do.
I read a little farther,
And I found this news proved true.
It's drinking I'll throw over,
Bad company I'll resign.
I'll rove around from town to town
For the girl I left behind.

Come all you rambling, gambling boys,
And listen while I tell.
It do you no good, kind friends,
It will do you no harm.
If you ever court a fair maid,
Just marry them while you can.
'Cause if you ever cross the main,
She'll marry some other man.

Evelyn's version of this well-known British broadside is similar to versions collected previously in North Carolina by Cecil Sharp – from Allenstand, Carmen and Big Laurel (the present day Sodom Laurel), which are all in Madison County.

Clarence Ashley, from nearby Tennessee, recorded it as *Maggie Walker Blues* (Folkways LP 2355), and the *Forget Me Not Songster* called it *The Maid I Left Behind*. Spencer Moore, from Chilhowie, in Virginia, recorded the song for Alan Lomax in 1959 (Rounder CD1702), while Grayson & Whitter recorded it as far back as 1928 under the title *I've Always Been a Rambler* (reissued on Document DOCD-8055). Seamus Ennis, Bobbie Clancy and Eddie Butcher knew it in Ireland.

32. Little Margaret (Child 74, Roud 253)
(Sung by Evelyn Ramsey at her home in Sodom Laurel, Madison County, NC, 8/29/80)

Spoken: *Little Margaret*

Little Margaret is sitting in her high hall door
Combing back her long yellow hair.
She saw Sweet William and his new made bride
Go riding by so near.

She threw down her ivory comb,
Threw back her long yellow hair.
Said, 'I'll go down and bid him farewell
And never more go there.'

It was late in the night
They were fast asleep.
Little Margaret appeared all dressed in white,
Standing at their bed feet.

Said, 'How do you like your snow-white pillow?
How do you like your sheets?
How do you like that pretty fair maid
Who lies in your arms asleep?'

"Very well do I like my snow-white pillow,
Well do I like my sheets.
Much better do I like that pretty fair maid
Who stands at my bed feet.'

He called for his serving man to go,
Saddled his dapple roan.
And he rode to her father's house that night
And knocked on the door alone.

Said, 'Is Little Margaret in her room,
Or is she in the hall?'
'Little Margaret's in her cold black coffin
With her face turned toward the wall.'

'Unfold, unfold those snow-white robes,
Be they ever so fine.
For I want to kiss those cold, cold lips,
For I know they'll never kiss mine.'

First he kissed her on the chin.
Then he kissed her cheek.
And then he kissed her cold, corpsy lips,
And he fell in her arms asleep.

Versions of the Old-World ballad *Fair Margaret and Sweet William* have turned up repeatedly in the American South. Cecil Sharp collected three English versions, and seventeen Appalachian ones, including two sets from Sodom Laurel singers. Early versions appear in Rimbault's *Musical Illustrations of Bishop Percy's Reliques* (1850) and Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (1855-59). A 1950's Folkways recording (FA 2040) by Bascom Lamar Lunsford is available on custom CD or digital download from Smithsonian Folkways.

33. The Lily of the West (Laws P29, Roud 957)
(Sung by Evelyn Ramsey at her home in Sodom Laurel, Madison County, NC, 8/29/80)

Spoken: *The Lily of the West*

I just came down from Louisville,
Some pleasure for to find.
A handsome girl from Michigan
Was so pleasing to my mind.
Her rosy cheeks, her rolling eye,
Like arrows pierced my breast.
They called her handsome Flora,
The Lily of the West.

I courted her for many a day,
Her love I thought to gain.
Too soon, too soon, she slighted me,
Which caused me grief and pain.
She robbed me of my liberty,
Deprived me of my rest.
They called her handsome Flora,
The Lily of the West.

One evening as I rambled,
Down by yon shady grove.
I met a lord of high degree
Conversing with my love.
He sang, he sang so merrily,
While I was so depressed.
And he sang for handsome Flora,
The Lily of the West.

I rushed upon my rival,
My dagger in my hand.
And I drew him back from my own true love
And boldly bid him stand.
Being mad to desperation,
My dagger pierced his breast.
And I was betrayed by Flora,
The Lily of the West.

Oh, now my trial has come on,
And sentenced soon shall be.
They put me in the criminal box
And there convicted me.
She so deceived the jury,
That I might have saved a dress.
For she far outshone bright Venus,
The Lily of the West.

Oh, now my liberty have gained,
I'll rove this country through.
I'll ramble this city over,
To find my love once more.
Though she robbed me of my liberty,
Deprived me of my rest.
But still I love my Flora,
The Lily of the West.

In the old days folksongs passed by word of mouth and via broadsides. Evelyn Ramsey, a neighbour of Cas Wallin and Dellie Norton, shows how things can so easily change. *The Lily of the West* is a song that she remembers friends singing years ago. She had forgotten the song – words and tune – until she came across a copy of Cecil Sharp's Appalachian Collection, which contained a version of the song that Sharp had collected in Kentucky. Evelyn relearnt the words and, being unable to read music, set them to a slowed down version of the tune used by Charlie Poole for the railroad song *Bill Mason* (Columbia 15407-D).

Despite the American place names, the song first saw light in early 19th century England (or Ireland), and was popular with British singers up to the beginning of the 20th century. Sabine Baring-Gould heard it from three singers in the west country around 1900. Bascom Lamar Lunsford, also from North Carolina, sang a good version on the now-deleted album *Music from South Turkey Creek* (Rounder 0065), and a version collected by Vance Randolph from the Ozarks singer Charles Ingenthron can be heard on Rounder CD 1108.

34. Somebody's Tall and Handsome
(Sung by Evelyn Ramsey at her home in Sodom Laurel, Madison County, NC, 8/30/80)

Somebody's tall and handsome, and handsome,
Somebody's eyes are blue.
Somebody's tall and handsome, and handsome,
Somebody's brave and true.

Somebody came to see me, to see me,
Somebody came last night.
Somebody asked me to marry, to marry,
Of course, I said, 'All right.'

There's going to be a wedding, a wedding,
A wedding in the fall.
There's going to be a wedding,
I'm going to invite you all.

As *The Wedding Song*, this turned up on Beech Mountain, NC in 1933, where it was sung by Nathan Hicks (Maurice Matteson & Mellinger Edward Henry, *Beech Mountain Folk-Songs and Ballads*, 1936). After more or less singing Evelyn's above three verses, Nathan added the following two extra verses.

Somebody called for mama,
And mama went out to see.
And mama came back with tears in her eyes,
Says, 'Daughter, there's grief for me.'

Somebody called for papa,
And papa went out to see.
And papa come back with a smile on his face,
Was glad to get rid of me.

Vance Randolph includes three versions of the song in his *Ozark Folksongs* collection (Vol. 3, 1949) and adds that other versions have been found in Nebraska and Virginia. We may add that it was also known to the Ritchie Family of Kentucky (see Jean Ritchie's *Singing Family of the Cumberlands,* 1955, pp. 60-61), and a recording by Jean's mother, Abigail Hall Ritchie, was

available on Folkways LP 2316, *The Ritchie Family of Kentucky*, available from Smithsonian Folkways as a custom CD or digital download.

35. The Truelover's Farewell (Roud 422)
(Sung by Evelyn Ramsey at her home in Sodom Laurel, Madison County, NC, 8/30/80)

So far away from friends and home,
There's one that's dear to me.
There's one forever in my mind,
And that fair one is she.

Come back, come back, my own true love,
And stay a while with me.
For if ever I have a friend on earth,
You've been a friend to me.

Hush up, hush up, my own true love,
For I hate to hear you cry.
For the best of friends on earth must part,
So why must you and I?

Ten thousand miles away, my love,
You know that never can be.
For the parting from my old true love
Shall be the death of me.

I wish my breast was made of glass,
Wherein you might behold.
It's on my breast the secret's wrote
With letters made in gold.

Oh, take this ring I will to thee,
And wear it on your right hand.
And think of my poor aching heart
When you're in some foreign land.

So fare you well, my old true love,
So fare you well for awhile.
I'm going away but I'm coming back,
If I go ten thousand miles.

A version titled *The Unkind Lovers*, or *The Languishing Lament of Two Loyal Lovers* is to be found in the *Osterley Park Ballads*, taken from a broadside printed by C. Bates (1630-1712). Robert Burns clearly knew the song, which he used as the basis for his well-known poem *My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose*. Cecil Sharp collected six versions in England, as well as a further

nine sets from Appalachian singers. One of these versions came from a Mrs. Sylvaney Ramsey of Hot Springs, who may have been related to Evelyn Ramsey.

Evelyn's verse 5 (which begins, 'I wish my breast was made of glass') also appears in Doug Wallin's song *The Time Draws Near*, and in several versions of *The Willow Tree/Brisk Young Lover/Died for Love* over much of the Anglophone world, while other verses appear in the Hayes Shepherd recording *Hard For to Love* mentioned previously.

36. The Truelover's Warning (Laws G21, Roud 711)
(Sung by Evelyn Ramsey at her home in Sodom Laurel, Madison County, NC, 8/30/80)

Come all you friends and pay attention,
And listen to these few lines I'm going to write.
They are as true as ever was written,
Concerning the life of a beautiful bride.

A young man courted a handsome lady.
He loved her as dear as he loved his life.
And unto him she made this promise,
She would be his lawful wife.

As soon as her parents learnt to know this,
They tried to part them night and day.
'Oh son, why be so foolish?
She's too poor,' they would often say.

Down on his knees before his father,
He cried, 'Oh father, please pity me.
How can you keep me from my true love?
For she is all the world to me.'

As soon as this lady came to know this,
She soon made up what she would do.
She wandered forward and left the city,
The green wild rose no more to view.

She wandered down by the lonesome river,
And for death she did prepare.
'Let this be a youthful warning,
That all true lovers may never part.'

Her true love being not far behind her,
He heard an awful sound.
He looked and saw his true love lying,
With a sword upon the ground.

Her cold black eyes, like stars she opened,
Saying, 'Love, oh love, you've come too late.
Prepare to meet me up in Heaven,
Where all true lovers will be complete.'

He then picked up the sword, a-weeping,
And placed it to his own dear heart.
Saying, 'Won't this be a joyful morning,
When all true lovers may never part.

This version of *The Silver Dagger* was well established in Madison County when I first visIted the area – although Cecil Sharp only published sets from Kentucky and Virginia – and I also recorded three of Evelyn's neighbours singing versions of the song. (Doug Wallin's version appears on Volume 3, track 20, of this set).

When, in 1949, Arthur Kyle Davis published his checklist of songs and ballads collected in Virginia, he was able to list eighteen sets, including one recording made by Texas Gladden, the sister of Hobart Smith, who called it, appropriately, *Broken Hearts*. A version from the singing of Holey Huntley may be heard on Augusta Heritage cassette 009, and listeners may wish to compare Evelyn's version with that recorded by Charlie Oaks and His Family – *Wake Up You Drowsy Sleeper* – that is reissued on Yazoo 2028.

37. Tom Dooley (Roud 4192)
(Sung by Evelyn Ramsey at her home in Sodom Laurel, Madison County, NC, 8/28/80)

Spoken: *Tom Dooley*

Hand me down my banjo,
I'll pick it on my knee.
This time tomorrow night,
It'll be no use to me.

Hang down your head, Tom Dooley,
Hang down your head and cry.
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley,
Poor boy, you're bound to die.

I met her on the mountain,
I swore she'd be my wife.
I met her on the mountain,
There I stabbed her with my knife.

I met her on the mountain,
Where she begged to be excused.

I met her on the mountain,
Where I hid her clothes and shoes.

This time tomorrow,
Reckon where I'll be,
Down in some lone valley,
Hanging from a white oak tree.

I had my trial at Wilkesboro,
What do you reckon they done?
They bound me over to Statesville,
And that's where I'm going to be hung.

repeat verse 2

The limb a-being oak,
The rope was being very strong,
Bow down your head Tom Dooley,
You know you're going to be hung.

'Momma, oh, momma,
Don't you weep or cry.
I've killed poor Laurie Foster.
Oh, I'm bound to die.'

'Poppa, oh, poppa,
What shall I do?
I've lost all my money
And killed poor Laurie too.'

Oh, what my momma told me,
It's about to come to pass.
Red whiskey and pretty women,
Will be my ruin at last.

If one song could be said to have started the 'folk boom' of the early 1960s, then that song must surely have been *Tom Dooley*, a mountain song collected originally from the late Frank Proffitt of Watauga County, NC and popularized by the Kingston Trio. Should there be anyone who does not know the history of the song, then full details appear in volume 2 of the *Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*. Suffice to say that Thomas C. Dula and Ann Melton were arrested in Wilkes County, NC in May 1866 and charged with the murder of Laura Foster. Dula, as principal, was found guilty and hanged on May 1, 1868. Melton, who had been charged as an accessory before the facts, was found not guilty. Brown reports that shortly before his death, Dula publicly announced that Ann Melton had not been involved in the murder, although, as Doug Wallin attests, on *Far in the Mountains,* Volume 3, track 8, public

opinion was otherwise. Other Appalachian recordings include those by Frank Proffitt (Appleseed CD1036) and Grayson & Whitter (Document DOCD-8055, a reissue of their 1929 recording). In some versions of the ballad, mention is made of a Sheriff Grayson who arrested Tom Dula. G.B. Grayson, who recorded the song in 1929, was a descendent of this Sheriff Grayson.

38. Hold to God's Unchanging Hand
(Sung by Douston and Evelyn Ramsey at their home in Sodom Laurel, Madison County, NC, 8/28/80)

Spoken: *Hold to God's Unchanging Hand*

Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved can stand.
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand.

Chorus:
Hold (to his hand), to God's unchanging hand.
Hold (to his hand), to God's unchanging hand.
Build your hopes on things eternal.
Hold to God's unchanging hand.

Trusting him who will not leave you,
Whatsoever years may bring.
If by earthly friends forsaken,
Still more closely to him cling.

When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory,
Your enraptured soul will view.

In his notes to the album *61 Highway Mississippi* (Rounder CD 1703) Alan Lomax describes one of his 1959 recordings of *Hold to God's Unchanging Hand* as 'A 20th century spiritual in the swinging congregational style common among black country Baptists of the 1910s and 1920s.' The version given by Lomax, from Anderson Burton and congregation at Independence Church, Tyro, Mississippi, shows little textual similarity to Douston and Evelyn Ramsey's version, except for the title refrain.

Sister Cally Fancy recorded the piece in 1929 (Brunswick 7157, reissued on Document DOCD-5313), and verses from the song were also included in *Prayer of Death, Part Two*, recorded in 1929 by the Mississippi blues singer Charlie Patton (reissued as part of a three CD set, issued by Catfish on KATCD 180). A further duet version can be heard sung by Estil and Orna Ball on Rounder LP 0072.

Notes: *Far in the Mountains*, Volumes 1 & 2

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Mark Wilson has generously helped with the song and tune notes.

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Any errors or mistakes in the notes are, of course, my responsibility.

Mike Yates - April 2002

Credits:

All of the foregoing text was written by Mike Yates (shown below, with Sam Conner), who also made all the recordings and took all of the photos (unless otherwise noted). My [Rod Stradling's] sincere thanks to Mike, and to everyone who has helped to make this project a reality …

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Notes: *Far in the Mountains*, Volumes 1 & 2



Sam Conner & Mike Yates

Clare Gilliam and the NSA – the complete Yates Collection of original (pre-2000) recordings is now housed in the National Sound Archive at the British Library. The recordings used here are taken from digital transfers of those originals, done by Clare at the NSA and funded by the National Folk Music Fund.

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The 2026 reissue of *Far in the Mountains* has been produced by John Schwab, on behalf of the Field Recorders' Collective, Inc. John carried out additional digital editing and sound restoration, starting with CDs from the original UK printing that had been purchased from Musical Traditions. The original brochures were scanned to produce these volume notes, which have been updated in places. John and the FRC give sincere thanks to Mike Yates (who has been an outstanding collaborator) and the late Rod Stradling, of Musical Traditions.

Album cover photo (and several others inside this brochure) © Paul Brown. Thank you, Paul!