

Texas Songster – Volume 2

MANCE LIPSCOMB

You Got to Reap What You Sow



1. CHARLIE JAMES
2. COME BACK BABY
3. SPANISH FLANG DANG
4. YOU GOT TO REAP
WHAT YOU SOW
5. COCAINE DONE
KILLED MY BABY
6. JOE TURNER
KILLED A MAN
7. BUMBLE BEE
8. BOOGIE IN "A"
9. HATTIE GREEN
10. SILVER CITY
11. THE TITANIC
12. IF I MISS THE TRAIN
13. LORD THOMAS
14. TOM MOORE BLUES
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17. MAMA, DON'T DOG ME
18. LONG WAY
TO TIPPERARY
19. WILLIE POOR BOY

20. YOU RASCAL YOU
21. I LOOKED DOWN THE
ROAD AND I WONDERED
22. SENTIMENTAL BLUES
23. POLICE STATION BLUES
24. MISSOURI WALTZ

Total Time: 78:00

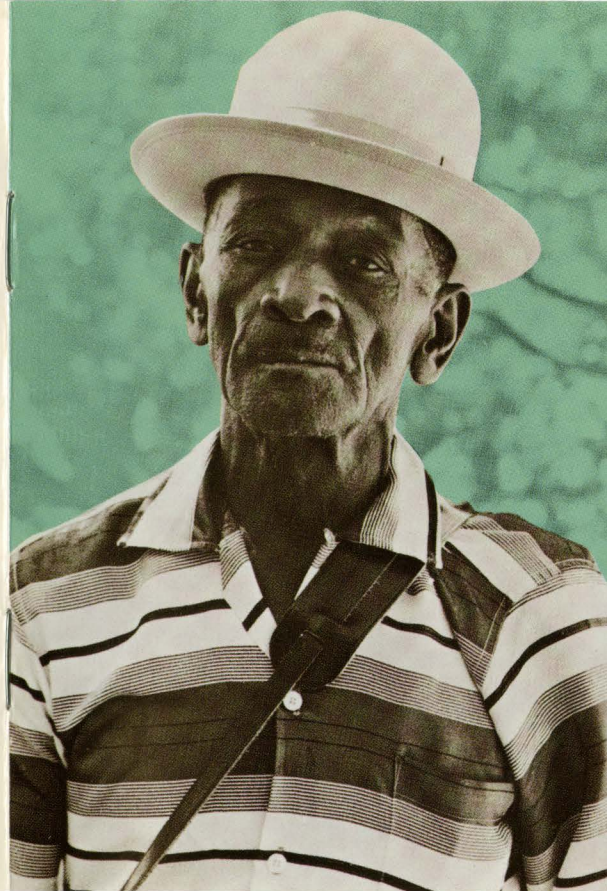
Mance Lipscomb – vocals and guitar.

Recorded by Chris Strachwitz at his home in Berkeley, Ca., on May 2, 1964, using one Capps condenser microphone and a Magnecord tape recorder.

Cover photo by Ben Jacopetti
Cover by Wayne Pope
#9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, & 24 previously unissued; all other selections originally released on Arhoolie LP 1023.

Edited and produced by Chris Strachwitz
All songs composed or arranged by Mance Lipscomb and © by Tradition Music Co. (BMI)

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Mance Lipscomb

TEXAS SONGSTER
VOLUME 2

You Got To
Reap What
You Sow





Photo: Chris Strachwitz

Mance Lipscomb at the UC-Berkeley Folk Festival

MANCE LIPSCOMB – Texas Songster Vol.2

“You Got to Reap What You Sow”

Along with Leadbelly, Pink Anderson, and Jesse Fuller, **Mance Lipscomb** was one of the few African American “songsters” to record extensively his remarkably wide-ranging repertoire of popular songs, blues, ballads, dance tunes, rags, spirituals, children’s songs, breakdowns, jubilees, and slow-drags. Mance Lipscomb was not only a wonderful singer and carrier of the full spectrum of rural Texas African American culture and traditions, but he was also a superb guitarist and a gentleman in the truest sense of the word.

I had the great pleasure of first meeting and recording Mance Lipscomb on a warm summer evening in his hometown of Navasota, Texas, in 1960. The recordings made at our first meeting resulted in the very first album release by my newly established **Arhoolie** record label. The songs from that first album, plus several more, are now available on Arhoolie CD 306 and Mack McCormick’s perceptive historical comments will help

you understand Mance Lipscomb’s significance within the wider world of African American country music.

This, the second Arhoolie CD release by Mance Lipscomb, was recorded in its entirety the afternoon of May 2, 1964 in my living room in Berkeley, California. Mance was my house guest while making a number of appearances in Northern California and was feeling especially good and rested that afternoon. Mance wanted to record his second album for me and he did it as if he were playing in front of an audience—one song after the other as they came into his head. In only a few instances did he or I wish to repeat a song. A few times the tape ran out prior to the end of a song and I would request that Mance repeat it. In a few cases where I would recall having previously heard him sing a different version of a song, Mance would tell me to turn the machine on and then delight me with yet another quite different version! He wound up recording 32 songs for my

microphone that afternoon.

The songs Mance Lipscomb recorded for this album ranged from blues to spirituals and from ballads to pop songs, with perhaps a little stronger emphasis on blues, since he sensed a good reaction for them among his new audience. Mance used to hear his uncle George sing *Charlie James* while they were working in the fields. *Come Back Baby* was a hit record for Walter Davis in the 1930s. The guitar instrumental *Spanish Flang Dang* is Mance's interpretation of what he heard some Mexican field hands play one night. The truth of *You Got To Reap What You Sow* has long been a line in many blues.

Back in the early part of the 20th century, when cocaine was a legal substance, many songs came out about its evil effects and Mance offers *Cocaine Done Killed My Baby* which he learned shortly after World War I. *Joe Turner* was a famous bad man in the area and although Mance never knew him personally, he made up this song from what people were saying about the man. *Bumble Bee* was composed and made popular by Memphis Minnie via several recorded versions which were issued in the late

1920s and early 30s. Pianist Pinetop Smith's recording of *Pinetop's Boogie Woogie* became very popular in the late 1920s and from that time on boogie woogie became an integral part of the blues language. The popularity of the genre, which crossed over into the country and pop music fields, peaked in the 1940s at the hands of piano giants Albert Ammons and Pete Johnson. Mance Lipscomb enjoyed playing boogie variations on the guitar of which *Boogie In "A"* is one of several. *Hattie Green* was a popular blues among Texas songsters and Mance recalled hearing *Silver City* as a popular number around 1916. The story about the sinking of the ship *Titanic* in 1912 was also known as *God Moves On The Water* and the recording by Blind Willie Johnson in the late 1920s probably helped to spread it into every corner of the South. *If I Miss The Train* is one of those wonderful songs which consists of many "floating verses" common to many blues.

Ballads like *The Titanic* have always been an important part of any rural "songster's" repertoire. The oldest item in this collection is almost certainly the fragmentary version of the English bal-

lad *Lord Thomas*. Mance learned it as a youngster and sings it *a capella* in very traditional Anglo ballad style. The verses he remembered don't seem to be the same as the several printed versions I have seen. Mance's enthusiasm for recalling this ballad from his childhood past was aroused after meeting many folk music fans at festivals who were interested in the whole spectrum of traditional music. Among them was Barry Olivier, director of the Berkeley Folk Music Festival, who was the first to invite Mance Lipscomb to the festival in 1961 after hearing his first album.

The most recent and perhaps most powerful ballad Mance Lipscomb sang and knew many verses to, was the locally well-known story about Washington county's land owner, Tom Moore. Lightning Hopkins was the only professional blues singer who had dared to make a commercial 78rpm record (available on Arhoolie CD 330) of this local ballad or "protest song" in the late 1940s. Lightning recorded only a few of the verses, however, of which local singers knew quite a number, but he added several personal ones. Times do change

and in the early 1970s Mance Lipscomb was invited to play at the home of one of Mr. Moore's sons. After listening for a while to the by then nationally acclaimed home-town "songster," the younger Mr. Moore requested the infamous song about his father. With a sparkle in his eyes, Mance later told me that yes, indeed, he had sung that song for Mr. Moore but had tried very hard to sing only the least condemning verses for the occasion.

So Different Blues is one of Mance Lipscomb's own very distinct compositions. In the version of *Tall Angel at the Bar* heard here (first take) you will note that there is no mention in the text of a tall angel. My comment to that effect quickly brought forth a second version with the line *Tall Angel at the Bar* repeated incessantly throughout the song. I chose to include the first, angel-less version on this CD!

Although much of Mance Lipscomb's repertoire is of African American origins, several selections on this CD take us back to the days when both races shared a common rural heritage. *Alabama Jubilee* is of Anglo American origins

as is the pop song from the World War I era: *Long Way To Tipperary* which in Mance's hands garners some charming additional local verses. *Willie Poor Boy* became one of my favorite songs during our travels together and I think I requested it at almost every one of Mance's public appearances. A "live" version of this song also appears on Mance Lipscomb's first Arhoolie CD 306. *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You* was popularized in the late 1920s or early 30s by Louis Armstrong among others but Mance's verses seem rather unique.

The final selection, the *Missouri Waltz*, was one of Mance's favorites and one of the first pieces he learned to play on the guitar when as a young boy he started accompanying his father, Charlie Lipscomb, who played the piece on the fiddle. "I never heard my father play a blues in his life—but he was a clear fiddler. Texas people didn't know nothing about blues until they come from Mississippi. My father didn't know them blues but he played waltzes, two-steps, ring plays, schottisches, church songs, and breakdowns."

Mance Lipscomb's music and life

story have been well documented. Arhoolie CDs 306 and 398 contain many of his favorite songs and we plan on several additional releases in the near future.

Mance's image was captured on film on several occasions. By far the best film is **A Well Spent Life** by Les Blank in which Mance Lipscomb not only plays a good deal of music, but the viewer is completely drawn into the life, culture, and physical environment of this remarkable man. (Available on video cassette from Flower Films c/o Arhoolie Productions).

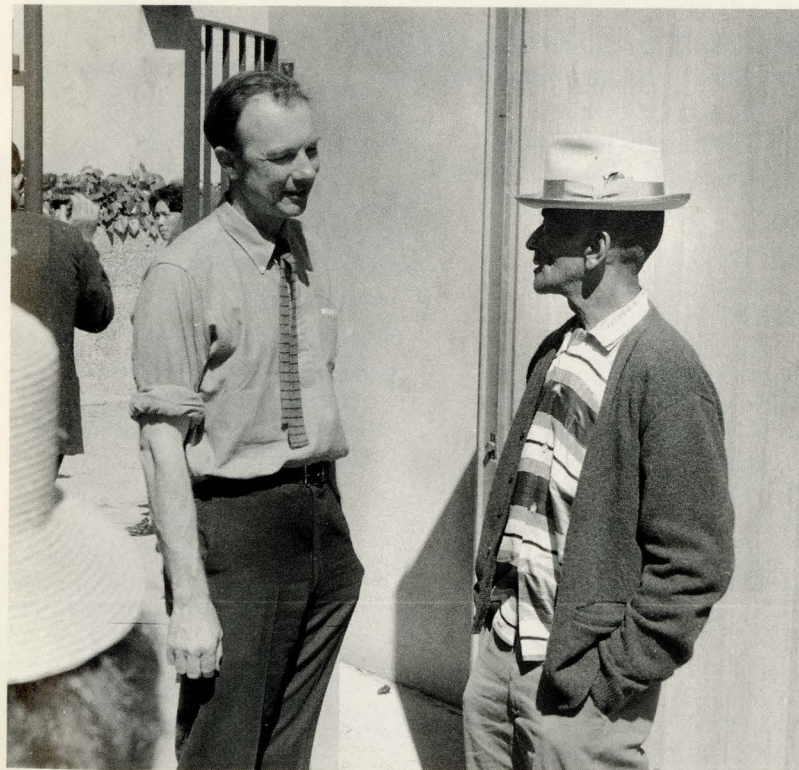
Several other films of mostly performances are also being readied for release and details will be found in the complete 100-page Arhoolie catalog.

Mance Lipscomb's oral autobiography, compiled by Glen Alyn, under the title **I Say Me For A Parable** is scheduled for publication in 1993 by W.W. Norton Co. - New York.

(Chris Strachwitz - editor & producer - 1993)

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Mance Lipscomb meeting Pete Seeger at the UC-Berkeley Folk Festival

Photo: Chris Strachwitz

MANCE LIPSCOMB

You Got to Reap What You Sow



1. CHARLIE JAMES (3:33)
2. COME BACK BABY (3:59)
3. SPANISH FLANG DANG (1:58)
4. YOU GOT TO REAP
WHAT YOU SOW (2:27)
5. COCAINE DONE
KILLED MY BABY (1:20)
6. JOE TURNER KILLED A MAN (4:31)
7. BUMBLE BEE (3:23)
8. BOOGIE IN "A" (2:25)
9. HATTIE GREEN (3:40)
10. SILVER CITY (3:32)
11. THE TITANIC (3:11)
12. IF I MISS THE TRAIN (4:04)
13. LORD THOMAS (1:35)
14. TOM MOORE BLUES (4:35)
15. SO DIFFERENT BLUES (3:01)
16. TALL ANGEL AT THE BAR (2:37)
17. MAMA, DON'T DOG ME (4:07)
18. LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY (2:54)
19. WILLIE POOR BOY (3:25)
20. YOU RASCAL YOU (3:38)



21. I LOOKED DOWN THE
ROAD AND I WONDERED (3:49)
22. SENTIMENTAL BLUES (2:37)
23. POLICE STATION BLUES (2:28)
24. MISSOURI WALTZ (2:03)

Total Time: 78:00

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