FSA-2

JOSEPH ABLE TRIVETT

Butler, Tennessee

FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. SHARON, CONNECTICUT

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JOSEPH ABLE TRIVETT is a large, vigorous man, eighty years old. He has lived all of his life in the mountainous northeastern corner of Tennessee, a stone's throw from the North Carolina border. In fact, the house in which he was born, a rough-hewn log cabin, was half in the one state and half in the other. *("There wasn't no chinking between the logs, either—many a morning I'd wake up with snow a-covering up the bed and the wind just a-blowing through the cracks.")*

Aside from farming, Abe has worked at a lot of jobs, "*one time or another*", But most of his life has been spent working with timber – either in the logging camps or in the saw-mills. The songs he sings were learned, mostly, from the men with whom he worked and he sings them in an appropriately rough, unadorned style, without accompaniment.

Abe and his wife, Addie (short for Adeline), now live in "*Stony Hollor*", Tennessee, where they raise a few chickens, a couple of cows, and tend a small garden patch. In March of 1962, they will celebrate their 62nd wedding anniversary. They have, as Addie says, "*somewheres in thirty grandchildren and somewheres in thirty great-grandchildren—it's awful what a bunch of 'em they is!*" She says it, however, with a very proud smile.

side 1:

THE NOWHERE ROAD (Trivett)
LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ELLENDER (Child 73)
JOE BOWERS
THE GOLDEN WILLOW TREE (Child 286)
GO AWAY FROM ME, YOUNG MAN
THE CAR THAT DIED (spoken)
MOTHER-IN-LAW
FAIR AND TENDER LADIES

side 2:

THE ROLLING STORE (Trivett)
THE LITTLE MOHEE
FRANK JAMES
THE COURTING CASE
MATHY GROVE (Child 81)
BLACK JACK DAVID (Child 200)
THAT BLOODY WAR

jacket design — al grossi

JOSEPH ABLE TRIVETT

of Butler, Tennessee

Recorded and edited by
Sandy Paton

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FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.
SHARON, CONNECTICUT

JOSEPH ABLE TRIVETT

It was a mild, mid-September day in 1961 when I stopped to ask directions at a small rural grocery store in an isolated valley known as "Stony Hollor", deep in the mountains of northeastern Tennessee. The friendly proprietor, an elderly gentleman named Harmon, hesitated not one moment when he learned of my interest in "old-timey songs".

"You ought to go see Abe Trivett," he said. "Forty years ago, up in the logging camps, whenever we wanted music, we'd holler for old Abe."

I made a mental note of Mr. Harmon's careful directions and drove immediately to Abe's small mountain home. He was sitting, along with his wife, Addie (short for Adeline), in the shade of their porch, taking advantage of the pleasant afternoon breeze. Having been told that he was eighty years old, I was hardly prepared for his big, booming welcome. Indeed, Abe has the strength and vigor of a man much younger in years, as his zestful singing on this record will attest.

The storekeeper had told me that Abe not only sang the old traditional songs, but that he had "made up" several good ones of his own, so I went right to the point.

"Mr. Trivett, I hear that you made up a song about working on the 'Nowhere Road'."

"I guess I did."

"Could you sing it for me?"

"I guess I could."

With that, he leaned his chair back against the wall and, in his strong, rough voice, began to sing me the ironic tale of his own experience with political patronage. There was no shyness, no embarrassment, no need for coaxing. Abe loves to sing and, as he told me later, he "wouldn't care if there was a thousand people in front of me." I explained that I had a tape-recorder in the car and asked if he would be willing to let me record his singing.

"I guess I would."

We set up the equipment in the living room and, while Addie began to prepare supper, Abe sang "The Nowhere Road" and "The Rolling Store" onto tape for me. I then began to inquire about the other songs he knew. Since nearly everyone in his area knows "Barbara Allen", if nothing else, I asked if he knew that one.

"I guess I do."

"Could you sing it for me?"

"I guess I could."

It was as simple as that. I stayed for several hours and, with almost no hesitation, no fumbling for long-forgotten words, Abe Trivett gave me about twenty songs, including two with over twenty verses. I had made an appointment to visit and record another singer that evening, so I asked if I could return and record more of Abe's songs the next morning. The answer was, of course, the familiar:

"I guess you could."

This record is the result of those two visits, plus another brief one in January of 1962. All told, Abe sang thirty-seven songs for me, fourteen of which may be heard here.

Abe Trivett may not be a great singer, but in his rough voice and bold, unpretentious style, one can hear many things--long, hard days spent felling timber in the rugged mountains of northeastern Tennessee--"ballhooting" logs down snow-covered slopes in the dead of winter--working from dawn till dark with wet trousers frozen solid from the knees down--years of hard labor wherever a man was lucky enough to find it--on road crews, in tobacco fields, saw-mills, factories--and, especially, the many nights in the logging camps where men made music and told tales to entertain themselves and the tales were rough and the music was unadorned. There was nothing pretty or fancy in the lives of these men and their music was cut from the same homespun cloth. If it is the artist's genius to be able to express, accurately, the culture in which he lives, then Abe Trivett is an artist.

This is a field recording, no more and no less. The sounds of the clock ticking on the wall and the chickens clucking on the front porch were unavoidable, as were the coughs of the guests, family, and friends, who came to witness the second and third recording sessions. What you hear on this record is exactly what you would hear if you were to visit Abe and his wife in their home. And that, I feel, is as it should be. A studio recording would, somehow, wrench this music out of its natural habitat--would impose upon it something artificial and strange. Folksongs belong in the homes of the people who love them and preserve them, not in the alien environment of a studio or a night-club.

This, then, is a visit to Abe Trivett's home. I only wish I could have recorded the wonderful aroma of frying ham and of biscuits baking in the oven of Addie's woodstove as she prepared dinner for us. More often than not, the collector's reward includes good food and warm friendships, as well as fine songs. This record will enable the listener to share at least a part of the collector's very pleasant experience.

Sandy Paton
Huntington, Vermont
1962

ABE TRIVETT'S SONGS

Side 1. Band 1. THE NOWHERE ROAD

The events described in this song took place approximately thirty years ago in Carter County, Tennessee. Grady Weaver was a young blind man who had acquired a fair amount of formal education, probably at the School for the Blind in Nashville, according to Abe. At any rate, Abe decided to vote for him when he ran for State Legislature, partly because he was blind and Abe figured "he needed the job." He told his friends that he intended to cast his ballot for Weaver and urged them to do the same. When the votes were tallied, Weaver had been elected, but Abe's was the only vote cast for him in his voting district. How ironic, then, that Abe would turn out to be the first man to lose his job on the "Nowhere Road" when Weaver managed to get the road building contract turned over to another construction company. Abe tells of finding Weaver, shortly before the next election, thoroughly mired down in the mud of a country road. He had been on his way to make a campaign speech in Abe's district, with his brother driving the car for him, when they became hopelessly stuck in the red clay gumbo that even today makes the roads in Abe's valley nearly impassable after a rain. Abe describes their conversation thusly: "I told him I didn't see why he wanted to make a speech up there, anyway. I says, 'You only got one vote up there the last time and I voted it--and I know I ain't a-going to vote for you again!' He says, 'Well, do you know any way I can get my car out of this mud?' I says, 'Well, I don't know; maybe you ought to try to <u>legislate</u> it out.'" The song is, of course, Abe's own creation.

Well, I'll just tell you a little story about something
that happened years ago. I finally voted for Grady Weaver
as representative of the state. He went to Nashville and
I was the first man he knocked out of a job by legislating
J. A. Walters (?) out of a job and legislating Nat Nave in.
And I was the first man that was laid off after Nat Nave
took the place--and this is what happened:

I was a-working on the Nowhere Road
On the sixteenth day of May,
Not knowing what had happened
Or how long I'd get to stay.

I turned and looked off down the road
And there I saw a man;
He walked on up to where I was at
And took me by the hand.

He said that "Asher is my name,"
He talked so very kind;
He had a paper in his hand
And soon it changed my mind.

I said that "Trivett is my name,"
He talked so kind and soft;
He said, "Your initials is J. A.;
I'll have to lay you off."

This great depression struck my mind,
Nothing I could make or save;
He said, "Don't think no-ways hard of me,
It's orders from Nat Nave."

I turned and walked off round the road,
A-thinking what I'd do;
Don't never kick a working man,
You'll kick his table, too.

These mountains here is poor and rough
And thirty miles from town;
And it don't take a heavy lick
To kick his table down.

Be careful, men, when you are kicked;
Just try some other way,
But keep this all deep in your mind
Until election day.

Be careful how you hook your horse
And how you muzzle a ox;
Be careful, then, whose name you drop
Down in the ballot box.

Be sure that he has got good eyes
And can both see and hear,
And has always got a business mind
And has got no taste for beer.

Side 1. Band 2. LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ELLENDER (Child 73)

This is, apparently, one of the most popular traditional ballads in America. SHARP prints thirty-one variants; BROWN reports fourteen texts in his collection, only a few of which he prints in their entirety. Abe's use of the line: "Come riddle my sword" is comparatively unusual, however, assuming that "swort" is a corruption of that word. (Note that two of the SHARP texts use "sport" in its place.) It may be that such usage is an echo of the ancient practice of divination by the sword. GUMMERE (pp. 302 ff.) says: "Magic, to be sure, is not far away; men were wont to read the future in their gleaming swords....." and, later: "That weapons and implements, even ships, are addressed as persons and respond, is an assumption at the very heart of folklore and still potent in ballad tradition." Abe's text is quite complete, although he does omit the transitional verses in which Lord Thomas, on his way to Fair Ellender's gate, and she, on her way to his, are mistaken for king and queen, so handsomely are they clad. CHILD considered the "Scottish traditional copy" of this ballad "one of the most beautiful of our ballads, and indeed of all ballads." GEROULD notes that its popularity was so great that "it suffered through early printing as a broadside", a fact which may explain, at least in part, its great diffusion in this country.

See: ARNOLD, BARRY I, BELDEN, BREWSTER, BROWN, COX, DAVIS II & III, EDDY, GARDNER/CHICKERING, SHARP, RANDOLPH, ETC.

"Oh, mother, oh, mother, come riddle my sword,
Come riddle my sword as one,
Whether I should marry fair Ellender
Or go bring the brown girl home."
(repeat last two lines)

"The brown girl she has house and land,
Fair Ellender she has none;
Therefore I'll charge you with my blessing,
You'll bring the brown girl home."

"Oh, mother, oh, mother, go bridle my house
And bring to me my clothes,
That I may invite fair Ellender
To my wedding," said he.

He rode on there to fair Ellender's gate,
He knocked there at the ring;
But none so ready as she, herself,
To rise and let him in.

"Oh, mother, oh, mother, come riddle my sword,
Come riddle my sword as one,
Whether I shall go to Lord Thomas's wedding
Or tarry this day at home."

"My daughter, you have friends of many
And you have foes of more;
Therefore, I'll charge you with my blessing,
You'll tarry this day at home."

"I know that I have friends of many
And I have foes of more;
I'll venture life, I'll venture death,
Unto his wedding I'll go."

She rode on there to Lord Thomas's gate,
She knocked there at the ring;
But none so ready as he, himself,
To rise and let her in.

He took her by the lily white hand;
He led her through the hall
And set her down at the head of the table,
Amongst the merry maids all.

"Is this your brown girl, is this your brown girl?
I think she looks quite brown,
When you might have married as fair a young lady
As ever the sun shined on."

The brown girl had a penknife in her hand,
Both edges newly ground;
She pierced it into fair Ellender's side
And the blood come trinkling down.

He took the brown girl by the hand,
He led her through the hall;
He drew out his sword, he cut off her head
And threw it against the wall.

He put the butt against the wall,
The point against his breast,
Saying, "Here is the end of three true lovers,
God send them home to rest.

"Go dig my grave, go dig my grave,
Go dig it both wide and deep,
And bury fair Ellender in my arms
And the brown girl at my feet."

Side 1. Band 3. JOE BOWERS

Alan Lomax points out (LOMAX II) that his father found this song "everywhere among cowboys and miners" in 1904-5. BROWN prints one text, obtained in Wautauga County, North Carolina, which, though more complete than the present one, is very similar. (Wautauga County is but a few miles from Abe's home.) The hero, originally, was a Forty-Niner from Pike County, Missouri, and the song is said to have been composed by one Frank Smith, who travelled with Joe Bowers on the westward trek. Abe, apparently unfamiliar with Missouri geography, sings that Joe came "all the way by pike", rather than from Pike, a reasonable interpretation, but for the fact that there were few turnpikes stretching from Missouri to Salt Lake City in the days of '49. By the time of the Civil War, according to LOMAX II, the song was quite well-known and had been used in the travelling minstrel shows as a comic number. Its place in tradition is well established, however, as it has been reported from Texas, Michigan, Virginia and the Ozarks--and now from Tennessee--as well as North Carolina. Abe says he first heard the song sung by a fellow from Arkansas, but he couldn't recall when.

See: BELDEN, BROWN, DAVIS I, GARDNER/CHICKERING, LOMAX II, and RANDOLPH

My name it is little Joe Bowers,
I had a brother Ike;
I came from Old Missouri,
It was all the way by pike.
I'll tell you how I came to this country
And how I came to roam,
And leave my poor old parents,
So far away from home.

I was a-going to my neighbor's house,
A-courting Sally Black;
I asked her if she'd marry,
She said it was a whack.
"Now, you little Joe Bowers,
Before we hitch for life,
You ought to have a home
To take your little wife."

"Oh, Sally, oh, my Sally,
Oh, Sally, for your sake,
I'll go to Salt Lake City,
I'll try to raise a stake."
When I got to Salt Lake City
I hadn't nary red;
I had such wolfish feelings
I wished myself was dead.

I worked through cold and heat,
I worked through rain and snow;
I was working for my Sally,
It was all the way for Joe.
The other day I got a letter,
It was from brother Ike;
It came from old Missouri,
It was all the way by pike.

It was the awfullest news
That ever you did hear;
Sal, she married the butcher
And the butcher had red hair.
More than that,
It was enough to kill me dead,
Sal, she'd had a baby
And the baby's head was red.

Side 1. Band 4. THE GOLDEN WILLOW TREE (Child 286)

A good story, plus a long history of broadside printings, has given this fine old ballad a firm place in popular tradition. CHILDS's earliest text, from the Pepys Ballads (1682-5), refers to a ship built in the Netherlands by none other than Sir Walter Raleigh and named "The Sweet Trinity". BROWN prints one text in which the name of the enemy ship is "The Turkish Traveloo", but the manuscript from which it was taken failed to indicate where it was obtained. The collector, a Mrs. Sutton, is quoted as saying that she had heard the ballad sung on Beech Mountain in North Carolina, among other places, and the Beech is a very short distance from Abe's home in Stony Hollor. In fact in September of 1961, I recorded a version of it in the Beech, sung by Lee Monroe Presnell, in which the enemy ship was "The Turkish Traveloo." Apparently referring to the verse in which the boy, out of affection for his shipmates, chooses to drown, rather than to "do unto you as I done unto them", LOMAX II calls this a "story of the courage, skill and humane morality of the little cabin-boy". The heroic nature of the lad has certainly appealed to the folk, for the ballad is extremely popular and may be found in almost every major American collection.

See: BELDEN, BROWN, COX, DAVISII & III, GARDNER/CHICKERING, LINSCOTT, LOMAX II, MORRIS, RANDOLPH, RICHARDSON, SHARP, ETC.

There was a little ship in the South Amerikee;
It went by the name of the Golden Willow Tree,
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea.

It hadn't been a-sailing but a week or two,
Till up stepped the captain, "Oh, what shall I do?"
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea.

Up stepped the captain, "What shall I do?
Yonder comes the Turkish Traveloo,
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea."

Up stepped a young man, said, "What'll you give me,
If I'll sink her in the lowland lonesome low,
If I'll sink her in the lowland sea?"

"It's I have house and I have land;
I have the only daughter you may have at your command,
If you'll sink her in the lowland lonesome low,
If you'll sink her in the lowland sea."

He fell to his breast and off swum he;
He swum till he came to the Turkish Traveloo,
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea.

There was some playing cards and some playing checks;
Some was a-dancing on the salt water decks.
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea.

He drew a little instrument just for the use;
He cut nine gashes in the salt water juice.
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea.

He fell to his breast and back swum he;
He swum till he come to the Golden Willow Tree,
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea.

"It's now will you be as good as your word,
Will you take me back on board?"
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea.

"Neither will I be as good as your word,
Neither will I take you back on board."
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea.

"If it wasn't for the love that I have for you men,
I'd do unto you like I done unto them;
I'd sink you in the lowland lonesome low,
I'd sink you in the lowland sea."

He fell to his back and down sunk he;
He bid farewell on the Golden Willow Tree,
A-sailing on the lowland lonesome low,
A-sailing on the lowland sea.

Side 1. Band 5. GO AWAY FROM ME, YOUNG MAN

SHARP titles this lovely folk lyric "The Cuckoo" and prints fourteen variants; BROWN, noting the recurrence of various other motifs, assembles similar lyrics under several titles, i.e., "The Inconstant Lover", "The Wagoner's Lad" (his B text begins with the first verse of the present song), and "Old Smoky", classifying them according to other, more distinctive elements. The frequent occurrence of these "floating" lyrics literally defy more specific classification. We have elected, therefore, to use Abe's title and avoid the problem altogether. LOMAX II, in printing one of the two variants sung by Jean Ritchie, points out the sexual symbolism of the cuckoo and its frequent appearance in the love songs of southern England and America as a messenger of Spring. Anyone who has read Shakespeare will be aware of the cuckoo's association with infedelity, but Armstrong, in The Folklore of Birds (Cambridge, 1959), describes the cuckoo-cuckold tradition as a literary conceit rather than folklore. He does, however, demonstrate the widespread belief in the bird as a harbinger of Spring, closely associated with fertility rituals, and points out that the cuckoo was often considered prescient, as well. That "she brings us good tidings and tells us no lies" would seem to indicate a retention of the ancient belief in the bird's ability to predict the identity of one's future spouse. The accompanying ritual varied from place to place, but generally involved the discovery of a hair the color of the hair of one's future husband or wife, either underfoot or in one's shoe, upon hearing the first call of the cuckoo. In England, as well as in some parts of the continent, it was believed that a girl could learn how long she was to remain unmarried by counting the calls of the first cuckoo. Regardless of how long the bird might choose to sing on such an occasion, the resulting tidings would be "good", -- more so, at any rate, than news of an unfaithful wife would be to a husband. Two of Abe's verses seem to be sung by a young man, but the rest are definitely those of a young girl deserted by a "false lying young man". It would appear logical, then, to assume that the good tidings brought by the cuckoo in this case would pertain to her future marriage, to an assurance that, in spite of her present woe, she was not destined to lifelong spinsterhood.

See: ARNOLD ("Lovely Willie"), BELDEN, BROWN, BREWSTER, COX, DAVIS I, HENRY, LOMAX II, RANDOLPH, RITCHIE, SHARP, ETC.

Go away from me, young man,
And let me alone,
For I'm a poor strange girl
And a long ways from home.

A-hunting, a-hunting,
A-hunting goes I,
For to meet my old true love
As she comes by and by.

To meet her in the meadow,
'Tis my own heart's delight;
To sit down and court her
From dark till daylight.

For a meeting it is a pleasure
And a parting is grief,
And a false lying young man
Is worse than a thief.

For a thief will only rob you,
Your money they crave,
And a false lying young man
Will bring you to your grave.

Your grave it will hold you
And turn you to dust,
And there ain't one in twenty
That a poor girl can trust.

They'll hug you and they'll kiss you.
And tell you more lies
Than the green leaves on the timber
Or the stars in the skies.

They'll tell you that they love you
And keep you well pleased;
They'll turn their backs on you
And court who they please.

A coo-coo is a pretty bird,
She sings as she flies;
She brings us good tidings
And tells us no lies.

Side 1. Band 6. THE CAR THAT DIED

In this short tale, we find Aoe borrowing from the rich tradition that produced the "Arkansas Traveler"--those jocular yarns about the rustic wit who, by playing dubm "takes the mickey" out of the city-slicker. The story in this case is Abe's own and, knowing him as I do, I have no doubt that it actually happened. For similar tales, see B. A. BOTKIN: A Treasury of Southern Folklore: New York, 1949.

I'll tell you just a little story about one trip that I made across the Blue Ridge Mountain one time, a-going back into North Carolina to work at a saw-mill. (Addied: Why, he's got that a-running! Abe: I know it.) There was a fellow had an old Ford car with the curtains just stretched up around it--pretty ragged old thing, but we was all a-riding in it.

We come to a place way up on the Blue Ridge Mountain, and there was a fellow ther, stalled. He couldn't go no further. And the snow was just a-melting--it had been a big snow and it was just a-melting and the sloppiest time you ever saw. The slop was about shoe-mouth deep, melted snow in the road, and he'd got there and he couldn't go no further.

We stopped there at that watering-trough and asked him what was the matter and he said, "I don't know; my car died right here."

"Well," I said, "I had a dog that done that, one time." And I said, "I don't know what was the matter with him. I had a good bed and I fed him good and, the first thing I knowed, that dog died just like your car has." And I said, "That dog's dead yet."

And he looked at me like he though I was a fool and he said, "Maybe if you fellows would help me push off down the mountain, here, my car'll start."

Well, we all jumped out and undertook to push him off down the mountain and pushed him a right smart piece, and, one by one, they commenced to go back to our car and just leave us to work it. They'd all quit and gone back but me. I was still a-pushing as hard as I could right on down the mountain. And the old car wouldn't yet start.

Directly, he said, "Did you ever run a car any?"

And I said, "Yes, I've run lots of 'em, but I never could overtake one."

And he looked kindly funny at me. He said, "What do you think I better do for my car?"

Well, it was about eight miles over to Spruce Pine and an awful muddy time. I said, "The best thing I know for you to do is for you to go over there and get the garage and fetch it over here and fix it."

And he said "You'd better run on back. They might leave you!"

Side 1. Band 7. MOTHER-IN-LAW

Paul Clayton possesses an unpublished version of this song, very similar in text, but quite different in tune, which he obtained from Mrs. MacAllister of Brown's Cove, Virginia. It has not been widely reported, however. I rather suspect that it is an old minstrel song or one that has filtered into the tradition by way of an early commercial recording. Disc collectors could

probably supply me with more information on this song and I would appreciate hearing from them regarding it. As to Abe's own source, he simply says "Oh I heard an old boy sing that one time" and can offer nothing more.

Come all you people and I'll sing you a ditty,
And it's all concerning my mother-in-law.

Oh, my heart's all troubled and I can't live happy
And it's everything I say she pops in her jaw;
I'd rather be sentenced to jail or to congress
Than to live all my life with my mother-in-law.

When I asked the old lady to wed her daughter,
And I didn't intend the whole family to wed,
She made a dive at a cup of cold water
And she took a fair pop at the side of my head.

Chorus

Oh, my wife sits down to have her picture taken
And she whips them kids because they're mean;
To hear the old lady around a-tongue-lashing,
It's enough to break a thrashing machine.

Chorus

Everything I do, she's a fault-finder
And everywhere I go, she's always there;
If I don't do to suit this old lady,
She helps herself to a lock of my hair.

Chorus

Oh, way down south they follow game-shooting
And every pop they'll make a draw;
I'll give anyone just seventeen dollars
That'll make a fair pop at my mother-in-law.

Side 1. Band 8. FAIR AND TENDER LADIES

This is one of the most beautiful and widely known folk lyrics in the Anglo-American tradition. SHARP prints eighteen variants, BROWN prints six, one of which contains a trace of the old English "Seeds of Love". Abe's nephew, Will Harmon, sang me a fragment of this song and then remarked that his uncle used to sing it. On my third visit with Abe, I reminded him of the song and he sang it right off, with, as one can hear on the record, a little prompting from his wife.

See: BELDEN, BROWN, DAVID I, LOMAS II, RANDOLPH, SHARP, ETC.

Come all you fair and tender ladies,
Take warning how you court young men;
They're like bright stars of a summer morning,
They'll first appear and then they're gone.

They'll tell to you some loving story
And make you believe they love you true;
They'll go straightways and court some other,
And that's the love they had for you.

If I had a-knowed before I courted
That love had a-been so hard to win,
I'd a-put my heart in golden boxes
And a-fastened it up with a silver pin.

I wish I was some little sparrow,
Or some of those that fly so high;
I'd fly away to my false true lover
And when he'd talk I would deny.

But, as I am no little sparrow,
Nor none of them that fly so high,
I'll lie down here in grief and sorrow
And weep and mourn until I die.

Side 2. Band 1. THE ROLLING STORE

Until quite recently, the arrival of "the rolling store" was an exciting weekly event in the more remote mountain communities. I understand that the isolated housewife looked forward to the local gossip almost more than she did to the goods it would bring. The children would save up their pennies to buy a "poke of candy" or some other treat. More often than not, in these areas where cash was hard to come by, the rolling store would trade store goods for farm produce, especially eggs or chickens. This would explain another hen "to try and hatch a diddle (baby chick) for the rolling store". As Abe says in his introduction to the song, he composed this "little piece" himself. The tune is very similar to the one he uses for "The Farmer's Curst Wife", of which he recalls but a fragment, but Abe is not aware of the borrowing.

There's a fellow brought a rolling store up here, and
Carter Guy was selling goods right up here and he got
mad. They got to turning on his land--turning around
coming back. He forbid 'em of turning on his land at
all. And I composed a little piece concerning that.

There's a store come to Pogey and it come on wheels
And nobody knows how the people all feels.

Chorus: Sing hi de ink ding dink ding,
Hi de ink ding day.

And the women and the children are standing in the door;
They's a-watching and a-waiting for the rolling store.

They's a-selling 'em oil at fifteen cents
And a-bringing it to 'em at their own expense.

Then Carter got mad and wouldn't let 'em turn around,
'Cause they's selling 'em lard at twelve cents a pound.

Said, "I forbid you from turning on my land,
'Cause you're taking all the money right away from my hand."

Said, "I guess I'll credit my customers no more,
'Cause the people's gone to trading with the rolling store."

Some people owe the merchant and they can't get a cent
And the preacher from the college couldn't make 'em repent.

But the store caused shortening in the bread
And a hot cup of coffee called "Cherry Red."

Floss, she set another hen and she set her on the floor
To try to hatch a diddle for the rolling store.

But the store went off and it never come again
And the next one that come was old "Chicken" MacLain.

Then the store from Johnson City came on a different time
And every nickel artickel three for a dime.

ON MAKING UP SONGS

Well, some of these songs that I made up, I'd be maybe out in the mountains by myself, a-digging ginseng--just a-prowling around, knocking the weeds down, watching on one side for a rattlesnake and on the other side for a bunch of 'seng. This stuff would get on my mind and I'd just keep humming away on it till, after awhile, I'd have a song made out of it. That's about all I could tell you about it.

Side 2. Band 2. THE LITTLE MOHEE

Apparently derived from an English stall ballad titled "The Indian Lass", this highly romantic song dates, in its American versions, to the days of the whaling industry. The "Indian Lass" has become a Polynesian maid from the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands and Mohee probably refers to the island of Maui. The song is widely known--there are twelve texts in the BROWN collection alone--and the slight variations in text would indicate wide circulation in early songsters and broadsides.

See: BELDEN, BROWN, BARRY II, BREWSTER, DAVIS I, MORRIS, RANDOLPH, ETC.

'Twas when I was roaming
For pleasure one day,
In fond recollection
The day passed away.

'Twas when I was amusing
Myself on the grass,
Oh, who come stood by me,
But a young Indian lass.

She come sit beside me,
She raised up my hand,
Saying, "You look like a stranger,
Not one of this land.

"Together we'll wander,
Together we'll roam,
Till we come to the river,
Where the cocoanut grow."

Said she to the paleface,
"If you'll nevermore roam,
We'll live here together
In a snug little home."

"Oh, no, my bright jewel,
That never can be,
For I have a true sweetheart
In my own free country.

"I won't prove false to her,
And I know she won't me,
For she has a true a heart
As a pretty Mohee."

The last time I saw her,
She stood on the sand;
As the ship passed by her,
She waved me her hand,

Saying, "When you get home, sir,
To the land that you know,
Remember the maiden
Where the cocoanut grow."

But now I have landed
Safely on the shore,
My friends and relations
All around me once more.

But all that's around me
And all that I see,
There's no one that compare
With the pretty Mohee.

Side 2. Band 3. FRANK JAMES

This is an interesting combination of "The Boston Burglar" and "Market Square", brought up-to-date by the insertion of the character of Frank James. A similar reworking of the older ballads was recorded in 1946 by L. D. Smith, of Swannanoa, North Carolina, for the Library of Congress. (AAFS-L14) BROWN notes that "The Boston Burglar" is an American adaptation of an English stall ballad called "Botany Bay" and that Sigmund Spaeth, in Read 'em and Weep, says that "M. J. Fitzpatrick is credited with its authorship."

See: ARNOLD, BREWSTER, BROWN, COX, DAVIS I, EDDY, FLANDERS I, GARDNER/CHICKERING, ETC.

I was born and raised in Louisville,
A city you all know well;
Raised up by honest parents,
The truth to you I'll tell.
Raised up by honrest parents,
Most kind and tenderly,
Till I became a drinking man
(At) the age of twenty-three.

I used to be a poor boy
And worked upon the square;
I learned to pocket money,
I hardly thought it fair.
I'd work hard day by day,
At night I'd rob and steal;
And when I made a big haul,
How happy I would feel.

I used to ride a big white horse
And drive the buggy fine;
I courted a lady,
I often called her mine.
I courted her for beauty,
Her love for me was great;
And when she'd see me coming,
She'd meet me at the gate.

Last night, when I was sleeping,
I dreamed a dreadful dream;
I dreamed I was in Hashville
Upon the purpole stream.
My friends had all forsaken me,
No one to go my bail;
I woke up, broken-hearted,
In Hawkins County jail.

Around came my sweetheart,
About ten o'clock,
With medicinals (?) in her hand,
She pressed them to the lock;
Said she, "My darling Frankie,
I think I heared 'em say
They'll send you 'round the mountain
For seven long years to stay."

Around came my mother,
About eleven o'clock,
With the Bible in her hand,
She pressed it to the lock--
"The twentieth chapter Matthew,
Go read both night and day;
Remember your old mother
And don't forget to pray."

Around came the jailer,
About twelve o'clock,
With the keys in his hand,
He rattled them in the lock--
"Cheer up, cheer up, my prisoner,"

I think I heared him say,
"They'll send you up to Franksboro,
Eleven long years to stay."

They put me on the northbound train
One cold December day,
And every city that I rode through,
I heared them people say:
"Yonder goes Frank James, the burglar,
Bound down in irons so strong
For some bad crimes or other,
And bound for Frankfort town."

There is a girl in Louisville,
There's one that I love well,
And, if I gain my liberty,
With her I'm going to dwell;
With her I'm going to dwell, my boys,
Bad company I will shun;
I'll quit all my night walking
And drinking of bad rum.

I left my aged father
A-pleading at the bar,
Likewise my aged mother
A-tearing down her hair;
She was tearing down her old gray locks
And the tears come rolling down--
"What have you done, my darling boy,
That you're bound for Nashville town."

Side 2. Band 4. THE COURTING CASE

(Abe's title: Root, Poor Hoggie): SHARP prints two variants of this song, both from Virginia; BROWN has two in the North Carolina collection. RANDOLPH has it as "The Courting Cage" and it is also known as "The Drunkard"s Courtship". There is little to add to Abe's spoken introduction to the song which may be heard on the record.

See: BREWSTER, BROWN, DAVIS I, GARDNER/CHICKERING, RANDOLPH, SHARP, ETC.

This here "Root, Poor Hoggie", that's a feller that's a-trying to court a girl and trying to get her to marry him and her a-making excuses and telling him--he was a-making her all fair promises and her a-answering him. You know that's what this is. And at the last of it he tells her when she'd get old and chilled with cold it would be "poor Hoggie, root".

Kind miss, I have a very fine house,
It's newly erectified,
That you might have at your command,
If you will be my bride, bride,
If you will be my bride.

Kind sir, I know your very fine house,
It's newly erectified,

But I don't want it at my command
Nor I won't be your bride, bride,
Nor I won't be your bride.

Kind miss, I have a very fine horse,
He paces like a tiger,
That you might have at your command,
If you will be my bride, bride,
If you will be my bride.

Kind sir, I know your very fine horse
And also very fine barn;
That horse's master will get drunk,
I'm afeared that horse might learn, learn,
I'm afeared that horse might learn.

Kind miss, I have a very fine field,
It's eighteen acres wide,
That you might have at your command,
If you will be my bride, bride,
If you will be my bride.

Kind sir, I know your very fine field
And also very fine fruit;
When I'd get old and chilled with cold
It'd be poor hoggie, root, root,
It'd be poor hoggie, root.

Kind miss, I have a very fine mule,
He works in the buggy well;
I'll drink and gamble when I please
And I'll bid you a long farewell, well,
And I'll bid you a long farewell.

Kind sir, I know your very fine mule,
He works in the buggy well;
You can drink and gamble when you please
And you may go to hell, hell,
And you may go to hell.

Side 2. Band 5. MATHY GROVE (Child 81)

This fine ballad has thrived in America, but has rarely been reported from the British Isles in recent years. BARRY, after careful examination of both British and American texts, concludes that the "ballad must have been nearly three hundred years in this country". LOMAX (II) accepts this conclusion and says "It has been in wide oral circulation in the U. S. for three hundred years". Certainly it has been widely reported here--SHARP prints seventeen tunes; DAVIS II prints six texts and one tune; DAVIS III contains three texts and two tunes. One generally assumes that any ballad so well established in American tradition must have had its currency reinforced by broadside or songster printings, but Mathy Grove is an exception. DAVIS III points out that it "is one of the ballads least spoiled by broadside, songster, or print". SHARP and BROWN each print one text in which the lady is slain by a pistol ball, rather than by her husband's already bloodied sword (the usual murder weapon). It is interesting to note that the "pistol ball" text in SHARP is from Tennessee and the one in BROWN

is from Mrs. Minnie Church. Mrs. Church is Abe Trivett's niece and lived, at the time Brown collected from her, just across the border from Stony Hollor into North Carolina. As a matter of fact, Abe learned the ballad from her brother, his nephew, Will Harmon. The present text is quite complete, although the second verse is actually a condensation of two sung in other variants.

See: BARRY I, BELDEN, BROWN, DAVIS II & III, EDDY, FLANDERS, GARDNER/CHICKERING, HENRY, LOMAX II, RANDOLPH, SHARP, ETC.

The first come down was dressed in red,
The next come down in green;
The next come down was a pretty fair maid
Dressed finer than any a queen, queen,
Dressed finer than any a queen.

She stepped up to Little Mathy Grove,
Said, "come and go with me."
"I'll swear by the ring that's on your hand
That you're Lord Daniel's wife, wife,
That you're Lord Daniel's wife."

"Oh, it matters not to the ring on my hand,
Nor whose wife I am;
Husband he is not at home,
He's in some distant land, land,
He's in some distant land."

Little foot-tate was a-standing by,
Heard every word that was said;
"If I should live before daylight,
Lord Daniel shall know of this, this,
Lord Daniel shall know of this."

He had about fifteen mile to go,
Ten of them he run;
He run till he came to a broken down bridge,
He fell to his breast and swum, swum,
He fell to his breast and swum.

He swum till he come to the green grass growing;
He sprang to his feet and run.
He run till he came to Lord Daniel's gate;
He tingled at the bells, they rung, rung,
He tingled at the bells, they rung.

"Oh, is my castle a-burning down,
Or what's a-going to be done?"
"True love's in the bed with another man
And both their hearts are one, one,
And both their hearts are one."

He got him up about fifty good men;
He done it with a free good will.
He put his bugle to his mouth,
He blowed it loud and thrill, thrill,
He blowed it loud and thrill.

"I'd better get up," said Mathy Grove,
"I'd better get up and go;
Lord Daniel he is coming home,
I heared his bugle blow, blow,
I heared his bugle blow.

"Lie down, lie down, my little man,
Lie down and go to sleep;
It's nothing but my father's shepherd
A-calling for a sheep, sheep,
A-calling for a sheep."

So they lay down, went to hugging and kissing,
And soon fell off to sleep;
But when they awoke it was broad daylight,
Lord Daniel was standing at their feet, feet,
Lord Daniel was standing at their feet.

"Oh, how do you like my pillow, sir,
How do you like my sheet?
How do you like my pretty fair maid
That lies in your arms and sleeps, sleeps,
That lies in your arms and sleeps?"

"Very well do I like your pillow, sir,
Very well do I like your sheet;
Much better do I like your pretty fair maid
That lies in my arms and sleeps, sleeps,
That lies in my arms and sleeps."

"Get up from there, get up from there,
And put you on some clothes;
I never liked it to be said
A naked man I slew, slew,
A naked man I slew."

"Oh, give me a chance, oh, give me a chance,
Give me a chance for my life;
You're standing there with two swords by your side
And me not as much as a knife, knife,
And me not as much as a knife."

"I'm standing here, two swords by my side,
They cost me deep in purse;
I'll give to you the best of them
And I will take the worse, worse,
And I will take the worse.

"I'll give to you the very first lick,
Use it like a man;
I will take the very next lick,
I'll kill you, if I can, can,
I'll kill you, if I can."

Little Mathy Grove took the very first lick,
It made him wonderfully sore;
Lord Daniel took the very next lick,
He killed little Mathy on the floor, floor,
He killed little Mathy on the floor.

He took his lady by the hand,
He set her on his right knee;
Said, "Which of us do you like best,
Little Mathy Grove or me, me,
Little Mathy Grove or me?"

"Very well do I like your red rosy cheek,
Very well do I like your chin;
But I would not give little Mathy Grove
For you and all your kin, kin,
For you and all your kin."

He took his lady by the hand
And led her through the hall;
He snapped a pistol in her breast,
She fell by a fatal ball, ball,
She fell by a fatal ball.

"Go dig my grave, go dig my grave,
Dig it wide and deep;
And bury little Mathy Grove in my arms,
Lord Daniel at my feet, feet,
Lord Daniel at my feet."

Side 2. Band 6. BLACK JACK DAVID (Child 200)

This is probably the most widely known American form of "The Gypsy Laddie". I recall Frank Proffitt saying that he had learned it at school (from the children in the schoolyard, however, not from the teacher as a classroom song) when he was a boy. Neither the tune nor the text as sung here are unusual, but Abe sings it with such gusto it was thought to be worthy of inclusion here. For a detailed account of the ballad and its origins, see DAVIS III, pp. 253-6. Note, however, that the stanza quoted there from the letter of Virginia's John Randolph is probably a verse of "The Quaker's Wooing" and does not relate to the present ballad, as the editor supposes. Abe's version contains, in the second and third stanzas, intrusions from "Where Are You Going, My Pretty Little Miss" or "I'm Seventeen Come Sunday", often found in American texts. SHARP contains ten variants, BROWN seven, DAVIS III five, indicating how widely known and popular the ballad is in this country.

See: BELDEN, BREWSTER, BROWN, COX, DAVIS II & III, EDDY, HENRY, LINSCOTT, RANDOLPH, SHARP, ETC.

Black Jack David come a-running through the woods,
He was singing loud and merry;
He made the green hills ring all around
And charmed the heart of a lady,
And charmed the heart of a lady.

"How old are you, my pretty little miss,
How old are you, my honey?"
She answered me with a "Tee hee hee,
I'll be sixteen next Sunday,
I'll be sixteen next Sunday."

"Come and go with me, my pretty little miss,
Come and go with me, my honey;
I'll take you across the deep blue sea
Where you never shall want for money,
Where you never shall want for money."

She pulled off them high heeled shoes,
All made of Spanish leather;
She put on them low heeled shoes
And they both went off together,
And they both went off together.

It was late in the night when the landlord come
Inquiring for his lady,
And he was informed by a pretty fair maid,
"She went off with the Black Jack David,
She went off with the Black Jack David."

"Go bridle and saddle my milk white steed
And hand to me my derby;
I'll ride to the east and I'll try to ride west
Till I overtake my honey,
Till I overtake my honey."

He rode till he came to the deep blue sea,
The sea was dark and muddy,
And the tears come rolling down over his cheeks,
For there he spied his honey,
For there he spied his honey.

"Last night I lay on a big feather bed
By the side of my husband and baby;
Tonight I'll lay on the cold damp ground
By the side of my Black Jack David,
By the side of my Black Jack David."

Side 2. Band 7. THAT BLOODY WAR

When Abe first sang this for me, he was a little reluctant to record it. "You don't suppose they'd come after a fellow for singing something like that, do you?" he asked. I assume the song is a reworking of an early commercial recording, but I have not heard the original. Frank Proffitt remembered a few verses from a record he had heard many years ago, but they were quite different from those sung here. The New Lost City Ramblers have recorded a song titled "The Battleship of Maine" (Folkways FA2396) which resembles the present one in some ways, but, again, there are as many differences as similarities. Abe has no recollection as to where he first heard the song. I must rely on disc collectors, again, to contact me if they have versions of the song in their possession. I should like to hear from those who do, especially if the text is comparable to Abe's.

I was just a little infant boy,
I was raised out in a farm;
Never as much as killed a flea,
Nor done anybody harm,
Till that war, that bloody war.

I was standing on the depot
All in my youthful form;
Up stepped an old policeman
And took me by the arm,
In that war, that bloody war.

Up stepped an old policeman,
Says, "Come with me, my son,
Your Uncle Sam is calling you
To help him tote a gun
In that war, that bloody war."

They put me on a great big boat,
Said I had to go to France;
Then I'd almost rather been dead,
But thought, I'd take a chance,
In that war, that bloody war.

They fed me on potatoes
And beans three times a day;
I thought the hogs must all be dead
And the hens would never lay
In that war, that bloody war.

I run all over Europe
To try to save my life;
If ever there comes up another war,
I'll send my darling wife
To that war, that bloody war.

War may come and war may go,
But get this on your mind--
If ever there comes up another war,
I'll be hard to find
In that war, that bloody war.

Sandy Paton
Huntington, Vermont
1962

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