

EDNA RITCHIE

Viper, Kentucky



Photo by Stanley R. Shapin



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EDNA RITCHIE is the ninth member in the most widely known generation of the Ritchie family of Perry and Knott Counties in Eastern Kentucky—a generation that spans great changes in Appalachian culture and, of course, in its folklore. The Ritchies are perhaps the best known “singing family” in the United States. Edna represents one element of the Ritchie family tradition, just as the Ritchie family represents one group of Appalachian folksingers.

Edna Ritchie attended Pine Mountain Settlement School and graduated from Berea College. She has remained in Perry County, where she is English teacher, librarian, and sponsor of the girl's glee club and the folk dancing club at Dilce Combs Memorial School in Jeff. She is a continuing worker in the settlement school tradition and teaches singing and play-party games at the Christmas Country Dance School in Berea. Until recently her performances have been largely limited to the recreation festivals of the highlands, the Kentucky Folk Festival at Lexington, and a Kentucky Folklore Society meeting in Louisville. Indeed, her first true concerts were those in October, 1960, at Western Kentucky State College. She has since appeared at the Chicago Folk Festival.

Edna is not a conscious traditionalist who deliberately seeks out the “old ways” of singing in matter or manner. The turns and graces in some of her performances are “natural” survivals in spite of experience and influences, not attempts at “authenticity”. She has “collected” songs simply as she met them in the schools and the community. Her repertoire is largely within the compass of the settlement school tradition, and in all ways she seems to fulfill and justify the best aims of the “quare women” who devoted their lives to the children of the eastern Kentucky highlands.

From the notes by D. K. Wilgus

side 1:

MAY DAY CAROL
GENTLE FAIR JENNY
THE RIDDLE SONG
OLD TYLER
OLD CRUMLEY
AUNT SAL'S SONG
FOREIGN LANDER
DEAR COMPANION
OLD KING COLE
SOMEBODY'S TALL
AND HANDSOME
DOWN CAME AN ANGEL

side 2:

THE CUCKOC
OLD CHIMNEY SWEEPER
FAIR AND TENDER LADIES
BLACKEST CROW
I WONDER WHEN I
SHALL BE MARRIED
AN OLD MAN CAME
COURTING ME
JACKARO
AS JOSEPH WAS A'WALKING

EDNA RITCHIE

**Recorded by Sandy Paton
Notes by D. K. Wilgus**

FSA-3



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Recorded in Viper, Kentucky, by Sandy Paton

Notes by D. K. Wilgus

Edna Ritchie is the ninth member in the most widely-known generation of the Ritchie family of Perry and Knott Counties in eastern Kentucky--a generation that spans great changes in Appalachian culture and, of course, in its folklore. The Ritchies are perhaps the best known "singing family" in the United States. Edna represents one element of the Ritchie family tradition, just as the Ritchie family represents one group of Appalachian folk-singers. There have been a number of singing families in eastern Kentucky--the Combs and Cornett families, for example--sometimes interlocking, but each family is unusual in its composition of active tradition bearers and unusual in its reaction to changing cultural traditions. The history of the singing Ritchies has been engagingly told by Jean Ritchie in Singing Family of the Cumberlands, and the present introduction to the singing Edna Ritchie will necessarily assume the talent, sensitivity, and continuing joy that mark a singing family in order to emphasize other important elements in the repertoire and style on this recording.

The closing of the 19th century saw a number of changes in Appalachian culture. The Appalachians had never been completely isolated geographically or culturally from developments in American life. Selected elements of "outside" culture were absorbed and adapted to the 18th century frontier culture, which was adapted only as absolutely necessary to meet "outside" pressures. When in the 1890's the expanding industrial culture recoiled on its by-passed areas, Appalachian culture began to disintegrate. It might have met its own problems (marginal land, etc.) in its own way, but it was not granted the opportunity. For folksong in particular the pressure resulted not simply in disintegration and death, but both adaptation and selective preservation. And one of the most important forces on some traditional singers came through the settlement schools.

Although the "missionary school" of Berea offered a sort of archetypal pattern, it had not at the turn of the century the relation to Appalachian tradition that developed from work of Katherine Pettit, the Lexington woman who, stirred by reports of conditions in Perry County in the wake of the French-Eversole "War", managed to secure acceptance among the normally and abnormally suspicious highlanders for her flower seeds, aid, and advice. From the tent schools Miss Pettit and May Stone conducted at Hazard in 1899 and at Hindman in 1900 grew permanent establishments. Old Solomon Beveridge, great-grandfather of Edna Ritchie, secured the donations of land, logs, and labor which established Hindman Settlement School in Knott County in 1902. By 1911 the indefatigable Miss Pettit turned back to Perry County, and through the donation of 136 acres by "Uncle William" Creech, Pine Mountain Settlement School was established in 1911.

The attitude of Katherine Pettit, May Stone, Lucy Furman, and Ethel de Long Zande toward folkways was unusual for their time and culture. There is a Kentucky legend of a music supervisor who reported on the low state of musical culture in the areas where the people knew "only those horrible songs like 'Barbara Allen.'" Miss Pettit recognized from the beginning the value of many elements of folk culture, songs in particular. When the young Josiah H. Combs came to Hindman in 1902, she collected his songs and sent them with others for publication in the Journal of American Folklore, 1907. The settlement schools welcomed Cecil Sharp and lesser collectors. But most important, the songs were accepted as a part of life in the settlement schools, fostered and given increased value in the hearts of students and sections of the community.

The work of the settlement schools in the field of traditional culture has, however, another aspect--which is not to be criticized but understood. The settlement schools were not run by folklorists interested in "normal" tradition, zealous not to "interfere" with the material and its performers. There is no reason that they should have been. But unfortunately folklorists have not always understood that there developed a "settlement school tradition" of songs and singers.

In the first place, the settlement schools were themselves interested in only a certain stratum of song. They existed to help lift the highlander from certain aspects of his culture. They were not, like some missionaries, opposed to dances and frolics per se, but opposed to the frolicing, hell-raising, fighting, feuding, distilling traditions in general, the new mining and railroad tradition in particular; and therefore to the artistic traditions associated with them. Furthermore, they saw the beauty of old folksong, but were hardly interested in the documentation of new hybrids developing in Appalachian culture. Thus they were ready for the visit of Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles, whose tastes in song agreed with theirs.

Here at the school...we preserve the ancient isolation of the hills by rigid censorship of songs. We do not let in popular airs, in order that the children may not forget their own songs, a richer heirloom for them than stocks and bonds. Our home-gathered simples are many, when each child brings to the school treasury his own wealth...But do not think of us as a learned, collecting school; we are a singing school. Each child, as he does his own job, sings for company, and usually in the traditional way... The mode of the lone singer is lost when we sing in a family group, a hundred strong. Gayer, livelier airs must prevail then, such as "The Swapping Song" or charming things from Mr. Cecil Sharp's collection of English folk songs, like "The Wraggle Taggle Gypsies" and "Jackie Boy." 1

The visit of the English collectors in 1917 brought the schools in contact with the English folksong revival, and Sharp "made conscious and explicit" the "half-formed plans not only to treasure all that came our way, but to keep it a part of the children's life ... Fine Mountain, he said, should be the friendly soil in which

1. NPMSS, I, 7 (March, 1922), pp. 1-2.

all that belonged to us should be kept alive, and all the allied English songs and dances should be planted..." 2 The settlement schools saw "nothing artificial about the introduction of other singing games and English country dances". 3

Again--the point is not to criticize but to understand. The songs Sharp got in 1917 (including those from Edna's sister May, and her cousin, Sabrina) were undoubtedly "unsullied" tradition. But one of the current tasks of the students of Appalachian song is to identify the strains and variants from the schools at Pine Mountain, Hindman, Berea, Ary, Brasstown, North Carolina, and elsewhere--often learned from their publications. But to identify them is not to deny that they may have re-entered a living tradition.

The Ritchie family was associated with the settlement schools from their beginnings. But the Ritchie tradition was and is deeper and wider. All students and families under settlement school influence did not preserve even the settlement school songs let alone songs from other sources. But settlement school "taste" helped strengthen antipathy toward certain types of song, antipathy arising in some instances from the same motives which originally supported the settlement schools. Songs entered Ritchie tradition in spite of the "censorship" and members of the family still differ in their attitudes and repertoires, just as members of the family have followed differing geographical and occupational paths.

Edna Ritchie attended Pine Mountain School and graduated from Berea College. She has remained in Perry County, where she is English teacher, librarian, and sponsor of the girls' glee club and the folk dancing club at Dilce Combs Memorial School in Jeff. She is a continuing worker in the settlement school tradition and teaches singing and play-party games at the Christmas Country Dance School in Berea. Until recently her performances have been largely limited to the recreation festivals of the highlands, the Kentucky Folk Festival at Lexington, and a Kentucky Folklore Society meeting in Louisville. Indeed her first true concerts were those in October, 1960, at Western Kentucky State College. She has since appeared at the Chicago Folk Festival.

Edna is not a conscious traditionalist who deliberately seeks out the "old ways" of singing in matter or manner. The turns and graces in some of her performances are "natural" survivals in spite of experiences and influences, not attempts at "authenticity". She has "collected" songs simply as she met them in the schools and the community. Her way is not the "right" way or the only way. It is Edna's way within a tradition. Her repertoire is largely within the compass of the settlement school tradition, and in all ways she seems to fulfill and justify the best aims of the "quare women" who devoted their lives to the children of the eastern Kentucky highlands.

2. Ibid., II, 3 (November, 1924), p. 3.

3. Ibid., I, 2 (May, 1919), p. 1.

In the notes to the following songs I have tried to provide a start on a bibliography by citing the most recent appearance of a variant with full notes, adding a few new references, especially to publications from Kentucky and the settlement schools.

The discographies are highly selective, listing performances related to the Ritchie family tradition or important for authenticity of material or manner.

Side I, Band I. MAY DAY CAROL

In eastern Kentucky, from whence have come the only trustworthy reports of survivals of English folk plays, one might expect to find a rare survival of an English folk carol. We should not, however, assume that this carol came into the Appalachians with the early settlers, or even with later 19th century migrants. Rather, it seems to have been introduced relatively recently at settlement school festivals as a part of the policy of planting "allied English songs and dances". Edna knows it as a family song, but suggests that it might have come into the family from Pine Mountain Settlement School. Jean Ritchie Pickow has related in detail how her sisters, Patty, Edna, Jewel, and Pauline returned from Pine Mountain bringing the new "song we sing at school on May Day morning".

Though this song bears no internal warrant of antiquity, it is a Christianized folk carol or a carol Christianizing certain of the spring rites of pagan England. It was once customary for youths of both sexes to spend May Day Eve in the forest, apparently assisting the fertility of nature by sympathetic magic, and to return the next morning with green branches. The revelers took branches or garlands from door to door in a quite or luck visit. The song performed lingers even when the custom of soliciting the gift or coin has vanished.

References:

Dean-Smith, p. 87.

J. Ritchie, Garland, pp. 60-1; Singing Family, pp. 258-62; Swapping

Song Book, pp. 78-9

Songs of All Time, p. 36

Oxford Book of Carols, pp. 97-101; 467

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, Carols of All Seasons, Tradition TLP 1031

Ed McCurdy, "A Branch of May", The Best of, Prestige/International 13002

I've been a-wandering all the night
And the best part of the day
Now I'm returning home again,
I bring you a branch of May

A branch of May, my love, I say,
Here at your door I stand.
It's nothing but a sprout, but it's well budded out
By the work of the Lord's own hand.

Take a Bible in your hand
And read a chapter through,
And when the day of judgment comes'
The Lord will think of you.

In my pocket I've got a purse
Tied up with a silver string.
All that I do need is a bit of silver
To line it well within.

My song is done and I must be gone,
I can no longer stay;
God bless you all both great and small
And send you a joyful May.

Side I, Band 2. GENTLE FAIR JENNIE (Child no. 277)

This ballad is Child's "Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin"--excepting that the wife is not wrapped in wether's skin. The usual forms of the tale relate how the farmer reforms his high-born wife and escapes the wrath of her kin by covering her with a sheep skin and thrashing the skin. Child believed that the ballad, collected first in Scotland in the 18th century, was derived from the 16th century metrical tale of "The Wife Wrapped in Morrel's Skin", in which the wife is wrapped in a salted horse's hide after the chastisement. In the long run, the essence of the tale seems to be the taming of the shrew, rather than the exact method.

The ballad is often analyzed according to its refrains, which vary both in Great Britain and North America. The "Gentle Fair Jenny" refrain, known in New England and the Appalachians, has apparently given not only a title to the ballad but a name to the wife; it is, however, a rationalization of an herb refrain, "juniper, gentian, and rosemary". The suggestion that the plant refrain indicates a supernatural cast in the ballad is somewhat questionable in that the refrain, whatever its original significance, belongs more to the tune than to the text; but the possibility cannot be ignored. The loss of the sheep skin motif in the "Gentle Fair Jennie" forms has occurred only in the Appalachians. The "if you want any more, you can cook it yourself" line by association with the "If you want any more, you can sing it yourself" commonplace, works toward the degeneration of the story.

Two other ballads, which may not have been originally connected with Child 277, have possibly influenced or been influenced by it. The Anglo-American "Holly Twig" (Brown, II, 454-6; IV, 243) tells of a man who marries a woman on Monday; she turns to a scold on Tuesday; he cuts a switch on Wednesday and whips her on Thursday; the Devil takes her on Friday, and on Saturday the man is happily single again. In "Risselty Rosselty" (Randolph III, 190-1), a man marries a wife slovenly in appearance and housekeeping.

Although there is neither whipping nor reform in this song, it includes the "sing it yourself" commonplace and a refrain related to the "Nickety-Nackety" refrain of the "Wee Cooper of Fife" form of Child 277.

Edna identifies this as a family song. Her sister, Jean, recalls learning it from her sisters, who got it at one of the settlement schools.

References:

Child, V, 104-7
Coffin, 146-8
J. Ritchie, Garland, p. 28
Songs of All Times, p. 22
Brown, II, 185-7; IV, 113-6
Dean-Smith, p. 101
Greig and Keith, pp. 218-220
Hubbard, pp. 38-9

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, The Best of..., Prestige/International 13003;
British Traditional Ballads in the Southern Mountains, Vol. 2,
Folkways FA 2302; Songs From Kentucky, Westminster SWN 18021,
WP 6037
Frank Warner, "Dan Doo", Our Singing Heritage, III, Elektra EKL 153
David Lewis, "Dandoo", A Sampler of Louisiana Folksongs, Louisiana
Folklore Society LSF 1202
Frank Proffitt, "Dandoo", ... Sings Folk Songs, Folkways FA 2360
Ewan MacColl, "The Cooper o' Fife", The English and Scottish Popular
Ballads, Vol. 2, Riverside RLP 12-623

I married me a wife and took her home,
Gentle fair Jennie, fair Rosie Marie.
I oftentimes wisht I had let her alone,
As the dew flies over the green vallee.

All in the kitchen she would not use
For fear of spoiling her new cloth shoes,

First day at noon I came in from the plow,
"My dearest wife is my dinner ready now?"

"There's a little piece of cornbread layin' on the shelf,
If you want any more you can cook it yourself."

Second day at noon I came in from the plow,
"My dearest wife is my dinner ready now?"

"Get out of here you dirty thef,
If you want any dinner go cook it yourself."

I took my knife and went out to the barn,
I cut me a hickory as long as my arm.

I took my limb and I went back
All around her back I made it crack,

"I'll tell my father and all my kin
That you whipped me with a hickory limb"

"You can tell your father and all your kin
I whapped you once and I'll whup you again."

Side I, Band 3. THE RIDDLE SONG

Riddling questions are of great antiquity, and songs and tales embodying riddles are widespread and ancient. This song itself is as venerable as almost any other musical item in current tradition. The oldest known text is extant in a MS. of the mid-15th century, and the song has to this day been immensely popular both in its own right and in combination with the lyric "Go No More a-Rushing" and the ballad "Captain Wedderburn's Courtship" (Child 46). Although the ballad was not collected prior to the late 18th century, opinion is divided as to whether the riddle song pre-dates the ballad or whether it is a fragment of the ballad. The musical evidence at least indicates that the riddle song has completely severed relations with the ballad. The earliest known form has a slight frame for the riddles in "I have a yong suster fer beyondyn the se/Many be the drowryis that she sente me", and probably had an unrecorded refrain, the garbled Latin "Perry, merry, dictum, dominee", which still exists in tradition and still puzzles investigators.

The enigmas in this song are not quite "true" riddles, metaphorical descriptions of objects in other terms. At times attached to this song is a series of trude riddles beginning "I gave my love a apple" which seems to have crept in during the early 19th century.

Edna has "always sung" this song. It has been quite familiar to all strata of American culture in recent years and its best known tune was used lately for a popular song, "The Twelfth of Never". "The Riddle Song" has been released on numerous phonograph recordings, none of which seems authentic or important enough to list below.

References:

- Child, I, 1-3, 414-425
Coffin, 59-60
Bronson, I, 376-81
Brown, II, 48-9; V, 25-7
Dean-Smith, p. 100
Opie, pp. 386-8
Kincaid, No. 1, p. 15, No. 7, p. 3; deluxe ed., p. 62
Raine, p. 18
"A Year of Song": Pine Mountain Calendar 1952
Jameson, p. 16
Songs of All Time, p. 65.

I gave my love a cherry that has no stone,
I gave my love a chicken that has no bone,
I gave my love a ring that has no end,
I gave my love a baby, there's no cryin.

How can there be a cherry that has no stone,
How can there be a chicken that has no bone,
How can there be a ring that has no end,
How can there be a baby, there's no cryin?

A cherry when it's bloomin' it has no stone,
 A chicken when it's pipping it has no bone,
 A ring when it's rolling it has no end,
 A baby when it's sleeping, there's no cryin'.

Side 1, Band 4. OLD TYLER

Two distinct but related songs current in Southern folk tradition, "Old Rattler" and "Old Coon Dog", contain stanzas similar to the "treeing" stanzas in "Old Tyler, but resemble each other textually and melodically far more than either resembles "Old Tyler". "Old Rattler" and "Old Coon Dog" are both loosely constructed "bango songs" with Negro-minstrel affiliations if not origin ("Rattler" exists as a work song). "Old Tyler" tells a coherent story not of a dog valuable in spite of his blindness, but of an inept hound whose egg-sucking proclivities dictate his pathetic death. "Allegainy" seems a corruption, but of what is not clear. Nor is it clear how this song entered Ritchie family tradition. Some members of the family thought Jewel was responsible for its procurement, but she has denied knowledge of the song.

References:

J. Ritchie, Garland, p. 26; Singing Family, pp. 75-7
 Lomax, American Ballads and Folk Songs, pp. 66-7; Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Leadbelly, pp. 105-8; Leadbelly, p. 64.
 Kincaid, No. 2, p. 31; No. 3, p. 19

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, Singing Family of the Cumberlands, Riverside RLP 12-653
 Elizabeth Cotten, "Here Old Rattler Here", Negro Folk Songs and Tunes, Folkways FG 3526
 Grandpa Jones, "Old Rattler", King 554; 668
 Bradley Kincaid, "Old Coon Dog", Brunswick 485
 Leadbelly, "Old Riley", Leadbelly Memorial, Vol. 1, Stinson SLP 17;
Rock Island Line, Folkways FA 2014; Leadbelly's Last Sessions, Folkways FA 2941
 Land Norris, "Yellow Gal", Okeh 40096
 George Pegram and Walter Farham, "Old Rattler", Pickin' and Blowin', Riverside RLP 12-650
 Moses Platt and James Baker, "Old Rattler", Negro Work Songs and Calls, Library of Congress AAFS L8 (also AAFS 38).
 Prisoners at Ramsey or Retreive State Farm, Texas, "Here, Rattler, Here", Negro Prison Camp Work Songs, Folkways FE 4475
 George Roark, "My Old Coon Dog", Columbia 15383-D
 Stanley Brother, "Old Rattler", King 690

Old Tyler was a good old dog,
 We thought he'd treed a coon,
 But when we came to find it out,
 Tyler was a barkin' at the moon,
 Lord, Lord,
 Tyler was a barkin' at the moon.

Old Tyler was a good old dog,
We thought he'd treed a squirrel
But when we came to find it out,
Old Tyler was a barkin' at the world,
Lord, Lord,
Tyler was a barkin' at the world.

Old Tyler started down the road,
He started in a run.
He had not gone but a little bitty piece
When he met Allegainy with a gun,
Lord, Lord,
Met Allegainy with a gun.

"Now Tyler, you have sucked my eggs,
And this will be your doom."
So he sent a steel ball through his head
And laid Old Tyler in his tomb,
Lord, Lord,
Laid Old Tyler in his tomb.

Side I, Band 5. OLD GRUMLEY (Laws Q 1)

The theme of the husband's luckless exchange of work with his wife is old and was treated in English balladry as early as the fifteenth century. "Father Grumble" was quite possibly an old song when first collected in the early nineteenth century, but the twentieth-century variants collected in the United States, where it seems to have been more popular than in the British Isles, generally closely resemble each other and the form printed in the 1842 Nursery Rhymes of England. The Scots "John Grumlie" form is rare in the New World. Rare also is the form Edna sings here, which, although related to the common American forms, condenses the story by omitting the wife's instructions, tasks other than milking the cow, and the husband's confession paralleling the first stanza.

The better-known "Old Man in Woods" form is a part of Ritchie Family tradition, having been learned by one of the girls while at Pine Mountain, but Edna collected this form recently from Mrs. Sophie Adkins of Hazard, Kentucky.

References:

- Laws, ABBB, p. 273
Brown, II, 445-8
Songs of All Time, pp. 64-5
Kincaid, No. 9, p. 7; deluxe ed., p. 27

Discography:

- Jean Ritchie, "Father Grumble", Library of Congress AAFS L14 (also AAFS 70); "The Old Man in the Woods", Children's Songs and Games from the Southern Mountains, Folkways FC 7054.
Peggy Seeger, "Equinoxial and Phoebe", Folksongs and Ballads, River-side RLP 12-655

Old Crumley he begin to swear,
As the leaf grows on the tree, tree,
That he could do as much work in a day
As his wife could do in three, three,
That he could do as much work in a day
As his wife could do in three.

Mrs. Crumley she picked up the whip
And went to drive the plow, plow,
Crumley he picked up the pail
And went to milk the cow, cow,
Crumley he picked up the pail
And went to milk the cow.

When old Brindle saw him a-comin
She began to beller and blow, blow.
She kicked old Crumley on the shin
Till the blood ran off his toe, toe.
She kicked old Crumley on his shin
Till the blood ran off of his toe.

He looked to the east, he looked to the west,
He looked toward the sun, sun.
Thought it had been a very long day,
"I wish my wife would come, come"
Thought it had been a very long day,
"I wish my wife would come."

Side I, Band 6. AUNT SAL'S SONG

Courting was a serious business in the Southern Appalachians, but it had its humorous side. To the outlander the "settlin' up" custom itself may be amusing; but this song is based on "inside" humor and satire at the expense of the obtuse or uninitiated and as such can be paralleled by a number of stories, seldom printable, current in other sections. Humorous and satirical songs of courtship are relatively common in Anglo-American tradition, but this one, though often printed, is really rare. There are, at most, two independent reports of it.

This is truly a "settlement school song". It gained its usual name, "Aunt Sal's Song", because it was the one song performed by Sally Dixon Creech, whose husband donated the land for Pine Mountain Settlement School. Though published forms vary slightly, all but one can be traced through workers and students to Pine Mountain. Mrs. Maude Minish Sutton collected a similar variant in North Carolina. As her informant was a mountain teacher, I suspect that "Aunt Sal" is again the ultimate source. Why such a fine song lingered only in a "fostered" tradition is difficult to understand.

References:

- J. Ritchie, Garland, p. 20; Singing Family, pp. 255-6.
Songs of All Time, p. 54.
NPMSS, VII, No. 1 (January, 1935)
Botsford, II.
Wells, p. 123
"A Year of Song": Pine Mountain Calendar, 1952
Campbell, pp. 129-30.
Brown, III, 27-8

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, "The Bashful Courtship", American Folk Tales and Songs, Tradition TLP 1011

A gentleman came to our house,
He would not tell his name.
I knew he came a-courtin',
Although he were ashamed,
Oh, although he were ashamed.

He moved his chair up by me side,
His fancy pleased me well.
I thought the spirit moved him
Some handsome tale to tell,
Oh, some handsome tale to tell.

But there he sat the live long night
And never a word did say.
With many a sigh and bitter green
He oftentimes wished for day,
Oh, he oftentimes wished for day.

The chickens they begin to crow
And daylight did appear.
"How do you do", "Good morning, sir,
I'm glad to see you here,
Oh, I'm glad to see you here."

He was weary all the livelong night,
He was weary of his life.
Said, "If this is what you call courtin', boys
I'll never take a wife,
Oh, I'll never take a wife."

And when he goes in company
The girls all laugh for sport,
Saying, "Yonder goes that ding dang fool
That don't know how to court,
Oh, that don't know how to court."

Side 1, Band 7. FOREIGN LANDER

This song seems truly a Ritchie Family song, at least in this century. The only other report is that from a friend and neighbor of the Ritchies. Balis Ritchie, Edna's father, recalled learning it from John S. Combs on the night in 1894 when he and Mrs. Ritchie were "shivareed." The song might well be Irish, and even a "code" song. Does it refer to Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Court of Love?

References:

B. Ritchie, p. 12

J. Ritchie, Singing Family, pp. 70-2

Discography:

Mrs. Martha Hall, Mountain Music of Kentucky, Folkways FA 2317

I've been a foreign lander for seven long years and more
Among the bold commanders where the thundering cannons roar.
I've conquered all my enemies both on the land and sea;
It is my dearest duel, your beauty has conquered me.

Don't you remember Queen Ellen, all in her flowery reign,
As she walked out of her paradise to cleanse the golden chain?
Her beauty and behavior, none with her could compare,
But you, my dearest darling, art more divinely fair.

I wish I was a turtledove just rising from my nest,
I'd sing so sweet in the morning with the dew all on my breast.
So sweet would be the music, so sad would be the tune,
I'd sing so clear in the morning in the beautiful month of June.

Side I, Band 8. DEAR COMPANION

The forsaken lover lyrics of the South form a beautiful and tangled maze of tunes, stanzas, commonplaces, and images. Among the complex relationships, certain songs assert a core of identity and are easily recognizable, yet blur at their edges into other songs with identifiable cores of identity. "Dear Companion" or "Fond Affection" is especially well-known in the midland U. S. and has been reported from Scotland. The "go and leave me" stanza, which turns up frequently as the chorus of other songs, such as "Columbus Stockade Blues," is not diagnostic for this song and is often missing. The first stanza, which seems to identify the song, will often introduce a different series of stanzas. The last stanza that Edna sings, while a key to the significance of the song, is infrequently reported. The key to the poetry lies in the effective and poignant contrasts.

The version Edna sings was collected in 1916 by Cecil Sharp in North Carolina. Edna learned it from Songs of All Times. Edna's sister, Jean, sings a shorter and slightly varying form. The tune is best known as set to "Poor Wayfaring Stranger".

References:

Brown, II, 398ff.; IV, 222ff.

Sharp, II, 109.

Songs of All Time, p. 51.

Ord, pp. 181-2

Greig, II, No. 169

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, Saturday Night and Sunday Too, Riverside RLP 12-620;

HMV B-10545

Patrick Gainer, Folk Songs of the Allegheny Mountains, Folk Heritage DB 2123

Garter Family, "Fond Affection", Victor 23585, Bluebird B-6176,

Montgomery Ward M-4744; "Little Darling Pal of Mine", Melotone/

Perfect/ Banner/Oriole/Romeo 51165, Conqueror 8542

Clarence Green(e), "Fond Affection", Columbia 15311-D

Philyaw Brothers, "Pretty Little Girls Are Made to Marry", Melotone 8-01-60

Irene Sanders, "Fond Affection", Champion 45056

I once did have a dear companion,
Indeed I thought his love my own,
Until a dark-eyed girl betrayed me,
And then he cares no more for me.

Just go and leave me if you wish to.
It will never trouble me,
For in your heart you love another
And in my grave I'd rather be.

Last night you were sweetly sleeping,
Dreaming in some sweet repose,
While I, a poor girl, broken hearted,
Listened to the wind that blows.

When I see your babe a-laughing,
It makes me think of your sweet face;
But when I see your babe a-crying,
It makes me think of my disgrace.

Side I, Band 9. OLD KING COLE.

Game and play-party songs (and they are often identical) exhibit the paradox of stability and extreme variation as do forsaken lover lyrics. The core of this song consists of stanzas 2, 3, and 4, which exist separately in other combinations but are found as a unit throughout the South and Midwest. Though this version seems to refer to the Mexican War, other variants have New Orleans and Quebec and mention the retreat of the British; thus the game text in something like its current form may be as old as the American Revolution. The last stanza, referring to the actual movements of the game, is often combined with the foregoing three stanzas, but the opening stanza analogous to the well-known nursery rhyme is unusual.

This is one of Edna's father's songs which he remembers from his youth. As he recalls the game, it was an "ice-breaker" begun by the marching of one couple, who in the final stanza gathered in another couple. Soon enough players were garnered in for another game.

References:

J. Ritchie, Singing Family, pp. 45-6; Garland, 34-5
Brown, III, 110-3; V, 55-6
Opie, pp. 112-3

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, Children's Songs and Games From the Southern Mountains,
Folkways FC 7054; Kentucky Mountain Songs, Elektra EKL 25, EKL
125 (tune only)

Old King Cole was a jolly old soul,
And this you may know by his larnin',
He ate cornbread till his head turned red
And his old yaller cap needs darnin'.

My pretty little pink, I once did think
That I and you would marry,
But now I've lost all hopes of you
And I ain't got time to tarry.

I'll take my knapsack on my back,
My musket on my shoulder;
I'll march away to Mexico,
Enlist and be a soldier.

Where the coffee grows on the white oak trees
And the rivers they run brandy,
Where the boys are pure as a lump of gold
And the girls are sweet as candy.

You may go on and I'll turn back
To the place where we first parted.
We'll open up the ring and choose a couple in
And hope they'll come free hearted.

Side I, Band 10 SOMEBODY'S TALL AND HANDSOME

This has the ring of a turn-of-the-century parlor or stage song, but there is a possibility that it derives from older Scots song. It exists in a clearly comic version as well as in this fairly serious form. The tune used here is similar to that of certain other songs of courtship, such as "Get Away, Old Man, Get Away" and "Mamma Sent Me to the Spring".

Edna learned this song from her mother, who had it from a schoolmate, Mary Cornett. (Jean Ritchie Pickow reports the girl as Mary Jane Combs.) The family story is that Mrs. Ritchie, singing it during her courting days, changed "Somebody's eyes are too" because of the color of Ballis Ritchie's eyes. The latter line has, however, been reported from other sources. Polygenesis?

References:

J. Ritchie, Singing Family, pp. 59-61
Brown, III, 323-5; V, 194-5
KFFM, II, 1 (April, 1927), p. 16

Discography:

Mrs. Abigail Hall Ritchie, The Ritchie Family of Kentucky, Folkways
FA 2316
Carolina Tar Heels, Victor 40128

Somebody's tall and handsome
Somebody's fond and true,
Somebody's hair is very black
And somebody's eyes are too.

I love somebody fondly,
I love somebody true,
Love somebody with all of my heart
And somebody loves me too.

Somebody came to see me,
Somebody came last night,
Somebody asked me to be his bride
And of course I said all right

I am somebody's darling,
I am somebody's pride,
And the day is not far distant
When I'll be somebody's bride.

Somebody's tall and handsome
Somebody's fond and true,
Somebody's hair is very black
And somebody's eyes are too.

Side 1, Band 11. DOWN CAME AN ANGEL

Had this song been collected in Great Britain, it might well have been explained as the product of medieval clerics in their ministry to simple country folk. Did its elemental poetry (often lacking in American religious song) arise in a similar fashion in the United States as a creation for children? The song can be traced no farther than the middle of the last century when it was apparently in oral tradition, to judge from the inclusion of a tune and one stanza in The Sacred Harp of 1869. Full versions appeared in later hymnals (though not in The Sacred Harp). Edna's tune seems clearly related to the nursery song "Go Tell Aunt Rhody", thus furnishing another suggestion of the song's relation to children. That the "Aunt Rhody" tune and the hymn tune "Greenville" are derived from "Rosseau's Dream", attributed to the eighteenth-century prophet of simplicity, is in dispute. The late George Pullen Jackson concluded that the melodic pattern exists independently among folksingers.

"Down Came an Angel" became a Ritchie song after Edna's sister, Jewell, learned it from one of her students on Lots Creek, Cordia, Kentucky. The text varies somewhat among members of the family.

References:

J. Ritchie, Garland, pp. 58-9

Brown, III, 595-6; V, 337.

Songs of All Time, p. 26

NPMSS, VII, 1 (January, 1935)

Botsford, II

Wells, p. 189

"A Year of Song": Pine Mountain Calendar, 1952.

Henry, Folk-Song, p. 416

Jackson, p. 242

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, "Christ Was Born in Bethlehem", The Best of....
Prestige/International 13003; Carols of All Seasons, Tradition
TLF 1031; Songs from Kentucky, Westminster SWN 18021, WP 6037

Christ was born in Bethlehem (3)
And in a manger lay. (3)
Christ was born in Bethlehem
And in a manger lay.

Judas he betrayed Him (3)
And sold Him to His foes. (3)
Judas he betrayed Him.
And sold Him to His foes.

Joseph begged His body (3)
And laid it in the tomb. (3)
Joseph begged His body
And laid it in the tomb.

The tomb it would not hold Him. (3)
He burst the bands of death. (3)
The tomb it would not hold Him.
He burst the bands of death.

Down came an angel (3)
And rolled the stone away. (3)
Down came an angel
And rolled the stone away.

Mary she came weeping (3)
Her blessed Lord to see. (3)
Mary she came weeping
Her blessed Lord to see.

"What's the matter, Mary?" (3)
"They've stole my Lord away." (3)
"What's the matter, Mary?"
"They've stole my Lord away."

Go and tell my brethren (3)
He's risen from the dead. (3)
Go and tell my brethren
He's risen from the dead.

Side II, Band 1. THE CUCKOO

The cuckoo is symbolic of a number of things in western Europe. Its habit of laying its eggs in the nests of other birds has made it a symbol of adultery; and, in a none-too-clear way cuckold seems to derive from cuckoo (cuculus). The cuckoo is also the harbinger of summer in Britain. It would be quite easy to insist that this song deals only with the seasonal symbolism and is unrelated to such symbolism as that in the bawdy "The Cuckoo's Nest". Yet stanzas from this song are found as a part of "false true lover" lyrics in both Great Britain and North America, indicating that even if this song has no sexual implications, singers have been aware of another symbolism. The line "She sucks all sweet flowers" may be ultimately derived from the cuckoo's less pleasant habit of sucking the eggs of host birds.

Edna identifies this as a family song. But the Ritchies sing a number of versions, varying in tune and text.

References:

- J. Ritchie, Singing Family, pp. 279-80
Brown, III, pp. 271-3
Belden, pp. 473-4
Reeves, Idiom, pp. 97-9; Everlasting Circle, pp. 79-80
Opie, p. 139
Kincaid, No. 1, p. 20
Songs of All Time, p. 9
MLW, II, 4 (January, 1927), p. 32
KFPM, II, 1 (April, 1927), p. 12
Jameson, p. 20

Discography:

- Jean Ritchie, ... Sings the Traditional Songs of Her Kentucky Mountain Family, Elektra EKLP-2 (2 versions); Kentucky Mountain Songs, Elektra EKL 125 (2 versions); Singing Family of the Cumberlands, Riverside RLP 12-653; Field Trip, Collector Limited Edition CLE 1201; World Festival of Folk Songs and Folk Dance, Westminster WF 12008
Pete Steele, Banjo Tunes and Songs, Folkways FS 3828
Clarence Ashley, "The Coo Coo Bird", Columbia 15489-D; Anthology of American Folk Music, Vol. 2, Folkways FA 2952
Kelly Harrell, "Cuckoo, She's a Fine Bird", Victor 40047
A. L. Lloyd, The Foggy Dew and Other Traditional English Love Songs, Tradition TLP 1016
Robin Roberts, Traditional Folk Songs and Ballads, Stinson SLP 77
Joan O'Bryant, American Ballads and Folksongs, Folkways FA 2338

The Cuckoo she's a pretty bird,
She sings as she flies,
She brings us glad tidings
And tells us no lies.

She sucks all sweet flowers
To make her voice clear,
She never sings cuckoo
Till summer is near.

She flies the hills over,
She flies the world about,
She flies back to the mountain
And mourns for her love.

The cuckoo she's a pretty bird,
She sings as she flies,
She brings us glad tidings
And tells us no lies.

Side II, Band 2. OLD CHIMNEY SWEEPER

Like many children's games, this one preserves an ancient usage. Most reports of "jumping the broom stick" in the United States treat it as a surrogate for the entire wedding ceremony in backwoods areas and particularly among negroes in slavery times. This game song has, however, been reported from Kentucky as being used at an infare following a wedding. The origin and meaning of the custom as reported in Europe is unknown. It has been variously interpreted as fertility magic, a method of eluding evil spirits, and a virginity or chastity test. Considering that reports from northern

England include leaping over stones and stools as well as sticks, I suspect that the meaning lies in the action rather than the object. It may be a rite of separation for the couple entering the new state. The custom has been widely reported from Gypsies in England, but does not seem to have been an original Romany custom. The existence of the custom among Gypsies, however, may explain the chimney sweeper in this game. I rather doubt that the custom is connected with the belief that a girl who steps over a broomstick will never be married.

Edna remembers this simply as a family song. The tune is a common one, forms of which are set to texts of "Fair and Tender Ladies", "She was Poor, But She was Honest", "Life's Railway to Heaven", etc.

References:

Brown, , 236-7; VI, 638
Thomas, p. 75
Thomas and Leeder, pp. 84-5
Henderson, pp. 38-9

I'm a poor old chimney sweeper,
I had a little daughter and I thought I would keep her.
Now she has resolved to marry,
Go choose you one, no time to tarry.

Now you've one of your own choosing,
If you lose, be your own losing.
Just right hands and a broom step over
And take a sweet kiss from your charming true lover.

Side II, Band 3. FAIR AND TENDER LADIES

The elements which make up this, one of the most beautiful of the "warning songs" of the Southern Appalachians, are ancient and well-known in Great Britain and various other combinations of them are well-known in the American South. But the association of the sparrow, locking the heart, and the stanzas on the perfidy of young men is relatively stable. The last stanza reflects the lot of frontier women, wed or unwed, cherished or deserted. What perhaps surprised Appalachian women most about Katherine Pettit and the other "fotched-on" females who established the settlement schools was the attractiveness of these old women (in their twenties).

Edna recalls this as a family song, but she also sang it at Berea College. And somewhat differing variants are also sung in the Ritchie family.

References:

J. Ritchie, Singing Family, pp. 203-4
Brown, III, 290-3; V, 173-5
Raine, p. 19
Kincaid, No. 1, p. 29; No. 9, p. 17, deluxe ed., p. 47
KFFM, II, 1 (April, 1927), p. 11

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, "Little Sparrow", Kentucky Mountain Songs, Elektra
EKL 25; EKL 125; "Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies", The Best
of ... Prestige/International 13003; A Folk Concert in Town Hall
(Folkways FA 2428 (with Oscar Brand and Dave Sear)).
Mrs. Martha Hall, Mountain Music of Kentucky, Folkways FA 2317
Carter Sisters and Mother Maybelle, Columbia 20820
Robin Roberts, Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies, Tradition TLP 1033

Come all ye fair and tender ladies,
Take warning how you court young men;
They're like a bright star on a cloudy morning,
They will first appear and then they're gone.

They'll tell to you some loving story
To make you think that they love you true;
Straightway they'll go and court some other,
Oh that's the love they have for you.

I wish I were some little sparrow
And I had wings and I could fly.
I would fly away to my false true lover,
And while he'll talk I would sit and cry.

But I am not some little sparrow,
I have no wings nor can I fly,
So I'll sit down here in grief and sorrow
And try to pass my troubles by.

I wish I'd known before I courted
That love had been so hard to gain,
I'd of locked my heart in a box of golden
And fastened it down with a silver chain.

Young man never cast your eye on beauty,
For beauty is a thing that will decay,
For the prettiest flowers that grow in the garden,
How soon they'll wither, will wither and fade away.

Side II, Band 4. BLACKEST CROW

Of the "false true lover" lyrics Edna sings on this album, this is certainly the most unstable. Many of the stanzas and images occur in other relatively stable songs in Great Britain and the United States, but it is impossible to say that the elements "belong" to any of the combinations. Some of the British elements can be traced at least to the 17th century and are probably older.

Edna learned this song from Lula Hale, teacher and collector of Homeplace, Ary, Kentucky. Miss Hale secured the song in an eleven-stanza form from Sadie Williams of Troublesome Creek in the 1940's. Miss Hale usually omits stanzas 9 and 10 because she does not feel they belong to the song. As printed in Songs of All Time, stanzas 3 and 5 are also omitted. And Edna drops a further stanza in this performance. In the transcribed text below the material originally collected by Miss Hale (on deposit

in the Western Kentucky Folklore Archive) is included in parentheses.

References:

Brown, III, pp. 299-304

Sharp, II, pp. 52-3, 96, 110, 113-8, 114, 117-8

Dean-Smith, p. 112

Reeves, Idiom, pp. 213-4

Songs of All Time, p. 53

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, Shivaree! Esoteric ea 538

Philyaw Brothers, "It's Hard to Please Your Mind", Vocalion 04119

The blackest crow that ever flew,
Although it may turn white,
When I prove false to you, my love,
Bright day(s) will turn to night.

When I prove false to you my love,
The rocks will melt and run,
The ocean will freeze in a solid cake,
And the deep blue sea will burn.

(The storms are over the ocean, Love,
The sea begins to foam.
It almost breaks my heart, little love,
To think of you at home.)

I asked your mother for your (you) love.
She said you were too young.
I wish I'd (I had) never seen your rosy cheeks
Or heard you chattering tongue.

(I'm going away to leave you, Love,
I am going for a while,
And before I return to you
I'll go ten thousand miles.

(Your gold ring I'll send back to you,
Your letters I will burn.
The lock of hair you stole from me
I'll thank you to return.)

Your yellow hair I do compare
With a beaded link of gold.
You was the prettiest creature, little love,
My eyes (love) ever did behold.

Remember on you(ders) mountain, Love,
In (when) sitting by me (side by) side,
You promised you would marry me
And be no other's bride.

(The train is on the island, Love,
The ship is on the sea.
I wonder where my darling's at
That she don't write to me.

(I'm wondering though you treat me so
And talked to me so kind,
But you never know those foolish girls,
They never know their mind.)

I've a bright ship on the ocean, Love,
I've a bright ship on the sea,
I've a true love out in the country
That never goes back on me.

Side II, Band 5. I WONDER WHEN I SHALL BE MARRIED

Known in the United States at least from Vermont to Florida but relatively infrequently reported by collectors, this spinster's lament has been traced to an English broadside, "The Maid's Sad Complaint for Want of a Husband", credited to Lawrence White and licensed July 1, 1678. And it found a place in The Scots Musical Museum. In the Appalachians where a girl of 19 was an old maid and the lot of a spinster was harder even than that of a wife, the humor of the song was a bit wry.

Edna thinks that this family song was originally brought home by her sister, Una.

References:

Songs of All Time, p. 13
JFSS, No. 33, pp. 142-5
Henry, Songs, pp. 153-4
Morris, pp. 153-4
Kincaid, No. 2, p. 33

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, The Best of..., Prestige/International 13003; Court-
ing and other Folk Songs of the Southern Appalachians, Elektra
EKL 122
Edna and Jean Ritchie, The Ritchie Family of Kentucky, Folkways
FA 2316

I wonder when I shall be married,
Oh be married, oh be married,
I wonder when I shall be married,
For my beauty's beginning to fade.

My mother she is so willing,
Oh so willing, oh so willing,
My mother she is so willing,
For she has four daughters besides.

My father has forty good shillings,
Oh good shillings, oh good shillings,
My father has forty good shillings
And they will be mine when he dies.

My shoes have gone to be mended,
Oh be mended, oh be mended,
My shoes have gone to be mended,
And my petticoat's gone to dye green.

And they will be ready by Sunday,
Oh, by Sunday, oh by Sunday
And they will be ready by Sunday,
Oh say, won't I look like a queen.

A cup, a spoon, and a trencher,
Oh, a trencher, oh a trencher,
A cup, a spoon, and a trencher,
And a candlestick made out of clay.

Oh say, won't I be a bargain,
Oh, a bargain, oh, a bargain,
Oh say, won't I be a bargain
For someone to carry away.

I wonder when I shall be married,
Oh, be married, oh, be married,
I wonder when I shall be married
For my beauty's beginning to fade.

Side II, Band 6. AN OLD MAN CAME COURTING ME

Even in this mild version, this is a surprising song to find in Appalachia, as its previous appearances in America have been in the Northeast. The answer is simple. Edna learned this song from a girl whose name she has forgotten--a Canadian girl who came back-stage and talked with her when she was in the cast of Wilderness Road at Berea.

As sung in Scotland, the west of England, Anglia, and the American Northeast the song tends to be quite outspoken in relating the experiences of the girl who wed far beyond her years. "Free" songs of this sort are not unknown in the Appalachians, but their circulation is restricted and they are strictly blackguard songs. The ordinary folksong collector seldom garners them (but see Henry, Folk-Songs, pp. 312-3). The theme of the old man's courtship occupies a number of songs, but this song seems unrelated to such items as "The Old Man Who Came Over the Moor" and "The Quaker's Courtship". Rather, its English and widespread American counterpart (if not version) is "Get Away, Old Man, Get Away" (See Randolph, II, 127-8).

References:

Dean-Smith, p. 95
Greig, II, No. 149
Hubbard, p. 156

Discography:

Jeannie Robertson, "A Aul' Man Cam' Coortin' Me", Scottish Ballads and Folk Songs, Prestige/Internation 13006; "Never Wed an Old Man" The Folksongs of Britain, II: Songs of Seduction, Caedman TC 1143
Sam Lerner, "Maids When You're Young Never Wed an Old Man", Now is the Time for Fishing, Folkways FG 3507
Alan Mills, "The Foolish Old Man", "Songs, Fiddle Tunes and a Folk-tale from Canada", Folkways, FG 3532

An old man came courting me, hey down, derry down
And old man came courting me, hey derry dee,
And old man came courting me, vowed he would marry me,
Girls beware, never wed an old man.

Chorus:

For an old man looks sourly, hey down, derry down
And old man looks sourly, hey derry dee.
He looks at you sourly, not daily but hourly,
Girls beware, never wed an old man.

And when we were married, hey down, derry down
And when we were married, hey derry dee.
And when we were married I wished I were buried,
Girls beware, never wed an old man.

He swore at me awfully, though we were lawfully
Wedded in church for to part never more.
He sneered at my cooking and when I wasn't looking
He'd fling all the bacon and eggs on the floor.

So awfully lazy by nigh drove me crazy,
He slouched about smoking from morning till night.
No work would he do for the farmers all knew
He'd be after the cider and to quarrel and fight.

So young girls take warning, old lovers be scorning
Who come prowling round to play catch as catch can.
Take warning, take warning and bid them good morning
And choose for your husband a jolly young man.

Side II, Band 7. JACKERO (Laws N 7)

The motif of the female warrior is old in popular literature and has been popular in Anglo-American balladry for the last three centuries. The reasons for the maid's donning man's attire and becoming a soldier or sailor vary, but she is usually seeking or accompanying her lover, sometimes, as in this ballad, in defiance of her parents. Doubtless one can accept reports of similar occurrences in the world of fact; but they occurred more frequently in the world of fancy.

Edna thinks this ballad may have been brought into the family by some of her older sisters from Hindman Settlement School. Edna's performance omits some elements found elsewhere, including the serving maid's informing of the parents, the discovery of the girl's sex, and her triumphant return with her lover. Also missing from

Edna's singing--but included in other copies from Ritchie family tradition--is the dialogue concerning the maid's slender waist and her white and small fingers, which occurs in many of the female warrior ballads and was not present in earlier forms of "Jack Monroe".

References:

- Laws, pp. 17, 202-211, 241
Brown, II, 314-7; IV, 182-4
Greig, I, p. 45
B. Ritchie, pp. 3-4
J. Ritchie, Swapping Song Book, pp. 62-3
Kincaid, deluxe ed., p. 271
Raine, pp. 16-7

Discography:

- Jean Ritchie, Songs from Kentucky, Westminster SWN 18021, WP 6037
Mrs. Maud Long, "Jackie's Gone A-Sailing", Library of Congress, AAFS L21 (and AAFS 105)
A. L. Lloyd, "Jackie Monroe" English Street Songs, Riverside RLP 12-614
Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, Two-Way Trip, Folkways FW 8755
Tom Paley, Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians, Elektra EKL 12; Courting and Other Folk Songs of the Southern Appalachians, Elektra EKL 122

There was a silk merchant,
In London he did dwell.
He had one only daughter,
The truth to you I'll tell,
Oh, the truth to you I'll tell.

Her sweethearts they were plentiful,
She courted both day and night,
Till all on Jacky Frazier
She placed her heart's delight.

"I'll lock you up in my dungeon,
Your body I'll keep confined
If there's none but Jacky Frazier
That'll ever suit my mind,
Oh, that'll ever suit my mind."

When her parents saw him coming
They flew in an angry way.
She gave him forty shillings
To bear him far away,
Oh, to bear him far away.

He sailed all over the ocean,
All over the deep blue sea,
Till safely he got landed
In the wars of Germany,
Oh, in the wars of Germany.

She sent down to the tailor's shop
And dressed up in men's gray,
And labored for their captain
To bear her far away,
Oh, to bear her far away.

She sailed all over the ocean.
All over the deep blue sea,
Till safely she got landed
In the wars of Germany,
Oh, in the wars of Germany.

She went down to the battlefield
And viewed it up and down.
Among the dead and wounded
Her darling boy she found,
Oh, her darling boy she found.

She picked him up all in her arms
And carried him to the town
And called in a physician
To cure up all his wounds,
Oh, to cure up all his wounds.

And now they're happily married,
So well they do agree.
And now they're happily married,
So why not you and me,
Oh, so why not you and me.

Side II, Band 8. AS JOSEPH WAS A-WALKING (child 54)

This song is regularly a part of the ballad "The Cherry Tree Carol", which combines this annunciation to Joseph with the apocryphical legend of the tree which bows down so that Mary can gather fruit. The legend in prose and song is found throughout Europe, and the United States. "The Cherry Tree Carol" frequently appeared in British popular print in the 18th and 19th centuries. The naming of Old Christmas as January 6 indicates that this is a 19th century text.

Edna says this is Richard Chase's North Carolina version. Allowing for the repetition of the last half of each stanza as a refrain, this form seems to be the composite text Chase made from a number of sources and set to a tune he collected from Horton Barker of Chilhowie, Virginia.

References:

- Child, II, 1-6
- Coffin, pp. 65-7
- Flanders, II, 70-3
- Brown, II, 61-3
- Chase, pp. 8-9
- "A Year of Song": Pine Mountain Calendar, 1952
- Songs of All Time, p. 25

Discography:

Jean Ritchie, "The Cherry Tree Carol", British Traditional Ballads
(Child Ballads) in the Southern Mountains, Vol. 2, Folkways FA
2502; The Best of ..., Prestige/International 13003; Carols of
All Seasons, Tradition TLP 1031

Mrs. Maud Long, "The Cherry Tree Carol", Library of Congress AAFS
L14 (and AAFS 66)

Artus Moser, "The Cherry Tree Carol", Southern Mountain Folksongs
and Ballads, Riverside RLP 12-617

A. L. Lloyd, "The Cherry Tree Carol", The English and Scottish
Popular Ballads, Riverside RLP 12-656

As Joseph was a walking
He heard an angel sing,
"This night shall be the birth night
Of Christ our heavenly king,
This night shall be the birth night
Of Christ our heavenly king.

"He neither shall be born
In house nor in hall,
Nor in a king's palace
But in an oxen's stall,
Nor in a king's palace
But in an oxen's stall.

He neither shall be washen
In white wine nor in red,
But in the clear spring water
With which we were christen-ed,
But in the clear spring water
With which we were christen-ed.

He neither shall be cloth-ed
In purple nor in pall,
But in the fair white linen
That usen babies all,
But in the fair white linen
That usen babies all.

He neither shall be rock-ed
In silver nor in gold,
But in the wooden cradle
That rocks upon the mold,
But in the wooden cradle
That rocks upon the mold.

The sixth day of January
His birthday shall be,
When the stars and the mountains
Shall tremble with glee,
When the stars and the mountains
Shall tremble with glee."

As Joseph was a walking
 Thus did the angel sing,
 And Mary's son at midnight
 Was born to be a king,
 And Mary's son at midnight,
 Was born to be a king.

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