

*"America's Greatest Folk Instrumentalist"*

# HOBART SMITH of Saltville, Virginia



**FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. SHARON, CONNECTICUT**



"America's Greatest  
Folk Instrumentalist"

# HOBART SMITH of Saltville, Virginia

*Recorded by Norm Pellegrini  
Notes by George Armstrong and Fleming Brown  
Discography by Harlan Daniel*

Hobart Smith was born in Smyth County, Virginia, on May 10, 1897, the oldest of four brothers in a family of eight children born to King and Louvine Smith. Although his name (and that of his sister, Texas Gladden) has been well known to folksong collectors for many years, this is his first solo album. It was recorded in the studios of Chicago's WFMT in October of 1963.

During Hobart's visit to Chicago, several evenings were spent with friends, singing, making music, and just plain talking. Much of this informal music and conversation was recorded and, from these tapes, George Armstrong has excerpted the story of Hobart's life and his views on his music as he told them in his own words.

Hobart began playing the banjo when he was seven years old, added the guitar when he was fourteen, and the fiddle after that. Both his father and his mother were banjo-pickers. ("Now I call my style of banjo-pickin' 'the old-timey rappin' style'; I learned it first from my daddy.") Hobart's father was a farmer and farming was Hobart's first occupation. Over the years he has also worked as a wagoner, a painter, a butcher, and, for a couple of years, as a musician in a travelling minstrel show. Indeed, music has always been an important part of his life. As he puts it: "I grew up into it and I'm still trying to play it"—an extremely modest description of the highly developed art of America's greatest folk instrumentalist.

## Side 1:

SOLDIER'S JOY (BANJO)  
PEG AND AWL  
THE GREAT TITANIC  
BANJO GROUP I  
BLACK ANNIE  
SALLY ANN  
CHINQUAPIN PIE  
LAST CHANCE  
JOHN GREER'S TUNE  
SHORT LIFE IN TROUBLE  
THE DEVIL AND THE FARMER'S WIFE  
SOLDIER'S JOY (FIDDLE)

## Side 2:

SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD  
STORMY ROSE THE OCEAN  
BONAPARTE'S RETREAT (FIDDLE)  
CUCKOO BIRD  
COLUMBUS STOCKADE  
BANJO GROUP II  
CINDY  
THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND  
JOHN HARDY  
MEET ME IN ROSE TIME, ROSIE  
UNCLOUDY DAY

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# **HOBART SMITH**

**Recorded by Norm Pellegrini  
Notes by George Armstrong**

**FSA-17**



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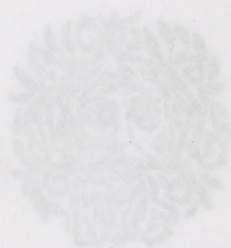
**SHARON, CONNECTICUT 06069**

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SHARON, CONNECTICUT 06089

HOBART SMITH

Hobart Smith was born in Smyth County, Virginia, on May 10, 1897. He was the oldest of four brothers in a family of eight children born to King and Louvine Smith. Hobart says that his is the seventh generation of Smiths in Virginia since his ancestors came from England. Thus it is probable that many of the Old World songs in his family have had a long development in America since they first crossed the Atlantic.

The name of Hobart Smith and that of his sister, Mrs. Texas Gladden, first became familiar to folksong collectors through their recordings made by Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress (see Discography). This recording, however, represents Hobart Smith's first solo album. It was made in the studios of Chicago's WFMT by that station's program director, Norm Pellegrini, in October of 1963, during Hobart Smith's fall concert tour.

The selection of songs and instrumentals was influenced by the desire to present a cross-section of Hobart's repertoire and to avoid repetition of material previously recorded on other labels. One important dimension of Hobart's music which is not represented is his very personal piano style. A second recording is planned which will feature the piano as well as unaccompanied ballads and hymns.

During Hobart's visit to Chicago, several evenings were spent sitting with friends, singing, making music, and just talking. Much of this informal music and discussion was taped and from these reels we have excerpted Hobart's own story and his views on the music he plays as he told it in his own words.

George Armstrong

"I GREW UP INTO IT"

(as told by Hobart Smith)

I started playin' the banjer when I was seven years old. When I was three, I commenced playin' on an old fire shovel. I was raised in an old log house that had a fireplace and my mother had a bar that went across the fireplace with hooks that came down to cook her stuff in the pots and then she had a big oven and lid and she'd bake her bread and pull out those coals with that shovel — cover it up with red-hot coals, you know — and bake her bread thataway. We didn't

have any cook-stove at that time. They said when I was just three years old, I'd get that fire shovel and just pick on it; and they asked me what I was pickin' and I said "Sour Colics!"

Now I call my style of banjer pickin' the old-timey rappin' style. I learned it first from my daddy. When I was seven years old I could play a tune on the banjer. So, my daddy, seein' I was interested in it, he ordered me a little, small, short-necked banjer from Sears-Roebuck and I commenced pickin' the banjer when I was seven years old.

Well, after that, I got onto a gittar — I commenced playin' that. Now, the first gittar I ever owned, I worked in a cornfield and bought it. I gave four dollars for it. I was fourteen years old then. So, then I liked the fiddle. I got on the fiddle after that. I got to playin' 'em all and all of 'em sounded pretty good to me.

My father and mother was both banjer pickers. I started the banjer at home. I didn't learn the gittar at home; I learned it from different men. Now, the first of the gittar playin' that I really liked was when a bunch of colored men came in there, oh, way back yonder. I was just about fourteen or fifteen years old. It was along about that time that Blind Lemon Jefferson came through and he stayed around there about a month. He stayed with the other colored fellers and they worked on the railroad there, and he'd just play and sing to entertain the men in that work camp. I think right about there I started on the gittar. I liked his type of playin'. I just watched his fingers and got the music in my head and then I'd thumb around till I found what I was wantin' on the strings.

The way it was with me, I just grew up and it seemed like I had a feelin' in me when I'd hear this old-time music. Well, I didn't hear anything else, you know, for years and years. I didn't know anything about this fingering the banjer (Scruggs style three-finger picking). That hadn't come out yet. Everybody rapped the banjer. I'd get around old folks that played a banjer and I'd listen to that and was just as full of music as I could be. It'd just register on me up and down like a thermometer. And, you see, I'd get that in my ear and then I'd get ahold of that banjer.

You've first got to get the tune on your mind and then find it with your fingers — keep on till you find what you want on that neck. But keep that tune in your mind just like you can hear it a-playin'. I've been to the cornfield many of a time when I was a farmer and I'd hear a good fiddle tune or a good banjer piece and I'd commence whistlin' it. And I'd whistle that till my mouth got so tired, and I'd

go home keepin' it on my mind. I'd go pretty fast and I'd whistle all the way into the holler on the mountain and my banjer would be hangin' on the wall. Sometimes I'd forget where it was at, and I'd whistle right loud and that banjer would answer me on the wall and I'd go and get her. I'd keep that tune right on my mind and I'd find that tune on the strings before I'd quit.

There was a feller I was raised up with by the name of John Greer. The fact about it — all of my banjer pickin' is John Greer's type. Now, my daddy picked a banjer; he picked the old-timey rap. I can play it just like him. He kept his thumb on the thumb string and that thumb string was just a-goin' all the time. Now, John Greer come along and went from thumb string to the bottom, double-notin', and he was the best man I ever heard on the banjer. And I patterned after him. "Coo-coo Bird" and "The Banging Breakdown" (titled "John Greer's Tune" on this record) I got from John Greer.

Now, the first fiddle that ever I heard in my life, when I was a kid — there was an old colored man who was raised up in slave times. His name was Jim Spencer. He played "Jinny Put the Kettle On" and all those old tunes like that, you know. And he would come up to our house and he'd play one night for us, and he'd go over to my uncle's and play one night for them, and then go down to my aunt's in the other holler — we lived in three different hollers in the mountains, you know. He'd make a round. Now, that was the first fiddling I ever heard in my life, although both my granddaddies were fiddlers. But my granddaddy on my mother's side died of TB in the old Civil War and my other granddaddy, I never did hear him but saw a little bit on it, but my daddy said he used to be a good fiddler. So, I'd hear old-timey fiddlers in different places and I'd just get it in my head and work it out with my fingers.

We'd have a square dance in the community twice a week. We'd have one on Wednesday night and Saturday night. But then, in my home, all of my kinfolk would meet and my daddy would pick the banjer and we'd dance to twelve o'clock every night of the week. We'd go to the mountain and get us some back-logs to throw on this fireplace to throw the heat out. The boys would all help us drag wood off'n the mountain and then we'd fire up that fire and your legs 'ud be burnin' off and your back a-chillin', but we really enjoyed it. The way they would do the square dance in them days, they'd have one in one person's house, say, tonight — say "Where'll we have the next 'un?" — "In my house, tomorrow night." Just like prayer meetin'; catch it around from house to house. There was square dancin' every night. They'd work pretty hard during the day, but they'd get ready for it. They'd come in and get washed and eat and they were ready for it.

My first life was farming. My daddy'd farmed all his life and I went into farming. And I went into wagoning long before the trucks came around, you know, or any cars at all. My daddy had a team and I had a team and we'd haul coal for people and move people and go to the station and get trunks out. And then I'm a pretty good painter; I used to paint a whole lot. I was a butcher; I worked with the Olin-Mathieson people for twelve years, a-butchering for 'em. At the time of the first World War I had got married and was lookin' for my first kid. Well, I got fourth class and the war never lasted but sixteen months and I never was called.

Me and my sister, Texas, went on Whitetop for the festivals. I met Horton Barker and Richard Chase at Whitetop. We played for Mrs. Roosevelt there in '36. Then, after she went back, she sent a telegram to Roanoke, to my sister, wantin' to know if we'd come up to the White House and sing some of those old songs. She wanted her husband to hear 'em. And so we did go. We went up there and spent a couple of nights with them and we had a program.

I had a band. I had two boys that played with me. I played with Tom (Clarence) Ashley thirty or thirty-five years ago. I played in a minstrel show for two years. I played my own music and danced my own music — that's one curiosity that everybody thought so much about. No, I wasn't makin' a livin' out of it. We'd just go places and play and maybe they'd give us so much. I played in dance halls back along in Hoover's time, you know, when you couldn't get ahold of a dollar nowhere. I played the fiddle the most — tunes like "Golden Slippers" and "Coming Around the Mountain" — for dances.

The fact about it — I went into this pop'lar stuff and got to playin' on that and then when I got in with Alan Lomax in 1942, he wanted me to pull back into the old folk music. And he said, "Don't you ever leave it no more!" I had just about left it. I hadn't owned a banjer in twenty-five years till the Vega people sent me that banjer from Boston as a gift several years ago. Pete Seeger got them to send it. I hadn't owned one in twenty-five years. Maybe I'd go to somebody's house and there'd be a banjer sittin' there and maybe I'd pick it up and play just one tune and set it down. I'd been playin' the fiddle and the gittar and piano. And, you see, all of those old pieces on the banjer was just gettin' away from me and I didn't fool with 'em. But after I got this new banjer, why it came back to me in just a little time. In thirty days I was back just as good as I ever was.

So, I've had a life in music ever since I was a kid. I grew up into it and I'm still tryin' to play it.

## HOBART SMITH'S BANJO STYLE

(Fleming Brown, banjo player and teacher at the OLD TOWN SCHOOL OF FOLK MUSIC in Chicago, has contributed the following observations and tablature.)

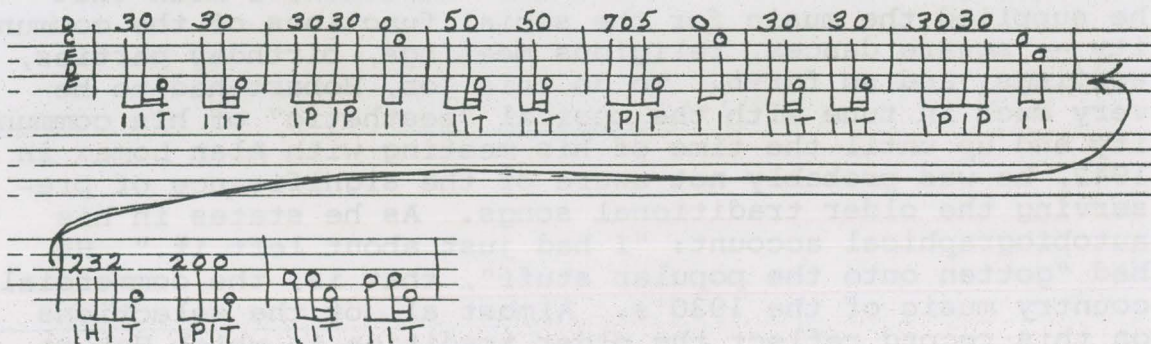
One of the greatest pleasures of my life has been the four or five days spent with Hobie. We taped many hours of his seemingly limitless repertoire, in many cases slowing down the more complex banjo tunes so that they might be tablatured. "Last Chance" is one of the most charming of his tunes, although not, by far, the most intricate. He makes no use here of the double noting (double thumbing) technique that he employs on most of the other tunes. His clean sound is due to the fact that he almost never brushes across the strings, but plays individual notes. (This is best shown in the tablature.)

Hobie uses his index finger and thumb on all of his tunes, but the technique undergoes a marked change in the "Banging Breakdown" ("John Greer's Tune") number by the use of the thumb instead of the index finger for the lead. Although he uses this technique on many pieces, this is the only one that appears on this record.

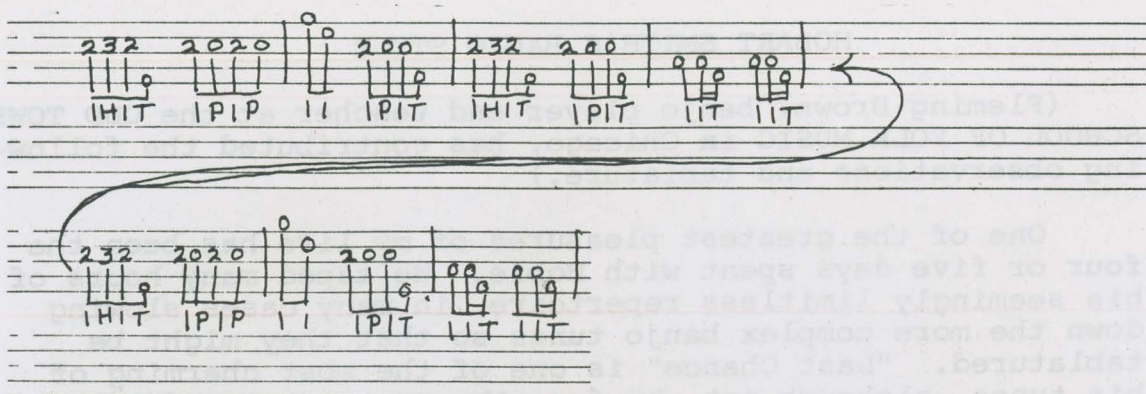
Hobie has no names for his tunings other than "high bass" for G, "low bass" for C, and "high tenor" for G modal. Then he uses the names of the tunes for the rest, i.e.: "Last Chance" tuning, "Cumberland Gap" tuning, etc. Many of the tunings are used for only one or two tunes. It is my belief that the various tunings were developed during the era of the fretless banjo, before the machine-made banjos infiltrated the mountains. Capos were not used and chords are difficult to make on the fretless banjo. The early players attempted to get as many of the basic melody notes as possible in their tunings and to pitch the instruments in the proper key for their voices.

### LAST CHANCE

Part A:



## Part B:



(Each part is played twice. The total tune consists of 30 bars — most strange, but that's the way it is!)

## THE SONGS

In compiling the notes for these songs, I have called upon the services of Mr. Harlan Daniel of Chicago, originally from Stone County, Arkansas, who is one of the leading collectors of and authorities on the early commercial recording of folk music. Most of the discographies listed here were contributed by Harlan.

The early phonograph records were, in fact, the first adequate documentation of folk music, since it is now recognized that just noting the tune and the verses on paper is barely half the story. It is also true that these early recordings had a strong influence on the tradition, in that they spread certain songs and styles of singing and playing throughout the South, in particular, and in many other parts of the country where these records were played on the radio.

Hobart Smith's most active years as a "functional" musician in his community were during the time that these early recordings were most popular and many of the artists on these records, such as Clarence Ashley, Clarence Green and Kelly Harrel, were his friends and contemporaries. In describing Hobart as a "functional" musician, I mean that he supplied the music for the social functions of the community — square dances, religious meetings, birthday parties, weddings, and so forth. To do this job, Hobart had to be very much in tune with the musical "aesthetic" of his community and up until the time of his meeting with Alan Lomax in 1942, he was probably not aware of the significance of preserving the older traditional songs. As he states in his autobiographical account: "I had just about left it." He had "gotten onto the popular stuff", that is, the commercial country music of the 1930's. Almost all of the selections on this record reflect the older tradition to which Hobart

has, happily, returned and represents the period of from about 1900 to 1930.

G. A.

Side I; Band 1. SOLDIER'S JOY

(Banjo tuning: GCGBD)

This tune was well-known in Britain at least as early as the latter part of the eighteenth century. Robert Burns used the tune for his soldier's song in "The Jolly Beggars". It was, and remains, a "standard" among old-time fiddle players (see Band 7). The tune was surely adapted by southern banjo pickers at an early date. Hobart learned the tune from his father, but plays it here in the style learned from John Greer.

Discography:

Sid Harkreader and Uncle Dave Macon - Vocalion 14887-5047; 1924

Fiddlin' John Carson - Okeh 45011; 1926

Nashville Washboard Band - Library of Congress AAFS L9

Jimmie Driftwood (with new lyrics) RCA Victor LPM-1635

Traditional Music from Grayson and Carroll Counties (Va.)

Glen Smith on fiddle - Folkways FS 3811

Side I; Band 2. PEG AND AWL

The title of this song refers to a "pegging awl" used by cobblers in making the soles of the old shoes which were pegged together with wooden pegs, usually hickory. The lyrics point up the fact that the problem of automation is an old one and a mixed blessing. The dates given in the text, however, would seem to have been dictated by poetical rather than historical considerations, since the first machinery used in the mass production of shoes was not introduced until the middle of the nineteenth century. The song is apparently American in origin, for no British versions have been found, according to no less an authority than A. L. Lloyd. It would also seem to be fairly rare in America, since only two other recorded versions are known. Hobart states that he learned the song from his sister, Texas Gladden. Here he accompanies himself on the fiddle, with some dulcimer backing supplied by the eminent dulcimer tuner of Wilmette, Illinois, Abercrombie K. Jessup (see notes to Folk-Legacy's FSI-5 — HOWIE MITCHELL).

Discography:

Kelly Harrel - Okeh 40544; 1926

Carolina Tar Heels (with Clarence Ashley) - Victor 40007; 1929

Lawrence Older - Folk-Legacy FSA-15

In the days of eighteen and one,  
Peg and awl,  
In the days of eighteen and one,  
Peg and awl,  
In the days of eighteen and one  
Pegging shoes is all I done;  
Hand me down my peg, my awl,  
My peg and awl.

Similarly:

In the days of eighteen and two  
Pegging shoes is all I do;  
Hand me down, etc.

In the days of eighteen and three  
New machine is set me free;  
Throw away, etc.

They've invented a new machine,  
Purtiest little thing you ever seen;  
Throw away, etc.

In the days of eighteen and four  
Pegging shoes I'll do no more;  
Throw away, etc.

#### Side I; Band 3. THE GREAT TITANIC

Just who it was that first made this song, we don't know, but, with the exception of "The Wreck of Old 97", it is probably the most widely known American disaster ballad.

The Royal Mail Line's luxury steamer "Titanic" was on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York when, on the night of April 14-15, 1912, she struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic and went down with the loss of 1,513 lives. The disaster immediately captured the imagination of the nation and it is probable that several different, distinct ballads were composed by various anonymous folk poets soon after the event. Versions of the song are very popular among Negro folk singers. Hobart says of the song: "When the 'Titanic' went down, I was just fifteen years old. And you know, right after anything like that happens there's a song that'll come out. Now, I didn't make the song; I got it from somebody else, but I couldn't tell who, it's been so long."

#### Discography:

Ernest V. Stoneman (The Titanic) - Okeh 40288, 1925;  
Edison 51823, 1926

Vernon Dalhart (The Sinking of the Titanic) - Columbia  
15032, 1925  
Vernon Dalhart (The Great Titanic) - Challenge 155;  
Silvertone 3828, 1926  
Pink Anderson - Riverside RLP 12-611  
Leadbelly's Last Sessions - Folkways FA 2941  
William and Versey Smith on Anthology of American Folk-  
music, Vol. 1; Folkways FA 2951  
Bessie Jones (accompanied by Hobart Smith) on Southern  
Journey - The Eastern Shores; Prestige Internation-  
al 25008

#### References:

White, Newman I., American Negro Folk-Songs, 1928  
Sandburg, Carl, American Songbag, 1927  
Randolph, Vance, Ozark Folksongs, Vol. IV, 1950

On one Sunday morning, just about one o'clock,  
This great Titanic boat begin to reel and rock.  
People on board begin to cry,  
Saying, "My Lord, I'm bound to die!"  
Wasn't it sad when that great ship went down?

#### Chorus:

Awful sad when that great boat went down.  
Husbands and wives, little children lost their  
lives.  
Wasn't it sad when that great ship went down?

Ship was leaving England, pulling for the shore;  
Rich they declared they would not ride with the  
poor.

Put the poor below;  
They's the first ones had to go.  
Wasn't that sad when that great ship went down?

Builders kept building, declared what they would  
do:

Gonna build a boat the waters couldn't break through.  
God had the power at His hand,  
Showed to the world it would not stand.  
Wasn't it sad when the great ship went down?

(Repeat second verse and chorus)

Note: One day, while swapping songs with friends, Hobart  
sang this unaccompanied and included the following verse  
between the first and second verses above:

People out on the ocean, a long way from home;  
They never knew just that their time had come.  
Death come riding by,  
Sixteen hundred had to die.  
Wasn't it sad when that great ship went down?

Side I; Band 4. BANJO GROUP I

BLACK ANNIE - banjo tuning: GDGBD - learned from his father.

SALLY ANN - banjo tuning: GDGBD - learned from his father.

CHINQUAPIN PIE - banjo tuning: GDGCD - "A chinquapin is a little green burr and they have bushes standin' about that high, you know, and when the chinquapins are just ripe, they bust out and, man!, you can eat 'em till you get sick and get a headache and vomit, and when you get over it, you can go back and eat that many more — if you want to. Now, there wasn't no pies made out of 'em. This old tune is just called 'Chinquapin Pie'."

LAST CHANCE - banjo tuning: FDFCD - "I got this piece from my uncle, my mother's brother, and he called it the 'Last Chance'. That's all I know about it and I just took it up from him." (Dock Boggs, old-time banjo picker from Norton, Virginia, knows this tune by the title of "Davenport".)

JOHN GREER'S TUNE (BANGING BREAKDOWN) - banjo tuning: GCGBD - Hobart learned this tune from John Greer and it is probably his most delightful banjo piece. The drumming is accomplished by rapping the fingertips across the banjo drum head. (See remarks by Fleming Brown, page 5.)

Side I; Band 5. SHORT LIFE IN TROUBLE

Here Hobart again accompanies his own singing on the fiddle. The instrument adds far more than a chord or a melody line backing, but really becomes a contrapuntal voice, ornamenting and filling in where the singing voice leaves off.

Discography:

Burhett and Rutherford - Columbia 15133, 1927  
Ashley and Green - Conqueror 8149, 1933  
Riley Puckett - Decca 5442, 1937

Short life of trouble;  
A few more words, then part.  
Short life in trouble, dear girl,  
And a boy with a broken heart.

Remember what you told me  
About three weeks or more;  
You promised me you'd marry me,  
Standing in your kitchen door.

A short life of trouble;  
A few more words, then part.  
A short life in trouble, dear girl,  
And a boy with a broken heart.

Side I; Band 6. THE DEVIL AND THE FARMER'S WIFE

Hobart sings here a Virginia version of this well-known old British ballad (Child 278) which he learned from his sister, Texas Gladden. A very similar version is sung by Horton Barker of Chilhowie, Virginia. The first two verses, describing some unusual agricultural techniques, set a comic stage for the story that follows, although they once may have indicated more explicitly a previous pact made between the devil and the unfortunate farmer. The last stanza often varies, depending upon the sex of the singer.

Discography:

Horton Barker - Folkways FA 2362  
Lawrence Older - Folk-Legacy FSA-15  
Jenes Cottrell - Old Time Music at Newport; Vanguard  
VRS 9147, 1964

There was an old man who owned a large farm,  
Had no horses to plow his corn.  
And a fie-die-diddle-i-day,  
Diddle-i-diddle-i-day.

Similarly:

He hooked up his sow and his cow to the plow  
And plowed the land, the devil knows how.

The devil come to the old man one day,  
Says, "One of your family I'll sure take away."

He said to the wife, "I'm sure we're done,  
For the devil's come for our oldest son."

"It's not your oldest son I crave,  
But your old scolding wife I'll sure take away."

"You can take her away with all my heart;  
I hope from hell she never does part."

He picked her up all on his back  
And off to hell he went, clickety-clack.

He set her down at the forks of the road;  
He said, "Old gal, you're a terrible load."

He took her on down to old hell's gates,  
There he made the old gal walk straight.

Then two little devils come a-rattling their chains;  
She off with her slipper and knocked out their  
brains.

Then one little devil come climbing the wall;  
Says, "Take her back, Daddy, she's a-murdering  
us all."

So the devil picked her up all on his back  
And, like an old fool, went lugging her back.

The old man was a-laying sick in bed;  
She took the butter-stick and paddled his head.

The old man was a-laying, peeking through the  
crack;  
He saw the old devil come a-lugging her back.

He said to the boy, "You're bound for a curse;  
She's been to hell; she's ten times worse."

It proves that the women is worse than the men,  
For they've been to hell and back again.

Side I; Band 7. SOLDIER'S JOY (fiddle)

See note for Side I; Band 1.

Side II; Band 1. SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD

This is a Negro blues and is not to be confused with the Al Jolson song of the same title. Hobart doesn't remember where he learned it. The fiddle accompaniment parallels the vocal line, accenting the vocal ornamentation and adding an embellishment of its own here and there.

#### Discography:

The Mississippi Shicks (Bo Chatman and Walter Vinson) -  
Okeh 8784, 1930 (Paramount 13134, Champion 50021,  
Varsity 6009, 1932 - Okeh 8854, Vocalion 03210,  
1931)

Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys - Vocalion 03139, 1935

Doc Watson - Vanguard VRS 9152, 1964

Go 'way from here, woman, hold out your hand;  
I'll get me a woman like you got your man.

Now she's gone, but I don't worry,  
'Cause I'm sitting on top of the world.

Don't like my peaches, don't shake my tree;  
Get out of this orchard, let my peaches be.

Now she's gone, and I don't worry,  
'Cause I'm sitting on top of the world.

Striped pants and a striped shirt, boys;  
One year and a day, boys, I've got to work.

I've got to work, but I don't worry,  
'Cause I'm sitting on top of the world.

(Repeat first verse)

**Side II; Band 2. STORMY ROSE THE OCEAN**

This song is one of those made up from "floating verses" frequently associated with other songs; in this case, especially, "The True Lover's Farewell" or "The Turtle Dove" or "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose", to name a few of the titles. The verses usually include the lines: "And who will shoe your pretty little feet, and who will glove your hand?" etc., which derive from the Scottish ballad, "The Lass of Roch Royal".

**Discography:**

The Carter Family (The Storms Are On the Ocean) - Victor 20937, 13136176; Montgomery Ward 7021, 1927.

Jean Ritchie and Doc Watson at Folk City - Folkways FA 2426

Maybelle Carter - Old Time Music at Newport; Vanguard VRS 9147, 1964

Oh, don't you see that turtle dove  
That flies from pine to pine?  
It's mourning o'er its old true love,  
Just like I'm mourning for mine.  
Stormy rose the ocean,  
The heaven may cease to be;  
This world may lose its motion, my love,  
When I prove false to thee.

When I prove false to thee, my love,  
When I prove false to thee;  
This world may lose its motion, my love,  
When I prove false to thee.  
Stormy rose the ocean,  
The heaven may cease to be;  
This world may lose its motion, my love,  
When I prove false to thee.

I'm going away, my old true love;  
I won't return no more.  
And I never will see your lonesome face  
For I'll never return no more.

Stormy rose the ocean,  
The heaven may cease to be;  
This world may lose its motion, my love,  
When I prove false to thee.

(repeat first verse)

Side II; Band 3. BONAPARTE'S RETREAT (fiddle)

Hobart says that several years ago two girls who were visiting Saltville asked him if he knew "Bonaparte's Retreat" and he answered, "No, I don't believe I do know that one." A few months later, while Hobart was visiting in Bluefield, Virginia, a country music group on the local radio station played the number and Hobart exclaimed, "Why, I know that tune! I've played it all my life."

The interpretation here, I suspect, owes as much to Hobart's re-hearing of the tune on the radio as to his own earlier playing. The treatment of the "B" section of the tune and the curious introduction of "Little Egypt's Dance" in the middle are probably derived from a "pop" version with lyrics recorded by Pee Wee King about 1954.

The old fiddle tune has long been a favorite among fiddlers and is sometimes called "Bone Part's Retreat" or "Bonaparte Crossing the Rockies".

Discography:

Morrison Twin Brothers String Orchestra - Victor  
Pee Wee King - Victor 21-0111  
Kay Starr - Capitol 1652  
The Watson Family - Folkways FA 2366

References:

Brown, Vol IV., pp. 214-215

Side II; Band 4. CUCKOO BIRD

Songs of the cuckoo are common in European folklore, the cuckoo being considered a harbinger of Spring and, hence, an omen of hope and renewal. Cuckoo bird songs in the Anglo-American tradition usually revolve around the theme of unrequited love with the verses about the bird coming in as a symbol of renewed hope.

The verses in Hobart's short version offer some curious poetry which suggests a strong Southern Mountain influence on the older British song. The first verse appears in the song "Green Grows the Laurel". The reference to the Fourth of July would appear purely American.

Hobart's singing and playing of the song (banjo tuning: GDGCD) serves as an example of the exciting contrapuntal blending of voice and instrument, an art characteristic of the highest development of the musical tradition of this region. The banjo serves as far more than accompaniment, becoming an emotional extension of the performer with a statement of its own to make which is equal in importance to the sung verses. After Hobart has finished singing, the banjo takes over completely and progresses subtly into more complex rhythmic and melodic ornamentations on the basic theme.

Hobart states that he learned this piece from John Greer about fifty years ago and he describes it as his own "choice piece".

#### Discography:

Kelly Harrell - Victor 40047, 1929

Clarence Ashley - Columbia 15489, 1929

Old Time Music at Clarence Ashley's, Part 2 - Folkways  
FA 2359

Edna Ritchie - Folk-Legacy FSA-3

Joseph Able Trivett - Folk-Legacy FSA-2

#### References:

Sharp, Vol. II, pp. 177-183

Brown, Vol. III, pp. 271-273

Belden, pp. 474-476

Randolph, Vol. I, pp. 237-239

Reeves, Idiom of the People, pp. 97-99; Everlasting Circle, pp. 79-80

I've ofttimes set and wondered  
What makes women love men;  
Then I look back and studied  
What makes men love them.  
It ain't nothing but a notion  
That flies through the wind.

They cause you hard trouble,  
They cause you downfall;  
They cause you hard labor, oh,  
Behind prison walls.

Gonna build me a steeple  
On a mountain so high;  
I'll watch my horse race  
As he passes by.

Cuckoo bird, mighty fine bird,  
Oh, she warbles as she flies.  
She ain't cuckooed, she ain't cuckooed,  
Since the Fourth of July.

Side II; Band 5. COLUMBUS STOCKADE BLUES

This song is still a "standard" among Country and Bluegrass musicians and was recently recorded by Bill Monroe. It is a number that was composed, or "put together", before 1928, but just who the "composer" was has not been established.

The refrain, beginning: "Just go and leave me, if you wish to", comes from the song "Dear Companion", as do several other lines in the verses. On the occasion of my wife, Gerry Armstrong, singing "Dear Companion" at the home of Texas Gladden in Salem, Virginia, Texas turned to Hobart and remarked, "We know that song as 'Columbus Stockade'."

Discography:

Darby and Tarlton - Columbia 15212-0, 1928  
Georgia Crackers - Okeh 45192, 1928  
Fiddlin' John Carson - Bluebird 5447; Montgomery Ward  
4848, 1935  
Gerry Armstrong; Simple Gifts ("Dear Companion") -  
Folkways FA 2335  
Edna Ritchie ("Dear Companion") - Folk-Legacy FSA-3

Way down in Columbus, Georgia,  
Back to my home in Tennessee;  
That's where my sweetheart left me,  
Oh, she turned her back on me.  
Go and leave me, if you wish to;  
Never let me cross your mind.  
In your heart, you love another;  
Leave me, darling, I don't mind.

The other night, when I lie sleeping,  
Dreamed I had you in my arms;  
When I awoke, I was mistaken,  
I was peeping through the bars.  
Go and leave me, if you wish to;  
Never let me cross your mind.  
In your heart, you love another;  
Leave me, darling, I don't mind.

Many a night with you I've rambled;  
Many an hour with you I've spent.  
Thought your heart was mine forever,  
Oh, I find it's only lent.

Go and leave me, if you wish to;  
Never let me cross your mind.  
In your heart, you love another;  
Leave me, darling, I don't mind.

Isn't but three things that I wish for:  
Is my coffin shroud in gray.  
When I'm dead, come look upon me,  
Think of what you have to say.

Go and leave me, if you wish to;  
Never let me cross your mind.  
In your heart, you love another;  
Leave me, darling, I don't mind.

When Hobart sang this for us in Salem, Virginia, he included the following additional verse:

Many a night, when you lay sleeping,  
Dreaming of some sweet repose,  
My poor girl (?) lies brokenhearted,  
Listening to the wind that blows.  
Go and leave me, etc.

#### Side II; Band 6. BANJO GROUP II

CINDY - banjo tuning: GCGBD — This is a popular dance piece in the South which probably derives from the minstrel show tradition. Hobart plays it here in an unusual setting which takes the form: aa bb a<sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup> bb, with the second aa part being played on the lower strings.

#### Discography:

Bumgardner and Davis - Columbia 167-D, 1924  
The Hillbillies (Old Time Cinda) - Okeh 40294, 1925  
The Hillbillies (Cinda) - Vocalion 5025, 1927  
Riley Puckett and Clayton McMichen - Columbia 15232, 1927  
Vernon Dalhart - Silvertone 5062, 8140, 9027;  
Challenge 405, 1927

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME - banjo tuning: GDGBD - This title has been applied to two unrelated pieces, the best known being an old Irish tune sometimes called "Brighton Camp" which was used as a marching song in the British and American armies as well as functioning as a dance tune and play-party song.

The second piece is derived from a British broad-side ballad (Laws P 1 B) which generally begins with the line: "My parents raised me tenderly, they had no child but me." The tune played here by Hobart seems to be a variant of the former, with some melodic influence from a tune reminiscent of "Old Joe Clark".

JOHN HARDY - banjo tuning: GDGBD - This is an instrumental rendition of the widely known song which tells of a murder in a gambling fight and the subsequent capture and execution of the murderer, John Hardy. The song is linked with a case on record of the execution of a Negro railroad worker named John Hardy in McDowell County, West Virginia, in 1894. There has been considerable confusion between the identity of this John Hardy and the legendary John Henry, who supposedly worked on the Big Bend Tunnel in West Virginia in 1870.

#### Discography:

Eva Davis - Columbia 167-D, 1924  
Buell Kazee - Brunswick 144, 1927  
Clarence Green - Columbia 15654, 1929  
Carter Family - Victor 40190, 1928; Bluebird 6033,  
Montgomery Ward 4741  
Frank Proffitt - Folkways FA 2360  
Max Hunter - Folk-Legacy FSA-11

#### Side II; Band 7. MEET ME IN ROSE TIME, ROSIE

Hobart is very fond of doing this piece which he describes as an "old time love song." The thumping heard in the chorus is Hobart beating on the guitar with the side of his hand.

Harlan Daniel, who has supplied so much of the early discography for these notes, owns a copy of the original sheet music for this song. The words are by William Jerome and the music by Jean Schwartz. The copyright was obtained in 1908 by Cohan and Harris, 115 West 42nd Street, New York, the heart of real "Tin Pan Alley".

Rosie, get wize, gaze in your eyes,  
Can't you see that lovelight gleaming?  
Think of the fun, when we are one,  
I'll be Mister and you'll be Mrs.  
For rose time only comes but once a year,  
And don't forget to meet me, Rosie dear;  
Oh, meet me in rose time, Rosie,  
Meet me in rose time, Rose.  
True loves are always cozy,  
Each little rosebud knows.

Don't you keep me waiting, Rosie,  
Put on your wedding clothes.  
Meet me in rose time,  
Dear sweet repose time,  
Meet me in rose time, Rose.

Hearts that are true, you'll find them few.  
You can live on love and kisses.  
Think of the fun, when we are one,  
I'll be mister and you'll be Mrs.  
For rose time only comes but once a year,  
And don't forget to meet me, Rosie dear;  
Oh, meet me in rose time, Rosie,  
Meet me in rose time, Rose.  
True loves are always cozy,  
Each little rosebud knows.  
Don't you keep me waiting, Rosie,  
Put on your wedding clothes.  
Meet me in rose time,  
Dear sweet repose time,  
Meet me in rose time, Rose.

#### Side II; Band 8. UNCLOUDY DAY

This is a popular religious song from the early part of this century. In some of the old songbooks of the day, it is credited to the Reverend J. K. Alwood. This is one of Hobart's favorite sacred songs. He performs it here with banjo accompaniment, although he also sings it with either the fiddle or the guitar. This is, in fact, the case with many of the songs in Hobart's repertoire.

#### Discography:

Homer Rodheaver and Doris Doe - Columbia 872-D, 1925  
Paramount Sacred Four - Paramount 3078, 1927  
Smith's Sacred Singers - Columbia 15351-D, 1929  
Pete Steele - Folkways FS 3828

#### References:

Favorite Songs and Hymns #53  
Pentecostal Jewels #85

Oh, they tell me of a home where no storm clouds  
rise,  
Oh, they tell me of a home far away.  
Oh, they tell me of a home where no storm clouds  
rise,  
Oh, they tell me of an uncloudy day.

Oh, the land of cloudless day,  
Oh, the land of an unclouded sky;  
Oh, they tell me of a home where no storm  
clouds rise,  
Oh, they tell me of an uncloudy day.

Oh, they tell me of a home where my friends have  
gone,  
Oh, they tell me of a home far away.  
Oh, they tell me that no tears never comes again  
To the lovely land of uncloudy day.

Oh, they tell me that there's smiles on the  
children there,  
Smiles drive the sorrows all away;  
Then they tell me that no tears never comes again  
To the lovely land of uncloudy day.

Oh, the land of cloudless day,  
Oh, the land of an unclouded sky;  
Oh, they tell me of a home way beyond the sky,  
Oh, they tell me of an uncloudy day.

Oh, the land of cloudless day,  
Oh, the land of an unclouded sky;  
Oh, they tell me of a home far beyond the sky,  
Oh, they tell me of an uncloudy day.

#### A HOBART SMITH DISCOGRAPHY

Library of Congress recording - AAFS L7

CLAUDE ALLEN - sung with guitar

Disc Records 787 (no longer available)

Texas Gladden Sings Blue Ridge Ballads - includes songs,  
instrumentals and accompaniments by Hobart Smith)

RAILROAD BILL, POOR ELLEN SMITH, DOWN IN THE  
WILLOW GARDEN, I'M NEVER TO MARRY, THE HOUSE  
CARPENTER, LONESOME ROAD BLUES, SOURWOOD  
MOUNTAIN, ARKANSAS TRAVELER, THE DEVIL AND  
THE FARMER

Trafition Records TLP 1007

Instrumental Music of the Southern Appalachians (in-  
cludes instrumentals by Hobart Smith - no vocals)

PATTEROLLER SONG (fretless banjo)  
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