FSA-22

The Traditional Music of

BEECH MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA VOL. I

"The Older Ballads and Sacred Songs"

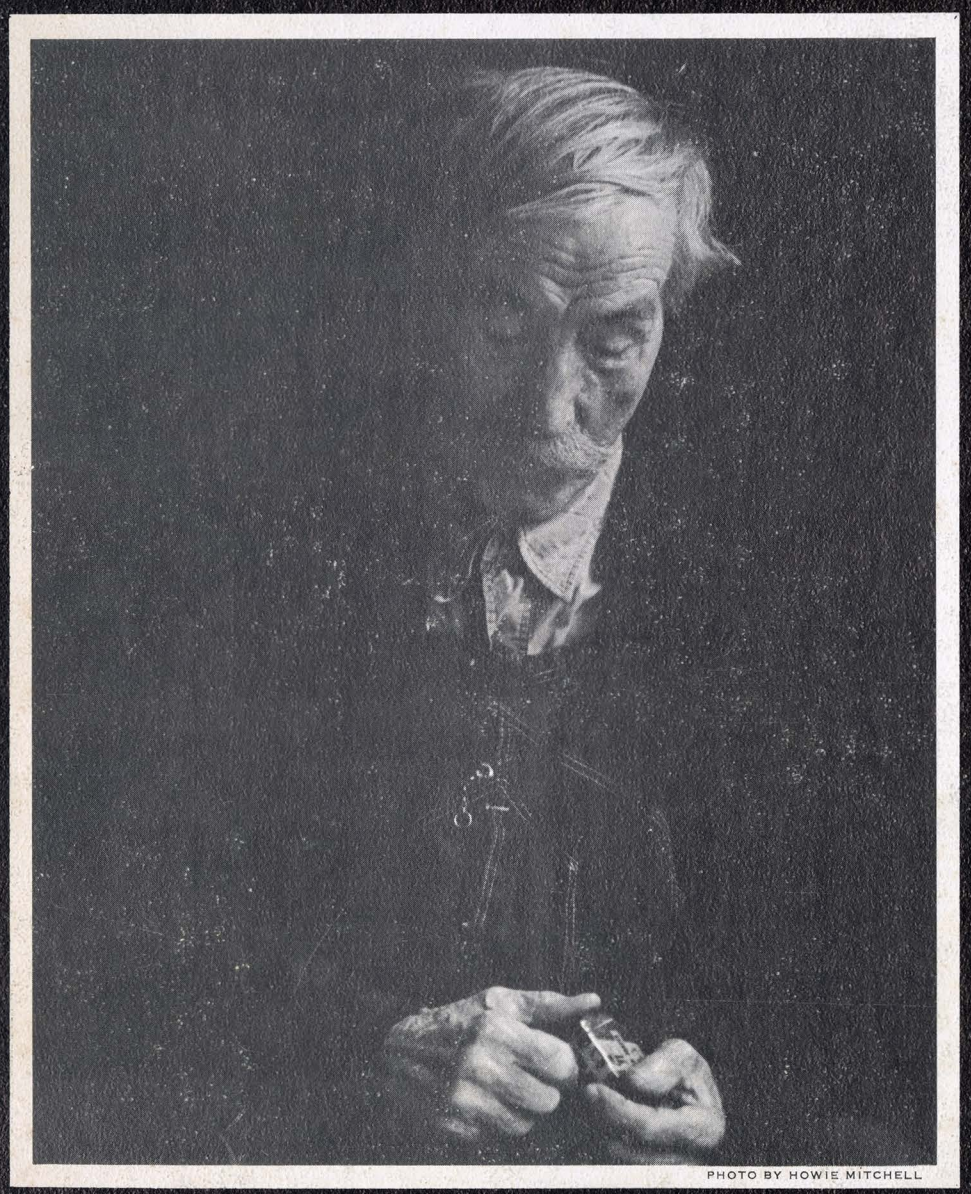

PHOTO BY HOWIE MITCHELL

featuring:

Lee Monroe Presnell · Buna Hicks
Lena Armstrong · Hattie Presnell
Etta Jones · Rosa Presnell

FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. FSA-22

The Traditional Music of

BEECH MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

VOLUME I: *"The Older Ballads and Sacred Songs"*

Beech Mountain's dark bulk rises on the borders of Watauga and Avery Counties in Northwestern North Carolina, a part of the long Blue Ridge chain which extends from Maryland to Northern Georgia. Here, in the relative isolation of a remote section of the Southern Appalachians, dwell the decendents of the region's first settlers, many of whom retain the music and the customs of their forefathers. Collectors of folklore have visited the Beech, as it is called by its residents, off and on for over thirty years, but the two volumes of this set represent the first attempt to share with the general public the rich musical heritage of the area by way of modern recording techniques.

Back in 1936, G. Schirmer, Inc., published a small paper-bound book containing 20 songs collected on the Beech by Maurice Matteson and edited by Mellinger Edward Henry. Mr. Matteson provided the arrangements and the piano accompaniments. Eight of the twenty songs were collected from the late Nathan Hicks, a member of the Hicks family so well represented on these records. It was Nathan's fame as a dulcimer maker that first took Frank Warner to the Beech, a trip that resulted in the discovery of many fine singers and songs, not the least of which was the now famous Frank Proffitt, Nathan's son-in-law (see FSA-1). Nathan was also the father of one of the finest tale-tellers of the Southern Mountains, Ray Hicks (see FTA-14). From the foregoing, one can easily see that the Beech has long been a treasure chest of tradition and it remains so today. As I wrote in the introduction to Ray Hicks' recording, "Folk traditions on the Beech fade slowly and die hard."

Originally planned as a single record surveying the musical heritage of Beech Mountain, the present two volumes were necessitated by the large number of items gathered from many people there over a period of several years. Each return visit produced new songs and singers—and new friendships—among the residents of this ruggedly beautiful corner of North Carolina. Selecting the songs to be included became increasingly difficult as the mass of collectanea grew. It was finally decided that the material justified a two volume set, to be divided between the older ballad tradition and the later songs and hymns, but all representative of the home-made music of the Beech Mountain people.

Side 1:

AWAKE, AWAKE, MY OLD TRUE LOVER
SIR LIONEL (Child 18)
FIVE NIGHTS DRUNK (Child 274)
SWEET SOLDIER BOY
THE HOUSE CARPENTER (Child 243)
WILLIAM HALL
THE TWO SISTERS (Child 10)
THE DAY IS PAST AND GONE

Side 2:

THE FARMER'S CURST WIFE (Child 278)
JOHNNY, OH, JOHNNY
JOHNNY DOYLE
THE JEALOUS BROTHERS
YOUNG BEHAM (Child 53)
PRETTY CROWING CHICKEN (Child 248)
GEORGE COLLINS (Child 85)
WHERE THE SUN WILL NEVER GO DOWN
FATHERS, NOW OUR MEETING IS OVER

FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.
Huntington, Vermont
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

The Traditional Music of

BEECH MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

Volume I

Produced by Sandy Paton
and Lee B. Haggerty

Notes by Sandy Paton

FSA-22

FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.
SHARON, CONNECTICUT 06069

DEDICATION

"Fathers, now our meeting is over,
Fathers, we must part,
And, if I never see you any more,
I'll love you with my heart."

Lee Monroe Presnell passed away in the winter of 1963. It is to the memory of this great ballad singer, of this great man, that these two albums are dedicated.

THE RECORDS

My first visit to Beech Mountain was made during the Autumn of 1961. Since then, I have returned several times to renew increasingly warm friendships and to record more of the people who make their home on that darkly beautiful mountain. Each visit has produced new material — tales, yarns, remedies, customs, as well as songs and ballads. The folk of the Beech live still close to the roots of their tradition. Radio and television have, of course, influenced the music currently popular on the mountain, but the older traditions linger; indeed, in the more remote sections of the Beech, they thrive.

While most of the songs, ballads and instrumental pieces are truly traditional, having been learned by the various performers through the process of oral transmission, this has not been the criterion applied in the selection of the numbers used in the two volumes of the set. My purpose was to document the musical culture of the community as it exists today in the homes of the people, not to sift it for folkloristic pearls, although each of the two records contains a few of these collector's delights. That Tab Ward may or may not have learned his version of "Little Maggie" from an early recording of the song was not my concern. That Tab and his friends like it and sing it was sufficient reason for its inclusion. Perhaps it is time for folklorists, recognizing the impact of the early recording industry on the folk communities of America, to draw a distinction between "oral transmission", i.e., that body of lore learned directly from another individual, and "aural transmission", referring to material learned, also "by ear", from recordings, radio, and the like.

I have not included, however, any of the "town music" which seems to be popular among the younger members of the Beech Mountain community, especially the teen-agers. This contemporary music is copied directly from Nashville recording artists such as Johnny Cash and Flatt and Scruggs and is performed, not in the homes, but in the gas-station-general-

store hangouts on the outskirts of Boone, the largest town in the area. Saturday nights will find a few of the boys from Beech Creek piling into their cars and heading toward Boone in search of music and mates, but, generally speaking, this is "town music" and apparently has no place in the rural homes of Beech Mountain. I am convinced that I have applied no alien aesthetic in excluding it here. The folk of the Beech have obviously applied their own aesthetic, distinguishing between commercial music, which is all right for town, and the home-made music of an earlier vintage, which is apparently more acceptable in the homes of the older residents. As an editorial aside, I might add that this observation has led me to the conclusion that commercial music, from Bluegrass to C&W, belongs on the stages where it was nurtured, if not born, while the older traditional music remains more appropriate in the quiet setting of the home. It occurs to me that we, who are now giving this music an important place in our lives, could profit from the example set by the folk of Beech Mountain and learn to draw a similar distinction.

The Gospel songs, on the other hand, have a very definite place in the homes on Beech Mountain. Because they have been learned in churches and singing schools from sacred songbooks and hymnals, these religious songs may be scorned by the folk-song purist who would discard that which does not derive directly from the Anglo-American tradition, transmitted exclusively by means of the sacrosanct oral process. I have elected to disregard what might be termed the "Anglophilic syndrome" and have included even the quite recent Gospel songs for the simple reason that they are deeply loved and often sung by the people of the Beech and form an important part of their home-made musical culture. I have probably spent as many evenings singing hymns with the Harmons in their Beech Creek home as I have spent recording R. L., Margie and Coot Greene singing their favorites.

Which brings me to one final point: collecting folklore in some depth from the people of a particular community is both more challenging and more rewarding to the collector than the approach which permits him to pass briefly through an area, snatching a handful of folkloric items en route. The prolonged association necessary for any sort of depth collecting transforms an "informant" into a friend. This personal involvement brings with it, quite naturally, the responsibilities concomitant with any friendship. It is my firm belief that we can learn much from a study of folklore, but the value of what we learn can be measured only as it applies to our daily lives. This statement is not to be construed as an endorsement of anti-intellectualism or of a romantic, back-to-nature approach to the folklore field. I realize that a well-indexed box of file cards can be a mighty handy tool, but I am convinced that friendships gather less dust. The people you hear on these two albums have given me a great deal more than just songs and, if my objectivity has been destroyed by my gratitude, I do not regret it.

THE LAND

Beech Mountain is made up of a dark mass of connected ridges which culminate in a rugged outcropping of rock known as "The Pinnacles". Mellinger E. Henry describes it as one of the shorter cross-ranges lying between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany Mountains. Its sinuous ridges are dotted with small tobacco farms and criss-crossed with dirt and gravel roads which seem to cling perilously to the steep slopes and serve to connect the mountain farms with the main highways. It is extraordinarily beautiful country; its stretches of dense timber, patterned by the natural "balds" and the cleared ground of farmland, are thick with Great Laurel or Rhododendron, laced with ivy, and highlighted by a profusion of wildflowers. Its deep hollows, especially when viewed in the late afternoon, are like so many dark blue fingers pointing crookedly at the crests of higher ground. Game is plentiful still, although nowhere near as abundant as it must have been when the ancestors of the present residents first broke their way through the forbidding wilderness to clear small patches of land and establish their homesteads. As primitive agricultural practices exhausted the original fields, the men would fell more trees, roll them into great piles, and burn them. Log-rolling parties were big social events, much like the better-known barn raisings; while the men made a competitive sport out of the arduous task of piling the logs, the women would prepare great feasts to be shared by all. Afterward, while the huge fires lit the scene, there would be dancing to the music of fiddle and banjo, followed by singing, as the youngsters fell asleep in the arms of their mothers and the not-so-youngsters found the darker edges of the firelight's glow a pleasant place to try their luck at a little courting.

Those were the days of subsistence farming; today, burley tobacco is the major cash crop, although the people of the Beech still raise most of their own food, stocking their root cellars and canning vegetables in preparation for the winter months. Almost everyone keeps a few chickens, some raise a hog for salt-pork, but, as a general rule, meat is a luxury few can afford.

Hard as it is, these mountain people love their life and their land. It's more than just being at home in one's surroundings and unfamiliar with other ways of life. Many of the younger men have left the area to seek work elsewhere, some going as far as Detroit or Toledo to find factory jobs, but they all seem to return after a short time. Their attachment to their land and their people is much too strong to break. An older woman of the Beech once expressed this feeling to me. We were standing on the road to "Uncle Monroe" Presnell's tiny house, gazing over the landscape toward the summit of the mountain, when she suddenly asked, "Have you been to the top of the Beech yet? Oh, it's beautiful up there! It's always

been a 'free mountain', too, you know — open to us for hunting, for picking berries and gathering herbs — not all fenced off and private like some of the mountains hereabouts. Yes, it's been good to us, the Beech has — fed a lot of people."

THE PEOPLE

Perhaps a half dozen names predominate on Beech Mountain, with Harmon, Ward, Hicks and Presnell appearing to be the most widely spread. (I trust the Glenns, Guys, Greenes, Masts, and others will not be slighted by this observation.) Most would appear to be of British origin, although the Harmons are sure that they stem from German immigrants who settled in either New York or Pennsylvania many generations ago. If this is the case, it may help to explain the unusually rich tradition of tale telling, especially of the "Jack Tales", found on the Beech. The songs and ballads, however, remain close to their British counterparts. Due to the relative isolation of the community, intermarriage has been taking place for many years. Cousin marriages are not uncommon, although marriages of first cousins are relatively rare. Blood lines can become fairly thin, even while surnames remain the same, given a long enough period of isolation. For example, a man may not consider himself related to another man bearing the same surname, at least "not close enough to count", although they may live within ten or fifteen miles of one another.

Many of the songs and nearly all of the tales traditional in the community may be traced back to the almost legendary Council Harmon, described by collector Richard Chase as "the lodestone" of Beech Mountain lore. This great patriarchal figure was Lee Monroe Presnell's grandfather, which means he was the great-grandfather of Lena Armstrong and Etta Jones. He was a great-uncle of Buna Hicks and a great-great-uncle of R. L. and Margie Harmon. Since Hattie and Rosa Presnell are Buna's daughters, he was their great-great-uncle as well. To go more deeply into the relationships of the people on these two records would require too much space and a more carefully indexed card file than mine. Suffice it to point out that a great portion of the material here recorded may be considered the folklore legacy of Council Harmon.

Two other sources of Beech Mountain folklore have become apparent to me during my several trips to the area. The first is Lee Monroe Presnell himself, who spent some years in the state of Arkansas and brought many songs back with him upon his return. The second source, clearly a very important one, was a man named John Calvin Younts (the spelling is somewhat arbitrary — it could easily be either Younce or Yance), better known among the Beech Mountain folk as "Lie-hue", a nickname bestowed upon him due to his immense skill at decorating truth with incredible fancy. "Lie-hue" traveled all over the South-

ern Appalachians, stopping to work (more or less) only when the pressure of his circumstances made it absolutely necessary. This itinerant folksayer brought many songs into the community, not to mention his huge store of fabrications, yarns, tall tales, and just plain lies, all of which endeared him to the children much more than to their less credulous parents. Lena Armstrong still bursts out laughing whenever she repeats a tale learned from or concerning "Lie-hue", partly because the stories are invariably preposterous, but mostly, I suspect, because she recalls the fabulous man with such delight.

Tab Ward tells of a time when "Lie-hue" dropped in to stay a few days with Tab's family. Such visits were always treats for the youngsters, for they meant hours of entertainment with songs and yarns. Tab's folks may not have been so pleased, for "Lie-hue" was immediately sent out to chop some wood as a contribution toward his keep. Early in that first afternoon of chopping, "Lie-hue" managed to take a nasty swipe at his ankle with the axe. The injury laid him up for weeks, during which time the Wards had to feed and care for him, of course. The day it was decided that he was well enough to work again, "Lie-hue" disappeared and, to add insult to injury, walked off wearing the best pair of trousers Tab's father owned under his own threadbare overalls. The photograph below shows "Lie-hue" as most of the Beech Mountain folk remember him — surrounded by his favorite possessions: an old, hand-made, fretless banjo, an ancient rifle, a pistol, and a generously proportioned jug which probably never held a drop of water.

Wiley Smith Harmon, father of R. L. and Margie, is one of the most respected members of the Beech Creek community. Born just a few miles up the mountain from the house in which he and his family now live, Mr. Harmon worked his way through Appalachian State Teachers College and became the schoolteacher and postmaster of the community. During the 1890's, "Postmaster Wiley" began writing down "song ballets", many of which he has preserved to this day. "The Soldier and the Lady", sung on Volume II by his son and daughter, was taken from an old broadside printing of the song; the melody used is the one remembered by Mrs. Harmon from the singing of one of her aunts. Thus, "song ballets" and the broadside presses have contributed to the music of the Beech, coupled with the process of oral transmission. The Harmons have always acted as my hosts during my visits to Beech Creek and I would like to express to them my deepest gratitude. Without their hospitality and constant assistance, these records would probably not exist.

THE PERFORMERS

Lee Monroe Presnell, called either "Uncle Monroe" or "Preacher Monroe" by the people of the Beech, was the ballad singing patriarch of the community when I first recorded him in 1961. He lived in a tiny, one-room shack on his son's land, high on one of Beech Mountain's many ridges. He "took his meals" with his son and his family, but always maintained his independence by spending most of his time in his own dwelling. Mr. Presnell was a lay-preacher for many years and was deeply loved by the entire population of the region. As one woman put it: "He was one of the sweetest preachers!" Mr. Presnell enjoyed vigorous health until the last few years of his life. By the time I was privileged to meet him and to record him, he was really quite ill and experiencing a great deal of discomfort. Behind the shortness of breath caused by his illness and his age, however, one can still hear the classic ballad style with its delicate ornamentation and highly expressive phrasing. I feel fortunate, indeed, to have been able to obtain tapes made of "Uncle Monroe" by Diane Hamilton, Liam Clancy and Paul Clayton several years before my first visit to the Beech. Although his voice, even then, had lost much of its strength, his artistry is undeniable. During my first recording session with "Uncle Monroe", I commented on the beauty of one of his ballads. The old man, then 86, smiled and said, "Yes, it is a beautiful song, isn't it? I always could tell when a song had a sweetness in it, and it makes me sad when I can't get that sweetness out any more, old as I am." Those who know what to listen for in ballad singing will agree with me, I'm sure, that the sweetness was still there, in spite of Mr. Presnell's self-criticism.

Mrs. Buna Hicks (whose full name, Frank Warner tells me, is Bunavista) is Monroe Presnell's niece. I have heard her called "Granny Hicks", but never to her face. She is not sure of her exact age, as the family Bible in which the date of her birth was entered has been lost, but she estimates her age at "around 74". If the estimate is correct, it is a very young 74, for Mrs. Hicks is a handsome, sprightly woman, quick to laugh and full of music. As she says, "I can make a noise on just about anything — guitar, banjo, or fiddle — but I don't play none of 'em well." The fiddle she plays on the present records was laboriously carved by her son, Captain, a number of years ago. Those who are familiar with the music of Frank Proffitt might be interested to know that Mrs. Hicks is the great aunt of Frank's wife, Bessie. Mrs. Hicks' late husband, Robey, was one of the men with whom Frank used to make music up on the Beech after hiking across country more than ten miles to do so. Many of Mrs. Hicks' songs are those she remembers her husband singing and playing. Last year, Mrs. Hicks travelled to Asheville, North Carolina, to appear in the folk music festival there, her first public appearance.

Hattie Presnell, Mrs. Hicks' daughter, is in her mid-fifties. She remembers more of the "old timey" songs than most members of her generation and sings them in what the mountain folk call a "fine" (i.e., light, soft) voice. Her version of "The Gray Cock" was the only one I heard in the community; the same may be said of her "Jealous Brothers" and "William Hall". I recorded Hattie in the home of her sister, Rosa Presnell, who sings "Soldier John" on Volume II of this set and joins her mother in singing "I Want to See My Savior Sometime" on Volume I. Rosa has a much stronger voice, more like her mother's, although her singing style has been more clearly influenced by commercial recordings and has lost the glottal stops and grace notes utilized by the older ballad singers, the unconscious use of which makes her mother's singing so outstanding. I can offer no simple explanation for the fact that Hattie has retained more of the older ballads, although the fact that her home is one of the few on Beech Mountain yet to be serviced with electricity may be of significance. Actually, I think Hattie just happened to love the older traditions more than most. I recall her showing me how they used to do the clog dance on the Beech, years ago, at the end of my first recording session there.

Captain Hicks (that is his given name), Buna's son, is a tall, dark haired, ruggedly angular man with a twinkling eye and a ready smile. He made the banjo which his wife, Viola, plays to accompany his mother's fiddle and, as mentioned above, he made the fiddle, too. The banjo resembles

that shown in the picture of "Lie-hue". The small head is made of squirrel hide, although Captain assures me that cat skins make the very best banjo heads. He explains, "If you use a squirrel hide, you've got to get a big one and you've got to be sure you don't put your bullet through his body or you'll ruin the hide. What you do is wait till he pokes his head out from behind a branch and then you shoot him in the eye." Captain's friends assure me that he can accomplish this consistently at distances of fifty yards and better. Captain's wife, Viola, is a soft-spoken, shy, plumply attractive woman. The dulcimer she plays on Volume II was made for her mother some thirty years ago by her uncle, Windsor Hicks. She plays it in the old traditional style of the Beech, noting it with a hardwood stick and plucking it with a thin, flexible sliver of hickory. Captain accompanies her on the guitar, playing a more or less Carter Family style. The easy precision with which they move from one tune to another is clear evidence of many hours spent making music in their home.

Tab Ward was both a farmer and a mason before ill-health forced him to retire. He lives down on the Watauga River and his farm, which he now rents out on shares, is one of the best in the area. The steep ridges of the Beech leave very little bottom land and the man who own some of it is fortunate, indeed. Tab was never one for "book-learning" and has very little formal education, but he could watch a man perform a skilled job just once and then could turn right around and do it himself. For over thirty years, Tab had no banjo and his fiddle hung neglected in his attic. After his wife passed away, however, Tab found time to bring the fiddle down once again and, soon afterward, made himself a fretless banjo. When I asked him why he had never married again, Tab grinned and said, "I guess I just like my freedom too much." Nowadays, one can drive past his neat, white house almost any evening and hear music being made by Tab and his friends. When I first visited Tab, he could recall only a few of the old songs, but these regular evening sessions have stimulated his memory and many of the tunes are now coming back to him.

Lena Armstrong and Etta Jones are daughters of Lee Monroe Presnell and make their home in Poteau, Oklahoma. When their father was working in Arkansas, one of these daughters married and stayed on in that state after her father moved back to the Beech. Later, the other daughter returned to Arkansas to be near her sister, married, and now both have moved to Poteau, a small town near the Arkansas border, practically in the foothills of the Ozarks. While recording Ozark singers in 1962, I realized how close I was to their home and drove over to pay them a visit and give them a photograph I had taken of their father. My intention was merely to visit the daughters of a man I dearly loved; it turned out, however, to be a long and highly rewarding recording session. I had been told that Lena

had a knack for remembering words and would be apt to recall some of the songs once widely known on the Beech. She certainly lived up to her reputation. In 1963, my associate in Folk-Legacy, Lee B. Haggerty, went again to the Beech and was delighted to find Lena and Etta visiting their father. The result of this chance encounter was another recording session and more good songs.

R. L. and Margie Harmon live with their parents in Beech Creek. When I first met them, Margie was working as a waitress in one of Boone's resort hotels, although I understand she is now working in one of the garment factories located there. R. L. works on road construction jobs most of the time, usually as a foreman, but Boone is rapidly becoming a famous resort area and the last time I saw him he was working on a ski-slope development over on the Grandfather Mountain, a job which required him to drive quite a long distance to and from work every day on top of working a twelve-hour shift. How he managed to have the strength and the patience to stay up for our late evening recording sessions, I'll never know. It didn't take much perception to see that his wife, Grace, was worried about him, knowing that he would never get enough rest to be ready for another hard day on the job, but R. L. insisted and for several days we stayed up late singing and recording hymns. Coot Greene, whose real name is Ottie (although I've never heard anyone call him that), is the bass of the trio and a very close friend of the entire Harmon family. He has worked in factories in Detroit, but finds the lure of the Beech too strong to resist for any length of time; periodically, he give up the high wages and returns home to help out on the farm. At this time, I understand, he is working with R. L. on a local construction job. Coot is a big, good-natured fellow, whose easy-going manner and mellow humor simply exude warmth. So far, he's managed to remain single, but he'd better watch out — some gal's going to grab him pretty soon. I only hope she sings as well as he does; I'll be going to the Beech to record a quartet, rather than a trio, if such proves to be the case.

There are many more singers and musicians on the Beech, but the limitations of space and time have made it necessary for us to exclude some of those who have graciously recorded for us. Our desire was to give a typical sampling of the songs and tunes still to be heard in the Beech Mountain homes. Originally, this was planned to be a single record, but we soon realized that even a two record set would be less than the depth survey we had hoped to produce. Our recording of Ray Hicks (FTA-14) presents the tale-telling tradition of the community and might be considered as a third record in the series, although it was produced separately.

Beech Mountain may have been good to its residents, as

the lady said, but the residents of Beech Mountain have been more than good to us. My associate, Lee B. Haggerty, and I want to express our thanks to all of the good people who welcomed us into their homes, sang and played for us, and invariably invited us to take dinner with them and to "stay all night", strangers though we were, and Yankees, to boot. The many friendships we have formed during our visits to "the Beech" have greatly enriched our lives.

Sandy Paton
Huntington, Vermont

THE SONGS — VOLUME I

Side I; Band 1. AWAKE, AWAKE, MY OLD TRUE LOVER
(Laws M 4)

Somehow, from the first time I heard "Uncle Monroe" Presnell sing this version of "The Drowsy Sleeper", I knew it would, one day, be the opening song on an album. He was 86 years old when he sang it for me and he sang it well, despite its extreme melodic range. "Uncle Monroe" usually sang with his eyes closed, his right hand moving in a way that almost described the melody line, rising and falling with the musical phrase. The movement did not resemble the steady, emphatic motion of the arm which Sacred Harp singers often use to maintain the established rhythm of their hymn; it seemed to reflect, rather, the text as well as the tune, much as his rhythm reflects the textual phrase instead of following a steady beat. Those who are familiar with British ballad singing will recognize the similarity of style, which is, essentially, that of telling a story on a melodic line.

This British broadside ballad has been widely recovered in North America; Laws lists many published versions of the ballad.*

Awake, awake, my old true lover;
Awake, arise, it's almost day.
How can you bear those soft, soft sleeping,
And your true love going away?

*All ballads included in the present collection which appear in Laws' American Balladry from British Broadsides or Native American Balladry will be given the singer's title, followed by Laws' identifying letter and number. Since his works list the published versions of each ballad, a similar listing here would be redundant.

Oh, who is that a-knocking at my window?
I pray you, tell to me.
It's me, it's me, your old true lover;
Awake, arise, come pity me.

Go, love, go and ask your father
If this night you could be my bride.
If he says no, so return and tell me;
(It will) be my last time ever bother thee.

I can't go and ask my father,
For he's on his bed of rest,
And by his side there lies a weapon
To kill the one that I love best.

Go, love, go and ask your mama
If this night you could be my bride.
If she says no, so return and tell me;
Be my last time ever bother thee.

I can't go and ask my mama
And tell her of your love so dear.
You may go and court some other
And whisper softly in her ear.

I will go to some wide river,
Spend my days, my months and years;
Eat anything but the green growing willow,
Also drink from my flowing tears.

Come back, come back, my old true lover
And stay a little while with me.
I will forsake my dear old mother
And go along by the side of thee.

("I can't get it up high enough to sing!")

Side I; Band 2. SIR LIONEL

To the best of my knowledge, only once before has a serious version of the ballad (Child 18) sung here by Buna Hicks been recorded in America. Herbert Halpert collected a more complete text, otherwise closely resembling Buna's, from Samuel Harmon (a relative of Mrs. Hicks)of Maryville, Tennessee, in 1939, which may be heard on the Library of Congress recording AAFS-57. These two American texts are similar to Child's "C" text which is titled "The Jovial Hunter of Bromsgrove" and has the refrain: "Wind well thy horn, good hunter" where we have "Blow your horn, Center". Child's text was taken from the recitation of a Benjamin Brown in Worcestershire, England, in 1845, although the

date of that recovery has no pertinence to the antiquity of the ballad. Indeed, in his notes, Child remarks that the "ballad has much in common with the romance of 'Sir Eglamour of Artois'."

Alfred Williams, in Folk Songs of the Upper Thames, prints a version from North Wilts which also resembles the Child text. A comparison of these several versions proves interesting. The hero in Child's "C" text is "Sir Ryalas"; in Williams' version the name is "Sir Rylas"; in our version he is not named. The refrain lines in Child are quite comparable to ours (one can speculate on the change of something like "Blow your horns, hunter" to the "Blow your horn, Center" sung by Mrs. Hicks), while the Williams text demonstrates the beginnings of the nonsense refrain generally associated with the widely known "Old Bangum" versions of the ballad, in that what Williams describes as an interpretation of the sound of the horn is occasionally inserted ("I an dan dilly dan killy koko an"). In the "Old Bangum" versions, of course, the once dramatic battle between the heroic knight and the vicious wild boar becomes farcical, with all traces of magic or witchcraft removed and the poor hero wielding a wooden knife. Child's text has Sir Ryalas attacked by a "wild woman", following his victory over the wild boar, "and he fairly split her head in twain". Williams' Sir Rylas is also attacked by a "wild woman" and he "split her head down to the chin". In our version, the wild woman has become a "witch-wife" whose head is split "to the chin". Our text appears to be nearer to the Child text in some respects, while sharing several variations with the Williams text. Perhaps our version came to America prior to the influence of the anonymous folk artist who first decided to add the sounds of the horn to the ballad, the interpolation of which eventually may have led to the comic "Old Bangum" versions with their odd refrains, so often sounding like a young Latin scholar conjugating his verbs rather than an imitation of a hunter's bugle, and the Williams text represents a surprising recovery of a transitional form of the ballad still being sung in England in the early part of this century. At any rate, all three are parts of a darned rare specimen of the ancient ballad tradition.

Mrs. Hicks recalls her fragment from the singing of her late husband, Robey Hicks. Rena Hicks, the mother of Ray Hicks who tells the old "Jack Tales" on our FTA-14, has written out a more complete text for me, but her health no longer permits her to sing. I found no one else on Beech Mountain who could recall the ballad. Needless to say, I would be delighted to hear from anyone who does know it.

He looked to the east, he looked to the west,
Blow your horn, Center;
He blowed his horn both east and west,
Just like a jobal (jovial) hunter.

He met the witch-wife on the bridge,
Blow your horn, Center;
They fit three hours by the day,
If you are the jobal hunter.

He split the witch-wife to the chin,
Blow your horn, Center;
And on his way he went again,
Just like a jobal hunter.

He went till he came to the wild boar's den,
Blow your horn, Center;
There laid the bones of ten thousand men,
If you are the jobal hunter.

The wild boar heared him to his den,
Blow your horn, Center;
He made the oak and ash to bend,
If you are the jobal hunter.

The wild boar he did slay,
Blow your horn, Center;
And on his way he went again,
Just like a jobal hunter.

Side I; Band 3. FIVE NIGHTS DRUNK

Hattie Presnell, Buna Hicks' daughter, sings this version of "Our Goodman" (Child 274). The sequence of verses is reversed from that usually found and is not, perhaps, as logical as those versions which have the poor cuckold proceed from the stable, through the house, and, finally, to the bed. Max Hunter, of Springfield, Missouri, sang us a version of the ballad which utilized the same sequence, but he had a few additional verses which suggested that the unfaithful wife had received more than one visitor. Neither version includes the often omitted final stanza which gets a bit anatomical in its bawdry. Hattie's use of "heel-irons" as a term for spurs also appears in Thomas Smith's version from Zionville, Watauga County, published as the "A" text in The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore. Until Joe Hickerson presents us with his long-awaited exhaustive study of this particular ballad in its many forms, I find myself disinclined to further observations for fear of contradiction. Joe's work is complicated by the fact that the ballad is very widely known.

One night I come home,
Drunk as I could be;
I found a head upon the pillow
Where my head ought to be.
"Come here, my little wife, baby,
Explain this thing to me.
How come a head on the pillow
Where my head ought to be?"

"You old fool, you blind fool,
Can't you never see?
It's nothing but a cabbage head
My mama sent to me."
"I've traveled this wide world over
Ten thousand miles or more;
A moustache on a cabbage head
I never have seen before."

Next night I come home,
Drunk as I could be;
Found a coat a-hanging on a rack
Where my coat ought to be.
"Come here, my little wife, baby,
Explain this thing to me.
How come a coat a-hanging on a rack
Where my coat ought to be?"

"You old fool, you blind fool,
Can't you never see?
It's nothing but a bed quilt
My mama sent to me."
"I've traveled this wide world over
Ten thousand miles or more;
Pockets on a bed quilt
I never did see before."

Next night I come home,
Drunk as I could be;
I found a hat on the table
Where my hat ought to be.
"Come here, my little wife, baby,
Explain this thing to me.
How come a hat on the table
Where my hat ought to be?"

"You old fool, you blind fool,
Can't you never see?
It's nothing but a butter-dish
My mama sent to me."
"I've traveled this wide world over
Ten thousand miles or more,
But a band around a butter-dish
I never did see before."

Next night I come home,
Drunk as I could be;
Found a pair of boots a-setting in the corner
Where my boots ought to be.
"Come here, my little wife, baby,
Explain this thing to me.
How come a pair of boots in the corner
Where my boots ought to be?"

"You old fool, you blind fool;
Can't you never see?
It's nothing but a churn
My mama sent to me."
"I've traveled this wide world over
Ten thousand miles or more;
Heel-irons upon a churn
I never did see before."

Next night I come home,
Drunk as I could be;
Found a horse in the stable
Where my horse ought to be.
"Come here, my little wife, baby,
Explain this thing to me.
How come a horse in the stable
Where my horse ought to be?"

"You old fool, you blind fool,
Can't you never see?
It's nothing but a milk cow
My mama sent to me."
"I've traveled this wide world over
Ten thousand times or more;
Saddle upon a milk cow's back
I never did see before."

Side I; Band 4. SWEET SOLDIER BOY
(Laws K 12)

Here "Uncle Monroe" sings what seems to be the most popular ballad on Beech Mountain. Why this particular broadside maintained such strength in the tradition, I don't know, but almost everyone who sang for us knew it. To judge by the length of Laws' list of published versions, it is equally popular throughout the English-speaking world. Folk-Legacy has recorded a lovely Irish version sung by Peg Clancy Power (FSE-8) of Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary. Perhaps the Hollywood idea that a happy ending is necessary for mass acceptance of a story is nothing but a money-maker's myth, after all.

Dark is the color of my true lover's hair;
His cheeks is like some lily fair.
If he'd return, it would give me great joy,
For I never loved any like my sweet soldier boy.
Oh, if he'd return, it would give me great joy,
For I never loved any like my sweet soldier boy.

"Father, Father, go build me a boat
And over the ocean I will float;
And every ship that I pass by,
There I'll inquire for my sweet soldier boy.
Oh, it's every ship that I pass by,
Oh, it's there I'll inquire for my sweet soldier boy."

She rowed her boat into the plain;
She saw three ships a-coming from Spain.
She halted each ship as it drew nigh;
Oh, there she inquired for her sweet soldier boy.

"Captain, Captain, tell me true,
Does my sweet William sail with you?
Answer me, oh, answer me; you'll give me great joy,
For I never loved any like my sweet soldier boy."

"Oh, no, lady, he's not here;
Got drownded in the gulf, my dear.
At the head of Rocky Island, as we passed by,
There we let your true lover lie.
At the head of Rocky Island, as we passed by,
There we let your true lover lie."

She rowed her boat unto a rock.
I thought, my soul, her heart would break.
She wrung her hands all in her hair,
Just like some lady in despair.

"Go dig my grave both wide and deep,
A marble stone at my head and feet,
And on my breast a turtle dove
To show to the world that I died for love."

Side I; Band 5. THE HOUSE CARPENTER

Lena Armstrong insisted that Etta, her sister, "help a little" when she recorded this version of Child 243 for us at her home in Poteau, Oklahoma. The ballad came to them through their father, who learned it from his mother who was the daughter of Council Harmon. "Uncle Monroe" tells us that his mother was a great singer and that many of his ballads were learned from her. Several other

Beech Mountain singers had versions of this particular ballad, all quite similar to the one recorded here. We chose Lena's singing of it primarily because her text was most complete, but the decision was not an easy one.

"The House Carpenter" is one of the most popular traditional ballads in America, although it has virtually disappeared from tradition in the British Isles. Several authors have pointed to the fact that this is likely the result of numerous broadside printings in America, two at least as early as 1857 and 1858, but the broadside texts were apparently taken from traditional versions found in America. Here we have, then, a case wherein the tradition supplied the text for the broadsides which, in turn, reinforced the tradition through the permanence of print.

"Well met, well met, my old true love."
"Well met," she replied to me.
"I'm just returning from the salt, salt sea
And it's all for the love of thee.
I'm just returning from the salt, salt sea
And it's all for the love of thee.

"I could have married the king's daughter
And she would have married me,
But I've forsaken her silver and gold,
And it's all for the love of thee.
But I've forsaken her silver and gold,
And it's all for the love of thee."

"If you could have married the king's daughter,
I'm sure you'd have better been;
For I am married to a house carpenter
And I think he's a nice young man.
For I am married to a house carpenter
And I think he's a nice young man."

"If you will leave your house carpenter
And go along with me,
I'll take you where the grass is ever green
On the banks of Sweet Willie.
I'll take you where the grass is ever green
On the banks of Sweet Willie."

She picked up her sweet little babe
And kisses gave it three.
Says, "Stay at home, you sweet little babe,
And keep your papa company."
Says, "Stay at home, you sweet little babe,
And keep your papa company."

They had not been on board two weeks,
I'm sure it was not three,
Till this young lady begin to weep
And she wept most bitterly.
Till this young lady begin to weep
And she wept most bitterly.

"Is it for my gold you weep,
Or is it for my store?
Or is it for your sweet little babe
You never shall see any more?
Or is it for your house carpenter
You never shall see any more?"

"It's neither for your gold I weep;
It's neither for your store.
But it is for my sweet little babe
I never shall see any more.
It is for my house carpenter
I never shall see any more."

They had not been on board three weeks,
I'm sure it was not four,
Till she cut a little leak in her true love's ship
And it sank, to rise no more,
Till she cut a little leak in her true love's ship
And it sank, to rise no more.

"Farewell, farewell to all seamen,
Farewell, farewell to thee;
You've robbed me of my house carpenter
I never no more shall see.
You've robbed me of my sweet little babe
I never no more shall see.

"Your body will lie in the bottom of the sea;
Your soul will burn in hell.
Your body will lie in the bottom of the sea;
Your soul will burn in hell."

Side I; Band 6. WILLIAM HALL
(Laws N 30)

It must have been the third time we visited Hattie when she finally recalled this ballad. We had to wait until the fourth trip, however, to record it, as Hattie's is one of the only houses on the Beech without electricity and we had to arrange to meet her at her mother's place to make the tape. Since the text here is somewhat confusing, I will quote Laws' description of the story told by the ballad in full, so the listener will be able to fill in the gaps.

"William Hall's parents, disapproving of his love, send him to sea. When he returns he finds that his girl does not recognize him and attempts to court her. She describes her lover, and he says he was killed at sea by a French cannon ball. When she weeps, he reveals his identity and produces the ring she gave him. The happy couple are married, 'whether their parents are willing or no'."

Cold drops of rain were a-falling,
Me and my true love chanced to meet.
Cold drops of rain were a-falling,
Me and my true love chanced to meet.

"Fair young lady, fair young lady,
Say, won't you marry me?"
"No, no, I have a true love in the navy,
No, no, I have a true love in the navy
Sailing on the deep blue sea."

"Do describe him, do describe him,
Do describe him unto me.
Perhaps I saw some such a fellow
Sailing on the deep blue sea."

"He is pretty, he is pretty,
He is neat (he?) and tall.
Oh, he has dark hair and he wears it curly,
Oh, them pretty blue eyes of all.
Oh, he has dark hair and he wears it curly,
Oh, them pretty blue eyes of all."

"Oh, yes, I saw some such a fellow,
By the name of William Hall.
I saw a cannon ball shot through him,
Oh the death that man did fall.
I saw a cannon ball shot through him,
Oh, the death that man did fall."

To hear the screams of this fair lady
Was enough to cause anyone to prove true.
"Cheer up; broken hearted since we parted,
Oh, my love, what shall we do?"

They went to the parson's, they got married,
Whether their parents were willing or no.
They went to the parson's, they got married,
Whether their parents were willing or no.

Side I; Band 7. THE TWO SISTERS

Lee Monroe Presnell was the only singer we found on the Beech who knew this ballad, Child 10. Versions which utilize the "Rosemary" refrain are comparatively rare; the Brown Collection does not contain one, although Sharp took one down from the singing of Mrs. Jane Gentry in Hot Springs, N. C., in 1916, and Henry published one in Folk-Songs from the Southern Highlands which was collected from Mrs. Samuel Harmon of Cade's Cove, Tennessee, in 1930. The element of magic, in which a musical instrument is fashioned from parts of the dead sister's body which then accuses the guilty sister of the murder, has been retained in both of these texts (most clearly in the Harmon text), but does not appear in Mr. Presnell's version. His text does exhibit, however, the "simple alternating refrain at the second and fourth phrases of the ballad quatrain" which Bronson calls "the earlier scheme" and which has been lost in the other two "Rosemary" texts. Regardless, we have here a truly beautiful melody, a fine ballad, and a performance in a fine traditional style. This recording was made some years before my first visit to the Beech, by Diane Hamilton, Paul Clayton and Liam Clancy. The "I got it too high" complaint heard at the end, however, was repeated, verbatim, by the old man when I recorded the ballad in 1961. "Uncle Monroe" was a great artist, distressed, in his late years, by his inability to measure up to his own exacting aesthetic standards.

There was two sisters that loved one man,
Jenny flower genty, rosemary;
And the youngest of them he loved best,
And the jury hangs over the rosemary.

Similarly:

Oh, sister, sister, walk with me;
Walk with me to the miller's pond.

Oh, the oldest pushed the youngest in;
It was all for the sake that the water was clear.

Oh, sister, sister, reach me your hand;
You may have half of that land.

Oh, sister, sister, I won't reach my hand;
I will have all of that land.

Oh, sister, sister, reach me your glove'
You may have sweet William for your old true love.

Oh, sister, sister, I won't reach my glove;
I will have sweet William for my own true love.

Oh, she floated around and she floated down;
She floated down to the miller's pond.

Oh. miller, miller, come and see;
There is something here a-floating by me.

Oh, it is not a fish, nor it is not a swan;
It is sweet William's old true love.

Side I; Band 8. THE DAY IS PAST AND GONE

This somber example of early American hymnody was composed by John Leland, a Baptist minister from Cheshire, Massachusetts, in 1835. Leland was born in 1754 and died in 1844. For fifteen years (1775-1790) he preached in Virginia, but he returned to New England following that date, for in 1801 he made a trip to Washington which brought him considerable notoriety. The trip is described in Original Sacred Harp as follows:

"The farmers of Cheshire, for whom he was pastor, conceived the idea of sending the biggest cheese to President Jefferson. Mr. Leland offered to go to Washington with an ox team with it, which he did (preaching along the way). The cheese weighed 1,450 pounds. He died with great hope of rest in the glory world."

Several verses of the adventurous minister's text are utilized in an arrangement by T. J. Denson in the above mentioned book. A complete text, published without credit to Mr. Leland, appears in Sacred Songs for Family and Social Worship, 1842, and corresponds almost exactly with that sung here by Buna Hicks. It probably appears in other, more widely known works, but I am some distance from a large library and have no access to them.

The day is past and gone;
The evening shade appears.
Oh, may we all remember well
The night of death draws near.

We'll lay our garments by,
And on our beds we rest;
So death will soon disrobe us all
Of what we here possess.

Lord, keep us safe this night,
Secure from all our fears;
May angels guard us while we sleep
Till morning light appears.

And when we early rise
And view the unwearied sun,
May we press on to reach the prize
And after glory run.

And when our days are past
And we from time removed,
Oh, may we in Thy bosom rest,
Thy bosom of Thy love.

Side II; Band 1. THE FARMER'S CURST WIFE

Lena Armstrong and Etta Jones here sing, much as they did when they were girls on the Beech, a lively version of Child 278. I suppose one could rearrange the verses a bit and make the song more logical (for instance the verse in which the devil carries the woman "like a fool dog a-hunting back-track" would seem to apply to the return trip from hell, rather than to the initial journey), but Rosa and Hattie Presnell, who also recorded this version for me, use the same sequence. I do not find a version in the Brown collection which uses this particular refrain or a variation of it, nor does one appear in Sharp quite like it. The ballad is very widely known in America, however. For a New York State version see Folk-Legacy's album of the Adirondack singer and fiddler, Lawrence Older (FSA-15).

"Now, we're going to sing this Devil song; it may be on there (the tape recorder), but I don't care..."

One day the old devil came to my plow,
Da-da, da da da da,
One day the old devil came to my plow.
"It's one of the family I'm after now."
And a whack to fie doodle die day.

Similarly:

Old Mr. Devil, you're surely in fun;
How can I spare my oldest son?

It's not your oldest son I crave;
It's your old scolding wife I'm after today.

Old Mr. Devil, with all of my heart,
I'll go to the house and help you to start.

He got her up on his back
Like a fool dog a-hunting back-track.

He carried her down to the forks of the road.
Says he, "Old woman, you're a hell of a load!"

He got her up on his back
Like a fool traveler wagging his pack.

He carried her down three steps of hell;
She picked up a stick and lathered (old De'l?).

Three little devils peeped over the wall,
Said, "Dad, take her back! She'll lather us all."

The woman went whistling over the hill,
"If the devil won't have me, I don't know who
will."

Side II; Band 2. JOHNNY, OH, JOHNNY

This, I think, is one of the most beautiful songs Mr. Presnell sang for us — and I have been unable to locate another version of it in any of the published collections. (I'm not saying there isn't one; I just can't find it.) We do know that he learned it during his stay in Arkansas from a Mr. MacIntyre of Van Buren County, "120 miles from Little Rock". I'd be pleased to hear from any folk song sleuth or collector who can give me more information regarding the song. We assume that the word "scarling" in the first verse is a corruption of "sterling", an indication of the song's British origin.

Johnny, oh, Johnny, you are my darling;
Like a red rose that grows in the garden.
I'd rather have Johnny without one thing
As to have any other with a thousand scarling.

It ain't the wind that blows so high,
Nor neither rain that makes me cry;
The whitest frost that ever fell,
I love you, Johnny, but I dare not to tell.

My father he offers me a house and land,
If I'll stay at home and do his command.
But his command I will disobey;
I'll follow you, Johnny, where you go or stay.

My mother she scorns both night and day,
But she can scorn and scorn at leisure;
The side of Johnny, I'll take my pleasure.

So, fare you well, Father, like-well, Mother;
Fare you well, sisters; fear no danger.
I'll forsaken you all and go with a stranger.

Side II; Band 3. JOHNNY DOYLE
(Laws M 2)

Buna Hicks sang a fragmentary version of this during my first visit with her, but during later recording sessions she managed to "get it together" for us. Brown and Sharp each print one North Carolina version of the ballad and two other North Carolina versions have appeared in the Journal of American Folklore.

One cool summer's evening, it happened but late,
When me and young Johnny was about to take a flight.
My old waiting maid standing by, a few words heared
she;
She ran to my mommy and told upon me.

She bundled up his clothes and bid him to be gone;
So slowly and slighted he moved along,
I thought, my poor soul, my poor heart was broke in
two.

And also they forced me to ride by young Samuel Moore,
And six double horse team to ride by my side.

When they a-menaced me, I entered the door.
My ear-bobs they bursted and fell unto the floor.
Into sixty-five pieces my stay laces flew;
I thought, my poor soul, my poor heart was broke in
two.

And also they forced me to stand by young Samuel Moore;
And also they forced me to give him my right hand.

When I ought to have spoke, I scarcely did design;
The thoughts of young Johnny run so in my mind.
He never shall rejoice me or call me his wife;
By this time tomorrow, death shall end all strife.

Up behind my oldest brother, he took me safely through,
And through my mother's chambery and into my own room.
I threw myself down by my own bedside,
So sick and so wounded my body I found.

My old mother, a-standing by with tears all in her eyes:
Since it is no better, we'll send for Johnny Doyle.
You wouldn't send for Johnny and now it is too late;
Journey's followed and death is my fate.

"Well, it's strange for us to think about, times like that used to be. Well, it seems like it must have been, from these songs that's been made; it must have been."

Side II; Band 4. **THE JEALOUS BROTHERS**
(Laws M 32)

Brown prints two North Carolina versions of this quite well known broadside ballad; Sharp prints four versions, all from North Carolina, and one other North Carolina version later appeared in the JAF. It is surprising that Hattie is the only singer we found on the Beech who recalls the ballad, since its currency in her state seems well established. On the other hand, it shouldn't be surprising, for Hattie seems to remember more old ballads than any of her Beech Mountain contemporaries.

Late one evening, a couple sat talking;
Two brothers were listening what were said,
Saying, "This courtship, it's got to be ended,
Or lay this young man in his grave,
Or lay this young man in his grave."

Late that evening, it's talking of a-hunting,
They insisting upon him to go,
They kept on insisting upon him
Till, at last, he'd agree to go,
Till, at last, he'd agree to go.

They rode over hills and mountains,
Many of a path that were unknown;
They rode till they came to some dark hollow
And there they left him dead alone,
And there they left him dead alone.

Late that evening, as they returned,
The sister inquiring of her own true love.
Saying, "He got lost in a game of hunting
And there were no more seen of him,
And there were no more seen of him."

She rose up early next morning,
Dressed in her silk so fine,
She rode all over hills and mountains
And a-many of a path were unknown,
And a-many of a path were unknown.

She rode till she came to some dark hollow
And there she found him dead alone.
She turned him over and over,
Crying, "Darling Boose, you're a friend of mine."
Crying, "Darling Boose, you're a friend of mine."*

*This is apparently a corruption of "bosom friend of mine" which appears in the other North Carolina texts.

Late that evening, she returning,
The brothers inquired where she had been.
Saying, "Keep your mouth shut, you deceitful
rascals,
For tomorrow you both shall hang."
Saying, "Keep your mouth shut, you deceitful
rascals,
For tomorrow you both shall hang."

Side II; Band 5. YOUNG BEHAM

This ballad, Child 53, is generally known as "Lord Bateman" in America and has been quite widely reported. Child says: "This story of Beichan, or Bekie, agrees in the general outline, and also in some details, with a well-known legend about Gilbert Beket, father of St. Thomas. The earlier and more authentic biographies lack this particular bit of romance, but the legend nevertheless goes back to a date not much later than a century after the death of the saint, being found in a manuscript of about 1300." He then describes the legend in detail and abruptly concludes: "But the ballad, for all that, is not derived from the legend. Stories and ballads of the general cast of 'Young Beichan' are extremely frequent." He does suggest, however, that the ballad has "been affected" by the legend.

Bronson gives 112 tunes, clearly demonstrating the popularity of the ballad, and observes that its popularity has been frequently "fortified in its verbal text by the broadside press" supported by "a vigorous and consistent musical tradition" which "proves with equal clarity that there has been no interruption in oral tradition."

This is another ballad which Buna Hicks had to "get together" for me over a period of time. The first time I recorded it, it was extremely fragmentary, consisting of only a few verses and a handful of phrases. At each subsequent visit, however, more of it appeared until, finally, it evolved to its present form.

Young Beham, from the Glasgow town,
The Turkish nation for to see.
The Turks took him as a prisonee
And bound him to a trusty tree.

Through his right shoulder they bored a hole,
And through and through they put a key.
They throwed him in a dark dungeonee
Where daylight he never could see.

The jailer had a beautiful daughter,
A beautiful daughter, oh, was she.

"Have you any house or land?
Have you any buildings free
That you would give to a pretty girl
That set you at your liberty?"

"The Glasgow town it is all mine,
Besides other buildings two or three,
That I would give to a pretty girl
That'd set me at my liberty."

"Give to me your faith and honor,
Your right hand, you'll marry me."
He give to her his faith and honor,
In seven years he'd marry her.

She paid down ninety thousand pounds
And set him at his liberty.

Miss Suzie Price thought the time very long
When seven years come rolling on.
Her old father built her a boat
And over the ocean she did float.

She went till she came to young Beham's gate;
There she rung the silver bell.
No one was as willing to rise and let her come in
As young Beham was himself.

"Here, old woman, take back your daughter;
I'm sure I'm none the worst of her."

"Such work, such work a-going on,
Such work, such work I never did see.
Marry one in the morning soon,
And marry the other one in the afternoon."

"I guess, you see, he waited till the seven years was up and he married this other girl. And this old woman, she didn't like it, because he had married her girl, and then, when Suzie Price went, he turned around and married her and turned that one back, you see, to her mother, and that woman didn't like that."

Side II; Band 6. PRETTY CROWING CHICKEN

This ballad, a version of "The Grey Cock" (Child 248), is not widely known today. It does not appear in Brown and Sharp prints only one version, collected from Jane Gentry in Hot Springs, North Carolina. Davis has not, apparently, found

it in Virginia, either, despite the extensive collecting done in that state. I recorded it during my first trip to Beech Mountain and Hattie, although very nervous, sang it without hesitation. Many listeners will associate the tune with other texts ("Willie Moore", for example), although I did not find the tune used as a "utility tune" on the Beech. The young man in the ballad is, of course, a ghost, who must return to the grave at the crowing of the cock.

The moon shines bright and the stars gives light
While this fair miss she worries (wearies?) alone.
Oh, there's something in the way that causes him to stay,
While this fair miss she worries alone, lone, lone,
While this fair miss she worries alone.

Her old true love come at last and he come very fast,
Come trippling through the plain.
This fair miss she rose and she drew on her clothes,
For to let her old true lover in, in, in,
For to let her old true lover in.

"My pretty little chicken, my pretty crowing chicken,
Say, don't you crow before day.
I'll make your wings of the yellow beating gold
And your comb of the silver so gay, gay, gay,
And your comb of the silver so gay."

This chicken proved false hearted
And crowed one hour too soon.
She sent her old true love away when she thought it had come day,
And he traveled by the light of the moon, moon, moon,
And he traveled by the light of the moon.

She saddled up her milk white horse
And also her dapple gray;
She rode through the dark wilderness
At the length of a long summer day, day, day,
At the length of a long summer day.

"My old true love, my sweet turtle dove,
When shall I see you again?"
"When the moon and the sun enters in yonders green
And the sky it shall shed no more rain, rain, rain,
And the sky it shall shed no more rain."

Side II; Band 7. GEORGE COLLINS

Several people sang versions of this ballad (Child 85) for me on the Beech, but "Uncle Monroe" had what I felt to be the finest tune. The generation following his seems to

have flattened out the tune to a certain extent, possibly due to the influence of recorded versions, possibly because they tried to make it fit the standard chords on the guitar, and possibly simply because the older tunes began to sound strange to them compared to the commercial music they were beginning to hear all around them.

The ballad is fairly well known in America; Henry and Matteson (Beech Mountain Folk-Songs and Ballads) print a version containing only three stanzas which was collected from Nathan Hicks, who accompanied it with the dulcimer, in 1933.

George Collins rode home one cold winter's night,
George Collins rode home so fine;
George Collins rode home one cold winter's night,
Taken sick and died.

Mary was sitting in yonders door,
A-sewing her silk so fine;
Oh, when she heard of George being dead,
She screamed, she cried and prayed.

"Daughter, oh, Daughter, what makes you weep so?
There's more young men than George."
"Mother, oh, Mother, George has got my heart,
And now he's dead and gone.

"Set down the coffin, take off the lid,
Push back the linen so fine.
Oh, may I kiss them pale clay lips?
I'm sure they'll never kiss mine.

"Oh, don't you see that lonesome dove
A-sailing through the pines?
She's mourning for the loss of her old true love,
Just like I mourn for mine."

Side II; Band 8. WHERE THE SUN WILL NEVER GO DOWN

Buna Hicks and her daughter, Rosa Presnell, sing here one of the old "camp-meeting" hymns which date from the early 19th century. Buna seems to have an endless store of these old sacred songs, called "spiritual songs" by most of the Beech Mountain folk. The favorite form for these songs is shown here — a strong, easily learned chorus, together with a verse in which the substitution of one word enables the song leader to continue almost indefinitely.

The first "camp-meeting" was held in 1800 in Logan County, Kentucky, and spread rapidly through Kentucky and

Tennessee, then to the Carolinas and to the rest of the nation. Jackson, quoting from Benson's The English Hymn, informs us that "spontaneous song became a marked characteristic of the camp meetings. Rough and irregular couplets or stanzas were concocted out of scripture phrases and every-day speech, with liberal interspersing of hallelujahs and refrains." During the 1820's, these songs began to make their way into print. The tunes used drew largely upon the popular or traditional songs of the area from which they sprang and, combined with their textual simplicity, were ideally suited to these remote, largely illiterate communities.

I want to see my mother sometime, sometime,
I want to see my mother sometime,
Where the flowers bloom forever
And the sun will never go down.
Where the sun will never go down, go down,
Where the sun will never go down;
Where the flowers bloom forever
And the sun will never go down.

(Subsequent verses substitute "father", "brother", "sister" and "Savior", in that order.)

Side II; Band 9. FATHERS, NOW OUR MEETING IS OVER

Buna tells me that this was regularly used to close the religious services in her area, some years ago. Her mother was always asked to sing it. Lomax (American Ballads and Folk Songs) prints a version of it "sent in by Sam P. Bayard of Pennsylvania", although we are not told where Mr. Bayard obtained it. Jackson prints it in Another Sheaf of White Spirituals as "recorded by L. L. McDowell, Smithville, Tenn., and published in his Songs of the Old Camp Ground". Musicologists are welcome to correct me, but I believe the tune to be Dorian.

Fathers, now our meeting is over;
Fathers, we must part.
And, if I never see you any more,
I'll love you in my heart.
Yes, we'll land on shore,
Yes, we'll land on shore,
Yes, we'll land on shore
And be saved forever more.

(Subsequent verses substitute "mothers", "brothers" and "sisters".)

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