FSA-23

The Traditional Music of

BEECH MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA VOL. II

"The Later Songs and Hymns"

featuring:

R. L. Harmon
Margie Harmon
Coot Greene
Lee Monroe Presnell
Buna Hicks
Captain Hicks
Viola Hicks
Rosa Presnell
Lena Armstrong
Tab Ward

FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. SHARON, CONNECTICUT

FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. FSA-23

The Traditional Music of

BEECH MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

VOLUME II: *"The Later Songs and Hymns"*

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:

PRECIOUS MEMORIES
I WENT TO SEE MY SUZIE
JOHNSON BOYS (instrumental)
COURTING CASE
BALDHEADED END OF THE BROOM
MORE PRETTY GIRLS THAN ONE (instrumental)
ROGERS' GRAY MARE
SOLDIER JOHN
CRIPPLE CREEK (instrumental)
THE SOLDIER AND THE LADY
OLD VIRGINNY
WHERE THE SOUL OF MAN NEVER DIES

Side 2:

TOBACCO UNION
IN DUBLIN CITY
THREE DULCIMER NUMBERS (instrumental)
FLYING AROUND MY PRETTY LITTLE MISS
LITTLE MAGGIE (sung with banjo)
LITTLE MAGGIE
I'M GOING THAT WAY
GOING AWAY TOMORROW
LOOK UP; LOOK DOWN THAT OLD RAILROAD
ANGEL BAND
AMAZING GRACE

Sharon, Connecticut 06069

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The Traditional Music of

BEECH MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

Volume II

Produced by Sandy Paton
and Lee B. Haggerty

Notes by Sandy Paton

FSA-23

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 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 II

Side I; Band 1. PRECIOUS MEMORIES

Margie Harmon, R. L., her brother, and Ottie "Coot" Greene gathered in the Harmon home in Beech Creek and sang many of their favorite hymns for me in much the same way that they sing them on Sunday mornings in the little church pictured on the cover of this album. They used the small paperback songbooks found in almost every home on Beech Mountain.

Many listeners will recognize this hymn; others will be more familiar with the words written to the tune by Aunt Molly Jackson:

"Dreadful memories! How they linger;
How they pain my precious soul.
Little children, sick and hungry,
Sick and hungry, weak and cold.

Dreadful memories! How they linger;
How they fill my heart with pain.
Oh, how hard I've tried to forget them
But I find it all in vain.

I can't forget them, coal miner's children,
That starved to death without one drop of milk,
While the coal operators and their wives and children
Were all dressed in jewels and silk.

Dreadful memories! How they haunt me
As the lonely moments fly.
Oh, how them little babies suffered!
I saw them starve to death and die."

The words to the original hymn, as composed by J. B. F. Wright, are sung here:

Precious memories, unseen angels,
Sent from somewhere to my soul,
How they linger ever near me
And the sacred past unfold.

Precious memories, how they linger,
How they ever flood my soul.
In the stillness of the midnight
Precious sacred scenes unfold.

Precious father, loving mother,
Fly across the lonely years,
And old home scenes of my childhood
In fond memory appear.

In the stillness of the midnight
Echoes from the past I hear;
Old time singing, gladness bringing
From that lovely land somewhere.

As I travel on life's pathway,
Know not what the years may hold.
As I ponder, hope grows fonder;
Precious memories flood my soul.

Side I; Band 2. **I WENT TO SEE MY SUZIE**

Lee Monroe Presnell's repertory was rich and varied. Though he loved the older ballads and sang them marvelously well, he also delighted in songs of a lighter nature. Here he sings the very well-known "Keys of Heaven", often called "Paper of Pins". The song has been found in England and in Scotland and appears in most of the major American collections. Randolph (Vol. III) prints two versions from the Ozarks that closely resemble those printed in Sharp (Vol. II); Brown (Vol. III) prints or describes thirteen North Carolina versions, demonstrating the popularity of the song in that state; Belden offers several versions as well as a very complete listing of variants known at the time of his publication, noting that the majority of American versions have replaced the romantic ending of the English song in which the suitor offers the girl the key to his heart which she accepts, proving that all she really wants is his love, with the much more cynical ending occasionally found in Scotland and sung here by Mr. Presnell. The first two lines are not generally found with the song, although they are the opening lines of another song found in Brown (a version of "I Was Born About Ten Thousand Years Ago") and still another found in Randolph as a version of "Liza Jane". One assumes that the song in Brown is a combination of both minstrel-type efforts. I do not find another version of "Paper of Pins" which uses the same opening lines.

Perhaps the first two American versions of this song ever published are those to be found in Newell's Games and Songs of American Children (1903, now available as a Dover paperback) where it is described as "hitherto unprinted" and as "more or less familiar throughout the Middle States." Newell also refers to a Scottish version in which the suitor is "the Evil One in person." The song is often used as the vehicle for a game or dance.

Special note should be made here of Mr. Presnell's occasional use of the pronunciation "lovyer" for the word "lover". The Oxford Universal Dictionary gives this as an obsolete form which dates to Middle English (1150-1450) and offers a line from Chaucer in evidence.

I went to see my Suzie;
She met me at the door,
Said I needn't come no more,
For I won't be your true lover.

Madam, I'll buy you a little black dog
To follow you when you go abroad,
If you'll be my true lover.

I won't accept your little black dog
To follow me when I go abroad,
And I won't be your true lover.

Madam, I'll buy you a dress of red,
And it stitched around with golden thread,
If you'll be my true lover.

I won't accept the dress of red,
And it stitched around with golden thread,
And I won't be your true lover.

Madam, I'll give you the keys to my desk
And you can have money at your request,
If you'll be my true lover.

I will accept the keys to your desk
And I can have money at my request,
And I'll be your true lover.

Madam, I can plainly see
You love my money, but you don't love me,
And I won't be your true lover.

Side I; Band 3. JOHNSON BOYS

Buna Hicks, playing the fiddle made for her by her son, is accompanied here by her daughter-in-law, Viola, on an old fretless five-string banjo, a common Beech Mountain instrument.

Side I: Band 4. THE COURTING CASE

Folk-Legacy has recorded two other versions of this well-known song (FSA-2 JOSEPH ABLE TRIVETT and FSA-11 MAX HUNTER), one from Tennessee and the other from the Ozarks, one called "Root, Poor Hoggie" and the other called "Oh, Miss, I Have a Very Fine Farm". The version sung here by Lena Armstrong and Etta Jones is the only one we recorded on the Beech, although the song appears to be known by other residents of the area. It is often called "The Drunkard's Courtship". For references to the provenience of the song, see Randolph (III, p. 53) and Brown (III, p. 10).

Oh, yes, I see you're a-coming again
And I don't know what it's for;
The very last time that you was here
I told you to come no more, more,
I told you to come no more.

Madam, I have a very fine house,
And it improved and giving light.
If you'll consent to be my bride,
It'll be at your command, 'mand,
It'll be at your command.

Yes, I know you have a very fine house,
And it improved and giving light,
But who would stay at home with me
When you're out playing cards at night, night,
When you're out playing cards at night?

Madam, I have a very fine house,
And it improved and giving light.
If you'll consent to be my bride,
I won't play cards at night, night,
I won't play cards at night.

Yes, I see you're a contrary old jade
And a hard old miss to please;
Some cold night, when you're alone,
I hope that you will freeze, freeze,
I hope that you will freeze.

Madam, I have a very fine horse
And he stands in yonders barn.
If you'll consent to be my bride
He'll be at your command, 'mand,
He'll be at your command.

Yes, I know you have a very fine horse
And he stands in yonders barn.
Sometimes his master would get drunk;
I'm afraid that horse would learn, learn,
I'm afraid that horse would learn.

Yes, I know you're a contrary old jade
And a hard old miss to please;
Some cold night, when you're alone,
I hope that you will freeze, freeze,
I hope that you will freeze.

Yes, I know I'm a contrary old jade
And a hard old miss to please;
Some cold night, when I'm alone,
I won't have you to please, please,
I won't have you to please.

Side I; Band 5. BALDHEADED END OF THE BROOM

Uncle Monroe probably had to "feed on hash" more times than not during the long, hard years of his life, but his sense of humor was never dulled by difficulty. He delighted in this song, with a wry recognition of its truth. Vance Randolph prints two variants of the song, with a note that it appeared under the title "Lines of Love" in The Merchant's Gargling Oil Songster, Chicago, circa 1885.

Oh, love is such a very funny thing;
It catches the young and old.
It's just like a plate of boarding (house) hash,
And of a many a man it has sold.

It makes you feel like a fresh water eel;
Causes your head to swell.
You'll lose your mind, for love is blind;
It empties your pocketbook as well.

Oh, boys, stay away from the girls, I say;
Oh, give them lots of room.
They'll find you and you'll wed and they'll
bang you till you're dead
With the baldheaded end of the broom.

When a man is a-going on a pretty little girl,
His love is firm and strong;
But when he has to feed on hash,
His love don't last so long.

With a wife and seven half-starved kids,
Boys, I'll tell you it is no fun,
When the butcher comes around to collect his debts
With a dog and a double-barreled gun.

Oh, boys, stay away from the girls, I say;
Of, give them lots of room.
They'll find you and you'll wed and they'll
bang you till you're dead
With the baldheaded end of the broom.

When your money is gone and your clothing in hock,
You'll find the old saying it is true:
That a mole on the arm's worth two on the legs,
But (what is) he going to do?

"Then it goes on:"

With a cross-eyed baby on each knee
And a wife with a plaster on her nose,
You'll find true love don't run so smooth
When you have to wear your second-hand clothes.

Side I; Band 6. MORE PRETTY GIRLS THAN ONE

Captain Hicks here accompanies his wife, Viola, and the ease with which his guitar follows her dulcimer clearly shows how many hours this couple have spent making music together in their home. The tune is well-known to all who are familiar with American folk music.

Side I; Band 7. ROGER'S GRAY MARE
(Laws P 8)

Generally speaking, this delightful song seems to belong more to the Northern tradition than to the Southern Mountains. Aside from Belden's two Missouri texts (one from a manuscript dating to the 1870's), all American references in Laws are from the Northern States and Canada. We have heard the song sung in the Miramichi region of New Brunswick by Stanley MacDonald, whose version also includes the additional stanzas found in Belden, but omitted here. Frankly, I feel that the song is just as well off without the somewhat anti-climactic verses. Laws lists two English sources and one Scottish, as well as several broadside printings in America. It seems odd that the song is not more widely reported in this country, in the light of its apparent reinforcement via the broadside presses. It is sung here by Lena and Etta.

There was a young Rogers in the time of the year.
He courted an old man's daughter so fair.
Her eyes was like two diamonds above
And her face was all over with millions (?) of love.

The wedding was ordered and the money paid down
In the beautiful value of ten thousand pounds.
Rogers, being greedy, picked out the gray mare
And he said, "Old man, I'll solemnly swear
I won't have your daughter without your gray mare."

The old man spoke with an angry word,
"I thought you would have my daughter, indeed;
But as it's no better, I'm glad it's no worse,
And a little more money I'll put in my purse."

Rogers was ordered and kicked out of doors;
Rogers was ordered to come there no more.
In about six months, or a little above,
He chanced to meet with fair Katie, his love.

He saw Miss Kate coming, says, "Do you know me?"
"It seems to me like I've seen you before.
A man of your likeness, with dark, curly hair,
Used to come courting my father's gray mare."

Side I; Band 8. SOLDIER JOHN

Randolph amply refers to the published American versions of this quite well-known song and I have checked as many of these texts as I have available, but have found none with the ironic ending found in this version sung by Rosa Hicks. The song is known also to Hattie Presnell and to Uncle Monroe's daughters, Lena and Etta. Rosa's mother, Buna, also recorded it for me. The song usually concludes with the soldier, after he has accepted all of the young lady's gifts, refusing to marry her because he has a wife and children at home. Somewhere along the line, an imaginative folksinger must have seen the potential irony and altered the final stanza. This is the only way I heard the song sung on the Beech.

"Soldier John, Soldier John, won't you marry me?"
"How can I marry such a pretty little girl
And me no hat to wear?"

Up she jumped and away she went
Around the market square;
Back she come with the finest hat
For Soldier John to wear.

(Repeat with "shirt", "pants", and "shoes", until final stanza:)

"Soldier John, Soldier John, won't you marry me?"
"How can I marry such a ugly girl
And me all these fine clothes to wear?"

Side I; Band 9. CRIPPLE CREEK

Buna Hicks plays the fiddle here, accompanied by her daughter-in-law, Viola, on the fretless banjo. The tune is very well-known as a square-dance melody, often found with more or less unrelated verses. The only verse Buna sang to the tune was:

Going up Cripple Creek,
Going at a run;
Going up Cripple Creek
To have some fun.

Brown refers to a Nebraska text which indicates that the gold strike at Cripple Creek, Colorado, was the inspiration for the fragmentary lyrics, but points out that Perrow, in a note to his Tennessee text printed in the JAF (XXVIII 180), says that "Cripple Creek is a well known mining district in Virginia." The fact that Davis reports six versions from Virginia, combined with the extreme popularity of the tune in the Southern Mountains, would suggest that the Nebraska text is probably the anomaly, rather than the other way about. This is merely a suggestion, of course; if you are partial to the State of Colorado, you are welcome to interpret it as did the Nebraska singer.

Side I; Band 10. THE SOLDIER AND THE LADY
(Laws P 14)

Laws elects to use the title "The Nightingale" for this very popular ballad, parenthetically referring to it as "One Morning in May". R. L. and Margie Harmon have the song from an old broadside in their father's collection and sing it to the tune their mother recalled from the singing of an aunt. That the Harmons are completely unaware of the apparent symbolism of the fiddle and the tune played thereon does not negate the fact that the song makes delicate use of the lingua franca, that metaphorical vocabulary used for speaking of matters otherwise tabu, which was once familiar to most of the folk community, at least in the British Isles. This is a more literary than "functional" view, I realize, for, once the folk cease to be aware of the symbolism, the function of the lingua franca ceases, as well. This innocence was not always the case in America, however, for Reeves prints one final stanza collected by Cecil Sharp in Kentucky (see: The Idiom of the People, London, 1958) which indicates that the soldier and the lady exchanged more than just musical appreciation:

"Come all you young ladies, take warning by me,
Don't ever set your affections on a soldier so free;
For they will deceive you as one deceived me.
Put you down to the cradle, rock a bye, baby."

Laws' description of the ballad states that it "ends with a lament and a warning against men who leave girls to rock the cradle alone." Still, we must consider our version as pure romance, without ramifications, inasmuch as it lacks both the final stanza quoted above and any such interpretation on the part of the singers.

One morning, one morning, one morning in May,
I spied a fair couple a-winding their way.
One was a lady, so sweet and so fair,
And one was a soldier, a brave volunteer.

They had not been standing but one hour or two,
When out of his knapsack a fiddle he drew;
The tune that he played made the valleys to ring.
See the waters a-gliding, hear the nightingales sing.

"Pretty lady, pretty lady, it's time to give o'er."
"Oh, no, my pretty soldier, please play one tune more.
I'd rather hear your fiddle, just the touch of one
string,
Than see the waters gliding, hear the nightingales sing.

"Pretty soldier, pretty soldier, will you marry me?"
"Oh, no, pretty lady, that never can be.
I've a wife back in London and children twice three.
Two wives in the army is too many for me.

"I'll go back to London and stay there one year,
And often I'll think of you, my little dear;
And when I return it'll be in the Spring.
See the waters a-gliding, hear the nightingales sing."

Side I; Band 11. OLD VIRGINNY

Uncle Monroe sang this lovely version of the song Sharp titled "In Old Virginny" at our first meeting. The editors of the Brown collection report only one similar text, but appear to distinguish it, for some reason, from the four texts printed by Sharp. In fact, they say "the only trace of this the editor has found elsewhere is a line from 'Must I Go to Mississippi' reported by Henry from South Carolina, and here the resemblance does not extend beyond the single line" (in the fourth stanza where they have "Must I go to Mississippi" in the place of Uncle Monroe's "Must I go to old Virginny"). It is clear that they do not consider this song to be a variant of the well-known "Greenback Dollar" popularized by the Carter family and others, although it appears to have much in common with that song. (Rosa Presnell sings the Carter family version.) They also seem to have overlooked the Ritchie family version printed in Singing Family of the Cumberlands which is certainly the same song as we have here. Be that as it may, it is a most

beautiful folk lyric and Uncle Monroe sings it magnificently. Listen to the gentle descent of his voice on the first word of the last line of each stanza, then try to repeat it exactly as he sings it. Such an attempt will, perhaps, enable you to appreciate the great artistry possible within the confines of a tradition. The folk aesthetic is a very demanding one.

Once I lived in old Virginny;
North Carolina was my home.
There I courted a handsome lady;
Oh, I called her my own.

Her hair was yellow and her eyes were sparkling;
On her cheeks were a diamond red
And on her breast she wore a white lily.
Oh, the tears that I have shed.

"Father said that I must not marry;
My mother said it would never do.
But, oh, kind miss, if you are willing,
I will run away with you.

"Oh, must I go to old Virginny,
Or, for your sake, must I die?
Oh, must I go, sad, broken hearted?
Oh, my darling, say, don't cry.

"Oh, when I'm asleep I'm a-dreaming about you;
When I'm awake I take no rest,
For every moment seems like an hour.
Oh, what a pain lies in my breast.

"Oh, when the golden sun is shining
On the top of Calvary,
Oh, it's sometimes, love, while you are thinking,
You must ofttimes think of me."

Side I; Band 12. WHERE THE SOUL OF MAN NEVER DIES

R. L. and Margie Harmon, with Coot Greene, learned this hymn from a song book published by R. E. Winsett in Dayton, Tennessee. The copyright date is 1914 and the composition is credited to William M. Dolden.

To Canaan's land I'm on my way,
Where the soul of man never dies;
My darkest night will turn to day,
Where the soul of man never dies.

Dear friends, there'll be no sad farewell,
There'll be no tear dimmed eye,
Where all is peace (and joy and love)
And the soul of man never dies.

A rose is blooming there for me,
Where the soul of man never dies;
And I will spend eternity
Where the soul of man never dies.

A love light beams across the foam,
Where the soul of man never dies;
It shines to light the shores of home,
Where the soul of man never dies.

My life will end in deathless sleep,
Where the soul of man never dies;
And everlasting joy I'll reap,
Where the soul of man never dies.

I'm on my way to that fair land
Where the soul of man never dies;
Where there will be no parting and
The soul of man never dies.

Side II; Band 1. TOBACCO UNION

As Lena Armstrong tells us at the end of the song, she learned this from old "Lie-hue". Hattie Presnell also knows the song and apparently has it from the same source. Just to illustrate the near-legendary aspect of this itinerant folk-sayer, I might point out that it is now becoming a more or less common belief that "Lie-hue" would appear on the Beech every seven years, a number with magical overtones.

In honor of the Surgeon General's report on the harmfulness of tobacco (apologies to Anton Tchekhov), SING OUT! published a version of this song in Vol. 14, No. 2, as noted from the singing of Emma Dusenberry, the great traditional singer from Mena, Arkansas. Randolph prints another version from Mrs. Maggie Morgan of Springdale, Arkansas, commenting that she had learned it in the late 1880's or early 1890's (Vol. III, p. 274).

Come young and old and hear me tell
How strong tobacco smokers smell,
Who loves to smoke the pipe so well,
For tobacco they will sell,
To burn and smoke in union.

They'll take the money from the poor
And carry it to their neighbor's door
And hasten it away to some man's store
To sell and buy tobacco more
To burn and smoke in union.

And then sometimes some church you'll view,
And there the men will sit and chew.
They will spit on the carpet floor
And it will spread a foot or more,
A-talking of the social union.

The twist so large within their mouth,
The juice runs down and stains their chin.
At this I always have to grin
And think there is but little sin
In this tobacco union.

Side II; Band 2. IN DUBLIN CITY
(Laws L 12)

Laws points out that traditional variants of this ballad differ widely, "probably because the narrative element is weak in the original broadsides." The extent of variation might also indicate a vigorous oral tradition, quite apart from the broadside influence, as the ballad is quite widely reported. Buna Hicks recorded a "Rude and Rambling Boy" variant for us, but space did not permit its inclusion in this set. Fleming Brown (FSI-4) sings another version which he learned from the Library of Congress recording of Justus Begley, Hazard, Kentucky, although his text has been collated with that sung by Aunt Molly Jackson. The ballad is generally considered to be of Irish origin, notwithstanding the frequency of its appearance in England. Uncle Monroe Presnell sings it here.

In Dublin City where I were born,
I lived in grief, I lived in scorn,
Until I learned the baker's trade,
Then soon was called the roving blade.

In Dublin City where I did stay,
I spent my money at balls and plays,
Until at last my cash grew low,
Then forced to robbing I must go.

I took to me a handsome wife;
I loved her as I loved my life.
To keep her dressed both neat and gay,
Then forced to robbing on the old highway.

I robbed King Williams, I do declare;
I left him sleeping in his Napton (?) Square.
Bid him goodnight, stepped into my chair
And with great haste rode home to my dear.

Through green bright fields I did pursue,
Then soon was robbed by the violent (?) crew.
My father well distracted run;
My mother cried, "Oh, darling son."

Just one thing that I do crave,
That's six young ladies to dig my grave,
And six young ladies to sink my vault,
All dressed in white, pink ribbons all.

And six young men to guard them home,
And give them swords and pistols all,
That they may fire salute for joy:
Here lies the poor wise and the rambling boy.

Side II; Band 3. THREE DULCIMER NUMBERS

We left these three numbers exactly as they were recorded for us, to demonstrate the ease with which Captain and Viola Hicks move from one number to another — evidence of many hours of music-making in their home. Viola simply gives the title of the next number and the two of them are off and playing without hesitation. The pieces are "Poor Ellen Smith" (the tune to the version known on the Beech), "Down in the Willow Garden", and "Maple on the Hill". Viola plays the dulcimer with a hickory sliver; Captain provides the guitar accompaniment.

Side II; Band 4. FLYING AROUND MY PRETTY LITTLE MISS

This is a very popular dance tune on the Beech, sung here by Buna Hicks. Every singer on the Beech knows it, and every musician can play it. The verses may not always follow in the same sequence, but, with a dance tune like this, that is of little importance.

Flying around my pretty little miss,
Flying around my daisy.
Every time I go that road
You almost drive me crazy.

Some comes on Saturday night,
Some comes on Sunday.
You give some a half a chance,
They'll stay till Monday.

Higher up a cherry tree,
Riper grows a berry;
Sooner a young man goes a-courting,
Sooner he'll marry.

Way down yonder in the western country,
Where the wind don't blow;
One more nickel to carry me through,
And I shove my beau to show.

Side II; Band 5. LITTLE MAGGIE (Tab Ward's version)

Tab Ward can't recall where he learned this version of what must be one of America's best known banjo songs, but another singer suggested that it was brought to the Beech by men who had been cutting timber in West Virginia. Whether or not this is the case, it is interesting to compare Tab's text with that sung by Uncle Monroe (Side II; Band 6). I am of the opinion that Mr. Presnell's is the older of the two versions, although I can offer no documentary evidence to support the assumption.

Over yonder stands little Maggie
With a dram glass in her hand,
A-drinking away her troubles
And courting another man.

Oh, how am I going to stand it,
To see those two brown eyes
A-shining in the moonlight
Like diamonds in the sky?

Pretty flowers is made for blooming;
Pretty stars is made to shine.
Pretty women is made for loving;
Little Maggie is made for mine.

Do around, do around little Maggie;
Go do the best you can.
I've got me another woman;
You can hunt you another man.

I'd rather be in some dark hollow
Where the sun refuse to shine,
(Than to) be a-loving little Maggie,
Who never will be mine.

First time I saw little Maggie,
She was sitting by the sea;
Next time I seen little Maggie,
She had a banjo on her knee.

I'm going down to the depot
With a suitcase in my hand.
I'm going away for to leave you
In a far and distant land.

Side II; Band 6. LITTLE MAGGIE (Mr. Presnell's version)

Uncle Monroe told us that he had learned this text in Watauga County, North Carolina. Those who are familiar with other versions of the song will note that the "highway robbers" in his text have become "revenue officers" in what I consider to be more recent revisions of the song. Mr. Presnell's text stands as a lyric "farewell", with no mention of either banjo or drinking away one's troubles.

"Wake up, wake up little Maggie.
Why do you sleep so sound
When the highway robbers are raging
And the sun is almost down?"

I wrote my love a letter,
And this is the way it read:
My darling, I know you'll see trouble,
But never hang down your head.
Little Maggie, I know you'll see trouble,
But never hang down your head.

The last time I seen little Maggie,
She were a-standing in the door.
Said, "Fare you well, loving Jimmy,
I'll never see you any more.
Oh, fare you well, little Jimmy,
I'll never see you any more."

When I were crossing the cold, icy mountain,
It was so chilly and cold.
"Fare you well, little Maggie;
I'll never see you any more."

Side II; Band 7. I'M GOING THAT WAY

R. L., Margie and Coot believe that they learned this Gospel song from a record (possibly by Bill Monroe) sometime in the early 1940's. I have been unable to locate it elsewhere.

The glorious news I'll tell and sing
As onward I go,
That those who are still astray in sin
My savior may know.
I want them to sing His praises above
Some beautiful day.
For glory to Him who died for me,
I'm a-going that way.

I'm going that way,
I'm going that way,
And Jesus my Savior I adore
Is with me each day.
I'm clinging to Him,
And never to stray,
And singing His praises all day long,
I'm going that way.

I know I shall meet Him at the gate
When trials are past;
I know I shall meet Him face to face
In glory at last.
And, oh, I believe that when we meet,
"Well done," He'll say;
For, trusting His soul-redeeming love,
I'm going that way.

Side II; Band 8. GOING AWAY TOMORROW
(Laws N 8)

I assume, primarily on the basis of the text of the third verse, that this is a fragment of the broadside ballad titled "Lisbon" by Belden. There are so many ballads of "Lover's Disguises" that follow a similar pattern and make use of the "your waist it is too slender" common-place, that it becomes extremely difficult to distinguish one from another, lacking, as we do here, any definitive narrative element. As Belden points out in his introduction to "Jack Munro", "Permutation and combination of a few simple elements have produced almost innumerable stall ballads on this theme in the last three centuries." In the light of Mrs. Hicks' comment at the end of the song, it should be noted that Laws N 9, a similar ballad titled "The Banks of the Nile", was printed in a Civil War revision under the title "Dixie's Isle" by Mackenzie.

"Going away tomorrow
To tarry for awhile,
So far from my dear darling,
About five thousand miles."

She wrung her lily white hands,
So mournful she did cry:
"You will 'list as a soldier
And in the war you'll die."

Four thousand drums are beating
And bullets whistling by,
And cannons loudly roaring
Around poor soldiers' cry.

"Your body are very slender,
Your fingers are very small;
You're a mighty little portion
To face a cannon ball."

"My body are very slender,
My fingers are very small;
It never makes me tremble
To face the cannon ball."

SPOKEN: "That's all I know. My mother sung that. Just as I was a little kid, I'd hear her sing that. You know she came through them war times in that awful war. Yes, she sang me them little old songs, tell me them tales about that war when I was just a young one, and I recollected some of them."

Side II; Band 9. LOOK UP, LOOK DOWN THAT OLD RAILROAD

This lyric is obviously of the same family as the very well-known "In the Pines", "Black Girl", and "Lonesome Road." The fourth stanza even suggests "Every Night When the Sun Goes In" (Sharp II, p.268), although the present song has nothing more in common with that lyric than the first two lines of the stanza. The editors of the Brown collection have elected to separate "In the Pines" from "Lonesome Road", despite the fact that their "B" text of the latter has as much in common with the former as it does with their "A" text. The criterion applied in the distinction is apparently the use of "Look up, look down that lonesome road" as the opening line of the two published texts, together with melodic differences. One is tempted to consider each song making use of these "floating" lyrics as another branch of a wide-spread family tree, even though the general structure of the song may vary considerably from one version to another. While not identical, the melodies seem to be related as well. I suspect that the individual singer may vary the stanzaic pattern from one singing to the next, adding or omitting verses, etc., according to his mood. One thing is certain: Mr. Presnell's version is not based on any of the numerous recorded versions of the song, since he recalled singing it as "a small boy", approximately eighty years ago.

Look up, look down that old railroad,
Way down in Tennessee.

My little girl, my sweet little girl,
Why have you treated me so?
You've caused me to weep, you've caused me to mourn,
You've caused me to leave my home.

The longest day that I ever saw
Was the day I left my home.
If you love me like I love you,
You'd lay your hand in mine.

Yes, every day, when the sun's gone down,
Hang down my head and cry.
The loss of one is the gain of two;
I'll turn my back on you.

Look up, look down that old railroad,
Way down in Tennessee.

Side II; Band 10. ANGEL BAND

This is one of the most popular hymns sung on the Beech. R. L., Margie and Coot learned it from an old book of Gospel songs which belonged to R. L. and Margie's grandfather. The hymn was written by J. Hascall and William Bradbury. Bradbury is credited with being one of the prime movers in the transition of American hymnody from the more stately style of the British composers to the more popular, sentimental style of the Gospel hymn. He was born in Maine in 1816, studied music in Boston, became a music teacher in Maine, New Brunswick, and, finally, in New York. His tunes were highly criticized at first for their similarity to the "plantation melodies" of Stephen Foster, but they won great popularity. Brawley notes that "some of the pieces composed for Sunday schools began to be used in meetings for older people, and one form especially cultivated was that of the ballad with a refrain." (Italics added) Bradbury died in 1868.

My latest sun is sinking fast,
My race is nearly run;
My strongest trials now are past,
My triumph is begun.

Oh, come, angel band,
Come and around me stand.
Oh, bear me away on your snowy wings
To my immortal home;
Oh, bear me away on your snowy wings
To my immortal home.

I know I'm near the holy ranks
Of friends and kindred dear;
I've brushed the dew on Jordan's banks,
The crossing must be near.

I've almost gained my Heavenly home;
My spirit loudly sings.
The holy ones, behold, they come;
I hear the noise of wings.

Oh, bear my longing heart to Him
Who bled and died for me,
Whose blood now cleanses from all sin
And gives me victory.

Side II; Band 11. AMAZING GRACE

No hymn could be more appropriate than this one as the closing song on this album, for no hymn is more widely known and loved by the American folk community than "Amazing Grace." The tune sung here is apparently that composed by William Walker, although the text is sung to several other tunes as well. The text was written by John Newton (1725-1807), an Englishman who went to sea at the age of nine years, sailing all over the world on ships carrying cargoes of goods and slaves. When he was twenty-three years old, he was on a ship that was severely battered by a terrible storm, in the course of which he was sure his life would be lost. To quote from Pfatteicher's In Every Corner Sing: "For the first time since his mother's death (which occurred when he was seven years old), he prayed." After the storm passed and the ship was safe, the young seaman began to think more about God, obtained an old Bible and began to study the Scriptures. As Pfatteicher says, however, "For the present this was as far as he went. He was offered the position of captain of a slave ship and he accepted. For several years he carried slaves between Africa and America. But as he studied the Scriptures more closely and prayed more often he came to hate the business in which he was involved. For the first time since he was nine years old he left the sea." Newton began to attend church regularly, studied, and, at the age of thirty-nine was ordained as a minister of the Church of England. The text of this, his most famous hymn, becomes all the more significant, it seems to me, in the light of the remarkable story of the man who wrote it.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I'm found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come.
'Twas grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me;
His word my hopes appear.
He will my shield and portions be
As long as life endures.

NOTE: I would like to thank Diane Hamilton for making the tapes she made of Uncle Monroe Presnell available to us, as well as Liam Clancy and Paul Clayton, who accompanied her on the collecting trip to Beech Mountain. I am also greatly indebted to Joe Hickerson for his assistance in tracking down the names of the composers of several of the hymns contained herein.

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