

The Songs and Ballads of  
**Hattie Mae Tyler Cargill**



**Debra Cowan   Acie Cargill   Susan Brown**  
with Kristina Olsen & Ellen and John Wright

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# **Songs and Ballads of HATTIE MAE TYLER CARGILL**

## *Introduction*

My grandma, Hattie Mae Tyler Cargill, was the last of the Tyler ballad singing family from Kentucky. The Tylers were very private people and kept their music in the family. They had their own way of tuning all the instruments and their own ways of playing them, and they only allowed family members to know those techniques.

When I was very young, my grandma used to sing to me and make me repeat the words and melodies back to her many times until I had them perfect. I guess I was the one who was chosen to preserve her tradition. I learned to accompany her on a small homemade fretless instrument that I now know was a primitive dulcimer. In this way, my ear was trained in the various scales that she sang in. She played a specially tuned parlor guitar in a strange style with the thumb playing the bass notes and with the index finger being thrust downward all the way to full extension, and she was very accurate with the noting, as I remember.

One of the things that made the Tyler music unique in the area was that the ballads were accompanied by a large number of family members playing the music, using the special tunings, of course. The instruments played were parlor guitar, 5-string guitar, mandolin, violins, lap dulcimers, zither, and a specially tuned autoharp. For dance type music, the banjo was played in the Tyler drop-thumb style, which has been recorded by me for the archives of the Library of Congress.

My grandmother had married into the Cargill family who played string band music and when they were present there would sometimes be a string bass, which added a lot. But even without the bass there would be ten or more musicians playing in the house and the effect was just fabulous. I was just a youngster, but when they took out the instruments for a gathering, it was my very favorite thing. I learned to play all the instruments as I was growing up, in the special tunings and techniques.

The melodies of the most basic songs were in four scales: major, minor, mountain major

and mountain minor. In the more complex songs there would be one scale used for ascending melodies and another scale used when the melody descended. This gives a very unusual and strangely beautiful effect. An example of this would be "Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair." Those songs were the hardest to sing and were reserved for the best singers who could hold their pitch the truest.

Many songs were sung as duets. Some were sung with obvious male and female parts and others were done with one singer singing the song all the way through and the accompanying singer adding harmony where necessary or effective. It seemed that the women were the strongest singers and usually they were the lead singers with a male or a female harmony part below them. Occasionally a harmony part was put on top of the lead, but that was not as common. Many times two or more singers would sing in unison.

The people in the family were mostly subsistence farmers who were poor by today's standards but normal by the standards of the time and conditions. Some worked as miners or laborers. Music was their entertainment. None were professionals. They loved their homes and their traditions. They were very polite and willing to share anything they had. They were not educated. Most could not read or write. But some could sing the words to 100 songs perfectly. They never looked down

on anyone. No one was ever considered unwelcome or unworthy. And I don't ever remember seeing any rudeness of any sort. These people appreciated each other and would help anyone in need.

My grandmother had an unusual role in the community. She sang the songs of death. There were no hospices or really no ways to ease the suffering of a dying person. There would be someone in the area who sang the songs of death to help the person to die. I was never allowed in the room when she sang those songs. I remember waiting on the porch and listening to those eerie sounds and I remember that sometimes when they were over, the person was dead. It was considered a high service and she was sought out by the dying person's family to try to help them along.

It seemed that there were songs for everything at that time. There were songs for sewing, milking, rocking the cradle, lullabies, courting, dancing, getting the mules ready for a day's work, and songs for the children to play their dancing games to. Of course there were many songs to warn young people of the dangers of errant behavior. There were many primitive gospel songs.

The most beautiful songs were the ballads. These somehow had been transported over generations because quite often they refer to a period of time that these people had no personal knowledge of. These songs were their

only treasures and were cherished as such. There were some songs that were a little on the bawdy side and were only sung when we children were either asleep or outside playing. Because I was chosen by my grandmother to carry these songs on, she did teach some of them to me with the warning not to share them with the other kids. But I did anyway, in secret child-only locations, and I still remember the boys grinning and the girls giggling when I sang those to them.

Such a different world that was. No electricity. No roads. No stores. No news besides word of mouth transfers, but everybody knew everybody and everything about them. These were happy people. Honest. Innocent. Accepting life as it came to them. Relishing the pleasures of companionship, music, and the wealth of beauty that surrounded them in nature. The simplicity of a primitive lifestyle reflected in the purity of their thoughts, kindness to one another, and the beauty of their music. I've gone back to try to find these enclaves. They are gone. The culture of these people has vanished with the encroachment of civilization. As my generation passes away, there will never again be contact with that world. At least the unadorned loveliness of their music can be preserved in recordings and hopefully in continuing performances.

*Acie Cargill*

## THE MUSICIANS

**ACIE CARGILL** plays stringed instruments in the old traditional styles, tunings, and scales he learned as a boy. Because he is a bachelor with no children to pass these traditions to, he is now recording his family's songs and tunes for posterity.

**DEBRA COWAN** loves to sing. Anyone who hears her is convinced of that immediately. With her own blend of traditional and contemporary song, Debra engages her audiences and invites them to sing along. She also shares the history of her traditional material, which is an integral part of the songs she sings. Her fresh interpretation and carefully selected material make music come alive for audiences of all ages. **SUSAN BROWN** performs many styles of music and is proficient on a variety of instruments as well as vocals. She presents music dating from the medieval time period to the present, including original tunes. Often seen in costume, she is known for historic and thematic programs adaptable for any age group and filled with opportunities for audience participation. When she was 19, Susan travelled the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky, fell in love with the traditional music, and collected songs and tunes from folks she met along the way. When Acie invited her to be a part of this project, she was excited by the chance to learn new variations of the music she already adored.

**KRISTINA OLSEN** is a classically trained

Please gather up some cherries,  
For I am with child.

Oh, Joseph became angered  
By her lost virginity.  
Let the father of the baby  
Gather cherries for thee.

Then up spoke baby Jesus  
From in his mother's womb.  
He told the cherry tree to bend down,  
Bow low to the ground.

The cherry tree did bend down  
So low to the ground;  
As Mary gathered cherries  
Joseph made not a sound.

Then Joseph knelt before her  
On both his hands and knees.  
Oh, Mary, please forgive me,  
For I have slighted thee.

Then Jesus spoke to Joseph,  
You have no debt to pay;  
Just respect the Virgin Mary.  
My birth is Christmas Day.

### 3. THE LOVER'S PROOF

*(Debra Cowan: voice; Acie Cargill: voice, mandolin, dulcimer; Kristina Olsen: guitar)*

Come sit here beside me and tell me your  
thoughts, dear;

Do you think that the sun can rise in the West?  
I'll sit there beside you and tell you my  
thoughts, dear;

I think that the sun's on the one I love best.

And who might that be, the one you love  
best, dear?

Is he handsome and strong, and honest is he?  
Yes, he's handsome and strong and I think  
he is honest.

His name I won't say 'cause he might not  
love me.

Oh, you won't say his name 'cause he might  
not love thee,

But if he is like me, he'd want you to say.

Oh, yes, he's like you, dear, and he'd want  
me to tell him,

But till I know that he loves me, I'll have  
it my way.

How will you be sure that he really loves you,  
And how will you know he's telling you true?  
There's one way I'll know, dear, that he  
truly loves me.

I'll ask him to prove it, one thing he must do.

Oh, how shall he prove his love will be faithful  
And how will you know his feelings for you?  
I'll know if he's honest and faithful and  
loves me

If he'll wait for my kisses, I'll know his  
love true.

Hmmm! How long must he wait for your  
kisses and favors?

Oh, when will you know his intentions  
are best?

Oh, when we are married I'll know  
his intentions.

guitarist and has performed publicly for many years. For this recording, she learned the old-time Tyler tunings and ornamentations, and plays the tunes with adept arpeggios and accurate fingering.

**ELLEN and JOHN WRIGHT** are instructors at Northwestern University and also play old-time music on guitar and drop-thumb banjo. John is the author of the Ralph Stanley biography *Traveling the Highway Home*, and Ellen has presented papers on bluegrass and country music.

## THE SONGS

### 1. COME ALL YE FAIR AND TENDER LADIES. (*Debra Cowan: vocal and guitar*)

Come all ye fair and tender ladies,  
Be careful how you court young men.  
They're like the stars on a summer morning,  
They first appear and then they're gone.

They'll tell to you some pleasin' story  
And tell you how their heart is true,  
Then go to another woman and court her,  
And that will show their love for you.

I wish I was a little sparrow  
Just flyin' here and flyin' there.  
I'd fly to my false-hearted lover;  
I'd sit and watch and just be near.  
But I am not a little sparrow,  
Nor have I wings, nor can I fly.

I'll sit here alone in grief and sorrow,  
Just weep and hear my baby cry.

If I had known before I courted,  
I'd never have courted any at all.  
I'd have locked my heart in a box of golden  
And held it down with a silver pin.

Please don't believe just any young man.  
They'll say they love and tell you lies,  
And when you give your love to him,  
It's "Goodbye girl, farewell, goodbye."

### 2. THE CAROL OF THE CHERRY TREE

(*Susan Brown: vocal, fretted dulcimer*)

Oh, Joseph was an old man  
And Mary was so pure,  
Oh, Joseph was an old man  
And Mary was so pure,  
Oh, Joseph was an old man  
And Mary was so pure.  
Oh, yes, she was a virgin,  
Of that he was sure.

(*all verses are sung similarly*)

One day they went a-walkin'  
Near the Sea of Gallilee  
And found a tree a-brimmin'  
With red cherries so sweet.

Mary spoke to Joseph  
In a voice soft and mild,

*(Susan: vocal, fretted dulcimer)*

Oh, when I was single my life was so gay;  
Now I am married, there's chores all the day.

There's dishes to wash and all the clothes, too,  
And, yes, all the cooking; there's so much to do.

Oh, don't I wish I was single again, again,  
Oh, don't I wish I was single again.

Oh, when I was single I'd primp and I'd flirt;  
Now I am married, it's kiss or get hurt.

I've two little children, they raise such a squall.  
Another baby will join us later this fall.

Oh, don't I wish...

Oh, when I was single my clothes fit just right;  
Now I am married, my clothes seem too tight.

Oh, when I was single, oh, swing me around;  
Now I am married, no partner I've found.

Oh, don't I wish...

Two little boys crying "Mama, we want  
some bread."  
My husband gets drunk and he wishes us dead.

Before we were married our love was the best;  
Now we are married, his love I detest.

Oh, don't I wish...

## 6. THE FARMER FEEDS US ALL

*(Acie: vocal; Kristina: guitar)*

Oh, the farmer feeds us all;  
Yes, he grows our corn so tall.  
Thank you, sir, Yes, the farmer feeds us all.

Oh, the cobbler makes our boots  
So that we don't go barefoot.  
Thank you, sir, but the farmer feeds us all.

Oh, the merchant sells us things  
And he wraps them up with string.  
Thank you, sir, but the farmer feeds us all.

Oh, the doctor makes us well;  
When we're hurt he helps us heal.  
Thank you, sir, but the farmer feeds us all.

Oh, the tailor mends our clothes  
And can make an overcoat.  
Thank you, sir, but the farmer feeds us all.

Oh, the miller grinds our grain,  
Makes our flour, rye or plain.  
Thank you, sir, but the farmer feeds us all.

Oh, the cows will give us milk  
So that we can drink our fill.  
Thank you, sir, but the farmer feeds us all.

Oh, the sheriff makes things right;  
Keeps the peace in every fight.  
Thank you, sir, but the farmer feeds us all.

*(repeat first verse)*

## 7. KEEP YOUR GARDEN CLEAN

*(Debra: vocal, guitar)*

No weddin', no pleasin', till the sun rise  
in the west.

#### 4. DARK-SKINNED DAVEY

*(Debra: vocal)*

The master he came a-riding home  
And looking for his lady.  
The servants soon began to cry,  
She's gone with the dark-skinned Davey,  
Gone with that dark-skinned Dave.

Fetch her buckskin gloves and her cape and cap,  
And her boots of Spanish leather.  
Tie behind the new bay mare  
And we'll ride home together,  
We'll ride home together.

He rode and he rode till near midnight  
And he saw their campfire gleaming.  
And then he saw his own dear wife  
In the arms of the Davey sleeping,  
In the arms of the Davey sleeping.

Well, I have brought your buckskin gloves  
And your boots of Spanish leather,  
And I have brought your cape and cap,  
And we'll ride home together,  
We'll ride home together.

Oh, you can keep the buckskin gloves  
And the boots of Spanish leather.  
I won't need the cape and cap;  
We won't ride home together,  
Won't ride home together.  
Have you forgotten your house and lands

And your servants to attend thee?  
Have you forgotten your silken gowns,  
And what about your blue-eyed baby,  
What about your blue-eyed babe?

Oh, you can have your house and lands,  
Your servants to attend thee.  
I'll never need those silken gowns,  
But I'll keep my blue-eyed baby,  
I'll keep my blue-eyed babe.

And what about your promise, dear,  
To stay and love together,  
And what about our nights of love?  
You said there was none better,  
Said there was none better.

I'm sorry, dear, to break my word  
To love and stay together,  
But I've taken now the dark-skinned Dave,  
And, yes, it has been better,  
Yes, it has been better.

Then please give me your lily-white hand;  
I'll kiss and say farewell, dear.  
I'll leave you with your new bay mare,  
You and your dark-skinned Davey,  
You and your dark-skinned Dave.

Last night I lay on a warm feather bed,  
My servants to attend me.  
Tonight I'll lay on the hard cold ground  
In the arms of my dark-skinned Davey,  
In the arms of my dark-skinned Dave.

#### 5. I WISH I WAS SINGLE AGAIN



And that may never be,  
And that may never be.

## 9. LORD LOVEL

*(Susan: vocal, fretted dulcimer; Acie: mandolin, violin, viola)*

Lord Lovel was standing at his own castle's gate;  
He was a-carrying his milk-white steed.  
Miss Nancy Belle came riding by;  
Her lover she wanted to see,  
Her lover she wanted to see.

Oh, where are you going, Lord Lovel? she said,  
Oh, where are you going? said she.  
I'm going to ride my milk-white steed  
To a foreign country to see,  
To a foreign country to see.

How long you be gone, Lord Lovel? she said,  
How long you be gone? said she.  
About one year or two, maybe three,  
But I will return to thee,  
But I will return to thee.

Well, he had not been gone but a year  
and a day;  
How he wanted his Lady Nancy.  
He dreamed of her arms and her kisses  
one night,  
And his lady he needed to see,  
And his lady he needed to see.  
Well, he mounted his steed and he rode  
all the day;  
Then he came to his own home town.  
But then he heard a church bell a-tolling,

And the people were a-gathering around,  
And the people were a-gathering around.

Oh, who is now dead? Lord Lovel he said.  
Oh, who is dead? said he.  
Your lady is dead, the people they said,  
Yes, they call her your Lady Nancy,  
Yes, they call her your Lady Nancy.

Well, he ordered her coffin to be opened  
for him,  
And her burial shroud to be turned down,  
And then he kissed her cold clay lips,  
And his tears came a-trinkling down,  
And his tears came a-trinkling down.

Miss Nancy Belle she died today,  
And I shall die tomorrow.  
Miss Nancy Belle died of pure, pure love,  
And I shall die of sorrow,  
And I shall die of sorrow.

## 10. OMIE WISE

*(Debra: vocal; Kristina: guitar; Acie: mandolin, dulcimer)*

Poor Omie, poor Omie,  
Poor little Omie Wise,  
And how she was deceived  
By John Lewis' lies.

He courted her hearty  
Most near every day,  
Then she was with child  
And no longer he'd stay.

Now all ye young maidens  
Who think it is time,  
Don't hasten to the young men;  
Oh, keep your garden clean.

My age was sixteen,  
A sweet budding rose;  
I thought that I should marry  
And I met a young beau.

His hair was so curly,  
And his eyes were deep brown;  
His name was Adam Gentry  
And he came from Caroline.

Oh, he danced with me only,  
And he swung me so strong,  
I fell in love with his laughter,  
And his arms were like stone.

He walked me through the woods;  
In his arms I'd soon be.  
As the moon was looking down,  
I gave him my virginity.

I thought that he would marry,  
But he soon proved me wrong.  
While I was carrying our baby,  
One sad day he was gone.

I rock my baby and I cry now;  
My life is so sad.  
My friends, they stay in the frolic,  
But I loved a false young man.

So, all you young maidens,  
Please listen to me.

Don't hasten on your love;  
Oh, keep your garden clean,  
Just keep your garden clean.

## 8. MY BROTHER EDWARD

*(Debra: vocal; Acie: vocal)*

How came that blood on your shirtsleeve?  
Oh, dear son, tell me.  
It is the blood of the old gray horse  
That ploughed the fields with me.

It is too pale for the old gray horse;  
Oh, dear son, tell me.  
It is the blood of my old black dog  
That walked the woods with me.

It is too dark for the old black dog;  
Oh, dear son, tell me.  
It is the blood of my brother, Edward,  
Who hoed the corn with me.

Oh, what did you fall out about?  
Oh, dear son, tell me.  
Because he cut the young holly bush  
That I had grown for thee.

Now what will you do when your father  
comes home?

Oh, dear son, tell me.  
I'll set my foot on yonder ship  
And sail across the sea.  
And when will you come back to me?  
Oh, dear son, tell me.  
When the sun sets in the old sycamore tree,

Oh, women are waiting  
To steal of your lives.  
They learn when they're young  
And they're worse when they're wives.  
If they're smiling before you,  
Best ask yourself why.  
A woman can charm you,  
But the best ones are shy.

If you go to get married,  
Don't hurry the day.  
Kiss this one, kiss that one,  
And go on your way.  
But when you're sure you are ready  
For a family and home,  
Find a good gal and love her  
And never more roam.

I've loved many times  
And each time was the best.  
To find a good woman  
Just give them this test.  
Stay away from their beauty  
For one month or more  
If you find your love stronger,  
She's the one you'll adore.

Sure, a woman can cook  
And a woman can sew,  
And the pleasures she'll give you  
You'll never outgrow.  
Don't choose by her looks;

You'd best see her inside.  
If she's sweet, clean and honest,  
Then make her your bride.

## 12. THE DEAR COMPANION

*(Debra: vocal, guitar)*

I once did have a dear companion;  
Indeed, I thought his love my own.  
But then a black-eyed woman betrayed me,  
And he cares for me no more.

Late last night, while you were a-sleeping,  
I was laying here alone.  
I was awake and softly weeping,  
Listening to the wind a-blowin'.

So many nights I've laid here thinking  
How your love was lost to me.  
We swore we'd always be together;  
Now I know that'll never be.

When I see our baby smiling,  
Then I see your handsome face.  
But when I hear our baby crying,  
Then I think of my disgrace.

You can go and you'll never see me;  
It no longer troubles me.  
In your heart you love another  
And in my grave I'd rather be.

## 13. LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ELLENDER

*(Debra: vocal; Kristina: guitar; Acie: vocal, mandolin, dulcimer)*

He said, Dearest Omie,  
We'll meet at Adams' Spring;  
I'll bring you some money  
And many fine things.

We'll ride to Kentucky  
And find a home place.  
We'll go and get married;  
T'will be no disgrace.

Poor Omie went to meet him  
Down at Adams' Spring,  
No money he brought her  
Nor other fine things.

Please come up behind me  
And together we'll ride;  
We'll go to Kentucky  
And you'll be my bride.

She got up behind him  
And off they did go  
To the banks of the river  
Where deep waters flow.

John Lewis, John Lewis,  
Please tell me your mind.  
Are you going to marry  
Or leave me behind?

Dear Omie, dear Omie,  
I'll tell you my mind.  
My mind is to drown you  
And leave you behind.

Have mercy, have mercy,  
Please spare me my life.  
Please spare my little baby;  
I'll not be your wife.

He kicked her and choked her  
And threw her in the deep.  
He left her a-drowning  
And he rode at full speed.

Poor Omie was missing;  
She's dead, her mother cried.  
Two boys were a-fishing  
And saw her floating by.

They cast their nets around her  
And brought her to the shore.  
Fair Omie, fair Omie  
Would never smile more.

They captured John Lewis  
And hung him in a tree.  
Yes, I am guilty;  
It's hanged I shall be.

## 11. THE BACHELOR'S LAMENT

*(Acie: vocal, guitar, mandolin, violin, dulcimer, string bass)*

Come gather, young fellers,  
My story's for you.  
I'm a man of experience,  
But these words will be few.  
If you'll heed my advice  
That I'll give in this song,  
Success, love, and money,  
You'll never go wrong.

Their love not meant to be.  
In their grave all three are now at rest.

A long, black coffin made so wide,  
All three lovers placed inside,  
And their arms were all entwined.  
Lord Thomas now will stay so warm  
With Fair Ellender in his arms  
And the brown girl lying close behind.

#### 14. THE DEATH OF YOUNG ROBERT

*(Susan: vocal, fretted dulcimer; Acie: violin)*

Come gather, my friends,  
For a short tale of woe,  
If you will but listen awhile,  
About a young couple  
And their newborn little babe.  
Oh, nothing is worse than the death of a child.

Oh, yes, I recall  
The day he was born.  
Such happiness. Such joy.  
His father, Lord William,  
Had prayed for a son  
And then Lady Anne gave birth to a boy.

Such a pretty little babe.  
Oh, Robert was his name  
And none could resist his smile.  
His father was proud  
And his mother so sweet.

Oh, nothing is worse than the death of a child.

Young Robert was sleeping  
In his cradle and cloth;  
Lady Anne asleep in a chair.  
Not a cry did he make,  
But she woke with a start.  
She bent to the cradle; he was lying dead there.

Her cries were soon heard  
By her servants and friends,  
But William was away many miles.  
When he came home  
His spirit was broke.  
Oh, nothing is worse than the death of a child.

They buried that little babe  
In a coffin of oak  
Lined with linen and gold.  
Their Robert was called  
To Heaven that day:  
A sweet little baby that'd never grow old.

#### 15. THE UNBROKEN TOKEN

*(Debra: vocal; Acie: vocal, guitar, dulcimer; Kristina: guitar)*

A fair young maid, working in her garden,  
A handsome soldier stood by a tree.  
He had his cap down on his forehead,

Lord Thomas kept the king's own deer,  
And he loved Fair Ellender,  
But she had no land nor home.  
Now tell me true, my dearest Mother,  
Should I marry Ellender,  
Or should I bring the brown girl home?

Take the brown girl by your hand,  
For she has house and land  
And Fair Ellender has none.  
My son, to you I will advise,  
And you've always thought me wise,  
Yes, bring the brown girl home.

I only love dear Ellender;  
Her skin it is so fair  
As ever the sun shined on.  
I'll take the brown girl by her hand,  
For she has house and land,  
Yes, I'll bring the brown girl home.

And then he rode to Ellender.  
She said, What joy to see you, sir.  
What news today you've brought to me?  
To my wedding will you come?  
And will you wear your finest gown,  
For the brown-skinned girl my wife will be.

Oh, Mother dear, should I go  
To his wedding or stay at home?

My friends and his be there.  
She dressed herself up all in white,  
As she herself the bride.  
Oh, Daughter, I sense bad luck. Beware.

He led her by her lily-white hand,  
And every lord rose to a stand.  
At the table's head he sat her down.  
Will the brown girl be your bride?  
You should have married me, she cried,  
Yet you chose the girl whose skin is  
quite so brown.

Oh, then the brown girl drew her knife  
And she took Fair Ellender's life,  
And her blood came a-trinkling down.  
I've loved just you; oh, please don't die.  
But her blood ran down her side.  
His heart was broke and her death was  
as his own.

Lord Thomas quickly drew his sword,  
And he never said a word.  
He led the brown girl down the hall.  
You are a murderer, he said.  
And he cut off the brown girl's head  
And then he kicked it hard against the wall.

He put his sword against the floor,  
His life could be no more,  
And he pierced it into his breast.  
This is the end of lovers three,

And each bell seemed to sing to her:  
Hard-hearted Barbara Allen.

Oh, Morher, dear Mother, please make my bed,  
Please make it long and narrow.  
Sweet William died of pure, pure love,  
And I will die of sorrow.

Oh, Father, dear Father, go dig my grave  
And dig it long and narrow.  
Sweet William died for me today,  
And I shall die tomorrow.

Oh, Barbara was buried in the old churchyard,  
And William buried beside her,  
And out of his heart there grew a red rose,  
And out of her's a briar.

They grew as tall as the old church tower,  
Till they could grow no higher.  
They locked, embraced, tied a lover's knot,  
The red rose and the briar.

## 17. THE ROSE BUD BLOOMS BUT ONCE

*(Susan: vocal, autoharp; Margaret Tyler: vocal)*

I was a little girl with long curly hair,  
I heard my mother say,  
Oh, see that little rose bud a-blooming there,  
It soon will fade away.

A rose bud blooms but once, my dear,  
I heard my mother say.  
Oh, see that little rose bud a-blooming there,  
It soon will fade away.

*(Similarly:)*

I was sixteen, so young and so fair;  
My life was once so gay.  
Oh, see...

Oh, the miller's boy I loved so dear  
And now my debts I'll pay.  
Oh, see...

He left me alone, my child to bear;  
With me he would not stay.  
Oh, see...

Now I'm forlorn, my sadness I'll share.  
Please listen, if you may.  
Oh, see...

When my daughter is grown, her beauty  
so fair,  
I'll tell her, one spring day:  
Oh, see that little rose bud a-blooming there?  
It soon will fade away.

## 18. MY WEDDING DAY

*(Debra: vocal; Kristina: guitar; Acie: violin, man-*

Saying, Oh, kind miss, can you fancy me?

You seem a man of noble honor,  
But you're not that man I took you to be.  
And, if you're a man of noble honor,  
You will not impose a sad woman like me.

I have a true love gone to the army,  
For many long years across the sea.  
And many more years I'll wait upon him;  
No man on earth shall enjoy me.

Oh, what if he's in some watercourse  
drowned,  
Or what if he's in a battlefield slain?  
Or he might have found another woman  
and married;  
You might sit and wait and never see him again.

Oh, yes, he may be in some watercourse  
drowned,  
Or in a battlefield slain. That may be true.  
Yes, he may have found another woman  
and married;  
I'll love his wife and little children, too.  
He reached his hand deep in his pocket  
And pulled out a ring and a diamond, too.  
The ring was the one that she had given him.  
She saw it, fell down near his boot.

He picked her up and he did embrace her;  
He held her hand and he kissed her cheek.

Then he kissed her lips as she was crying,  
Saying, I've returned to marry thee.

## 16. BARBARA ALLEN

*(Debra: vocal; Kristina: guitar)*

'Twas in the merry month of May;  
Wild flowers they were blooming,  
Sweet William came from the north country  
And he courted Barbara Allen.

He courted her for many long years,  
And still she would not have him.  
His heart was broke, on his death bed lay,  
For the love of Barbara Allen.

He sent his best friend to the town,  
To the house where she was dwelling.  
Oh, William's sick; bids me call for you,  
If your name be Barbara Allen.

Oh, slowly, slowly got she up,  
And to his bedside going.  
She looked upon his pale white face.  
Oh, William dear, you look a-dying.  
He rolled his face unto the wall,  
And she could hear him crying,  
Farewell to you, farewell to you,  
Farewell to sweet Barbara Allen.

She had not gone far from the town;  
She heard the death knells tolling,



But ten thousand times more I loved the  
Lady Margaret  
Who's a-standing at my own bedfeet.

Very well I like my bride so sweet,  
And very well do I like her sheets,  
Oh, yes, ten thousand times more I loved the  
Lady Margaret  
Who's a-standing at my own bedfeet.

When that night was passed, with morning  
coming on,  
He was troubled by that strange, strange dream.  
He rode to Lady Margaret's and he knocked  
on her door.  
Her mother, in black, began to scream.

Lady Margaret's not in her high sewing room,  
Nor is she in her own courtyard,  
But she's lying in her coffin, so narrow and  
so long.  
Her skin now seems so pale and hard.

Her mother took him in to see her lying there,  
And he rolled back her silken shroud.  
He bent and he kissed her cold, clay lips,  
And his cries could be heard aloud.

Ten thousand times I've kissed these lips  
so warm,  
And just as often they've kissed mine.  
Save her linen burial cloth, please save it for me;  
Lady Margaret in death I'll soon join.

## 20. THE DYING DAUGHTER

*(Debra: vocal; Kristina: guitar; Acie: violin,  
viola, mandolin)*

Oh, Mother dear, go make my bed  
And let me lie in darkness.  
Please rub my head like you have done;  
I feel such awful sadness.

Oh, daughter of mine, I love you so.  
Oh, daughter of mine, what ails you so?  
Oh, daughter of mine, I love you so.  
Oh, daughter of mine, what ails you so?

*(similarly:)*

Oh, Mother dear, I feel so weak,  
And I can't stop a-crying.  
Please hold me now; my heart is broke;  
I think that I'm a-dying.

Oh, daughter of mine, my sweetest dove,  
So many young men would crave your love.

I've never felt like this before;  
It seems I might stop breathing.  
His mother says that I'm unworthy;  
My ways to her aren't pleasing.

Oh, daughter of mine, you are my life;  
The young man you love's not free for a wife.  
Please bid farewell and kiss my lips;  
You've been the dearest mother.  
I fear my death; I feel it now.  
My young life now is over.

Oh, daughter of mine, please linger here;  
You're the fairest of flowers, my  
daughter dear.

*dolin, dulcimer)*

Oh, tomorrow is my wedding day;  
I'm as happy as I can be.  
It's the day that I've been living for,  
My husband wed to me.

As a girl, I dreamed and longed for this day;  
Oh, sing, little birdies, sing.  
My love is good, and such a strong man,  
And soon I'll wear his ring.

The flowers are a-blooming everywhere;  
I'll pick them for my garland.  
I'll weave some daisies into my hair  
To charm and please my darling.

My mother is a-baking now;  
Our families will all be there.  
My father will be, oh, so proud,  
But I'm sure I'll see his tears.

My new life will from tomorrow start;  
We'll make our home and family.  
These words I'll gladly say from my heart:  
Oh, yes, I'll marry thee.

## 19. SWEET WILLIAM AND LADY MARGARET

*(Debra: vocal; Acie: vocal, mandolin; Kristina:  
guitar)*

Sweet William's mother arose one early morn,  
And she dressed herself in blue.  
I want you to tell me of the long, long love

Between Lady Margaret and you.

Of her love, I can't say  
On this morning in May,  
But I don't think that she loves me.  
And tomorrow early morn I'll ride to  
the church;  
Lady Margaret my bride shall see.

Lady Margaret was sitting in her high  
sewing room,  
She was combing back her yellow hair.  
She saw her lover, William, walking with  
his new bride,  
As to the church door they drew near.

When she saw the couple there,  
She quickly bound up her hair  
And from her high window fell.  
The people found her dead and their tears  
began to shed.  
Why she jumped there was none that could tell.

The bride was dressed in white; 'twas on their  
wedding night,  
And now she was fast asleep.  
Lady Margaret's ghost arrived about midnight,  
And she stood at their own bedfeet.  
Oh, how do you like  
Your bride so sweet,  
And do you like her silken sheets?  
I'd have given my life to be your wedded wife,  
But a new love's now in your arms asleep.

Very well do I like my bride so sweet,  
And very well do I like her sheets,

this family, unlike many others in the region, chose to accompany their ballads with a variety of traditional instruments and often to sing them with other than the “single voice” style that is the more common approach to ballad singing there. Often, Acie’s family used vocal harmonies. They sometimes sang with more than one voice in unison, and they even exchanged parts, as in the several examples here of dialogue songs. The Tylers seem to have discovered their own way of presenting these songs for each other’s pleasure, and used it creatively.

Some of the numbers presented here are unique examples of songs previously gathered in Kentucky (“The Dear Companion,” “Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies,” “The Waggoner’s Lad”). Also, there are versions of seven classic ballads, as defined for us by Professor Francis James Child in his great compilation of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. Quite aside from these, though, we find several songs that do not appear to have been previously reported.

I asked Acie if he thought his grandmother might have made up a few of these, as she was clearly a highly creative person with a strong traditional base upon which to build. He agreed that this was quite possible, and could explain the presence of songs such as “The Death of Young Robert,” which I, at least, have not seen in other collections.

The Tyler/Cargill family musical tradition

was obviously a vital, thriving one, capable of being modified in a creative way. As Acie points out, when the Tylers and the Cargills got together, the addition of the string bass was a new element in the instrumental mix, and, as he says, it “added a lot.”

The desire to document the music of his family led Acie to teach the songs offered here to Debra Cowan and Susan Brown and to invite them to record with him. Of course, they were honored to do so. Kristina Olsen was encouraged to learn the Tyler family tunings and scales on her guitar, and other tunes were taught to the Wrights, including the one they play behind Acie’s recitation of his grandmother’s poetic description of a return visit to her Kentucky home.. We are sure that you will enjoy the music presented here, and will be inclined to learn many of the songs. In that way, Acie hopes his family’s music will be enjoyed for many more generations.

*Sandy Paton*

## 21. THE WAGGONER'S LAD

*(Debra: vocal; Kristina: guitar; Acie: vocal, mandolin, dulcimer)*

Oh, hard is the fortune of all womankind;  
They're always controlled, they're always  
                    confined.

Controlled by their parents until they are wed,  
Then slaves to their husbands until they  
                    are dead.

I'm just a poor woman; my story is sad.  
A long time been courted by the  
                    waggoner's lad.

He courted me daily, each night and each day,  
Now his wagon is loaded and he's going away.

Your parent's don't like me; they think I'm  
                    too poor.

They say I'm not worthy to come to your door.  
I work hard for my living and my money's  
                    my own,

So, if they don't like me, I'll leave them alone.

Your horses need feeding; I'll get them  
                    some hay.

We'll sit here together as long as we may.  
My horses aren't hungry; they won't eat  
                    your hay,

So, fare you well, darling, I'll be on my way.

My heart now is broken; your love is not mine.  
I'll think of you often, for such a long time.

But when you come back, love, don't think  
                    I'll be here.

You might see me a-crying, but I won't let  
                    you near.

Well, I love you, my darling; I've loved a  
                    long time.

And you've been my sweetheart, but a new one  
                    I'll find.

I'll kiss him and hug him and, yes, I'll be kind.  
Forget him and scorn him when I have  
                    the mind.

## 22. MY KENTUCKY HOME

*(Acie: vocal; Ellen and John Wright: guitar and banjo - playing "The Road To My Home" by Hattie Mae Tyler Cargill)*

As I stand here in the woods  
                    I wonder why I ever left.  
                    I wonder if I ever did leave.

As I close my eyes  
                    I smell the fragrance of the woods.  
                    I'll never forget the smell.

Even when I was a girl  
                    I could smell the woods  
                    Better than I could see them.  
                    That's why I never got lost.

I wonder what happened to all the other kids.  
                    Did they get old like me?  
                    Or are they still jumping and climbing  
                                    and hiding?

I'm expecting little Bennie Arnett to come  
a-yelling from behind a tree  
any time now.

How I used to fly through these woods!  
Screaming.  
Laughter always trailing behind me.  
People used to say they could hear me in the  
woods for miles away.

I could run those trails all day.  
Now I can hardly walk  
Without a stick.

I'm gonna climb this hill today,  
And this old dog is gonna climb it, too.  
He sleeps a lot,  
And it seems he's as stiff as I am.

We're a good team for hiking;  
Both of us move slow,  
Both of us love to be in the woods,  
And we're happy to be together.

This oak tree was my favorite when I was a girl.  
Why didn't it get old like me?

I just don't know why I loved this tree so much.  
Just something about it.  
I made it the center of my world.

I could climb and sit in the branches  
and dream,  
And just look out.

I used to see wild animals, especially deer.

The way they move.  
And I liked the wild turkeys.

Maybe someday I'll be a deer.  
I think I'd like to be a buck deer  
Just a-going through the woods like  
I own them.

Oh, I can feel that wonderful breeze.  
I love the way the wind sounds in the trees.

I belong here.  
This place is part of me,  
And I am part of this place.

Come on, old dog.  
You better keep up, or I might leave  
you behind.  
We don't have time to rest.  
It'll be dark soon, and we still got a long  
ways to go.

### **A Note from Folk-Legacy**

When Acie Cargill offered us the chance to produce this remarkable recording of his family's music, we were delighted. Here were examples of ballads and songs from the repertoire of his traditional music-making family from Kentucky, primarily as they were very deliberately passed to him by his grandmother, Hattie Mae Tyler Cargill. I say "remarkable" because

## The Songs and Ballads of Hattie Mae Tyler Cargill

1. Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies	DEBRA	3:12
2. The Carol of the Cherry Tree	SUSAN	4:09
3. The Lover's Proof	DEBRA/ACIE	2:13
4. Dark-Skinned Davy	DEBRA	2:35
5. I Wish I Was Single Again	SUSAN	2:18
6. The Farmer Feeds Us All	ACIE	1:29
7. Keep Your Garden Clean	DEBRA	2:55
8. My Brother Edward	DEBRA/ACIE	2:51
9. Lord Lovel	SUSAN	4:04
10. Omie Wise	DEBRA	3:27
11. The Bachelor's Lament	ACIE	2:16
12. The Dear Companion	DEBRA	2:55
13. Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender	DEBRA/ACIE	4:13
14. The Death of Young Robert	SUSAN	2:50
15. The Unbroken Token	DEBRA/ACIE	3:48
16. Barbara Allen	DEBRA	4:09
17. The Rosebud Blooms But Once	SUSAN(*)	3:55
18. My Wedding Day	DEBRA	2:17
19. Sweet William and Lady Margaret	DEBRA/ACIE	4:06
20. The Dying Daughter	DEBRA	3:09
21. The Waggoner's Lad	DEBRA/ACIE	3:01
22. My Kentucky Home	ACIE	3:45

(Tune: The Road To My Home)

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69:23

(\*) with Margaret Tyler (no relation!)

Acie



Debra



Susan



Kristina



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*We would like to express our gratitude to David Weide  
for his assistance with this project.*







CD-128

Songs and Ballads of Hattie Mae Tyler Cargill

Folk-Legacy CD-128

# The Songs and Ballads of Hattie Mae Tyler Cargill

Debra Cowan    Acie Cargill    Susan Brown

with Kristina Olsen and Ellen & John Wright



An unusual collection of traditional songs and ballads cherished by one Kentucky family and preserved by the grandson of Hattie Mae Tyler Cargill, performed here by several fine singers and instrumentalists personally selected by Acie Cargill.

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- |                                       |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
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