

# Chicago Town & Points West



## Chicago Town & Points West *Art Thieme* LIVE

I was excited when Art mentioned a fifteen-hour collection of his live performances, and I am proud to have worked with him to produce this CD from that collection. I hope you enjoy listening to it as much as I enjoyed producing it. – Dennis Cook

1. CHICAGO TOWN BLUES --- This is my warts and roses love song to my home town. Chicago continues to be my musical, intellectual and inspirational home even though Carol and I now live in Peru, IL. ---Recorded at the Equinox Festival in the middle of State Street--Madison, WI by Wisconsin Public Radio--Sept. 1979.
2. WRECK OF THE TENNESSEE GRAVY TRAIN — From Uncle Dave Macon. Here is a song that could be taken right out of today's headlines. Recorded by Fritz Schuler at the University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc in March of 1979. Fritz and Mary's wondrous Golden Ring Music Store and Folklore Center is a must stop in Wisconsin.
3. DIAMOND JO (JOE ?) — from the singing of Parchman Farm prisoner Charlie Butler in 1937. Here I sing it with my altered 9-string Martin D-76 guitar at the Madison Wisconsin Folk Singing Festival. (I am possibly wrong about my steamboat connection idea as expressed on this CD---but the romantic side of me wants my theory to, somehow, some day, prove true.)
4. JIM BRIDGER AND THE WINTER OF 1830 — From a tall tale I heard in Oregon in 1967—combined with a tall tale Richard Chase told at the first University Of Chicago Folk Festival in 1961. This tale, like most tall ones, does not have a punch line. These “lies told on purpose” helped people deal with, belittle, and get the best of all sorts of hard times—like terrible winter storms. Recorded at the Madison Wisconsin Folk Singing Festival.
5. SIOUX INDIANS — Learned from the singing of Alex Moore and included on one of the old Library Of Congress Archive Of American Folk Song's 12-inch Long Play record albums. Surprisingly, there is a modicum of respect shown in this song for the Native-American chief and his fighters. My rendering of this great ballad (story song) was recorded at Stages Music Hall on Clark Street in Chicago -- November 14, 1979 by Rich Warren for WFMT-FM radio.
6. WHEN I WAS A COWBOY / ROY AND TRIGGER --- From Leadbelly--Recorded during a song swap with good friend Jerry Rasmussen at the wonderful folk club and restaurant Café Carpe in Fort Atkinson, WI. Fine singer, Bill Camplin and wife, Kitty Welch, make the best pizza in the world there.



7. STEALIN' --- A fine old song from the Memphis Jug Band. Also recorded at Café Carpe by Tom Martin-Erikson for Wisconsin Public Radio.

8. GENE AND CHAMPION / RIDIN' DOWN THE CANYON / COWBOYS LAMENT --- Gene Autry and Smiley Burnett wrote Riding Down The Canyon in the back seat of a car on the way to a gig near Chicago when both were with the WLS NATIONAL BARN DANCE in that city. It surely paints a lovely picture. Cowboys Lament is a famous traditional cowboy ballad. This was at the NO EXIT COFFEEHOUSE in the 1970s. --- During the thirty-seven years I played at "The Exit" (as we often called the grand little place) it was owned, first, by Joe Moore, then, by Peter Steinberg, and last by Brian and Sue Kozin. They've all been wonderful friends who provided great coffee, unique bathroom graffiti (and aromas) plus probing and inspiring conversation on more than a just a few occasions. It was a combination oasis, living room, hash house, library, and personal true-love dating service – all right there under the Chicago Transit Authority elevated train tracks for ease of access.

9. A SCOTTISH SOLDIER --- from the singing of Andy Stewart in the early 1960s. --- Ben Franklin said, "There never was a good war—or a bad peace." Realizing the total truth of that, I honor the sacrifice, the valor, and the memory of those who fought. I also believe just as strongly that we should honor those whose valor, commitment, and sacrifice led them to resist and protest emphatically while trying to end the wars that killed so many just like this Scottish soldier.

10. LAZY BONES --- I've always loved this song from Hoagy Carmichael. Doing it on a 5-string banjo was my own idea---as inspired by Pete Seeger (Blue Skies), Billy Faier (world music), Bob Gibson (Andalucian Dance), Stuart Halliday (Scotland The Brave), Cathy Fink (Monkey Music), and Frank Hamilton (Miserlou).---These mentors of mine all pushed the banjo's musical envelope. Being children of the city in love with old-timey southern music, it was possibly natural that we took our northern urban music and tried to rural-ize it.

11. GROUNDHOG --- self explanatory. With a jaw/Jew's/juice harp.

12. THE HILLS OF ROANE COUNTY --- sung at the No Exit---in the 1980s.

13. MOLLY DARLING / MARY CHARLOTTE ANN McGHEE --- Both of these songs are for Carol. Recorded at No Exit. John Hartford told me Molly Darling was written by Will B. Hayes in the 1800s. I learned M.C.A.McGhee from Bill Chipman of Senath, MO. I tape recorded Bill in Chicago in 1966.

14. THE BIGGEST WHATEVER --- a creature song from The Dillards---No Exit.

15. SAN ANTONIO ROSE --- by Bob Wills---banjo solo---Recorded at No Exit – a song swap with Cathy Fink who, with her partner Marcy Marxer, won their FIRST GRAMMY in 2004. Congratulations! You two are the best!!

16. SOHO ON SATURDAY NIGHT / NO MORE BOOZE --- recorded by old friend Paul Stamler at a house concert at his home in St. Louis, MO. Soho is a song of Pittsburgh, PA. I got from Vivian Richman. I learned No More Booze from the singing of Ed McCurdy.

17. HARD TIMES IN THE MILL / A DOLLAR AIN'T A DOLLAR ANY MORE --- H.T.I.T.M. was learned from the monumental folksinger extraordinaire, Pete Seeger. As I say on the CD, it contains my favorite line in all of folk music! --- A.D.A.A.D.A.M. is from a 78-rpm record by The Union Boys.

18. I'M GONNA LEAVE OLD TEXAS NOW --- Learned from Bob Gibson. This is how I sang it to end my portion of the show to aid then-injured folksinger Michael Cooney at Stages Music Hall--Chicago---Nov.4, 1979. (Michael is better now!!!) This little song really says exactly what I feel about my life spent in the American folksong revival: I'm a better man for just the knowin' of you.

### Acknowledgments

Sincere and heartfelt thanks to all my friends who have made this project possible with their expertise, kindness, generosity and good humor. I especially want to thank Dennis Cook.

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1 Chicago Town Blues	3:30
2 Wreck Of The Tennessee Gravy Train	2:59
3 Diamond Jo	4:57
4 Jim Bridger And The Winter Of 1830	6:57
5 Sioux Indians	3:09
6 When I Was A Cowboy / Roy & Trigger	4:09
7 Stealin'	3:44
8 Gene & Champion / Ridin' Down The Canyon / Cowboys Lament	5:53
9 A Scottish Soldier	3:21
10 Lazy Bones	2:43
11 Groundhog	2:15
12 The Hills Of Roane County	2:41
13 Molly Darling / Mary Charlotte Anne McGhee	4:04
14 The Biggest Whatever	2:29
15 San Antonio Rose	1:45
16 Soho On Saturday Night / No More Booze	3:45
17 Hard Times In The Mill / A Dollar Ain't A Dollar Any More	4:15
18 I'm Gonna Leave Old Texas Now	2:45

A delightful collection of songs and stories drawn from a large inventory of Art's live performances.

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All profits go to The Art Thieme Trust. Donations welcome.

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