

# HARD TRAVELIN

Sung By

CISCO HOUSTON

WITH GUITAR

FARE THEE WELL

STAGOLEE

I WANT TO GO HOME  
MY LOVER WAS A  
LOGGER

HOUND DOG

DRUNKEN RAT

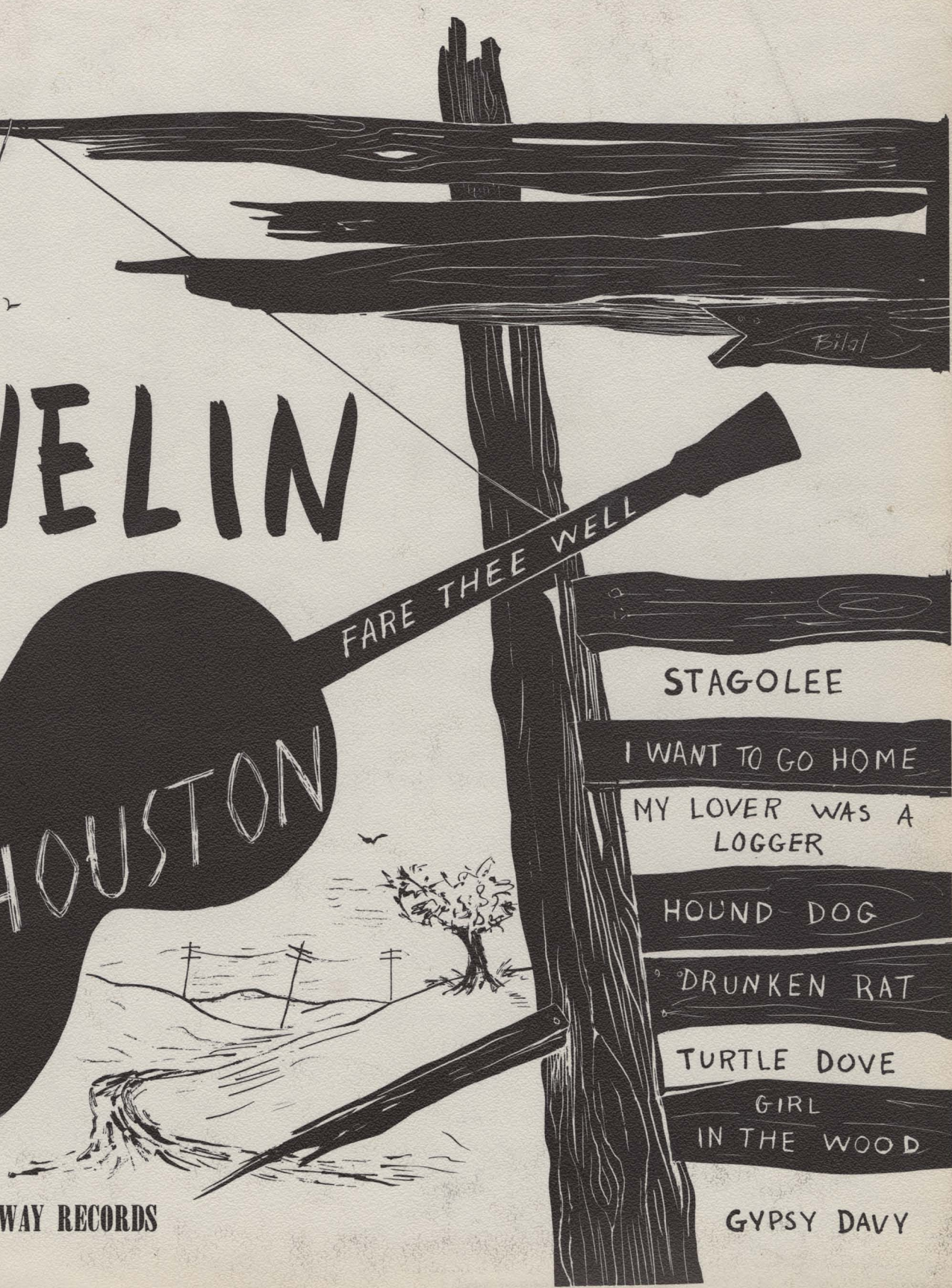
TURTLE DOVE

GIRL  
IN THE WOOD

GYPSY DAVY

FA 2042

FOLKWAY RECORDS





HARD TRAVELING SUNG BY CISCO HOUSTON

FOLKWAYS FA 2042

# Hard Traveling Sung by Cisco Houston

Illustrated Notes are Inside Pocket



FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FA 2042  
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## HARD TRAVELING

"I tried to make these songs to tell you something about the migratory worker. I mean the worker that gets forced out onto the road or just naturally hits the road because he likes that kind of life for the time being. . . I have seen all of our workers migrate at one time or another for some cause or other. Low wages, bad bosses, hard laws, high prices, rents, lousy houses, filthy apartments, all of these things have caused all of us to travel some."

Thus, Woody Guthrie explains how he came to write his songs and ballads about migratory workers and the Oklahoma Dust Bowl. Alan Lomax, who helped to record many of Guthrie's songs for the Library of Congress collection; called him "our greatest contemporary folk poet." Such praise is well deserved, for Guthrie has composed hundreds of songs about the 'working stiff', in and out of work, as well as many other kinds of ballads and protest songs. When he writes about hard traveling, hardrock mining, riding the freights, harvesting, and lying in jail on a vagrancy charge, it is out of personal experience which gives the songs true meaning, vitality, and life.

Of HARD TRAVELING, the title song in this album, Guthrie has the following to say:

"It might not be one of the best songs in the world but it is better than any I've seen on sheet music, to my way of thinking. HARD TRAVELING is the kind of a song you would sing after you had been booted off your little place and had lost out, lost everything, hocked everything down at the pawn shop, and had bummed a lot of stems asking about work."

Cisco Houston learned the song directly from Woody with whom he did so much of the singing, working, traveling and sailing Guthrie describes.

I've been doing some hard traveling, I thought  
you knowed,  
I've been doing some hard rambling, way down  
the road,

For I've been doing some hard rambling,  
Hard drinking, hard gambling,  
I've been doing some hard traveling, Lord.

### Notes by Kenneth S. Goldstein

By flat car and box car, by river boat and canal boat, by old model 'T' and his own two legs, Cisco Houston has covered the tremendous panorama that is America. He knows the land and its people intimately. His songs come from the land and its people. . .

A professional singer and actor, Cisco Houston has appeared on radio and television, in nightclubs and concerts - at all times with an outstanding sincerity, appreciation, and understanding of the songs and the people from whom they come.

Woody Guthrie, with whom Cisco did much of his hardest traveling, describes him this way: "Cisco likes hard hitting songs and hard hitting people. He likes to roam and to ramble, to walk, think, drink, eat and talk with oil field rough-necks, timber slippers, mine crawlers, white collar city and town workers, with clerks, with folks on the ships, on trains, on fast wheeling river barges, and to meet and to sing with the people. . . . He's a man that likes most of all to meet new colors of people, newer colors of fields, hills, valleys and new looking mountains under every color of a sky." Knowing this, his ability to sing a migratory worker song and a bad man ballad with the same conviction that he performs a love song and an old English ballad is understandable.

Not all of the songs in this album are 'traditional.' Some were rather recently composed. Others, however, are variants of songs dating back several hundred years. But in each instance they are songs which, to paraphrase Walt Whitman, Cisco heard America singing. . .



I've been doing some hardrock mining, I thought  
you knowed,  
I've been leaning on a pressure drill, way down  
the road.  
Well, the hammer flying and the air hose sucking,  
And six feet of mud and I sure been a-mucking,  
And I've been doing some hard traveling, Lord.

I've been laying in a hard rock jail, I thought  
you knowed, boys,  
I've been laying out ninety days, way down the  
road,  
Well, the darned old judge he said to me,  
It's ninety days for vagrancy,  
And I've been doing some hard traveling, Lord.

I've been riding them fast passengers, I thought  
you knowed, boys,  
I've been hitting them flat wheelers, way down  
the road,  
I've been riding them blind passengers,  
Dead enders, kicking up cinders,  
I've been doing some hard traveling, Lord.

I've been doing some hard harvesting, I thought  
you knowed,  
From North Dakota to Kansas City, way down  
the road,  
Been a-cutting that wheat and a-stacking that  
hay  
Just trying to make about a dollar a day,  
And I've been doing some hard harvesting, Lord.

I've been walking that Lincoln Highway, I thought  
you knowed,  
I've been hitting that '66', way down the road,  
Got a heavy load, I got a worried mind,  
I'm looking for a woman that's hard to find,  
And I've been doing some hard traveling, Lord.

For additional material on songs of the migratory  
workers see the following references:

The Hobo's Hornbook by George Milburn,  
I. Washburn, New York, 1930

Bound For Glory by Woody Guthrie  
E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1943

American Folk Songs of Protest by John Green-  
way, University of Pennsylvania Press, Phila-  
delphia, 1953

## STAGOLEE

Gambler Kills Friend Over  
Loss Of Hat In Crap Game  
Fight Over \$5 Stetson Ends  
In Death of Father Of Two

Here is a headline as starkly dramatic as any to  
be found today. A favorite piece of American  
folklore, it relates a story of violence and mur-  
der which could successfully compete with a  
Mickey Spillane novel. STAGOLEE, the song  
which tells the tale, ranks but one step behind  
'John Hardy' as the most popular of Negro 'bad  
man' ballads.

Little in the way of factual material is available  
concerning a real life Stagolee. The song is ex-  
tremely popular with roustabouts and levee work-  
ers in the South. This, plus the fact that a steam-  
boat which ran between St. Louis, Memphis, and  
New Orleans was named Stack O'Lee, points to  
the possibility that the ballad incident may have  
happened to a rouster named after the river boat.  
The reverse is also possible and, as suggested  
by Alan Lomax, the boat may have been named  
after the 'bad man' of the ballad.

Many singers from whom the ballad has been  
collected claim to have known or to have worked  
with Stagolee, but they have been unable to pro-  
duce any corroborating or consistent evidence.  
If all the people who have claimed they saw mur-  
der committed actually did see it, then several  
murders were being committed in various places  
at the same time by different men with the same  
name. Despite this lack of specific knowledge  
about the event, this dramatic song certainly  
suggests material for an American 'folk' opera  
or ballet.

Well, I remember one September, on one Friday  
nite,  
Stagolee and Billy de Lyon had a great fight,  
Crying, "When you lose your money,  
Learn to lose."

Oh, Billy de Lyon shot six bits, Stagolee bet  
he'd pass,  
Stagolee out with his '45', said, "You done shot  
your last,

When you lose your money,  
Learn to lose."

Well, a woman come-a-running, fell down on  
her knees,  
Crying, "Oh Mr. Stagolee, don't shoot my  
brother, please,"

When you lose your money,  
Learn to lose.

It was way down in the gambling hall, fighting  
on the floor,  
Old Stagolee pulled the trigger of that smoking  
'44'.

When you lose your money,  
Learn to lose.

Well, you talking about some gamblers, you  
ought to seen Richard Lee,  
He bet 1,000 dollars then he come out on a three,  
Crying, "When you lose your money,  
Learn to lose."

Oh, Billy de Lyon said to Stagolee, please  
don't take my life,  
I got two little babes and a darling loving wife,  
When you lose your money,  
Learn to lose.

Now what I care about your two little babes,  
your darling loving wife,  
Boy, you done took my stetson hat and I'm bound  
to take your life,  
When you lose your money,  
Learn to lose.

Gentlemen of the jury, what do think about that,  
Old Stagolee killed Billy de Lyon about a five  
dollar Stetson hat,  
When you lose your money,  
Learn to lose.

Well the judge said, Mr. Stagolee, Mr. Stagolee,  
I'm gonna lock your body up and set your spirit  
free,  
When you lose your money,  
Learn to lose.

#### Stagolee

"The Negro and His Songs" by Odum and  
Johnson, University of North Carolina Press,  
Chapel Hill, N. C., 1925, pp. 196-197

"Steamboatin' Days" by Mary Wheeler,  
Louisiana State University Press, Baton  
Rouge, La., 1944, pp. 101-102

"A Treasury of American Folklore" by  
B. A. Botkin, Crown Publishers, New York,  
1944, pp. 122-131

#### THE JOHN B. SAILS

For many years the sunken hull of a small sloop  
could be seen poking its ribs out of the sand at  
Governor's Harbor in the Bahamas. The boat,  
now gone from its shallow grave, has been im-  
mortalized in a song which tells of a rousing  
party, aboard ship, some time before she was  
sunk.

This song, THE JOHN B. SAILS, was collected  
by Carl Sandburg from the cartoonist John T.  
McCutcheon and his wife who learned to sing it  
in the West Indies. Sandburg reports their com-  
ment, "Time and usage have given this song al-  
most the dignity of a national anthem around  
Nassau."

The song first appeared in Sandburg's "Ameri-  
can Songbab", a pioneer collection, written for  
a place on every piano, and for use in every  
home in America. In a cautious paragraph in the  
preface of the book, Sandburg wrote:  
"The book was begun in depths of humility, and  
ended likewise with the murmur, 'God be merci-  
ful to me, a sinner.' It is a book for sinners,  
and for lovers of humanity. I apologize to them  
for the sins of the book and that it loves much  
but not enough."

Mr. Sandburg need not have feared the reception  
his collection was to receive. From the pages of  
the book have come songs which have been popu-  
lar not only with folk music devotees, but also  
with a wide-spread, general public. Whenever  
recording companies, singers, and composers  
have reproduced and recreated songs from its  
pages with intelligence and integrity, they have  
been rewarded with the real success of listener  
appreciation. Such a song is THE JOHN B. SAILS.  
Listening to it here, it seems strange that only  
after 24 years following its publication was it  
adapted for commercial recording. The first re-  
cording of this song was by the Weavers and  
proved to be highly popular, making the 'Hit  
Parade' shortly after its introduction.



We come on the sloop John B.,  
My grandfather and me,  
Round Nassau town we did roam;  
Drinking all night, we got into a fight,  
I feel so break-up, I want to go home.

Refrain:      So hoist up the John B's sails,  
                  See how the main sail set,  
                  Send for the captain ashore, let  
                                  me go home;  
                  Let me go home, I want to go home,  
                  I feel so break-up, I want to go  
                                  home.

Well the first mate, he got drunk,  
And destroyed the people's trunk,  
Constable come aboard, take him away,  
Sheriff Johnstone, please let me alone,  
I feel so break up, I want to go home.

Refrain

Well the poor cook he got fits,  
Throw way all the grits,  
Then he took and eat up all of my corn,  
Let me go home, I want to go home,  
Oh, this is the worst trip since I been born.

Refrain

#### John B. Sails

"The American Songbag" by Carl Sandburg,  
Harcourt, Brace & Company, New York,  
1927, p. 22

"The Weavers Sing", Folkways Music Publishers,  
New York, 1951, p. 18

#### THE FROZEN LOGGER

From the Michigan woods we hear the beginning  
of a tall tale in song -

"Come all you old time lumberjacks  
Wherever you may dwell,  
And listen to my story-  
The truth to you I'll tell.

It's of that grand ol lumberjack,  
Paul Bunyan he was called;  
He was born up in Wisconsin  
And was thirty-five feet tall."

About his blue ox, 'Babe', the lumbermen sing-

"This big blue ox weighed 14 tons,  
And every time he'd bawl  
The earth would shake and tremble  
And the timber it would fall.

He was sixteen feet between the eyes,  
And no matter what you think,  
The river went dry for three miles down  
Whenever he took a drink."

- from "Lore of the Lumber Camps"  
by E. C. Beack, University of Michigan  
Press, Ann Arbor, 1948, pp. 123-124

In much the same tradition, is a song of more  
composition which tells of a frozen logger. If the  
song rings true it is because it was written by a  
man who not only worked as a lumberjack with  
other 'shanty boys', but who also has become one  
of America's leading folklorists specializing the  
songs and tales of the woodsmen. James Stevens,  
who together with Ivar Haglund finally copyrighted  
the song in 1947, tells the story of its creation  
many years before:

"I was associated (in 1929) with Stewart Hol-  
brook and H. L. Davis (on a) radio program of  
Paul Bunyan sketches. Holbrook supplied the  
ideas, I provided the lies, and Davis and I to-  
gether composed the ballads for the program,  
trying to hold true to the creative spirit of the  
old-time bunk-shanty bards."

- from "Bunk-Shanty Ballads and Tales",  
Oregon Historical Quarterly, December,  
1949, p. 241

THE FROZEN LOGGER achieved unusual popu-  
larity in the Northwest due to the frequency with  
which Ivar Haglund sang it on his local radio pro-  
gram, and to a recording of the song by Earl  
Robinson. In 1951 the Weavers spread its popu-  
larity to all corners of the U.S. with their  
spirited performance on record and in concert,  
niteclub, and theatre appearances.

As I sat down one evening, twas in a small cafe,  
A forty year old waitress to me these words did  
say:

"I see that you are a logger and not just a  
common bum."

'Cause nobody but a logger stirs his coffee  
with his thumb.

My lover, he was a logger, there's none like  
him today,

Well, if you'd pour whiskey on it, well he'd  
eat a bale of hay.

Well, he never used a razor to shave his  
horny hide,

He'd just drive them in with a hammer, then  
he'd bite them off inside.

My lover he came to see me, twas on a freezing  
day,

He held me in a fond embrace that broke three  
vertebraes,

Well, he kissed me when we parted so hard  
that he broke my jaw,

And I could not speak to tell him he forgot  
his mackinaw.

I saw my lover leaving, sauntering through the  
snow,

Well, going grimly homeward at forty-eight  
below.

Well, the weather it tried to freeze him, it  
tried its level best,

At a hundred degrees below zero, why he  
buttoned up his vest.

It froze clean through to China; and it froze to  
the stars above,

And at a thousand degrees below zero, it  
froze my logger love.

And so I lost my lover, and to this cafe I come,  
And here I wait till someone stirs his coffee  
with his thumb.

#### The Frozen Logger

"A Treasury of Western Folklore" by B. A.  
Botkin, Crown Publishers, New York, 1951,  
pp. 769-770

"The Weavers Sing", Folkways Music Publishers,  
New York, 1951, p. 20

#### TURTLE DOVE

Of the many beautiful songs written by Robert  
Burns, Scotland's most famous lyric poet,  
one of the most frequently recited is "A Red,  
Red Rose."

"O, my luv'e's like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June;

O, my luv'e's like the melodie  
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luv'e am I;

And I will luv'e thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun; -

I will luv'e thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee well, my only luv'e!  
And fare thee well awhile!

And I will come again, my luv'e,  
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Without a doubt Burns' poem was modeled after  
a variant of TURTLE DOVE or THE TRUE  
LOVER'S FAREWELL. It is known that Burns  
had in his possession a broadside copy of the  
song. Burns may also have heard the song sung  
by English peasants. Recognizing the beauty of  
the folk poetry, he borrowed from it, preserv-  
ing its feeling: The sensitivity he displayed in  
incorporating some lines wholly, with judicious  
editing of other, is one measure of his creative  
talents.

TURTLE DOVE, sometimes called 'The True  
Lover's Farewell,' has been traced back to a  
17th Century broadside or penny song sheet  
titled 'The Languishing Lamentation of Two  
Loyal Lovers'. Several stanzas from the song  
appeared in an American burlesque song during  
the middle of the 19th Century, and rather fre-  
quently, thereafter, in popular songbooks  
called 'songsters'

The turtle dove, as a symbol of true love, is  
found in the folklore of both the British Isles  
and America. The cuckoo, on the other hand,  
is employed as a symbol of false or inconstant  
love. American variants of the song have been  
collected in every southern state, and occasion-  
ally stanzas and even the complete song have  
been found combined with distinctly different  
traditional songs in these same areas.

Oh, can you see that little turtle dove,  
Sitting under the Mulberry tree;



See how that she doth mourn for her true love  
As I shall mourn for thee, my dear,  
As I shall mourn for thee.

The sea will never run dry, my dear,  
Nor the rocks never melt with the sun,  
And I ne'er will prove false to the bonny lass

I love  
Till all these things be done, my dear,  
Till all these things be done.

Oh, fare thee well, my own true love,  
Oh, fare thee well, for a while,  
And though I go, I will always come again  
If I go 10,000 miles, my dear,  
If I go 10,000 miles.

#### Turtle Dove

"One Hundred English Folksongs" by Cecil Sharp, Oliver Ditson Company, Philadelphia, 1916

"Folk-Songs of the South" by John H. Cox, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1925, pp. 413-414

"English Folksongs From The Southern Appalachians" by Sharp and Karpeles, Oxford University Press, London, 1932, pp. 113-118 and 389

#### SIDE II

#### TRUE LOVE ON MY MIND

This song, as is the case with a great number of Negro folk songs, is a combination of several basic song types. In it we find elements of protest and of play, while the song itself is essentially a love or courting song.

In the first stanza two thoughts are uppermost in the singer's mind - his true love, and his 'boss-man'. Words such as 'boss-man', 'cap'n' (captain), and 'white folks' are clearly employed to soften intense feelings which ordinarily, one might presume, would find expression through much stronger words.

The Red Bird, Blue Jay, and the Sparrow, all three of which are mentioned in this song, are found often in Negro folklore and song. It is not unusual to find animals and birds talking, working, loving, and singing in verse and story. The second and third stanzas are repeated in many of the play-party and dance songs of both the Negro and white people of the South.

The last stanza of the song represents a typical ending found in southern love songs. The city slicker might say the same thing by suggesting, "let me take you away from all of this", but the folk expression "Wild geese floating where the South wind blows, so why not me and you" makes more beautiful poetry, and is certainly less suggestive of ulterior motives.

The music has an unusual, almost chant-like quality, suggesting its derivation from a field call or 'holler'. With a slight change in the rhythm and phrasing, the song could serve as a work song. Such changes, and the borrowing of stanzas from other songs, are common in the large body of secular Negro folk songs.

Saturday night and a Sunday, too,  
True Love on my mind;  
Monday morning early and soon,  
And the boss-man's got me gwine.

Red bird's sitting on a sycamore limb,  
Singing out his soul,  
And the big black snake crawled up that tree  
And he swallowed that poor boy whole.



Blue Jay pulled a four horse plow,  
Sparrow, why can't you?  
Because my legs is little and long  
And they might get broke in two.

Wild geese flying through the air  
Through the sky of blue;  
They're now a-floating where the south wind  
blows,  
So why not me and you?

#### True Love On My Mind

"American Negro Folk-Songs" by Newman I. White, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1928, pp. 174-175, 336  
"On The Trail of Negro Folk-Songs" by Dorothy Scarborough, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1925, p. 165 (bottom of page)  
"Folk-Songs From The Southern Highlands" by M. E. Henry, J.J. Augustin, New York, 1938, p. 429

#### DINK'S SONG

"I found Dink washing her man's clothes outside their tent on the bank of the Brazos River in Texas. Many other similar tents stood around. The black men and women they sheltered belonged to a levee building outfit from the Mississippi River Delta, the women having been shipped from Memphis along with the mules and iron scrappers, while the men, all skillful levee-builders, came from Vicksburg. . . . While her man built the levee, each woman kept his tent, toted the water, cut the firewood, cooked, washed his clothes and warmed his bed."

Thus John A. Lomax introduces us to Dink, from whom he collected this most beautiful of all secular Negro folk songs. The song, as Dink originally recorded it for Lomax on an Edison recording machine, is a variant of 'Careless Love'. However, the stanzas which most readily identify its relationship to 'Careless Love' have been dropped, and the shortened version which Cisco Houston sings is a song unto itself. The refrain, though, remains in its original form representing 'a subdued cry of despair and longing'.

The original Edison record of Dink's song was broken many years ago, but the song was not lost. Carl Sandburg, who says the song reminds him of the ancient Greek poetess, Sappho, used to sing it regularly on his programs. The Lomax children, all of whom knew and loved it, sang it regularly. Dink's song is just as much alive today as it was when she first sang it for the elder Lomax in 1908.

If I had wings like Noah's dove  
I would fly to the arms of my love.  
Fare thee well, oh honey,  
Fare thee well.

If I had a-listened to what my momma said,  
Well, I'd a-been sleeping in a feather bed.  
Fare thee well, oh honey,  
Fare thee well.

Oh, I got a gal, she's long and tall  
And she moves her body like a cannon ball.  
Fare thee well, oh honey,  
Fare thee well.

One of these mornings and it won't be long,  
You're gonna call my name and I'll be gone.  
Fare thee well, oh honey,  
Fare thee well.

#### Dink's Song

"American Ballads & Folksongs" by John A. and Alan Lomax, Macmillan, New York, 1934, pp. 195-196  
"Adventures of A Ballad Hunter" by John A. Lomax, Macmillan, New York, 1947, pp. 271-275  
"Folk Song, U. S. A." by John A. and Alan Lomax, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, New York, 1947, pp. 39-40, 66-67



## THE GYPSY DAVE

Why is one traditional English ballad remembered through the years, while another, equally beautiful in story and music, slowly disappears? Though their opinions vary on many points, folklorists agree that the ability of the folk to associate a song with their own lives and aspirations is the major factor in continuing its active life.

Why then should a song about a gypsy lover who persuades a rich lady to quit her husband and travel with him, leave such a deep impression on American folksingers? Alan Lomax, in the introductory notes to a Library of Congress recording of the song, gives this answer to the question:

"The tale has had an enormous appeal for the common people since it depicts the defeat of the aristocrat; for women it has meant romantic escape from the slavery of frontier marriage."

Early English and Scotch variants of the song tell the story of the gypsy leader, Johnny Faa, who sings at the gate of a lord who is absent, enticing the lady to come down. When she appears, the gypsies bewitch her, and she goes off with them. Upon his return the lord learns of his lady's defection. He sets out to bring her back. The lord overtakes and kills the gypsy band. Questioning his lady, he is dismayed to learn, in most versions, that she does not wish to return with him.

In America, few changes have been made in the basic story. In most variants on this side of the ocean, the lady willfully goes off with the gypsy, without benefit of any extenuating circumstance such as a magic spell. Very few American versions end with the gypsies being hung, for, as the folk would have, the gypsy and love are triumphant over the 'wicked', aristocratic lord.

Cisco Houston's version, which he learned from Woody Guthrie, is completely Americanized, both as to words and music. The 'milk white steed' of British variants is now a 'buckskin horse'. A similar change has been made from 'lily white gloves' to 'buckskin gloves'. The charm of gypsy music has been retained, but the song has taken on aspects of the cowboy ballad with its 'big guitar', the 'campfire gleaming', and the 'hundred dollar saddle'.

It was late last nite when the boss come home  
A-asking about his lady,  
And the only answer he received,  
She's gone with the Gypsy Davey,  
She's gone with the Gypsy Dave.

Go saddle for me my buckskin horse  
And my hundred dollar saddle,  
Point out to me their wagon tracks  
And after them I'll travel;  
Well, after them I'll ride.

Well, he had not rode to the midnite moon  
When he saw their campfire gleaming,  
He heard the notes of the big guitar  
And the voice of the gypsy singing  
That song of the Gypsy Dave.

Take off, take off your kidskin glove  
And your boots of Spanish leather,  
And give to me your lily white hands  
We'll go back home together;  
We'll ride back home again.

No, I won't take off my kidskin gloves  
Nor my boots of Spanish leather,  
I'll go my way from day to day  
And sing with the Gypsy Davey,  
I'll go with the Gypsy Dave.

Have you forsaken your house and home?  
Have you forsaken your baby?  
Have you forsaken your husband dear  
To go with the Gypsy Davey?  
And sing with the Gypsy Dave?

Yes, I've forsaken my house and home  
To go with the Gypsy Davey,  
And I've forsaken my husband dear,  
But not my blue-eyed baby,  
My pretty little blue-eyed babe.

### The Gypsy Dave

"The English and Scottish Popular Ballads"  
by Francis J. Child, Houghton, Mifflin &  
Co., Boston, 1882-1898 (See Volume IV,  
p. 61 ff.)

"The British Traditional Ballad in North  
America" by Tristram P. Coffin, The  
American Folklore Society, Philadelphia,  
1950, pp. 120-124

"Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri  
Folklore Society" by H. M. Belden, Universi-  
ty of Missouri Studies, Volume XV, Columbia,  
Missouri, 1940, pp. 73-76



## HOUND DOG

"A man's best friend is his dog" may sound trite to some, but to the farmer it has considerable truth. Listen to him 'spouting off' in song about his hound, and there is no mistaking the love and pride he has for his four-footed friend.

"Well, I had a dog and his name was Blue,  
And I bet you five dollars he's a good one too."

Give him his head, and watch the farmer pick up steam as he tells you about this most wonderful of all creatures. He will tell you boastfully about his canines' hunting exploits, and, as the tale goes along, the prowess of the mangy looking animal at his heels will amaze you.

The dog, however, is more than just the farmer's hunting companion. When called on to do so, he becomes an excellent 'shoulder' for the farmer to cry on. A dog will listen attentively and agree with all the farmer's complaints. When the situation calls for it, he will even help the farmer to do his crying.

HOUND DOG tells of a farmer complaining about his bad lot. Nothing seems to be going his way, and to provide his sad story with some poignant background music, the farmer calls on the dog to bay at the moon. The song is full of sad sounds which complement perfectly the farmer's tale of woe.

There are, at present, more than a half dozen individuals who own copyrights on versions of this song. Each claims to be its author. The noted folklorist Ben Botkin credits 'Dub' Smith with the authorship of HOUND DOG, and, in commenting on the song, says: "Today's (folk) process is complicated and accelerated by 'city-billy' singers who not only write songs based on oral tradition, but speed such songs on their way back into the public domain, as in the current Hound Dog."

The song has existed in the oral tradition of our country for many years. Through its adoption and subsequent reshaping by anonymous folk singers, the song has passed from the stage of the composed song to the collective ownership of the folk community as a whole.

Reference: "A Treasury of Western Folklore" by B. A. Botkin, Crown Publishers, New York, 1951, p. 731

Refrain: Hound dog, bay at the moon,  
Lay back your long ears and sing  
your sad tune;  
Lift up your long head and bay at  
the moon;  
Hound dog, bay at the moon.

Well, my cotton is weevily and my sorghum's  
gone bad,  
My kinfolk have et up what little I had.

Refrain

Rotten potatoes and a dirty tow sack,  
Pain in my belly and a crick in my back.

Refrain

That the Lord should forgit me, doth bring my  
heart pain;  
I guess he's forgotten for to make it to rain.

Refrain

May the good Lord forgive me for the things I  
done wrong;  
My hound dog will be gone before long  
And then we'll quit singing this lonesome old  
song.

Refrain

## INTOXICATED RAT

The effects of whiskey on animals (from the lowest to the highest forms) are well chronicled. A few drinks help you feel good; a few more will help you feel better; another few drinks and you begin to believe you're capable of taking on the world; and then, just a little more, and you don't feel anything! With slight variations this pattern applies equally to the drinkers in a penthouse apartment who lift their glasses with two fingers and to the jug toters in the Southern mountains who need two hands to raise the crock.

Liquor stills, long outlawed, are still used in backwoods areas, where they produce some of the hardest liquor in the world. There is always the chance of discovery and arrest by Federal



agents (revenooers), but the penalties for moonshining have never been so severe as to compel a complete shutdown of all such activities.

While the mountaineer is taciturn about his moonshining activities, and talks little about liquor generally (his wife is usually a strong prohibitionist), he will occasionally sing about the pleasures of drinking.

"Oh, they call it that good old mountain dew,  
And them that refuse it are few,  
If you'll set down your mug  
I'll fill up your jug  
With that good old mountain dew.

"That Good Old Mountain Dew" is only one of the many well-known songs about drinking which come from the Southern mountains. "Little Brown Jub", "Rosin The Bow", and "Rye Whiskey" are also traditional songs on the subject which have been known and sung for many, many years.

A relatively recent addition to the songlore of whiskey is THE INTOXICATED RAT. The melody and the opening lines of this ballad have been borrowed from "Our Goodman" (Child #274), one of the most popular of the comical English traditional ballads found in this country.

THE INTOXICATED RAT certainly equals the fine humor found in the older, English song, and has an excellent moral beside. This story of the mouse who over-imbibes, believes he is ready to take on the world, and then is brought back to earth by the sudden appearance of a tom cat, can best be summed up with..... reality is more soboring than coffee.

Well, the other nite when I came home  
As drunk as I could be,  
I got tangled up in the old door mat  
Fell flat as I could be.

Well I had me a little old bottle of rum,  
And I didn't have any more,  
And the cap flew off when I went down  
And I spilled it on the floor.

Then the rat came out of his hiding place  
And he got that whiskey scent,  
And he ran right up and he got a little shot  
Then back to his hole he went.

Well back to his hole he went,  
Right back to his hole he went,  
He ran right up and he got a little shot  
Then back to his hole he went.

Then the rat came out of his hole once more,  
Sidled up to the rum on the floor;  
He was a little bit shy, but he winked one yee  
Then he got him a little bit more.

And he didn't go back to his hole that time,  
But he stayed by the puddle of gin,  
And he said, doggone my pop-eyed soul,  
I'm gonna get drunk again.

Well, he washed his face with his front feet  
And on his hind legs sat,  
And with a twisted smile and a half closed eye  
Said, Where's that doggone cat.

And he didn't go back to his hole,  
He said, Doggone my soul,  
I'm only a rat but a doggone cat  
Can't run me back to my hole.

Well, his little old eyes begin to shine  
As he lapped up more and more,  
And it made me glad that I had stumbled  
And spilled it on the floor.

But soon the puddle of rum was gone  
And I didn't have any more gin,  
And the little old rat was a-having a time  
When the old tom-cat walked in.

Well the cat made a pass, and the rat made a  
dash,  
His boldness faded thin;  
Well the cat jumped over and the rat got sober,  
Ran back to his hole again.

Ran back to his hole again,  
Ran back to his hole again,  
Well the cat jumped over and the rat got sober,  
Ran back to his hole again.

The Intoxicated Rat: "Backwoods America" by  
Charles M. Wilson, University of North  
Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N. C., 1935,  
Chapter XIV (Moonshiners)  
"North Carolina Folklore, Volume III",  
edited by H. M. Belden and A. P. Hudson,  
Duke University Press, Durham, N. C.,  
1952, Chapter II (Drink and Gambling Songs)



### THE GIRL IN THE WOOD

When I was a young boy and drove my mother wild,  
I met a maiden in the wood, and she said, Child,  
Look deep into my green eyes and at my autumn  
hair,

When you're a man you'll never see a girl quite  
so fair.

Remember me, remember me,  
Remember for the rest of your life.

Her eyes were green as grassy pools looking  
right at me,  
And her hair was red and grown with the leaves  
just like an autumn tree;  
She moved her tiny hands and she made a little  
turn,  
She swayed in the wind just like a graceful fern.  
Remember me, remember me,  
Remember me for the rest of your life.

I swore as she vanished that when I was fully  
grown

I'd have a girl just like her to be my very own,  
And now I am a man and I'd marry if I could  
But I can't lose the memory of the girl in the  
wood.

Remember me, remember me,  
Remember for the rest of your life.

I've wished a hundred times that she'd never  
looked at me

With the first wild beauty that only youth can  
see,

For a man cannot find it when he's looking  
for a wife,  
And he'll end up in bachelorhood the rest  
of his life.

Remember me, remember me,  
Remember for the rest of your life.

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- Band 2. DINK'S SONG
- Band 3. HOUND DOG
- Band 4. GYPSY DAVE
- Band 5. INTOXICATED RAT
- Band 6. THE GIRL IN THE WOOD

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