

folk songs of

Courting and Complaint

FA 2049

WHISTLE, DAUGHTER, WHISTLE
WHEN I WAS SINGLE
THE HOUSE CARPENTER
WHEN FIRST UNTO THIS COUNTRY
ALL OF HER ANSWERS
YOUNG MAN WHO WOULDN'T HOE CORN
THE WAGONER'S LAD
LONG LONESOME ROAD
THE BUTCHER'S BOY
THE OLD MAID
LEATHERWING BAT

SUNG BY

Peggy
Seeger

*with banjo
and guitar
accompaniment*

FOLKWAYS RECORDS



Rosenholz

FA 2049

FOLK SONGS OF COURTING AND COMPLAINT

Descriptive notes inside pocket

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FA 2049

WHISTLE, DAUGHTER, WHISTLE
WHEN I WAS SINGLE
THE HOUSE CARPENTER
WHEN FIRST UNTO THIS COUNTRY
ALL OF HER ANSWERS
YOUNG MAN WHO WOULDN'T HOE CORN
THE WAGONER'S LAD
LONG LONESOME ROAD
THE BUTCHER'S BOY
THE OLD MAID
LEATHERWING BAT

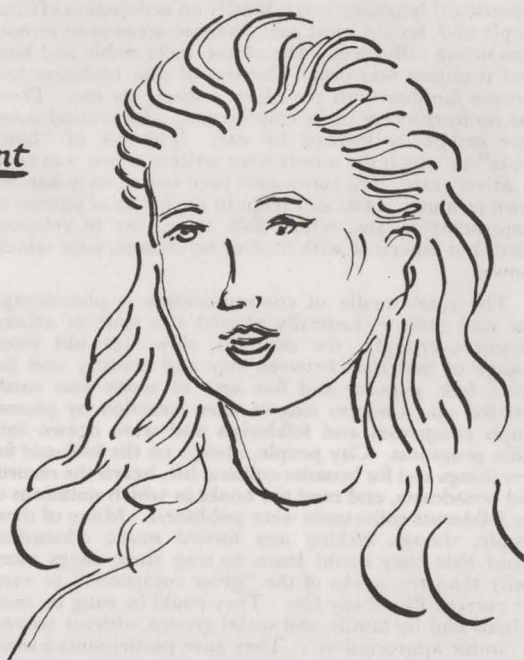
Folk Songs of Courting & Complaint

Carlis

Sung by Peggy Seeger

with banjo and guitar accompaniment

*Whistle, Daughter, Whistle
When I Was Single
The House Carpenter
When First Unto This Country
All of Her Answers
Young Man Who Wouldn't Hoe Corn
The Wagoner's Lad
Long Lonesome Road
The Butcher's Boy
The Old Maid
Leatherwing Bat*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

* CLARK WEISSMAN Guitar Accompaniments
ANDREW KAZDIN Recording Engineer
JEAN-PIERRE RADLEY Recording Engineer
SARA WARD Cover Design
JAY BALL Production

PEGGY SEEGER is city-bred. But from her first year she was thrown into day-by-day contact with rural styles of singing as heard on the field recordings from all over the United States that had been deposited in the Library of Congress by folklorists and which her parents, Charles and Ruth Seeger, were transcribing for books such as the Lomaxs' *Our Singing Country* and *Folksong: USA*, B. A. Botkin's *Treasuries of American Folklore*, and her mother's own publications of children's songs. Peggy

picked up her banjo and guitar playing in much the same way as her singing. More recently, by personal contacts with singers and instrumentalists, both urban and rural, in the fast-growing folk-singing movement, she has broadened her development of a style midway between the "raw" material of rural folk song and the "consciously polished" material of its urban adoption. It is an eclectic, or selective, style. But she "came by it natural". It reduces to a minimum the usual excesses of urban rendition of rural music — uncalled-for dramatization of words or phrases, over-precise articulation of degrees of the scale, exaggerated contrasts of loud and soft, fast and slow, etc. — at the same time avoiding affectation of the nasal or whining voice found in some — but by no means all — good rural singers. Peggy's singing style owes most, perhaps, to the Southeast tradition, for it was that which was at first best represented in the Library of Congress files. But her activity in and around Cambridge, where she is a student at Radcliffe College, owes much to the lively singing groups, where she met Clark Weissman, who gives guitar accompaniment to her banjo in four of the songs on this disc.

Introduction and Notes by
CHARLES SEEGER

Until 1940, the singing of folk songs in the English (American) language was typically an occupation of rural people and, for the most part, in those areas most remote from urban influences. The oldest, most stable and honored tradition was oral. Carriers of that tradition had become familiar with the idiom entirely by ear. There was no instruction in its employment. Individual songs were ordinarily learned by ear. The use of "ballit books" in which the words were written down was comparatively rare. The tunes were even more rarely handed down in music notation, except in the books of patent- or shape-notes hymns, where folk tunes, set to religious words but otherwise with little or no change, were widely known.

The mass media of communication — phonograph oisc and radio — radically altered this state of affairs. Almost over-night, the constant, slow ages-old interchange of materials between city and country and between folk, popular and fine arts of music was vastly speeded up. Country singers were recorded by phonograph companies and folklorists and were drawn into radio programs. City people, always on the look-out for new things and for broader cultural life, heard the records and broadcasts, and read the books in which notations of the folklorists' collectanea were published. Many of these people, though lacking any formal music education, found that they could learn to sing these songs more easily than the works of the "great composers" or even the current Broadway hits. They could be sung by individuals and by family and social groups without courses in "music appreciation". They gave participants a sense of satisfaction of communicating something common among themselves by a medium that was common to the American people — a people so often looked down upon because it had no music of its own. And this was recognized as a healthy factor in the broadening democratization of American life.

But in the process, the songs themselves — even the idiom in which they had been moulded — began to change. The change was so rapid that folklorists, who

are pre-eminently students of change (that is, of the slow change of past centuries) loudly lamented the death of the whole tradition. "Old-time" country singers began to acquire the platform graces of the popular and fine arts, while city singers began to sing the songs in the current styles of those arts — a kind of musical translation, as it were. Thus the "hill-billy" and the "city-billy", though using the same musical materials, crossed paths while going in exactly opposite directions. Some of the former, indeed, set themselves to "compose" (and copyright) new folk songs; some of the latter, to out-do the country singer in uncouthness of manner and style of singing.

ABOUT THE SONGS

WHISTLE, DAUGHTER, WHISTLE — The theme of "Whistle, Daughter" is commonly found in Western Europe as well as throughout the United States. This particular version seems to be a more literary one, making use as it does of such abstract terms as "singularity", "propriety", and "virginity" — words not typical of folk song and indicative of urban influence.

WHEN I WAS SINGLE — A "white" blues, on a theme of British origin, this song has variants which are met with in practically every collection of folk music. It is interesting to compare this version with those found in Sharp's *English Folk Songs from the Appalachians*. It is an excellent example of what American singers do to English folk song.

THE HOUSE CARPENTER — The text used here is a stanza-by-stanza selection from the twenty-six versions contained in Davis' *Traditional Ballads of Virginia*, the tune being a composite of many heard by the singer. It still maintains, however, the essential characteristics of the generally known version. The folklorists' designation for the theme of the ballad is the "Daemon Lover", and considerable antecedent action is often detailed at length. Apparently, the first lover had departed and been reported dead in a "forraign land". His sweetheart mourned for a proper time, then married, happily, a house carpenter. Some versions suggest that then the spirit of the first lover returns, others that it is the actual lover, alive, who entices her from her home, husband and child.

WHEN FIRST UNTO THIS COUNTRY A STRANGER I CAME — There are many unexplained elements in this fragmentary ballad — for instance, the irrelevance of the stanza beginning "With my hands in my pockets", and mentioning the "coat of all colors". Sudden shifts like these may indicate the shortening of a longer song, or perhaps the telescoping of two versions, in which key material is sometimes completely omitted.

The melody is particularly unusual in its rhythmic irregularity, which consists of the introduction of two measures of triple time into a song in duple time. Such irregularities are likely to occur on high notes or at the ends of phrases in Anglo-American folksong.

ALL OF HER ANSWERS TO ME WERE NO* — The theme is of English origin and is given various serious as well as comic treatments, examples being "Paper of Pins" and the "Quaker's Wooing". The chorus is ready-made for group singing and the song itself is a children's singing game. The variation in levels of speech is amusing, where delicate phrases as "The ripest apple will soon grow rotten . . . don't be so bold" occur right next to bits of slang like "uh-uh, no" and "pray, little miss, this ain't the way".

YOUNG MAN WHO WOULDN'T HOE CORN — This is one of the lesser-known melodies to a well-known text which also appears under the title "The Lazy Young Man" in many collections. About the more conventional versions, Vance Randolph, in *Ozark Folksongs*, says: "these words are sometimes sung to an old melody called 'The Blackbird and the Crow'. Cox says that it has never been reported from England and is 'very probably an American product.'"

THE WAGONERS LAD — From the same family as "On Top of Old Smoky", this short ballad introduces the theme of a conflict between the suitor and the parents of the girl. Unaccompanied singing is often more appropriate for songs of this type. Either it is difficult to fix a chord sequence to a melody or the melody is distorted by the steady rhythmic pulse introduced by instrumentation.

LONG LONESOME ROAD* — This is a traditional "lonesome song", a mould into which is cast the migratory verses of many other such songs.

THE BUTCHERS BOY (THE RAILROAD BOY) — Found in practically every state in the Union, THE BUTCHERS BOY is an English folk song. Many of its lines are migrant, appearing in countless other ballads. Early ancestors and relatives are "The Cruel Father", "There is an Alehouse in Yonder Town", and even "Tavern in the Town".

THE OLD MAID'S SONG* — The old maid tells of the success of her sisters, gives her own age as "six and forty", and makes unheard-of concessions to the man who will marry her and take her "out of pity".

KATY CRUEL — A California singer has traced this somewhat nonsense song back to Oklahoma. It is fragmentary and its stanzas, divided into two groups of two stanzas, tell no story. A few of them seem to be borrowed bodily from other songs.

LEATHERWING BAT* — In this comic song, animals take parts in a conversation discussing the problems of courting.

SIDE I

WHISTLE, DAUGHTER, WHISTLE

Mother, I would marry, yes, I would be a bride,
And I would have a young man forever at my side;
For if I had a young man, oh how happy I would be,
For I am tired and oh so weary of my singularity.

Whistle, daughter, whistle, and you shall have a cow,
I cannot whistle, mother, I guess I don't know how;
But if I had a young man, oh how happy I would be,
For I am tired and oh so weary of my propriety.

Whistle, daughter, whistle, and you shall have a sheep,
I cannot whistle, mother, I can only weep;
But if I had a young man, oh how happy I would be,
For I am tired and oh so weary of my virginity.

Whistle, daughter, whistle, and you shall have a man,
I cannot whistle, whw-whw-wh-wh-wh-wh-wh;
You impudent little daughter, and what makes you whistle now?
I'd rather whistle for a man than whistle for a cow.

WHEN I WAS SINGLE

When I was single, went dressed all so fine;
Now I am married, Lord, go ragged all the time.
Lord, don't I wish I was a single girl again.

Dishes to wash, and spring to go to;
When you are married, Lord, you've got it all to do.
Lord, don't I wish I was a single girl again.

When I was single my shoes they did squeak;
Now I am married, Lord, my shoes they do leak.
Lord, don't I wish I was a single girl again.

Three little children all lyin in the bed;
All of them so hungry, Lord, they can't raise up their head.
Lord, don't I wish I was a single girl again.

I wash their little feet and send them to school;
Then comes the drunkard, and calls them a fool.
Lord, don't I wish I was a single girl again.

When I was single I eat biscuit and pie;
Now I am married, Lord, it's eat corn-bread or die.
Lord, don't I wish I was a single girl again.

THE HOUSE CARPENTER

Well met, well met, my own true love,
Well met, well met, cried she.
I have just returned from the salt, salt sea
And all for the love of thee.

I could have married the king's daughter, dear,
I'm sure she would have married me.
But I have refused her crowns of gold
And all for the love of thee.

If you could have married the king's daughter, dear,
I'm sure you are to blame.
For I am married to a house carpenter
I think he is a fine young man.

Will you forsake your house carpenter
To go along with me?
I will take you to where the grass grows green
On the banks of the salt, salt sea.

If I forsake my house carpenter
To go along with thee,
What have you got to maintain me on
And keep me from poverty?

Six ships, six ships are out on the sea,
Seven more are on dry land,
One hundred and ten all bold sailor-men
Shall be at your command.

She picked up her sweet little babe,
Kisses gave it three;
Saying "stay right here with my house carpenter,
And keep him good company."

She dressed herself in rich attire
So glorious to behold,
And as she trod upon her roan,
She shone like the glittering gold.

They were not out but about two weeks,
It was not more than three;
When that young lady began for to weep,
She wept most bitterly.

My love, why are you weeping so
Do you weep for your golden store,
Or are you weeping for your house carpenter
That never you shall see any more?

I do not weep for my house carpenter,
Neither for any store;
But I am weeping for my own little babe
Whom I shall never see any more.

They were not out but about three weeks,
It was not more than four;
Meanwhile this lady continued to weep
And her weeping it ceased no more.

They were not out but about three weeks,
It was not more than four;
When the ship sprang a leak and began to sink
It sank to rise no more.

Once around spun our gallant ship,
Twice around spun she,
Three times around spun our gallant ship,
And sank to the bottom of the sea.

WHEN FIRST UNTO THIS COUNTRY A STRANGER I CAME

When first unto this country
A stranger I came,
I courted a fair maiden
Nancy was her name.

I courted her for love
Her love I didn't obtain,
Do you think I've any reason
Or right to complain.

I rode to see my Nancy
I rode both day and night,
I courted dearest Nancy
My own heart's true delight.

I rode to see my Nancy
I rode both night and day,
Till I noticed a stallion
Both white-looking and gray.

The sheriff's men had followed
And overtaken me,
They carted me away
To the penitentiary.

They opened up the door,
And then they shoved me in,
They shaved off my hair
And they cleared off my chin.

They beat me and they banged me
They fed me on dry beans,
Till I wished to my own heart
I'd never been a thief.

With my hands in my pockets
My cap set on so bold,
And my coat of all colors
Like Jacob's coat of old.

When first unto this country
A stranger I came,
I courted a fair maiden
Nancy was her name.

ALL OF HER ANSWERS TO ME WERE NO

Madam I have come for to court you
Your affections for to gain,
If you'll give me good attention
Perhaps I'll come twice more again.

Uh-uh, no, no sir no,
All of her answers to me were no. (2)

Madam I have gold and silver
Madam I have a house and land,
Madam I have a world of pleasure
It'll be yours at your command.

Uh-uh, no, etc.

What care I for your gold and silver
What care I for your house and land,
What care I for your world of pleasure
All I want is a handsome man.

Uh-uh, no, etc.

Madam you seem for to dote on beauty
Beauty is a thing that will fade away,
Gather a red rose in the morning
Then by noon it will fade away.

Uh-uh, no, etc.

The ripest apple will soon grow rotten
The warmest glove will soon grow cold,
Young man's promise is soon forgotten
Pray little miss don't be so bold.

Uh-uh, no, etc.

The Arkansas boys they ain't the fellers
They don't know how to court the girls,
Turn their backs and hide their faces
Pray little miss this ain't the way.

Uh-uh, no, etc.

Now the Texas boys they're the fellers
They know how to court the girls,
Hug them a little and kiss them plenty
Pray little miss this is the way.

Uh-uh, no, etc.

Madam I have been to London
Madam I have been to France,
Many a time my mammy whipped me
Oh Lord honey how she made me dance.

Uh-uh, no, etc.

Madam I have come for to court you
Your affections for to gain,
If you'll give me good attention
Perhaps I'll call twice more again.

Uh-uh, no, etc.

SIDE II

YOUNG MAN WHO WOULDN'T HOE CORN-

I'll sing you a song, not very long
About a lazy farmer who wouldn't hoe his corn,
The reason why I cannot tell,
That young man was always well. (2)

He planted his corn about June the last
In July it was about knee high;
In September there came a big frost,
And all that young man's corn was lost. (2)

He went to the field, he got there at last
The weeds and grass was up to his eye;
The grass and weeds grown so high
Caused that poor young man to sigh. (2)

Now his courtship had just begun --
"Say young feller have you hoe'd your corn?"
I tried I tried I tried in vain,
I don't believe that I will raise one grain. (2)

"Why do you come to me to wed
If you can't raise your own cornbread,
Single I am and will remain
A lazy man I'll not maintain." (2)

He hung his head and walked away
Saying kind miss you'll rue the day,
You'll rue the day that you was born
For giving me the devil because I wouldn't hoe corn. (2)

Now his courtship was to an end
And on his way he did begin --
Saying kind miss I will have another girl
If I have to ramble this whole wide world. (2)

THE WAGONERS LAD

Oh hard is the fortune of all womankind
They're always controlled, they're always confined;
Controlled by their parents until they are wives,
Then slaves to their husbands, the rest of their lives.

Oh I am a poor girl, my fortune is sad,
I have always been courted by the wagoner's lad;
He courted me daily, by night and by day
And now he is loaded and going away.

Your parents don't like me, because I am poor
They say I'm not worthy of entering your door;
I work for my living my money's my own
And if they don't like me they can leave me alone.

Your horses are hungry, go feed them some hay
Come sit down beside me as long as you stay.
My horses ain't hungry they won't eat your hay
So fare you well darling, I'll be on my way.

Your wagon needs greasing, your whip is to mend
Come sit down here by me as long as you can.
My wagon is greasy, my whip's in my hand,
So fare you well darling, no longer to stand.

LONG LONESOME ROAD

Oh look up and down that long lonesome road
Hang down your head and cry, my Lord. (2)

I wish to the Lord that I'd never been born
Or died when I was a baby, my Lord. (2)

I would not be here eating this cold corn bread
Or sopping this salty gravy, my Lord. (2)

You have caused me to weep, you've caused me to mourn
You have caused me to leave my home, my Lord. (2)

Oh I wish to the Lord, that I have never seen your face
Or heard your lying tongue, my Lord. (2)

I wish that I had some nice young man
To tell all my secrets to, my Lord. (2)

Because this young fellow that I'm going with
Tells everything I do, my Lord. (2)

You'd better quit them rough rowdy ways
Gonna end up in the county jail someday. (2)

Oh its look up and down that long lonesome road
Where all our friends have gone, my love
And you and I must go.

THE BUTCHERS BOY

She went upstairs to make her bed,
And not one word to her mother said.
Her mother she went upstairs too,
Saying, "daughter, oh daughter, what troubles you?"

"Oh mother, oh mother I cannot tell,
That railroad boy I love so well,
He courted me my life away
And now at home he will not stay."

"There is a place in London town,
Where that railroad boy goes and sits down.
He takes that strange girl on his knee
And tells to her what he won't tell me"

Her father he came up from work,
Saying where is daughter, she seems so hurt.
He went upstairs to give her hope
And found her hanging from a rope.

He took his knife and cut her down,
And in her bosom these words he found:
Go dig my grave both wide and deep
Place a marble slab at my head and feet.

And over my coffin place a snow-white dove
To warn the world I died of love.

THE OLD MAID'S SONG

CHORUS Come a landsman, a pinsman, a tinker or a tailor,
Fiddler, or a dancer, ploughboy, or a sailor,
Gentleman, a poor man, a fool or a witty
Don't you let me die an old maid but take me out of pity.

Oh, I had a sister Sally, was younger than I am
She had so many sweethearts, she had to deny them;
As for my own part I never had many
If you all knew my heart, I'd be thankful for any.

CHORUS

Oh, I had a sister Susan, was ugly and misshapen,
Before she was sixteen years old she was taken,
Before she was eighteen, a son and a daughter
Here am I six and forty and nary an offer.

CHORUS

Oh I never will be scolding, I never will be jealous,
My husband shall have money to go to the alehouse,
While he's there a-spending well I'll be at home a-saving,
And I'll leave it to the world if I am worth having.

CHORUS

KATY CRUEL

When I first came to town
They called me the roving jewel.
Now they've changed their tune
They call me Katy Cruel.

REFRAIN: O diddle-i-ee-o little-i-o-day.
Oh that I was what I would be
Than for to be what I am not
Here am I where I must be
Go where I would I cannot.

When I first came to town
They brought me the bottles plenty,
Now they've changed their tune
They bring me the bottles empty.

REFRAIN

Oh I know who I love and
I know who does love me,
I know where I'm going
And I know who's going with me.

REFRAIN

Oh down the road I'll go
And through the boggy mire,
Straightway cross the field
And to my heart's desire.

REFRAIN

LEATHERWING BAT

"Hi," said the leather-wing bat,
"I'll tell you the reason that,
The reason that I fly by night
I've lost my heart's delight."

CHORUS: Li li low, dee diddle um day,
Li li low, dee diddle um day,
Li li low, dee diddle um day,
Hey lee lee, and lye li lo.

"Hi," said the mourning dove,
"I'll tell you how to regain your love,
Court her night, court her day
Never give her time to say you nay."

CHORUS

"Hi," said the owl with head so white,
"Another day and a lonesome night.
Thought I heard a pretty girl say
She'd court all night and sleep all day."

CHORUS

"Hey," said the redbird, sitting on a chair,
"Once I courted a lady fair,
She got saucy and then she fled,
Ever since then my head's been red."

CHORUS

"Hi," said the blackbird, sitting on a bench
"Once I courted a handsome wench,
She got fickle and turned her back
Ever since then I've dressed in black."

CHORUS

"Hi," said the bluebird as he flew,
"If I were a young man I would have two,
If one got saucy and wanted to go,
I'd have a new string to my bow."

CHORUS

"Hi," said the jaybird sitting in a tree,
"When I was a young man I had three,
Two got saucy and took to flight,
The one that's left don't treat me right."

CHORUS

FOLKWAYS Records

AND SERVICE CORP., 121 W. 47 ST., N.Y.C.
Long-Playing Non-Breakable Micro Groove 33 1/3 RPM

FOLKSONGS OF COURTING AND COMPLAINT

Sung by PEGGY SEEGER, with 5-string banjo;
guitar accompaniment by Clark Weissman

SIDE I

FA 2049 A

- Band 1. WHISTLE, DAUGHTER, WHISTLE
- Band 2. WHEN I WAS SINGLE
- Band 3. THE HOUSE CARPENTER
- Band 4. WHEN FIRST UNTO THIS COUNTRY
A STRANGER I CAME
- Band 5. ALL OF HER ANSWERS TO ME
WERE NO

Copyright 1955 by Folkways Records & Service Corp.
N.Y.C., U.S.A.

FOLKWAYS Records
AND SERVICE CORP., 121 W. 47 ST., N.Y.C.
Long Playing Non-Breakable Micro Groove 33 1/3 RPM

FOLKSONGS OF COURTING AND COMPLAINT
Sung by PEGGY SEEGER, with 5-string banjo;
guitar accompaniment by Clark Weissman

SIDE II

FA 2049 B

- Band 1. YOUNG MAN WHO WOULDN'T
 - Band 2. HOE CORN
 - Band 3. THE WAGONERS LAD
 - Band 4. LONG LONESOME ROAD
 - Band 5. THE BUTCHERS BOY
 - Band 6. THE OLD MAID'S SONG
 - Band 7. KATY CRUEL
 - Band 7. LEATHERWING BAT
- Copyright 1955 by Folkways Records & Service Corp.
N.Y.C., U.S.A.