

FOLKWAYS RECORD FA2309

# OLD LOVE SONGS & BALLADS



DESIGN & PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN

from the Big Laurel, North Carolina

*Recorded By Peter Gott & John Cohen*



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## Folkways Records FA 2309

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FOLK LIFE PROGRAM

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Pretty Saro  
 Fine Sally  
 Juba  
 Neighbor Girl  
 Soldier Travelling from the North  
 Hicks Farewell  
 In Zepo Town

Don't You Remember  
 Awake, Awake  
 Mathie Grove  
 Love Has Brought Me To Despair  
 Johnny Doyle  
 Conversation with Death



# OLD LOVE SONGS & BALLADS

from the Big Laurel,  
North Carolina

*Recorded By Peter Gott  
& John Cohen*

Dillard Chandler, 55, raised in an old log cabin in the community of Sodom on Big Laurel Creek, now works in Asheville. Between jobs he usually turns up at Lee's, where they sing and tell stories all night long.

Lee Wallin, 75, lives way back in a "holler" over a rough, rocky road in a pole cabin. He has always been a favorite at local "frolics" and box suppers, and still likes to frill the banjo and dance a jig whenever there is an opportunity. Like nearly all mountain farmers, he raises what food his family eats and his only income is from a small crop of tobacco.

Berzilla Wallin, Lee's wife, is the mother of twelve children and at 70 still fires up the wood stove every day to fix a good meal of cornbread and soup beans. She likes to pick a "banjer" and is full of songs and stories that she has heard from her grandparents and parents since she was a little girl.

Cas Wallin lives on a little farm on Chandler Cove on Big Laurel. Cas leads the hymns in the local Church of God, but is equally ready to sing a good old ballad or blow a tune on the mouth harp when the preacher is out of earshot. He and Lee are brothers.

Elisha Shelton lives in the community of Allegheny on Shelton Laurel. He has picked the banjo and danced all night at many a frolic after a corn-shucking or barn-raising. He keeps a "tune bow" hanging on the wall beside his banjo, and if no other instrument is handy he will pick up a couple of spoons and rattle out a tune.

## GENERAL STATE OF MUSIC, OLD AND NEW, IN THE LAUREL RIVER REGION

To an observer from the North it is surprising how many young people in the mountains can make music on a guitar or banjo. They are characteristically modest about their skill, some of the best musicians requiring several hours of persuasion before they will even admit that they can pick a tune. Their music consists almost entirely of modern country and bluegrass songs that they hear on radio and TV. Perhaps 10% of the musicians play the banjo, a few the fiddle, mandolin, or mouth harp,

and the rest the guitar or electric guitar. Most of them know their way around a little on several instruments.

The number of young musicians, however, is few compared to the number of old ones. Nearly every shack has an old thin-shelled banjo in the attic with a dirt-blackened ground-hog hide, or a dusty fiddle that was laid aside when it was cracked over someone's head at a frolic. Most of the instruments haven't been picked up in 25 years or more, when several things happened to discourage people from making music.

Before radios, roads, or automobiles appeared in the mountains, home-made music was one of the few entertainments possible. Lee says that when he was a boy, 65 years ago, banjos were so scarce that you might have to walk ten miles to borrow one for a square dance. People often danced all night to no other music than someone slapping his knees and calling out sing-songy rhymes. He says that a good "juber patter" didn't have to worry about making a living. Back then ballad-singing around the fireside at night was also one of the chief forms of entertainment.

When banjos became available through mail order companies, instrumental music became more widespread. According to one farmer, when he was a boy about 40 years ago, banjo and fiddle tunes were nearly all you heard, and what singing there was was done mostly by older people, still without accompaniment. The custom of holding "workings", for which a good square dance would be the reward, provided an ideal atmosphere for banjo and fiddle music. Every family would have several workings a year--a bean-stringing, corn-shucking, fodder-pulling, or perhaps a log-rolling or barn-raising. They would bake pies and cakes all the day before and would kill about a dozen chickens that morning. It took three or four shifts to eat supper, and when the dishes were done they would clear all the furniture out of the kitchen and tune up the fiddles and banjos. Usually there was a table in one corner with a bucket of water and a bucket of corn liquor side by side, with a dipper in each. Many a time they would dance and make music until daylight, and work again the next day.

The fun was first dampened when the virgin timber was cut and logging crews of rough men came in from the outside (about 50 years ago, in this area). People who hadn't been at a working would come drunk to the dance and would usually start a fight.

An unfortunate change also took place in the moonshiners' craft. When the government clamped down on moonshiners, they turned to using sugar and yeast, instead of pure corn sprouts, to hurry up the process and lessen the chance of being caught. The resulting brew makes a person so sick that he has to get roaring drunk before he begins to enjoy himself.

Finally the stage was reached where not a dance would go by without someone getting shot, and often killed (hence the nickname "Bloody Shelton Laurel"). The sad result was that the dances and workings stopped, and with them much of the fiddle and banjo music.

The radio and phonograph also discouraged many people from playing. When country music became commercial and new songs and complicated instrumental styles were invented faster than the average farmer could learn them, he laid his banjo down, for he was ashamed to play his age-old tunes when everyone wanted to hear the latest flashy tune on the radio.

Many of the old people here do not care for the new music. They say it is just a jumble of notes and that it takes the old tunes and twists them around so you can scarcely recognize them.



The guitar, as pretty as it sounds in present-day country music, is largely responsible for spoiling the old music. When the guitar appeared in the mountains perhaps 25 years ago it took over the banjo's function of supplying rhythm for the fiddle, and the banjo became a melody instrument requiring a single-note style and needing picks to be heard. It also introduced chords to the music. In the old "note-music" the banjo and fiddle would be tuned to suit the song, and the noting done on one string at a time, the others being sounded as drones. In the new "chord music" it became necessary to change and simplify many of the melodies to fit in with the chords. The old songs suffered even more than the dance tunes, by the use of guitar and chords. The flowing melodies and little grace notes simply cannot be heard with six strings playing at once, and the melodies of today have been reduced to simple tunes that fit in with the three basic chords and would be dull without accompaniment.

Present-day country music is often beautiful and exciting, but I believe much is lost when the old songs and dance tunes are fitted to the new styles. All the country people I have talked to who remember hearing the old songs and dance tunes sung and played in their traditional manner say that they sounded best that way.

Peter Gott

#### Old Love Songs and Ballads

John Cohen

When Cecil Sharp came through the mountains in 1916 and 1917, he reported mainly the presence of unaccompanied ballad singing as the folk music of this region, and paid little regard to the instrumental music. In recent years, the instrumental music has developed in such a way as to almost entirely obliterate the ballad singing.

The area where this record was made, was the heart of one of Sharp's key areas of collecting. One can read how he collected over 38 tunes at Big Laurel between Aug. 14 and Aug. 18 in 1916 and another 29 tunes in nearby Hot Springs on Aug. 23.

Many people around this Big Laurel area remember Cecil Sharp's visit, and those who have seen his book 'English Folk Songs of the Southern Appalachians' look on it with a type of pride, and a sense of closeness...often they are more concerned with recognizing the names of their relatives who were mentioned as Sharp's informants. Almost all of his informants are now dead.

Although ballad singing is somewhat scarce in this region now, the tradition seems strong in some families, or with particular individuals, and one does not sense that any particular type of person prefers this music. Naturally, more of the older people are associated with it, but amongst them there seems to be no patterns of similarity; some are strongly attached to the church, some play musical instruments and enjoy dancing. Some are married, re-married, separated from wives, or unmarried. Their choice of songs often seems to reflect their social position as well as their sentimental inclinations, or lack of same.

In this personalized relation to the songs lies the strength of the singers on this record. They are doing more than relating a distant story. Their closeness to the words and ideas in the songs seems to run contrary to the often voiced theory of ballad singing being detached and remote. In their choice of songs, the singer often reveals some of the more delicate aspects of their nature. Berzilla Wallin sings songs connected with the feminine aspects of love while Dillard Chandler seems preoccupied with the amorous side - yet his approach is colored with a personal sorrow that is revealed in all his songs.

It can be seen that ballad singing is not just an exercise of memory. With Dillard Chandler the tunes are always shifting and changing. Sequences of verses and sometimes whole phrases change from one singing to another. We have recordings of him singing 'Awake, Awake' at intervals of several

weeks, and can see how much the melody has been changed over this period of time. Even within the performance of this song on this record, one may hear melodic changes from verse to verse. The basic pattern of melodic lines within a single verse is ABAC, yet in the third verse, the pattern has become ADAEC (with the introduction of 2 melodic changes). Verse 6 has one melodic variation making it ADAC.

More often than not, these changes heighten the emotional content of the song and also serve to accent certain narrative passages, as in 'Mathie Grove' verse 6 and 'Conversation With Death' verse 5. This improvisational quality is not cultivated as a conscious act. More likely, the singer would be embarrassed if it were pointed out, for the desire is to repeat the song as it was learned. Yet in another sense, these variations can be seen as the force which has kept this music vigorous and changing over the years, and has produced such a variety of tunes and texts to a single song.

Further, it can be seen that no two performers sing with identical stylistic mannerisms, and in this respect, musical notation is inadequate representation. A melody, or the relationships between a series of notes, is only a framework upon which a song exists. The real character of a song lies in the way it is sung. (See Charles Seeger's article on style in Journal of American Folklore for a further discussion of this point.) Neither is notation of a single verse or variation sufficient in presentation of a complete ballad, for it should be seen that constant variations appear, and still other possibilities exist with the singer, outside the particular performance given. With these considerations in mind, a notation of one verse of 'In Zepo Town' is presented here, to reveal some of the complexities of exact notation...and to bring forth some of the irregularities, (or the freedom) in rhythmic presentation. Although this melody is similar to Sharp's notation of this song, comparison should be made in regard to the different rhythmic structure.

A large range of singing styles within the same tradition is encountered in the Big Laurel region. Compare the exaggerated and vigorous singing of Cas Wallin to Lisha Shelton's more 'even' approach. I did not sense that any aspect of stylization made one singer preferable to another in the eyes of the community. More often, a 'good' singer was one who could sing with full force, and the older people often apologize for their voices lacking the power they used to have. 'Oh she used to be a good singer, you could hear her clear on the other side of the mountain'. However, full force and power are not to be mistaken with loudness of sound, for much of the singing is done with great restraint and a certain quietness.

Ballad singing as it is done around here in North Carolina seems to be very much a two-way affair, with both the singer and listener paying careful attention to the meaning of each song. This can be attested to by the range of comments before and after the ballad is sung. At one point Berzilla Wallin sang part of "Flora, the Lilly Of The West",



BERZILLA & LEE WALLIN AT HOME

Photo by  
John Cohen



a song wherein the narrator 'plunges a knife' into his love because he felt she had betrayed him. Immediately after singing this, Berzilla's son said that "no girl was worth all that trouble". She countered that this song showed "how deep and true love ran in the olden days, and the trouble with people today was that love was no longer so strong, and so children had less respect for their parents, and husbands for their wives...that's why there is so much divorce now days."

During the singing of Dillard Chandlers ballads, especially at those moments in the narration which tell of the more intimate moments of affairs of love, Lee Wallin often interrupts with sounds expressing his humorous indignation at the 'taboo' ideas, as well as his enthusiasm for the action taken by the protagonists in the story. After Mathie Groves was finished, all the men present (Dillard, Lee Wallin, and his son Doug), had some comment to make as to what they would have done if they had been in Mathie's situation. One said he would have fought harder, another said he would have killed Lord Daniel, and the other said he would have 'snuck out the back door.'

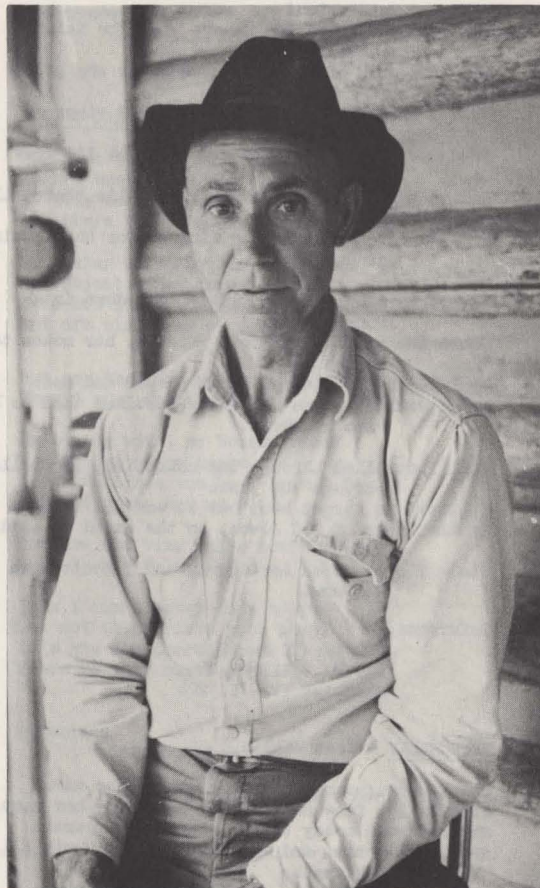
Lisha Shelton believes that the characters 'Dickie and Johnson' in his version of the ballad (The Three Butchers Sharp) both had 'Shelton' for their last name, and that the story took place shortly after the civil war, and he believes they were ancestors of his. Although Laws reports this song from British Broad-sides p. 166, it is significant that Lisha feels this closely connected to the song.

It is important to recognize that this style of ballad singing does not exist in relation to the past alone. Although the songs presented on this record are mostly ancient in character, it must be seen that Dillard also sings the 'Man Of Constant Sorrow'...with a few words changed to emphasize the love side of the song..and he says he learned it from Ralph Stanley's recording (the Stanley Bros. Columbia) which is in the blue grass style. He also sang 'Old Shep' a sentimental country song about a dog, and he sings it with every bit as much feeling and intensity as he brings to the ballads. Further, he sings it in the same style he sings the old ballads, complete with the flourishes, grace notes and other mannerisms which give his singing its characteristics. In an understanding of folk song style in the mountains, one will encounter this phenomenon many times, where a style from one period will be applied to music from another, with no particular distinction between the two on the part of the performer. (See You Are My Sunshine by Grandville Bowlen on Mt. Music Of Ky. Folkways - FA 2317 for another example of this type of stylistic transfer).

It shall be seen also that an affinity for unaccompanied ballad singing does not exclude an affinity for other types of music. Lee Wallin had the reputation of being an excellent ballad singer, but since he has lost his voice, his emphasis has been on banjo playing, clowning and cutting up, much in the fashion of Uncle Dave Macon (whom he greatly admires). Yet when someone sings an old ballad, he is readily involved, if only as a listener. Lisha Shelton expends most of his musical energy playing the banjo to accompany his songs, and although he is adept at the local banjo style (picking the melody with the index finger while making drones out of the first and fifth strings), he generally uses a simplified strum, based on the Carter Family style, involving a strong rhythmic brushing across the banjo strings. Lisha tells how he remembers the Carter Family from years ago at a radio station, and how he taught AP Carter the song 'Engine 143'.

No further conclusions can be made from a record, limited in scope as this one. In effect, we have done here, very much the same as Cecil Sharp: presenting only the older songs and the older styles. Much of the instrumental music of this

area has been presented on other recordings. 'Music For Moonshiners' L 3031 Judson lp was made by musicians of the Laurel River region. Bascom Lundsford, who recorded so many songs for the Library Of Congress, lives about 20 miles from here, and Obery Ramsey lives just a few miles down the road from these performers. Indeed, they tell that Obery collects many of his songs from these people, although he adds his own accompaniments when he presents them on records.



DILLARD CHANDLER

Photo: John Cohen

The recordings were made in Aug. 1963, using a Tandberg tape recorder and the Tandberg microphone. Copies of all material collected in this trip will be deposited at the Library of Congress, Folklore Division, Washington, D.C. Much credit must go to Peter Gott, who did the preliminary work, locating the singers. Also thanks to Polly Gott and Penny

Cohen who did the cooking and helped with the research. The notation of 'In Zepo Town' was done by Mieczyslaw Kolinsky and the tape preparation and editing was done by Peter Bartok.

On the record cover is a photo of Berzilla Wallin and Dillard Chandler.

#### PRETTY SARO - Cass Wallin

When I first come to this country in 1849  
I saw many fair lovers, but I never saw mine  
I viewed all around me, I found I was quite alone  
And me a poor stranger and a long ways from home.



My true love she won't have me, as this I understand  
 She wants a freeholder and I've got no land  
 But I can maintain her on silver and gold  
 And as many of the fine things that my love's house  
 could hold.

It's I wish I was a poet and could write some fine  
 hand  
 I would write my love a letter that she might  
 understand  
 And I'd send it by the waters when the islands  
 overflow  
 And I'd think of my darling wherever she goes.  
 It's I wish I was a turtle dove, had wings and  
 could fly  
 Just now to my love's lodging tonight I'd draw  
 nigh  
 And in her lily white arms I would lie there all  
 night  
 And I'd watch them little windows for the dawning  
 of day.

Way down in a lonesome valley, way down in a  
 lonesome grove  
 Where the small birds doth whistle, her notes to  
 increase  
 My love she is slender, both proper and neat  
 And I wouldn't have no better pastimes than to be  
 with my sweet.

Well I strolled through the mountains, I strolled  
 through the plain  
 I strove to forget her, but it was all in vain  
 On the banks of Old Cowee, on the mound of said  
 brow\*  
 Where I once loved her dearly and I don't hate  
 her now.

#### References

Sharp - II P. 10  
 N.C.F. - III P. 285  
 Randolph IV - P. 224

#### FINE SALLY - Cass Wallin

There was a young lady from London she came  
 Fine Sally, fine Sally, fine Sally was her name,  
 She had more money than a king could possess  
 And her beauties and her diamonds was worth all  
 the rest.

There was a young doctor who lived close by  
 Upon this fair damsel he casted his eye  
 Fine Sally, fine Sally, fine Sally says he  
 Why can't you please tell me why our love can't  
 agree.

I don't hate you Billy, nor no other man  
 But to say that I love you is more than I can.

Fine Sally took sick and she knew not for why  
 She sent for this young man whom she had denied  
 Says are you the doctor can kill or can cure  
 Are you the young man whom I have denied?

Yes I am the doctor can kill or can cure  
 But I will reward you for what's past and gone.  
 Let what's past and gone be forever forgotten  
 And spare me a while longer on this world to live.

I won't spare you Sally nor (the endurance of my  
 heart.)  
 But I'll dance on your grave when you're laid in  
 the earth.

It's off of her fingers pulled diamond rings  
 three  
 Says take this and wear it and be no more seen  
 For the light of your colors remember poor me  
 When you are through dancing on Sally your Queen.

#### References

Sharp - II p. 10, as "The Brown Girl"  
 Laws p. 253, as "Rich Irish Lady"  
 Randolph, I p. 205  
 Cox - p. 366

#### JUBA - sung by Lee Wallin

Sold my cow and I sold my calf,  
 All I got is a dollar and a half-ooch

Get that right hand lady by the hand  
 I don't think she's got a man-ooch  
 Combination swing - hey

See old Daddy Will a-goin around the hill  
 A-diggin up a 'tater hill-ooch

Juba this and Juba that  
 Juba killed my yaller cat - wheee

Juba this and Juba that  
 Juba killed a yeller cat -wheooo.

The clapping sound on this recording is achieved  
 by the performer slapping his hands in rhythm  
 against his knees, and chest etc. while calling  
 out the words.

In the book Negro Folk Rhymes (Macmillan Co. 1922)  
 Talley includes Juba, with some of the same verses  
 as here. (Yaller Cat). "Negro folk rhyme was used  
 for the dance... a circle formed...clapping hands  
 together...and patting feet in rhythmic time with  
 the words of the rhyme being repeated. The task of  
 the dancers...to execute a dance...feet would beat  
 tatoo on the ground answering every word, and some-  
 times every syllable." "Many Negro folk rhymes  
 were used as banjo and fiddle songs."

Bessie Jones and her friends from the Georgia Sea  
 Islands, who today, are outstanding practitioners  
 and performers of Negro dances, etc. also do this  
 Juba game, while slapping their hands on thighs,  
 knees, and chest.

Juba dancing was famous in the old Minstrel shows  
 as well, and on occasion today they still can be  
 seen. The name is the same, but the form of the  
 dance has not been observed by this writer.

#### Reference

Talley, p. 9

#### NEIGHBOR GIRL - Lee Wallin - voice and banjo

When I get in the rocky field, I'll set down and  
 cry  
 I'll think on the neighbor girl who used to feel  
 so nice.

This good time tomorrow where do you reckon I'll  
 be  
 Down in old Tennessee with a woman on my knee.

I went upon the mountain, I looked back down the  
 lane  
 It looked so dark and hazy I'm bound to go again.

It's grief and sorrow, enough to kill me dead  
 To think I am a pretty little boy, and I ain't  
 got no sweetheart.

When I was a little boy, a-sixteen inches tall  
 The way I courted them pretty little girls, I made  
 my mammy cry.

#### THE SOLDIER TRAVELLING FROM THE NORTH (Child #299)

Dillard Chandler

The soldier travelling from the north  
 As the moon shone bright and clearly,  
 The lady knew the gentleman's horse  
 Because she loved him dearly.

She took his horse by the bridle ring  
 And led him to the stable  
 Here's hay and oats for your horse my love  
 Go feed him you are able.



She took him by the lily white hand  
 She led him to the table  
 Here's cake and wine for you my love  
 Go eat and drink you're welcome.

Well she pulled off her blue silk gown  
 She laid it on the table  
 It's he pulled off his uniform suit  
 And he hopped in the bed with the lady.

I heard some trumpets sound  
 And I must go and meet it  
 Oh soldier dear don't leave me here  
 For I am ruined forever.

When silver bells and conks shall stand  
 When you and I shall marry.  
 Oh soldier dear don't leave me here  
 For I am ruined forever.

#### Reference

Sharp - I p. 305, as "Trooper and the Maid"  
 N.C.F. - II p. 198  
 Brewster - p. 166

#### THE SAILOR BEING TIRED - Dillard Chandler

It's the sailor being tired well he hung down  
 his head (2)  
 Well he asked the little maid to show him the  
 bed.

Well she showed him the bed like a maid oughta  
 do (2)  
 Well he said my little honey won't you come  
 to bed too.

It's the little maid being young not thinking  
 any harm  
 Well she got in the bed and she rolled up in  
 his arms.  
 It's what I done there well I wouldn't tell here,  
 But I wish that night could've been a long year.

It's a six months passed and eight rolled by (2)  
 It's her shoes wouldn't button well her apron  
 wouldn't tie.

If it is a boy child name it after me  
 Put a pistol in its pocket lord, dress it in blue  
 Tell it to hug the women like its daddy used to  
 do.

If it is a girl child hire it a nurse,  
 Set it on your knee lord, comb its curly head,  
 Lord, you can remember me when I am dead.

#### Reference

Laws, p. 162, as "Home, Dearie, Home",  
 or "Bell Bottom Trousers"

#### HICK'S FAREWELL - Dillard Chandler

The time's been swiftly rolling by  
 When I must faint and die.  
 My body to the dust returns  
 And there forgotten lie.

My loving wife, my bosom friend  
 The object of my love.  
 It's oft times you have looked for me  
 And oft times saw me come.

But now the time rolls swiftly by  
 When I must faint and die.

My loving wife, my bosom friend  
 The object of my heart.  
 It's oft times you have looked for me  
 And oft times saw me come.

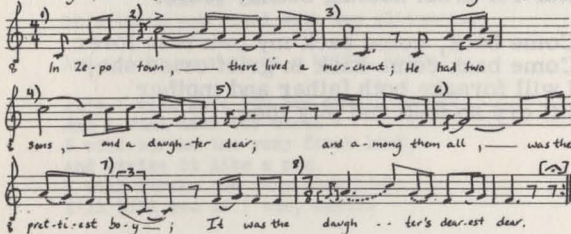
But now the time rolls swiftly by  
 When I must faint and die.

It's I can't never come to you  
 Let not this grieve your heart  
 It's you can shortly come to me  
 Where we will never part.

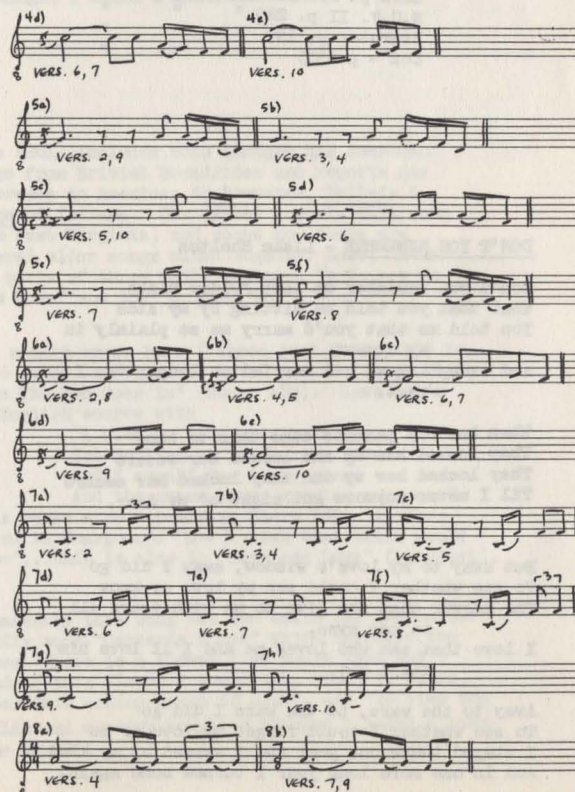
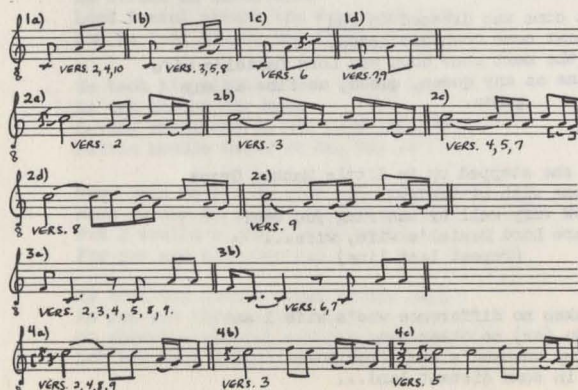
#### Reference

Sharp, II p. 142  
 N.C.F. III p. 589  
 Randolph IV p. 52 as "The Dying Preacher"

as song by  
 Usha Shelton  
 Allegheny, N.C.  
 Aug 23, 1963  
 IN ZEPO TOWN  
 transcribed by  
 Mieczyslaw Kolinski



The following are variations in rhythm and melody as loved by the singer. Each measure is numbered - and the letters a), b), etc. after the numbers refer to the variations of each measure. The numbers below the measures indicate the verse or verses in which the particular variant is sung.





IN ZEPO TOWN (In Seaport Town) - Lisha Shelton

1 In Zepo Town there lived a merchant  
He had three sons and a daughter dear  
And among them all was the prettiest boy  
It was the daughter's dearest dear.

2 One evening they were in a room courting  
Their oldest brother chanced to hear  
He goes and tells his other brother  
Let's deprive her of her dearest dear.

3 So they rose up so early next morning  
A game of hunting was agreed to go  
But little did he think of a bloody murder  
A game of hunting he agreed to go.

4 They wandered over hills and valleys  
And through a many of a place unknown  
Till at last they became to a ditch of briars  
And there they killed him dead alone.

5 So they returned home late in the evening  
Their sister inquiring for the service boy  
Oh we got him lost in the wildwoods hunting,  
No more of him could we ever find.

6 While she lie upon her pillow  
The service boy appeared in a dream  
Says your brothers killed me rough and cruel  
All wallowed in a gore of blood.

7 But since your brothers has been so cruel  
To rob and steal your own sweet life  
One grave deserves both of our bodies  
I'll stay with you as long as life.

8 So she returned home late in the evening  
Her brothers asked her where she'd been  
Just hold your peace you deceitful villains  
For one alone you both shall hang.

9 Her brothers being deep convicted  
To jump in a ship and find relief  
The winds did blow and the waves overcome them  
Their graves was both in the deep blue sea.

Reference

Sharp I p. 310 (In Seaport Town)  
Laws p. 196 as "The Bramble Briar"  
N.C.F. II p. 229 " " "  
Brewster p. 193 " " "  
Cox - p. 305 " " "

DON'T YOU REMEMBER - Lisha Shelton

Don't you remember on last Friday night  
What that you told me sitting by my side  
You told me that you'd marry me so plainly in  
my breast  
And excepting we get married no longer can I  
rest.

When her old parents came this to know  
They locked her up and locked her secure  
They locked her up and they locked her secure  
Till I never anymore got sight of my dear.

But away to my love's window, away I did go  
To see whether I could see my love or know  
The answer that she give to me with tears all  
in her eyes,  
I love that man who loves me and I'll love him  
til I die.

Away to the wars, to the wars I did go  
To see whether I could forget my love or no  
I stayed there one year and I served by my kind  
And in one more long year I turned home again.

All on my way returning home (the moon was shining  
bright)?  
Sweetest of my thoughts was my whole heart's  
delight  
Her old mother saw me coming she wrung her hands  
and cried  
Says my daughter loved you dearly and for your  
sake she died.

Where is her grave oh where may it be  
Pray let mine be by its side  
Of all grief and sorrow that I do adore  
My true love's in her grave and I wish I were  
there.

Reference

Sharp - II p. 103 as "The Lover's Lament"  
Brewster - p. 196 as "Charming Beauty Bright"  
Cox - p. 342 " " "

AWAKE, AWAKE - Dillard Chandler

A Awake, awake, my own true lover  
B Awake, awake it's almost day;  
A How can you bear love to sleep and slumber  
C And your own true lover a-going away.

A I'll go all down on yander's river  
B I'll spend my weeks, my months, my days,  
A It's I'll eat nothing but green willow  
C Nor I'll drink nothing but my tears.

A Come back, come back, my own true lover  
D Come back, come back, in grief cried she  
A It's go and ask your pappa if I mayn't have you  
E' And if he says no please come back and tell me  
C' It'll be the last time I'll bother you.

A Oh no I can't, nor I neither won't do it  
B For he lies on his bedside at rest  
A And in his hand he holds a weepion  
C For to kill that boy who I love best.

A I'll go all down on yander's river  
B I'll spend my weeks, my months, my days,  
A It's I'll eat nothing but green willow  
C Nor I'll drink nothing but my tears.

A Come back, come back my own true lover  
D Come back come back in grief cried she,  
A I will forsake both father and mother  
C I'll cry so loud and pity thee.

MATHIE GROVES - Dillard Chandler (Child 81)

First come was dressed in red  
The next come down was green,  
Well the next come down was Lord Daniel's wife  
As fine as any queen, queen, as fine as any  
queen.

Well she stepped up to little Mathie Grove  
Go home with me tonight  
I know very well by the ring you wear  
You are Lord Daniel's wife, wife...  
(repeat last line)

It makes no difference who's wife I am  
To you (or) no other man  
Says my husband's away from home  
He's in some distant land...



It's little Robert Port was a standing by  
Hearing every word was said  
If I don't die before daylight  
Lord Daniel shall hear this news...

He only had but fifteen mile to go  
And ten of that he run  
He run til he come to the broken down bridge  
And he fell on his breast and he swum...

He swum til he came to the green river shore  
And he sprung on his feet and he run, run....

He came to Lord Daniel's halls  
And he rattled his bells and rung...

Oh what's the matter little Robert Port  
Oh what's the matter now?  
It's another man in the bed with your own true  
lover  
Gonna be some hugging done...

He got him up a few good men  
And he started out with a free good will  
He put his bugle to his mouth  
And he blowed it loud and swill, swill...

It's little Mathie Grove was a-laying awake  
It's time for me to go  
Says I hear your husband coming now  
For I heard his bugle blow, blow...

Lie down, lie down little Mathie Grove  
Lie down and go to sleep  
That's nothing but my father's shepherd  
A-calling for his sheep, sheep...

So they both fell off to huggin' and kissin'  
And they both fell off to sleep  
Next morning when they woke up  
Lord Daniel was at their bed feet, feet...

So how do like my pillow sir  
Well how do you like my sheets?  
Well how do you like my pretty fair miss  
Who lies in your arms and sleeps, sleeps...

Very well do I like your pillows sir  
Much better do I like your sheets,  
Much better do I like your pretty fair miss  
Who lies in my arms and sleeps, sleeps...

Get up, get up little Mathie Grove  
Get up and put on your clothes  
I never want it to be said  
A naked man I slew, slew...

So give me a chance, so give me a chance (it's)  
for my life  
It's there you stand with two glittering  
swords  
And me not as much as a knife, knife...

It's I will give you the best I've got  
And I will take the worst  
I will strike the very first lick,  
And strike it like a man  
I will strike the very next lick.  
I'll kill you if I can, can...

It's little Mathie Grove took the very first  
lick  
He struck an awful blow  
Lord Daniel struck the very next lick  
And he laid him on the floor, floor...

He took his little woman by the hand  
He set her on his knee  
Saying which one do you like the best  
Little Mathie Grove or me, me...?

Very well do I like your red rosy cheeks  
Much better do I like your chin  
But I wouldn't give little Mathie Grove  
For you and all your kin...

He took his little woman by the hand  
He led her through the hall  
He placed a special against her head  
Let her have a special ball, ball...

# References

Sharp I p. 161  
N.C.F. II p. 101  
Randolph I p. 124  
Cox - p. 94

## LOVE HAS BROUGHT ME TO DESPAIR. - Berzilla Wallin

My father he was a rich old jade  
My mother she was a lady fair.  
And me a being the only heir  
So love has brought me to despair.

It's when I wore my long silk gown  
He followed me from town to town  
But now apron just will tie  
He passes my door and he won't stop in.

There is a street in yonders town  
Where my true love walks up and down.  
He takes another girl on his knee  
And tells to her what he won't tell me.

He takes another girl on his knee  
Oh ain't it a awful grief to me.

There is some flowers I've heard them say  
That would cure false love both night and day.

And of these flowers I did pull  
Until I got my apron full.

I gathered black and I gathered blue  
But none of these flowers could I find  
That would cure false love or ease my mind.

It's out of these leaves I made a bed  
And out of the flowers a pillow for my head  
It's down she lay and nary a word spoke  
Until her aching heart was broke.

And in the green meadows round  
I thought I heard a doneful sound.

Laws (261) includes this amongst his American songs from British Broad-sides and reports one reference in America; in Brewster, Ballads & Songs of Indiana. Cox (#144) reports this song from West Virginia, and shows how there are several older songs mixed together here, including parts of three Child Ballads, "A Tavern in this Town" and the "Butcher Boy".

The second verse here ("apron just will pin") is also found in "Careless Love" and in "Every Night When The Sun Goes In" (Sharp 189). Laws cites an English source with

"I wish my babe were born  
Set Smiling on its nurses knee,  
And I myself was in my grave  
And the green grass growing over me."

This verse also appears in Sharp 189. Another verse in Sharp says "how I wish that train would come"...this is also in "Careless Love" (Lunsford).

Apparently this song was the basis for the Carter Family song "Carter's Blues" which includes the lines 'There is a flower I've heard them say', 'And if this flower I could only find, it would cheer this aching heart of mine', and 'To view the fields and meadows round, I thought I heard a lone-some sound'.



# References

Laws p. 261  
Brewster p. 276  
Cox p. 427

## JOHNNY DIAL (Doyle) Burzil Wallin

I am a poor maiden all crossed in love  
And I'll refer my case to the powers above  
Such grief it is no pleasure (I'll count it no  
toil)?  
I'll ramble this world over with young Johnny  
Dial.

On last Saturday evening the moon was shining  
bright  
Me and young Johnny was going to take a flight  
My waiting maid a standing so plainly she did  
see  
She rolled to my mother and told up on me.

My mother conveyed me to a room that was high  
So no one could see me nor no one pass me by  
She bundled up John's clothing, she bid him be  
gone  
So slowly, so slowly he moved along.

My father provided above a thousand pound  
A fine horse and saddle for me to ride upon  
And six noble horsemen to ride by my side  
In order to make me young Samuel More's wife.

We rode and we rode all along to the town  
We rode up to Squire Gardiner's and there we got  
down  
And the very moment the squire appeared at the  
door  
My earrings they bursted and fell to the floor.

By young Samuel More's side they did force me to  
stand  
And also they forced me to give him my hand  
And when I should have spoken I scarcely could  
resign  
For my poor heart were bleeding for young Johnny  
Dial.

Behind my oldest brother they carried me back  
home  
And by my own mother's conveyed to my room  
Mother oh mother, a bolt to the door  
And don't you let in your Samuel More.

For before tomorrow morning my life shall end all  
strife  
He never shall enjoy me nor call me his wife  
And the last word she spoke was young Johnny fare  
you well  
There's more love that my heart than my tongue  
can tell.

Oh, daughter oh daughter, I'll send for young  
Johnny Dial  
To send for young Johnny I think it quite worth  
while  
And the last word she spoke was young Johnny fare  
you well  
There's more love that in my heart than my tongue  
can tell.

## References

Sharp II p. 27  
Laws p. 180  
N.C.F. II p. 365

## CONVERSATION WITH DEATH - Burzil Wallin

Oh what is this I cannot see  
With icy hands take hold on me  
Oh I am Death that none can excell  
I open the door of heaven and hell.

Now death, oh death, how can it be  
That I must come and go with thee,  
For death oh death how can it be  
For I'm unprepared for eternity.

Yes I've come for to get your soul  
Leave your body and leave it cold  
To drop the flesh from off your frame  
The earth and worms both have their claim.

Now death oh death, if this be true  
Please give me time to reason with you  
From time to time you've heard and saw  
I'll close your eyes and lock your jaw.  
I'll lock your jaws so you can't talk  
I'll fix your feet so you can't walk  
I'll dim your eyes so you can't see,  
This very hour come go with me.

Now death oh death consider my age  
And do not take me at this stage  
My wealth is all at your command  
If you will move your icy hand.  
The old, the young, the rich, the poor  
They alike with me will have to go  
No age no wealth, no silver no gold  
Nothing satisfies me but your poor soul.

Now death oh death please let me see  
If Christ has turned his back on me  
When you were called and asked to bow  
You wouldn't take heed, and it's too late now.  
Now death oh death, please give me time  
To fix my heart and change my mind  
Your heart is fixed, your mind is bound  
I have the shackles to drag you down.  
Too late, too late, to all farewell  
My doom is fixed, I'm summonsed to hell  
As long as God in heaven shall dwell,  
My soul, my soul, shall scream in hell.

## Reference

Randolph IV p. 98

also see Folkways Records -  
"Spirituals" - by Doc Reed  
and Vera Hall as "Death is  
Awful" "Dock Boggs" as "Oh Death"

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