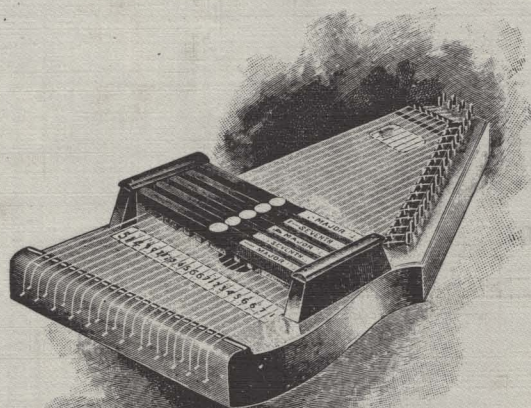


MOUNTAIN MUSIC

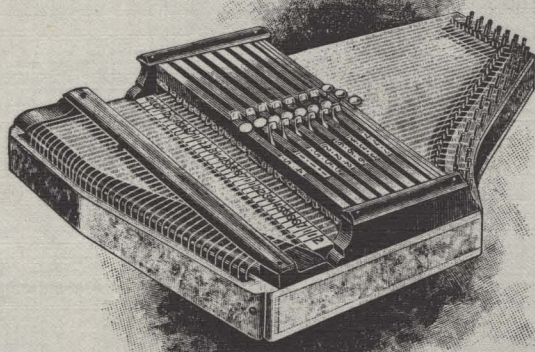
RECORDED BY MIKE SEEGER

PLAYED ON

THE AUTOHARP

Style No. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$. \$5.00

Style No. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ has 23 strings and 5 bars, producing the three chords of C, F and B Major, G and C Seventh. Thumb pick, brass pick, music rack, tuning key and instruction book containing 22 pieces of music. Nicely packed.



Style "Parlor Grand." \$75.00

Style "Parlor Grand" has 30 strings, 10 bars and 13 shifters—38 chords. Complete Major keys of F, C, G, D, A, and E; Minor keys of G, D, A and E, also 12 Diminished Seventh chords. Beautifully finished and packed in carrying case. A magnificent instrument. Appropriate and complete furnishings.

A GOOD-NATURED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT "EASY TO PLAY"

... Chapter 1

"The Autoharp encourages the musical effort of the person who is least musical, and will respond with harmonious chord to the touch of anybody. It never is ill-tempered; practice cannot disturb those who listen, for it knows no discords. People of more or less musical skill find it charming in its simplicity, delightfully easy to become acquainted with and companionable at all times, while it baffles the attempt of the skilful to find its musical limitations."

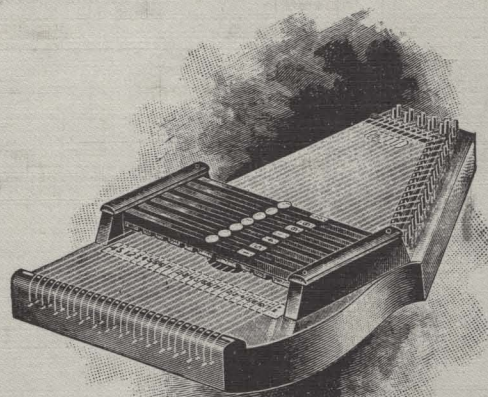
"EASY TO BUY"

... Chapter 2

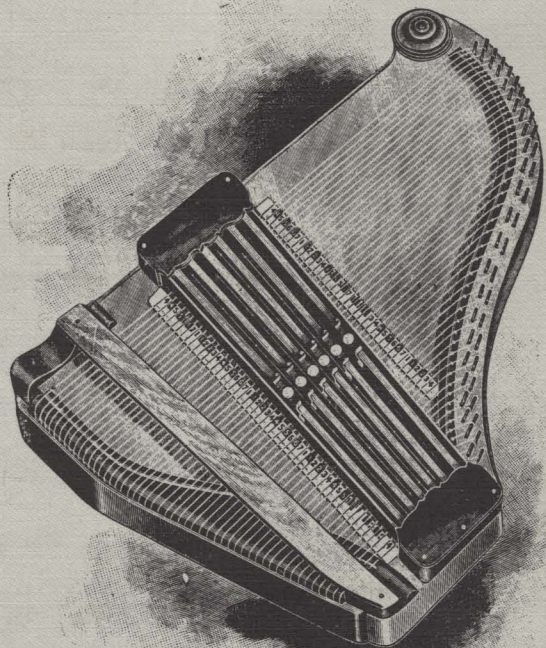
"It accommodates itself to the means and musical abilities of everybody. It says to the person who desires recreation at home, 'Buy me for \$5.00.' And so all the way up, as one can see from the complete catalogue shown on this page, it will follow the growth of musical desire and accomplishment. It appeals to one and another with the irresistible argument of economy; for in all styles it will be found much cheaper than any other instrument possessing anything like the same possibilities, for even the skilful artist finds in the \$150.00 Autoharp an instrument with as great scope as any which can command his attention."



AUTOHARP
PATENTED, MAY 9, 1882.
MANUFACTURED BY
C.F. Zimmermann Co.
DOLGEVILLE, N.Y., U.S.A.

Style No. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$. \$7.50

Style No. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ (entirely new this year) has 28 strings and 7 bars, producing 7 chords with minor changes. A very superior Autoharp. Thumb pick, brass pick, music rack, tuning key and instruction book containing 22 pieces of music. Nicely packed.



Style "Concert Harp." \$150.00

Style "Concert Harp" has 54 strings. This instrument produces 72 chords, comprising all the Major, Minor, Seventh and Diminished Seventh chords of every key, as well as a number of compound chords. Tone quality: rich, full, sympathetic. For solo and orchestral work. Finish and equipment commensurate with price. The Perfect Autoharp.

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

THE AUTOHARP AS PLAYED BY THE OLD MASTERS

PROPERTY OF
FOLKLIFE PROGRAM
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

STONEY'S WALTZ

SWEET MARIE

MAY I SLEEP IN YOUR BARN TONIGHT, MISTER?

SHE'LL BE COMING 'ROUND THE MOUNTAIN

FLOP-EARED MULE

BILE 'EM CABBAGE DOWN

ALL I GOT'S GONE

ELLA'S GRAVE

SHORTENIN' BREAD

OLD JOE CLARK

WALTZ

PRECIOUS JEWEL

AIN'T GOING TO WORK TOMORROW

MULE SKINNER BLUES

JOHN HENRY

WEeping WILLOW TREE

WRECK OF NUMBER NINE

RED RIVER VALLEY

THE GREAT REAPING DAY

I'M ALONE, ALL ALONE

JACOB'S LADDER

'WAY DOWN IN THE COUNTRY

BENFIELD HOEDOWN

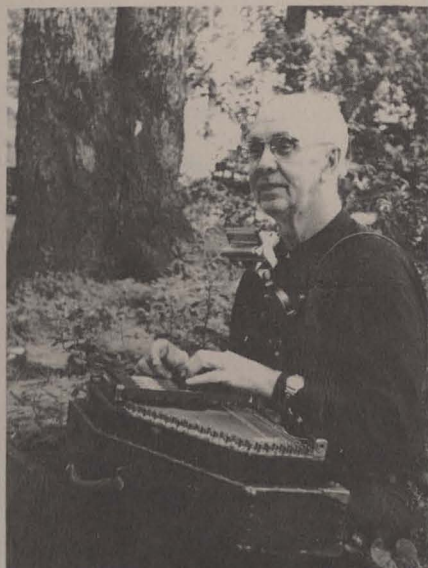
WILDWOOD FLOWER

TRAGIC ROMANCE

mountain
music
played
on the

AUTOHARP

RECORDED AND EDITED BY MIKE SEEGER



ERNEST V. STONEMAN - 1961



NERIAH & KENNETH BENFIELD
Newport Folk Festival - July 1964



KILBY SNOW - 1961

NOTE:

For those of you who have waited as much as two and one half years for these notes, there will be (by about 1967) an autoharp teacher-encyclopedia (book and record) on Oak - Folkways which will include:

Doyle Moore's definitive "The Autoharp: Its' Origin & Development From a Popular to a Folk Instrument".

Suggestions and instructions for tuning, playing, modifying, maintaining, and building an autoharp.

A discography of old and new recordings of autoharp music.

PLEASE DON'T WRITE FOLKWAYS-OAK, WATCH FOR FUTURE ANNOUNCEMENTS AS TO WHEN THIS PUBLICATION WILL BE AVAILABLE.

INTRODUCTION

The autoharp was invented by Charles F. Zimmerman a German musical instrument dealer, repairman and innovator who had come to the United States in 1865. It was based in size and general design upon the zither, a well known instrument in Germany and with it Zimmerman was hoping to establish his new system of numerical music notation. He patented it in 1881 and first produced it in Philadelphia in 1885. During the first three years of production fifty thou-

sand autoharps were sold but their main attraction was as a musical novelty in that invention-happy period.

In 1892 the C.F. Zimmerman Company was bought by piano-maker Alfred Dolge and moved to Dolgeville, New York. Dolge launched an advertising campaign and the autoharp soon became very popular, mostly in parlors. Autoharp clubs sprang up, a minor composer wrote a minuet for it, and "the world's greatest autoharp performer", Aldis Gery, (who worked for Zimmerman and designed autoharps) toured with Victor Herbert's band from 1895 to 1897. By 1897 they had produced nearly three hundred thousand autoharps.

As a result of many factors including the limitations of the instrument (especially tuning), the slackening of a fad, unwise management, and the advent of the talking machine, the autoharp was falling into general disfavor around 1900. In 1910 the right to produce autoharps was acquired by the Phonoharp Company of Boston which started producing a more limited line of instruments. It was during this time from about 1900 to 1920 that the autoharp was introduced to the southern mountain areas, mainly through mail order houses and by door to door salesmen-teachers (tuners?). And the autoharp was soon also used by preachers in hospital wards and in class rooms. In 1926 Phonoharp merged with Oscar Schmidt International Inc. the present makers, who over the past few years have been experimenting with and making improvements on the autoharp.

When the autoharp first appeared in the southern mountains the style of playing it varied from simple non-rhythmic

strumming of chords to (after a short while) the type of playing by Neriah Benfield and Ernest Stoneman both of whom remember it first from about 1900 to 1905. A later development was the playing of Kenneth Benfield and Kilby Snow. All mountain picking styles closely resemble the style outlined in autoharp self teacher manuals of the 1890's, that is, accompaniment with thumb and first finger, and picking of tunes with the first finger with occasional chord strums with thumb and first finger.

The songs played or accompanied included almost every type to be found in the southern mountain area from old hymns to the more recent religious songs, waltzes, sentimental songs and country tunes that are represented on this record. Blues were generally not suited to either accompaniment or picking on the autoharp. The primary attraction of the autoharp was its pleasing tone and initial ease of playing but in contrast to its fad life and death in the north, it took hold in the south and has remained as part of a continuing tradition comparatively unexploited commercially, unlike most other areas of country music. But although the instrument was absorbed in a limited way into mountain tradition it remained in several ways similar to the mountain dulcimer, a parlor (or home) instrument, and in a way it filled the void left by the gradual demise of the dulcimer. Both instruments were primarily of German descent but the chord oriented autoharp lent itself more to accompaniment and less to do the playing of the old "modal" tunes so well suited to the melody - oriented dulcimer.

As far as I can tell autoharp players were numerous especially up to approximately 1935 or 1940 and I have met or heard of at least a dozen more than those on this record. One man of about 70 in western North Carolina who had an amplified autoharp played us a dozen tunes expertly, mostly waltzes, and we heard of a couple of other players nearby. Another man of about the same age in Chicago (originally from southern Ohio) played tunes such as "Red Wing" and "Little Brown Jug". He told us of how the autoharp teacher-salesman had sold he and his sister autoharps, taught them how to play, hired a local school auditorium for them to play in and then taken orders for more autoharps at the performance. Mrs. Elizabeth White (Josh White's mother) sang us several religious songs to the accompaniment of her autoharp in Greenville, S.C. Her grandson (age app. 18) sings some of Josh White's more modern songs to the accompaniment of the autoharp. A Mr. Peaslee and Mrs. Waterman both of Pittsfield, Massachusetts played autoharp duets (one picking, the other accompanying) from about 1895 until Mr. Peaslee's death in 1963. Their repertoire consisted primarily of hymns and popular songs current in the northeast around 1900 and they played at homes, churches, and hospitals.

Tex Isley, who played with Charlie Monroe and currently plays with Tom Ashley, is an excellent autoharp player. A man in western North Carolina was making elaborate autoharps as late as the 1950's.

But despite the plentitude of autoharpists, very few players knew of one another and until about 1957 the instrument was either scorned or overlooked by commercial recording companies and serious collectors of folk music alike.

Ernest V. Stoneman was the first person to record a song with autoharp accompaniment on September 6, 1924. He soon gave it up for the more versatile and tunable guitar. As he says, "People were lost when they went out of tune. I bet there are thousands of them in garrets for that reason." Many other old time country musicians also used autoharps for accompaniment in the early recording days and, of course, the best known were the Carter Family.

The first appearance on record of anything approaching an instrumental lead by the autoharp was on two religious songs by the Thrasher Family (from Decatur, Georgia): "I Have a Friend", Col. 15717-D (W 149273) and "This is the Reason", Col. 15539-D (W 149272). These were recorded about 1930 with guitar and autoharp and were not

unusual except for their use of the autoharp as the instrumental lead. The autoharp was apparently ignored by the Library of Congress field collections and as far as I can tell, the only appearance of it is as accompaniment on a few recordings of the Bogtrotters band of Galax, Virginia. The next occurrence of an autoharp "break" was also on Columbia by Maybelle Carter (of the original Carter Family) and the Carter Sisters (ca. 1952) "Fair and Tender Ladies" (4-20920 - ZSP9306) and "I Never Will Marry" (4-20974 - ZSP9307). But the autoharp remained obscure until a 1956 recording by the Wilburn Brothers, "Go Away With Me" (Decca 9-30087, released 10/22/56), which featured Maybelle Carter's autoharp playing. The autoharp immediately became popular in country music circles and many other players including one of the Wilburn Brothers took up her style of playing as well as her new method of holding it upright against her chest which made it much more adaptable to present day microphone oriented country music. At about this same time I first heard Ernest V. Stoneman play his amplified autoharp with some of his children at a Gambrilla, Maryland country music contest. Shortly thereafter, he recorded the first autoharp instrumental tune to be issued on disc, "Stoney's Waltz" (which he composed about 1930) and several other songs with autoharp on "The Stoneman Family-Old Time Tunes of the South" (Folkways FA2315). This record is the first recording devoted to the exploration of the many facets of traditional autoharp music.

Credits and Miscellaneous

Many thanks to Ernest V. Stoneman who told me of Kilby Snow, who was then living around Fries, (pronounced Freeze) Virginia, near Galax.

Thanks also to Anne Bird and John Cohen who first met Kenneth Benfield who was in the audience at Union Grove Fiddler's Convention, April 1, 1961.

On this record, the role of the autoharp as accompaniment is minimized as the Benfields and Snow are primarily instrumentalists.

The autoharps on the album cover appeared along with four others in an advertisement around 1895 and most models were still available until about 1926. They can now be found in attics, antique shops and pawn shops.

All photos and notes are by MS unless otherwise noted.

1957 recordings were made on Magnecord M33 (with shot heads) and Electrovoice 636 microphone

1961 recordings were made on Ampex 600 and considerable flutter existed on several tracks. Electrovoice 654 microphone used.

History of the autoharp in introduction is based on Doyle Moore's paper which will be printed in full in the forthcoming Oak "Autoharp Teacher".

The many "clacks" heard during the tunes on this record are from the chord bars going up and down.

Ernest V. Stoneman

Ernest Stoneman was born in 1893 on Iron Ridge, near Galax, Virginia. He started playing autoharp at about age 8 and remembers his first tune as being "Molly Hare". He learned to tune the autoharp from a nearby school teacher. Several members of his family played or sang old time songs and he remembers his grandmother Bowers as picking tunes on the autoharp in a very different fashion than he does now. When Mr. Stoneman demonstrated the older style that his grandmother played, he would pick a melody note and then strum a chord after it without a regular rhythm in a way similar to old time unaccompanied hymn singing. (A couple of other autoharp players, one from southern Ohio and another from western North Carolina also played in similar manner, especially on religious songs.)

Until the age of about 31 Mr. Stoneman worked at several different trades around his home area and played mostly for dances and other gatherings, sometimes just playing mouth-harp and autoharp by himself. In 1923 he heard the first recording of a country (then called hillbilly) singer and guitar player, Henry Whitter, and like many others, knew he could do better. We contacted the Okeh record company and went to New York City to record the first two country songs to ever be recorded with the autoharp, "The Titanic", and "The Face That Never Returned" on September 6, 1924. The Okeh recording director, Ralph Peer, was especially interested in the autoharp but later tended to favor the guitar as he said it was not so limited.

For about five years Mr. Stoneman continued to record both singly and with other Galax area musicians for almost every phonograph company, and during this time recorded some of the best old time music ever played. He was accompanied on some of these old discs by his wife, Hattie, who still sings and plays fiddle and banjo but was unfortunately not available for these recordings. In the early 1930's the Stonemans moved to the Washington, D. C. area where they have lived and played since. They have thirteen children all of whom play music and five of whom joined their father to make an LP for Starday (The Stoneman Family) in 1962. Included on the record was "The Titanic" sung much the same as it was 40 years ago although the accompaniment was stylistically between Blue Grass and straight country. This band has played for years in the Washington area at parks, theaters, contests (where Scotty Stoneman, a fantastic fiddler, has little competition), and at occasional night clubs. More recently they have appeared on the Grand Ole Opry, for the Folk Song Club of the University of Illinois, the UCLA Folk Festival and numerous coffee houses in the Los Angeles area.



Close up of Mr. Stoneman's Pick.

MR. STONEMAN'S STYLE of playing consists primarily of picking the melody string, usually in the top two octaves, with the index finger (in a motion towards bass strings) and simultaneously, in a pinching motion, a bass string with the thumb (in a motion towards treble strings). This is a kind of "pinching motion" with thumb and first finger moving towards one another. Between each melody note the back (rail side) of his first finger strums in the opposite direction, or upwards towards the higher pitched strings. This reverse motion with index finger is possible because of the special pick that Mr. Stoneman has fashioned of spring steel. (see picture). His accompaniment in a four beat measure consists primarily of a sweep upwards (towards treble strings) with the thumb in the bass strings on the first beat, downwards with the finger in the treble strings on the third beat, and (sometimes) upwards with the back of the finger in the treble strings on the fourth beat.



Close up of Mr. Stoneman while playing.

Mr. Stoneman's autoharp is a recent Schmidt with several of the seventh chords changed to straight major chords for additional keys. He has also moved the chord bars to the left for more room to pick (also to pick closer to the middle of the strings) and put some sound deadness to quiet the bar action.

When playing Mr. Stoneman puts the autoharp on top of a case that he built for it which gives it additional resonance. Since he sits down to play and can't move to a microphone, at shows he sometimes also uses an electric pickup mounted on top of the autoharp. His mouth-harp rack is surplus from the telephone company and holds four harps mounted on a "wheel" for convenience in changing keys.

Neriah and Kenneth Benfield

Neriah McCubbins Benfield, affectionately called "Mr. Cub" by his family, was born in 1893 in Catawba County, North Carolina. When he married he moved to Rowan County, North Carolina, where he lives now. He is a veteran of World War I and is now retired from farming. His son Kenneth wrote in 1961:

... "I was talking to dad the other day about the autoharp and he said the first one he remembered was when he was five years old. His 77 year old brother who is living had it. Back then it didn't have a cover over the (right end of the) strings and you were always tearing up your fingers when you played it. When he was around 20 years old he said he could play pretty well. By that he meant pick like we did only without missing notes. He has always played by note and always played lead. He knew people who played but mostly by chords. Forty

five years ago they had a real string band. Hubbert Mayes, his brother-in-law picked the five string banjo. Dad's 77 year old brother Robert "Bob" picked the five string also. Dad played the autoharp. Hubbert said Dad's playing then beat anything he ever heard and I think he is about right. I can remember how he played 30 years ago and I thought the same. He would sit with his back to a wall flat in the floor and play under his right leg. That is the way Hubbert said it sounded so good. Can't you just picture that in your mind 45 years ago?

"As for the music they played then it is pieces like he still plays today. Coming Around the Mountain, Nelly Grey Wildwood Flower, Katy Cline, Weeping Willow, Eller's Grave, Idaho Girl and tunes like we played when you were here..."



Close up of Neriah and Kenneth Benfield while playing.

Kenneth Lee Benfield was born in 1923 and has been playing since he was about thirteen years old. He adds that he couldn't tune one until he was twenty-six. He first learned from his dad from whom he learned most of his older tunes. But he has learned a great number of songs since about 1950, from radio and records, and is continually learning new songs. He and his dad rarely sing with the autoharp reserving it for instrumental music. In fact they share one autoharp and one guitar and the latter in a reversal of roles is used primarily for accompaniment of autoharp pieces.

When we visited the Benfields (and recorded most of these tunes) it was several days after the Snows had recorded with double autoharps, which was the first time I had seen two traditional autoharpists play together. The Benfields tried it on my suggestion and played autoharp duets a good part of that night. When my Ampex broke down we probably heard "Weeping Willow Tree" for a half hour while I was trying to fix the machine. Each time they picked it better and more lively, alternately picking in the upper and lower ranges and none of us could tire of it.

Both Neriah and Kenneth Benfield hold the autoharp on their lap and pick in a like manner, with a pick on the thumb and usually no pick on the first finger. (Recently Neriah Benfield has been using a pick on the back (nail side of his first finger). Most melody notes are played with the back of the first fingernail in a motion upwards towards the treble strings similar to frailing a banjo. Additional notes are picked with the front of the first finger in a downward motion and occasional chords are strummed with the thumb.

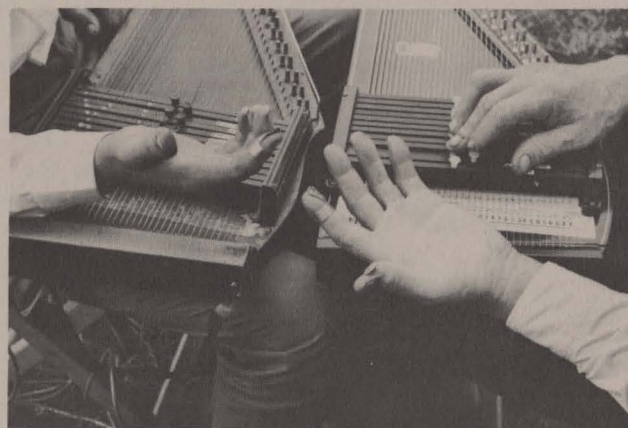
Kenneth Benfield and his wife and daughter make their home near Mt. Ulla in central North Carolina. He now farms, preferring it to the industrial work that he was doing at the time of this recording.

Both Kenneth and Neriah Benfield have played mostly around home for family and friends. They appeared at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival.

Kilby Snow

John Kilby Snow was born May 28, 1906 in Grayson County in southwestern Virginia. By about the age of 4 he had started playing autoharp and at the age of 5 he beat his brother-in-law (from whom he had first learned) in a Winston Salem, N. C. contest. Since then Mr. Snow has played at occasional contests (especially Galax Fiddler's Convention), shows, radio, and T.V. and the 1964 Philadelphia Folk Festival. He has worked primarily as a builder and carpenter and has raised four children two of whom play autoharp and other instruments. His youngest son Jim (born 1942) plays autoharp with him on "Red River Valley". He had been playing about a year at the time of this recording.

Kilby Snow's autoharp (an early Schmidt) has ten considerably modified bars and as the photograph shows, he is left-handed. He has fashioned his thumb and finger picks out of brass sheet metal. The finger pick is made so that the tip (the last 1/4" of it) is approximately parallel to his fingernail, so that he can pick in both directions with it. He slants the tip slightly so that it strikes perpendicular to the string despite the fact that the motion of the finger is not at an angle of 90° to the strings. See illustration. He occasionally stands up while playing and like Stoneman has attached an electric pickup which he uses once in a while.

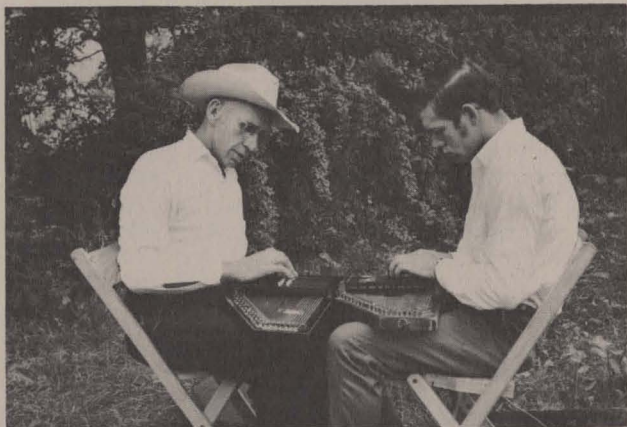


Picks used by Jim and Kilby Snow.

The distinctive sound of Mr. Snow's style is due largely to his innovation of what he calls "drag notes" which roughly approximates the slur of sliding from fret to fret on a banjo or guitar string. The most usually slurred note is the third note of the scale which in the key of C for instance, would be D-D#-E. He gets this slide by "dragging" his finger pick upwards (towards the higher pitched strings) on the D, D#, and E strings. On the D and D# strings of course the chord bar must be released and then when the E string is reached the C chord bar should be brought down. The "drag note" effect is easiest and most natural when the autoharp is played left handed. Mr. Snow plays almost entirely with his finger, even for the occasional chord strums between melody notes, and does not play plain chord accompaniment with songs, as can be seen on "Precious Jewel".

Jim Snow plays right handed in the more conventional manner. When they play together they face one (see photo) with both autoharps facing the same direction, and sometimes take turns picking and/or chording each others autoharp, both autoharps playing constantly.

These recordings were made on two occasions, the first on a visit with him at Wade Ward's house near Independence, Va. August 1957. At this time Mr. Snow was tuning (in the key of C for example) the D almost up to D# to give the drag notes a more fluid and bluesy sound. He now tunes in the standard manner. The early sound was also partly determined



Kilby and Jim Snow at Philadelphia Folk Festival 1964

by worn tape heads. Also on the earlier recordings he had not yet started using the flatted seventh note as he then played "John Henry" using the sixth instead. Since the early recordings of 1957 he has added "Muleskinner Blues" and "Ain't Going to Work Tomorrow" to his repertoire. He has moved more towards Blue Grass and is certainly the most Blue Grass of all the autoharp players both in choice of material and his driving melodic and rhythmic treatment of it. He draws his tunes and songs from country songs and breakdown tunes from nearby and from commercial recordings of over the past forty years (from Blind Alfred Reed and the Carter Family to Bill Monroe and Carl Smith).

Kilby Snow is now retired and lives near Nottingham, Pennsylvania.

A couple of quotes from Kilby Snow when asked how to learn to play:

"Get the tune in your mind"

"Keep the sound (of the autoharp) with your voice"

Texts and Notes on Songs

Side I

Ernest V. Stoneman, autoharp.

Stoney's Waltz-Composed for the autoharp around 1930. This was the first autoharp instrumental to be issued on a commercial record in 1957 on Folkways FA 2315. Several other songs with autoharp were also on the same disc. This recording was made Dec. 10, 1961 at Mr. Stoneman's home, in Carmody Hills, Md.

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Sweet Marie-Neriah and Kenneth Benfield, Autoharps. Recorded at the home of Kenneth Benfield July 21, 1961. The first tune they played with two autoharps.

May I Sleep in Your Barn Tonight Mister?-Kilby Snow, autoharp. Recorded at the home of Wade Ward near Independence, Virginia August, 1957. This tune is from an early "hillbilly" sentimental song.

She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain-Kilby Snow, autoharp; Wade Ward, five string banjo Recorded at the home of Wade Ward August, 1957. This tune is from one of the better-known southern mountain songs.

Flop-eared Mule-Kilby Snow, autoharp. Recorded in vacant house near Nottingham, Pennsylvania July 19, 1961. Mr. Snow plays a considerable amount of this tune with no chord bar depressed, or rather between times that he presses the chord bar. A well-known instrumental tune.

Bile 'em Cabbage Down- Ernest Stoneman, autoharp and vocal; Mike Seeger five string banjo. Recorded Dec. 10, 1961. The third, fourth, and fifth verses were composed by Mr. Stoneman. One of the best known instrumentals-with-words from the south.

Bile 'em Cabbage Down

1. Wish I had a nickel
And I wish I had a dime
Wish I had a pretty little girl
To kiss and call her mine

Chorus

Bile 'em cabbage down-a-boys
Bake the hoe cakes brown
The only song that I can sing
Is bile 'em cabbage down

2. All I want is a pig in a pen
And corn to feed it on
Pretty little woman to stay at home
And feed it when I'm gone

Chorus

3. The river is up and the channel is deep
And the wind blows steady and strong
All I want is a little greenback
To shove my boat along

Chorus

4. I went across the mountain
I crossed it in a swing
I was getting on the other side
You could hear my banjo ring

Chorus

5. Saturday night and Sunday
Pretty girls on my mind
Then on Monday morning
The boss-man takes my time

Chorus

All I Got's Gone (composed by Uncle Dave Macon)
Ernest Stoneman-autoharp mouth-harp and vocal. Recorded Dec. 10, 1961. This recording is similar to Mr. Stoneman's earliest on Okeh.

1. I'm a-going to sing you a brand new song
She's a dandy sure as you're born
All them things just a running in rhyme
Things all right considering these times
But all I got's gone, all I got's gone
2. Whole lot of people bought automobiles
Didn't know how they was a-going to feel
Rolled around so grand and proud
Notes come due they couldn't pay it out
All they got's gone, all they got's gone

3. Whole lot of people owned nice little farms
Doing pretty well didn't do no harm
Sold their farm bought an auto too
Notes come due, they had to skidoo
All they got's gone, all they got's gone

4. Country dudes a-riding in cars
Tailor made suits and smoking cigars
Running to the barbershop, primping and a-rubbing
Bet you right now they're plowing and a-grubbing
For all they got's gone, all they got's gone

5. Whole lot of farmers want to ride and plow
Had to buy a tractor to find out how
When they broke a piece them poor white fools
Better kept a walking and a-plowing their mules
For all they got's gone, all they got's gone

6. Don't like to see the women a-wearing satin dresses
Their husband bankrupted and in great distresses
Better been home a-washing up the dishes
Patching their dresses or their husbands old britches
For all they got's gone, all they got's gone

7. Me and my partner we both went to bed
A jug of white lightning under my head
I waked up the stopper was pulled
The jug was empty, my partner was full
All I got's gone, all I got's gone

Eller's Grave-Neriah Benfield, autoharp; Kenneth Benfield, guitar. Recorded July 21, 1961. (The tune is from an old ballad about a girl drowned on a horse-N&KB)

Shortenin' Bread-Kenneth Benfield, autoharp. Recorded April 28, 1961 at Mr. Benfield's home near Mt. Ulla North Carolina. This is one of the best known instrumental tunes in the south, sometimes with words.

Old Joe Clark-Kenneth Benfield, autoharp. Recorded July 21, 1961. Also one of the best known old time instrumental tunes, often with lyrics.

Waltz-Neriah Benfield, autoharp. Recorded July 21, 1961.

Precious Jewel

Kilby Snow, autoharp and vocal. Recorded July 19, 1961. One of Roy Acuffs most well-known songs.

1. Way back in the hills as a boy I once wandered
Deep in the grave lies the girl that I love
She's gone from this earth, a jewel in heaven
More precious than diamonds, more precious than gold

Chorus

A jewel on earth, a jewel in heaven
She'll brighten the kingdom around God's great throne
May the angels have peace, God bless them in Heaven
They've broken my heart and left me to roam

2. When a girl of sixteen, we courted each other
She promised someday to become my sweet wife
Then I bought her a ring to wear on her finger
But the angels they called her to Heaven one night

Chorus

3. This world holds a wealth, its troubles and trials
The earth holds a treasure of diamonds and gold
But it can't hold the soul of one precious jewel
She's resting in peace with the Heavenly fold

Chorus

Ain't Going to Work Tomorrow-Kilby Snow, autoharp. Recorded July 19, 1961. This is the tune to which the Carter Family (and later Flatt and Scruggs) sang this song.

Mule Skinner Blues-Kilby Snow, autoharp. Recorded July 19, 1961. Mule Skinner Blues is well known by singers from Jimmie Rogers (the first) and Bill Monroe to some of the more recent pop singers. This version is a departure from any I've heard and could only be Mr. Snow's own arrangement.

John Henry-Kilby Snow, autoharp. Recorded July 19, 1961. From what is one of the best known American folk songs.

Weeping Willow Tree-Neriah and Kenneth Benfield, autoharps. Recorded July 21, 1961. Tune from old sentimental song still sung today.

Wreck of Number Nine

Ernest Stoneman-autoharp, mouth-harp and vocal. Recorded Dec. 10, 1961. Similar to Mr. Stoneman's early Okeh recordings, except for his playing of the melody on the autoharp.

1. On a cold winter night not a star was in sight
And the north wind come howling down the line
With his sweetheart so dear stood a brave engineer
With his orders to pull old number nine

She kissed him goodbye with a tear in her eye
But the joy in his heart he could not hide
For the whole world seemed bright when she told him
that night
That tomorrow she'd be his loving bride

2. O'er the wheels came the song as the train rolled along
And the black smoke came pouring from the stack
With his headlight agleam seemed to brighen his dream
Of tomorrow when he'd be going back

He sped around the hill and his brave heart stood still
For a headlight was shining in his face
And he whispered a prayer as he threw on the air
For he knew this would be his final race

3. In the wreck he was found lying there on the ground
And he asked them to raise his weary head
As his breath slowly went this message he sent
To the maid that he thought he would be wed

There's a little white home that I bought for our own
Where I dreamed we'd be happy by and by
And I leave it to you for I know you'll be true
Til we meet at the Golden Gate, goodbye.

4. She kissed him goodbye with a tear in her eye
But the joy in his heart he could not hide
For the whole world seemed bright when she told him
that night
That tomorrow she'd be his loving bride

Red River Valley-Kilby and Jim Snow, autoharps. Recorded July 19, 1961. From a well known country song.

The Great Reaping Day (R. E. Winesett)

Ernest Stoneman, autoharp and vocal. Recorded January 1957. This is a short version of a song that Mr. Stoneman recorded with a full group in the late 1920's.

1. There is coming a day when to judgment we'll go
There to reap as in life we have sown
If we sow to the flesh, death eternal we'll reap
Heavens joy then will never be known

Chorus

May we sow righteous seeds for the reaping
Which is coming to everyone
Oh the joy on that day when we hear Jesus say
Come ye blessed a crown you have won

2. Go ye forth to the fields sow and reap golden grain
Look around you the fields they are white
If we reap what we sow to that land you may go
- - - The dark shadows of night

Chorus

I'm Alone, All Alone

Ernest Stoneman autoharp and vocal; Mike Seeger 5-string banjo. This is the first recording that Mr. Stoneman has made of this tune, which he learned from a childhood friend around the Galax area, Burl Hancock, who also plays the autoharp.

1. I'm alone all alone in this world (3)
Take me home dear Saviour take me home
2. I have no father in this world (3)
Take me home dear Saviour take me home
3. I have no mother in this world (3)
Take me home dear Saviour take me home
4. I have no sister in this world (3)
Take me home dear Saviour take me home
5. I'm alone all alone in this world (3)
Take me home dear Saviour take me home
6. I have no brother in this world (3)
Take me home dear Saviour take me home
7. I have no sweetheart in this world (3)
Take me home dear Saviour take me home
8. I'm alone all alone in this world (3)
Take me home dear Saviour take me home

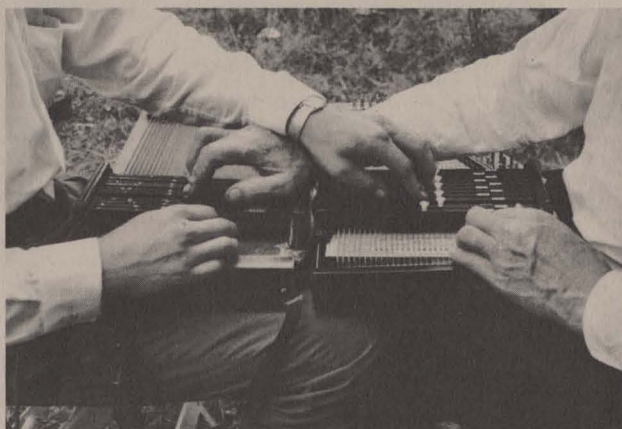
Jacob's Ladder-Kenneth Benfield, autoharp. Recorded July 21, 1961. The tune is that of a well-known religious song.

'Way Down in the Country-Kenneth Benfield, autoharp. Recorded April 28, 1961 from A Grandpa Jones song complete with his traditional I - IV - I ending.

Benfield Hoedown (Idaho Girl)-Neriah Benfield, autoharp. Recorded July 21, 1961. This tune was composed by Neriah Benfield.

Wildwood Flower-Kilby Snow, autoharp; Mike Seeger, guitar. Recorded August, 1957. One of the most popular tunes amongst guitar and autoharp players alike which as a song was first recorded by the Carter family in the early thirties.

Tragic Romance-Kilby Snow, autoharp; Hazel Dickens, guitar; Mike Seeger, Wade Ward's five String banjo. Recorded August, 1957. This tune is from an early 'hillbilly' ballad sung by the Morris Brothers. Mr. Snow ended the tune because (as can be heard) a string on his autoharp popped on the last time through.



Jim and Kilby Snow

COUNTRY MUSIC ON FOLKWAYS RECORDS

OLD TIME & BLUEGRASS

by John Cohen

This is to serve as an introduction to one segment of the Folkways catalog which represents something of the seeds and sources for a dynamic aspect of American folk music which has found a voice in the cities and colleges in recent years. For the most part, this is mountain music derived from the rural south.

There is now an excitement about this music throughout the colleges and cities, amongst young people who are finding a voice in this music, and who are making it their own voice.

There are a great range of approaches to this music, and a great many styles involved; yet inherent in this movement is a desire to remain close to the traditional ways of playing the music.

The movement, diverse as it is, has taken on a structure which has its heroes, artistic leaders, legendary characters, a sort of language of its own, and several senseless confusions and stereotypes applied to it.

Much of the clamor about this music has come from banjo pickers & guitar singers who have brought the music to everyone's attention by their very enthusiasm. It is their excitement about the music which has communicated first. But there is much more to be heard and understood.

These spirited musicians are often 'put down' for being merely 'ethnic imitators' by the very same people who recognize that traditional folk music is the only aesthetically complete folk music to be heard.

Although it is relatively new in its present situation, this music is part of one of the oldest American traditions. It has its roots in the music of the early settlers, and has received fresh vigor over the years from developments within American culture which have introduced new sounds and new instruments to this tradition, as well as new rhythms and harmonies to accompany the changing social functions the music has performed.

It is part of an active and progressive tradition, yet it has always maintained a terrific sense of respect and preservation for its own past. In this way elements from years ago are still considered as significant to the present day music by those who perform and live with this music.

Within old time string band music, bluegrass and just home performances, are found trances of the old ballad styles of singing, of bagpipe and fiddle sounds from the British Isles, as well as sounds of the sentimental songs from the 19th century, minstrel stage songs, early Negro blues, rhythms from jazz as well as those now found in rock-and-roll.

One significant and important aspect of the current city trend towards this music is that it has presented a way to enjoy and understand the popular music, without sentimentality and without losing the perspective of culture as a whole. It is only in the nature of this perspective that the urban interest differs from the country tradition. This can neither be praised nor lamented, nor can it be overlooked. It must be recognized, for it is the basis upon which an intelligent approach can develop to the many ideas which are being encountered in the current investigation of folk music.

The importance of academic scholarship can not be denied: neither can an excited emotional involvement. It is only when folk music becomes just a form of entertainment, in the more commercial sense of that word, that it is being abused.

That the investigation has become more like an involvement of love or art, is to the credit of the investigators. If city people have found that country music is meaningful to them, then this is a genuine enrichment of their lives.

The more one gets involved in this music, the more one realizes the character of an old tradition at work, and the astonishing directness and simplicity in the approach of the traditional artist. An understanding of the music opens up the possibilities for us all to get the most pleasure and reward from these old songs, and from the people who sing them.

In various college campuses and cities now, folk music societies and festivals are emerging which incorporate active research with song collecting, concert producing, and music playing. At one school, on the event of a New Lost City Rambler concert, the folk music society increased its membership by 100, a panel discussion was held with university faculty and visiting musicians participating, a student string-band was formed, and a local Bluegrass band of country kids was 'discovered' and incorporated into the general university folk song scene. In addition to this, a regular publication was started. At another place, serious discographical research is being done and a record of rare re-issues of early hill music was released. Concerts are being produced employing traditional artists; this is no longer a unique situation. The University of Chicago Folk Festival, the Berkeley Festival, the Friends of Old Time Music, and the Ash Grove in Los Angeles, are all pointing the way towards an intelligent enjoyment of traditional folk music.

Within the Folkways catalog is a group of recording which present the scope and nature of the various facets of this music. Folkways has been consistent in its presentation of this music as it is traditionally and authentically performed.

FA2951 (Vol. 1) - Ballads: 27 traditional ballads performed by The Carter Family, Clarence Ashley, Buell Kazee, Carolina Tar Heels, Furry Lewis, Charlie Poole with the North Carolina Ramblers, G. B. Grayson, The Masked Marvel, "Chubby" Parker, many others.

2 12-inch 33-1/3 rpm longplay records \$11.90

FA2952 (Vol. 2) Social Music: 29 selections performed by Bascom Lunsford, Blind Willie Johnson, Carter Family, Sacred Harp Singers, Dunt Stephens, A Hunt's Ramblers, The Pep-Steppers, Cincinnati Jug Band, others.

2 12-inch 33-1/3 rpm longplay records \$11.90

FA2953 (Vol. 3) Songs: 28 selections incl. East Virginia, One Morning In May, Sugar Baby, Mountaineer's Courtship, 99 Year Blues, K.C. Moan, Fishing Blues, etc., performed by Uncle Dave Macon, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Clarence Ashley, Cannons Jug Stompers, Carter Family, John Hurt, "Dock" Boggs, Stoneman Family, many more.

2 12-inch 33-1/3 rpm longplay records \$11.90

The Anthology of American Folk Music FA 2951, FA 2952, FA 2953

This collection is a most comprehensive one, and gives an incisive look into the folk music current from 1927 to 1932 as recorded by the commercial recording companies of that time. Good representation of rural music, with many important artists represented, ed. and annotated by Harry Smith.

Vol. 1 Ballads:

Some Child Ballads, and many other old songs in the ballad tradition, sung as current and popular songs in 1927, etc.

Vol. 2 Social Music:

Dance music and religious music. Both white and Negro traditions. Many instrumental pieces.

Vol. 3 Songs:

Excellent collection of country songs and many blues.

Important artists in this collection.

Clarence Ashley
Buell Kazee
Dick Justice
Uncle Eck Banford
Burnette & Rutherford
Carter & Young
Carolina Tar Heels

Miss. John Hurt
Furry Lewis
Jilson Setters
Eck Robertson
Uncle David Macon
Blind Lemon Jefferson
Dock Boggs

Grayson & Whitter
The Carter Family
Kelly Harrell
Frank Hutchison
Charlie Poole
Bascom Lunsford
Jim Jackson
Ernest Phipps
E.V. Stoneman
Blind Willie Johnson