

DOCK & BOGGS

volume



recorded & edited by MIKE SEEGER FOLKWAYS FA 2392

A. DOYLE MOORE

FOLKWAYS FA2392

DOCK BOGGS VOLUME 2

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FOLKWAYS FA2392

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DOCK BOGGS VOL. 2

Recorded and Edited by Mike Seeger



Dock Boggs and his wife Sara- 1963

INTRODUCTION

The life of Dock Boggs is measured out not only in decades but in entire cultures. When he was a child, he often followed a local Negro musician up and down the dusty roads pestering the man to play a tune on the banjo. The man, perhaps in irritation and perhaps in an amused and calculated effort to fathom the boy's desire for the music, refused repeatedly and kept walking, and so the boy dogged his steps sometimes for miles. Inevitably, the man gave in and sat down on the roadside to play and the boy to listen. Like many musicians of his generation, Dock can still vividly describe the passion with which he heard music as a child, the vision it became to him, the preciousness and rareness of its sound.

Today Dock in his old age moves easily through the modern world of jet liners and engagements coast to coast, of Carnegie Hall audiences and Newport ovations and television interviews. A long way from the dusty road. But the passion of the child hearing his first precious notes of music remains to awe us, we whose brains are so chock full of electronic echoes and broadcast jangle that we will never, never hear music the way Dock heard it from that banjo player in his boyhood. But then, we have not earned the right to hear as has Dock.

Night came to the Cumberlands during Dock Boggs' lifetime. It was while he was still young that his people abandoned their heritage of working the earth and of hunting and herding animals under the sun and attuned to the seasons and went down under the ground to labor in stinking holes like machines, cutting away the mineral at the coal face, not breathing air or seeing sunlight or knowing the seasons any longer. The new life was a change so simple and so profound that it will never occur again: it was the exact moment people ceased living on the natural earth and began living under and over and away from it and it only happens once. Its terrible toll among Dock's people--all of us, really--is still being taken.

(I once asked Dock why the people of the Cumberland, especially during the years when he was a young man, so often resorted to violence, why so many of them seemed in despair, why their lives were cheap and their peace of mind so rare; what was the temper of his time? He said simply, "People were afraid." I thought then--and know now--that the reason why Dock had survived from the one culture to the other is because he was not afraid.)

law and order that came into the hills with the railroads and tipples, accelerated by Prohibition and its degeneration of the traditionally upright rural lawman into a corrupt cop. Like any man human enough to want to uphold the integrity of his property, his family, and his person against the anarchy that was the plateau in the 1920's and 1930's, Dock Boggs carried his own protection stuck in his belt. It was a .38 Special and Dock by his own admission could use it well. He also by his own admission drew it on another man in anger and with full intention to use it on at least one occasion that we know of. Yet, Dock Boggs, in a time when life was so cheap that a murder sentence often consisted of two years in the penitentiary with time off for good behavior--and to accommodate the hordes of convicted killers who otherwise would have inundated the penal system under normal terms of punishment--Dock Boggs had the courage not to pull the trigger, the courage to face down his enemy and thus defeat him rather than merely destroy him, the courage to live rather than die a little with the man killed. Today, many otherwise respectable middle-aged mountain men can still brood over the bitterness scored into their youths by a sentence, however brief, for killing another man--but Dock Boggs is serene and free and his vision unclouded by spectral prison walls. He was not afraid. He did not pull the trigger in fear.

As a young married man, Dock went to work in an industry in which men fought and died for the right to work. A mine job meant more than a living: it meant self-respect, self-sufficiency, and simple survival. Even so, Dock Boggs had the courage to walk off a job in those days rather than work in sub-standard safety conditions, the courage and pride in self to demand to work like a man rather than be driven in animal fear to labor in brute apathy of the contempt of King Coal. Now, one commonly encounters in Dock's land legless men, armless men, blind men, men with crushed and twisted backs and pelvises, men with weakened and enlarged hearts, men with burned out lungs, wheelchair men, broken men, widows and orphans of men who literally--literally--had to be scraped out of the mine shafts with scoop shovels to be buried. Mine victims all: they were afraid. Dock Boggs is whole and hearty at 67, and if he tells you occasionally of his shortness of breath due to the coal dust on his lungs, still you know there is none on his heart.

Even in his retirement Dock's courage has stood him in good stead. Without the two principle elements of his life, hard work and music, Dock found his physical and mental vitality siphoned off into restless and futile automobile trips through the mountains, burning up, as he has said, "twenty or thirty dollars a month" worth of gasoline aimlessly

searching for--he hardly knew what. Then he had the courage to take up his music again in the face of strong community social and religious pressures because he knew the preciousness and passion of it, the pride of it and the beauty, and once again he hadn't the fear that the knownothings had. He did it partly for us who love his music and partly for himself, for of all his enemies, the stagnation of old age was the one he had the roughest time facing down.

Now, he loves to see the youngsters learning his songs, trying to play the banjo as he does, picking up his tunings and turnings of phrase--and he lives through the music. "I'll live longer this way," he has said of his new career of traveling and performing for college and city audiences. I think he has said that a few other times in his life, too.

Like the staunchest of William Faulkner's southerners, Dock Boggs has not only lived through Cumberland's long night but has prevailed over it. He has mastered it and infused its raw spirit and tragic temperament into his old songs and brought the gift of his life to us all.

Listen: Do the best of men and the worst of times always go together?

Jon Pankake

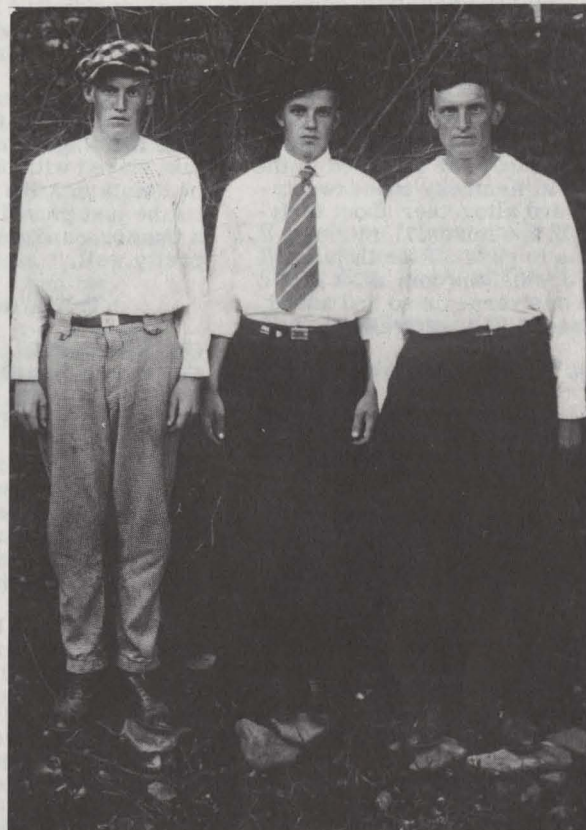
July, 1965



Dock Boggs - Age 9



Mr. J.B. Boggs, Mrs. E.E. Boggs, father and mother of Dock Boggs.



Dock Boggs, Napoleon Boggs (a nephew), and Lee Hunsucker (ca 1915)

SIDE A, BAND 1

MIXED BLUES:

"Well, the 'Mixed Blues', it's my own Composition..."

Banjo tuning: GDGBD

- 1 Oh, you caused me trouble, woman,
and you caused me to kill a man,
Caused me trouble, and you caused
me to kill a man,
Oh, now I'm in the jailhouse, got to
do the best I can, best I can.
- 2 Oh, it's hard to be in trouble and all
bound down in jail,
Hard to be in trouble and all bound
down in jail,
All your friends done forsaken you,
and no one to go your bail, go
your bail,
- 3 Goin' away now, baby, I'm a-goin'
away for a spell,
Goin' away now, woman, and I'm
goin' away for a spell,
But to leave my wife and babies, I'd
rather be in Hell.
- 4 It's all right to flirt, mama, and it's
all right to roll high,
It's all right to flirt, and it's all
right to roll high,
Providin' you feel that you're safe,
and your man ain't standin' by
standin' by.
- 5 Oh, the train that I ride, it's six-
teen coaches long,
Train I ride, it's sixteen coaches
long,



A not unusual photo for this time and place. Johnnie Wells, Wheatley & Anderson Wells. (Ca 1914). "The two Wells boys are Brothers. All are Deceased" - DB.

Don't stop at any station for to take
any passengers on, passengers on.

- 6 These is my old blues, and I sing
them when I please,
These is my old blues, and I sing
them when I please,
Oh, the blues ain't nothin', baby,
but a heart disease, a heart
disease.

SIDE A, BAND 2

OLD JOE'S BARROOM

"It was recorded by some musician
on a guitar, if I remember right, and
I liked the words of it and the way it
sounded... so I learned the song and I
sung it very near the (original) tune.
I might have changed it just a little
bit in order to fit my way of playing it
on the banjo... It must have been re-

corded something like thirty-eight or forty years ago...

"I composed that verse to it... 'I been working in these old coal mines' ... I was working in the coal mines and I sung that quite a lot while I was a-loading coal. So it just come in nice and come in handy for I worked in the coal mines in Kentucky about twenty-five years and altogether about forty-one years in the mines... I'd sing a lot of times to pass off the time and I sung 'Old Joe's Barroom a lot so I just made one verse or so and added to it because it fit in so well."

Banjo tuning: GCGBD sung in G

- 1 I was down at old Joe's barroom,
A corner by the square,
The drinks were served as usual,
Well, a goodly crowd was there.
 - 2 On the left stood Joe McKenzie,
His eyes all bloodshot red,
He gazed at the crowd about him;
Boys, this is what he said.
 - 3 As I passed Saint James' Infirmary,
I seen my good gal there.
She was all stretched out on a cold,
white table,
So cold, so sweet, so fair.
 - 4 I may be killed on the ocean,
May be struck by a stray cannonball.
You can write in life's history
That a woman was the cause of it all.
 - 5 If I die, little woman, won't you bury
me?
On my tombstone write the letters in
black,
Sayin', "There lays my hard workin'
daddy,
Great God! won't you please bring
him back?"
 - 6 I work in these old coal mines
Sundays and all night long,
Tryin' to provide for my wife and
baby,
But now she's took it and gone.
 - 7 Let her go, let her go, God bless
her,
She's mine wherever she may be,
She may travel this whole world
over,
She'll never find a pal like me.
 - 8 Want eight easy dice rollin' hustlers,
Four black-headed women to sing a
song.
Fill my casket with moonshine whisky
So I can drink while the hearse rolls
on.
 - 9 Oh, now you've heard my story,
I'll take another shot of booze,
If anybody happens to ask you,
You can tell 'em I've got the poker-
playin' blues.
- Dock said he composed stanza 6

SIDE A, BAND 3

DANVILLE GIRL:

"I'd have to say I learned that from my brother Roscoe Boggs. I don't know whether brother John played that

much or not, but I've heard my brother Roscoe play it and sing it."

Q: "Did they play it anything like you?"

Dock: "Very near. Played it in the same key, in D. Course, where I pick with two fingers, why my brothers just played with one... Brother Roscoe, he didn't pick the "knock-down" way but he just picked with one finger and a thumb... and some pieces he picked pretty well."

Banjo Tuning: F#DGAD

Oh, I went down to Danville,
Got struck on a Danville girl.
You bet your life she's out of sight,
She wears those Danville curls.

She wears her hair on the back of her
head
Like all high-toned people do.
The very first train that leaves this
town
I'm goin' to bid that girl adieu.

I don't see why I love that girl,
For she never cared for me,
But still my mind is on that girl
Wherever she may be.

Look up look down this lonesome road,
Hang down your head and cry.
The very best friends have to part
sometime,
Then why can't you and I?

It's forty miles through the rock,
It's sixty through the sand,
Oh, I relate to you the life
Of a many poor married man.

SIDE A, BAND 4

COLE YOUNGER:

(Learned from Lee Hunsucker, his brother-in-law)

"I learned a lot of these old songs, half of them or more that I know, from him cause he didn't play any kind of music-instrumental music-but he was a good singer and he was all the time singing... he could just memorize, seemed like, a song (if he) heard it sung a couple times and could sing it very near word by word and the songs stuck with him..."

Banjo tuning-GDGBD

1. I am a noted bandit,
Cole Younger is my name,
To many a death procession
My friends I brought to shame.
- 2 Of robbing of a Northfield bank's
A thing I can't deny.
Now I'm a poor prisoner,
In the Stillwater jail I lie.
- 3 The first of my many robberies
I will relate to you,
Was a poor Californian miner,
And the same will surely rue.
- 4 I taken from him his money,
And I told him to go his way,
The same will check my conscience
Until my dying day.

5 I went home,
And brother Bob did say,
"We'll buy fine horses
and together ride away."

6 We started out for Texas,
That good old Lone Star State,
All on the new prairie
There the James boys meet. *

7 With knives and revolvers
We all set out to play,
A-drinking good corn whisky, boys,
To pass the time away.

8 The Union Pacific
We first did surprise,
A-murdering of your own heart's
blood
Would bring tears to your eyes.

9 Brother Bob was shot and wounded,
All in Northfield he did lie, **
All on the new prairie
There the bullion lie.

* Dock said it should have been The James boys we did meet.

** Dock said it should have been All in Northfield he did die.

When Dock sang the song for us on 5-9-65, he sang this stanza between stanzas 5 & 6.

To avenge our father's death,
We each other will strive,
Off to the new prairie
Until the day we die.

SIDE A, BAND 5

SCHOTTISCHE TIME:

"I remember very distinctly who I heard play that. His hands had kind of gotten stiff, but he used to play a banjo some and he's a blacksmith... at Dorchester, Virginia and I happened to be over on Guest's River-that's just across the hill from Dorchester-one Sunday. I had my banjo and we was up there in the field and we'd sent down to a place where they had drinks-get us a drink of whiskey-and we're just sitting around there maybe eight or ten up there in the field kind of out in the woods, and he taken up my banjo-Jim Begley, from Tennessee-and he showed me that 'Schottische Time'. He told me it was 'Schottische Time' and gave me the time and how it was played. After he showed me, why I tried it and I learnt kind of how to play it very near the way he played it... I never heard him play anything only just with finger and thumb or two fingers and thumb. He never picked no 'knock-down', he just picked it..."

Banjo tuning-GCGBD

SIDE A, BAND 6

PAPA, PAPA BUILD ME A BOAT

Charlie (Powers) used to play the guitar with me some and he used to play banjo with his father in the Powers Family band. And he played a

few pieces on my banjo every now and then. If we was playing in contests he'd always pick my banjo against me, and Scott Boatright was with us then and he'd pick the guitar against Scott, and he'd play the fiddle against Melvin Robenat (the fiddler with Dock's band). And he was pretty tolerable good on all the instruments. And I learned 'Papa Build Me a Boat' from Charlie Powers."

Banjo tuning-GDGBD

- 1 Papa, papa build me a boat,
So on this river I can float.
Every ship I chance to see
I'll inquire of Sweet Willie.
- 2 Captain, Captain tell me true,
Does Sweet Willie sail with you?
No, oh no, he don't sail with me,
He got drowned in the deep blue sea.
- 3 I'm a-goin' away, little darlin' girl,
I'm a-goin' away for awhile,
But I will return to you, sweetheart,
Should I go ten thousand mile.
- 4 Stars may rule the oceans, sweet-
heart,
And heavens may cease to be,
This earth will lose its motion,
sweetheart,
Should I prove false to thee.

SIDE A, BAND 7

LITTLE BLACK TRAIN:

"...I learned that from my brother-in-law, Lee Hunsucker. Of course I arranged it on my banjo...it's my own arrangement that way."

Banjo tuning-GCGAD
(usually plays with 5th string tuned to F#. Probably forgot to tune it.)

- 1 God sent to Hezekiah
A message from on high,
"You better set your house in order,
For you must surely die."
- 2 He turned to the wall in weeping,
We see him there in tears,
He got his business fixed all right,
God spared him fifteen years.

CHORUS 1: There's a little black
train a-coming,
Fix all your business
right.
There's a little black train
a-coming,
And it may be here tonight.

- 3 Go tell that ballroom lady
All dressed in the worldly pride
That death's dark train is coming,
Prepare to take a ride.
- 4 I see that train with engine
And one small baggage car.
Your idle thoughts and your wicked
deeds
Will stop at the judgment bar.

CHORUS 2: There's a little black train
a-coming,
Fix all your business
right.

There's a little black train
a-coming,
Prepare to take a ride.

- 5 That poor young man in darkness
Cared not for the gospel light
Till suddenly he heard the whistle
blow
And the little black train in sight.

- 6 "Oh, Lord, will you not spare me?
I see my wicked plight.
Have mercy, Lord, upon me,
Please come and set me right."

- 7 But death had fixed its shackles
Upon his soul so tight,
Before he got his business fixed
The little black train in sight.

CHORUS 1: There's a little black train
a-coming,
Fix all your business right.
There's a little black train
a-coming,
And it may be here tonight.

SIDE A, BAND 8

NO DISAPPOINTMENT IN HEAVEN

Banjo tuning-GCGBD-sung in Key of G

- 1 There'll be no disappointment in
Heaven,
No weariness, sorrow nor pain,
No hearts that are bleedin' and
broken,
No song with a minor refrain.
 - 2 The clouds of the earthly horizon
Will never appear in the sky,
For all will be sunshine and
gladness
With never a sob nor a sigh.
- CHORUS: I am bound for that beautiful
city,
My Lord is prepared for his
own,
Where all the redeemed of all
ages
Sing, "Glory!" around the
white throne.
Sometimes I grow homesick
for Heaven
And the glories I there shall
behold.
What a joy that will be when
my Savior I see
In the beautiful city of gold.

- 3 The old will be young there forever,
Transformed in a moment of time,
Immortal we'll stand in his likeness,
The stars and the sun to outshine.
- 4 We'll never pay rent for our
mansions,
Our taxes will never come due.
Our garments will never grow
threadbare,
But always be fadeless and new.

CHORUS:

SIDE A, BAND 9 GLORY LAND:

"There's an old minister, a travel-
ing evangelist, a fellow by the name of
Osborne. I don't know where he's from,

but he had that song back about twenty
five or thirty years ago...and he gave
it to my oldest sister, gave her the
ballot of it-the words-and more or less
the tune that I sing it in is my own
arrangement. I just arranged it my-
self 'til I could sing it."

Banjo tuning-F#DGAD

- 1 If you have friends in Glory Land
Who left because of pain,
Thank God, up there they'll die no
more,
They'll suffer not again.
- 2 Then weep not, friends, I'm going
home,
Up there we'll cry no more.
No coffins will be made up there,
No graves on that bright shore.
- 3 The lame will walk in Glory Land,
The blind up there will see.
The deaf in Glory Land will hear,
And the dumb will talk to me.
- 4 The doctor will not have to call,
The undertaker, no.
We'll have no pain up there to bear,
Just walk the streets of gold.
- 5 We'll need no sun in Glory Land,
The moon and stars won't shine,
For Christ himself is light up there,
Pure rays of love divine.
- 6 Then look away to that good land
Where peace and joy sublime
Shall fill our hearts to runnin' o'er,
There's shoutin' all the time.
- 7 Now won't you mothers meet us
there,
With all your children too,
To live in bliss forevermore,
And never say adieu.
- 8 Then what a land our Lord's
prepared,
No death, no pain, no tears.
He made our robes as white as snow
And built us mansions there.

SIDE B, BAND 1

BANJO CLOG:

"I wouldn't know hardly who to give
credit for learning that from. I played
that some and heard a colored fellow
by the name of Jim White-blue-eyed
Jim White-used to be at Dorchester-
play something very near the same
kind of time and I heard another col-
ored fellow that plays in a band over there
pick something very near the same
time. And...then Byrd Moore, we
played off and on together for about fif-
teen years...he picked some of the
'Banjo Clog' but he didn't pick it hardly
like I play it. I've heard different ones
play it, but...I never seen no one play
it just exactly like I play it."

Banjo tuning-GCGBD

SIDE B, BAND 2

WISE COUNTY JAIL:

"As far as me ever singing them
jailhouse songs like that, why a lot of

people think that I spent a lot of time I guess in jail... I've been arrested for fighting or being drunk or something like that... I've been put in jail a time or two... I've stayed from twelve o'clock to daylight and I've stayed from evening to the next morning. But as far as ever pulling a jail sentence, I never did. 'Course if I'd been tried and got justice, I guess I'd've pulled them, maybe been behind the grey walls. But still there's not many of us what hasn't done anything to what we'd have gone to the penitentiary for.

"We had some law back along I'll say from 'twenty up to... 'thirty two or something like that in Wise County here... the jailhouse it wasn't so sanitary as it is today... And we have good law today and we had good law back then—a lot of them were good fellows—I mean they done their duty and done the way the law required them to do. But we had some that was just very near outlaws. And they would treat an outsider or a person out of state—maybe they'd see them come in here, if they had a Kentucky tag or Tennessee, or New Jersey or New York, or somewhere, why blow them over to the side of the road when he (the officer) wasn't even anything more than a game warden or not even a state police, and curse a man out and call him bad names, maybe haul off and slap him in the face... and abuse fellows, strangers, or tourists... or people coming through here and they sure wasn't very well liked.

There's a lot of (people around Norton)* would remember the fellow I'm really referring to and I think the law that raided with him and went with him was really afraid of him. I don't know what the judges, some of them, wasn't kind of afraid of him when he came in to court, cause he was awful over bearing and he just wanted to make people kneel to him and just do what he said do.

"So I went over into Kentucky* and this song, I made it along about 1928. I composed the words and put a tune to it, this 'Wise County Jail'. I didn't make it for any reflection or to try to run down my home state or my home county or my hometown where I live or to hurt anybody's feelings... but it fit in very well a lot of points about a certain officer who used to be around here. He was killed up here on Guest's River, the man that I made mostly that song about. Of course I never called his name and of course I'm sorry he got killed... but the way he was a-living and the way he was a-treating people, he couldn't live. There's nobody could go on living long a-smart that... He caused me a right smart of trouble...

"And I sure don't mean any reflection on our present law enforcement or judges or anything of our state on account of making this song."

Q: "Did you sing it around very much at the time?"

Dock: "Well, not too much. I sung it in Kentucky several times but I never sang it very much in Virginia because I didn't know how people would take it. I never wanted to hurt people's feelings or say something when it wasn't necessary, where it wouldn't be no benefit, and so I was just kind of conscientious about it.

But still, the song I think, for the way it was composed and why it was composed and all, I think it's allright, it's very true..."

Banjo tuning-GCGBD

Copyright, 1929
BY MORAN L. BOGGS

Wise County Jail

Wash up your face, boys,
Comb up your head;
Now get ready for your coffee and bread,
It's hard times in the Wise county jail;
It's hard times I know.

It's a piece of cold meat,
And cold corn bread;
It's so cold it's heavy as lead,
It's hard times in the Wise county jail;
It's hard times I know.

We're in jail,
And it's so complete;
About one-half enough to eat,
It's hard times in Wise county jail;
It's hard times I know.

It almost makes my stomache ache,
When they bring the potatoes;
In the old tin plate,
It's hard times in the Wise county jail;
It's hard times I know.

We're in jail,
And it is so nice;
Among the dirt and body lice,
It's hard times in the Wise county jail;
It's hard times I know.

The Wise county jail,
Is no jail at all;
The chiches and bugs are walking the wall,
It's hard times in the Wise county jail;
It's hard times I know.
It almost brings me to my knees;
When I hear that jailer,
Ring them keys;
It's hard times in the Wise county jail,
It's hard times I know.

The officers around Norton,
Are a dirty old crew;
They will arrest a poor man,
And look him plumb through;
His pockets they'll pick,
And his clothes they'll sell;
For twenty-five cents,
They would send him to hell;
It's hard times in the Wise county jail,
It's hard times I know.

SIDE B, BAND 3

SUGAR BABY:

"Well if I'm not mistaken, I learned 'Sugar Baby' from my oldest brother.. Brother Roscoe played the banjo and brother John played the fiddle and banjo, that's my oldest brother, and brother Dave... Sister Jane... she played a banjo. She could play a lot

of them old pieces... 'Poor Ellen Smith', 'Cripple Creek', 'John Hardy' ... 'Hook and Line'... pieces like that."

Q: "Did your brother... play it in that same tuning?"

Dock: "Yes, if I remember right"

Banjo tuning-GD GCD

1 Got no sugar baby now,
I've got no honey baby now,
I've done all I can do
For to see peace with you,
I can't get along this a-way,
I can't make a livin' this a-way.

2 Oh, I've got no sugar baby now,
I've got no honey baby now.
I've done all I can do,
I've said all I can say,
I can't make a livin' this a-way,
I can't get along this a-way.
I've got no honey baby now,
I've got no sugar baby now.

3 Got no use for the red rockin' chair,
I've got no sugar baby now,
I've got no honey baby now.

4 Laid her in the shade,
Gave her every dime I made,
What more could a poor boy do,
What more could a poor boy do?

5 Done all I can do,
I've said all I can say,
I will send you to your mama next
payday,
I will send you to your mama next
payday.
I've got no sugar baby now,
I've got no honey baby now.

6 Who'll rock the cradle,
Who'll sing the song,
Who'll rock the cradle when I'm
gone,
Who'll rock the cradle when I'm
gone?
I'll rock the cradle,
I'll sing the song,
I'll rock the cradle when you're gone.
Got no sugar baby now,
I've got no honey baby now.

SIDE B, BAND 4

THE DEATH OF JERRY DAMRON:

"I got that song—I don't know who composed the words to the song—but someone... gave that song to Mistress Millard Gamble. The accident must have occurred close to thirty to thirty-five years ago. He was a brakeman as I understand, he was Mrs. Millard Gamble's brother. He got killed riding the head end of a train... Mistress Gamble gave me that song... the words of it, something like thirty years ago... just after it was made. I don't guess he'd been killed over maybe a year or so. And so I'd been a-making a few records along and she said 'Dock, if you could record that and put it on record I'd be pleased... you can have the song if you can put music to it and sing it'. And so I'm very pleased to get an opportunity to put it on record.. It's been a long time and I've had the song... it tells a story about how it happened."

Banjo tuning-F#CGAD

1 In the head of Marrowbone Holler,
Where the crystal waters flow,
Jerry Damron met disaster
Up there on the C. and O.

2 As he left the Coaldale junction
On the head end of his train,
Thinking not of unseen dangers,
Frosty nights or drenchin' rain.

3 Perhaps his thoughts were of his
sweetheart
And on some earthly paradise,
When his car gave indications
That it was riding on the ties.

4 Then he got to safety,
To make successful land,
Then there comes that old, old story,
One misstep or slip of hand.

5 Far from darkness came destruction,
And the truth we'll never know,
Of the feelin's of that train crew
Up there on the C. and O.

6 Quick the angel cock was opened,
But, alas, it came too late,
Jerry's soul had departed
Through that far off golden gate.

7 Then we see the tool car passing
With the boom a-swinging low
As if it was mournin' for Jerry
Up there on the C. and O.

8 Jerry, we miss you and we wonder
If you see the C. and O.
And your friends that are still
mournin' for you
Where the Marrowbone waters
flow.

9 Jerry, we hope you're among the
angels
Way up there above the stars,
Where there'll be no more worry,
Ridin' heavy trains or cars.

10 Now you're sleeping, gently
sleeping,
Where the Big Sandy breezes blow,
But your memory's still with us
Up and down the C. and O.

11 And it's just another story,
While friends sometimes must
part,
While your soul has gone to Glory,
There remains a broken heart.

SIDE B, BAND 5

RAILROAD TRAMP:

The best I remember I learned that
off a phonograph record. I can't re-
member the person who recorded it
but it was accompanied by a guitar, if
I remember right. I never heard no-
body play it on a banjo... I been a-
playing it on banjo about thirty to
thirty-five years.

Banjo tuning-GCGBD

1 I'm a poor old railroad man,
Just an L. and N. section hand,
And the weight is slowly creeping
on the way.
Now hard times is coming on,
And my last gold dollar is gone,
And this song is what I learned to
sing and play.

CHORUS: Oftimes you see the path
Of a poor misfortune tramp.

He has no home and has no
place to fill.
As you see him pass along,
And he sings his little song,
Please remember that the
poor tramp has to live.

2 My health broke down out on the
track
With heavy loads upon my back,
Now I have to make my way the best
I can.
We never know when we are young
What may be our fatal doom,
These words is from a broke down
section hand.

CHORUS:

3 Yes, my health is broken down,
As I tramp from town to town,
Sing and play, take whatever you
may give.
While I try to play and sing,
Just divide your little change,
And remember that the poor tramp
has to live.

CHORUS:

SIDE B, BAND 6

POOR BOY IN JAIL

"Well that's a song, some poetry that
I picked up. I don't know where I got that
at. But the words of it, I liked it, and
I just... put the tune to the song and
fixed it up and arranged it myself. I
just composed (the tune)... made it my-
self what would go with the song. The
sound seemed to fit in with the poetry
and with the words... I never heard no-
body else play it like I did... cause I'm
the one who put the tune to it the way
it is."

Banjo Tuning-GDGBD

1 Oh, my mama's in the cold, cold
ground,
My daddy, he went away.
My sister married a gamblin' man,
And now I'm gone astray.

2 I sit here in this old jail,
And I do the best I can,
Get to thinking about the woman I
loved,
She ran away with another man.

3 She ran away with another man,
poor boy,
She ran away with another man,
Get to thinking about the woman I
loved,
She ran away with another man.

4 I went out on the prairie,
And I stopped the Katy train,
Took a bag of mail from standing
there,*
And I walked away in the rain.

5 They got the bloodhounds on me,
And they run me up a tree.
Said, "Come down from there, my
boy,
And go to the penitentiary."

6 I said, "Mister judge, Mister judge,
What you goin' to do to me?"
Said, "If the jury finds you guilty,

my boy,
I'm goin' to send you to the
penitentiary."

7 They took me to the railroad station,
A train come rollin' by.
I looked in the window, saw the
woman I loved,
And I hung my head and cried.

8 I hung my head in shame, poor boy,
I hung my head and cried.
I looked in the window, saw the
woman I loved,
And I hung my head and cried.

* Dock says it should have been

Took a bag of mail from the baggage
coach,

SIDE B, BAND 7

BROTHER JIM GOT SHOT

"A family came into this country
when I was just a little boy, I'll say it's
been about fifty five years ago-it may
have been fifty eight years ago-I was
very small... and this here Lineback
Family had a boy and a girl... I believe
one of them played a bass fiddle... The
father, old man Lineback himself,
picked a guitar and a banjo and he
played fiddle and his wife, why she
played the guitar, the best I remember.
And (that was the) first time ever I
seen anybody where they put their arms
around each other's neck, one note the
other's guitar and the other note the
banjo and one picked the guitar and the
other picked the banjo... And he played
this here 'Hard Luck' or 'Brother Jim
Got Shot'. He played that piece in a
school at Sutherland, Virginia... It's
long since been worked out. There's
no post offices or no houses up there
now. There used to be I guess five
hundred or maybe a thousand houses
up there. There's not over two or
three a-standing anymore. These
people came up there whenever it was
a-booming.

"There's two or three nights I know
they stayed up there... and several of
those old songs... I didn't get all the
words of the song when I could have
got it, cause they was a-selling bal-
lots, if I'd had the ten cents or a
quarter to give... Seemed to me like
they had a book, the Lineback Family
Songbook. I won't say for sure, but
they had songs and had pictures... and
I memorized the words to most of that
song from hearing at that time... That's
the only tune I remember that they
played..."

*See Folkways record FN 5458, An
Interview with Dock Boggs Side B,
Band 4.

Banjo Tuning-GCGBD

1 Me and my brother Jim went to a
restaurant one night,
Through some other parties we got
into a fight.
Shot all the way through me, they
killed my brother Jim,
Hard luck, hard luck, they placed
me on the spot.

CHORUS 1: Jury said it wasn't me,
my brother Jim got shot.
Jury said it wasn't me,
my brother Jim got shot.

2 Well, my wife had a mouth big enough
for both.
She got frightened in her sleep one
night, and a mouse ran down her
throat.

CHORUS 2: Hard luck, hard luck, they
placed me on the spot.
Jury said it wasn't me,
my brother Jim got shot.

3 Got me a cat and a piece of cheese,
and I placed it on her chin.
My wife got frightened in her sleep
one night, took rat, cat, cheese
and all in.

SPOKEN: Wasn't that an awful dose?

Here's how Dock did it on Brunswick 133

HARD LUCK BLUES

1 Me and my brother Jim went into a
restaurant one night.
Through some other party we got
into a fight.

2 Shot all the way through me, they
killed my brother Jim.
Shot all the way through me, they
killed my brother Jim.

CHORUS: Hard luck, hard luck, they
placed me on the spot,
Jury said it wasn't me, my
brother Jim got shot.

3 Well, my wife, she had a mouth big
enough for both.
She got frightened in her sleep one
night, and a mouse ran down her
throat.

CHORUS:

4 Got me a cat and a piece of cheese
and placed it on her chin.
My wife got frightened in her sleep
one night, took rat, cat, cheese
and all in.

CHORUS:

Here's the version John McGhee did on
Gennett 6546.

HARD LUCK JIM

* 1 "Jump right in the swim," I've
heard the people say.
No matter what they say or do things
are bound to come their way,
But I am of a different sort, I go lie
on the shelf,
I've thought the matter over, and
I'm a Jonah to myself.
Hard luck, dead hard luck, a man
to me once said
That he was pretty certain I had
brake wheels in my head.

* I'm not sure about Jump, my record
has a dig there.

2 Well, I went into a restaurant just
a week ago tonight.
My brother Jim was with me, and
we got into a fight.
Well a waiter pulled out a great big

gun, I stepped in front of him,
And the bullet went right straight
through me and killed my brother
Jim.

Hard luck, dead hard luck, they
hung me on the spot.
The jury said it was through me my
brother Jim got shot.

3 I've got another brother, and the
people call him Jake.
He fell into a coal hole, it was just
the other day.
Well, he got five thousand damages
just to walk a little lame.
I saw a coal hole open and I tried
that same old game,
But hard luck, dead hard luck, when
I fell in that hole,
Instead of getting damages, six
months for stealin' coal.

4 My wife has got a great big mouth,
it's big enough for both.
Well, the other day she fell asleep,
and a rat ran down her throat.
I went and got a piece of cheese,
then I got a cat.
I put the cheese upon her tongue
and waited for that rat,
But hard luck, dead hard luck,
when the rat he left his stall,
Well, the cat she jumped and my
wife swallowed rat, cat, cheese
and all.

SIDE B, BAND 8

JOHN HENRY

"Well, now I'd have to give credit
to many of a different people about that
because back whenever I first learned
some of the words of John Henry...
there wasn't but a few white men
around through this country that picked
a guitar. There's several that played
a banjo but it was colored people-there
was a negro used to walk from Dor-
chester to Sutherland and on weekends
he'd take his guitar and be walking up
the track-there's about three miles
from Dorchester to Sutherland-and... I
lived in what they called Needmore
above Dorchester-I'd get out and follow
him... They called him 'Go Lightning'-
and he was very nice and kind and I'd
beg him-I was just a little boy-cause
music always thrilled me when I was a
boy-seemed like I just could hear a
piece, a sad piece or a lonesome piece,
why it thrilled me from the top of my
head to the sole of my feet-I'd walk
along after him-I didn't have no nickels
or dimes to give him, or quarters or
anything-of course he picked and he'd
take up collection or lot of the time
people give him money to play. But I'd
beg him set down on the end of the ties-
I'd follow him plumb from Needmore...
to Sutherland a lot of time to get to hear
him to play 2 or 3 or 4 pieces-and a lot
of times I'd hear him play 'John Henry'.
I learned some of the words from him
and... in learning songs and so on I
heard others play it, like poor old
Clintwood Johnson, I called him
'Dogwood' or 'Hotfoot' Johnson... Then
I've heard some others play it on a
banjo. I just don't remember who,
but they played it in the old-fashioned
key like I play it... I've heard it play-
ed and sung in a different key than what

I play in but still the way I play it is
the original way that I heard it played
back fifty five, sixty years ago.

Banjo Tuning-GDGBD

1 John Henry was a little baby
Sitting on his daddy's knee.
Cried, "The Big Bend Tunnel on the
C. and O. road,
It's a-goin' to be the death of me,
It's a-goin' to be the death of me."

2 John Henry put a hole up in the rock,
One down in the side.
Oh, the rock was so tall, John
Henry was so small,
He laid down his hammer, and he
cried,
He laid down his hammer, and he
cried.

3 Oh, the people heard a mighty
rumblin',
Thought the tunnel might be fallin'
in.
John Henry said, "It's nothin' in
the world
But my steel hammer hussin' in
the wind,
But my steel hammer hussin' in
the wind."

4 John Henry said to his shaker,
"Boy, you'd better pray,
If ever I miss this six foot of steel,
Tomorrow'll be your burying day,
Tomorrow'll be your burying day."

5 John Henry had a little woman,
Her name was Julie Ann.
He hugged her, he kissed her before
he died.
Says, "Oh, Julie, do the best you
can, can,
Oh Julie, do the best you can."

Miscellaneous

Occasionally Dock's voice wavers
almost like a "volume" vibratto such
as in Mixed Blues, Jerry Damron,
Papa, Build Me a Boat. This is a part
of the style of some old time singers
and is an expression of emotion. As he
says, "sometimes I get tears in my
voice."

Song notes are from interviews with
Dock Boggs.

This album was recorded June 3, 4,
and 5 1964, at his sister's, Laura
Hunsucker's house on Guest's River
near Wise, Virginia.

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microphone were kindly loaned for
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available by Peter Siegel.

Text transcriptions by Willard
Johnson, so that he won't correct them
after printing.

Guitar accompaniment by Mike Seeger.

Photos, clippings, and ballot
courtesy Dock Boggs unless otherwise
noted.

Cover photos by Mike Seeger