

The Wandering Folk Song. Sam Hinton

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Irwin Rosenhouse

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A STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS

TALE OF MUSIC

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THE CRUEL SARPINT Springfield Mountain



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THE WANDERING FOLK SONG

By SAM HINTON



Credit: Matt Hinton LaJolla, California

A friend told me a story about a wandering explorer, in the Kalahari Desert, who at dusk one day escaped from a threatening sandstorm by going into a small cave. As darkness fell, the explorer settled himself for the night, but found that the knife at his belt made it hard to find a comfortable position. He removed the knife, and, not wanting to lose it in the dust of the cave floor, felt along the rock wall until he found a crevice that would serve as a shelf. Placing his knife there, he went to sleep. In the morning, he retrieved the knife, and found another one beside it -- an ancient stone one. It had probably been left there, under similar circumstances, by a wandering hunter thousands of years before. The explorer experienced a sudden bond with this other human being who had responded in a manner so similar to his own, and a warm feeling of kinship bridged the centuries between that moment and the Stone Age.

Folk songs can do this for us, too. They can speak across time and space of men whose feelings have not been so very different from our own.

On this recording are a few examples of songs in which this kind of continuity appears to be obvious. But I do not intend to say "This is exactly how it happened," or that each group of songs appears in accurate sequence; as a matter of fact, it is quite likely that some of the direct relationships assumed here exist only in my own mind, and it is certain that some of the true relationships are far more complex and widespread than I have guessed. But SOME sort of relationship exists in every case. There is a long stream of cultural tradition within which these songs have wandered, and I find my greatest delight in joining this wandering, if only for the briefest time and in the smallest way.

THE WANDERING FOLK SONG as a title was suggested by my good friend Barry Olivier of Berkeley, California, and I am most grateful to him for letting me use it.

Sam Hinton

A STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS TALE OF MUSIC. The various categories of music -- folksong, art song, popular song, and so on -- are really no more than arbitrary divisions of a continuous spectrum. And the history of a given song, even though we can know it only in an incomplete way, shows that these categories don't mean very much, for the song may be seen to have wandered freely from one category to another. This is certainly the case with the following:

1. The Butcher's Boy

When a song has become firmly established in the oral tradition, it is very likely to produce "floating stanzas" which wander about, ready to attach themselves to any song that seems to need another verse or two. "The Butcher's Boy," which probably dates back to the early 1600's, has produced a whole rash of these floating stanzas, of which the most widespread are the "Dig my grave both wide and deep" lines.

In Jersey City where I did dwell,
A butcher's boy I loved so well.
He courted me both night and day,
But now with me he will not stay.

There is an inn in this same town,
There my love he sits him down,
Takes some strange girl upon his knee,
And tells her what he won't tell me.

Oh, is this not grief to me,
That she has silver more than me?
But her gold will fade and her silver fly,
And someday she'll be poor as I.

She went upstairs and to her bed,
Nothing to her mother said.
And when her father he came home,
He said "Where has my daughter gone?"

He went upstairs, the door he broke,
Found her hanging by a rope.
He took his knife and cut her down,
And in her bosom these words he found.

"Go dig my grave both wide and deep,
With marble slab at head and feet;
On my breast a turtle dove,
To show the world that I died for love."

2. The Tavern in the Town

This song, which became a pop song in the 1930's is based on a Cornish version of "The Butcher's Boy." Its history shows the old custom of establishing copyrights on old material (a custom that continues to this day), for it was copyrighted in 1883 by William H. Hills; then, around 1934, it was published again, with words and music credited to Rudy Vallee. As everyone knows, it's a great song for everybody to sing, with lots of room for fancy harmony and antiphony.

There is a tavern in the town,
And there my true love sits him down,
And he drinks his wine as merry as can be --
And never, never thinks of me.

Fare thee well, for I must leave thee;
Do not let the parting grieve thee,
For the time has come for you and I to say "goodbye."
Adieu, adieu, kind friends, adieu;
I can no longer stay with you.
I'll hang my harp on the weeping willow tree,
And may the world go well with thee.

He left me for a damsel dark;
Each Friday night they used to spark.
And now he takes that damsel on his knee,
And tells her things that he won't tell me.

Fare thee well... ETC.

Go dig my grave both wide and deep,
With marble slab at head and feet;
And on my breast a turtle dove
To signify that I died for love.

Fare thee well... ETC.

3. Grieve, Oh Grieve

I learned this one long before "There Is a Tavern in the Town" became a hit song. My mother learned it when she was a girl in Gatesville, Texas, and I can't remember when I didn't know it. It contained the first line I recognized as a floating stanza, and I can still remember my delight at hearing Rev. Terry Wilson of Crockett, Texas, read the 137th Psalm, with its familiar lines "... yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows..." Later, the appearance of "The Tavern in the Town" gave me an inkling of the wandering propensities of music.

Oh grieve, oh grieve, my true love grieve;
Must I love someone that don't love me?
Must I go bound while you go free
And love somebody that don't love me?

Oh dig my grave, both wide and deep,
With marble slab at head and feet;
On my breast a turtle dove
To show this world that I died for love.

Adieu, adieu, kind friends, adieu;
I can no longer stay with you.
I'll hang my harp on the willow tree
To show the world that I died for thee.

Oh, dig my grave, oh dig it deep ETC.

4. The Water Is Wide

When I was a kid, I simply sang all the songs I could learn, without worrying about what KIND of songs they were. Then, when I entered Texas A and M College and started browsing in the Library, I discovered that lots of these songs were called "folk songs," and that scholars actually collected and studied them. One of the books in the Library was a Cecil Sharp collection of English folk songs, containing "The Water Is Wide." What most intrigued me about this lovely old song was the verse asking if the singer must go bound while somebody else goes free, as this was another floating stanza that I had first met in "Grieve, Oh Grieve." What with lines from the Bible and from an English folk song, I began to suspect that maybe this homely old song was respectable.

The water is wide; I cannot cross o'er,
And neither have I wings to fly;
Oh, go and fetch me some small boat,
That we may cross o'er, my true love and I.

Must I go bound while she goes free,
And love a girl who won't love me?
Why must I play such a childish part
And love a girl who will break my heart?

Down in the meadow the other day,
Picking flow'rs so bright and gay;
Picking flow'rs of red and blue --
I little thought what love can do.

I put my hand in some soft bush,
Thinking the fairest flower to find;
I pricked my finger to the bone,
And left the fairest flower alone.

I leaned my back up against some oak,
Thinking it was a sturdy tree;
First it bent, and then it broke;
And so did my false love to me.

For love is bonny and love is gay,
A little while when it is new;
But it grows old, and waxeth cold,
And fades away like the morning dew.

5. The Happy Land

Here is a connection that is rather tenuous, and this song may not really be closely related to the preceding one. The tunes do sound alike, though, and are the products of people belonging to one musical culture. The words to this hymn, which is very widespread, were written by Dr. Isaac Watts, the British nonconformist minister, about 1720. The tune, which sounds to me so much like "The Water Is Wide," I got from Joshua Leavitt's Christian Lyre, published in 1831.

There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides
And never-withering flowers;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
That heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green;
So, to the Jews, old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

Could we but climb where Moses stood
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Could fright us from that shore.

Incidentally, a significant feature of Dr. Watts's work relates to his feeling that the Old Testament often ran counter to the teaching of the New Testament. Up to his time, most

of the generally accepted religious music consisted of musical settings of metrical paraphrases of the Psalms, taken from the Old Testament, were said to be of divine origin. Watts, however, believed in hymns, and he made a lot of them, often using folk tunes for the music. (These tunes were usually German ones, taken from folk-derived hymns of the Moravian Brotherhood; Watts, unfortunately, didn't know anything about English folk music.) The last verse of "The Happy Land" shows something of the Watts attitude toward the Old Testament, as it really seems somewhat critical of Moses, saying in effect "Maybe Moses couldn't cross the Jordan, but, by golly, WE could!"

6. Intemperance

A good tune like that used for "The Happy Land" should not be wasted, and this one hasn't been; it's been used over and over. This anti-liquor song is a good example, it is taken from *The Western Mintrel*, a songster printed about 1850 and lent to me (somewhat later) by Candie and Guy Carawan. In the 1850's, there were a good many young radicals, and they often sang protest songs. Two big radical ideas were especially pushed by these wild-eyed youngsters -- Abolition and Prohibition!

Oh, say no more the wine-cup waves,
With peace and pleasure flows;
Of hope and happiness the grave,
Fraught with a thousand woes.

I've seen the lip of genius quaff
That ever-burning bowl,
And with a wild and haggard laugh,
I've seen his eyeballs roll.

Oh God! That thus the fairest flowers
Of science and of song,
Should wither in ambrosial bowers,
That should to fame belong!

Mark what the mighty sword hath slain,
The pestilence and pride;
Roll forth the millions of the main,
The throngs of suicide --

Still dark intemperance may tell
Terrific trophies o'er;
In numbers, she hath doomed to Hell
Ten thousand thousand more!

I'm not sure what a waving wine-cup is -- but watch out for 'em!

7. Loomis

This version of "The Happy Land" is from William Bradbury's hymnal, *The Victory*, published about 1860. The title follows the old practice of hymnodists who often gave honorific names to their songs instead of giving them names that referred to the songs themselves. "Loomis" as a title may refer to a town by that name, or to a patron who fed and lodged an itinerant singing teacher and composer. The tune, labelled in the book "Welsh Melody," is, of course, *Ar Hyd y Nos* ("All Through the Night").

WORDS ARE THE SAME AS IN NUMBER 5 ABOVE.

8. Lilly Dale

Now let's leave "The Happy Land" for a moment and hear a pop song of 1852 which provided a good tune for later versions of the hymn. All popular songs are written to some sort of pattern, so as to capitalize on whatever format is popular at the moment. One of the formulae in the early 1850's held that your song would be a popular one if it depicted the moon shining gently on the grave of a lovely girl who had died of love or some other genteel disease; and it would help if the song were supposedly sung by the bravely self-pitying bereaved one. "Lilly Dale," by H. S. Thompson, fills this bill in every respect and it was a hit song. Particularly important is the nice slow chorus (which allows time for sobbing), which opened a new door when the tune was taken over by the hymnodists.

'Twas a calm, still night
And the moon's pale light
Shone soft o'er hill and vale;
When friends mute with grief
Stood around the death-
Bed of my poor lost Lilly Dale.

Oh Lilly! Sweet Lilly!
Dear Lilly Dale;
Now the wild rose blossoms o'er her little green grave
'Neath the trees in the flowery vale.

"I go" she said, "to the land of rest
And before my strength should fail
I must tell you where,
Near my own loved home,
You must lay poor Lilly Dale."

Oh, Lilly . . . ETC . . .

There are lots more verses, but they are no better than these. You'll find them on page 199 of *Heart Songs*, a fine family songbook published by the National Magazine Co. in 1909, and now available in a facsimile reprint edition. Mr. Thompson seems to have had a penchant for writing songs whose tunes would be used with other people's words. In 1860 he came out with "Annie Lisle," whose tune was used later for the well-known (and beautiful) alma mater of Cornell, "Far Above Cayuga's Waters," and subsequently for school songs in every part of the country.

9. Land of Rest

"Lilly Dale" had not been around very long before its tune was wedded to the old Watts words in "The Happy Land." Under the title of "Land of Rest," it appeared at least as early as 1866, in William Walker's *The Christian Harmony*. The slow chorus of the pop song seems to have provided something useful and pleasing, for all the subsequent settings of the Watts words that I have met have used a similar refrain.

There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night
And pleasures banish pain.

CHORUS:

Oh Heaven, sweet Heaven,
Home of the blest.
How I long to be there
In its flories to share,
And to lean on my Savior's breast.

By the way, if you want to look up any other versions of this hymn -- and there are dozens of them -- you should know that it goes under many names, including "Land of Pure Delight," "Oh, Heaven," and "Never Part Again." There are lots and lots of different tunes, one of which, called "Land of Rest" in the *Olive Leaf* (1878), uses a tune very similar to that of the old secular ballad "Lord Lovell."

10. O, Ye Mountains High

One of the great Mormon song writers was Charles W. Penrose. On the first weary trek to Great Salt Lake, he is said to have kept the people's spirits up by composing new songs, and he continued doing this after settling down in Salt Lake City. "O Ye Mountains High" is still a popular hymn in the Church of Latter-Day Saints. It is obviously patterned after the "Lilly Dale" complex; from the sound of the refrain, however, I feel that Mr. Penrose was paraphrasing the hymn rather than "Lilly Dale" itself, although this is by no means certain.

O, ye mountains high,
Where the clear blue sky
Arches over the vales of the free;
Where the pure breezes blow
And the clear streamlets flow --
How I've longed to your bosom to flee.

CHORUS:
O Zion; Dear Zion;
Land of the free.
Now, my own Mountain Home,
Unto thee have I come;
All my fond hopes are centered in thee.

Here our voices we'll raise
And we'll sing to thy praise,
Sacred home of the Prophets of God;
Thy deliverance is nigh;
Thy oppressors shall die;
And thy land shall be freedom's abode.

CHORUS:
O Zion; Dear Zion;
Land of the free!
In thy temples we'll bend,
And thy rights we'll defend,
And our home shall be ever with thee.

11. Oh, Freedom

This Negro spiritual appeared in print as early as 1899, in Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns*, which Barton had collected some 15 years earlier. The spiritual was listed as an "old song sung by a former slave." Krehbiel first noticed the similarity to the "Lilly Dale" tune, and Jackson discussed it further in his *White and Negro Spirituals* in 1943. The relationship of the songs lies only in the tune, and even there, the similarity is not very close. In any event, "Oh Freedom" is a tremendous artistic improvement over "Lilly Dale" and most of its derivatives. There are many versions; this particular one is from East Texas.

Oh, Freedom! Oh, Freedom!
Oh, it's Freedom, Lord, for me.
And before I'd be a slave
I'd be buried in my grave,
And go home to my Lord and I'd be free.

No more sorrow, no more sorrow,
No more sorrow, Lord, for me.
And before I'd be a slave
I'd be buried in my grave
And go home to my Lord and I'd be free.

Oh, Freedom . . . ETC.

Oh, what preaching. Oh what preaching,
Oh, what preaching over me!
And before I'd be a slave
I'd be buried deep in my grave
And go home to my Lord and I'd be free.

Oh, Freedom . . . ETC.

CONVERGENT EVOLUTION. When two plants or animals quite unrelated to one another find, in the course of their evolution, similar answers to the same problems (such as digging mechanisms of the mole-cricket and the unrelated mammalian moles), biologists speak of "convergence." And I feel that many songs show pretty much the same process. Similarities between two songs may indicate that two peoples in different parts of the world have had similar thought processes, rather than direct cultural contact. This may be the case with the following pair of songs, although I can't rule out the possibility of direct relationship. . . .

12. The Real Old Mountain Dew

(Irish version.) Even without a general law of Prohibition, it has long been illegal in Ireland for a man to make his own whiskey to evade the paying of taxes on it. This song celebrates an illegal still hidden in the Irish hills. Colm O'Locklainn, who first heard it in 1916, writes (in his *Irish Street Songs*) that it may have been written by Phil O'Neill of Kinsale. The word "peelers," by the way, is an opprobrious term for "policemen," and illustrates a point in Ireland's troubled history: When the Englishman Sir Robert Peel set

up a police force in Ireland, he did so mainly as a means of holding down the Roman Catholics, and the force was more of an occupying army than of a peace-preserving constabulary. The term "peelers," referring to Sir Robert's last name, has a sort of contemptuous sound to it. Later on, the same man became a member of the Cabinet under the Duke of Wellington, and in 1828 was chiefly responsible for the Metropolitan Police Act. Back home in England he was more affectionately known as Sir Bobby, and this time his **FIRST** name was used to designate his policemen.

Let waters flow and breezes blow
In a free and easy way;
But give me enough of the real old stuff
That's made near Galway Bay.
And the peelers all, from Donegal,
From Sligo and Leitrim to --
We'll give 'em the slip and take a sip
Of the real old mountain dew.

CHORUS:
Hi, the deedle ee eidle doodle dum, . . . ETC.

Oh, learned men of tongue and pen
Have wrote the praises high
Of the sweet potheen from Ireland green,
Distilled from wheat and rye.
Away with pills! It'll cure all ills
Of the Christian or pagan or Jew;
Just take off your coat and grease your throat
With the real old mountain dew.

CHORUS:

There's a sweet little still at the foot of the hill
Where the smoke curls up to the sky;
By a whiff of the smell you can plainly tell
There's potheen, boys close by.
For it fills the air with a perfume rare,
And betwixt both me and you,
As home we roll we can finish up a bowl
Of the real old mountain dew!

CHORUS:

13. That Good Old Mountain Dew

(American song.) This also celebrates a hidden still in the hills, but this one was in the American southern mountains back in the days of Prohibition. It was composed by Bascom Lamar Lunsford, the pioneer performer-scholar to whom the present popularity of folk music owes so much.

There's an old hollow tree
Down the road here from me,
Where you lay down a dollar or two.
When you go 'round the bend;
Then you come back again,
There's a bucket of that Good Old Mountain Dew!

CHORUS:
They call it that Good Old Mountain Dew,
And them that refuse it are few.
Shut up your mug
And they'll fill up your jug
With that Good Old Mountain Dew!

Now my Brother Bill
Runs a sweet little still,
Where he'll run you a gallon or two,
Where the buzzards in the sky
Get so drunk they can't fly
Just from smelling that Good Old Mountain Dew!

CHORUS:

Now, my Brother Nort,
He's a sawed-off and short,
And he stands about four feet two;
But he thinks he's a gi'nt
If you give him a pint
Of the Good Old Mountain Dew!

CHORUS:

1. The Old Gray Mare

There are probably more people that know one verse of this song than there are that know any other non-patriotic song in America. It's been around quite awhile, and has moved repeatedly back and forth between the popular and the folk traditions. In 1858 J. Warner published a piece called "Down in Alabam," later known as "Down in the Wilderness." In 1915, Frank Panella published it as a fox trot or schottische for orchestra, calling it "The Old Gray Mare." There can be little doubt, however, that the Warner version was based on earlier folk material.

The Old Gray Mare came a-tearin' out the wilderness,
Tearin' out the wilderness,
Tearin' out the wilderness.
The Old Gray Mare came a-tearin' out the wilderness
Many long years ago.

Old Abe Lincoln

This was a campaign song used the first time the Republicans put up a presidential candidate, in 1860. It worked, too!

Old Abe Lincoln came a-tearin' out the wilderness,
Tearin' out the wilderness,
Tearin' out the wilderness.
Old Abe Lincoln came a-tearin' out the wilderness --
Way down in Illinois.

Old Jeff Davis tried to tear down the gover'ment,
Tear down the gover'ment,
Tear down the gover'ment.
Old Jeff Davis tried to tear down the gover'ment,
Many long years ago.

And Old Abe Lincoln had to come build it up again,
Come build it up again,
Come and build it up again.
Old Abe Lincoln had to come build it up again,
Many long years ago.

Swimming the Delaware

This verse is typical of the many floating nonsense stanzas that have attached themselves to the "Old Gray Mare" tune.

The Old Gray Mare went swimming in the Delaware,
In her yellow underwear --
Said she didn't give a care!
The Old Gray Mare went swimming in the Delaware,
Many long years ago.

In the Wilderness

This play-party song was collected in Oklahoma by Ber Botkin.

The first little lady come in the wilderness,
Come in the wilderness,
Come in the wilderness.
The first little lady come in the wilderness --
Down in Galilee.

Hands up! 'Round my lady,
'Round my lady,
'Round my lady.
Hands up! 'Round my lady --
Down in Galilee.

I Wait Upon The Lord

The precursor of J. Warner's "Old Gray Mare" was almost certainly a religious song, although it is not quite certain whether it started as a Negro song or a white one. The version given here is certainly an early one, having first appeared in print in 1867 in Slave Songs of the United States by Allen, Ware, and Garrison; they got it from singers in the Carolina Sea Islands.

CHORUS:

I wait upon the Lord,
I wait upon the Lord;
I wait upon the Lord my God,
Who take away the sins of the world.

If you want to get to Heaven,
Got to go in the wilderness,
Go in the wilderness,
Go in the wilderness.
Mornin', brother, go in the wilderness,
Got to go in the wilderness,
And wait upon the Lord.

If you want to meet Jesus . . . ETC.

CHORUS:

If you want to be a Christian . . . ETC.

Afflicted sister . . . ETC.

CHORUS:

2. I Ain't a-Scared of Your Jail

This is one of the great freedom songs sung in Birmingham, and after that in many other parts of the South. The musical history of the tune, interesting though it is, fades into insignificance when compared to what it means from the standpoint of social history. The song IS history!

I ain't a-scared of your jail because I want my freedom,
I want my freedom,
I want my freedom.
Ain't a-scared of your jail, because I want my freedom --
I want my freedom now!

I ain't a-scared of your dogs . . . ETC.

I ain't a-scared of the Bull . . . ETC.

I ain't afraid of the hose . . . ETC.

I'll walk the picket line . . . ETC.

I ain't a-scared of your jail . . . ETC.

THE COWBOY'S LAMENT. Here is a song that has been the subject of a great deal of study, and you will find a number of articles about it in such scholarly journals as the Journal of American Folklore and Western Folklore. There is also an excellent study in the form of a phonograph record: this is The Unfortunate Rake (FOLKWAYS FS3805) in which 20 interrelated songs are well sung and discussed in well-written notes. Much of the work has dealt primarily with the evolution of the words; the little set of four presented here is aimed mainly at showing some tune relationships.

3. My Jewel, My Joy

One verse of this song, and its beautiful tune, was published by P. W. Joyce in Old Irish Music and Songs in 1909. It had been written down in 1848, from the singing of Mr. W. Aldwell of Cork, who had said that he learned it about 1790. The tune is too good to stop after one time through, and I have shamelessly lengthened it by taking a couple of verses from some other old versions, and adding them on . . . They might even be the sort of verses that really were sung with this tune.

My jewel, my joy, don't trouble me with the drum;
Sound the dead march as my corpse goes along.
Over my body throw handfuls of laurel,
And let them all know that I'm going to my rest.

As I was walking by St. James Hospital,
As I went down by the hospital gate,
I met a young man all wrapped in white linen --
All wrapped in white linen, so cruel was his fate.

"Had she but told me before she disordered me;
Had she but told me about it in time,
I might have got salts and pills of white mercury,
But now I'm a young lad cut down in his prime."

My jewel, my joy, . . . ETC.

4. The Cowboy's Lament (Arkansas)

It's a pity that the tune of "My Jewel, My Joy" has not survived intact in the American tradition, but there are a couple of tunes that are at least similar. One of these is "Iron-head's Version" (of the Cowboy's Lament), collected by John and Alan Lomax in a Texas prison in the early 30's (*Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*; N. Y., Macmillan, 1938; pp. 420-421). Another is the one sung here. It was given me by Mrs. Irva Montijo, a student in one of my University of California Extension courses; Irva got it from her mother, Mrs. Florence Rose, who learned it when she was a girl in Bigflat, Arkansas.

As I went down to the door, the door;
As I went down to the door of my room.
I spied a young cowboy, all dressed in white linen,
All dressed and laid out and ready for the tomb.

CHORUS:
Beat the drum slowly and play the fife lowly;
Play the Dead March as you carry me along.
Take me to the churchyard and lay the sod o'er me,
For I'm a young cowboy and know I've done wrong.

Once in the saddle I used to be happy;
Once in the saddle I'd dash away gay.
First I took to drinking and then to card playing;
Got shot one night, and now I must die.

CHORUS:

5. Lake Chemo

In 1838 Eliza Cook, an English poetess, wrote a sentimental pseudo-Irish poem called "Nora MacShane." The poem was subsequently set to several tunes, including the familiar ones also used for "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms" and "Fair Harvard." Other settings of an unknown nature, were also used, and we find occasional mention of the song that does not specify the tune. Probably there were some new tunes composed for it, and one of these may have been the one used for "Lake Chemo." We know that "Nora MacShane" was sung in the North Woods in the middle of the nineteenth century, and while we don't know for sure what tune it had there, the WORDS to "Lake Chemo" constitute, for the most part, a direct parody of "Nora." And we do know the tune for "Lake Chemo," which has been handed down in the family of Mr. James Wilton Rowe of Great Works, Maine; Mr. Rowe made up the words and sang them to this tune in 1871.

For a full account of the detective work leading to this connection, see "Lake Chemo" in the *Bulletin of the Folk-Song Society of the Northeast*, no. 7, 1934; pp. 14-16. Mr. Rowe's words commemorate a memorable camping trip into the wilds of Maine.

I left old Lake Chemo a long way behind me;
With many a tear back to Old Town I came;
But if I but live 'til one year from this August
I'll pack up my traps for Lake Chemo again.

CHORUS:
There pick'rel are plenty; perch in abundance;
Whiskey and new milk they both flow like rain.
And if I but live 'til one year from this August
I'll pack up my traps for Lake Chemo again.

'Tis pleasant to think of the shed-tent we slept in;
The walls were thin cloth and the roof but a pole.
How familiar the chirp of the birds in the morning,
And the doctor a-digging the beans from the hole.

CHORUS:

I think of fish chowder red-hot from the kettle,
And pork that we frizzled so nice in the fire;
With big roaring Crawford a-raising the devil
'Til three in the morning before he'd retire.

CHORUS:

6. The Cowboy's Lament (Texas)

One of the tunes often used for "The Cowboy's Lament" -- the one that is probably the most popular among today's singers of folk songs -- is a reworking of an Irish song, "The Bard of Armagh." The one I was raised with in Texas, however, was based on the "Lake Chemo - Nora MacShane" melody, and has always been my favorite. Here it is . . .

As I walked out in the streets of Laredo,
As I walked out in Laredo one day,
I spied a cowpuncher all wrapped in white linen --
All wrapped in white linen, as cold as the clay.

"I see by your outfit that you are a cowboy";
These words he did say as I boldly drew nigh.
"Come sit down beside me and hear my sad story --
I was shot in the breast, and I know I must die.

"Get sixteen gamblers to handle my coffin;
Get six pretty maidens to bear up my pall.
Put bunches of roses all over the coffin --
Put roses to deaden the clods as they fall.

"Oh, beat the drum slowly, and play the fife lowly,
And play the Dead March as you carry me on;
Take me to the green valley, there lay the sod o'er me --
For I'm a young cowboy, and I know I've done wrong.

"Twas once in the saddle I used to go dashing,
'Twas once in the saddle I used to be gay.
Go first to the dram-house and then to the card house --
Got shot in the breast and I'm dying today.

"Go fetch me a cup, a cup of cold water
To cool my parched lips . . ." the poor cowboy said;
But ere I returned, the spirit had left him
And gone to its Maker: the cowboy was dead.

We beat the drum slowly, and played the fife lowly,
And bitterly wept as we bore him along.
For we all loved our comrade, so brave, young and
handsome,
We all loved our comrade although he'd done wrong.

7. Springfield Mountain I

Often cited as perhaps the first English-language ballad to have originated in North America, "Springfield Mountain" is based on actual incident. On an August afternoon in 1761, 22-year-old Timothy Myrick died as the result of a bite by a rattlesnake (doubtless the timber rattlesnake, *Crotalus horridus horridus*), inflicted while Timothy was mowing in a hayfield near Farmington, Connecticut. He was buried near his father's home in Springfield Mountain (now Wilbraham), Massachusetts, which was given as the site of the tragedy in the first known versification of the incident; this was in Joseph Fiske's *Rhymed Almanac* for 1765.

It is not certain whether people put a tune to the Fiske verses or whether the song was not sung until quite a bit later. There is reason to believe that the song itself did not start until 1832, when it may have been composed and sung as part of a pageant commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the founding of Springfield Mountain. It is also possible that this version was written -- or at least approved by -- Mrs. Sarah Dwight who had, as Miss Sarah Lamb, been engaged to the unfortunate Timothy some 70 years earlier. However it started, it got to be a pretty popular song in the early and middle 1800's. The words I sing here are from a diary written in 1849 by a resident of Springfield Mountain, and later published in the *Bulletin of the Folk-Song Society of the Northeast*. The tune I learned from a sailor in the San Diego Naval Hospital in 1944; he sang it with some of the later comic words, but I have always felt that the old tragic words were best suited to it.

In Springfield Mountain there did dwell
A likely lad, I knew full well.
Leftenant Myrick's only son,
A likely lad of twenty-one.

One early morning this lad did go
Down in the meadow the hay to mow;
He scarce had mowed twice round the field
When a pizen sarpint bit his heel.

Soon as he felt that deadly wound
He threw his scythe down on the ground.
Straightway for home was his intent,
Crying aloud still as he went.

The neighbors round, his voice did hear,
But none to him did thus appear,
Thinking for workmen he did call,
And so alone this lad did fall.

His careful father as he went,
Seeking his son was his intent.
And soon his only son he found,
Cold as a stone upon the ground.

In seventeen hundred and sixty-one
'Twas this sad accident was done;
Let it be warning unto all
To be prepared when God doth call.

8. Springfield Mountain II

Parody is one of the most important forces in the shaping of American folksong. "Springfield Mountain" was subjected to the indignities of parody around 1840; Joseph Spear, a vaudeville performer, used to pretend to be a New England country bumpkin, and burlesqued the songs that were taken seriously by the country people. (Sort of an early-day Smothers Brothers, he was.) In a way, he was ridiculing the people, and, in a way, the joke was on him -- for the people took the song back into their oral tradition, and it entered a new and more vigorous life as a comic number. Here is what Joseph Spear did to it, using for a tune a slowed-down version of the English fiddle tune, "Merrily Danced the Quaker's Wife."

In Springfield Mountain, there did dwell
A likely lad, I knowed him well.
Leftenant Myrick's only son,
A likely lad of twenty-one.

CHORUS: Ri too dee noo, ri too dee nay,
Ri too dee noo, ri toodle de day.

Now one fine day this lad did go
Down in the meadow, the hay to mow.
He scarce had mowed twice round the field
When a pesky sarpint bit his heel.

CHORUS:

"Oh, Johnny dear, why did you go
Down in the meadow the hay to mow?"
"Oh, Molly dear, I thought you knowed --
When the hay gets ripe, it must be mowed!"

CHORUS:

Now Molly had two ruby lips
With which the pizen she did sip.
But Molly had a rotten tooth --
And so the pizen killed them both.

CHORUS:

And so they died, guv up the ghost,
And off to Heaven they did post
A-crying loud still as they went --
"Oh, cruel, cruel, ser-pi-ent!"

CHORUS:

Now all young men this warning take,
And don't get bit by no rattlesnake;
And mind, when you're in love, don't pass
Too near to patches of tall grass.

CHORUS:

(NOTE: Milton Lev of the Sacramento Folksong Society didn't think it fair that there should be no warning for the ladies as well as for the young men, so he made up another stanza which fits beautifully:

For all young ladies, the warning's clear --
Oh, see your dentist twice a year!

CHORUS:

I sang that once at Sonoma State College, and a student came up afterward, having dashed off still another warning couplet -- this time aimed at the unfortunate rattlesnakes!

9. Rattlesnake Mountain

This great Arkansas version I got from Jimmie Driftwood, who likes to point out that the labial suction applied by the heroine was, in this case, successful, and the patient survived. But then he had to marry the girl, and it seems sort of an open question as to which fate was the worse. . . . Jimmie is not sure about it, but thinks he may have made up one or two of these verses himself.

Oh Rattlesnake Mee-wi-mountain I did dwee-wi-dwell;
I heard a stee-wi-story I'm gonna tee-wi-tell,
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.

A nice young mee-wi-man in the month of Mee-Mi-May
Went down to the fee-wi-field for to mow his hee-wi-hay.
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.

He had not mee-mi-mowed around the fee-wi-field --
Come rattle, come snee-wi-snake, and it bit him on
the hee-wi-heel.

Come a roo di, roo di, roo.
He jumped up hee-wi-high and looked all a ree-ri-round,
Then he closed his ee-wi-eyes and he fell to the gee-
wi-ground,
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.

He cried "Little bee-wi-bird, go tell my gee-wi-gal
I'm a-rattlesnake bee-wi-bit, and I need my See-Wi-Sal!"
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.
So the little bird flee-wi-flew and spread the nee-wi-news;
And here come See-Wi-Sally without any shee-wi-shoes.
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.

"Oh, Johnny dee-wi-dear, why did you gee-wi-go
Down in the fee-wi-field, the hay for to mee-mi-mow?"
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.
"Oh, Sally dee-wi-dear, I thought you knee-wi-knowed,
When the hay gets ree-ri-ripe, it's got to be mee-wi-mowed."
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.

"Oh Johnny dee-wi-dear, I'll save your lee-wi-life,
If I may bee-wi-be your sweet little wee-wi-wife."
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.
She grabbed his lee-wi-leg, which made him squee-wi-
squeal,
And sucked the poison blood all out of his hee-wi-heel.
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.

So all young mee-wi-men, this warning tee-wi-take;
Don't never get bee-wi-bit by a rattle-copper-snee-wi-
snake.

Come a roo di, roo di, roo.
When a rattlesnake bee-wi-bites -- you're bit for the
rest of your life!
Come a roo di, roo di, roo.

There are scores of versions of this song in which syllables are twisted and repeated in a sort of pig-latin. Note the pervasive effects of personal familiarity with the symbolism of the folk tradition; even in the midst of all this nonsense, a bird is pulled into the story in its usually serious role of watcher and disseminator of the news.

10. Springfield County

Many people, hearing or reading the old Spear version of "Springfield Mountain" have wrongly thought it to be a song that the old folks had naively taken seriously, and have felt called upon to ridicule it. Thus, some of the later songs

appear to be parodies upon a song not recognized by the parodists as being already parody! I think something like that prompted this one, which was printed by the late Prof. Harold W. Thompson in his great collection of folklore from New York State, *Body, Boots, and Britches*. His informant had learned it at Albany Normal College in 1883.

In Springfield County, there did dwell
A likely lad, I knowed him well.
And Obed Squashbine was his name,
And Dolly Smythe his charming flame.

Now Obed he, as you must know,
Did earn a heap a-shovelling snow.
And when the weather it was good,
He earned some more a sawring wood.

One early morning, before 'twas light,
He was sawring wood with all his might.
He hadn't sawred more'n half a cord
When his three fingers off he sawred!

No Obed, when he saw the blood,
Just like an aspen leaf he stood.
Then up he picked his fingers quick,
And run to Dolly, lickety-split.

He run till he came to Dolly's door,
And fell "kerplop!" upon the floor.
"Oh Dolly, Dolly -- come here quick;
I've sawred my fingers for a stick!"

So Dolly forthwith she did run,
To get a doctor to sew them on.
But Dolly, being out of breath,
Straightway fell down and froze to death.

So all the neighbors to him did run,
And said to Obed, "Come, oh come!"
And Obed, when he Dolly saw,
He up and died of the lockjaw.

They buried them down in the sand,
Obed a-holding Dolly's hand.
Their weeping friends, they stood around,
And with their tears they soaked the ground.

ABOUT SAM HINTON

Would you believe that a biologist could be a prominent folksinger? Folkways recording artist, Sam Hinton, just may be one of the country's only folksinging biologists.

Sam Hinton has given concerts and lectures on folklore and folk music all over the United States, and has appeared in most of the major folk music festivals. He has been emcee and discussion leader in every one of the annual Berkeley (California) Folk Festivals, which began in 1957. He has also appeared at the Pacific National Festival in Honolulu, the Jackson Hole (Wyoming) Festival, the annual University of California at Los Angeles Festival, and the famous Newport Folk Festival (Rhode Island).

Mr. Hinton began his study of folk music at an early age. He grew up in East Texas, in the swamp country--an area providing ample material for the development of his two major interests, folk music and biology. Upon entering Texas A & M College to major in zoology, he discovered in the college library that folklore also had an honored place in the eyes and ears of scholars. Since that time, he has become a scholar of the subject himself.

After two years of college, he went on the road with a Major Bowes troupe as a folk singer. He sang his Texas songs in forty-six states over the next two years. He then entered U. C. L. A. and was graduated with a degree in zoology. At U. C. L. A. he met Leslie Forster, whom he later married. They met while both were members of the college a capella choir. A trained singer, violinist, and violist (as well as an artist), Leslie Hinton has taught her husband most of what he knows of the formal aspects of music.

Today, the Hintons live in La Jolla, California, in a modern home they built themselves. Mr. Hinton's home office is now on the new campus of the University of Cali-

11. Old Jabo

Words and music by Sonny Terry. "Springfield County" gave rise to a lot of floating stanzas, and you'll find a whole raft of songs which have somebody running across a field, getting bitten by a snake, and falling to the ground. When Sonny Terry wanted to make up a song in honor of his brother, whose nickname is Old Jabo, he had recourse to these -- and other -- floating stanzas, and incorporated a song of genuine originality. In this song, by the way -- as in all the songs on this record -- I am more concerned with reproducing the content than the form, or style, and my harmonica produced only the feeblest ghost of Sonny's magnificent sound.

Now, Old Jabo run across that field,
And a big black snake bit him on the heel.

Old Jabo tried his best --
Fell right back in a hornet's nest.

Up he jumped and away he ran --
And you couldn't catch the fool in an aeroplane.

Old Jabo don't have no shoes;
That's why he's got them running blues.

Now Old Jabo promised me
Before he died he'd make a will for me.

But he lived so long till his head got bald,
And got out of the notion of dying at all.

Old Jabo, fare you well;
I know something I ain't gone tell.

These songs were recorded by John Mullen in the studios of Audio Recorders, San Diego, California.

fornia, in San Diego. The Hinton's two children are both college students. Matt is studying biology, and Leanne is a graduate in ethnomusicology.

For almost twenty years, Sam Hinton was the Curator of the Aquarium-Museum at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. He continued to sing and to lecture on folklore as a side interest. In 1965, he became Assistant Director in the Office of Relations with Schools, an office of the University of California which represents the University in contacts with high schools, junior colleges, and other institutes of higher learning.

In 1960, he gave programs for the children of American servicemen in 32 schools in Germany and France. He regularly teaches folklore and biology for the University of California Extension. He also spent parts of many summers teaching in the folk music workshops at the Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts, a mountain branch of the University of Southern California.

In 1958, Sam Hinton began writing and illustrating the weekly newspaper feature, *THE OCEAN WORLD*. He is the author of *EXPLORING UNDER THE SEA-SHORE LIFE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA* (Naturegraph, 1960).

Mr. Hinton has recorded 64 songs for the Library of Congress, and about 100 songs for various commercial labels. *THE WANDERING FOLKSONG* is Sam Hinton's third record for Folkways.

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