

Foc'sle Songs and Shanties

Folkways Records FA 2429

Sung by Paul Clayton and the Foc'sle Singers

Recorded and with Notes by Kenneth S. Goldstein



Folk's Songs and Shanties

RATCLIFFE HIGHWAY
RIO GRANDE
HAUL ON THE BOWLINE
MAGGIE MAY
HAUL AWAY JOE
DO MY JOHNNY BOOKER
ROLL THE COTTON DOWN
HAUL BOYS HAUL
LEAVE HER JOHNNY
PADDY LAY BACK
FIRE DOWN BELOW
A HUNDRED YEARS AGO
SANTY ANNO
CAPTAIN NIPPER
HANGIN' JOHNNY
BANKS OF THE SACRAMENTO
WON'T YOU GO MY WAY
GOODBYE FARE THEE WELL
ALL BOUND TO GO
THE BLACK BALL LINE

Descriptive Notes are inside pocket

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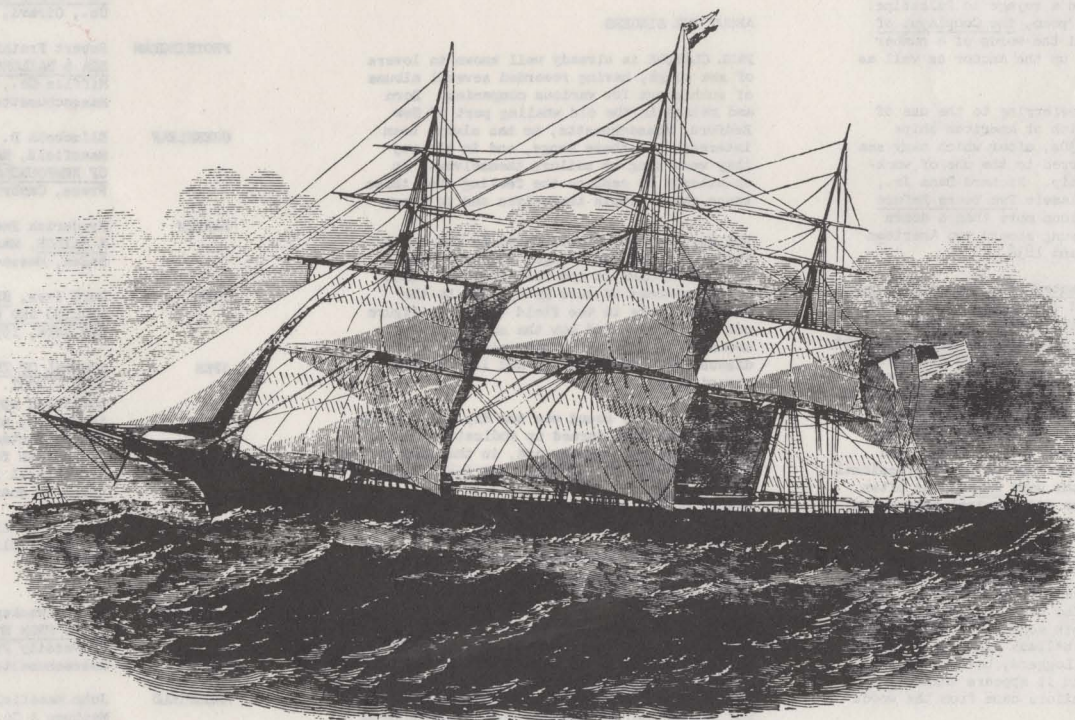
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"The Sovereign of the Seas" American Clipper Cover design by Ronald Clyne

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AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In the days of the square-riggers, when the sailing ability of a ship depended upon canvas and wind, as well as the skill and strength of a ship's crew, sailors made their work load lighter and their leisure time more pleasurable by singing. Students of sea lore are unanimous in their opinion that work songs have been sung aboard ship from the earliest inception of man's adventurous voyages over great bodies of water.

The singing of these work songs, or shanties, reached its heyday during the period between the War of 1812 and the Civil War, when American sailing craft roamed the world, dominating all trade lanes and reaching a peak of efficiency of operation unrivalled during the many centuries of Britain's mastery of the sea. While this period was most prolific in the creation and singing of these songs, the custom has been conclusively traced back to sailing vessels many centuries earlier. And, to be sure, these shanties were not the property only of the English-speaking world, but were sung in many tongues aboard the sailing craft of other nations as well.

The earliest written passages concerning such songs have been found in the autobiographical writings of a 15th century Dominican friar, who described the singing of Venetian sailors with whom he sailed on a voyage to Palestine. And in a 16th century poem, *The Complaynt of Scotland*, are found the words of a number of songs used to haul up the anchor as well as hoisting sail.

No definite passages referring to the use of shantying aboard British or American ships appeared until the 1830s, after which many sea writers suddenly referred to the use of work-song singing aboard ship. Richard Dana Jr., for example, in his classic *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840), mentions more than a dozen shanties having been sung aboard two American vessels between 1834 and 1836.

The word *shanty* or *chantey*, the source of a great deal of theorizing and discussion by students of this material, first appeared in Charles Nordhoff's *Nine Years A Sailor*, published in 1856, but referring to the 1840s. A much belabored theory is that the word derives from the French imperative *Chantez!* -- Sing! Another theory is that the term is simply derived from the word *chant*. This word had a much broader meaning before the Civil War than it does today, and often was applied to any type of non-professional singing. Then, too, the word *chant* was often used to designate Negro and minstrel songs; its usage aboard ship would hardly be strange, therefore, since many seamen on both American and British ships were Negro and often were leading shantymen, evidence of which comes up in the great number of shanties of definite Negro origin. The possibility has also been suggested that the sailor's term for a work song was derived from 'shanty-song', as the ballads and songs of the lumbermen are known. Loggers, however, sang no work songs as such, and it appears unlikely that the term as used by sailors came from the woods country.

The spelling of the word has been left to the mercy of various compilers of these songs, with the most frequent spelling in recent collections tending to standardize the spelling at *shanty*.

There are three main types of shanties, without which none of the sailing vessels from the days of 'iron men and wooden ships' would have made much time over the wide expanses of ocean which they crossed.

1. **Short-haul or short-drag shanties:** These were used only when a few short, lusty pulls were required as in 'sweating up' or removing the slack from the halyards (stout ropes used to hoist sail). They were also used in hauling on sheets, tacks and braces (various ropes used for one operation or another in setting or taking in sail.)

2. **Halyard shanties:** These were pulling jobs too heavy and prolonged for a short haul shanty, as in hoisting the main sails, catting the anchor, and occasionally for pumping.
3. **Windlass or Capstan shanties:** These were rolling songs suited to continuous pushing, as in tramping around the capstan when hoisting anchor or moving the ship against the dock, and also in the back-breaking work of manning the pumps.

When off duty, the sailor sang non-work songs to pass the time. Such songs were known variously as forecassle (or foc'sle) songs, or, on British ships as forebitters, taking their name from the places on board ship where they were most frequently sung. These songs might be about any subject; they sang of love, home, brave deeds, and historical events and figures, but the favorite songs were those with their settings at sea. Ribald songs (and bawdy shanties as well) were common, though few of these have been reported in print in this century of the censor.

But whatever kind of song the sailor sang, the important thing was not so much the song as the fact that he was singing. Herman Melville in one of his famous sea novels writes: "It is a great thing in a sailor to know how to sing well, for he gets a great name by it from the officers, and a good deal of popularity among his shipmates." What more could a man ask for!

The sampling of shanties and foc'sle songs and shanties heard on this recording were mostly learned from BBC field recordings of British shantymen. Five of these numbers, however, were learned from standard collections of sailors' songs; they include Haul Away Joe; Do My Johnny Booker; Roll the Cotton Down; Santy Anno; and The Black Ball Line.

Kenneth S. Goldstein

ABOUT THE SINGERS

PAUL CLAYTON is already well known to lovers of sea songs, having recorded several albums of such songs for various companies. Born and raised in the old whaling port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, he has always been interested in these songs, and in the way they were sung by sailors themselves. In an attempt to capture the feeling that these songs carry within themselves and to grasp

the way they may have sounded in the day of full sail, Clayton brought together THE FOC'SLE SINGERS in the fall of 1958. Each of the members of this group went to the standard books in the field trying to figure out in his own mind how the songs actually sounded. During their meetings they would discuss each of the songs and its function aboard ship.

At first, their sound was too dry and brittle. Further research turned up indications that sailors did use harmony and, in the case of the foc'sle songs, occasionally had instrumental accompaniments. This resulted in their decision to use spare harmonies and an occasional instrumental break. At all times they have tried to keep away from the overly rich, commercial, choral harmonies that have marred so much of the sea material currently being presented to the public.

The young men who comprise THE FOC'SLE SINGERS vary greatly in their backgrounds and interests. DAVE VAN RONK grew up in the jazz tradition and his contact with folkmusic has been in the field of the Negro jazz and street singing traditions. The lessons he has learned from conscientious listening to these traditions has shown itself in the great talents he displays in his FOLKWAYS RECORDS album FS 3818, DAVE VAN RONK SINGS BALLADS, BLUES AND A SPIRITUAL.

BOB BRILL, too, came to folkmusic through a love of jazz. He plays a fine trumpet and kazoo as well as guitar, and likes to sing the blues of Bessie Smith and other classic blues singers. As with all of the other members of the group, he is interested in finding the authentic sound in music, whether it be blues, jazz, or, in this case, sea songs.

ROGER ABRAHAMS is a talented folksinger who came to folkmusic through a love of old ballads and lyrics. He is presently working hard at becoming a sometime scholar, pursuing his PhD. in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania, where he also teaches in the English Department.

BOB YELLIN supplies the banjo accompaniments for this album, and is mainly interested in 'Bluegrass' music. He is presently a member of the 'Greenbrier Boys', and plays a whole lot of banjo for them.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REFERENCE WORKS CONTAINING SHANTIES AND FOC'SLE SONGS

In the headnotes to the foc'sle songs and shanties included in this album will be found selected references to other texts and data which are given in various standard collections of sea songs, or in other more general collections.

In the left hand column, the reader will find the short reference designation for each of the books in this bibliography, which are described in detail in the right hand column.

BECKETT	Mrs. Clifford Beckett, <i>SHANTIES AND FOREBITTERS</i> , J. Curwen & Sons Ltd., London, 1914.
BONE	David W. Bone, <i>CAPSTAN BARS</i> , The Porpoise Press, Edinburgh, 1931.
BULLEN	F.T. Bullen & W.F. Arnold, <i>SONGS OF SEA LABOUR</i> , Orpheus Music Publishing Co., London, 1914.
COLCORD	Joanna G. Colcord, <i>SONGS OF AMERICAN SAILORMEN</i> , W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1938.
DAVIS	Frederick J. Davis & Ferris Tozer, <i>SAILOR SONGS OR 'CHANTIES'</i> , Boosey & Co. Ltd., London, n.d.
DOERFLINGER	William M. Doerflinger, <i>SHANTYMEN AND SHANTYBOYS</i> , The Macmillan Co., New York, 1951.
FINGER	Charles J. Finger, <i>SAILOR CHANTIES AND COWBOY SONGS</i> , Haldeman-Julius Co., Girard, Kansas, 1923.
FROTHINGHAM	Robert Frothingham, <i>SONGS OF THE SEA & SAILORS' CHANTIES</i> , Houghton Mifflin Co., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1924.
GREENLEAF	Elisabeth B. Greenleaf & Grace Y. Mansfield, <i>BALLADS AND SEA SONGS OF NEWFOUNDLAND</i> , Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1933.
HARLOW	Frederick Pease Harlow, <i>THE MAKING OF A SAILOR</i> , Marine Research Society, Salem, Massachusetts, 1928.
IVES	Burl Ives, <i>SEA SONGS OF SAILING, WHALING AND FISHING</i> , Ballantine Books, New York, 1956.
JPSS	<i>JOURNAL OF THE FOLK SONG SOCIETY</i> , 1899 - 1931. (This journal was published approximately once yearly in London, and contains articles and collectanea by the leading figures in English folk song study. Included are several fine articles and collections of shanties and sea songs.)
KING	Stanton H. King, <i>KING'S BOOK OF CHANTIES</i> , Oliver Ditson Co., Boston, 1918.
MACKENZIE	W. Roy Mackenzie, <i>BALLADS AND SEA SONGS FROM NOVA SCOTIA</i> , Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1928.
MASEFIELD	John Masefield, <i>A SAILOR'S GARLAND</i> , Methuen & Co., London, 1906.
SHARP	Cecil J. Sharp, <i>ENGLISH FOLK CHANTEYS</i> , Simpkin Marshall, Ltd., London, 1914.
SHAY	Frank Shay, <i>AMERICAN SEA SONGS AND CHANTEYS</i> , W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1948.
C.F. SMITH	C. Fox Smith, <i>A BOOK OF SHANTIES</i> , Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1927.
L.A. SMITH	Laura Alexander Smith, <i>THE MUSIC OF THE WATERS</i> , Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., London, 1888.
TERRY	Richard Runciman Terry, <i>THE SHANTY BOOK</i> , Part I and Part II (2 volumes), J. Curwen & Sons Ltd., London, 1921 & 1926.

WHALL W.B. Whall, SEA SONGS AND SHANTIES,
6th edition (enlarged), Brown, Son
& Ferguson, Ltd., Glasgow, 1948.

Notes by KENNETH S. GOLDSTEIN

SIDE I, Band 1: RATCLIFFE HIGHWAY
(Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

This delightful foc'sle song describes in fascinating nautical euphemisms a typical encounter between Jack Tar and a young lady (if, indeed, she could be called that). The Ratcliffe Highway referred to is located near Limehouse Reach in London, and (according to Doerflinger) is lined with "plenty of sailors' taverns, tailor shops, and dance halls." These shops and taverns were much frequented by temporarily idle seamen on a layover between trips to India and China on the cargo ships of the nearby East India Company. A variant text was usually sung in the halliard shanty, 'Blow the Man Down'.

The earliest known reference to this song appears in George Edward Clark's "Seven Years of a Sailor's Life" (Boston, 1867), in which the author writes that this was a favorite song on a British vessel on which he shipped in 1860.

For additional texts and information, see Doerflinger, p. 114 ff., and JFSS #8, 1906, p. 172.

RATCLIFFE HIGHWAY

As I was a-walking down Ratcliffe Highway,
A flash looking packet I chanced for to see,
Of the port that she came from I cannot say much,
But by her appearance I took her for Dutch.

CHORUS:
Singin' toorali laddie i-toorali laddie,
I-toorali laddie, i-toorali-i-ay.

Her flag was three colors and her masthead was low,
She was round at the counter and bluff at the bow,
From larboard to starboard and so sailed we,
She was sailing along with the wind blowing free.

She was bowling along with the wind blowing free,
She clewed off her topsails and waited for me,
I fired my bow chaser, the signal she knew,
She backed her main topsails and for me hove to.

I hailed her in English, she answered me clear,
"I'm bound for the Black Arrow, bound to the
Shakespeare,
So I warshipped and weather-warped and what do you
know,
She passed me her hawser and I took her in tow.

I tipped her me flipper and I took her in tow,
And yardarm to yardarm away we did go,
She then took me up to her own private room
And there all the evening we drank and we spooned.

SIDE I, Band 2: RIO GRANDE
(Sung by Roger Abrahams and Chorus)

This favorite capstan shanty, used mainly in raising the anchor on outward bound trips, does not refer to the Rio Grande River on the Mexican border, but to the Brazilian port of the same name. Whether bound for that port or not, a shantymen would invariably strike up this rollicking song on leaving port, as much to entertain the girls and men on the crowded docks as to facilitate heaving up the anchor.

For additional texts and information, see Doerflinger, p. 64; Beckett, p. 2; Bone, p. 114; Bullen, p. 13; Colcord, p. 86; Davis, p. 6; Finger, p. 12; Frothingham, p. 262; Harlow, p. 321; Ives, p. 86; JFSS #20, 1916, p. 306; King, p. 17; Mackenzie, p. 286; Masefield, p. 320; Sharp, p. 24; Shay, p. 21; C.F. Smith, p. 18; L.A. Smith, p. 10; Terry I, p. 4; Whall, p. 51.

RIO GRANDE

Oh, say were you ever in Rio Grande,
Oh you Rio,
It's there that the river runs down golden sand,
And we're bound for the Rio Grande.

CHORUS:
So away love away,
Oh you Rio,
Sing fare you well, my pretty young girl,
And we're bound for the Rio Grande.

Now New York town is no place for me,
Oh you Rio,
I'll pack up my trunk and I'll go off to sea,
And we're bound etc.

Now all you beachcombers we'll have you to know,
Oh you Rio,
We're bound for the Southard and glad for to go,
And we're bound etc.

So it's put down your bag and get it unpacked,
Oh you Rio,
The sooner we leave, the quicker we're back,
And we're bound etc.

The anchor is weighed and the gear all made fast,
Oh you Rio,
And the boys give a cheer when the harbor is passed,
And we're bound etc.

SIDE I, Band 3: HAUL ON THE BOWLINE
(Sung by Dave Van Ronk and Chorus)

The British poet-laureate, and one-time sailor, John Masefield, referred to this short haul shanty as being "certainly in use in the reign of Henry VII." Whether this shanty dates back that far is a moot point, but its unusual antiquity may be inferred from the fact that the bowline ceased to be an important functioning rope (worth singing about) in the early 17th century. In modern sailing vessels the bowline could be set taut by one or two hands, but in early vessels the bowline (according to Doerflinger) was the equivalent of the modern fore sheet.

For additional texts and information, see Doerflinger, p. 9; Bone, p. 38; Bullen, p. 30; Colcord, p. 42; Davis, p. 35; Finger, p. 14; Greenleaf, p. 338; Ives, p. 71; JFSS #20, 1916, p. 314; King, p. 12; Masefield, p. 325; Shay, p. 27; L.A. Smith, p. 13-14; Terry I, p. 58.

HAUL ON THE BOWLINE

Haul on the Bowline,
Homeward we are going -

CHORUS:
Haul on the Bowline
The Bowline haul.

Haul on the Bowline,
Before she starts a-rolling -

Haul on the Bowline, Haul on the Bowline,
The skipper is a-growing - Kitty is my darling -

Haul on the Bowline, Haul on the Bowline,
So early in the morning - Kitty comes from Liverpool -

Haul on the Bowline, Haul on the Bowline,
To Bristol we are going - It's a far cry to pay day -

SIDE I, Band 4: MAGGIE MAY
(Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

The noted English folklorist A.L. Lloyd refers to this song as one that "found its way into every ship but none of the songbooks." This sums-up the situation pretty well, for it has appeared in print only twice, in both cases in rather esoteric publications. Dr. Cecil English reports that an early version under the title 'Charming Nellie Ray' appeared in the nautical journal, *The Blue Peter* (1930), quoting from a private journal of a sailor on the convict ship 'Kains' and written down in 1830. Accidents of an oral tradition have since changed this to the present title.

Listeners will recognize the tune as that to which the 19th century tear-jerker 'Darling Nellie Gray' was set. It now appears that this maulin piece was simply Henry Clay Work's parody of the older British foc'sle song.

In recent years, the song has been collected rather frequently from traditional singers in both England and Australia.

For additional texts and information, see the Australian folksong publication, *SINGABOUT*, Volume 2, No. 2, September, 1957, pp. 10-12.

MAGGIE MAY

Oh, come all you sailors bold and when my tale is told
Oh, I know that you all will pity me
For I was a bloomin' fool in the port of Liverpool
On a time when I was first paid off from sea.

CHORUS:
Oh, it's Maggie, Maggie May, they have taken you away,
To toll upon Van Dieman's cruel shore,
'Cause you robbed many a whaler and many a drunken
sailor,
Now you'll never cruise 'round Liverpool any more.

I was paid off at the home from a voyage to Seyleone,
(Sierra Leone)

And two pound ten a month had been my pay,
As I jingled in my tin, I was sadly taken in
By a lady by the name of Maggie May.

Oh, when I steered into her well I hadn't got a care,
I was cruising up and down old Cannon Place,
She was dressed in a gown so fine like a frigate
of the line,
And I being a sailor I give chase.

So she gave me a saucy nod and I like a farmer's clod,
Why I let her take my line abreast in tow,
And under all plain sail we rode before the gale
And it's to the Crow's nest tavern we did go.

So next morning I awoke and I found that I was broke,
And she got every penny that was mine,
So I had to pop me suit, my John L's and my boots
Way down in far claim pawn shop number nine.

SIDE I, Band 5: HAUL AWAY JOE
(Sung by Bob Brill and Chorus)

One of the best known of all short-haul shanties, 'Haul Away Joe' was used mainly to help in sheeting home the foresail. Frederick Pease Harlow gives a fascinating description of its use at sea in his excellent autobiographical commentary on sea-life, 'THE MAKING OF A SAILOR'.

"With the gale blowing strong from the south'ard, we set the reefed foresail and reefed mainsail. While sheeting home the foresail the second mate led the pull when chanting: 'He seemed to have the strength of three men and the watch doubled their efforts to keep up with him...'

"The men were strung out along the deck, knee-deep in water, where they held the sheet of the sail, and the second mate took his position close up to the sheave and standing on top of the spare spar, one hand free and swinging in the breeze he sang at the top of his voice so as to be heard above the gale by us all..."

"Few people can understand what it means to sing in such weather. It was absolutely necessary to stretch the foot of the sail, all it would stand, and bring the clew as far down as possible.... The second mate, singing at the top of his voice as he neared the end, suddenly turned, grasping the sheet with both hands, while he crouched with bended knees, and on the word 'Joe!' straightened out with one mighty pull, with the help of the others, that brought the rope whizzing through the sheave..."

For additional texts and information, see Bullen, p. 31; Colcord, p. 41; Davis, p. 60; Doerflinger, p. 4; Finger, p. 15; Frothingham, p. 257; Harlow, p. 272; Ives, p. 50; JFSS #18, 1914, pp. 31-32; JFSS #20, 1916, p. 312; King, p. 12; L.A. Smith, p. 50; Masefield, p. 324; Shay, p. 30; Sharp, p. 32; Terry I, p. 56; Terry II, p. 68; Whall, p. 57.

HAUL AWAY JOE

Oh when I was a little boy my mother often told me
Way, haul away,
We'll Haul Away Joe,
That if I did not kiss the girls my lips would all
grow mouldy,
Way, haul away,
We'll haul away Joe.

St. Patrick was a gentleman, he come of decent people,
Way, haul etc.
He built a church in Dublin town and on it put a
steeple,
Way, haul etc.

Oh, Louis was the King of France before the revolution,
Way haul etc.
But then he got his head cut off, which spoiled his
constitution,
Way, haul etc.

Way, haul away, we'll heave and haul together,
Way, haul etc.
Way, haul away, we'll haul for better weather,
Way, haul etc.

SIDE I, Band 6: DO MY JOHNNY BOOKER
(Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

According to authorities, this favorite short haul shanty was used mainly at tacks and sheets by American sailing vessels, and under the British flag was sometimes used also for furling sail.

Doerflinger cites 'Johnny Booker' as "one of many characters shanghaied into shanty lore from the

songs of the blackface minstrels, or possibly from Negro folksong.... And, indeed, the antics of the hero of this song are prominently displayed in songs appearing in various mid-nineteenth century minstrel songsters, as well as in orally circulated songs collected in this century mainly from Negro traditional singers.

For additional texts and information, see: Bullen, p. 30; Colcord, p. 44; Davis, p. 64; Doerflinger, p. 9; Frothingham, p. 298; Greenleaf, p. 339; Ives, p. 73; JFSS #20, 1916, p. 313; King, p. 13; Sharp, p. 45; Shay, p. 28; Terry I, p. 55; Whall, p. 146.

DO MY JOHNNY BOOKER

Oh, do my Johnny Booker, come rock and roll me over,
O, do my Johnny Booker, do.
Oh, do my Johnny Booker, and I always was a rover,
O, do my Johnny Booker, do.

Oh, do my Johnny Booker, come rock and roll me over,
O, do my etc.
Oh, do my Johnny Booker, the mate he's never sober,
O, do my etc.

Oh, do my Johnny Booker, come roll me in the clover,
O, do my etc.
Oh, do my Johnny Booker, and I'll never tell my mother,
O, do my etc.
So, do my Johnny Booker, come rock and roll me over,
O, do my etc.
Oh, do my Johnny Booker, you're not too long at Dover,
O, do my etc.

SIDE I, Band 7: ROLL THE COTTON DOWN (Sung by Roger Abrahams and Chorus)

This topgallant halyard shanty probably originated with Negro longshoremen from one of the southern cotton ports. The song may have originally been used by stevedores stowing a cargo of cotton in a ships hold. David Bone suggests two possible ways in which it may have found its way into use aboard ship: "Whether the song sung by the stevedores... was heard by visiting seamen and adopted as a chanty for topsail halyards, or was brought to sea by the stevedores themselves, is hard to say. Many of them shipped as seamen when the cotton season was over and there was dearth of employment in the ports." In any case, it should be noted that, as sung at sea, 'Roll the Cotton Down' was not an exclusively Negro shanty, for in its variant texts it reflected much of the life and mores of white sailors, who between ocean trips migrated each winter to southern ports in search of work as stevedores, where, as often as not, they were paid better, and had better living conditions, than at sea.

For additional texts and information, see Beckett, p. 4; Bone, p. 83; Bullen, p. 24; Colcord, p. 62; Davis, p. 74; Doerflinger, p. 33; Frothingham, p. 254; King, p. 9; Masefield, p. 311; C.F. Smith, p. 54; Terry II, p. 40.

ROLL THE COTTON DOWN

Away down south where I was born,
And roll the cotton down,
I used to work from night till morn,
And roll the cotton down.

I thought I'd go and climb the lines,
And roll etc.
And for the sailors sun shall shine,
And roll etc.

A dime a day is the black man's pay,
And roll etc.
A while man's pay is a dollar a day,
And roll etc.

I served my time in the Black Ball line,
And roll etc.

It was there I wasted all my prime,
And roll etc.

On the Black Ball line is for me the line,
And roll etc.
That's when you'll fly the number nine,
And roll etc.

And to Henry Clay I went one day,
And roll etc.
And for Liverpool town we sailed away,
And roll etc.

SIDE I, Band 8: HAUL BOYS HAUL (Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

This British foc'sle song (learned from a BBC recording of a traditional English singer) con-

tains three elements found most frequently in traditionally circulated (as compared to patriotically inspired composed) nautical songs. Complaints about the hard life at sea (usually accompanied by a description of the easier shore life), a description of actual work on board ship, and some mention of the girl left behind seemed to find a very natural place in the songs sung around the Foc'sle when the seamen had a moment free to reflect on their existence.

I have been unable to find any reference or other texts for this song in the various collections examined.

HAUL BOYS HAUL

CHORUS:
Haul, Boys, Haul, haul, boys haul,
Heave away the capstan, lads, and let's get up the trawl,
When the wind is gently blowing and the ship is gently rolling,
My Hannah, my Hannah, won't you be true to me.

Oh, once I was a schoolboy and I lived at home in ease,
But now I am a traveling lad to plow the raging seas;
I thought I'd like seafaring life, 'twas all right till I found
'Twas a damn sight worse than slavery when you got on the ground.

For every night in winter, as regular as the clock,
You put on your sou'wester and likewise your oilskin frock,
And go up to the capstan, lads, and ever heave away,
For that's the cry in the middle of the night as well as in the day.

SIDE I, Band 9: LEAVE HER JOHNNY (Sung by Dave Van Ronk and Chorus)

This pumping shanty was traditionally reserved for the last task the sailors performed before leaving ship after a hard voyage. With the ship tied fast to the pier, the men worked at pumping her dry. With the voyage over, the sailor was free to express (without fear of reprisal) his heart-felt opinion of the ship and its officers. Then came the parting handshakes and kidding, the seamen shouldered their bags, and left the ship to spend their hard-earned moneys freely. But always there was the realization that soon their money would be spent and they would be looking around to sign on for another voyage.

Various authorities seem unanimous in their belief that 'Leave her Johnny' was a modern form of an older 'farewell' shanty. Doerflinger writes that it was "derived from the shanty,

"Across the Western Ocean," which originated about 1850, at the height of the Irish emigration to America."

For additional texts and information, see Bone, p. 135; Bullen, p. 8; Colcord, pp. 119-121; Davis, p. 11; Doerflinger, p. 89; Finger, p. 13; Harlow, p. 280; Ives, p. 62; JFSS #18, 1916, p. 36; King, p. 7; Masefield, p. 327; Sharp, pp. 3-4; Shay, p. 86; C.F. Smith, p. 74; Terry II, p. 52; Whall, p. 50.

LEAVE HER JOHNNY

Oh, times were hard and the wages low,
Leave her, Johnny, leave her,
I guess it's time for us to go,
It's time for us to leave her.

Beware the packet ships I say,
Leave her etc.
They'll steal your stories and your clothes away,
It's time etc.

There's Liverpool Pat with his tarpaulin hat,
Leave her etc.
And Yankee John, the packet rat,
It's time etc.

She would not wear and she would not stay,
Leave her etc.
She shipped great seas both night and day,
It's time etc.

It's rotten beaf and weevily bread,
Leave her etc.
It was pump or drown the old man said,
It's time etc.

The sails all furled, our work is done,
Leave her etc.
And now ashore we'll take our run,
It's time etc.

Oh, what will us poor shellbacks do,
Leave her etc.
Our money's gone, no work to do,
It's time for etc.

SIDE I, Band 10: PADDY LAY BACK (Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

This foc'sle ditty (better known by the title "Mainsail Haul") was well known on British packet ships throughout the last half of the 19th century. More than likely it began life as an Irish or English music hall song, but its sentiments and language were so in keeping with the sailor's actual lot, that it soon made its way into the foc'sle.

Closely related to this song is the popular capstan shanty "Paddy, Get Back", with which it shares a common refrain, and, occasionally, a similar textual line. The shanty is easily differentiated from the foc'sle song, however, in that its stanzaic form is that of unrhymed couplets, rather than the alternate rhyme quatrains given here.

For additional texts and information, see Bone, p. 139; Colcord, p. 121 (for the shanty); Doerflinger, p. 54 (for the shanty) & pp. 117-121 (for the foc'sle song); Shay, p. 69 (for the shanty).

PADDY LAY BACK

'Twas a cold and dreary morning in December,
All of my money it was spent,
Where it went to, Lord, I can't remember,
So down to the shipping office went.

CHORUS:

Oh, Paddy, lay back, take in your slack,
Take your turn around the capstan, heave a pawl,
About your stations, boys, be handy,
Raise tack sheets and mainsail haul.

Now that day there was a great demand for sailors,
For the colonies and for Frisco and France,
So I shipped aboard a liney bark, the Hotspur,
Had a paralytic drunk on my advance,

Now I joined her on a cold December's morning
A-flapping of me flippers to keep me warm,
With a south comb hoisted as a warning
To stand by the coming of a storm.

Now though me poor old head was all a jumpin',
We had to loose her rags the following morn,
Oh I dreamt the boarding master I was thumping,
When I found out he sent me 'round the Horn.

So I swore that I'd become a beachcomber,
And I'd never go to sea no ruddy more,
For I never wanted for to be a roamer,
I'd shanghai the boarding master and stay ashore.

But it's now once more I'm off again to sea, boys,
It's the same old ruddy business all again;
So stamp the capstan 'round and sing a song, boys,
Sing once again this dear refrain.

SIDE II, Band 1: FIRE DOWN BELOW (Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

This delightful pumping shanty exists in two fairly distinct forms. In what appears to have been the more widely known form, the shanty consists of rhymed couplets and an external refrain. A typical example of this form is:

There is fire in the lower hold, there's fire
down below,
Fire in the mainwell, the captain didn't know.

CHORUS:

Fire, fire! Fire down below,
It's fetch a bucket of water, girls,
there's fire down below.

As Colcord describes this form of the shanty: "Jack would have his joke, even about that most dreaded of dangers, fire at sea; and the joke lay in his choosing non-inflammable portions of the ship in which to locate his imaginary fire."

The less common form of the shanty is that sung in this album. As sung here, the shanty consists of rhymed couplets containing an alternating line internal refrain. The content of this shanty is also quite different from that of the more common form. Aside from the fact that this version contains a continuous narrative line for part of its text, it differs also in the meaning which lies behind the expression "there's fire down below". Rather than the literal (though imaginary) use of this expression given in the example above, in the version sung here it has a ribald euphemistic implication, not unrelated to the proverb "Still water runs deep".

For additional texts and information see Colcord, p. 117; Davis, 78; JFSS #20, 1916, pp. 303-304; Sharp, p. 27; Terry II, p. 32.

FIRE DOWN BELOW

She was just a village maiden with a red and rosy cheek
To me way hay hee hi ho

She went to church and Sunday school and sang them
Anthems sweet
But there's fire down below.

Now the parson was a misery, so scraggy and so thin
To me way etc.
And he said: "Look here, you shellbacks, if you
lead a life of sin
There's fire etc.

Now he took his text from Melachie and he whirled a
weary face
To me way etc.
I took French leave and sailed away and now I've
fell from grace
And there's fire etc.

But the parson had a daughter who was sweet as
sugar candy
To me way etc.
And she said to me: "You sailors would make lovers
neat and handy
But there's fire etc.

But she said: "You bunch of sailors is a bunch of
bloody liars
To me way etc.
And all of youse are going below to feed the
ruddy fires
And there's fire etc.

Oh there's fire in the cabin and in the galley, too,
To me way etc.
Fire in the foc'sle but the coal is the crew
And there's fire etc.

If the bloom'n' boats won't hold us when it's
time for us to go
To me way etc.
We can pray to Havelock Wilson we've got him down
below,
And there's fire etc.

Yes, there's fire at the top, me boys, there's
fire down below
To me way etc.
Fire in the boatswain's pipe, it's time for us
to go
And there's fire etc.

SIDE II, Band 2: A HUNDRED YEARS AGO (Sung by Bob Brill and Chorus)

According to Terry, this rousing halyard shanty
"was known to nearly every British seaman."
Colcord reports its use on American ships as well,
and adds as a further comment that it is "the
only shanty which can be identified with the
Baltimore clippers," but states no authority for
this remark.

Most authorities consider this shanty to be a
variant form of the more widely known (and
probably older) halyard shanty, "A Long Time Ago."

For additional texts and information, see Colcord,
p. 67; Davis, p. 65; Sharp, p. 57; L.A. Smith, p. 44;
Terry II, p. 56; Whall, p. 137.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

A hundred years is a mighty long time
O yes o
A hundred years was before my time
Haul away Joe.

We sailed away for Milford Bay
O yes o
And the girls are on the wharf saying we've got your
half pay
Haul away Joe.

The boatswain shouted to the crew
O yes o
I'm going to find you work to do
Haul away Joe

Then up aloft the yard must go
O yes o
For Mr. Mate he told me so
Haul away Joe.

Then we heard the old man say
O yes o
One more pull and then belay
Haul away Joe.

And now we're bound for Bristol town
O yes o
Yes my lads we're homeward bound
Haul away Joe.

Our gallant ship up channel steered
O yes o
The cliffs of Dover soon appeared
Haul away Joe.

Soon we'll be in Bristol town
O yes o
And the girls will be in their Sunday gowns
Haul away Joe.

SIDE II, Band 3: SANTY ANNO (Sung by Dave Van Ronk and Chorus)

This widely known capstan shanty (used in raising the
anchor) was popular with both British and American
seamen. Unlike most shanties, which are almost
impossible to date with any accuracy, 'Santy Anna',
by nature of its historical references, can pretty
safely be dated to shortly after our war with
Mexico (1846-1848).

Why Santa Anna should emerge as a hero and Zachary
Taylor a coward in most versions of this shanty
presents a fascinating problem to students of
folk history. Santa Anna's stirring defense
of Buena Vista, and the general failure of
Taylor's campaign in Northern Mexico at the be-
ginning of the war apparently made a deep impres-
sion, for, though Santa Anna's forces were
decisively defeated at a later date, the folk
chose to immortalize him for his temporary vic-
tory during the early stages of the war.

David Bone suggests an alternative answer to this
problem: "Coloured men from the South probably
put the words to this old air. General Taylor
represented a Northern influence that was not
popular with the castes and half-castes of the
Border. So, in their wording of the song, he
is 'told off' as having abandoned the engagement."

Interestingly enough, in the version sung in this
recording, the positions of the two protagonists
are reversed, with the result that the commentary
is considerably truer to historical fact.

For additional texts and information, see Bone,
p. 129; Bullen, p. 15; Colcord, p. 84; Davis, p.
34; Doerflinger, p. 78; Frothingham, p. 262; Ives,
p. 48; JFSS #18, 1914, p. 33; JFSS #12, 1908, pp.
236-239; King, p. 16; Mackenzie, p. 262; Sharp,
p. 15; Shay, p. 79; L.A. Smith, p. 47; Terry I,
p. 18; Whall, p. 56.

O shellbacks have you heard the news
Heave away, Santy Anno
The Yankees took Vera Cruz
All on the plains of Mexico.

Brave General Taylor saved the day
Heave away, Santy Anno
Drove those Mexicans away
All on the plains of Mexico.

O Santy Anna had a wooden leg
Heave away, Santy Anno
Wore it for a wooden peg
All on the plains of Mexico.

O Santy Anna fought for fame
Heave away, Santy Anno
That is why we sing his name
All on the plains of Mexico.

I thought I heard the old man say
Heave away, Santy Anno
He'd give us grog this very day
All on the plains of Mexico.

SIDE II, Band 4: CAPTAIN NIPPER (Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

This delightful British foc'sle ditty has been
collected only rarely from tradition. More
than likely it was first popularized in British
music halls, and taken from there to the foc'sle
by one of the many sailors who frequented the
music halls on their layover between ocean trips.
Mrs. Clifford Beckett, who supplied the only text
I have found in print, suggests that the 'good
ship Ragamuffin' refers to the old "Bellerophon."

For an additional text, see Beckett, p. 12.

CAPTAIN NIPPER

'Twas the fifteenth of September, how well I do
remember,
I nearly broke my poor old mother's heart,
For I shipped with Captain Nipper in a big four
masted clipper
Bound away down south for foreign parts.

CHORUS:

And the wind began to blow, and the ship began
to roll,
And the devil of a hurricane did blow - Oh my oh!
It nearly knocked the stuffing from the good ship
Ragamuffin
And we thought to the bottom we should go.

Then we hoisted up our anchor and we set our jib
and spanker
And the pilot took us to the harbor's mouth,
Then from the tug we parted, and on our voyage
started,
With the compass headed East-Nor-West by South.

(CHORUS)

Then there came a good stiff breeze that made the
old man sneeze
And carried away the sails on every hand,
And for seven long days we bore it while running
right a-fore it
Thinking we would never see the land.

But the ship got caught aback and the stays began
to crack
And a fore top gallant foresails carried away,
So we put the helm over and headed straight for Dover
And at last we anchored safe within the bay.

SIDE II, Band 5: HANGING JOHNNY (Roger Abrahams and Chorus)

This halyard shanty seems to have been called on
to aid in the long haul work of hoisting the yards
in rough weather. In A SAILOR'S GARLAND, John
Masefield gives the setting for this song as follows:
"It has a melancholy tune that is one of the
saddest things I have ever heard. I heard it for
the first time off the Horn, in a snowstorm, when
we were hoisting topsails after heavy weather.
There was a heavy, grey sea running and the decks
were awash. The skies were sodden and oily, shutting
in the sea about a quarter of a mile away. Some
birds were flying about us, screaming...I thought
at the time it was the whole scene set to music.
I cannot repeat those words to their melancholy,
wavering music without seeing the line of yellow
oilskins, the wet deck, the frozen ropes, and the
great grey seas running up into the sky."

Frederick P. Harlow, who believed the shanty was
of Negro origin, writes: "No one could help
putting his entire strength into the pull of this
chantey, for ... the chantey was sung with a jerk
and a swing as only chantey in 6/8 time can be
sung. ...The words "Hang boys, hang," are used in a
topsail-halliard hoist, when sweating up the yard
"two blocks," where, in swaying off, the whole
weight of the body is used. The sing-out, from
some old shellback, usually being words such as
"Hang, heavy! Hang, buttocks! Hang, you sons of
---, Hang!"

For additional texts and information, see Bullen,
p. 23; Colcord, p. 72; Davis, p. 54; Doerflinger,
p. 31; Frothingham, p. 250; Harlow, p. 253; Ives,
p. 70; King, p. 6; Masefield, p. 315; Sharp, p. 56;
Shay, p. 54; C.F. Smith, p. 44; Terry I, p. 40;
Whall, p. 26.

HANGING JOHNNY

They call me Hanging Johnny
Away boys away,
They say I hangs for money
O hang boys hang.

O first I hanged my Sally
Away boys away
And then I hanged my family
O hang boys hang.

It's then I hanged my granny,
Away boys away,
I hanged her up so canny,
O hang boys hang.

And then I hanged my mother
Away boys away,
My sister and my brother
O hang boys hang.

A rope, a beam, a ladder,
Away boys away,
We'll hang and haul together
O hang boys hang.

We'll hang and haul together
Away boys away,
We'll haul for better weather
O hang boys hang.

SIDE II, Band 6: BANKS OF THE SACRAMENTO
(Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

This capstan shanty is frequently referred to as a 'gold-rush' shanty, apparently dating from that period in our history. The relationship between this song and Stephen Foster's "Camptown Races" is an obvious one though it is still not known which came first. Foster's song was written in 1850, and it is possible that he may have picked up the tune from some sailor; more than likely, however, is the probability that the shanty was a parody of the Foster song made after its publication helped to spread the song from coast to coast.

For additional texts and information, see Bullen, p. 21; Colcord, p. 105; Davis, p. 16; Doerflinger, p. 67; Frothingham, p. 260; Harlow, p. 319; Ives, p. 54; King, p. 15; Masefield, p. 321; Sharp, p. 24; Shay, p. 82; C.F. Smith, p. 24; L.A. Smith, p. 10; Terry II, p. 10; Whall, p. 122.

BANKS OF THE SACRAMENTO

In the Black Ball line I served my time
With a hoodah, and a hoodah,
In a full rigged ship and in her prime
With a hoodah, hoodah day.

CHORUS:

So it's blow, boys, blow
For Californio
There's plenty of gold
So I've been told
On the banks of the Sacramento.

O we were the boys to make her go
With a hoodah etc.

Around Cape Horn in the frost and snow,
With a hoodah etc.

Around Cape Stiff in seventy days,
With a hoodah etc.

Around Cape Stiff is a mighty long ways,
With a hoodah etc.

When we was tacking 'round Cape Horn,
With a hoodah etc.

I often wished I'd a never been born,
With a hoodah etc.

O the mate he whacked me around and around
With a hoodah etc.

And I wished I was home all safe and sound
With a hoodah etc.

O when we got to the Frisco docks
With a hoodah etc.

The girls were all in their Sunday Frocks
With a hoodah etc.

SIDE II, Band 7: WON'T YOU GO MY WAY
(Sung by Bob Brill and Chorus)

This fine halyard shanty deserves to be better known, but seems to have been reported in print only twice, and in both cases from the same English informant, a Mr. John Short of Watchet, Somerset, who was a shantymen for most of his fifty years of sailing-ship experience. The version given in this recording was learned from a BBC recording.

For additional texts and information, see Sharp, p. 61; Terry II, p. 38.

WON'T YOU GO MY WAY

O I met her in the morning
Wont you go my way
In the morning bright and early
Wont you go my way.

Oh I asked her for to marry
Wont you etc.

But she said she'd rather tarry
Wont you etc.

On a cold and frosty morning
Wont you etc.

On a dark and stormy morning
Wont you etc.

Oh I'm on my way to Frisco
Wont you go etc.

Oh I'm on my way to Frisco
Wont you go etc.

SIDE II, Band 8: GOODBYE FARE THEE WELL
(Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

This homeward-bound capstan shanty appears to have been a favorite on both British and American ships. Of its popularity, Terry writes: "This is one of the best beloved of shanties. So strongly did its sentiment appeal to sailors that one never heard the shantymen extemporize a coarse verse to it." Terry seems to have missed the possibility that one reason for its never being sung with 'coarse verses' was largely due to the fact that it was sung in raising the anchor while the ship was still close to shore within earshot of the men and girls who were wishing the ship good speed and homeward-bound luck.

The shanty may have been inspired by a popular foc'sle song of the same title and sentiments.

For additional texts and information, see Bone, p. 116; Bullen, p. 7; Colcord, p. 113; Davis, p. 18; Doerflinger, p. 87; Finger, p. 13; Frothingham, p. 259; Greenleaf, p. 336; Harlow, p. 341; Ives, p. 85; King, p. 14; Mackenzie, p. 267; Shay, p. 85; C.F. Smith, p. 76; L.A. Smith, pp. 56 & 219; Terry I, p. 6; Whall, p. 119. For variant texts to the foc'sle song of the same title, see Shay, p. 147; Terry, Salt Sea Ballads, p. 6.

Oh I thought I heard the old man say
Good bye, fare thee well, good bye, fare thee well,
Oh, we're homeward bound this very day
Hurrah, my boys, we're homeward bound.

Homeward bound, heave up and down,
Good bye, etc.
Oh heave on the capstan and make it spin round
Hurrah, etc.

Our anchor's aweigh and the gear is made fast
Good bye, etc.
We leave the harbor and go home at last
Hurrah, etc.

Oh, heave with a will and you heave loud and strong,
Good bye, etc.
And sing a good chorus for it is a good song,
Hurrah, etc.

Oh, we're homeward bound and the wind's blowing free
Good bye, etc.
And the girls and our wives are waiting for thee
Hurrah, etc.

We're homeward bound and I hear the sound,
Good bye, etc.
We're homeward bound to old Boston town,
Hurrah, etc.

SIDE II, Band 9: ALL BOUND TO GO
(Sung by Roger Abrahams and Chorus)

This windlass shanty, which began its life along the Liverpool water front, originally dealt with the Irish emigration to America in the 1850s. Doerflinger prints the text of an Irish stage song (found in several 19th century songsters) from which the solo lines of the shanty seem to have been adapted. The original stage song, and many earlier versions of this shanty, refer to a Mr. Tapscott and his ship, the 'Joseph Walker'. The gentleman referred to was none other than one of the partners in the emigrant shipping house of W. & T.J. Tapscott, of Liverpool. Largely as a result of this shanty, Tapscott's name was spread far and wide, and not usually in a very favorable context.

For additional texts and information, see Colcord, p. 93; Davis, p. 8; Doerflinger, p. 62; Frothingham, p. 265; Harlow, p. 104; Ives, p. 64; JFSS #20, 1916, p. 308; JFSS #32, 1928, p. 98; King, p. 19; Mackenzie, p. 259; Sharp, p. 30; Shay, p. 73; L.A. Smith, p. 54; Terry I, p. 28; Whall, p. 53.

ALL BOUND TO GO

Oh, as I walked out down by the docks all on a summer day
Heave away, my Johnnies, heave away,
'Twas there I saw a full rigged ship, she was looking oh so gay,
And away, oh my jolly boys, we're all bound to go.

Oh I shipped aboard the morning before the break of day,
Heave away etc.
And we were about to take a trip, the Bengal was her name,
And away, etc.

Oh, the day was fine when we set sail, the wind was blowing free,
Heave away, etc.
But soon it freshened to a gale and we were far at sea,
And away, etc.

Oh, we snugged her down and laid her too, we reefed main topsail set,
Heave away, etc.
It was no joke I say to you, our bunks and clothes were wet,
And away, etc.

Oh, the gale and fury had increased and the night was fairly come,
Heave away, etc.
And every lubber never ceased to wish himself at home
And away, etc.

So gayly let your voices ring, my Johnnies heave away,
Heave away, etc.
We're bound to go so better sing and fight your tears away,
And away, etc.

SIDE II, Band 10: THE BLACK BALL LINE
(Sung by Paul Clayton and Chorus)

This shanty celebrates the infamous Black Ball Line, and may be one of the oldest of American shanties, perhaps dating from the inception of the line in 1816. The most famous of the packet-ship lines running between New York and Liverpool, The Black Ball ships were small (300 to 500 tons), but handsomely built, and kept up a rigorous sailing schedule. In order to keep to this schedule, the hand-picked captains drove their men and themselves without let-up, in the course of which they made a name for themselves as the fastest ships afloat, as well as the most cruelly managed. By the time of the Civil War, these ships were world famous, and numerous shanty lines were sung in its praise... and in its condemnation. The version given here is one which found more good than bad to sing about.

For additional texts and information, see Colcord, p. 53; Davis, p. 14; JFSS #18, 1914, p. 37; Sharp, p. 26; Terry II, p. 2; Whall, p. 99.

THE BLACK BALL LINE

In the Black Ball Line I served my time
Hurrah for the Black Ball line,
In the Black Ball line I had a good time,
Hurrah for the Black Ball line.

Oh, the Black Ball ships are good and true,
Hurrah etc.
And they are the ships for me and you,
Hurrah etc.

For once there was a Black Ball ship
Hurrah etc.
That fourteen knots an hour could clip
Hurrah etc.

And her yards were square and her gear all new
Hurrah etc.
She had a good and gallant crew
Hurrah etc.

And one day while sailing on the sea
Hurrah etc.
We saw a vessel on our lee
Hurrah etc.

Oh, we knew it was a pirate craft
Hurrah etc.
Her iron guns before and aft
Hurrah etc.

And we did not fear as you may think,
Hurrah etc.
But made them pirates water drink
Hurrah etc.