

STRING BAND INSTRUMENTALS

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS

MIKE SEEGER
TRACY SCHWARZ
JOHN COHEN

FOLKWAYS RECORD FA 2492

DESIGN & PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN

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FA 2492

Saddle Up the Grey (John: voice & guitar; Tracy: fiddle; Mike: fiddle)
 Greenback Dollar (Mike: voice & guitar; Tracy: fiddle; John: banjo)
 Victory Rag (John: guitar; Mike: autoharp)
 Soldier's Joy (John: banjo)
 Blackeyed Susie (John: banjo; Mike: voice & fiddle; Tracy: fiddle)
 My Wife Died On Saturday Night (Mike: voice & mouth harp; Tracy: guitar; John: banjo)
 John Brown's Dream (John banjo; Tracy: fiddle)
 Jenny on the Railroad (Mike: fiddle; Tracy: fiddle)
 Take Me Back to Georgia (Tracy: fiddle; Mike: banjo; John: guitar)
 Chinese Breakdown (Mike: banjo; Tracy: fiddle; John: guitar)

Yellow Rose of Texas (Mike: voice & banjo; John: banjo; Tracy: fiddle)
 Cowboy Waltz (Mike: fiddle; Tracy: guitar; John: mandolin)
 Stone's Rag (Tracy: fiddle; John: guitar; Mike: autoharp & mouth harp)
 Smoketown Strut (Mike: guitar)
 Jackson Stomp (John: banjo-mandolin; Tracy: guitar)
 Going to Jail (Tracy: fiddle; Mike: banjo; John: guitar)
 Bill Cheatham (Tracy: fiddle; Mike: banjo)
 Shout Lulu (John: banjo)
 Weary Lonesome Blues (Mike: guitar lead; John: guitar backup)
 New Lost Train Blues (Steve Ledford) (Mike: fiddle; John: guitar)
 New Camptown Races (Frank Wakefield) (Tracy: banjo; Mike: mandolin; John: guitar)

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Greenback Dollar - from the Weems String Band, Columbia 15300 (145356). One of the more unusual old time string band sounds: banjo and fiddle playing a fairly complex tune together with what is virtually a bass drone.

Victory Rag - we learned this from Maybelle Carter when we played at the Ash Grove together in April 1963. She learned it from a guitar player at the Old Dominion Barn Dance in Richmond, Virginia when she was playing there with her daughters, in the early 1950's. This tune is currently on her latest record (on the Smash label) with other old time tunes and songs of which like this she has never recorded before.

Blackeyed Susie - from J. P. Nestor, Vi 21070A, Whitter's Virginia Breakdowners (Henry Whitter, John Rector, James Sutphin) Okeh 40320 (s-72-680-a), and verses from oral tradition. One of the most popular breakdown tunes.

My Wife Died Saturday Night - from Dr. Humphrey Bate and his Possum Hunters, Bruns 271. This record is second to none as a harmonica breakdown. The harmonica is unfortunately ignored in most oldtime and Blue Grass music these days. The Crook Brothers (on the Grand Ole Opry) have a good old time breakdown harmonica player when you can hear him over the other instruments, and the Stanley Brothers have been occasionally using a 'choke style' or blues style mouth harp on their recordings.

Chinese Breakdown - I learned this tune from Junie Scruggs, Earl's older brother, while recording him for Folkways' Banjo Tunes and Songs - played in Scruggs' Style. It is an old tune and I've altered it considerably since I first heard it.

Stones Rag - a tune from oral tradition; style from Jimmie Rodgers and also from the playing of Gwen Foster, Walt Davis, Clarence Green, Will Abernathy and Thomas C. Ashley (The Blue Ridge Musical Entertainers) on Over at Tom's House, Tom Ashley, ConQ 81038 (11043).

Smoketown Strut - from Sylvester Weaver, Okeh 8152-A. A slightly sophisticated guitar piece from a negro guitarist - accompanist who was the first to record Steel Guitar Rag (solo) in the mid 'twenties.

Lonesome Weary Blues - from Roy Harvey and Leonard Copeland, Col. 15582 (149219). In a short visit with Leonard Copeland in June 1964, Mr. Copeland said that Harvey (deceased) played lead on this tune with three fingers and thumb. Mr. Copeland played lead on the other three that they recorded together. They were both from West Virginia. This, the most bluesy of the tunes that they recorded becomes almost a parlor blues, and on the original record the two guitars worked so closely together that they were inseparable.

The New Lost Train Blues - (Steve Ledford) - from J. E. Mainer's Mountaineers, Bb B-6424. It was the name of this song which suggested our name. The tune was composed by Steve Ledford who fiddled it on the original record and is still an excellent fiddler today, known throughout the western section of North Carolina. Unlike most old time musicians he collects oldtime records. His father was recorded the Library of Congress in the 1930's.

New Camptown Races - (Frank Wakefield) - Frank Wakefield, Carace Hutchins, Marvin Cobb on an unknown (to us) Detroit label, recorded about 1957. According to Frank Wakefield, he composed this excellent Blue Grass style tune shortly before the recording which probably contributed to its raw drive. He has recently re-recorded this tune on a Folkways LP with Red Allen.

TAKE ME BACK TO GEORGIA

From Lowe Stokes and Mike Whitten Col 15486 (149298)

Lowe Stokes can be heard on many of the Gid Tanner and Skillet Lickers records. I like this tune because of its easy, relaxed but lively beat, and the sound of the unison notes in the second part.

COWBOY WALTZ

From Woody Guthrie & Friends, Folkways FP 10 (Lonesome Valley)

This is a good example of a tune you'd hear at a country dance, in between square dance sets, with its simple back up and moderate waltz beat. When I was in the Army, while stationed in Germany, I once mentioned to a mandolin player from Kansas how I didn't like waltzes too much, and he immediately and unexpectedly answered that he did like them because they reminded him of the dances he went to at home. After that I reconsidered, and decided I liked them too after all, and the simpler the better.

GOING TO JAIL

From Buddy Young's Kentuckians, Superior 2519

A ragtime type fiddle tune that shows Negro influence. Some of this tune has runs that can be heard in Bluegrass fiddling.

BILL CHEATHAM

From the Red Headed Fiddler Bruns 470 and Eck Robertson's Brilliancy Medley Victor 40298A.

JENNY ON THE RAILROAD

From Carter Brothers and Son-Voc 5297

A good old time double fiddle breakdown that bears relationship to the tune "Paddy on the Turnpike" by its change from G to F. The old timers played together with great informality and spontaneity, while modern professional fiddlers will work out a harmony system, with one fiddle playing lead and the other tenoring.

SOLDIERS JOY

I learned this from Hobart Smith, who played it at the banjo workshop at the University of Chicago festival in 1963, and for the Friends of Old Time Music concert in New York in Sept. 1963. Hobart's performance can be heard on the FOTM record for Folkways. This well known dance tune is popular between fiddler & banjo pickers, and this version as set by Hobart, is extremely ambitious, with as much emphasis on the left hand as the right.

SHOUT LULU

From Rufus Crisp, Woody Wachtel, Roscoe Holcomb, and Pete Steele. It is not clear whether this is a dance tune or a banjo show-off piece. It works as both, and is very similar to the banjo tune 'Hook & Line' - (see Mt. Music of Ky. - Folkways). It has been pointed out that this tune and style is very close to certain negro banjo-styles. Ralph Stanley also plays this, and sings some good words as well.

SADDLE UP THE GREY

- from Carter Bros. & Son. Okeh 45202 (400336)

It has been pointed out in the Little Sandy Review that the da-di-da da is a surviving aspect of the scottish 'chin music' where they used the voice to imitate instruments, for dancing. Someone else points out that this quality is a result of the singer forgetting the words.

Saddle up the grey, better get away
Ain't gonna get no supper here today,
Fill up the jug, and blow out the light
Ain't gonna get no dinner here tonight.

Riding of the goat, leading of the sheep
'Won't be back til the middle of the week.

JOHN BROWN'S DREAM

- from The Southern Broadcasters, Silvertone 5183 B

Hobart Smith of Saltville, Va. also plays this as a banjo tune. It is one of the most intense and unrelieved banjo fiddle tunes.

JACKSON STOMP

- from The Mississippi Mud Steppers, Okeh 45504 (404714)

On the original recording, the mandolin banjo had the double strings tuned in octaves, producing an even wider range of sound. Recently re-released on an LP of old time string band music by Chris Strackwitz - box 5073 Berkeley 5, Cal.

YELLOW ROSE OF TEXAS

- from Ben Jarrell accompanied by DaCosta
Woltz's Southern Broadcasters - Gennett
6143 (7-27). Most of text from "Red Rose of
Texas" - North Carolina Cooper Boys - Okeh
45174 (81648 A)

There's a yellow rose in Texas that I am going to
see

No other fellow knows her, no other one but me

She cried so when I left her that it like to broke
my heart

And if I ever find her, we never more will part.

Now I'm going to find her for my heart is full
of woe

We'll sing the songs together we sung so long ago

When I get back to Austin how happy I will be
With the yellow rose of Texas a-sitting on my
knee.

Originally a Civil War Song, this also was on the
popular 'Hit Parade' about 10 years ago. In
some versions, the yellow rose becomes the Red
Rose. This must have been in minstrel song
tradition, for other versions make much mention
of the protagonist as 'this darkey'.

GREENBACK DOLLAR

Over the hill and down the holler, all I want is a
greenback dollar (2)

Over the hill and down the holler, all I want is a
sweet little mama (2)

BLACKKEYED SUSIE

All I need in this creation,
Pretty little wife and a big plantation

All I need to make me happy
Two little boys to call me pappy

Blackeyed Susie went huckleberry picking
Boys got drunk and Susie got a licking

Some got drunk and some got boozy
I went home with Blackeyed Susie

MY WIFE DIED ON SATURDAY NIGHT

My wife died Saturday night Sunday she was
buried

Monday was my courting day and Tuesday I
got married

Round and round up and down every where
I've wandered

Round and round up and down looking for
my honey

NOTES FOR STRING BAND INSTRUMENTALS

Saddle Up the Grey -
John - guitar - #G flat pick
Tracy, Fiddle - Classical in G tuning played
Mike - Fiddle - tuned GDGD

Greenback Dollar
John - banjo - open C tuning
Tracy - Fiddle - Classical tuning - played in C
Mike - Guitar - tuned CADGBE; play only
two (6th & 5th) bass strings. Used Martin
D-28 #60144

Victory Rag
John - guitar - #C - 3 finger picking
Mike - Autoharp; three fingers picking (thumb
and two fingers)

Soldiers Joy
John - banjo - C tuning frailing

Blackeyed Susie
John - banjo - open C tuning frailing
Tracy - Fiddle - classical tuning - played in D
Mike - fiddle - tuned GDAE

My Wife Died
John - banjo - C tuning 3 finger 'roll'
Tracy - guitar - flat pick
Mike - B flat mouth harp

John Brown's Dream
John - banjo G tuning capo to #A - frailing
Tracy - fiddle - classical tuning - played in A
Mike - asleep

Jenny on Railroad
Tracy - fiddle - classical tuning - played in G
Mike - fiddle - tuned GDGD

Take Me Back To Ga.
John - guitar flat pick
Tracy - fiddle - classical tuning played in C
Mike - banjo - tuned GCGBD; Thumb and two
fingers with picks.

Chinese Breakdown
John - guitar flat pick - key of D
Tracy - fiddle - classical tuning played in D
Mike - banjo - tuned GCGBD; Thumb and two
fingers with picks and capo on second fret
of all strings

Yellow Rose of Texas
John - banjo, C tuning 3 finger 'roll' C
position up neck.
Tracy - fiddle - open G tuning played in C
Mike - lead banjo - tuned GCGBD; index finger
picking upwards throughout. Lots of trouble-
dumping.

Cowboy Waltz
John - mandolin
Tracy - guitar - flat pick
Mike - fiddle - tuned GDAE; played in key of D

Stones Rag

John - guitar-flat pick

Tracy, fiddle-classical tuning played in C

Mike - autoharp, Mouth harp and Mouth harp rack

Smoketown Strut

Mike - guitar-tuned EADGBE; played with thumb two fingers, no picks. Start in key of G.

Jackson Stomp

John - mandolin with banjo head

Tracy - guitar-flat pick

Going to Jail

John - guitar (emulate piano)

Tracy - fiddle-classical tuning played in C

Mike - banjo-tuned GCGBD; Thumb and two fingers, no picks.

Bill Cheatham

Tracy - fiddle-classical tuning played in A

Mike - banjo-tuned GDGBD. Capoeed.

Shout Lulu

John - banjo, GCGCD frailing.

Weary Lonesome Blues

John - guitar, #D 3 finger picking

Mike - Lead guitar-tuned DADF#AD; played with thumb two fingers and picks.

New Lost Train Blues

John - guitar #C 3 finger picking

Mike - fiddle-tuned GDAE

New Camptown Races

John - guitar, capo up 3 to #B - flat pick G fingering

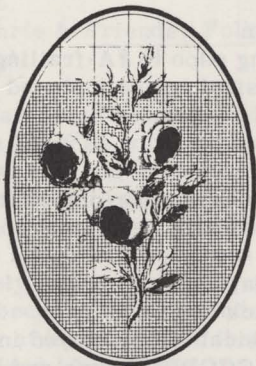
Tracy Banjo-capo up to Bb-simple scruggs rolls-G tuning

Mike - mandolin - tuned tuned tuned GDAE.

Don't capo. Key of B flat.

This album was recorded May 12 and 13, 1964 by Peter Bartok at the Pequot Library Auditorium. Editing and mono mix by PB & NLCR.

It has been suggested that this album be subtitled "The New Lost City Ramblers Sing Their Most Requested Songs".



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Discographical information by ms

Cover photo: DESIGN & PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN

NLCR (male, vested, with instruments), left to right: Tracy, Mike and John

Wives and children left to right: Tracy's wife Eloise sitting and Step Children Polo, Bobby (on Eloise's lap), and Clyde Smith.

In the center, Kim, Marj and Jeremy Seeger.

On the right, Penny Cohen with Arley Seeger on her lap.

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