

# MUSIC FROM THE SOUTH

Field recordings taken in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi under a grant from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation by Frederic Ramsey, Jr. With photographs, notes, and personnels.

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## VOLUME 3 HORACE SPROTT, 2

FOLKWAYS FA 2652



FOLKWAYS FA 2652

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# MUSIC FROM THE SOUTH

Interview

Steal Away to Jesus

Louisiana Blues

One Dollar Bill, Two Dollar Bill

Mama, Don't Treat Your Daughter Mean

Say, You Don't Know, Honey

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

PHOTOGRAPH BY FREDERIC RAMSEY, JR.

# MUSIC FROM THE SOUTH

## Volume 2: Horace Sprott, 1    Volume 3: Horace Sprott, 2    Volume 4: Horace Sprott, 3

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### Notice

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHS ON SLEEVES show HORACE SPROTT chopping cotton in patch near Cahaba River (MUSIC from the SOUTH, VOLUME 2: Horace Sprott, 1); LONG VIEW OF SAME FIELD, WITH SPROTT CABIN IN RIGHT BACKGROUND (Horace Sprott, 2); ANNIE SPROTT, HORACE, AND ONE OF THE TWO BOYS, outside the cabin (Horace Sprott, 3).

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THE PHOTOGRAPHS IN THIS BOOKLET DOCUMENT COUNTRY LIFE OF PERRY COUNTY-ALABAMA.

### INTRODUCTION

All recordings presented on ten 12" longplay records by Folkways under the series title, "Music from the South," are the outcome of work carried on during 1954 in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, under a grant from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

Our broad purpose was to explore the Afro-American musical environment in as many areas of the South as time and the Fellowship permitted. As a tentative but not binding objective, we hoped to tap as many sources as possible that would lead us back to the music and the story of the period 1860 to 1900 -- roughly, to years just before and after Emancipation (1863), or to that other date used so generally for southern reckoning, the year of "the Surrender." (1865)

For this reason, the majority of persons who were sought out, and who recorded, were between 60 and 95 years old. Exceptions were made whenever younger persons (Scott Dumber, Ella Cash, Dorothy Melton, young gospel singers, and children who sang play songs) played and sang in any one of several ways -- e.g., word content, playing style, vocal style -- that related to the earlier period. The period 1860 - 1900 was not chosen for spurious or capricious reasons. It is a period which saw the development, principally in New Orleans, of a dance music which later evolved into the form, or forms of a form, which is now called jazz. It is doubtful, however, if the word "jazz" worked its way into our common speech much before the years of World War I, and even then not as a tag for music.

It is not doubtful, however, that the musics played in New Orleans related to the folk backgrounds of those who played. The environment of New Orleans itself was urban; yet many musicians who came to play in New Orleans came directly from the country, or sprang from country stock that had emigrated to New Orleans. This is not to say that all early dance music of New Orleans was purely country or folk in origin; quite the contrary, the urban music that developed was a fusion of many complex elements, of which "country" was one part. It seems possible, now, to say that some of the country elements may have come in through the horns, which are closest to the human voice. But again, not all music played by horns was country music. Other country elements were carried in directly by voice, and by the accompanying instruments, the guitar and banjo. The city contributed a well-established tradition of fairly sophisticated reed-playing, the proficiency which musicians developed by playing on hundreds of occasions in march and dance bands, and the cosmopolitan, "mixing" attitude which permitted so many elements -- Africanisms, Spanish melody and rhythm, Caribbean music, and European classic music -- all to come together.

But along with all this, there was always an undertone, felt probably more by "American" Negroes than by the Creoles, of the music from a country environment. This is the background of music which can be loosely grouped as comprising chants, jubilees, hymns, and spirituals, on the religious side, and field hollers, play songs, blues, reels, and rags, on the secular side.

"Each Sunday Bolden went to church," it was once stated by Bud Scott (veteran guitarist, 1890 - 1950, Record CHARGER, September, 1947), "and that's where he got his idea of jazz music. I think I am the first one who started four beat for guitar and that's where I heard it . . . all down strokes, four straight down."

It is even possible, that in the earliest, most fluctuant period when the new, evolving music was being played, less of the country influence predominated. But as the music developed more and more into a new way of playing, the country repertoire began to be incorporated into the new music with greater frequency. It is for these two principal reasons -- the presence, in early hands, of country horn men, and the presence, in later performances, of a repertoire of country songs, that it was felt that more of the country material, especially material relating to the formative years of the new music, should be sought out and recorded. Our method was to go into the most remote rural regions and seek out, by word-of-mouth enquiry, all persons who could sing, play, or dance. Except in New Orleans, no one "took us" to persons who would record. We found them ourselves, and talked with them in their own homes. The recordings were taken in cabins, on front porches, in fields and in yards. No one was ever asked to "come into town" or "make an appointment at a studio" when we wanted to get something down on tape. The tape, the microphones, and the recording machines went to the people who talked and sang and played for them. It was our feeling that it was easier for any one to remember, to talk, and to sing, when surrounded by his children, his friends, by interested neighbors and familiar passersby. We sought the everyday environment to which so much of music heard in the South relates.

Some rules of exclusion were maintained. Aside from work in the New Orleans area, recordings were taken in regions where no one else had worked. Our reason for this was simply to avoid duplication of material obtained by other collectors. For example, the county in western Alabama, Livingston, where both the Lomaxes and Harold Courlander had worked, was not selected for any recording. It was felt that the Lomaxes and especially Courlander, whose magnificent "Negro Folk Music of Western Alabama" is represented on Folkways P 417 and P 418, had already done this specific job. It was required to find new persons whose song and recollection could be tapped.

Another rule of exclusion applied to persons who had already recorded, and to professional performers. With the single exception of Elder David Ross of New Orleans, who had recorded privately for Dick Allen and Sam Charters of that city, no person had, at the date of recording, done previous work before the microphone. Every person heard in the entire series of "Music from the South" is, therefore, new to records. None are professionals.

By avoiding duplication, we wished to show both the richness and range of new material still to be heard in the South. It is hoped that this demonstration will stimulate others to collect material which, of later years, has been assumed by many to be no longer extant.

It is this writer's conviction that a few months of work in some counties of the states selected has only begun to assess the wealth of material available. Before it can be assumed that southern music is extinct, we shall have to hear from every county and every sub-division of every county. Our work can only be regarded, in comparison to such an extensive and long-range project, as a series of experimental drillings. Much remains to be found, and much remains to be recorded and documented. It might not hurt, however, to point out that the time for such work to be accomplished falls within the next ten, possibly twenty, years. For the strong tradition of music, and the way of life which engendered it, lamented or lamentable as that may seem, are both fading irrevocably as changes come to the South.

-- Frederic Ramsey, Jr.



HORACE SPROTT

By

Frederic Ramsey, Jr.

Horace Sprott, whose generous outpouring of song resembles the unbroken, upward flow of waters from artesian bored wells of his native Talladega Forest, was born some time between 1886 and 1890, near Sprott Plantation, in Alabama. His grandmother had been a slave on the plantation, his mother, Bessie Ford, was between 18 and 22 years when Horace was born. From her, and from his grandmother, he heard the old religious songs of the bush arbor and the plantation. And from his father, he heard the "worldly songs" that religious people refused to sing.

Like Leadbelly, a singer who also inherited a whole tradition of church and secular songs, Horace "banished away" from his home ("from my own name..." i.e., Sprott, Alabama) at an early age. Then began, as with Leadbelly, the years of wandering, working, and learning that contributed so much to his experience of southern song.

Today, he lives in a small, two room cabin that has one door, two battened-door windows, a small wood stove, a bench, a table, and three chairs. There are planks missing from the loose board floor, and there are gaps between the rough slabs of wood that serve as interior wall and exterior siding. His landlord, a dirt farmer who works pretty hard around the calendar to keep a small patch of cotton under cultivation, has never done much to keep up this home, but he has been generous, in his way; the gaps in Horace's cabin are just about the biggest and best in all of Perry County.

I never once heard Horace Sprott complain about any of this; although he lives all year 'round in this house with his wife, Ammie, their two young sons, and an adopted boy who moved in with them "because Horace treats me better than my own father." Like his landlord, Sprott works pretty hard around the calendar, too, fitting his occupations into the seasons. I first found him cutting timber in a bottomland grown up in sweetgum, loblolly pine, and oak. He was working with a couple of friends, cutting down the big trees and saving them into smaller lengths. A mule belonging to the youngest of the other two men pulled the logs into position for a truck that came in over a corduroy road and hauled the timber off to market. For two weeks of this work, he received less than \$5, and the trucker, who had pocketed the money for the lumber, still owed him for three weeks when Horace quit.

When cotton chopping (thinning and cultivating by hoe) time came, Horace and the three members of his immediate family worked in the fields. Then, Sprott figured out that if the whole family of four worked all week long, they could make "as high as \$50 a week." But it didn't work out that way -- for one thing, the two boys figured they could do better going fishing. Pay to Negroes for cotton chopping was a flat \$2 a day, for work from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. But when they came into town to buy clothes and food, they had to pay the same prices as any one else.

I have shared meals with Ammie and Horace and the three boys, and they consisted uniformly

of a rough sort of short bread, cooked in a pie plate over the wood stove, and sweetened with blackstrap molasses; if times were good, coffee washed down the meal. "Well-to-do" Negro farmers of the region sometimes spread out a bit more, and include turnip greens, corn meal, beans; rice, and an occasional bit of hog back in the daily menu. I saw very little milk in most cabins; fruit was rare, and so was lean meat, especially lean meat in any quantity. Once, a "prosperous" farmer served a chicken on Sunday; every ounce of that chicken came to the table, right down to the claws.

Three principal musical strains offer, to persons like Horace, a break-through from the everyday, "mean world" which surrounds them. One is the old, devout strain of the jubilees, chants, hymns and spirituals sung in churches and the homes; one is the work song, which grows out of the long, hard hours in the field; and a third is the song about everyday life, which in this region takes the form of "cornfield songs," "the old blues," and "ballads." Each is easily recognizable as sung by Sprott in these records.

To his singing, Sprott contributes a sombre, "straining voice," a high degree of personal feeling, considerable skill in handling his voice, and a remarkable memory. If he hesitates for a moment, recalling an episode that brings to mind a song, or the song itself, it is because, as Sterling Brown said on hearing the tapes, "it's a deep well he's got to go down." The interview tapes show how wide an experience Sprott has had, and how far back, slowly and ruminatively, his memory can lead. Singing the songs, recalling them, his delivery is slow; it is the old way, the country way, the way they had it before "they had the time increasin'," as he tells us.

Three volumes of this "Music from the South" series have been given over to Horace Sprott because his old songs, his way of singing them, and his way of learning them, cut close to the heart of a tradition. It is an old tradition, and it is our feeling that his work embodies it best. It is a tradition of wandering, of restless beating back and forth across southern boundaries, of traveling and learning all the way.

We had a glimpse of this when Leadbelly talked about his days as leader for Blind Lemon Jefferson (Folkways FP 241-2); but Leadbelly was not a man to linger over tradition, or the questions asked of him. His best answer was always a tune-up on the guitar and a fresh burst of song. There was too much that Leadbelly, a would-be star, wanted to forget about the old South.

But Horace Sprott has had the time to sit down on his porch and go over all of it, step by step -- to recall, mile by mile and almost note for note, his long journey. The meaning of his recollections is that he has managed to give us, at almost the last possible moment in its history, an eloquent summation of Negro music. He has chronicled its enrichment as song after song has been shaped by one man's lips, then remembered and re-shaped by his fellow man and fellow singer.

At one time, there were many men like Horace Sprott, a driven band who learned from each other; hounded, rejected, even by their own people, they passed from one hard time to another, never forgetting the song. In that way, the tradition and the repertoire grew, and a body of poetic expression emerged. This poetry, and the music that went with it, was their heritage and their trust.

#### BAND 1

SELECTION 1: SMOKED LIKE LIGHTNING (Time: 2:15)  
(Source: MC 2-3) HORACE SPROTT and MARSHALL FORD (interjections) Recorded near Cahaba River, Perry County, Alabama, April 10, 1954.

Hey, yehoo . . . hoosie . . . yehoo . . . hoo . . . yehoe  
O, smoked like lightnin', and (she) teeth shine  
like gold  
Don't you hear me talkin', pretty mama,  
smoked like lightnin', and (she) teeth shine  
like gold  
Lahoo . . . hoo . . . lahoo . . . hoo . . . lahee  
I followed my baby to her buryin' ground,  
don't you hear me cryin', I say,  
I followed my baby to her buryin' ground  
Lahoo . . . hoo . . . lahoo . . . who hoo . . . dahee  
"Sing it, Sprott!" (Marshall Ford)  
They were gatherin' all around,  
Don't you hear me cryin', baby,  
They was gatherin' . . . out there . . . all around  
Lahoo . . . hoo . . . lahoo . . . wohoo ("call her, call  
her!") lahee.

Her hair (?hid the day-benner. . . )  
long, old lonesome day  
Don't you hear me cryin', baby  
(?in (it, id) the day benner)  
Long, old lonesome day  
Lahoo . . . hee (2) . . . lahoo . . . wohoo . . . lahee  
Hey, now!  
"Let's go, Sprott!" . . .

Band 2: EARLY ONE MORNING, THE BLUES COME  
FALLING DOWN (Source: MC18-4) Recorded April  
17, 1954, Huff Cabin.

Say, early one mornin', the blues come fallin'  
down (2)  
I didn't have no woman, didn't have no place to  
stay  
Come in this morning, blues were 'round my bed  
Got up this morning, the blues were in my bed  
Feel so worried, I didn't know what to do, hey  
hey, baby (2)  
Lay down last night, I in my sleep (2)  
When I woke up, didn't have no place to go (2)  
Thought 'bout my baby, she'd be back some day,  
hey hey (2)  
Now I'm cryin' all night an' I cried all night  
before (2)  
Till my baby come back, you know I won't cry no  
more  
I said Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, please  
When I go home, I'm going back to stay

Band 3: WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING HOME.  
(Source: MC4-7) (26) Horace Sprott, Mattie Ford,  
Eveline Daniels, and group. Sprott, voice and  
harmonica. Recorded April 10, 1954, at Daniels  
cabin, near Cahaba River, Perry County, Alabama.

Oh, when the saints go marching home (2)  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
Oh, when the saints go marching home  
Oh, when the dead

and Christ shall rise  
and Christ shall rise

Oh, when the dead and Christ shall rise  
Oh, Lord, I want to be in that number  
Oh, when the saints go marching home.  
Oh, when the saints

go marching home  
Oh, when the saints go marchin' on  
Oh, Lord, I want to be in that number  
Oh, when the saints go marching in (on, home)  
(. . . harmonica takes voice)

go marchin' in  
(. . . )  
go marchin' in  
(. . . ))

Oh, when the saints go marching in  
Lord, I wants to be in that number,  
Oh, when the saints go marching home  
Oh, when the dead and Christ shall rise (2)  
Good Lord, I wants to be in that number  
Oh, when the dead and Christ shall rise  
Oh, when the saints go marchin' in (2)  
Good Lord, I wants to be in that number,  
When the saints go marching home.

Band 4: AIN'T THIS A MEAN WORLD. (Source: MC31-1)  
(129) Horace Sprott. Marion, Alabama, April  
21, 1954.

". . . you have to kneel sometime . . . to . . .  
. . . try to live in, try to stay here  
till you die  
You got to kneel sometime, to try to live here,  
try to stay here  
till you die  
You got no mother, you got no father, got no  
sister, done lost a brother  
Have to kneel sometime, to  
to try to live here, try to stay here,  
till you die  
Have to go some time...  
to try to live here, try to stay here,  
till you die  
some time to live here try to  
stay here,  
till you die  
Got no mother, you got no father, got no sister,  
lost a brother  
Ain't this a mean world,  
to try to live here, try to stay here,  
till you die  
You got to give up your right  
to try to live here, try to stay here  
till you die.

Give up your right, to try to live here, try to stay here  
until you die.  
Got no mother, got no father, got no sister,  
oooh...I lost my brother  
Got to give up your right, to try to live here,  
try to stay here,  
till you die.  
Shout . . shout . . groan . . groan . . moan . .  
ah (like a turtle dove. . ?)  
Some time to live here (in?), time to stay here  
until you die

Oh, Lord. (Annie Sprott)  
Got no mother, got no father, and no sister,  
lost my brother,  
This is a mean, mean world  
to try to live here, try to stay here  
till we die.

Band 5, (second selection) SELECTION NO. 5  
OH, GIAD, OH, FREE (CHANT) Time: 2:52 Source:  
Mc 31-2) HORACE SPROTT and his mother, BESSIE  
FORD Recorded Marion, Alabama, April 21, 1954.  
(Note: first few notes of the chant were lost,  
as the singers started *ex tempore*: perhaps a  
slow fade into it would be good. . .)

going to stay here. . .hay  
yes. . .  
shine on. . . I'm so. . .  
oh oh glad. . . my soul is. . .  
my soul is free. . . I'm so glad. . .  
oh. . .glad my soul is. . .  
oh. . .free Jesus let me. . .  
mmm. . .hmmh. . . an' he  
can my heart. . .lay. . .hay Jesus  
oh, he let me. . .hmmh. . . an' he gave  
my heart. . .la. . .hay yes. . .yes  
surely, surely. . . my soul is. . .  
. . .oul is free. . . I'm so. . .  
oh. . .glad My sou. . .l  
. . .oul. . .oh. . .free, free indeed. . .

. . .free and deep (?) yes, Lord  
soul. . .oh. . .free my soul. . .  
oh. . .oh Just tell me, Jesus  
yes. . . I know you. . .  
he's. . .oh. . .hoo tell me. . .  
. . .oh, hoo. . . I know you. . .oh  
yes, yes! He is strong!  
yes he is some folks glad, too  
yeah, it is. . . my soul's free. . .  
n free indeed!

Band 6: MY HOE LEADIN' MY ROW (Source: MC 26-  
1) (112) Horace Sprott, Nellie Hastings.  
Recorded in Marion, Alabama, April 21, 1954.

hold it there...  
hoe choppin' Bessie Binder hold the hoe there..  
my hoe choppin' Bessie Binder hold it there...  
my hoe leadin' my row oh, hoe  
oh, wonder who's got the latest row hold the hoe there  
oh, wonder who's got that hold it there  
my hoe choppin' Bessie Binder hold the hoe there  
my hoe choppin' Bessie Binder hold it there  
oh, my hoe, leadin' my row  
leading my row, oh, hoe



PATCHES OF FARM LAND UNDER CULTIVATION IN HILLS  
OF TALLADEGA NATIONAL FOREST, OAKMULGEE DIVI-  
SION, ALA.

Oh, Nellie, I'll call you hoe there  
Oh, Nellie, I'll call you hoe there  
Oh, Nellie, I'll call you hoe there  
My hoe leadin' my row oh, lord  
Nellie hear me an' she won't answer oh, hoe  
Nellie hear me an' she won't answer oh, hoe  
Nellie hear me an' she won't answer oh, hoe  
Hoe, leadin' my row oh, no  
leadin' my row, oh, no  
Oh, Horace, I'll call you oh, hoe  
Oh, Horace, I'll call you oh, hoe  
Oh, Horace, I'll call you oh, there  
Oh, hoe leadin' my row oh, my row  
Oh, I'm  
My hoe goin' through an' I'm comin' back oh, hoe  
My hoe goin' through an' I'm comin' back oh, hoe  
My hoe goin' through an' I'm comin' back oh, hoe  
Oh, hoe, leadin' my row

MUSIC FROM THE SOUTH, VOLUME 2: Horace Sprott,  
Side 2. (Source: MT 17)

Band 1:

"I don't exactly remember what year I was born  
in, but I do know the month...I was born Feb-  
ruary the second, and I disremember what year...  
but anyway, I'm sixty-four years old..an' I was  
born right across the river (Cahaba) there at  
Sprott's Plantation...My mama an' my daddy, they  
was in slave'y time..."  
"Do you remember any of the songs that they sang?"  
"I remember...I can remember the songs that my  
grandmother sung, 'for she died..."  
"Where did you learn all your songs?"  
"Uh...some of 'em, I learned through old folks  
singin', an' some of 'em, I just picked them  
up..."  
"Well, like the blues, where do you figure you  
picked them up?"  
"The blues come from, uh...oh, old fellow by the  
name of Hankton...Willie Hankton, he was about  
the first fellow I heard sing blues."  
"And how old was he, when you first heard them?"  
"He was about...I was eighteen, he was 'bout  
twenty-nine. Me an' him used to work at the  
mill together...I left home, eleven years old..  
from my own name (Sprott, Alabama)...I went to  
uh...down here to Dallas County...I left Dallas  
County...when I became fourteen years old, I were  
were workin' over here at Barwell's...Mr. Bar-  
well's...back 'cross the river there at  
Heiberger and Union...When I come sixteen years  
old, workin' at the sawmill...Well, when I  
become eighteen, I spent six months in prison..  
in Kilby..."  
"Was that a county farm?"  
"Yes, that's it...it's when you do somethin',  
an' they send you through by law...court. Well,  
I did something, an' they sent me to prison,  
an' I went to Kilby, and I stayed there six  
months. I went for two years. That place right  
there (Holding out his left wrist to show a  
mark)...if I do something and come back, they  
know me."  
"Yeah, I see. That's a ...a mark on your...  
did they brand there?"

"Yes, sir, they brand there."  
"They branded on your left..."  
"An' I have rubbed it..."  
"...wrist."  
"...an' rubbed it, but hit won't come off."  
"Ummm...not a brand."  
"No sir, that'll die there. When I die, that'll  
be right there. I tooken an' shot a girl, an'  
I didn't kill her, an' I didn't hurt her. An'  
they sent me to prison. By spendin' six months  
time, she got a repeal for me to get out..."  
"What was the name of that girl, Horace?"  
"Marietta Waters."  
"Is she still alive?"  
"I reckon so. She...last time I heard from her,  
she's on the state pecunia (peculiar, pecuniary?)  
...up there...She married again, left me. Me  
an' her married, then."  
"After you got out?"  
"Yes, after I got out, me an' her married.  
Stayed together, eight years straight. Then I  
quit her. Didn't want to kill her, I quit her.  
An' I stayed separated eight years. An' I  
married another one..."  
"What was her name?"  
"Ida Marner...Stayed separated from her, eight  
years...nine years. Then I married this one I  
got now."  
"How long have you been with Annie?"  
"Seventeen years, will be eighteen this one,  
comin' August."  
"And did you have any children by either of your  
first two wives?"  
"Nary one but these two..."  
"...by Annie?"  
"That's right...Any one but Annie."  
"That's from Annie. Well, what...These are your  
only children you've ever had? These two boys?"  
"...only children, these two boys. I got one,  
he is twenty-one years old...I didn't know  
Annie at the time..."  
"What's his name?"  
"I recall it...Joe Boy...Joe Boy Sprott. He got  
two...two...he got three children now..."  
"Does he live around here?"  
"Bibb County...his mamma stay right up the road,  
here."  
"Is that the only time you had any trouble, with  
the prison?"  
"Yes, sir."  
"I guess one experience is enough."  
"Yes, sir, that give me enough. I didn't want..  
I don't want no more. I've ..I gove(rn) myself  
right now. When I get too full, if I can't walk  
off from you, I just won't say nothin' else to  
you."  
"Well...how was it in that prison? What did you  
do? What did they make you do?"  
"Well, you worked..."  
"On different farms?"  
"On a ...along through the winter, you had to  
shovel. An' 'long through this time of year,  
(May) you had to hoe...Pick cotton, in pickin'  
cotton time. Well, when I went there, it was  
'long in pickin' cotton time. An you got to..  
Mr. Ramsey, I ain't tryin' to fool...you got  
to bring them two hundred pounds of cotton in.  
I picked eighty-four...ninety-four, the first  
day. Ninety-four the second day. They brought  
me down 'cross that barrel, an' I promised  
them...thing, just like that thing layin' there..  
(he pointed to a round-topped old trunk lying  
on the porch)...an' when they throw you down  
'cross there, you don't know whatever overcome  
you...rubber come from there, an' struck you  
right there, an' right here, and you can't even  
move. They just pick you up and throw you on  
there. You don't need to say, they ain't goin'  
to put you on there. He got some boys there,  
all he got to do, say 'Get it.' Fightin' ain'  
doin' you no good. You goin' 'cross that box.  
An' when you go 'cross there, they ain't goin'  
to do nothin' but just grab an' pitch you out  
thataway, an' you goin' hit that box, an' when  
you hit that box, they got you, all right."  
"I told him, 'Cap'n, I say, if you just  
turn me loose, I'll bring your cotton in the  
mornin', what 'mount you want.' He say, 'Oh  
no, he says, I got to hit you on that I  
say, 'please, sir, don't hit me no mo'. He  
say, 'well, I'm goin' try you.' So'n he said  
that, he let me loose. He tawed (tied, touched)  
a button, right under that thing. I tried to  
watch an' see where he tawed (tied, touched)  
it, but I didn't. Tied (tawed) a button, I was  
standin' up on my foot. Third day,  
I brought him a hundred and fifty pound o'  
cotton. An' I can walk right out there right  
now if I want to, pick up two hundred an' fi...

I mean, I picked 'em two hundred an' fifty. An' I can walk right out there right now, an' pick two hundred pound o' cotton, any day. That boy settin' right there'll do the same thing.

"Well, in travelin' I left here, then...my folks didn't even know I'd been in prison, till I come back. I left here and went to Birmingham after I come back from prison. I stayed two years and two months, in Birmingham, and I imagine I'd have been there right now, if the climate had a suited my... (eye) climate. I couldn't get on to the climate. Doctor told me if I wanted to live, I better go back to the South. So I left then, and come back. I left here then, I went to Sanford, Mississippi.

"Was that on a big plantation?"

"Yes, sir, down there in Sanford, Mississippi, that's a big place...apple orchards, orange orchards, puckho'n (pecan)...not puckho'n, but cocoanuts...cocoanut farm, orange farm, apple farm. I stayed there three years. I used to... if anybody don't know, though, I do not want to gather these thing called cocoanuts. That tree wasn't a locust tree...yes sir, thorns, every-thing...cocoanut tree is a heap worse than a pecan tree. He got a long thing there, with a little snout on, he used to 'side up there an' take an' see one an' took it around an' cut it off an' drop it. You can't ever go up in that tree, like you can no other tree. Well, I stayed there three years, gatherin' oranges, pecans...I mean oranges, an' that...apples. Then I left that, an' I went to a snuff factory. That was down there in Louisiana...Jordan (?)

"You were saying that's how you learned so many songs?"

"Yes, sir, in travelin', pickin' 'em up."

"Do you remember any of the people from whom you picked them up -- anyone specially?"

"Richard Bamberg."

"And where did you run into him?"

"I run into him in uh...down in Louisiana."

"And what part of Louisiana?"

"Shreveport, Louisiana, where I worked."

"About what year was that? Do you remember how old you were, or about when that would be?"

"That was in 1933. I can 'member that year."

"And he knew a lot of blues, and things like that?"

"Yes, sir, he knew a lot of blues."

"Was he a box picker?"

"No, we just be workin' out on the farm field, like that, an' he'd go to sing...an' I'd pick 'em up from him. Me and him run buddies, all the time."

"Do you think he'd still be down there?"

"No... 'cause I heard he was dead."

"What was that work in the field? Sugar cane, or cotton?"

"No, cotton. Well, ah...after that ere, I came back to uh...Center Felix...that's down the river here..."

"Down the Cahaba?"

"Yes, sir, straight down the road. An' uh, stayed down there near Freeman Suttle's. An' I worked there, four long years, near Freeman Suttle's...an' I left there then, come back to Marion. That was in...when I come back to Marion, that was in 1935. Come back to Marion. When I left Marion then, I went up there to Mr. Joey Richardson's. I started in a crop with him an' made one, an' started the other. That was 1936. I went blind..."

"What was the cause of that?"

"Cataracts. E.B. Fuller's. He got it now. Well, I worked there with him, piddlin' around a year, and couldn't see, and couldn't take care of him...an' I left him then, in 1936, come up here to old man Gene (Le Berq's) Burk's. ....here to 'cross the river, Bibb County Line Perry County and Bibb County line...Mr. Shewie Eldridge...he carried me to Selma, stood my operation an' everything. I got where I could see. An' I left that then, and went to Mobile. Stayed in Mobile four years."

"What did you do in Mobile?"

"I worked on the bay."

"Did you pick up any songs there?"

"Yes, I learned three or four, there. One of 'em I said I was going give you if you ever come back."

"Do you want to do that now?"

"It don't make no difference."

"All right, let's do that now."

Band 2: LUKE AND MULLEN (Source: MT 18-1)

Oh, git up, Sam Mellon, put on your shoes  
Git ready t'catch old Luke 'fore he leave this town

Oh, Luke done laid Mullen body down

Oh, Luke an' ol' Mullen, they began to squabble  
an' talk

Luke told ol' Mullen, 'I don't want to lay your body down.'

Luke shot ol' Mullen, shot old Mullen once, shot ol' Mullen twice

Third time he shot ol' Mullen, Luke laid old Mullen body down.

Wake up, Sam Mellon, put on your shoe

Get ready t'catch old Luke 'fore he leave this town

For Luke done laid Mullen body down.

Mullen tried to play bad, Mullen didn't know how  
When he found old Mullen, old Luke done laid Mullen body down.

Luke told Mullen, 'Don't want to kill you, man  
Stop your jivin', stop your foolin' around,  
Don't want to hurt you, don't want to hurt your feelin',  
'Cause Luke done laid Mullen's body down.

Shot old Mullen once, shot old Mullen twice,  
Third time he shot old Mullen, Luke laid Mullen's body down.

Undertaker begin, ride ride about  
Found old Luke where Mullen laid his body down.

Band 3: INTERVIEW continued (Source: MT 18)

"Is that based on a real story that happened to some fellows?"

....that was Luke and Mullen?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was that when you were down there?"

"No sir, that was third year after Surrender.

They started that song."

"Do you reckon he was that old?"

"He could have been that old, 'cause he looked old. You remember that old fellow, Uncle Wils?" (Wilson Boling, 93 years.)

"Yes, Uncle Wilson."

"Well, he were just...looked like to me, he was old as Uncle Wilson then..."

"Did he work in the docks, or in the fields, or ...this fellow that taught you that old song?"

"He was a ...me an' him worked in a place you call the packing house. We was workin'...we called it the shed. Now there was a string where us was workin' at...a string of these here transport trucks you see goin' up an' down the road. We had to pack them things in boxes, roll 'em out...where I was, I was packing beef...rollin' beef out...in cans, and boxes. They put 'em in boxes and tied 'em down. I set 'em on there an' carry 'em to the door, where the transport trucks done backed up there as fast I rolled 'em out there...As I was rollin' them out there, he was throwin' 'em in the truck, an' he got it loaded...I have traveled..."

MUSIC FROM THE SOUTH, VOLUME 3

HORACE SPROTT, 2

SIDE 1

"Did you meet any other fellows besides this one that had songs that went back like that?"

"Yes, sir, I learned...where I learned this song here I was tellin' you 'bout John Henry...I learned this song, John Henry, from a white fellow by the name of Cleve Hesoot."

"Where was that?"

"That was in uh...down here in uh...Summerfield (Alabama - north of Selma) right around the hill and on by (there) to Summerfield...I learned that John Henry from him. And another little old fellow down there by the name of John..."



SIDE OF SHED, SPROTT, ALABAMA "ILEFT HOME....FROM MY OWN NAME."

John Lewis. He knowed a right smart of songs. I learned a heap of 'em from him." "We was talkin' 'bout my grandma a while ago. One of her songs done come to me now. She was in slave'y..." (Source: MT 18)

NOTE: Because of speed variation of the portable, the first line of STEAL AWAY had to be cut. It is:

Green trees is bowing, o sinner stand a-trembling.  
From here, the song is intact. . .

SELECTION 1: STEAL AWAY TO JESUS TIME: 3:57  
(Source: MT 19 - 1)

The trumpet sounds in-a my soul  
Ain't got long to stay here  
Run away, steal away, run away to my Jesus

Run away, steal away home

I ain't got long to stay here

My Lord is callin', he callin' by the thunder  
Trumpets sound within-a my soul  
I ain't got long to stay here  
Run away, steal away, run away to Jesus, child'en

Run away, steal away home.

I ain't got long. . .stay here.

If I was a gambler, tell you what h'I would do  
Stop my way of gamblin', I'd work on the dealin' too

Run away, etc.

If I was a liar, tell you what h'I would do  
I'd stop my way of lyin', I'd live for my Jesus too

Run away, etc.

Band 2: INTERVIEW continued (Source: MT 19)

"When you were in Louisiana, did you ever get to hear any of the jazz bands? Did you ever hear of them?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever get to New Orleans?"

"No, I got on the suburbs, I never did get up into New Orleans town."

"Did you ever hear any brass bands playing down around there?"

"Not in New Orleans. I hear the brass band down here below town."

"The Lapsy Band?"

"Yes."

"Played with them one night."

"With the Lapsy Band?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you play -- the harp?"

"We was down here at a place you call Gus Mitchell's. I reckon you hear talk about it. He keep the bands down there nearly most all the time. I was down in there one night...that was no better than last year...I with the Lapsy boys last year. And uh...they got to playin' a song 'bout Shine On... 'shine on me.' They have got it, but h'I ain't got it like they have. They got it increasin'. And I didn't have it increasin'. . .The best way is steady."

"We kind of left you down in Mobile...the story part..."

"I stayed there in uh...Mobile...we eat and drill, right (or, 'We eat, in a grill, right there...'), 'cause sometime, it be till twelve o'clock... still a workin'."

"Twelve at night?"

"Yes, sir. Sometimes we'd be there from six in the morning, till twelve that night."

"How much did you get paid for that?"

"Well, forty cents an hour. Sometimes we'd be there twenty-four hours 'fore we ever move."

And they rose from 40 cents an hour, we went to gettin' six bits out of 'em. When they rose to six bits an hour, we'd stay there then anywhere from 20,10,15 and 20 hours. Sometime I wouldn't pull off my shoe until I got so weak one day that I just had to quit. Workin' night an' day, 48 hours. So then sometime my check would be 300, 360 dollars, 370 dollars. And if I had a taken care of that money, I'd ha' been whole footed today. But you see it would go day come day God sent Sunday. Big time. I lay there sometimes when the pay day...an' that's where

(why) I learnt so much...I traveled. I left there one day, an' I stopped out in Sanford, Mississippi...s way back in here. Three of us'es, in a car...Sanford, Mississippi. Now in some part o' Mississippi, out there around in Meridian, Mississippi, out there...if he goin' go on 't south side, he won't never come back...no way..."

"Is that so...that's a rough town."

"I declare hit is. Now, we was up in Meridian, Mississippi 'bout three year ago...an' two of our fellow left here with us got locked up in jail. I kept a tellin' 'em, I said 'Big Red, you 'an Mister Moody better pull now.' I say, 'you all gettin' in my country now,' I say, 'you can go in Meridian all right, but y'all know where you all at now?' I say, 'y'all come here in the wrong way.' The moment they stopped the car like that...th' road patrol run it up. We had a case o' beer, settin' right there. An' he gotten up to Moody John an' Big Red an' called them on. We had to come from Meridian, Mississippi then, back here, to get money to go back an' get 'em. Me an' Harry over there. Old Harry stood every bit of it. This fellow right there, he outrun me (thim?) an' he got away. He come home, that (my) baby there can tell you, wouldn't you honey, he come home and told the folks we was in jail...Harry said he was a preacher, I was a deacon. And I ain't never been a deacon in my life, I ain't never been nothin' in the church but a member. So we got 'em out, an' got them home same night we got...we...they stayed home same night we stayed at home."

"I can...uh...talk about down here on my...some parts of uh...Avondale, I worked in...I didn't name hit...."

"No, that's right."

"I worked in the Avondale four years. Stayed in there."

"What'd they do 'there?"

"Cut staves...make barrel cages out of them. Big yard...mill there. Well, I stayed there.. an' the song that I started to sing one night, and I cut hit off, I learned hit in Avondale.. and I want to tell you the truth...I have traveled in my days, and time...1948, fellow hit me with a brick, and cut me...my right... my left ear some off my head. Dr. Mason sewed it back on...with 49 stitches...that's in travelin'..."

"What'd he do that for, Horace?"

"Got mad. Threw a brick. An' I saw him when he crooked his arm and cocked it ready, an' I just nodded my head thataway an' he chucked that brick over...hadn't been for that, he'd a tore this part of my head slam off...Then in the year 1939...49...in forty...in 1948, fellow hit me with a double-barreled shotgun, right back there..."

"Right behind the ear?"

"Right behind the ear. Had to blood (or butt?) it again...I lay dead from twelve...from one o'clock till this time o' evening, 'fore I come to. An' still, I'm still here able to get about now. Heap o' folks see me an' ask me, how did I make it? ...an' how I'm makin' it, an' I tell 'em well, I'm making it through by the grace of God...."

Band 3: SPEECH continued

"You can pick that up, me walking right down the road...cause hit go for loud..."

SELECTION 2: LOUISIANA BLUES (Source: MT 20-1)  
This is song referred to in dialog above, as learned in "the Avondale."

Hey. . ayy. . hey hey woman woman woman  
Now you know how your daddy feels

Hey. . hoo. . oh. . hee  
I got somethin' to tell you, baby

Hey.... hoo  
That you never heard, baby

hey. . whoa. . eee

Hey ay hey hey, woman

Oh.. oh. . baby. . hey. . oo. . whoa. .  
eee

I got somethin' to tell you baby, Lord,  
Lord

Make your hair rise on your head  
Sprinklin' on your bed

whoa. . whoa. . wha . . hee

Oh, Liza, oh oh Liza, Liza Jane



CUTTING TIMBER IN BOTTOMLAND. HORACE SPROTT, HARRY RUTLEDGE

who. . oh. . hee

Everything I ever tell you, baby  
You run and tell your man, hey, woman!  
I'm goin' tell you something baby,

Lord, Lord  
Your man don't understand. .

hey. . who. . ooh. . ehee. . .

Hey, baby, baby, hey, hey, gal!  
I want to know what's the matter with  
you, woman. . .

ho. . ho woo ho ooo whaa, hee...

If I feel tomorrow like I feel today  
ooh, hoo. . ooh. . ho. . eee

O, be no rollin', baby, o, be no get  
along,

awha. . who. . ee

I'm goin' follow you woman...woman!  
Aah, to your buryin' ground, Lord. .

ahooo. . . aowhahees. . .

You used to love me baby, baby, hey. .  
Look who you got now. . . honey . .

who. . hoo. . whooo. . hee. .

An' you may be a bully woman,  
But you won't last long. . .

whoa. . hoo. . whoa. . ohee. . ahwoo. . whooo.

Band 1: Side 2: INTERVIEW continued (Source: MT 20)

"The...uh...fellow I got that song from, he was named (Saunders?)...Thormus...." (Thomas)  
"And he called it Louisiana Blues?"

"Louisiana Blues. Me an' him was workin' at the same mill."

"And about when was it that you heard that?"

"That was in 1935."

"But he must have heard that a long time before?"

"He heard that 'way back...He say he got it from Mike Waters."

"Mike Waters?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was he from Louisiana too?"

"Yes, sir, he was from Louisiana. Both of them was from Louisiana..."

"Did you ever hear talk of a fellow named Leadbelly. . . or Walter Boyd, was his name once, who was sent away...who used to sing right smart of songs out in Louisiana?"

"He had left 'fore I got there."

"But you did hear of him?"

"... they was talkin' of him when I got there, but. . ."

"He also played the guitar."

"Yes, sir."

"But you did hear about him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who told you about him?"

"Thormus...Thormus (Thomas?) followed him."

"I see. He did follow him?"

"Yes, sir, he did follow him. He told him I (4d) ought to come in there 'fore his buddy left..."

"Who was his buddy?"

"That's the fellow you call...."

"Oh, Leadbelly."

"Said I ought to come in there 'fore he left. Said, good a voice as I got, said, you wouldn't be here neither, say, you'd be with him, he'd carry you with him."

"That's right. Well, I'm..."

"An' I hate I didn't get there...I used to follow guitars all the time...just like Philip (Ramsey) up here. I'd go down, set down, they'd get to pickin', I get to singin'.

That's where I learned a heap o' different songs...on the guitar. Well, I quit followin' the guitar, then went to blowin' the harp (harmonica) with the guitar...."

Luke Harley...Dave Thomas...we picked...Luke Harley picked guitar, me an' Dave blowed a harp."

So all them gone but me, I'm here yet. Dave's dead, an' Luke's dead, an' I'm still unturned, ...yet."

"Did you ever hear them talking of Blind Lemon Jefferson?"

"I knowed him...I know two or three of his songs. ...old Blind Lemon."

"Well, Lead used to lead Blind Lemon, you know... Leadbelly used to lead Blind Lemon."

"Yes, sir. I think they say he's dead...both of them...Blind Lemon, I'd rather beat the dust down, than eat, an' hear him get to singin' them blues..."

"But you never heard Leadbelly, did you?"

"No...The fellow was leadin' Blind Lemon when I met him, Richard Shaw."

"Is he still around?"

"Richard?"

"I think him and Lemon both dead. But now, when old Blind Lemon started this song, 'bout sweet lovin' mamma come tippin' 'cross the floor in her little stockin' feet....an' I know that one."

"Can you sing that?"

"Yes, I can sing both of them. I learned them two from Lemon."

"...on the next reel I got...I got two in mind right now. They'll be...I can still hold 'em.. One of 'em is my own, and the other one is old Lemon's."

"You've made up songs of your own...made up the words?"

"Yes, sir. One of 'em is my own, I'm figuring to put it on now."

"Is the music yours...or is that from a blues.. just a blues melody you've heard around?"

"I just get settin' down, studyin' it, study up a song. I name it when I get it perfect... I name it."

"I tell you who I did learn how from...he played a banjo...in the World War, first World War, and he been all through that. And he lived here till about three year ago...he died. Will Howe (or Harris)....Played in every state in Alabama.. Will Howe..."

".....and you learned lots of songs..."

"Lots of songs from him. He's in the first World War, an' me an' him run together, day and night."

Band 2: Selection 1: ONE DOLLAR BILL, TWO DOLLAR BILL. (Source: MT 21-1).

Yes, a one dollar bill, two dollar bill,  
Find no bill like the railroad bill.  
Yes, a one dollar bill, two dollar bill,  
Can't find no bill like the railroad bill.  
One dollar, two dollar, three dollar bill,  
Find no bill like the railroad bill.  
How 'bout your money, how 'bout your time,  
One dollar bill, here's a two dollar bill,  
Find no bill like the railroad bill,  
Used to have a dollar, used to have a dime,  
Used to have a nickel, but now ain't got a dime.  
It's a one dollar bill, two dollar bill,  
You won't find no bill like these railroad bills.  
Sent for you once, sent for you twice,  
Sent for you my last time, I ain't never sendin' no more,

Like that railroad bill.

Steal in the mornin', steal ev'y night,

Steal at noontime, to get my dollar right,

Yes, a one dollar bill, two dollar bill,

Find no bill like the railroad bill.

"Yes, that was Will Harris' song, (he) picked on the banjo all the time."

Band 3:

"What was the other song you had in mind?"  
"Yes, I got it..."

Selection 2: MAMA, DON'T TREAT YOUR DAUGHTER MEAN (Source: MT 21-2)

Hey mama, o mama, don't treat your daughter mean.  
Just because she would marry lowdown Jesse Jame  
Oh mama, please don't treat your daughter mean  
'Cause she would marry, lowdown Jesse Jame  
Says she my sister ain't you my mama  
Seem like the way you are treatin' me  
'bout to make me lose my mind  
If I don't go crazy, Lora, I believe I lose my mind

Hey hey mama, don't you treat your daughter mean  
Said just because she wouldn't marry Jesse Jame  
Says I got to walkin' this mornin'

got the (to) fallin' means 'n cryin'  
Thinking 'bout my sister uh  
wantin' to marry lowdown Jesse Jame  
Jesse Jame was a wheeler, Jesse Jame was a  
(start?) stoff  
Jesse Jame was a man didn't bother leavin'  
Just because my sister wanted to marry Jesse  
Jame  
She 'bout to run me crazy, she 'bout to make me  
lose my mind  
If I don't go crazy, hey, I believe I'll lose  
my mind  
An' I want somebody to tell me whether that be  
crazy or not.  
The blues come slidin', mama, just like showers  
of rain  
Blues in my kitchen, blues in my dining room,  
Went to bed last night, the blues in my bed,  
I begin to wonder, would Jesse Jame make me well  
If I don't go crazy, sure goin' to lose my mind.  
I stood then this mornin' about half past four,  
Blues standin' a-knockin' on my front door,  
Said, blues, blues (with a ) feelin', please  
don't jump on me,  
Ain't got nowhere, got nowhere to go.  
Yes, rock was my pillow, cold i'on (iron) was  
my bed  
Got nobody to hug an' call me babe,  
Say blues with a feeling, don't you worry me  
If I don't go crazy, sure goin' lose my mind

"I 'magine that's crazier still."  
"Where'd you get that one, Horace?"  
"I made that one."  
"You made that one up?"  
"Yes, sir. I just got sittin' down. I was  
studyin' 'bout the words. My own self, I made  
that song...my own self. But after it got  
started, I hear it in several places, folks  
singing it. But I sit down, made that one up."  
"Where do you figure you heard that -- I mean,  
where do you figure they heard that when they  
studied it?"  
"I don't know."  
"Heard you sing it?"  
"Yes, yes, they got that one from me. I set  
down...down here one night, at 't stavin' mill,  
down near Felix-below (little?). Felix, near  
north of Summerfield, an' made that song. Back  
down there near Summerfield, and made that song  
up myself. Started singin', an' got tuned to  
it. I liked it right well, an' then I started  
playin' (it) with a guitar. Oh...uh...Luther  
Waters. Me an' him tune it with the guitar, an'  
I sung it."  
"Do you remember what year that was?"  
"1942."  
"When you made that one up."  
"Yes...now, the song I sung, Saturday night me  
an' her ( ) I made that song. That's the  
reason I told her, she'd say, I don't know that,  
song, an' I'd say, follow me...."

#### Band 4:

"There's another one...if there's a chance for  
it then...."  
"Yeah, there's a chance for it."  
"Let me see, can I get a short one...yeah, I got  
a short one....Ready?"

#### Selection 3: SAY, YOU DON'T KNOW, HONEY (Source: MT 21-3)

Say, you don't know, you don't know my mind  
Dog-gone you baby, you don't know, you don't know  
my mind  
When you see me laughin', I'm laughin' to keep  
from cryin'  
Got a handful o' nickels, pocketful o' dimes,  
Houseful of children, ain't nary one mine  
Honey, you don't know, you don't know my mind  
When you see me laughin', laughing to keep from  
cryin'  
You don't know, you don't know, you don't know  
my mind  
Dog-gone you baby, you don't know, you don't  
know, you don't know my mind, etc.  
I asked my baby, could she stand to see me go,  
Yes, dog-gone you, I could stand to see you die,  
Honey you don't know, etc.  
Nickel is a nickel, dime is a dime,  
Can't drink whiskey, but I'm wild about my wine,  
Baby, you don't know, etc....  
Woke up this mornin', 'bout half past fo'  
Head on my pillow where my baby used to lay,  
Honey, you don't know, etc.

Nickel is a nickel, dime is a dime,  
Can't drink whiskey, but I'm wild about my wine,  
Baby, you don't know, etc....  
Woke up this mornin', 'bout half past fo'  
Head on my pillow where my baby used to lay,  
Honey, you don't know, etc.

#### A NOTE ON THE RECORDINGS IN THESE VOLUMES

Symbols in brackets indicating source of recordings refer to use of the Magnecorder (MC) and Magnemite (MT) tape machines. No claim is made that these field recordings achieve an optimum of high fidelity; the machines were set up as carefully as possible, often under difficult circumstances. The Magnemite, which is hand cranked, was subject to unfortunate speed variations. We hope these will be forgiven in the interview sequences. It was a question of this, or nothing at all. These sequences were taken on the porch of Sprott's cabin, and any one listening carefully can hear in the background at least some of the familiar evening and night sounds of the region: the baying of dogs in the distance, an occasional bark from near at hand, the cry of whip-poor-wills that nest in the partly secluded clearings along the edge of the woodland, and the trill of meadow birds. Somewhat more distracting are the sounds made by dropping of a tin plate, rustling of wind on the small crystal microphone, the squeak of the rubber capstan wheel of the Magnemite, the sound (accompanied by electrical clickings) of cranking the mechanical motor. Mr. Asch, Mr. Bartok, and Mr. Hancock have done their best to equalize the field tapes and to reduce these distractions to a minimum. We are duly grateful to the water moccasins that glide silently through the irrigation ditch a few feet from Sprott's porch steps; their presence, at least on the tapes, provides no distraction whatsoever.

#### MUSIC FROM THE SOUTH, VOLUME 4: HORACE SPOTT, 3

#### SIDE 1

#### BAND 1

#### SELECTION 1: DIVES AND IAZARUS (DIP YOUR FINGER DOWN IN THE WATER AND COOL MY PARCHERIN' TONGUE) (Source: MT 22-3)

"Dip your finger down in the water and cool  
my parchin' tongue  
'cause (h)'I'm tormented in the flame  
Lord, have mercy  
Dip your finger down in the water an' cool  
my parcherin' tongue,  
Because I'm tormented in the flame."  
Rich man Dives...

"I'm tormented!"



HORACE SPOTT AND NEIGHBOR (LEFT) ON PORCH OF  
FRIEND, SATURDAY EVENING, NEAR DOBINE CREEK

Say, before he died,  
I've got a home in hell,  
Lord, have mercy  
Dip your finger down in the water an' cool  
my parcherin' tongue  
'cause I'm tormented in the flame.  
Rich man Dives...  
called poor Lazarus...  
Dip your finger down in the water an' cool  
my parcherin' tongue  
Because I'm tormented in the flame  
Lord have mercy  
Dip your finger etc...."  
Oh, rich man...Lazarus...  
Say, before he die...  
"I've got a home on high, hallelujah,  
Dip your finger, etc."  
Say, poor boy...Lazarus  
Went to rich boy...Lazarus...  
(.... ) as I can be,  
Dip your finger, etc..."  
Poor boy Lazarus hurt,  
Went to rich man Dives hurt,  
Told him,  
"Any crumb fall from the table... 'cause  
in this flame,  
Lord have mercy,  
and dip your finger, etc..."  
Went again to talk ...  
...no crumb to find  
Lord have mercy,  
Dip your finger, etc..."

Note: Horace Sprott's song about Dives and Lazarus is based on the following passage from the New Testament, Luke 16:19-25:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:  
And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,  
And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.  
And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;  
And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.  
And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.  
But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."  
A variant fragment of DIVES AND IAZARUS is contained in Lomax, John A. and Alan, "American Ballads and Folk Songs," Macmillan, 1934, pp. 583-584. Another reference in song to the same parable is found in GOT A HOME IN THAT ROCK, "National Jubilee Melodies", National Baptist Publishing Board, Nashville, Tennessee, n.d., p. 49.

#### Band 2:

"The name of that was rich boy Lazarus...po' boy Lazarus, an' rich man Dives...."  
"I asked you a long time ago one night about the first blues you thought you might have heard, when you were a little...little boy..what you thought that one was. And you sang one that night, on the way home in the car...?"  
"When I first hear the blues?...to remember 'em an' bring 'em on up. I was 'bout sixteen years old. Well, after I heard the first blues I heard, now let me see....I can't even name that, first blues I heard, right now...but I can name (a few?) (or, name the field songs...)"  
"Well, like those songs that you sing, like those field songs...those were being sung before..."  
"...long years ago, yes sir, 'fore I got 'em."

"Do you reckon they started from people working in the field?"

"Yes, sir. Yes sir, old cornfield songs, that's the reason that's the name of all of 'em I know...those old cornfield songs..."

"Well now, those songs...those were sung mostly by colored folks, weren't they?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well where do you reckon they got them?"

"They sprung...from I imagine, from they fore-parents...Just like some of mine sprung from some of my foreparents, but not them at home, you know..."

(Ed. note: Reference is to living members of Sprott's family, on his mother's side, who are church people)...Such as my daddy...(His father is dead)...my daddy's folks..."

"They used to sing them, your daddy's folks?"

"Yes, sir. My daddy an' all his folks. I got a uncle, used to sing them things you hear me holler..."

"They'd sing 'em in slave'y time, then?"

"Yes...you'd hear him, walkin' up and down that road there, an' you could hear him five..."

'bout five miles there, like you can me if I'd holler 'em out..."

"Did they ever use them to talk together, in the field...one field to the other...to let 'em know who was there?"

"Yes. It like...we be hollerin' over here in a bunch...be hearin' 'em over yonder...an' they wouldn't know who they was...they couldn't make out, they figure one in that bunch would answer. he'd liable mought (not) to holler. But one in this bunch over here going to answer. An' you'd know which one...which was which. One might answer 'way down yonder. An' I can get to hollerin', right out there...singin'...I can get an echo from some down yonder on Daniel's place...I get the echo from some, maybe back over here to Mr. Griffin, back up there..."

"They don't do that any more, though, do they?"

"I can do it now. I can get to hollerin' right now..."

Band 3: Selection 2: BABY, IF I DON'T GET LUCKY. (Source: MT 23-2)

If I don't get lucky, baby you will always know  
If I don't get lucky, honey you will always know  
No, I don't mean, I don't mean you no good  
Sometime I get to walkin', baby, walkin' all night long

Just to get a....., just to get a thrill with you

Yes, sometime you mistreated me, baby, Lordy, (h'it) comin' back to you,

Sometime you mistreat me baby, you know h'it comin' back home to you

When I get a thrill with you, baby, don't know hardly what to do

Say, you woke up this mornin', like a rattle-snake.....(2)

Oh, you etc..

You might....., every where you go

Oh, I can't get a thrill, I can't get a thrill with you

Say, say, tell me, baby, what done got the matter with you

Yeah, you done got just like, ol' rattlesnake... an' the squirrel

Think about...this mornin', just before I leave home

Oh, I didn't have nobody...nobody to care... care for me

I done got to the place, baby, I can't get a thrill, yeah, with you

Talk to your mama an' your father, till..... comin' back home

Oh, talk with your mama, tell her...come back home

They feel this-a-way, to be worried..... (bothered down?),

Yeah, you done (just, or that) like, ol' rattlesnake an' the squirrel (or, "in his coil"?)

I...can't....can't get a thrill with you.

"You said that was the kind of song that you sang in the first days when you ever heard about blues?"

"Yes, sir...."

"and uh..."

"...That's the way they went, then. That's the way the blues started, then. Now, they done



UNCLE WILS' (WILSON) BOLING, AGED 93 YEARS "IT'S A JOB ON ME, TO SUPPORT MYSELF AT MY AGE."

made 'em, an' different."

"That's right. And you heard them like that? You'd sing them, then somebody else five miles down..."

"When I was a kid..."

"...would come back at you with it."

"Yes. An' you could know...that's when a squad be out there, and a squad be down at Daniel's place. You could see 'em, but you couldn't make 'em out, to know...to know who they is, well if you holler'd, you'd know...In them days an' times, you better not holler, if you holler, somebody gonna answer you...you'd know who he was by answer..."

Band 4: Selection 3: SOME OF THESE DAYS (I'M GOING TO WALK THIS MILKY WHITE ROAD). (Source: MT 24-1)

Oh, when-a we walk, walk this milky white road

Poor child, some of these days

Well, I'm going to walk, walk this milky highway

Oh, Lord, some of these days

Well, well, well, h'I'm goin' to walk up, goin' take my stand

I'm goin' jine the Christian band

That's when-a we walk, walk this milky highway

Oh, Lord, some of these days

I'm goin' to meet...my lovin' mother,

I'm goin' to shake righteous hands

Tell her how I made it over, this old road,

Well, well, well, through trial, through tribulation,

Oh Lord, I have really come

That's when-a we walk, walk this milky white road,

Oh Lord, some of these days (2)

I'm goin' to meet my lovin'...(Annie?)...

I'm goin' to shake righteous hands

Tell her how ....I made it over my highway

Well, I have-a....I have done

I have triumphed!....hold me down!

That's when I....I walk...walk this milky white road

Oh Lord, some of these days

Through trial, through tribulation

Jesus standin', on....o...my high

Yeah, he'll lead me in the valley,

To make my journey through

Yes, I ....I walk, walk this milky white road

Oh Lord, some of these days

Well, well, well, I'm goin' to walk, walk this milky white road

I'm goin' jine that Christian band

Ah, when-a we walk, walk this milky white road

Oh Lord, some of these days.

Band 5:

"I learned that 'un...travelin' uh...through the uh....state of uh....Dallas County. 'Course it was an old lady, sung that song. I reckon she was about seventy-five or eighty years old."

"About how many years ago was that?"

"'Bout twenty-five...an' uh, she was...had been sick. We had been settin' up with her, weeks an' weeks at a time. She got up...one day, we was hoein' right in front of the house, workin' in front of the house, just like out there. An' she got up, an' got to walkin' in the yard... hadn't been out of the house in three weeks. An' she got up and got to walkin' in the yard, singin' that song...and as she was singin' it, I caught it. Every verse of it she sung, I caught it. She went back in the house and laid down. When we come out of the field...it was about fifteen of five, we quit at five...when we got there, she was dead...."

"I told 'em all...I said, 'if she don't die to-night, she'll die tomorrow'....because death was

on her, an' she givin' y'all a pattern to follow her, if you wants. I told her...her daughter, when I was talkin' to her, say, she given y'all, now, a pattern to follow her if you wants. See, she told you she goin' walk that milky highway. Y'all weren't there for her to talk to, an' she just got up...the Lord give her strength to get up to sing...got on back in the house and laid down. I 'magine she died, soon's she laid down. 'Cause we quit at five o'clock, and 'bout fifteen to five, she was singin'. When we got them rows done, we quit an' got in the house, and she was dead....last song she sung.

"An'...uh...they wanted it sung over her body. Couldn't a one sing it...not now. So I told 'em I'd sing it. Say, 'you can't sing it.' Told 'em, 'yes I can, I sing, I can sing it like she sung it.' Say, 'if you sing it, I'm going to have the undertaker to call you'....So, just before they preach, they called me up to sing that song...for my sister Sarah...."

"I got up...when I got up from my seat, I got up and seed talkin'. Told them, I wished they had let me sit down... 'Cause when I'm sittin' down, my mind is up...quick as I get up, my mind sets back down...so I don't want to make no water haul. And so those folks wouldn't let me sang that song...."

"Couldn't sing it like I wanted, 'cause they wouldn't let me. They was screamin' an' hollerin' an' a-goin' on, an' I couldn't do that, with folks hollerin' that way. But they say I sung it. Sing it, and taken another song...I was glad...I don't know, Lord give me that talent, I ain't got it, it ain't mine, it belongs to Him. Reason why I don't sing many reels...of course, I sing 'em sometimes...sing near 'bout as many reels as I do church songs."

"By reels, you mean blues, or...."

"That's right. We call 'em reels."

Side 2

Band 1: Selection 1: BLACK SNAKE BLUES. (Source: MT 23-1) (as learned from Blind Lemon Jefferson).

Oh...ain't got no mama now

She told me late last night, I didn't need no mama nohow

Oh...black snake crawlin' in my room

Some pretty mama better come and get these black snake soon

Mmm....honey, what the matter now

Told me late last night, didn't need no mama nohow

Yes, sweet lovin' mama come tippin' 'cross the flo' in her lovin' stockin' feet

Oh...ain't got no mama now

She told me late last night, I didn't need no mama nohow

Mmm....black snakes all in my room

Mmm...mama that's all right, that's all right for you

Mama that's all right, most any old way you do

Oh...ain't got no mama now

She told me late last night, I didn't need no mama nohow

M...sweet lovin' mama come tippin' 'cross the flo' in her lovin' stockin' feet

Mama that's all right, that's all right for you

Baby, that's all right, most any old way you do

Oh...black snake crawlin' in my room

Some pretty mama better come an' get these black snakes soon

Oh...it must been a bedbug, you know a chinch don't bite that hard....



HEAD MARKER OF GRAVE IN BURYING GROUND OF OLD OAK GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH, NEAR OSBORN CROSS ROAD, PERRY COUNTY



PORCH OF CABIN IN TALLADEGA NATIONAL FOREST, OAKMULGEE DIVISION, NEAR NEW HOPE CHURCH. THIS CABIN, COMPARED TO THAT OF HORACE SPROTT, IS GENEROUS.

Mmm...honey that's all right, that's all right for you  
Honey that's all right, most any old way you do..  
Mmm...it must been a bedbug, chinch don't bite that hard....  
O, sweet loving mama come tipping 'cross the floor in her lovin' stockin' feet  
Honey that's all right, that's all right for you  
Honey that's all right, most any old way you do  
Oh....I ain't got no mama now  
I...m....don't need no mama nohow  
That's all right, any old way you do.

"That's old Blind Lemon...I learned that one from him..."  
(Ed. Note: Other reference by Sprott to Blind Lemon is in MUSIC FROM THE SOUTH, VOLUME 3: HORACE SPROTT, 2; Side 2, Band 1.)  
"When did you know Blind Lemon?"  
"I...know him down here in Eutaw, Alabama."  
"He was singin' there?"  
"Yes...playin' the guitar that night..I just sot there an' caught that song from him, one night in Eutaw...Eutaw, Alabama...I didn't catch but that one, 'cause I wanted that one...any song I want, I can catch it right quick...."

Band 2: Selection 2: JESUS GOING TO MAKE UP MY DYING BED. (Source: MT 24-2)

Oh...when I come to die...  
Jesus, take me home on high  
An' I be crossin' over, I be crossin' over,  
Jesus going to make up my dying bed  
Well, in my dying hour, I know somebody goin' cry  
All I want you to do for me, give that bell a tone,  
Then I be goin' to heaven, I be goin' to heaven,  
I be goin' to heaven,



Jesus going to make up my dying bed.  
Mmm...in my dyin' hour, I know somebody goin' cry,  
All I want you to do for me, just 'fore my dyin' hour  
I'll be dyin' easy, I be dyin' easy, I be dyin' easy  
Jesus gonna make up (my) dying bed  
Oh...when I come to die, Jesus, take me to my home on high  
h'I be goin' with Jesus, I be goin' with Jesus,  
I be goin' with Jesus,  
Jesus gonna make up my dyin' bed  
Oh....oh...Lord, crynin' won't do no good,  
Oh....oh...Lord, groanin' won't do no good,  
I'll be restin' easy, I'll be restin' easy,  
I'll be restin' easy,  
Jesus gonna make up (my) dyin' bed  
Oh...comin' down to die, Jesus gonna take me home on high  
h'I be cryin' hallelujah, h'I be crynin' Hallelujah,  
h'I'll be cryin' Hallelujah,  
Jesus going to make up my dying bed.

"Now that was one of my old grandmother's songs.."

Band 3: Selection 3: TAKE THIS HAMMER. (Source: MC 3-3) Recorded near Cahaba River, April 10, 1954.



JUGS, HAND SHAPED OF CLAY FROM NEARBY CREEK BEDS, MAKE NESTS FOR MARTINS WHEN CUT OPEN ON THE SIDE AND STRUNG UP ON POLES. MARTINS BRING GOOD LUCK ANYWHERE IN ALABAMA, AND MOST PEOPLE MAKE HOMES OF GOURDS FOR THEM. IN THE TALLADEGA FOREST, JUGS DO JUST AS WELL.

This here hammer (wham!) killed John Henry (heunhh!)  
Killed him dead, baby (wham!), killed him dead (heunhh!)  
This here hammer (heunhh!), killed John Henry (heunhh!)  
Killed him dead (heunhh!), killed him dead (heunhh!)  
I been drivin' (heunhh!) hammer from my shoulder (heunhh!)  
All day long (heunhh!), all day long (heunhh!)  
(Come on man, come on)  
I been drivin' (heunhh!), hammer from my shoulder (heunhh!)  
All day long (heunhh!), all day long, (heunhh!)  
(Come on man, come on!)  
Lord, I b'lieve I (heunhh!) 'near 'bout dynin' (heunhh!)  
In my arm (heunhh!), in my arm (heunhh!)  
(Tell the truth!)  
in my arm (heunhh!)  
Lord, I b'lieve I'm (heunhh!) 'near 'bout dynin' (heunhh!)



ROADSIDE JUKE NEAR PERRY-HALE COUNTY LINE, ALABAMA. DESERTED ALL WEEK LONG, JUKES LIKE THE "LAURA LEE" BLARE UP WITH SONG AND DANCE ON SATURDAY NIGHTS.

In my arm (heunhh!), in my arm, (heunhh!)  
(fifteen minutes to play, now)  
in my arm (heunhh!)  
( your leg!)

I'm goin' back to (heunhh!), Newport, Jersey (heunhh!)  
(bout quittin' time)  
mine, baby (heunhh!) ol' mine (heunhh!)  
I'm goin' back to (heunhh!) Newport, Jersey (heunhh!)  
ol' mine (heunhh!) ol' mine (heunhh!)  
(Hey, Sprott!)

Take this hammer (heunhh!), carry it to my captain (heunhh!)  
(you better run that mule...)

Tell him I'm gone (heunhh!), tell him I'm gone (heunhh!)  
(you better)

If he asks you (Heunhh!), was I runnin' (heunhh!)  
Tell him I was flyin' (heunhh!), tell him I was flyin' (heunhh!)  
Lord, have mercy!  
(come on, Sprott!)

If he asks you (heunhh!) was I runnin' (heunhh!)  
Tell him I was flyin' baby (heunhh!), tell him I was flyin' (heunhh!)  
If he asks you (heunhh!), was I runnin' (heunhh!)  
Tell him I was flyin' (heunhh!) pretty near flyin' (heunhh!)  
That's the crop!  
(that's the crop) . . .

Band 4: Selection 4: FREIGHT TRAIN - "THE SOUTHERN". (Source: MC 1-5, 5) (Number 1 of three train pieces recorded by Horace Sprott.) Harmonica solo by Horace Sprott. Recorded near Cahaba River, Perry County, Alabama, April 10, 1954.

Band 5: Selection 5: BUCK DANCE. (Source: MC 40-8, 120). Horace Sprott, dancer. Accompaniment: Hand Claps. Recorded in Rutledge cabin, near Cahaba River, Perry County, Alabama, May 8, 1954.

Comes in on....  
"Martha, give me something like this (hand-pat rhythm)....now you's rollin'....(hey, Sprott!)  
....Hey, mama's tellin' it an' papa's tellin' it, too. When I was in tough luck...(come on boy, come on!)...when I was in tough luck, you know, police got after me...(yeah)...an' this is what I began to do (getting down on floor to dance)  
...that's it!.....That's all she wrote...."

Band 6: Selection 6: SHINE ON, RISING SUN. (Source: MC 40-6, 186). Horace Sprott. Recorded near Cahaba River, Perry County, Alabama, May 8, 1954.

Shine on, shine on, risin' sun, shine on  
Oh, the one I'm lovin' she is dead  
Shine on, shine on, rising sun, shine on  
'cause the one I'm lovin', she is dead and gone  
Shine on, shine on, rising sun, shine on  
Say just keep on shinin'  
'cause the woman I love is dead  
Shine on, rising sun, shine on  
Say, just keep on shinin'  
'cause the woman I love is gone  
Shine on, shine on, rising sun, shine on  
just keep on shinin'  
'cause the woman I love is gone  
Shine on, shine on, rising sun shine on  
just keep on shinin'  
'cause the woman I love is dead.