

Folkways Records FA 2659

BEEN
HERE
AND
GONE

Music from the South, Volume 10
A Record to Accompany the
Rutgers University Press Book,
BEEN HERE AND GONE,
by Frederic Ramsey, Jr.

COUNTRY SOUNDS, MUSIC AND SONG

Louis Bonner

FIELD HOLLER

Horace Sprott

TRAIN PIECE

Horace Sprott

GANDY DANCERS LINING TRACKS

Frisco Crew

NEW ORLEANS STREET MUSIC

Freddie L. Small

THE BLACKBERRY WOMAN OF
NEW ORLEANS (STREET CALL)

Dora Bliggen

MARCHING BRASS BAND OF NEW ORLEANS

Eureka B.B. of N.O.

HOLINESS PEOPLE (CHURCH SONG)

Ella Hall, Effie Fitts

HYMN

Dennis Atkins

DRIFTER'S SONG

Mozelle Moore

BLUES

Scott Dunbar

SKIFFLE AND GOOD TIMES MUSIC

Jug-Washboard-Guitar Skiffle Band

THE BLACKBERRY WOMAN (CHURCH SONG)

Dora Bliggen

MARCHING BRASS AGAIN

The Eureka of New Orleans

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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BEEN HERE AND GONE by Frederic Ramsey, Jr.

Music from the South
Volume 10, FA 2659



by FREDERIC RAMSEY, JR.

"Anybody should ask you who made up this song,
Tell 'em Jack the Rabbit, he's been here and gone ..."

INTRODUCTION

This record takes its inspiration from a book, and the work that went into that book. The book, published by Rutgers University Press, is titled "Been Here and Gone," and a subtitle identifies its contents as reflecting "a journey to southern music-makers." This applies to the record as well.

As I stated in the Foreword to the book, the journey is in reality a composite one; the material to compile it has been drawn from five trips made throughout the South during the period 1951 through 1957.

During this period, my principal concern was to find out and record as much of a disappearing strain of music and life as was granted in the time allotted. The Guggenheim Foundation helped the project with grants in 1953 and 1955.

Beginning in 1955, a good many of the recordings which I had taken up to that time in the South began to be released under the Folkways Series Title, "Music from the South." (Folkways FA 2650 through 2658). Nine LP's in all precede the present, or tenth volume (FA 2659). Some time in 1957, I began organization of material for a book of text and photographs that would relate, in visual and narrative form, something of the various kinds of music and persons I had

encountered on my trips. The work on the book, and the winnowing of material, brought into focus many aspects of southern music-making which I had not readily grasped while editing the earlier recordings. The acquisition of additional data and recorded material helped to round out the picture. So this record, "Been Here and Gone," has been edited so as to include later material and to benefit from experience acquired while preparing the book.

In the record, as in the book, I have attempted to go beyond documentary cataloging and presentation of material, in order to present as inclusive an account as possible of the lives of people who make music in the South. In the book, text and photographs were combined for this purpose. In the record, I have added certain sounds of southern life, to its music; and have tried to create a comprehensive aural survey that derives from themes exposed in the book.

The book is organized into ten sections, or episodes; each explores a particular person, or aspect of southern music-making. From the Table of Contents, they are as follows (*):

Prologue	Material Covered
(1) A Joyful Noise	Church music, Holiness People
Part I: Past	
(2) Music Just Everywhere	Old country life and music

- (3) Making it Through One man, Sprott, and his story
- (4) Good Times Informal country dance music - skiffle, played by jug, harmonica, guitar, washboard; dancers.
- (5) Born Quite a While Country Brass Bands

Part II: Present and Near-Present

- (6) Let's Move it! Track-lining song; gandy dancers.
- (7) It's a Long Lane Blues and Drifters; Mississippi byroads; the drifters' life and music.
- (8) Planted by the Water Scott Dunbar, Mississippi blues singers.
- (9) The Streets of New Orleans The streets and their part in the development of marching brass, and jazz.

Epilogue

- (10) Among the Living Country music, and the younger generation; secular dance.

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<p>BOOK United States: Rutgers University Press</p> <p>England Cassell and Company</p> <p>Canada: The Ryerson Press</p>	<p>RECORD Folkways Records 117 W. 46th St. N.Y.C</p> <p>Colette's Bookstore 70 New Oxford St. London W.C. 1, England</p> <p>Folkways Records 1827 St. Catherine St. W., Room 101, Montreal PQ Canada</p>
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The record has a sound-sequence of its own. Although the order of presentation is different, it is hoped that the careful listener (and reader) will find much to correlate between the two efforts, and that themes as well as episodes will be discovered which are common to both.

SIDE ONE: SOUNDS AND MUSIC

As I went about gathering both visual and recorded material and talking with people, I was struck by ways of living, and of making music, that have disappeared else where. It also came to me forcibly that all these things would in due time disappear from the South (and specifically, from the three states in which material was gathered -- Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi). There was impressed on me a constant sense of a past that had somehow got itself perpetuated into the present, but which would soon be entirely gone.

Hunting will probably never disappear until the last acre of green life has been bulldozed away from the southern landscape. But its methods and purpose have changed. The old hunt horn (made from a steer's horn) heard on Band One of the record comes from a time when hunting was practised not solely for its sport, but for the food it brought. This was especially true -- and continues to be, to some extent -- in remote rural areas where poverty is the common lot of all dirt farmers and sharecroppers. Mimicry of hunt sounds found its way into music and immediate-

ly following the sound of the horn, we hear Horace Sprott "blowing a hunt" on his French Harp, or harmonica.

Hand work in the field has not disappeared, although the song that used to accompany it is nearly obsolete. The field song that follows the hunt music (My Little Annie, So Sweet) has especial interest in that it is one that can be traced to a blues as sung by Blind Boy Fuller (Sprott tags it by saying: "Don't you hear Blind Boy Fuller callin' you?"). Undoubtedly, Sprott's version is derived from Fuller's recording of the song. But behind the recording is Blind Boy Fuller's own early experience of field song, and here is an example of a song that has come from the field, been turned into a recording, then worked its way back to the field and in the process, re-cast in something close to its original form. The sound of automobiles along the highway close to the field, and the louder roar of a tractor driven by a white man in another part of the same field, help to tell why so much southern song will soon be gone.

Railroad crews that line track are rare nowadays. So are the train pieces blown by musicians like Horace Sprott; his version of "The Frisco" mimicks specifically the sound of that particular line; he has heard its freight cars chuffing through his own countryside. The gandy crew of the Frisco (St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad) is heard beating its "jim crow" bars against Frisco tracks in response to calls and song from its caller, Joe Warner. The first command is given by the white boss of the gandy crew. (For fuller explanation of this work and song, refer to Section 6, "Let's Move it!," of the book).

The streets of New Orleans (Section 9 of book) are still frequented by a diminishing number of itinerant musicians (Blind Freddie, "Tiger Rag," Band 4) and by street vendors (Dora Bliggen, the Blackberry Woman, same band). And on occasion (Although the occasions tend to become less frequent), the proud sound of the marching brass of the Eureka Band blends with other cries and sounds from the streets (bell of junk peddler's cart, street corner conversation, honking of horns, braying of automobiles, Bands 4 and 5).

Thus it is that in New Orleans, a sense of the music that grew to maturity in its streets, still lingers in those streets; and it is perhaps interesting that Freddie L. Small, a man who once played clarinet in a jazz band, can still recall, on an instrument that is both of the streets and the country, (but rarely of the jazz band) a past moment from his life as a professional jazz musician. ("Tiger Rag," beginning Band 4). Nowadays, Freddie L. Small spends most of his time playing the harmonica on the streets.

One of the selections picked up from the streets as the Eureka marches by, "When the Saints Go Marching," is by way of musical introduction and first statement of a theme which is elaborated on SIDE TWO.

NOTICE

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BAND 1:

SOUND EXCERPT 1: OLD COUNTRY HUNT HORN, blown by Louis Bonner, near Tunica, Louisiana.

MUSIC 1: THE HUNT, blown by Horace Sprott on the French Harp, or Harmonica, in the country near Sprott, Alabama.

SOUND EXCERPT 2: HUNT HORN, same as above, at distance.

BAND 2:

MUSIC 2: MY LITTLE ANNIE, SO SWEET, (Field Holler), by Horace Sprott, sung while chopping cotton, Alabama.

BAND 3:

MUSIC 3: THE FRISCO, train piece, blown on French Harp by Horace Sprott, Alabama.

MUSIC 4: LET'S MOVE IT!, Track Lining as called and sung by Gandy Dancers (railroad crew) of Frisco Line, Alabama.

BAND 4:

MUSIC 5: TIGER RAG, blown on harmonica by Freddie L. Small, New Orleans, Louisiana.

MUSIC EXCERPT 6: WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN, played by the Eureka Band of New Orleans, recorded in the streets. (distant)

SOUND EXCERPT 3: BLACKBERRIES!, call of the Blackberry Woman, Dora Bliggen, in the streets of New Orleans.

MUSIC EXCERPT 7: AS ABOVE (THE SAINTS), with music coming closer and passing by, then fading down the street.

MUSIC 8: BOURBON STREET PARADE, by the Eureka Brass Band, as above.

SOUND EXCERPT 4: BLACKBERRIES!, by Dora Bliggen, as above.

SIDE TWO: SAINTS AND THE DEVIL

All along the many roads that wind through southern states, the traveler finds cause to wonder at the dualism which underlies attitudes toward southern music-making. It is held by some that a man achieve near-beatification if he plays only church music; anything else belongs to the devil. A trombone playing a hymn is sanctified by all church beliefs; the same trombone playing a blues, or a secular dance song, is believed to be ascended straight from the streaming hinges of Hell.

Far from deterring the development of music as music, this dualism has, on the contrary, seemed to stimulate widespread performance of all kinds of music. For each side of the bench -- whether the one that belong to the saints, or the side that belongs to the devil -- seems to be occupied by practitioners whose intensities of expression may owe much to a heightened sense of conflict.

The saintly performer, who sticks to church music alone, seems to be reaching for expression so powerful that it will sweep the devil's music back to its

source. And the secular musician, although he may be an entertainer cast in the role of devil's emissary, performs with an urgency that may be due to the faint, subdued flurrying of an angel's wing heard always at his back. For in nearly every case, his early musical training was acquired in a home where only religious music was held to be proper.

Neither side has ever established a complete sweep of the field and that may be a reflection of conflict common to all life since the time man began to think about his religions.

For SIDE TWO, music and musical excerpts state the conflict in terms of "good" and the "bad" side of the bench, set one after the other.

The solo trombone of Dennis Atkins, a member of the country brass band known as the Laneville-Johnson (see Volume One of the Series, "Music from the South", and book section 5, "Born Quite a While"), recorded in the Alabama countryside near Laneville in Hale County, opens SIDE TWO with the few simple, solemn notes of an old hymn tune.

He is followed directly by a group led by Elder Ella Hall (see book Section 1, "A Joyful Noise") who sing "When the Saints Go Marching," recorded on the outskirts of Marion, Alabama, in Perry County. The same theme is picked up by Mozelle Moore, a musical drifter, as he wanders along an Alabama roadside (see Section 5 of book, "Good Times"). Then Moore launches into his drifter's song, "I'm Goin' to Pack up My Things, and Back Down That Sunny Road I'm Goin'" accompanying himself on the harmonica (see Section 4; and 7, "It's a Long Lane," of book). This serves as introduction to a blues about Mississippi, sung by Scott, Celeste and Rose Dunbar (see section 8 of book, "Planted by the Water"). From the laughter and shouts that follow performance of "Vicksburg and Natchez Blues," the tape picks up the beats of rhythm played by an impromptu skiffle band of guitar, jug, washboard, in Alabama (see Section 4 of book, "Good Times"). The sound of good times and of laughter at end of this session goes down under the insistent, saintly theme of the trombone; and from this, we hear the passionate religious song, "O Lord, Have Mercy" sung by Dora Bliggen in New Orleans.

As Dora Bliggen concludes her song (and she is in a state of near possession as she dances and exclaims at end of her selection), the sombre tones of a dirge, "A Closer Walk With Thee," played in the streets of New Orleans by the Eureka Band enters beneath the chokes sounds of her voice.

In New Orleans, the custom of burying a man to the soulful strains of a dirge, and then of returning from the graveyard with a blare of jubilant jazz ("Panama," last selection) may have grown from a desire to resolve the conflict between "good" and "evil" which characterizes nearly all southern music. The solution, however, is peculiar to New Orleans, for in other parts of the South (notably in the Methodist and Baptist Bible belts) it is considered sacrilegious to play or sing any but the most sombre music at death. The Catholicism of many of New Orleans' residents has perhaps played some part in condoning a resolution of "good" and "bad" musics. Perhaps, too, residents of a city so firmly oriented to pleasure and good times take a generally less strict attitude about mixing the "good" with the "bad." Yet whether this dualism is resolved or unresolved, it provides a background for investigating principal strains of music from the South, up to and including jazz.

- BAND 1:**
- MUSIC EXCERPT 1:** HYMN, played solo on trombone by Dennis Atkins, of the Laneville-Johnson Union Brass Band, Laneville, Alabama.
- MUSIC 2:** WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING, sung by Elder Ella Hall, Effie Fitts, Jennie Jackson, Brother Williams and Congregation of First Independent Holy Church (of God) Unity. Prayer, on outskirts Marion, Alabama.
- MUSIC EXCERPT 3:** WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING, played by Mozelle Moore, harmonica, on Alabama road.
- MUSIC 4:** I'M GOIN' TO PACK UP MY THINGS, AND BACK DOWN THAT SUNNY ROAD I'M GOIN', played and sung by Mozelle Moore, as above.
- MUSIC 5:** GOIN' BACK TO VICKSBURG (VICKSBURG AND NATCHEZ BLUES) sung and played by Scott Dunbar (guitar), Celeste Dunbar, Rose Dunbar, near Pond, Mississippi.
- MUSIC 6:** GOOD TIMES - Skiffle and Dance Improvisation, played by Mozelle Moore, jug; Philip Ramsey, Jr., washboard; Philip Ramsey, Sr., guitar; dancing by Horace Sprott and others. Handclaps.
- MUSIC EXCERPT 7:** HYMN, played by Dennis Atkins, as above.
- MUSIC 8:** O, LORD, HAVE MERCY, sung by Dora Bliggen, The Blackberry Woman, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- MUSIC 9:** JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE, played by Eureka Brass Band in streets of New Orleans.
- BAND 2:**
- MUSIC 10:** PANAMA, played by the Eureka Brass Band of New Orleans as above.

PHOTOGRAPHS



DRYADES STREET,
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA



CORNER N. ROBERTSON AND URSULINES, NEW ORLEANS



LOWNDES COUNTY,
ALABAMA



OUTSKIRTS OF MARION, ALABAMA



SIDE OF CABIN,
TALLADEGA NATIONAL FOREST,
ALABAMA

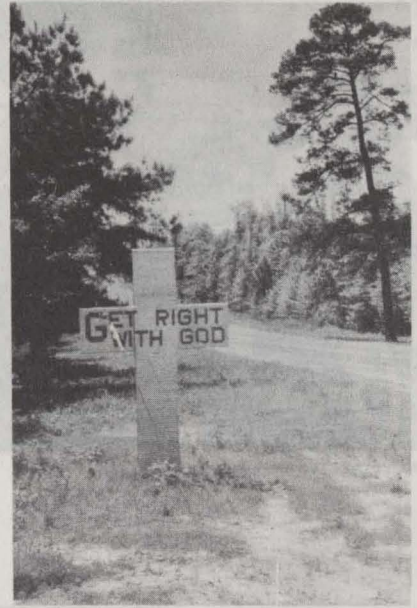


LANEVILLE, ALABAMA

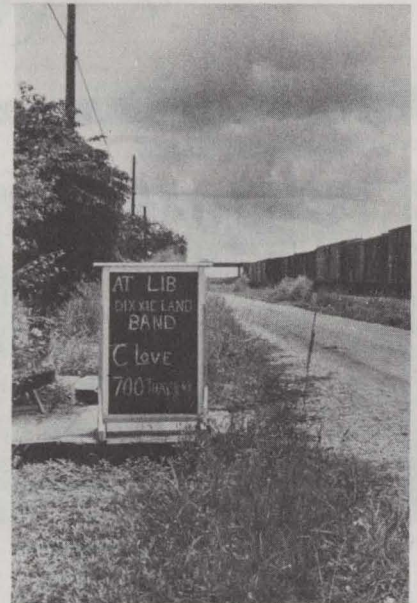
BETWEEN CUBA, ALABAMA,
AND KEWANEE, MISSISSIPPI



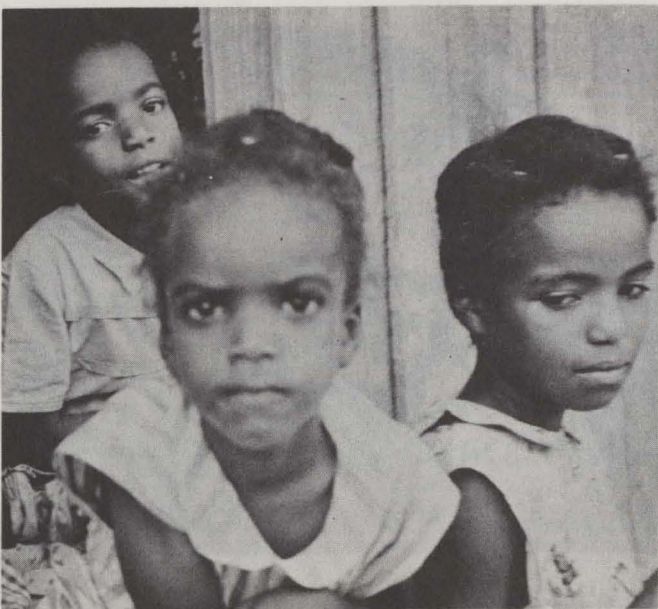
NEAR GOOSE CREEK, ALABAMA



LITTLE OAKMULGEE CREEK, ALABAMA



ALGIERS, LOUISIANA



MT. OLIVE,
ALABAMA



OLD RIVER LAKE, MISSISSIPPI



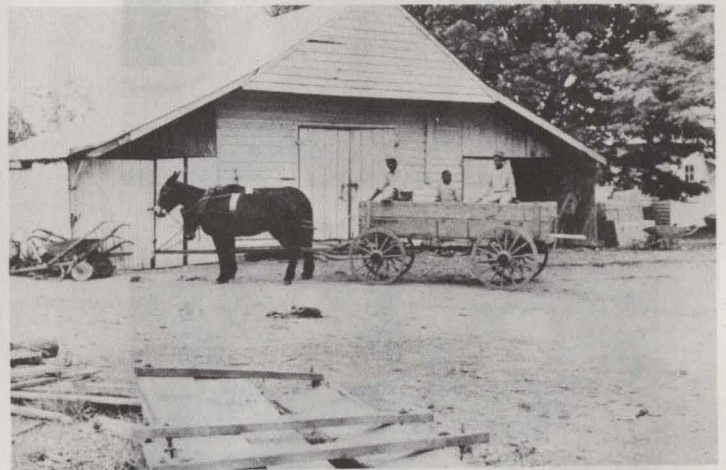
LEE CABIN, NEAR CAHABA RIVER, ALABAMA



NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

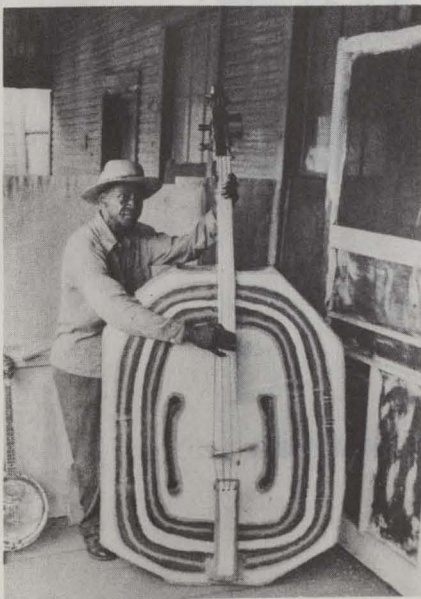


DOBINE SETTLEMENT, ALABAMA



WEBB'S INTEREST, ALABAMA

GREENVILLE, MISSISSIPPI



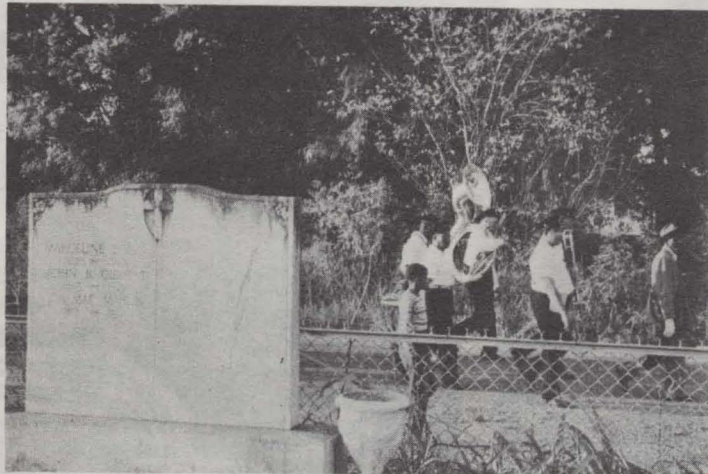
MARCHING TO GRAVEYARD, McLENNANVILLE, LOUISIANA



MARCHING FROM GRAVEYARD, McLENNANVILLE, LOUISIANA



DONALDSONVILLE, LOUISIANA



AFTER BURIAL, McLENNANVILLE, LOUISIANA



BURIAL, McLENNANVILLE, LOUISIANA