

VIVIAN RICHMAN SINGS

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FG 3568 *cover design by herbert weinberg*

the glooms of ligonier

the forks of the ohio

sinclair's defeat

the mouse's courting song

james bird

the conestoga wagoner's complaint

the hero of erie

the jolly lumbermen

hold on

aja lejber man

a steel mill tragedy

"pittsburgh" hymn

I'm a beggar

red iron ore

handsome mary, the lily of the west

the twenty-inch mill

soho on saturday night

pittsburgh town

FOLK SONGS OF WEST PENNSYLVANIA

M
1629.7
P4
R532
F666
1959

MUSIC LP



VIVIEN RICHMAN SINGS

FG 3568

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SINGS



ABOUT THE ALBUM:

These songs represent a small segment of the extensive collection of folk songs and ballads of Western Pennsylvania which has been made by Jacob A. Evanson over the last twenty years. Some of these are to be found in his chapter entitled "Folk Songs of an Industrial City" in "Pennsylvania Songs and Legends" by Korson and others. And some of the songs are from oral tradition, old manuscripts, newspapers and similar sources.

Mr. Evanson, as Director of Vocal Music for the Pittsburgh Board of Education, has not been content to merely collect and classify these songs as "museum pieces", but has re-introduced them, through the thousands of school children in the city who are now singing them. Through his untiring and dedicated work, Mr. Evanson has given legitimate recognition to the rightful place of our regional traditional songs in the music curriculum of our schools, and in the musical experience of our school children.

We are indebted to him, not only for these songs from his collection, but also for the interesting and informative background notes he has provided for this album.

In recognition of Pittsburgh's Bicentennial (1759-1959) this album is dedicated.

Vivien Richman

ABOUT THE SINGER:

Vivien Richman, a native New Yorker, attended Brooklyn College before moving to Pittsburgh in 1946 and becoming an adopted daughter of Western Pennsylvania. She received her B.S. in Education from the University of Pittsburgh.

For the past ten years, Vivien Richman has been bringing programs of folk music to audiences throughout the Midwest.

She has appeared in National Folk Festival programs, and, since its inception in 1956, she has been a featured singer in the Pittsburgh Folk Festivals. She has twice been recorded by the "Voice of America".

In the Isaac Seder Adult Education Center of the YM-WHA in Pittsburgh, Mrs. Richman has presented ten annual series of illustrated lecture-recitals on folk music.

Vivien Richman presented a series of eight half-hour films on folk music (as writer, producer and performer) for WQED, Pittsburgh's educational TV station. These programs were used by 400 schools in ten counties in Western Pennsylvania.

She has appeared in concerts in the major concert halls of Pittsburgh, and in St. Louis, Washington, Cincinnati, Harrisburg, Indianapolis and other cities in the Midwest.

She served as a member of the faculty for a Workshop in the Folk Arts, for Graduate students in the School of Education of the University of Pittsburgh. She has given illustrated lectures at many other schools and colleges...Duquesne University, Washington and Jefferson, Geneva College and others.

Her songs are included in Folkways Records "New York 19" and "Exchange". Her music has been heard in supper clubs, night clubs, church groups and women's clubs, and she has appeared countless times on radio and television.

She is a member of the Western Pennsylvania chapter of the Pennsylvania Folklore Society, the American Folklore Society, and she is the chairman of the Folk Arts Leadership Committee of the YWCA and the co-chairman of the Folk Arts program of the YM-WHA.

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THE GLOOMS OF LIGONIER

The story of songs in the Pittsburgh region begins in 1759, in the gloomy, wintry forest, at the newly-built Fort Ligonier. The Fort was permanently abandoned in 1765, but recently restored as a historical museum, at Ligonier, Pa. some miles east of Pittsburgh. It was a very important half-way station between Pittsburgh and the well-established settlements further east.

A British soldier, who knew his countrymen's lyrical tradition, finds solace from the "surly winter" and loneliness, in making these elegant lines to his lady-love, or to the ladies in general...it isn't quite clear which. This lovely tune fits the lines as glove to hand.

The verses are in the popular ballad or common meter for which there were almost unlimited numbers of wonderful tunes which most everybody knew and from which each person drew a favorite melody for each of his favorite lyrics.

The adaptation of this tune to this text is, therefore, according to the practice that has prevailed wherever and whenever the folksong tradition has been vigorous and creative. Reproduced here are four of the original six verses.

THE GLOOMS OF LIGONIER

From climes deformed by frost severe,
From mountains wrapt in snow,
Where surly winter rules the year
And howling tempests blow,
And howling tempests blow.

To you, whose modest charms improve
The lightning of your eyes;
Still conscious of the force of love,
We soldiers waft our sighs,
We soldiers waft our sighs.

While happy thus the scene shall shift,
We've nothing more to ask;
Honour, the king's peculiar gift,
And love, your tender task,
And love, your tender task.

Of these possest, at fate we'll smile,
Defy the surly year,
Honour and love shall reconcile
The glooms of Ligonier,
The glooms of Ligonier.

THE FORKS OF THE OHIO

This song is one of many from the talented hand of Robert Schmertz, Pittsburgh architect and professor of architecture at Carnegie Institute of Technology. Mr. Schmertz, for many years, has been writing songs, in folk style, about the history of his beloved Pittsburgh. This song, with its delightfully unexpected internal rhymes, is entirely accurate historically.

FORKS OF THE OHIO

In 1753, George Washington came to the Ohio,
A year past twenty and he had plenty of old
get-up-and-go,
He didn't seem to mind the Indians or the
ice and snow,
As George came a-looking and a-riding and
a-walking
To the Forks of the Ohio.
As George came a-looking and a-riding and
a-walking
To the Forks of the Ohio.

Now Lord Dimwiddie, the royal governor of
Virginia,
Said, George, you better go west a month or so,
See what the Frenchmen say,
Just tell them that the King don't want them
And they had better go,
So George went a-looking and a-riding and
a-walking
To the Forks of the Ohio.

Now, Queen Aliquippa was the Indian skipper
Of a tribe down Logstown way,
George thought he'd better win this lady Indian
And without delay,
So he took her a coat and a jug of whiskey
And he stayed a day or so,
Then George came a-looking and a-riding and
a-walking
To the Forks of the Ohio.

He met with a trapper whose name was
Christopher Gist,
The hist'ries say,
Who looked mighty dapper in a coonskin capper
And a buckskin negligee,
And George said, Christopher, let's get
traveling,
Erie's where we'll go,
So they both went a-looking and a-riding and
a-walking
From the Forks of the Ohio.

George and Christopher kept on traveling
Clear to Fort LeBoeuf,
George said, We'll state 'em an ultimatum,
But the Frenchmen called their bluff,
When George said, Gentlemen, vite tout de
suite,
The Commandant said, Non!
So they came back a-looking and a-riding and
a-walking
To the Forks of the Ohio.

They came back down to the wide Allegheny
And they built themselves a raft,
But Christopher he didn't quite get the
gist of her
'Cause he thought fore was aft,
And George fell smack into the water
While the wintry winds did blow,
And George came a-swimming and a-sneezing and
a-coughing
To the Forks of the Ohio.

Now if you go a-riding or a-walking on a
Sunday afternoon,
A walk by the river is good for the liver
And you might try this tune,
On the very same spot where George came
traveling
Many years ago,
When George came a-looking and a-riding and
a-walking
To the Forks of the Ohio.

SINCLAIRE'S DEFEAT

Much of the story of Western Pennsylvania was written in blood. What strange urge could have impelled the early settlers to face the terrible hazards from weather, beasts and man...especially the hostile Indians. Bloody massacre is the theme of many a ballad of the region, and here, a whole army, under General St. Clair (not Sinclair), sent out to Ohio by President Washington, met its doom in 1791 at the hands of the Indians, beside the Wabash River. Here is the authentic ballad tradition in both words and tune. Its words are a graphic narration still capable of holding and moving the hearer. The tune traditionally associated with the text is "Napoleon's Retreat".

The early Pittsburgh politician and chronicler, Henry Brackenridge (1786-1871) attributes this ballad to Dennis Loughy, the "Blind Homer of Pittsburgh", who did indeed advertise this

ballad among his broadside publications in Pittsburgh around 1800. Frank Cowan, writing in 1878 of early Western Pennsylvania, offers a more plausible theory that it was written by a Major Eli Lewis, a survivor of the battle.

SINCLAIRE'S DEFEAT

'Twas November the fourth in the year of 'ninety-one,
We had a sore engagement near to Fort Jefferson.
Sinclair was our commander, which may remembered be,
For there we left nine hundred men in the Western territory.

We charged with courage firm, but soon again gave ground,
The war-whoop then redoubled, as did the foes around.
They killed Major Ferguson, which caused the men to cry,
"Our only safety is in flight, or fighting here to die."

"Stand to your guns", says valiant Ford, "let's die upon them here
Before we let the Indians know we ever harbored fear."
Our cannon-balls exhausted and artillery-men all slain,
Obliged were our musketeers the enemy to sustain.

Yet three hours more we fought them and then were forced to yield
When three hundred bloody warriors lay stretched upon the field.
Says Colonel Gibson to his men, "My boys, be not dismayed;
I'm sure that true Virginians were never yet afraid."

The word, Retreat; being passed around, there was a dismal cry,
Then helter-skelter through the woods, like wolves and sheep they fly;
This well-appointed army, who, but a day before Defied and braved all danger, had, like a cloud, passed o'er.

THE MOUSE'S COURTING SONG

In its "classical" form, this song is familiar as "A frog he would a-wooing go," and with fine disregard for species, he proceeds to direct his attentions to Miss Mouse. With native logic, American children have straightened out the inconsistency of species, armed the hero with modern six-shooters, and borrowed the heroine's name from Walt Disney. This is the song-making process of the folk. Internal evidence indicates that this version is a fairly recent one.

This is a unique version of the text, presumably having originated in Pittsburgh. When first discovered by a school teacher, Mrs. Gladys Lantz Zeiler, it was found to be generally known among the Negro children around Miller School in Pittsburgh.

According to Chappell, the earliest known reference in literature to this song is found in Wedderburn's "Complaint of Scotland", dated 1549. The earliest musical version is in Ravenscroft's "Melismata", printed in 1611.

THE MOUSE'S COURTING SONG

There was a little mouse and he lived on a hill, hm, hm, hm, hm
There was a little mouse and he lived on a hill,
He was rough and tough like Buffalo Bill,
hm, hm, hm, hm.

One day he decided to take a ride...
With his two six-shooters by his side...

He rode right up to Miss Mousie's door,
And he knocked and he knocked with his knuckles on the door.

He said, Minnie, Minnie Mouse, will you marry me
Away down yonder in the orchard tree?

Without my Uncle Rat's consent
I would not marry the Pres-i-dent.

So Uncle Rat gave his consent
And the Weasel wrote the publishment.

The first to the wedding was Uncle Rat
His head as long as a baseball bat.

The second to the wedding was Mr. Snake,
Wrapped all around the marble cake.

The next to the wedding was a big black bug,
Carrying around a little brown jug.

The next to the wedding was a nimble flea,
Said, Minnie, Minnie Mouse, will you dance with me?

The next to the wedding was a bumble-bee
With a broken wing and a crooked knee.

The next to the wedding was Mr. Cow,
He wanted to dance but he didn't know how.

The last to the wedding was Mr. Cat,
He ruffled and he tuffed and he ate Uncle Rat.

There's bread and cheese upon the shelf,
If you want to hear more, just sing it for yourself.

JAMES BIRD

From the War of 1812 comes this tragic ballad which is based on actual fact. The original poem of over twenty verses was written by the editor of the Wilkes-Barre newspaper and first appeared there.

According to government records, James Bird served heroically under Commodore Perry in the Battle of Lake Erie. When Perry was transferred to the Atlantic fleet, James Bird went AWOL from the Lake Erie unit, hoping to rejoin Perry.

Bird was apprehended near Pittsburgh, brought back to Lake Erie, court-martialed as a war-time deserter and given the death penalty. The entire country was shocked by the failure to recognize Bird's heroic record and his motives for leaving Lake Erie.

JAMES BIRD

Sons of freedom, listen to me,
And your daughters, too, give ear,
You a sad and mournful story
As was ever told shall hear.

Hull, you know, his troops surrendered
And defenseless left the west;
Then our forces quick assembled,
The invaders to resist.

Among the troops that marched to Erie
Was the Kingston volunteers,
Captain Thomas then commanded
To protect our west frontiers.

Soon they came where noble Perry
Had assembled all his fleet;
Then the gallant Bird enlisted,
Hoping soon the foe to meet.

But, behold, a ball has struck him,
See the crimson current flow;
Leave the deck! exclaimed brave Perry;
No, cried Bird, I will not go!

But there came most dismal tidings
From Lake Erie's distant shore,
Better far if Bird had perished
Midst the battle's awful roar.

"Dearest parents", read the letter,
"This will bring sad news to you,
Do not mourn your first beloved,
Though this brings his last adieu".

"I must suffer for deserting
From the brig Niagara,
Read this letter, brothers, sisters,
'Tis the last you'll hear from me."

Lo! he fought so brave at Erie,
Freely bled and nobly dared,
Let his courage plead his mercy,
Let his precious life be spared.

Farewell, Bird, farewell forever,
Friends and home he'll see no more;
But his mortal frame lies buried
On Lake Erie's distant shore.

THE CONESTOGA WAGONER'S COMPLAINT

Howard C. Frey contributed this song, among others, to "Pennsylvania Songs and Legends". The famous Conestoga wagons were also called "Pittsburgh Wagons", proudly claiming, in 1800, "Philadelphia to Pittsburgh in twenty days!"

In 1852, the first railroad train reached Pittsburgh and soon the wagoners were victims of technological progress, but not without loud, and not always polite protests, as in this song which was known at least as early as 1855.

THE CONESTOGA WAGONER'S COMPLAINT or THE WAGONER'S CURSE ON THE RAILROAD

Come all ye bold wagoners and turn out man by
That's opposed to the railroad or any such a
plan,
'Tis once I made money by driving my team
But the goods are now all hauled on the rail-
road by steam.

May the devil get the fellow that invented
the plan.
It'll ruin us poor wagoners and every other
man.
It spoils our plantations wherever it may cross,
And it ruins all our markets so we can't sell
a hoss.

If we go to Philadelphia inquiring for a load,
They'll tell us quite directly it's gone out
on the railroad.
Oh, the rich folks, the plan they may justly
admire
But it ruins us poor wagoners and makes our
taxes higher.

Our states they are indebted to keep them in
repair,
Which causes us poor wagoners to moan and to
despair,
It ruins our landlords, it makes business worse,
And to every other nation it has only been a
curse.

It ruins wheelwrights, blacksmiths and every
other trade,
So a plague on all the railroads that in this
world was made.
It ruins our mechanics, what think you of it
then?
And it fills our country full of just a lot
of rich old men.

Come all ye bold wagoners that have got good
wives;
And go back to your homes and farms and there
you'll spend your lives.
When your corn is all cribbed up and your small
grain is sowed,
You'll have nothing else to do but curse the
old railroad!

THE HERO OF ERIE

From the War of 1812, comes this moving expres-
sion of the war widow mourning her terrible
loss. No longer speaking of the glory of
battles, we hear only the anguish and despair
which are the result of violence and war.

As in the case of "The Glooms of Ligonier"
(see notes), the author's choice of tunes is not
known and therefore the present tune has been
adapted from Walker's "Southern Harmony", 1835.
The text is from Frank Cowan's "Southwestern
Pennsylvania in Song and Story", 1878.

THE HERO OF ERIE

Lament for the Loved One Slain in Battle.

To Columbia's loud call my dear William responded,
And to my fond arms bade a tender adieu,
In hope to return with the laurels of glory,
And reap all the fruits of affection so true.

While Fortune, who laughs at the purpose of
mortals,
Had said that I ne'er should behold him again;
In the cold, silent grave, my sweet William,
neglected,
Lies far from his love, among heaps of the slain.

When bravely he fell, in the front of the battle,
Contending with Britons on Erie's dark wave,
O! had I been there to expire with my lover,
Not lived thus a victim of woe for the brave.

Yet cease, my poor widowed heart, from thy wild
sorrow,
A few years, at most, shall thy William restore;
In the pure land of heroes, with transport
thou'lt join him
Where war and where death shall divide us no more.

THE JOLLY LUMBERMEN

Lumbering in the state of Pennsylvania was at
its height around 1860 when she was the leading
producer. A principal logging area was the
headwaters of the Allegheny and Susquehanna
Rivers in Potter County. Unknown billions of
board feet of lumber were rafted down the
Allegheny through Pittsburgh and the songs of
lumbering came down the river with the lumber-
jacks.

This ballad refers to events in the year of
1873, but Alan Lomax thinks it likely that
it is an antecedent of "The Buffalo Skinners"
of the same year. This present version can be
found in "Pennsylvania Songs and Legends" by
Korson and others.

THE JOLLY LUMBERMEN

Come all you jolly lumbermen and listen to my
song,
I'll tell you all my story and I won't detail
you long,
Concerning some husky lumbermen who once agreed
to go
And spend a winter recently on Colley's Run-i-o.
We landed in Lock Haven the year of seventy-
three,
A minister of the gospel one evening said to
me,

Are you the party of lumbermen that once agreed
to go
And spend a winter pleasantly on Colley's
Run-i-o?

Oh, yes, we'll go to Colley's Run, to that we
will agree,
Then we'll agree to accompany you to Colley's
Run-i-o,
Provided you pay good wages, our passage to and
fro,
Then we'll agree to accompany you to Colley's
Run-i-o.

Oh, yes, we'll pay good wages, your passage to
and fro,
Provided you will sign papers to stay the winter
through,
But, mind you, if you get homesick, and back
you swear to go,
You'll have to pay your own passage down from
Colley's Run-i-o.

'Twas by that awful agreement that we agreed to
go,
Full five and twenty in number, all able-bodied
men.
The road it was a pleasant one, by train we had
to go,
Till we got to McFarling's tavern, full seventeen
miles below.

But there our joys were ended, our troubles they
began,
The captain and the foreman came following up
the Run,
They led us in every direction, through some place
I did not know,
Among the pines which grew so tall on Colley's
Run-i-o.

Our hearts were clad with iron, our soles were
shod with steel,
But the usages of that winter would scarcely
make a shield,
For our grub the dogs would laugh at, and our
beds were wet with snow,
I'd grant there's no place worse on earth that
Colley's Run-i-o.

But now the spring has come again and the ice-
bound streams are free;
We'll float our logs to Williamsport, our friends
we'll haste to see,
Our sweethearts they will welcome us, and bid
others not to go
To that God-forsaken gehoooley of a place called
Colley's Run-i-o!

HOLD ON

A spiritual, traditionally sung by both Negro
and white people, this song was learned from
Lawrence Peeler, a teacher of music in the
Pittsburgh Public Schools, who says that it
is widely sung in the city.

HOLD ON

CHORUS:

Hold on, hold on, keep your hand on the plow,
hold on.

Mary she wore a golden chain,
Keep your hand on the plow, hold on,
On every link was my Lord's name,
Keep your hand on the plow, hold on.

(CHORUS)

The rock cried out, "I'm a-burning in two!"
Keep your hand on the plow, hold on,
"Cause I want to go to heaven, just the
same as you!"
Keep your hand on the plow, hold on,

(CHORUS)

If you want to go to heaven, I'll show you
how,
Keep your hand on the plow, hold on.
Just keep your hand on the gospel plow,
Keep your hand on the plow, hold on.

(CHORUS)

AJA LEJBER MAN

"I came to McKeesport from Slovakia in 1899,"
said Andrew Kovaly. "I was only fourteen years
old and life was hard for immigrants. But my
father, brother and friends who had come here
ahead of me helped me. I got a job in a steel
mill and have worked there ever since. I
don't know who made "Aja Lejber Man" but it
was very popular in the early 1900's." (From
Jacob Evanson's chapter in "Pennsylvania Songs
and Legends")

Mr. Evanson notated this song in 1947 from
Andrew Kovaly's singing in his home in
McKeesport. The song still has considerable
currency among Slovaks.

Bass: Charles Cubelic
Bulgaria: Edward Toocheck
Accordion: B. Byron Powelson
Translation by Vivien Richman
and Richard Crum

AJA LEJBER MAN

Aja lejber man, robim kazdi den,
Vse sebe rakujem
Kelo zosporujem,
Kelo zosporujem natidzen.

Prijde petnasti, tai sesnasti,
Talara nabaru,
Daj nam po poharu,
Naj se napijeme napedu.

Skraju list dostal, bim daco poslal,
Senem zastolietek,
Napisem listocek,
Poslem zene stovku napedu.

I'm a working man, I work every day,
Always I am dreaming,
Always I am counting,
How many dollars am I saving?

When pay-day comes around, the middle of the month,
I throw a dollar on the bar,
Buy everybody drink,
We all have a drink on payday.

From old country comes a letter,
Right away I answer it,
Back to Slovakia
I send her a hundred dollars,
All for my wife when it is payday.

Odpocivam v Americkéj pode

I Lie in the American Land

(A STEEL MILL TRAGEDY)

Andrew Kovaly came to Pittsburgh from Slovakia in 1899. He worked in the steel mills in McKeesport (about 17 miles from Pittsburgh) until his death a few years ago. This song is one of his many compositions, and this is the story behind it, in his own words:

"I was a young foreman in a Bessemer mill here in McKeesport. A very good friend of mine, a member of my crew, had saved enough money to send to Slovakia for his family. While they were on their way to America, he was killed before my eyes, under an ingot buggy. I tried to grab him but it was too late. It was terrible.

"I felt so bad that when I met his wife and little children at the railroad station, I hardly knew how to break the sad news to them. Then I made this song. My friend was very proud of America, and it was with pride and happiness that he looked forward to raising his children as Americans. The song made me feel better, and also my friend's wife. But she cried very hard. I have never forgotten it."

(From Jacob Evanson's chapter in "Pennsylvania Songs and Legends".)

An English language version of this song may be heard in American Industrial Ballads, FH 5251, sung by Pete Seeger.

Bass: Charles Cubelic
Bulgaria (A six-string, guitar-like instrument from Yugoslavia): Edward Toocheck
Accordion: B. Byron Powelson
Translation by Richard Crum.
This is probably a Slovak dialect from the Saris district, where the Slovaks live near the Poles and the Carpatho-Russians.

Odpocivam v Americkéj Pode

I Lie in the American Land

(A STEEL-MILL TRAGEDY)

Ej, Božemoj, sotej Ameriki,
Idze donej narod preveliki,
Ija pojdzem, sak som mladi esce,
Dami Panbok tam dajake scesce.

Jase vracim kecmé nezabije,
Len ti cekaj ot domne novinu,
Jak ot domne novinu dostanes,
Sitko sebe doporjatu prines,
Sama sednes navraneho kona,
Atak prijdzes draha duso moja.

Ajak vona do McKeesport prisla,
Ta us muza zivoho nenasla,
Len totu krev co znoho kapkala
Atak nadnu pre horko plakala.

Ej, muzumoh co zesi ucinil,
Zesi tote dzeci osirocil.
Povic zeno tej mojej siroce,
Zeja lezim utej Americe,
Povic zeno najme necekaju,
Boja lezim Americkim kraju.

Ah, my God, what is there in America?
So many people are going over there...
I will go too, for I am still a young man,
May the Lord give me good luck there.

I'll come back, if I do not die over there,
You just wait for news from me,
And when you hear from me, get everything ready,
Mount a raven-black steed, and come to me, my beloved.

Ah, but when she came to this strange land,
In McKeesport, there she found him dead.
Only his blood, his blood did she find
And over it bitterly she cried.

Ah, my husband, what have you done to us?
What can you say to these children you have orphaned?

Tell them, my wife, not to wait for me,
Tell them, my wife, I lie here in the American land.

"PITTSBURGH" HYMN

This is the tune and three of the eight verses as found in "The Norristown New and Much Improved Musical Instructor", by "A Professor of Music", published in Norristown, Pa. in 1832.

According to the practice of hymn-tune composers of the day, the title "Pittsburgh" is reasonable evidence that the tune was "composed" in Pittsburgh. The tune, however, is a slowed up version of the older traditional air widely sung to "The Birds' Courting Song". The text is by Isaac Watts.

"PITTSBURGH" HYMN

Create my nature pure within,
And form my soul averse to sin;
Let thy good spirit ne'er depart,
Nor hide thy presence from my heart.

I cannot live without thy light,
Cast out and banished from thy sight;
Thy holy joys, my God, restore,
And guard me that I fall no more.

Oh, may thy love inspire my tongue;
Salvation shall be all my song;
And all my powers shall join to bless
The Lord, my strength and righteousness.

I'M A BEGGAR

James Miller, a teacher of music at A. Leo Weil School, Pittsburgh, Pa. notated this traditional Negro spiritual in the fall of 1945 from the singing of a Negro street evangelist.

Mr. Miller said that the evangelist sang it slowly, simply, with great sincerity and no ornamentation.

I'M A BEGGAR

I'm a beggar, don't drive me away;
I'm a beggar, don't drive me away;
Lord, you know I am poor,
But I'm knocking at your door;
Please, don't drive me away.

I've been weary, don't drive me away...

I've been lonesome, don't drive me away...

I've had hard times, don't drive me away...

RED IRON ORE

Most of Pittsburgh's iron ore has come from Michigan, since 1850. This ballad tells of the Great Lakes ore-shipping from Escanaba, Michigan around 1870, in the last days of vessels that used sails as well as steam.

The schooner, the E.C. Roberts, mentioned in the ballad, was built in 1856 and the Exile in 1867. Sailing vessels were displaced by steamers later in the 1870's.

RED IRON ORE

Come all you bold sailors that follow the Lakes,
On an iron ore vessel your living to make.
I shipped in Chicago, bid adieu to the shore,
Bound away to Escanaba for red iron ore.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.

In the month of September, the seventeenth day,
Two dollars and a quarter is all they would pay.
And on Monday morning the Bridgeport did take
The E.C. Roberts away out in the Lake. Derry down...

Next morning we hove alongside the Exile,
And soon was made fast to an iron ore pile,
They lowered their chutes and like thunder did roar,
They spouted into us that red iron ore.

Some sailors took shovels while others got spades,
And some took wheelbarrows, each man to his trade,
We looked like red devils, our fingers got sore,
We hated Escanaba and that blamed iron ore.

The tug Escanaba she towed out the Minch,
The Roberts she thought she had left in a pinch,
And as she passed us, she bid us goodbye,
Saying, We'll meet you in Cleveland next Fourth
of July!

Across Saginaw Bay the Roberts did ride,
With the dark and deep water rolling over her side.
Now for Port Huron the Roberts must go,
Where the tug, Katie Williams, she took us in tow.

Now the Roberts is in Cleveland, made fast stem
and stern,
And over the bottle we'll spin a big yarn.
But Captain Harvey Shannon had ought to stand treat
For getting into Cleveland ahead of the fleet.

Now my song is ended, I hope you won't laugh,
Our dunnage is packed and all hands are paid off,
Here's a health to the Roberts, she's staunch,
strong and true,
Not forgotten the bold boys that comprise her crew.

HANDSOME MARY, THE LILY OF THE WEST

The text is from Frank Cowan's "Southwestern
Pennsylvania in Song and Story" (1878, Greensburg,
Pa.) Mr. Cowan says that the song "...belongs to
the era of the keelboatmen on the Ohio River...
although it is sung occasionally to this day,
(1878)."

Mr. Cowan believed that the song is based on fact.
However, it is an adaptation of an Irish street
ballad, "Molly O, the Lily of the West", in which
the man is acquitted. The tune used here, pre-
sumably very old Gaelic, is that associated with
the Irish text.

HANDSOME MARY, THE LILY OF THE WEST

When first I came to Louisville some pleasure there
to find,
A damsel fair from Lexington was pleasing to my
mind,
Her cherry cheeks and ruby lips, like arrows
pierced my breast,
They called her Handsome Mary, the Lily of the West.

I courted her awhile, in hopes her love to gain,
But she proved false to me which caused me much
pain,
She robbed me of my liberty deprived me of my
rest,
They called her Handsome Mary, the Lily of the
West.

One evening as I rambled all down by a shady grove,
I saw a man of low degree conversing with my love,
They were singing songs of melody, while I was
sore distressed,
O faithless, faithless Mary, the Lily of the
West!

I stepped up to my rival, my dagger in my hand,
I caught him by the collar, and boldly made him
stand;
Being driven to desperation, I stabbed him in the
breast,
But was betrayed by Mary, the Lily of the West!

At length the day of trial came, I boldly made my
plea,
But the judge and the jury, they soon convicted
me.
To deceive both judge and jury so modestly she
dressed,
And there she swore my life away, the Lily of the
West.

THE TWENTY-INCH MILL

This is one of the oldest known iron or steel
ballads. It was probably inspired by Carnegie's
twenty-inch mill on Thirty-third Street around
1870, where the first Pittsburgh rolled beams
were made which made possible the construction
of suspension bridges and skyscrapers.

The ballad presumably had a decade or two of oral
circulation before it was printed in the "National
Labor Tribune" on April 25, 1894. The song can
be found in the chapter, "Folksongs of an Industrial
City" by Jacob Evanson in "Pennsylvania Songs and
Legends" by Korson and others.

THE TWENTY-INCH MILL

Come all you iron workers and listen to my
song!
It's all about the twenty-inch, I won't detain
you long,
Our troubles they are numerous, we have a noble
crew;
All things go right when we're by night, we
make a gallant show.

We have roughers built like elephants
And others thin and spare,
Our catcher says it's all the same,
Our roller's seldom there.
We have hookers, they're all skillful men,
Our straighteners number five,
And when we go to changing rolls,
All nature seems alive.

We have helpers; we have heaters
That sometimes burn the steel;
We have pilers too, and chargers
That help to ram the peel.
Our buggy man's a daisy;
He's a man that takes no sass,
But he always helps big Jumbo there
To drive them in the pass.

When we are on the night turn,
They come well-filled with beer,
It takes a big supply, you know,
To put them in good cheer.
They try like men to work again;
You may look on with pride;
The bar at last goes through the pass,
But sticks fast in the guide.

Now we can't do much on iron rails,
On slap-jacks or on tees;
We're no great hands on channel bars,
On posting rounds or zeas;
But we're expert hands on six-by-six,
Your orders we can fill,
And, for your life, don't let them go
To any other mill.

Come all you iron workers,
And listen to my song;
It's all about the twenty-inch,
I won't detain you long.
Our troubles they are numerous,
We have a noble crew;
All things go right when we're by night,
We make a gallant show!

"One of the most popular street troubadours was Philip Byerly, known as 'The Irish Minstrel Boy', who in the '80's and '90's sang his way into the hearts of fellow steelworkers in Soho, a Pittsburgh district. Possessing a good tenor voice, he sang not only the Irish folk songs beloved of his audiences, but also his own ballads, the most popular of which was 'Soho on Saturday Night.'"

(From Jacob Evanson's chapter in "Pennsylvania Songs and Legends".)

I learned this song from my good friend Mrs. Julia Means of Pittsburgh who grew up in Soho and sang this when she was a child. The "new license plan" apparently referred to another ill-fated attempt on the part of the police to "clean up" this section of the sprawling industrial city.

SOHO ON SATURDAY NIGHT

They tell us in Soho on Saturday night,
Most everybody you meet they are tight,
The men with their bottles,
Their wives with a can,
And young girls go prowling around like a man.

One woman I met, I'll never forget,
She fell in a sewer and she got soaking wet,
The crowd gathered 'round her all thinking her
dead,
But then she got up and quickly she said:

"Oh, isn't it queer how some women drink beer,
They drink and they drink and get tight,"
And the new license plan,
Well, it ain't worth a damn
In Soho on Saturday night.

Oh, they all tossed their drinks,
Carnegie did the same,
As fast as they could fill them up,
Around the drinks they came,
Carnegie he got blind drunk,
Oliver couldn't see,
Frick was bad, but Mellon was a damned sight
worse than me!

Oh, isn't it queer how some women drink beer,
They drink and they drink and get tight,
And the new license plan,
It ain't worth a damn
In Soho on Saturday night!

PITTSBURGH TOWN

Pete Seeger tells this story about the creation of this song: "The song was made pretty much by Woody Guthrie, the Oakies' balladist. That was back in the summer of 1941 when he and I and two other fellows, The Almanac Singers, a jalopyful of modern troubadours, stopped in Pittsburgh on a country-wide junket. The early war boom was on and Pittsburgh was an awesome sight. This song...was the result of communal effort, but mostly Woody Guthrie's."

Alan Lomax used this song in 1943 on his C.B.S. broadcast from Pittsburgh "Trans-Atlantic Call-People to People." There are several versions of this song in circulation.

Since the wonderful days of Smoke Control in Pittsburgh, the first line "Pittsburgh town is a smoky old town" has become a slanderous inaccuracy, and some folks now sing, "Pittsburgh town is a great old town" instead. Children in the Pittsburgh schools contributed the verses about Pittsburgh, the river town and Pittsburgh, the hilly old town.

PITTSBURGH TOWN

Pittsburgh town is a smoky old town, Pittsburgh,
Pittsburgh town is a smoky old town, Pittsburgh,
Pittsburgh town is a smoky old town,
Solid steel from McKeesport down,
Pittsburgh, Lord God, Pittsburgh!

Pittsburgh town is a hilly old town, Pittsburgh,
Pittsburgh town is a hilly old town, Pittsburgh,
Pittsburgh town is a hilly old town,
The streets and roads go up and down
Pittsburgh, Lord God, Pittsburgh!

Pittsburgh town is a river town, Pittsburgh,
Pittsburgh town is a river town, Pittsburgh,
Pittsburgh town is a river town,
The two rivers meet at the Point down town,
Pittsburgh, Lord God, Pittsburgh!

What did Jones and Loughlin steal? Pittsburgh,
What did Jones and Loughlin steal? Pittsburgh,
What did Jones and Loughlin steal,
Up and down the river, far as you can see,
Pittsburgh, Lord God, Pittsburgh.

From the Allegheny to the Ohio, Pittsburgh,
From the Allegheny to the Ohio, Pittsburgh,
From the Allegheny to the Ohio,
They're all joining up in the C.I.O.
Pittsburgh, Lord God, Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh town is a smoky old town, Pittsburgh,
Pittsburgh town is a smoky old town, Pittsburgh,
Pittsburgh town is a smoky old town,
Steel on the top and coal in the ground,
Pittsburgh, Lord God, Pittsburgh!

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Sing oh! the City oh!

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Early Pittsburgh

by

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with

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