ASCH AH 3831

BALLADS AND SONGS OF THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE

Annotated by
Paul Newman and Eric Davidson
Recorded in the field by
Eric Davidson,
Paul Newman, and Caleb Finch

ASCH AH 3831

SIDE I

Band 1 - Hanging of Georgie
Paul Jones (Vocal, Unaccompanied)

Band 2 - Returning Sweetheart
Sarah Hawkes (Vocal, Unaccompanied)

Band 3 - Barbry Allen
Granny Porter (Vocal) with Wade Ward (Fiddle)

Band 4 - Young Men and Maids
Paul Joines (Voval, Unaccompanied)

Band 5 - Green Willow Tree
Paul Joines (Vocal, Unaccompanied)

Band 6 - Ho Lilly Ho
Sarah Hawkes (Vocal, Unaccompanied)

Band 7 - Walkin' In The Parlor
Kilby Reeves (Vocal, Fiddle)

Band 8 - Little Sparrow
Sarah Hawkes (Vocal, Unaccompanied)

Band 9 - County Jail
Kilby Reeves (Vocal, Fiddle)

Band 10. - The War is A-Raging
Aunt Polly Joines (Vocal, Unaccompanied)

Band 11 - Pig In A Pen, Spud Gravely (Vocal, Guitar) and
Glen Smith (Fiddle)

Band 12 - Roving Ranger
Paul Joines (Vocal, Unaccompanied)

SIDE II

Band 1 - Pretty Polly
Ivor Melton (Vocal, Mandolin) and Glen Neaves' Band

Band 2 - George Allen
Spud Gravely (Vocal, Guitar)

Band 3 - Roving Gambler
Hobart Delp (Vocal, Fiddle) and Band

Band 4 - Ten Thousand Miles
Ruby Vass (Vocal, Guitar)

Band 5 - 1809
Glen Neaves, (Vocal, Guitar)

Band 6 - Little Maggie
Ivor Melton (Vocal, Mandolin) and Glen Neaves' Band

Band 7 - Death Of The Lawson Family
Glen Neaves (Vocal, Guitar)

Band 8 - Lonesome Day
Ruby Vass (Vocal, Guitar)

Band 9 - Budded Roses
Paul Joines (Vocal, Guitar)
and Cliff Evans (Vocal, Guitar)

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

ASCH AH 3831

3831

ASCH RECORDS Album No. AH ~~2331~~

Ballads and Songs of the Blue Ridge Mountains:

Persistence and Change

Recorded in the Field by Eric Davidson, Paul Newman, and Caleb Finch

Notes by Eric Davidson and Paul Newman

The archaic ways of life long sequestered in the back-country settlements of the Blue Ridge Mountains are suddenly disappearing with great rapidity. Only in a few scattered farm-sized patches do the traditional, pioneer customs of the mountain folk still persist, and soon these places too will be abandoned or changed. Change is not a new thing in this part of the country however, for the first irreversible steps toward modernization had already begun to affect life in some rural Blue Ridge localities 60 or 70 years ago. We must go back that far, to the time when the most aged traditional musicians of today were young children, if we are to place ourselves in the environment of the earliest indigenous music of which we have knowledge. Evidence accumulated by various collectors such as Cecil Sharpe (1916) shows that the songs and ballads then current in the unique oral tradition of the Blue Ridge were to a large extent derived directly from ancient British Isles folk sources. The maintenance and the expression of this venerable musical tradition were deeply intertwined with many other aspects of life among the old time mountaineers, as we shall endeavor to point out (see also the Notes to our Folkways recordings "Traditional Music of Grayson and Carroll Counties", FS 3811 and "Band Music of Grayson and Carroll Counties, Va.", FS 3832). Thus, when traditional patterns of life began to change after the turn of the century, innovations appeared as well in the songs and ballads sung by the Blue Ridge people. A series of diverse styles superceded one another as the decades passed, each characterized by novel structure, instrumentation, subject matter, and performance technique. Yet there was more in common between each style and its own local antecedents than there was new. As had been the earliest traditional music, the newer styles have in turn been disseminated orally and informally within the localized cultural region where they still exist. Thus each of these newer musical styles has behaved as a folk tradition, even though these "traditions" have scarcely been as long-lived as the more famous folk traditions of earlier times. It has been our purpose in presenting this anthology of songs and ballads from the Blue Ridge to represent and to characterize each of the stages through which the musical traditions of the mountains have passed, from the earliest times of which we have knowledge down to the present. There emerges a complex story of continuous, dynamic alteration in an old and private traditional form, one close to the hearts of its practitioners, as anyone who knows them soon becomes aware. If our study has been successful it may also serve as a guide to the recognition and dating of much Virginia and North Carolina mountain music from other areas.

A study of traditional music in historical depth, cutting across multiple stylistic patterns as ours does, is possible only because of the rapidity of the musical evolution which has recently occurred in this region. Up to a few years ago, when the pieces presented on this record were collected, it was still possible to find living practitioners of every musical style. Another facilitating factor is the mutual incompatibility of several of the musical styles. Due to this factor an able musician of this region will often have mastered two or even more styles during his lifetime, and he will have preserved these styles, separate from each other and apparently unadulterated in form: an example is our North Carolina singer Paul Joines, as the listener will discover for himself.

We intend now to discuss in detail each of the stylistic periods into which the traditional music of this area naturally divides. Following this there appears a brief personal account of the various performers represented on this record and in the final section of these Notes we present detailed information on each of the individual selections on the accompanying record.

The Earliest Phase

The Earliest Phase of Blue Ridge ballad music can be viewed most simply as a transplant from the British Isles. The ancestor of the present day inhabitants of this region brought to the New World not only the literature of the British ballads but also a strong repertoire of archaic folk melodies. The ballads were sung to these tunes, many of which were "modal" in nature.[1] Generally they were performed with little or no instrumental accompaniment. All available evidence indicates that the oldest ballads have changed very little in the hundreds of years since they were first introduced. The fact that balladeers continue to sing of strange persons and places which are often meaningless in American context constitutes strong evidence for the unchanging character of these ballads. Consider for example the themes, place names, and characters of Paul Joines' "The Hanging of Georgie" or Sarah Hawkes' "Ho Lilly Ho". (See the words transcribed in the final section of these Notes.)

The extremely conservative character of the Earliest Phase ballad literature depended on the existence of an unbroken line of oral transmission from generation to generation. In the isolated mountain community of those times children tended to model themselves exclusively on their elders. As they grew older they continued to work in family groups together with their parents, taking over work and responsibilities little by little until they became adults and in turn began the teaching of their own children.

It was the women who were the main carriers of the ballad tradition. Ballads were sung by the women while they were tending their children, sewing, or performing a multitude of other tasks. They were transmitted from mother to daughter and in this way, without conscious effort, the old musical heritage was passed on to the younger women. Evidently there were occasional male ballad singers as well, but this appears to have been the exception rather than the rule. It may have been these male singers who were responsible for first setting banjo and/or fiddle accompaniment to the ballads since the instrumental performers were primarily men.

It is of great interest to examine the means by which it was possible for a very large number of people to memorize dozens of extremely lengthy ballads so accurately that the texts changed hardly at all in hundreds of years. At least part of the answer is to be found in the inherent structure of the traditional ballad. These ballads are constucted as combinations of set phrases rather than from individual words. Thus if one wished to describe a pretty lady in a ballad, the range of possibilities was limited to a small number of phrases, e.g., "lilly white hands", "long yellow hair", "red ruby lips", etc. Virtually every line of a ballad such as "Young Men and Maids", for example, contains such phrases, and they are equally common in other ballads. It is easy to see that once one has become familiar with these traditional "ballad building blocks" the problem of memorizing 12 to 15 verses is vastly simplified, and the resistence of each verse to change is greatly increased. The importance of phrase length units in the transmission process has been noted by us previously in the Notes to "Traditional Music of Grayson and Carroll Counties", where we showed that the traditional banjo and fiddle dance music of these southwest Virginia counties is also constructed from phrase length unit combinations of notes. It may be that all orally transmitted folk literature is characterized by similar phrase unit construction.[2]

The Early American Phase

The retention of examples from the earliest known phase of ballad singing is indeed a remarkable aspect of traditional Blue Ridge music. However, these British Isles holdovers have in recent times constituted only a small part of the indigenous music. Despite this fact they have been heavily emphasized by many collectors, often to the total exclusion of many less ancient songs and ballads originating here in America. The early settlers who came to the New World from the British Isles brought with them not only the knowledge of many British ballads, but also an active tradition of ballad making, and many noteable events occurring in America thus found their way into traditionally styled ballads. In the beginning, and for a long time thereafter, only the event described in the ballad words was uniquely American; the structure of the ballad, the specific phrases of which it was built, the modalities and melodies of the tunes, and the style of performance were indistinguishable from those of Early Phase ballads. American ballads of this kind came to be sung by the same people and under the same circumstances as older ballads of British origin. Limitations of space prevent us from presenting more than the two Early American Phase ballads on this record, but it should be noted that many of the best traditional mountain ballads are to be placed in this category. A major element of continuity connecting the American Phase ballads with the Earliest Phase British ballads can be observed in the choice of themes. American ballads were based on occurrences of the same genres as those celebrated in British ballads. Classic examples are the "murdered girl" family of ballads, which includes, among others, "Omie Wise", "Deep Water" and "Banks of the Ohio" - cf. the old British ballad "Cruel Ships Carpenter"; the "cruel parents" group of ballads, represented by American songs such as "O Peggy Dear" - cf. the older "Young Men and Maids"; and the ballads sharing the "victim of justice" theme such as "Poor Ellen Smith", "Rome County", and "The Ballad of Claude Allen" - cf. "The Hanging of Georgie".

Included in the music of the Early American Phase was a large number of songs, in addition to the ballads. Some of these songs were sung by ballad singers while others were performed by band musicians. The ballad singers sang lyric songs or laments, related in theme and mood to the ballads, and they performed these songs in much the same style they used for the ballads. Compare, e.g., Sarah Hawkes' rendition of the song "Little Sparrow" with her performance of the ballad of

1. The term "modal" is commonly used by folk collectors to refer to modes other than the major (ionian) and minor (aeolian).

2. Evidence in support of such a generalization has been presented in a recent study by Albert Bates Lord concerning Serbian folk epics and the famous Homeric tales This author demonstrated that the accurate oral transmission of these very long folk epics was based on common knowledge among the epic tellers of the phrase units from which the tales were constructed: Lord, Albert Bates, The Singer of Tales, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960.

"Ho Lilly Ho". On the other hand, songs performed by the string bands were played in the style of instrumental band music. In this style the voice was used as another instrument rather than being set off and accompanied by the band, as in later band styles. This close relationship between voice and instrument is illustrated in the selections on this record by Kilby Reeves, and in Spud Gravely's "Pig in a Pen".

Many of the new songs which were created during the Early American Phase were incorporated into the band music repertoire rather than the ballad and lyric song repertoire. For example there are a number of old railroad songs played by traditional bands (e.g., "New River Train", "Train on the Island") but true ballads incorporating this theme are rare. The explanation for this may be related to the fact that in general women sang ballads while men played band music. Songs about railroads, gambling, the deeds of violent gangs of outlaws, etc., were seldom commemorated in traditionally styled ballads since the subjects did not seem appropriate for women. There has persisted to this day a feeling among older mountain women that the singers of these songs tended themselves to "rough and rowdy ways".

The modes, harmonies and verbal phrases used in the preexisting songs and ballads were naturally incorporated into the Early American songs, and the archaic characteristics of these songs differentiate them from songs of later times written on the same themes.

The Guitar Phase

In sharp contrast to the "melting pots" of the East and the bustling river towns of the Midwest, the tiny communities of the Blue Ridge Mountains had been geographically isolated and relatively self-sufficient from the time of their settlement. The breakdown of their extreme condition of isolation began shortly before the turn of the century. The railroads at this time penetrated the mountains and large textile, lumber and furniture mills were soon constructed. Towns developed rapidly at the railheads, settled by people from nearby farms as well as by workers from other parts of the country. With the towns came more extensive communication with areas outside the mountains via trains, improved roads, newspapers, and later radio. At first the remote farms were not directly affected, but in time they too were influenced by the presence of the towns, for with the changing times came different standards of tastes in tools and clothing, and also in music. The influence of the towns was felt most strongly by the younger generation, and in the last analysis the changing times affected the traditional rural culture not so much because the old-timers gave up their traditional ways but because the transfer of traditions from generation to generation ceased when the young people were drawn off into another world of new tastes and values. Whereas in the old days a young person would have learned songs and ballads from an older member of the family or a neighbor, the musical tastes of the young person in the town were influenced by a variety of people, who might hail from Baltimore, Roanoake, or Charleston.

Among the newer musical influences to penetrate the Blue Ridge area none has had more impact than the introduction of the guitar. Apparently the guitar was unknown in the Blue Ridge Mountains before the time of the Spanish American War. At the time of Cecil Sharp's trek into the southern Appalachians in 1916 it still was not common. The ease with which the guitar suddenly spread throughout this region may have been due to the new attitudes towards change which were fast replacing the extreme conservatism of old times. Musicians took to the guitar because it is versatile and easy to play, particularly when used for accompaniment. The guitar was furthermore attractive because of the large repertoire of new songs associated with it. The inherent nature of the guitar and its manner of play contributed directly to changes in traditional song and ballad music. As usually played, the guitar is a chorded instrument particularly unsuited for tunes based on gapped (pentatonic) or "modal" scales. Rather than adjust the guitar to the intricate demands of the old modalities, the average guitar player ended by forcing the old melody into a major or minor mould set by the guitar. This often involved changing a note here and a note there, with the net result the destruction of the "modal" flavor of many of the old tunes and their replacement with squared-off I -IV-V7 versions. In some cases, the original tune was not preserved at all, and instead an entirely new tune was set to the old words; cf., for example, The Carter Family's "Sinking in the Lonesome Sea" (Okeh 03160) and Paul Joines' traditional rendition of "The Green Willow Tree", which is presented on this record.

In this period of change some continuity with the past was provided by the ballads and songs themselves. The old ballads and songs were subjected to a very severe selection process at this stage. The majority of the old ballads failed to be transmitted to the younger generation. Only a handful of them survived. A somewhat larger number of the old songs persisted, probably on account of their successful integration with the still thriving string band traditions. The few songs and ballads which did survive have undergone continuous alteration, however. On this record versions of older songs and ballads which illustrate these stylistic developments are "Pretty Polly", "George Allen", "Roving Gambler", "10,000 Miles", "1809", and "Little Maggie". The musical changes associated with the advent of the guitar are evident when these examples are compared with our selections from the earlier musical phases. For a detailed consideration of the role of the guitar in the evolution of string band music, see our discussion in the Notes to "Band Music of Grayson and Carroll Counties, Va.", Folkways - FS 3832.

The Late Tradition

In 1927 the Carter Family made their first record. Only 11 years had passed since Cecil Sharp had crossed the Blue Ridge in his travels through the southern Appalachians. The enormous stylistic distance separating the archaic songs and ballads collected by Sharp from the music of the Carter Family shows how rapidly musical traditions were changing. Earlier, innovations had been added slowly. As we have seen, American themes had been gradually integrated into the earliest song and ballad traditions, and later some of these songs and ballads were adapted to accompaniment by the guitar when that instrument filtered into the mountains. By the mid 1920's, however, the whole process was accelerating. For a while, before orally transmitted local music was completely swamped out by radio- and record-borne commercial imports, there was a transient florescence of new and distinct musical forms in areas such as the Blue Ridge. Since these new forms evolved from preexisting local music, and since the new music was performed by traditionally trained musicians often using traditional mountain instruments, we can regard these late innovations as the final stage in the long history of indigenous song and ballad traditions.

The major innovation during this phase was the sudden introduction of an immense number of new songs. Of the close to 300 tunes recorded by the Carter Family between 1927 and 1941 only about 5% are renditions of old traditional mountain tunes. The rest are either hymns, blues, or commercial songs from the Nashville Tin Pan Alley. The selections presented here, "Lonesome Day", "Budded Roses", and "Death of the Lawson Family", illustrate the diverse origins of the songs which came at this time to be sung in the Blue Ridge area (see detailed notes on these selections below). An earmark of the new songs is the frequent use of moralistic and religious themes. Phrases such as "Meet me up in heaven, that's my true and earnest prayer" ("Budded Roses"), songs such as the moralistic "Drunken Driver" or the hymn-like "Let that Circle Be Unbroken" are typical. A significant feature of the new music also derived from church sources was the appearance of close harmony part singing at moderate or slow tempos. Reference to the Carter Family is instructive here also: their close harmony style was used interchangably for hymns and for secular songs. This style appeared in conjunction with the emergence of the guitar as a lead instrument, even though the traditional banjo and fiddle were also used to accompany the new style vocal music. New topical songs describing local events continued to appear at this late date and the question arises whether these represent latter day examples of the ancient ballad making tradition. A typical case is "The Death of the Lawson Family" presented on this record. Songs such as this one lack the definitive characteristics of older Blue Ridge ballads and might better be termed "pseudo-ballads". Unlike true ballads of the Earliest Phase, and unlike Early American Phase ballads, pseudo-ballads are not constructed from the traditional verbal phrase units (e.g., "lilly white hand", etc.). They are considerably shorter than the old ballads and therefore do not possess the same leisurely narrative development. Furthermore, they frequently contain religious motifs lacking in the true ballads. It is impossible to know exactly when the bona fide ballad making tradition became extinct, but it could not have lasted much beyond the archaic rural culture of which it was a part.

For some years the music played by the younger generations has been Nashville music, i.e., the same "Country and Western" music popular all over the South. Oral transmission of strictly local musical traditions ceased a generation ago. The songs and ballads in this record were recovered from deep in the memory of rare individuals. In the Blue Ridge Mountains this old time music will die when this last generation of old time musicians is gone.

The Singers

Paul Joines, now about 56 years old, has spent much of his life in and around Sparta, N. C. He was born a few miles from Sparta, near Whitehead Community, and spent his first years on an old fashioned farm deep in the beautiful Blue Ridge country surrounding Sparta. There he was instilled with the old ballads of the Blue Ridge area, which he learned primarily from members of his family. He recalls for instance, that as a child he would often beg his Ma to sing "Green Willow Tree" when he was ill or could not sleep. Paul is a restless man and at an early age he embarked on a career of rambling which was to lead him to every part of the country. Always he has returned to the mountains, however, and he now lives in Sparta with his mother, only a few miles from the farm where he was born. An extremely fine old time style ballad singer, Paul is also a great source of local tales, stories, and country humor. He is interested in the preservation of the musical traditions of his area, and went to considerable trouble to make these recordings a success.

Aunt Polly Joines, Paul's mother, is now 87 years old. She lived in the deep country near Whitehead Community until the family moved into Sparta only a few years ago. Warm, hospitable, and alert, her advanced age notwithstanding, Aunt Polly has not had an easy life. Her father was shot and killed when she was two months old; she

and her twin sister were the youngest of his six children. Among her many poignant recollections is the time she was called home by a sudden family illness, and in the dead of the frozen mountain winter she walked all the way from Galax to Sparta, crossing the solid ice on the New River by foot. She no longer sings because her voice has weakened, and we are fortunate to be able to present her priceless, traditionally styled "Warfare Is A-Raging" on this recording.

Sarah Hawkes was born and raised near Baywood, Virginia, in Blue Ridge country close to the Virginia-North Carolina State line. At the time the selections on this record were recorded she was an elderly woman living near Nottingham, Pa. Unfortunately, she has since died. Her song books were filled mainly with hand-transcribed Carter family selections, but interspersed among these were a dozen or so old songs and ballads which she had learned from her mother as a girl. She had never accompanied herself on any instrument, and was unable to accommodate even her Carter Family songs to a guitar accompaniment.

Ruby Vass, of Hillsville, Virginia is a descendent of an important Carroll County family. Ruby is an admirer of Carter Family styles and songs. For her the guitar is an essential part of the music. She is a skillful guitar player, and is comfortable with either flatpick or thumb- and finger-picks. She has lived all of her life in and around Hillsville and is extremely well known for her singing and playing in the area.

Glen Neaves and Ivor Melton, fiddler and mandolin player respectively, are both lead vocalists. At present they play with a blue grass band from near Galax. Ivor is from Galax while Glen lives a few miles away, in Fries, Va. The band is known as "The Blue Grass Buddies", and is more extensively represented on our accompanying record "Band Music of Grayson and Carroll Counties" (FS 3832). In this band Bobby Harrison plays guitar, along with Jules Bartlett or Glen Neaves. The banjo picker is Cullen Galyean, a champion three-finger style banjo player living in Piper's Gap, Va; it was in Cullen's kitchen that these band numbers were recorded. The country-style bass is picked by Claudine Lambert. Ivor, who is as fine a singer as he is a mandolin player, appreciates the "real old ones" such as "Pretty Polly", but knows only a few complete ballads from the era when they were common. Glen is among the best known of the musicians in the Grayson-Carroll County area, where he has lived for over 35 years. He was born and raised further down the Blue Ridge, near Jefferson, North Carolina, and grew up as a singer and fiddler. Several examples of his music have also been presented in our previous Folkways record, "Traditional Music of Grayson and Carroll Counties" (FS 3811). Glen is one of the most expressive singers we have heard in the Blue Ridge area, and also one of the most polished. He has performed locally on various occasions for many years, and is equally at home singing with his fiddle (as in his "Handsome Molly" on FS 3811) as when playing the guitar.

Spud Gravely lives near Hillsville, in Carroll Country, Virginia. Although he is totally blind he continues to work his exceptionally beautiful valley farm. He at one time played autoharp, guitar, fiddle, and banjo; at present he usually plays guitar with a local Hillsville band. In recent years he has learned a great deal of modern commercial country music. His favorite music, however, is the old style music he plays when he gets together with his close friend Glen Smith, in whose sitting room we recorded the selections on this record.

* See Appendix for key to musical terminology and references.

Glen is one of the outstanding traditional instrumentalists of the southern mountains. His music is featured on two of our other Folkways recordings, FS 3811 and FS-3832.

Hobart Delp is from Laurel Springs, North Carolina. He and his band, which consists of his teenage son Larry and a close friend, Joe Kyles, play locally in the Laurel Springs area. Hobart is a fiddler and singer, while the others pick banjo and guitar respectively. Though they could recognize many of the older songs and ballads, the Delp band too is unfamiliar with more than a few complete versions.

Granny Porter is the mother of Wade Ward's late wife, Molly. Like Wade, Granny stems from a family of old time musicians. Her father was the renowned fiddler Van Sage, and Granny who was 81 the year we recorded her "Barbry Allen" (1959) has known and loved the old time music all her long life. Granny's repartee and memory remain sharp as a tack, and she is a great wit and story teller. She herself played the fretless banjo when she was young, and sang as well. Her ear is still very accurate, and we have heard her nag Wade when he is trying to remember a long-fallow tune until he finally gets every note right, just as it rings in her memory from the country dances of a half-century or more ago.

Kilby Reeves lives on a lovely mountain farm near Twin Oaks, North Carolina. We heard about him from other fiddlers, who uniformly described his style as "the real old time way". A fiddler and singer of traditional dance tunes and string band songs, Kilby has missed having an old time banjo picker to play with for many years. He is one of the few remaining singing fiddlers in the Blue Ridge country.

Songs and Ballads

Side I Band 1. "The Hanging of Georgie": sung by Paul Joines

Child #209, Sharp #34 "Geordie". Texts recorded in North Carolina and Virginia are practically identical to this one. Since no one knows to what real place Bohany refers, it is not surprising that the name is variously rendered as Ghelanay, Goannie, Balleny and even Virginy. A striking example of linguistic change can be seen in the 3rd verse where Paul sings "you" rather than the obsolete "thee" on the last note in spite of the rhyme pressure to use the older form.

The scale is hexatonic (6)* dorian/aeolian; range: authentic; structure: aabc; meter: 2/4. This rendition illustrates the freedom of meter allowable in unaccompanied singing. Another feature of unaccompanied singing is here illustrated in that the tune is to some extent altered from verse to verse. In the 2nd verse, 3rd line, a measure is lost; in the 4th verse, 3rd line, the word "stole" is given only one beat rather than two with the result that two strong beats occur successively, and in the 5th and 6th verses the introductory note leading into the 3rd line is shortened from two measures to one.

Go saddle up my little grey horse
And saddle him so gaily
That I may ride to the king's castle
And plead for the life of Georgie.

She rode on till she got there
She was both well and weary
Combing back her long yellow hair
Saying lawyers here is money.

Lawyers got up and spoke for George
But the good it wasn't any
By your own conduct you'll have to die
And the Lord have mercy on you.

George got up and spoke for himself
But the good it wasn't any
He stole six of the king's best steeds
And sold them in Bohany.

George was hung with a golden chain
That was not made for many
Because he came of a noble race
And courted a virtous lady.

I have not rode on the king's highways
And I have not murdered any
But six white steeds of the king's I stole
And sold them in Bohany.

Band 2. "Returning Sweetheart": sung by Sarah Hawkes

Sharp #98 "The Broken Token", also commonly known by the first line "A Pretty Fair Maid Down in the Garden". This text, and texts similar to it, are widely known throughout Virginia and North Carolina. The you/thee linguistic problem also arises in this ballad. In the first verse, where there is no chance for rhyme in either case, the more common "you" is chosen, but in the last verse Sarah responds to rhyme pressure and uses "thee".

The scale is pentatonic (4) (7); range: plagal; structure: abcd; meter: 2/4. The free flowing character of this ballad accounts for part of its charm, but its appeal is also due to a lovely melody line which extends over a wide range, and which makes effective use of 4ths in the ascending line.

A pretty fair Miss out in her garden
A brave young soldier came riding by
Saying pretty fair Miss will you marry a soldier
Who has come so far to marry you.

Oh no kind sir, a man of honor
A man of honor you may be
But how can you impose on a lady
When she's not worthy your bride to be.

I have a sweetheart out on the ocean
Just seven long years been gone from me
And if he's gone just seven years longer
No man on earth can marry me.

He slipped his hand into his pocket
His fingers being slender and small
He showed to her the ring she gave him
Straight way before him she did fall.

He picked her up in his arms
And the kisses gave her, one, two, three
Saying pretty fair Miss will you marry a soldier
Who's come so far to marry thee.

Band 3. "Barbry Allen": sung by Granny Porter, with Wade Ward, fiddle

Child #84, Sharp #24.

The scale is pentatonic (f); range: plagal; structure: abcd (2, 2, 2, 2); meter: 3/2.

Though traditional ballads were usually sung without accompaniment, a fiddle or dulcimer was occasionally used. This rare recording by Granny Porter and Wade Ward is a unique rendition of what is probably the most popular folk-ballad in the English language.

In yonders town where I was born
There was a fair maid dwelling

Might every youth to weep and mourn
Her name was Barbry Allen.

One day one day in the month of May
When the green leaves were a-swelling
Young William came from the western state
And courted Barbry Allen.

It was early, early in the month of June
When the flowers were a-bloomin'
Young William on his death-bed lay
For the love of Barbry Allen.

He sent his servant through the town
To the place where she was dwelling
Saying wherever you be they call for you
If your name be Barbry Allen.

So slowly, slowly she fixed up
And slowly she came nigh him
The only words she said to him
Were young man I think you're dying.

Oh yes I'm sick and very sick
And on my death-bed lying
But better for thee I still could be
One kiss from you would cure me.

I know you be sick and very sick
And on your death-bed lying
But better for you, you'll never never be
Though your heart's blood were a-spilling.

For don't you remember the other night
When you were in town a-drinking
You drank the health to the ladies all around
And slighted Barbry Allen.

Oh yes I remember the other night
When I was in the town a-drinking
I drunk the health of the ladies all around
But my heart to Barbry Allen.

Band 4. "Young Men and Maids": sung by Paul Joines

Sharp #165 "The Silver Dagger". The text is widely known in North Carolina and Virginia. The theme of lovers who are separated by parents, and as a result kill themselves, is common to many songs in this area as noted above.

The scale is hexatonic (6) dorian/aeolian; range: authentic; structure: abab; meter: 2/4. Due to greater degree of fit between text and tune, and to the repetition of the b part of the tune coincident with the rhyme structure, this ballad has a greater feeling of regularity and order about it than the two preceding ones.

Young men and maids, pray lend attention
To these few lines that I shall write
A comely youth that I shall mention
Who courted a lady fair and bright.

As soon as the parents came to know it
They strove to part them night and day
To part him from his own dear jewel
For she was poor they had heard them say.

This damsel being both fair and pretty
She saw the grief that he went through
She wandered forth and left the city
Some pleasant shady grove to view.

Then she pulled out a silver dagger
And pierced it through her own true heart
Saying let this be a faithful warning
Never to young true love part.

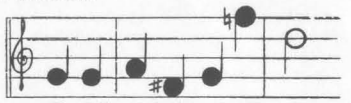
Her true love lost out in the thicket
He thought he heard his true love's voice
He ran to her like one distracted
Saying oh my love I am quite lost.

Her eyes like stars were brightly beaming
Said oh my love you've come too late
Prepare to meet me on Mount Zion
Where all our love can be more great.

Then he picked up the bloodstained weapon
And pierced it through his own true breast
And thus did say as he did stagger
Farewell my love I'm gone to rest.

Band 5. "Green Willow Tree": sung by Paul Joines

Child #286, Sharp #41 "The Golden Vanity". The scale is hexatonic (3) mixolydian/dorian; range: authentic; structure: abcc; meter: 2/2. The b part in verses 4, 8, and 11 is different from the b part used in the other verses. The chorus (c part) has some peculiar features in the first full measure:



The 7th interval (from g to f) is one which is seldom used melodically in traditional classical music or in modern day pop or Country and Western music. The other more obvious peculiarity is that the $f^{\#}$ doesn't "belong". Theoretically the scale calls for a f-natural, but the melody line, which is preparing for the large ascending leap, flows more easily with the inconspicuous $f^{\#}$ on a weak beat providing a half step leading tone.

There was a ship come sailing from the northern country
And she went by the name of the Green Willow Tree
As she lay anchored in the lowland, lonesome lowland
As she lay anchored in the lowland, low so low so low.

Then up stepped one of the little cabin boys
Saying what will you give me their lives to destroy
If I'll sink them in the lowland, lonesome lowland
If I'll sink them in the lowland, low so low so low.

I'll give you gold and I'll give you fee
And my oldest daughter your wedding bride shall be
If you sink them in the lowland, lonesome lowland
If you'll sink them in the lowland, low so low so low.

He folded up his arms and out swam he
Crying oh the low and the lonesome sea
I will sink them in the lowland, lonesome lowland
I will sink them in the lowland, low so low so low.

He had a little instrument fitted for the use
He could make eleven holes at one single push
As he sank them in the lowland, lonesome lowland
As he sank them in the lowland, low so low so low.

Some were at cards and others at dice
While still others were taking the devil's own advice
As he sank them in the lowland, lonesome lowland
As he sank them in the lowland, low so low so low.

Some ran with hats and some ran with caps
They were trying to stop out the salt water gaps
For they were sinking in the lowland, lonesome lowland
For they were sinking in the lowland, low so low so low.

He folded up his arms and back swam he
Crying oh the lowland, the lonesome sea
I have sunk them in the lowland, lonesome lowland
I have sunk them in the lowland, low so low so low.

Captain oh Captain take me back upon board
And be unto me as good as your word
For I have sunk them in the lowland, lonesome lowland
For I have sunk them in the lowland, low so low so low.

No I will not take you back upon board
Neither be unto you as good as my word
Although you sank them in the lowland, lonesome lowland
Although you sank them in the lowland, low so low so low.

He folded up his arms and down sank he
Crying oh the lowland the lonesome sea
I am sinking in the lowland, lonesome lowland
I am sinking in the lowland, low so low so low.

Band 6. "Ho Lilly Ho": sung by Sarah Hawkes

Sharp #65 "Jack Went A-Sailing", also commonly known by the title "Jack Munro". The theme of a girl disguising herself in men's clothes to join her soldier lover is treated in numerous ballads and songs (cf. "The Warfare Is A-Raging"). Certain particular lines, e.g., "Your arms are too slender, your fingers are too small", are common to most members of this thematic ballad family. This ballad differs from many in that the girl does in fact succeed in making her way to the battlefield and finding her lover.

The scale is pentatonic (3) (6) ($g^{\#}$); range: authentic; structure: abcd + chorus; meter: 2/4. The extra length of the first line in the 5th verse as compared with the 4th is handled in a way that is stylistically extremely effective. Being free of instrumental constraints, Sarah Hawkes simply produces a five-measure phrase in place of the usual four. Likewise, in the 7th verse, which is lacking syllables in the first line, she simply cuts the phrase to three measures.

There was a wealthy merchant
In a city he did dwell
He had an only daughter
The sailor loved so well.

Chorus: Ho lilly ho, ho lilly ho

The drum began to beat
The fife began to play
And off to the field of battle
They all did march away.

Chorus: Ho lilly ho, ho lilly ho

Before you come on board sir
Your name I'd like to know
She answered with a smiling face
They call me John Munro.

Chorus: Ho lilly ho, ho lilly ho

Your waist is little and slender
Your fingers are too small
Your cheeks too red and rosy
To face the cannonball.

Chorus: Ho lilly ho, ho lilly ho

I know my waist is little and slender

My fingers they are small
But it only makes me tremble
To see ten thousand fall.

Chorus: Ho lilly ho, ho lilly ho

And when the war was ended
She made a circle round
Among the dead and wounded
Her darling one she found

Chorus: Ho lilly ho, ho lilly ho

She picked him up
She carried him to the town
And called for a London doctor
To heal his bleeding wound

Chorus: Ho lilly ho, ho lilly ho

Band 7. "Walkin in the Parlor": sung and played on fiddle by Kilby Reeves

Dance tunes of this type were occasionally referred to as jigs or ditties. They were normally sung only in an instrumental context. Sharp's assistant Maud Karpeles, wrote concerning these ditties, "The words appeared to be chosen from a large stock of phrases and fitted at random to the tune." (1931, p. xviii). She in fact overstated the case, however: the words are not selected at random, but it is true that words which are sung with a particular tune at a particular time have probably had diverse histories, verses being borrowed from other songs and some being older than others.

The scale is pentatonic ($f^{\#}$); range: plagal; structure: aa'bb', where only the a part is sung; meter: 2/4. It would be incorrect to describe Kilby Reeves as "accompanying" himself on the fiddle. Rather the voice and the fiddle are so integrated as to constitute a single, complex, musical sound, as would two instruments.

Walkin in the parlor
Walkin in the shade
Walkin in the parlor
Hear the man play

Band 8. "Little Sparrow": sung by Sarah Hawkes

Sharp #118 "Come all you fair and tender ladies"

Scale: mixed; range: authentic; structure: aa'bc; meter: 2/4 (interpreted freely).

This song illustrates two important factors: (1) the "modal" flavor of a tune is determined not only by the scale which is used but also by melodic features such as emphasis on certain notes and direction of melodic movement, and (2) within a tune there may be a change from one "modal" flavor to another (a feature not uncommon in the traditional songs and ballads but rare in modern style music). In the first two verses (aa') the melody is built on three notes, 4th, 5th, and octave (ignoring the 6th which occurs twice as a passing note on a weak beat), providing a very open, upward directed melodic line. A new "modal" flavor is immediately announced at the beginning of the 3rd verse by the addition of the 3rd note to the scale and the use of a half step interval which is followed by a melodic line which, in contrast to the bold aa' parts, uses only small intervals in a generally descending direction. Finally, in the closing cadence of the 4th verse, two new notes are introduced, a flatted 3rd (in spite of the fact that a major 3rd was used in the b part) and a minor 7th, with the result that the ending has a dorian/aeolian flavor.

Come all you fair and tender ladies
Take warning how that you love young men
They're like a star in the bright summer morning
They do appear and then are gone.

They'll sit by your side and tell you many stories
They'll tell you all the love they have for you
And away they go and court another
That shows the love they have for you.

Once I had an old true lover
Indeed I thought he was my own
Away he went and courted another
And left me here to weep and mourn.

I wish I was a little sparrow
And had a wing that I could fly
When my true love was courting another
I guess I'd be somewhere close by.

But I'm not a little sparrow
And have not wings that I can fly
So I'll sit down in grief and sorrow
And sing and pass my troubles by.

Band 9. "County Jail": sung and played on the fiddle by Kilby Reeves

This is more widely known by the title "Long Lonesome Road". The tune played by Reeves is similar to the one in Lomax & Lomax (1941) which was taken from Fields Ward and the Bogtrotters. The song is considered to be Negro in origin; it has been collected from Negroes in Va., N.C., S.C., and Georgia. Whatever its origin, this song has been part of the musical tradition of Whites in the Blue Ridge area for a long time; many musicians, like Reeves, play this tune in the traditional old time style, without any thought that it is an "import". (Pre-1940 Library of Congress recording of "County Jail" voice/banjo by J. Paul Miles, Cherry Lane, N.C.)

The scale is pentatonic ($f^{\#}$); range: plagal; structure: abb' (the tune being 12 measures long rather than the standard multiple of 8); meter: 2/2.

Now Darlin, oh Darlin see what you've done
Head to your hands, and cry, cry
Head to your hands, and cry.

You can come downstairs, been alone
Come and stay here with me a while
Come and stay here with me.

Out in the orchard the sun in the clouds
Come in between here, pore little girl
Come and I'll try to do more.

Then walkin in the mountain, the fish in the stream
A tickle with a broom would make a fool out of me.

Now, you gonna quit your running away
Be in some county jail my love,
Be in some county jail.

Band 10. "The Warfare Is A-Raging": sung by Aunt Polly Joines

Sharp #113. While this song is based on the same theme as the ballad "Ho Lilly Ho", all of the versions collected lack narrative content. Instead they are all emotive elaborations on the problem set forth in the ballads of this theme family.

The scale is pentatonic ($f^{\#}$); range: plagal; structure: ab(ab) the 2nd (ab) present only with the 2nd and 4th verses; meter: 2/2. Detailed technical analysis cannot begin to describe the remarkable musical sensitivity that is still conveyed by this 85 year-old woman.

The war is a-raging and Johnny you must fight
I long to be with you from morning till night.

I'll cut off my hair, and men's clothing I'll put on
I'll go marching by your side, as you go marching on
As you go marching on, that's what grieves my heart so
Oh may I go with you, No my love no.

Your waist it's too slender, your fingers they're too small
Your cheeks too red and rosy to face the cannonball.

I know my waist is slender, my fingers they're too small
But it never makes me tremble to see ten thousand fall
To see ten thousand fall, that's what grieves my heart so
Oh may I go with you, No my love no.

Band 11. "Pig in a Pen": sung by Spud Gravely, with accompaniment by Gravely on guitar and Glen Smith on fiddle

This is a commonly known little song in the Blue Ridge area and yet, for some unexplainable reason, folk collectors have generally failed to take notice of it.

The scale is quite clearly major even though the 7th note never actually occurs. Chords used are I, IV; range: mixed plagal/authentic (from 4th below to octave above); structure: abcd; meter: 2/4.

Oh yonder comes Maby
Really how I know
Nobody's sweet little gal.
A-Hell and a-dance and gone.

Chorus 1: Like a corn hog Lordy in the pen
Corn to feed him on
All I want is some little gal
To feed him when I'm gone.

Chorus 2: It's hard to love and not to be loved
Hard to grieve your mind
Everytime I'm rambling around
Be coming back some time.

Yonder comes baby
Hung her head and cry
Said yonder goes the meanest man
That ever lived or died.

Next time said darling
Pick a bed with me
Said yonder comes the sweetest man
That ever lived with me.

Chorus 1: It's corn yes, corn in the crib
Corn to feed him on
All I want is some little gal
To feed him when I'm gone.

Chorus 1:

Chorus 2:

Chorus 2:

Chorus 1:

Band 12. "Roving Ranger": sung by Paul Joines

Sharp #179 "Come All Ye Southern Soldiers"; commonly known as "The Texas Rangers". According to Lomax, it became current about the time of the battle of the Alamo, 1835, and then spread Eastward. A text identical to this one of Paul Joines was collected in Ohio (Eddy, 1939) and similar texts have been collected all over the U.S. In versions collected in the South, the scene is often changed to the Civil War, e.g., the 2nd verse of the text collected by Sharp reads:

Our captain did inform me, perhaps he thought it right
Before we reached Manassas he said we'd have to fight
I heard the Yankee coming, I heard them give command:
To arms, to arms, they shouted, and by your colours stand.

One should note that this ballad, which is truly American in origin, differs from the traditional English ballad in that the narration is given in the first person.

The scale is hexatonic (2) (on mixolydian pattern); range: authentic; structure: abca'; meter: 2/4.

The last note in the 2nd line has a curious sound to it because, contrary to the almost universal practice of having the tonic or the 5th at this very strong point, in this instance the note is the 4th. In the 3rd line we again find the use of the 7th interval which we noted in "Green Willow Tree" -- in this case the leap being down rather than up.

Come all you Roving Rangers wherever you may be
I'll tell you of some trouble that happened unto me
My name is nothing extra and it I will not tell
To all of you true rangers, I'm sure to wish you well.

It was at the age of sixteen I joined the jolly band
And marched from western Texas into the Indian land
Our captain he informed us, perhaps he thought it right
That when we reached the mountains, that we would have to fight.

I saw the Indians coming and heard them give a yell
My feelings at that moment no human tongue can tell
I saw the smoke ascending, it almost reached the sky
The very first thought that struck me, it's now my time to die.

It was then I thought how Mother in tears to me would say
To you they are all strangers, with me you'd better stay
I thought she was old and childish, the best she did not know
My mind was bent on roving and I was bound to go.

I saw the rifles glistening, their bullets round me hailed
My heart it sank within me, my courage almost failed
I heard the captain shouting, I heard the brave command
To arms, to arms, he shouted, and by your horses stand.

We fought them nine long hours before the fight was o'er
The like of dead and wounded I never saw before
Nine of as brave young soldiers as ever trod the West
Were buried by their comrades with bullets in their breast.

I'm still a Roving Ranger but not like once before
My little black eyed Mary, I'll see the girl no more
My situation's altered, as you can plainly see,
I have no friends or sweetheart to weep and mourn for me.

SIDE II Band 1. "Pretty Polly": sung by Ivor Melton, with band at Piper's Gap: Cullen Galyean, banjo; Bobby Harrison, guitar; Claudine Lambert, bass; Jules Bartlett, guitar.

Sharp #49 "The Cruel Ship's Carpenter". This can be traced back to an English broadside, "The Gosport Tragedy", which had been written down by 1750. As is the case in many American murder ballads, the man kills his sweetheart because he has got her pregnant and he wishes to be rid of her.

The scale is hexatonic (2) (on mixolydian pattern); range: plagal (+ a 3rd); structure: aa'b; meter: 2/4.

"Pretty Polly", "Little Maggie" (see below), and "Old Joe Clark", are examples of traditional tunes which have made their way into the standard repertoire of the modern style string bands. Because of the nature of its scale, "Pretty Polly" does not lend itself to the harmonic framework in which these bands normally operate. In this case the band solves the difficulty by playing one chord throughout the tune, which thus becomes a sort of chordal drone on top of which the singer sings.

Oh Polly, Pretty Polly, come go along with me
Oh Polly, Pretty Polly, come go along with me
Before we get married, some pleasure to see.

Well my mind is to marry and never to part
Well my mind is to marry and never to part
The first time I saw you it went through my heart.

Well he led me over mountains and valleys so deep
Well he led me over mountains and valleys so deep
Pretty Polly misjudged it and then began to weep.

Oh it's Willy, little Willy, I'm afraid of your ways
Oh it's Willy, little Willy, I'm afraid of your ways
The way you've been rambling to lead me astray.

Oh it's Polly, Pretty Polly, your guess is about right
Oh it's Polly, Pretty Polly, your guess is about right
I dug on your grave over half of last night.

Well he went out to the jailhouse and what did he say
Well he went out to the jailhouse and what did he say
I killed Pretty Polly, I'm trying to get away.

Band 2. "George Allen": sung by Spud Gravely, with guitar.

Child #85 "Lady Alice", Sharp #25 "Giles Collins". Numerous texts of this ballad have been collected in North Carolina and Virginia. In all of them the man's last name is Collins (either George, John, or Giles Collins). The substitution of the name Allen in this version for Collins may be due partly to the fact that Hillsville, Virginia, Spud's home, was the home of the famous Allen family. Collins, on the other hand, is a less common name there.

The scale is Major (I, IV, V7 chord pattern is used); range: authentic; structure: abac; meter: 2/4.

The very regular 3/4 time and the I, IV, V7 chord pattern are noticeable characteristics of modern tunes which have been "squared-off" so that they fit properly with the guitar. The tune that Spud plays to this ballad is quite different from earlier ones collected, most of which use the pentatonic ($f^{\#}$) scale.

George Allen rode home one cold winter night
George Allen rode home so fine.
George Allen rode home one cold winter night
And taken sick and died.

Sweet Mary was in his sitting room
Sewing silk so fine
And when she learned that poor Georgie was dead
She threw her silk aside.

She weeped, she moaned, yes she weeped and she moaned
She weeped and moaned all day
Her mother said, "Oh Mary dear
You'll meet him again someday."

Yes, Georgie rode home one cold winter night
George Allen rode home so fine.
George Allen rode home one cold winter night
And taken sick and died.

Band 3. "Roving Gambler": sung by Hobart Delp, with band: Hobart Delp, fiddle; Larry Delp, banjo; and Joe Kyles, guitar.

Laws H4. This ballad is ultimately derived from the British ballad "The Roving Journeyman" but has been so changed that one might want to call it a native American ballad. Versions of this ballad have been collected over large parts of the U.S., i.e., in Missouri, Colorado, Michigan, Utah, Arkansas as well as in the South proper.

The scale is pentatonic ($f^{\#}$), harmonically the I major chord is played throughout except that at the beginning of the 4th line the melodically non-existent 4th note of the scale is sufficiently felt to allow a switch to a IV major chord at that point; range: plagal. The tune ends on the 5th tone rather than the tonic, causing what is, for obvious reasons, called a "circular tune"; structure: abcd; meter: 2/4.

I am a roving gambler
I gamble down in town
Whenever I meet with a deck of cards
I lie my money down.

Had not been in Washington
Many more weeks than three
When I fell in love with a pretty little girl
And she fell in love with me.

She took me in her parlor
She cooled me with her fan
She whispered low in her mother's ear
I love this gambling man.

Oh daughter, oh dear daughter
What makes you treat me so
To leave your dear old mother
And with a gambler go.

Oh mother, my dear mother
You know I love you well
But the love I have for a gambling man
No human tongue call tell.

I've gambled up in Washington
I gambled o'er in Spain
I'm going back to Georgia
To gamble my last game.

I hear that train a-coming
A-coming round the curve
A-whistling and a-blowing
Straining every nerve.

Oh mother, my dear mother
I'll tell you if I can
If you ever see me coming again
I'll be with the gambling man.

Band 4: "10,000 Miles": sung by Ruby Vass, with guitar

Sharp #114 "The True Lover's Farewell". The lines, "Who will shoe your pretty little foot...?" seem to have a particular appeal and have been incorporated into many songs which include a conversation between lovers who are parting.

The scale is Major (I, IV, V7 chords); range: authentic; structure: abab cda'b'; meter: 3/4.

This, like "George Allen", is an excellent example of a squared off 3/4 time tune. The shift to the IV chord at the beginning of the c part is very characteristic of modern style harmonic progressions.

I'm going away to leave you dear
I'm going away for a while
But I'll return to you someday
If I go ten thousand mile.

Chorus: The storms out on the ocean
Heaven it seemed to be
This world will lose its motion, love
If I prove false to thee.

Who will shoe your pretty little feet?
Who will glove your hand?
Who will kiss your rosy red cheek
When I'm in some foreign land?

Chorus:

Papa will shoe my pretty little feet
Mamma will glove my hand
And you may kiss my rosy red cheek
When you return again.

Chorus:

Oh have you seen that mournful dove
Flying from time to time
It's weeping for its own true love
Just like I weep for mine.

Chorus:

I'll never go back on the ocean, love
I'll never go back on the sea
I'll never go back on the blue wide world
Till she goes back with me.

Chorus:

Band 5. "1809": sung by Glen Neaves, with guitar

Sharp #76 "Pretty Saro". This song is strictly American in origin, and is probably from the South, since it has mostly been found in that area, extending only somewhat into the midwest. In most versions, the singer expresses his true love for "Pretty Saro" from whom he has been parted, e.g., (from Brown III, p. 286) a North Carolina verse:

It's not the long journey I'm dreading to go
Nor leaving of this country for the debts that I owe;
There is but one thing that troubles my mind,
That's a-leaving pretty Saro, my true love, behind.

Exactly what immigration is being referred to is also questionable. In most versions collected the date is 1849 but other versions agree with the 1809 date.

The scale is Major (I, IV, V7); range: combined plagal-authentic; structure: abbc; meter: 3/4.

I come to this country in eighteen and nine
Saw many pretty women but I didn't see mine
I looked all around me and I was alone
Oh a stranger in this country and a long way from home.

Come all you young men when you're first starting out
Don't place your affection on some smiling sweetheart
They'll go dancing before you, your favor to gain
Young men take warning for it's labor in vain.

Green grow the wild olives and the rushes grow tall
Now love is a thing that'll conquer us all
I know by experience, my mind teach me so
Young men take warning for you know that it's so.

Now when you're married you're not your own man
Can't go when you want to, come back when you can
Your wife will embrace you and tell you bad news
Young men take warning for you know that it's so.

Now when you're married you're not your own man
Can't go when you want to, come back when you can
Your wife will embrace you and tell you bad news
Young men take warning for it's a sad life to choose.

Green grow the wild olives and the rushes grow tall
Now love is a thing that'll conquer us all
I know by experience, my mind teach me so
All to your own opinion but you know that it's so.

Band 6. "Little Maggie": sung by Ivor Melton with band at Piper's Gap: Cullen Galyean, banjo; Claudine Lambert, bass; Bobby Harrison, guitar; Jules Bartlett, guitar; Glen Neaves, fiddle.

"One can place the origin of the song no earlier than the late nineteenth century not only because of its style, but, assuming the reference to distilling to be original, because of the strong Federal action against moonshiners beginning in the late 1870's. The earliest notice of the song is on a Virginia ballot dated February, 1906." (D.K. Wilgus, Notes to "The Doc Watson Family" Folkways FA2366). Thus does Wilgus describe the origin of the family of songs including "Darling Corey" and "Little Maggie". Most of the present day "Maggie" (as distinct from "Corey") versions have been derived ultimately from a Virginia version recorded by Grayson and Whitter (Victor 40135). "Maggie" is an exciting, driving tune and thus has been very popular with Blue Grass bands. The true mixolydian, in which "Maggie" is written, can be easily chorded by using major chords built on the 1st and 7th notes of the scale. It has been recorded by Obray Ramsay and Henry Gentry, Larry Richardson, Stanley Brothers, Earl Taylor and his Stoney Mountain Boys, and many others.

Scale: mixolydian; range: limited (end below to 5th above); structure: abab; meter: 2/2.

Over yonder stands Little Maggie
With a dram glass in her hand
She's a-drinking down her troubles
And courting some other man.

First time I saw Little Maggie
On the banks of the deep blue sea
With a forty-four around her
And a banjo on her knee.

Sometimes I have a nickel
Sometimes I have a dime
Sometimes I have ten dollars
Just to pay Little Maggie's wine.

Oh how can I ever stand it
Just to see those two blue eyes
They are sparkling like a diamond
A diamond in the sky.

Repeat 1.

Band 7. "The Death of the Lawson Family": sung by Glen Neaves, with guitar

Dec. 25, 1929 (AP) Walnut Cove, N.C. "Becoming suddenly insane, a Stokes county farmer today slew his wife and six children, and, after having laid them out for burial, went into a patch of woods near his home and killed himself. The body of C.D. Lawson, a 43-year-old father and husband, was found about half a mile from the home..." According to Wilgus this ballad was recorded on the Bluebird label by Wiley Morris who copyrighted it.

This modern "pseudo-ballad" differs greatly from the older true ballads. Even in a longer text collected in N.C., the narrative is too short, and the religious element in the last verse is strictly late in style.

The scale is major (I, IV, V7); range: plagal;

structure: abcd; meter: 3/4.

It was on one Christmas evening
The snow was on the ground
When the home in North Carolina
Where this murder' he was found.

His name was Charlie Lawson
And he had a loving wife
Well we'll never know what caused him
To take his family's life.

They say he killed his wife at first
And the little ones did cry
Please Papa won't you spare our lives
For it is too hard to die.

But the raging man could not be stopped
He would not heed their call
He kept on firing fatal shots
Until he killed them all.

They were buried in a crowded grave
While the angels watched up above
Come home come home you little ones
To the land of peace and love.

Band 8. "Lonesome Day"; sung by Ruby Vass, with guitar

This is a traditional Negro tune which has spread throughout the Blue Ridge area in modern times in a squared-off version recorded by the Carter family. Characteristic of the underlying blues base is repetition of the first line of the verse with change only in the last line. In this case, however, we get the first line three times, so that the tune is composed of 4 lines, each 4 measures long, a favorite structure in mountain music. In real Negro blues, the structure is 3 lines, each 4 measures long for a total of 12 measures in the tune. Also characteristic of the blues are the flatted 3rd (the "blue note") which occurs in the 2nd measure of the 3rd line (on the word "been" in the 1st verse), and the use of the 17 chord at the end of line 2 leading into the IV chord at the beginning of line 3 (Ruby Vass plays this 17 chord only in the first 2 verses. In the other verses she stays on the I chord.

The scale is Major (I, IV, V7 chords); range: authentic; structure: aa'a''b; meter: 4/4.

Today has been a lonesome day (3 times)
It seems tomorrow'll be the same old thing.

They carried my mother to the burying ground (3 times)
And then the pallbearers let her down.

If you ever hear a churchbell chime
If you ever hear a churchbell tone (2 times)
You'll know now that she's dead and gone.

Go dig my grave with a silver spade (3 times)
And mark the place where I must lay.

There's one kind favor I ask of you (3 times)
Please see that my grave is kept clean.

Band 9. "Budded Roses": sung by Paul Joines and Cliff Evans, with guitar

This song, sometimes known as "Little Bunch of Roses", was first collected in western North Carolina in 1920 with a tune different from the one Paul Joines uses. This song is never included in collections of "traditional" tunes from the Appalachians and there is no evidence that it is much older than 1920.

The scale is major (I, IV, V7 chords); range: authentic; structure: abcd; meter: 4/4.

Little sweetheart we have parted
From each other we must go
Many mile may separate us
In this world of care and woe.

But I've treasure of the promise
That you made me in the lane
When you said we'll be together
When the roses bloom again.

Now this parting brings us sorrow
Oh it almost breaks my heart
But pray darling will you love me
When we meet no more to part.

Down among the budded roses
I am nothing but a stem
I have parted from my darling
Never more to meet again.

Will this parting be forever
Will there be no coming day
When their hearts will be reunited
And all troubles pass away.

Darling meet me up in heaven
That's my true and earnest prayer
If you love me here on earth dear
I am sure you'll love me there.

Appendix: Explanation of terminology and references, etc. used in the Notes accompanying the individual selections.

Texts: References are given by number to the texts when they are found in the two major collections of English-American ballads: Child and Sharp. Identification has been made only for the text; there has been no attempt to identify the older ballads and songs by their tune.

Musical Analysis

1) Scale: The traditional names ionian (major), mixolydian, etc. apply properly only to 7 note scales and are used in these notes in the proper sense. If the scale is hexatonic, the missing note is put in parentheses and the names of the two heptatonic scales to which it corresponds are separated by a slash /, e.g., hexatonic (3) m/d means a 6 note scale with the 3rd missing which corresponds to (neutralizes the difference between) mixolydian and dorian. If the scale is pentatonic, it is identified by the two missing notes in parentheses.

2) Range: The term "authentic" indicates that the melodic range is from tonic to octave, the term "plagal" indicates a range from the lower to the upper dominant (a 4th below to a 5th above the tonic). Both of these terms imply that the range will be exactly one octave -- obviously the range will sometimes be more and sometimes less. Any significant deviation will be noted.

3) Structure: This denotes whether tonal phrases (which in most cases are 4 measures in length) are the same or different from preceding ones in the same tune. The use of primes, e.g., a', indicates that the phrase can best be viewed as a repetition even though it may not be identical to the first occurrence of that phrase (which would be marked a).

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