

VOLUME TWO

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FS 3845

MUSIC OF THE BAHAMAS

RECORDED AND EDITED BY SAMUEL B. CHARTERS



The Sloops at Lisbon Creek Photo by A. R. Banberg

Cover design by Ronald Clyne

MUSIC OF THE BAHAMAS

Sacred Music:

DIG MY GRAVE BOTH LONG AND NARROW

DEPEND ON ME

TAKE YOUR BURDEN TO THE LORD AND LEAVE IT THERE

Service at ST. STEPHENS ANGLICAN CHURCH

A WAKE

JESUS WILL BE YOUR FRIEND

A GREAT DAY IS COMING

Launching Songs and Ballads:

LONG SUMMER DAYS

YOUNG GAL, SWING YOUR TAIL

PYTORIA

CURRY CAMP BURNED DOWN

CECIL GONE IN THE TIME OF STORM

Descriptive Notes are inside pocket.

[illegible]

(Music of the Bahamas, Volume II)

Andros Island is a large, flat island lying southeast of Florida, about 150 miles into the Atlantic. It is the largest of the Bahamas Islands, 120 miles long and 45 miles wide. On the western side, toward Cuba and Florida, the water is less than four feet deep for most of the coastline, with endless, hot shallows alive with fish and plant life. On the eastern side, toward Nassau, the capitol of the Bahamas, there is a shallow, dangerous reef. Eighteenth century pirates used the island as a base, but it has very little good anchorage. A vessel drawing more than four or five feet of water must anchor outside the reef, trusting to cables to stay off the rocks in a stiff wind. Partly because of this, and partly because the prevailing winds make the return sail long and arduous, Andros is the least developed of the large Bahaman islands.

Scattered along the eastern coast of Andros are settlements of Negro fishermen who depended on sponge fishing until a fungus destroyed the sponges in 1938, and who have been living on farming, crawfishing, and sporadic tourist trade for the last twenty years. The island is a raised, flat coral growth, almost without soil, and covered with tough, spiny brush. There are trees on the higher ground, but swamps and shallow, brackish lakes cover most of the interior of the island, and mosquitoes and flies fill the air. Many of the natives feel the island is haunted with spirits living in the trees, and the island has had such endless bad fortune that there would seem to be excellent grounds for their belief. Three great shallow streams, the Biggs

Because of the isolation and poverty of Andros the natives have retained many characteristics of their older culture which have disappeared on the other islands. Nassau itself has become a hybrid of many cultures, with American and West Indian characteristics coloring the generally gray outline of British colonialism. There are only a handful of whites living on Andros, most of them living near a new resort hotel on the northern part of the island. The hotel has been struggling against the Andros spirits for six years and seems on the verge of giving up the unequal struggle. In the last two hundred years extensive investments in sugar planting, sisal planting, and pineapple farming have all failed. The Parker Pen interests are operating a sawmill and large farm about forty miles north of the hotel, but the mill burned during the winter, and labor unrest has threatened the farms future. The sisal plantation was managed by young Neville Chamberlain, and at one point during his stay he cut down a tree which was known to be the home of one of the spirits, a "chickcharnie". Natives of Andros blame all of Chamberlain's subsequent bad fortune, including Munich, on the offended spirit. The superstitions of Andros are dying, but the dismal luck seems to hold good.

I went to Andros in the summer of 1958 to study and record the older religious music which still survived in some of the southern settlements. In Nassau I found that noone really knew much about Andros, and that the general opinion was that there was nothing there to know about anyway. A native sloop from Long Bay Cays, on the southern part of the island, was in to sell some fish, and they agreed to take us and the recording equipment to southern Andros. We waited on the boat, with the crew, until about 4 a.m., tied up along side the Nassau public dock, waiting for the captain. Large

wharf rats were crawling from one boat to another - they were tied close together along the dock - and there were clouds of mosquitoes. The captain finally stumbled to the boat too drunk to sail. The Andros luck continued to hold. We were finally able to get a plane to a settlement called Fresh Creek, near the resort hotel.

At Fresh Creek there was one man, John Roberts, who still sang in the old style. He sang dozens of ballads and hymns, but the older style demands three singers, singing in a freely improvised contrapuntal framework, and there were no other singers his age in the settlement. He listened to what he had done and shook his head ruefully.

"That ain't right."

We asked him if there were any other singers in the area.

"You got to see Frederick McQueen."

He said that Frederick McQueen had grown up with him in a settlement called Blanket Sound, about twenty miles north of Fresh Creek. McQueen was the best singer on Andros. Had he seen Frederick recently? No, he had not seen Frederick for nearly twenty years. They had sailed together on the sponge boats; then after the fungus had killed sponges they had worked together on the ill-fated pineapple farm. The farm had burned in 1940 and he had not seen Frederick since then. We asked around the settlement, and found that most of the older people had heard Frederick sing. Women would clap their hands together.

"Frederick McQueen? He could sing so beautiful. So beautiful. There'd never be a wake or a wedding that the people wouldn't come and carry him there to sing."

An old sponging captain, Ormond Johnson, a strong, dark man, with hands scarred and twisted from years of pulling on water soaked lines, said that Frederick had sailed for him years before, and in the long nights of sailing McQueen would sing to them as they lay out on the deck, wrapped in coarse blankets, looking up into the skies. The sloops have small open fires in boxes on the deck, and during the night there was the glow from the coals. Johnson remembered McQueen's voice as the most beautiful he had ever heard. He was sure that Frederick was still living, somewhere on Mangrove Cay, on the southern part of the island.

Two days later there was a dead, flat calm, and a boat from Mangrove Cay, sailing to Nassau, drifted into Fresh Creek with the tide and anchored in the creek. I found the men at a dance that night and asked them about McQueen. They said he was sailing on a fast sloop named the Charity, and that he was living in a settlement called Lisbon Creek about seven miles south of Mangrove Cay. I asked them if he still sang, and there was an embarrassed silence. They finally said that McQueen was drinking, did not sing often, and that his voice was not as strong as it once had been. One of them protested.

"McQueen's still the best there is, for his style of singing."

In field recording there is a continuous effort to find the musicians still performing in the older styles. The younger people are influenced to a considerable extent by the recorded music commercially available; so it is necessary to find older people, and often the older singers have forgotten many songs, and the instrumentalists have not played for years and their performance is disappointing. A singer who is able to recall many songs, regardless of the musicality of his performance, or an instrumentalist who can recapture some of the feeling of an older style is recorded extensively. The possibility of finding a man like McQueen, an almost legendary singer, was intensely exciting.

We left Fresh Creek; searching down the coast for Frederick McQueen. We were to take a mail boat south to a settlement called Behring Point, and we

waited a day and a half for it to reach Fresh Creek from Nassau. It came inside the reef about two in the afternoon and stood off while a small boat came in to shore. The anchor cables had dragged the night before, and the wind had nearly driven the ship onto the rocks at Mastik Point. There was a hurricane warning, and a strong wind was tossing the sea. We put the equipment into the small skiff and pushed back toward the ship. It was pitching awkwardly in the heavy swell, and the equipment had to be handed up onto the deck while the skiff was held against the side of the ship. Then we had to scramble on board as best we could, climbing up rusted cables. The moment a winch had lifted the skiff onto the deck the ship slipped through a break in the reef to get to the open sea. Despite the heavy swell the crew was trying to rest. They had had little sleep the night before. A man was in the stern watching a line dragging through the water. Just outside the reef a large barracuda took the bait and was pulled aboard, twisting across the deck as the man struck at it with a hammer.

About sunset, with the wind dropping, the ship reached the anchorage off Behring Point. The skiff drove onto the rocks a few yards offshore, but people from the settlement were waiting on a small stone pier, and they got the equipment and the ships freight into the settlement. A man named David Mackey, the local constable, took us to his home, a stucco building on a small hill overlooking the trees and scattered houses of Behring Point. He had a chicken killed for supper, and talked with us about the unpleasant island politics until supper was ready. We ate in a small room by kerosene lamp. There was very tough chicken, hand ground corn grits, and cocoa. While we were eating we heard a trumpet. David was sitting on the front porch playing for some of the younger people in the settlement. When we came out on the porch they were dancing a quadrille. It was the quadrille as it had been danced a hundred years ago, and they laughed as they danced, whirling and turning in the darkness. David said he ". . . began studying how to play the trumpet" when he was forty-nine years old, and that he expected that if he kept studying he would continue to get better, and he was determined to play as well as another trumpet player from a neighboring settlement.

About McQueen he couldn't say. He hadn't heard Frederick sing in years, and he knew that he was drinking, but he remembered Frederick's singing from the sponging days, when on a calm night the boats would tie up so close that the men could walk across the decks and they would sing until morning. We sat with David into the night, while he told the legends of the animals and spirits of Andros.

At dawn we sculled out to the small sloop that was taking us to Mangrove Cay. It was an older boat, the sails in shreds, the lines spliced from a dozen partings, the hull thick with paint. The tide drifted us slowly across the wide mouth of the North Bight to an island called Big Wood Cay; then with the wind almost dead we lay becalmed about thirty yards off the beach of Big Wood. The settlement we had left, Behring Point, shimmered faintly in the heat behind us, and beyond the reef a sloop from the south of the island lay as still as we. Voices occasionally reached us across the water. The hours passed. On the small sloop there was no place to hide from the sun, and small flies with a nasty sting were coming to the boat from the island. There was a little water on board, but it was in a rusted oil can, almost unfit to drink.

About noon a light breeze slowly carried us past the island. We were sailing over the warm shallows of a coral reef, over the dazzling colors of fish and plants, but we had been drifting too long, and the changing tide was carrying us out toward the reef. We slipped into the Middle Bight current, trying to scull the heavy sloop across it. The Middle Bight is nearly a mile across, and a strong current surges through it with the tides. The water under us was

nearly forty feet deep. A summer squall came up as we were drifting toward a small island just inside the reef. The wind caught the sails and we began to move again, with only a few miles still to go.

We dropped anchor a few hundred yards from a beautiful, palm lined beach. There were smaller boats pulled up, and a few houses, but there were very few people to be seen. They were all back in the bush working their small farms. We transferred the equipment into a tiny, leaking skiff and sculled to shore, bailing as we went. We had to wade the last twenty yards, carrying the equipment up out of the water. The lowering clouds of the squall had turned the afternoon dark and windy, and we hurried toward a combination dance hall and grocery store that had electricity and rooms. The rain began to fall and we walked rapidly along the path, stopping occasionally in small stone buildings that sold cheap rum along the path. We reached the dance hall soaking wet, badly sunburned, and very tired from the hours on the sloop.

That night we began asking for McQueen. A man from Bastain Point, three miles from the settlement where McQueen was staying, said that McQueen's ship, the Charity, was still at sea, but that it was expected in any time. The next morning we took bicycles and began riding toward Lisbon Creek. The rough path ended at Bastain Point, and we had to push the bicycles across the heavy sand toward Lisbon Creek. We stopped under a grove of coconut palms to watch a man work on a small dinghy boat. He was working on the mahogany frame out under the palm trees. A man from Lisbon Creek was sitting on a log talking with him, and we asked about McQueen. They both laughed. The man from Lisbon Creek shook his head.

"All he lives for is drinking."
"Does he still sing?"
"Sometimes. But when he gets drinking he doesn't sing so good."

He said he would walk with us to the settlement. His name was Leroy Bannister, a hard working, and - by Andros standards - a very prosperous man. His dinghy had come in first in the Bahaman work boat races the winter before, and his smaller sloop had taken second. He had a large sloop for crawfishing and an extensive farm not far from the settlement. He seemed happy, but years before he and his wife had lost two young children in a fire, and they had had no other children. He was the only man of his family still living, and with him would die the name of Bannister. He felt very keenly not having someone to leave his name to. His wife was a very attractive woman, working from dawn until ten and eleven at night on the endless jobs that must be done by the women of the settlements.

Under the trees at Lisbon Creek there were six large sloops under construction. The men were known for their fast, strong boats, and they often found themselves with more orders than they could handle. The men were scattered along the beach working. A handsome young woman, about eight months pregnant, was walking along the shore and Bannister hailed her. Her husband was the captain of the Charity and McQueen stayed in a room at their house. She was waiting for the first glimpse of the sail, but with the fitful winds she didn't know when the Charity might come in. Bannister took us to his house and we talked for the rest of the afternoon. We arranged with him to have the equipment moved to Lisbon Creek by dinghy the next Monday. He wanted us to stay with him until the Charity came in.

In the morning on Monday we recorded a small brass band playing in the dance hall; then took the bicycles along the path toward the creek. As we were starting along the beach a man hailed us and said that there was a sail coming in on the other side of the reef. It looked like the Charity, standing well off the reef, beating past Mangrove Cay toward Lisbon Creek. We reached the settlement just as the Charity dropped anchor, about five hundred yards out. Bannister saw me standing in the water and called out.

"Do you want to go out to her?"

I did. We hoisted the sail on a dinghy tied near his house and went out to the Charity. There were some children on the deck, coming back from a trip to Nassau, and they were helping the Captain load supplies into a skiff. As we shouted across the water Frederick McQueen climbed out of the cabin onto the deck. He was tall, over six feet, very dark skinned. His chest was tremendous, but his arms and legs looked thin, almost wasted. He shook hands nervously, answering my questions in a light, clear voice. We unloaded the sloop and sailed to the settlement. Bannister and I had to leave for Mangrove Cay to get the recording equipment, and we left, in the dinghy again, almost immediately.

It was after dark when we reached the Creek. I was almost too excited to eat, but Mrs. Bannister had fixed a good supper, and we ate quietly. I had found McQueen, but I hadn't heard him sing. Mrs. Bannister came into the room and said that there had been a wake while the ships were in Nassau. The sloops had tied up side by side away from the public dock and there had been singing all night, with prizes for the best lead singer. How had McQueen done? He had won, just as he always did. They had all but carried him back to the Charity with the bright colored scarves that were the prizes draped around his neck. Bannister said that McQueen had only come close to losing once that anybody knew about. He was singing against one of the Bullards, from Long Bay Cays, but he sensed it was going to be close; so he didn't drink, and his voice held up all night. I went out into the darkness, looking for McQueen, feeling reassured.

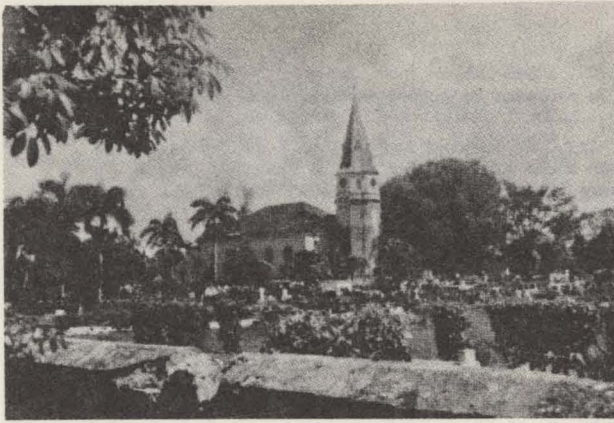
Most of the people of the settlement were sitting on a small concrete pier talking quietly, or just sitting enjoying the evening breeze. I asked for McQueen, and he answered me from the darkness a few yards away. I went over to talk with him. After a moment he said,

"Everybody say I shouldn't let you down. Don't worry, I won't let you down."

I was too embarrassed to answer him.

About twenty minutes later there was shouting from the far side of the settlement, and in a moment we could hear the sound of guitar music. Some young men had come from a nearby settlement to record. They were playing as they came, with friends walking behind them, carrying lanterns. I went to set up the machine on the porch of Bannister's house, and noticed that McQueen was gone. By the time the men had finished drinking a bottle of rum they were carrying most of the people of the settlement were crowded around the porch. The recording was like a noisy party, with the performers showing off for their friends and everyone laughing at the sound of the instruments over the machine.

About midnight I saw McQueen standing at the edge of the crowd, and I called to him, asking him if he was ready to sing. He nodded. I asked him to stand in the yard and lead the people of the settlement in a boat launching song. He stood in the shadows, the people in a ragged circle around him. There was a nervous silence; then he put his hand against his cheek to steady the tone, lifted his head and began to sing. His voice was clear and brilliant, with a tender sadness. As his voice cried out the darkness inside him seemed to lift. The others fell silent and stepped back to listen. In the stillness, when he stopped singing, I realized I was crying.



A CHURCH IN NASSAU
PHOTO BY S.S.CHARTERS

SIDE ONE

SACRED MUSIC

Band 1. DIG MY GRAVE BOTH LONG AND NARROW

Band 2. DEPEND ON ME

Band 3. TAKE YOUR BURDEN TO THE LORD AND LEAVE IT THERE

John Roberts, H. Brown, Charles Wallace.

Band 4. Service at St. Stephens Anglican Church
Alfred Nemo, catechist.

Band 5. A Wake

Band 6. JESUS WILL BE YOUR FRIEND

Band 7. A GREAT DAY IS COMING

Frederick McQueen.

SIDE I, Band 1: DIG MY GRAVE BOTH LONG AND NARROW
1'30"

John Roberts, lead voice; H. Brown, bass; Charles Wallace, treble. Recorded at Fresh Creek Settlement, Andros, Bahamas Island, August 10, 1958.

Dig my grave so long and narrow,
Make my coffin so neat and strong.
Dig my grave so long and narrow,
Make my coffin so neat and strong.

But two, two to my head,
Two, two to my feet;
But two, two to carry me,
Whenever I die.

Oh Lord, my soul's going to shine like a star,
My little soul's going to shine like a star,
Lord my little soul's going to shine like a star,
Oh, on Mount Calvary.

DIG MY GRAVE is included in the earliest collections of Bahaman music,¹ and in the islands is considered a very old song. It is almost always sung as a three-voiced anthem, with considerable contrapuntal emphasis, and some imitation in the phrases ". . . two, two to my head, two, two to my feet; but two, two to carry me . . ." The style seems to have survived from the Anglican polyphonic hymns of the 18th century. A tedious examination of eighteenth and nineteenth century hymnology has not been successful in determining the source of DIG MY GRAVE, but in discussing this Bahaman anthem, and other folk hymns which are contrapuntal to at least some degree, Charles Seeger² has written, "The explanation might very well be that, along with the borrowing of secular folk-tunes . . . borrowing of a prevailing convention in the polyphonic performance of these tunes may have taken place. We would expect to find traces of

such practice in present day secular folk music and in the branch of religious singing that functions along the lines of oral rather than written tradition."

Among the Andros singers there still survive musical terms which were widely used in the 18th century, but which are no longer in common usage. The melodic line is called a "ground" and the bass style is called the "afterbeat". The singers usually use these terms only when they are talking about older anthems like DIG MY GRAVE. The melody of a "spiritual" is usually called the "lead" and the term "afterbeat" is not used to describe the base.

SIDE I, Band 2: DEPEND ON ME
1'50"

John Roberts, lead voice; H. Brown, bass; C. Wallace, treble. Recorded at Fresh Creek Settlement, Andros, Bahamas Islands, August 10, 1958

- (1) Oh, 'pend on me, I will 'pend on you,
Faithful servant, I want to be;
When you hear my trumpet sound then
But you can depend on me.
- (2) Oh well 'pend on me, Lord I'll 'pend on you,
Now well faithful servant, I'll be close to thee;
When you hear that trumpet sound and
Then you can depend on me.
- (3) Repeat (2)....
- (4) Now you dig my grave with a silver spade,
But lower me down with a golden chain;
But when I hear my Father call me
But you can depend on me.
- (5) Repeat (2)....

SIDE I, Band 3: TAKE YOUR BURDEN TO THE LORD AND LEAVE IT THERE
3'32"

John Roberts, lead voice; H. Brown, bass; C. Wallace, treble. Recorded at Fresh Creek Settlement, Andros, Bahamas Islands, August 10, 1958.

Leave it there, Lord, leave it there,
Take the burden to the Lord and leave it there;
If you trust and believe He will surely treat you right,
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

Etc. Etc. . .

DEPEND ON ME and TAKE YOUR BURDEN are "spirituals", and while the contrapuntal style of the anthems is no longer present, there is an intense contrapuntal development of these simple songs. In DEPEND ON ME there is only a suggestion of this development, but in TAKE YOUR BURDEN the style has come to full flower. The lead singer is "rhyming", improvising a highly rhythmic melody against the harmonic background of the other voices. He uses the verses of the song as the basis for his words, though older singers like Roberts have a store of rhythmic phrases that carry them past the occasional moments when inspiration lags. It is in the harsh vocal tones and rhythmic complexity of the "rhymed" spiritual that the African backgrounds of the natives of Andros are very evident. The bass and treble voices elaborate their own parts until there are three voices singing an improvised contrapuntal elaboration that is very different from the simple harmonized spiritual.

SIDE I, Band 4:

Service at St. Stephens Anglican Church
Alfred Nemo, catechist, with women and children of the settlement. Recorded at Fresh Creek Settlement, Andros. August 12, 1958. 2'50"

The people of Fresh Creek attend either St. Stephens



H. BROWN, CHARLES WALLACE, JOHN ROBERTS
PHOTO BY S.B.CHARTERS

Church, on the creek, or St. John Chrysostom Roman Catholic Church on the headland. The Catholic Church has been active in the out islands for about fifty years, but it is the older Anglican Church, and the Anglican musical style, that has influenced Bahaman music. This was a morning service, and most of the men from the settlement were at work.

SIDE I, Band 5: A WAKE

Recorded from a distance at Fresh Creek, Andros, July 21, 1958.

In the Bahamas a wake begins as the word passes through a settlement that an older person is failing. The people begin gathering at the house about sunset, and sing all night. The singing continues during succeeding nights until the person has died. The women sing early, and the men stay outside drinking until about midnight, then they slip into the room and begin singing the loud "rhymed" spirituals. The women sing the slower hymns, often leading the songs from a hymnal. An older woman will sit in a reading chair, singing from her tattered book, reading by the light of a lantern.

SIDE I, Band 6: JESUS WILL BE YOUR FRIEND
2'25"

Frederick McQueen, lead singer; with men from the Lisbon Creek settlement and Joseph Green. Recorded at Lisbon Creek, Andros, Bahamas Islands, August 18, 1958

Now I'm traveling on for Jesus night and day,
Lord I'm traveling on for Jesus night and day,
Want you to make up in your mind
Say now good friend's hard to find,
Lord telling you everybody will be your friend.

Tell you my mother she's dying
Lord these many years ago,
When she were laying on her deathbed
Now she put now a whisper in my ear,
(Spoke) what she say?
Don't mind, don't mind, don't mind what the people
say,
(Teach) everybody will be your friend.

She said if you find your brother in the fort,
Now don't carry his name abroad,
Seal it down on the forehead
And take that home to my God,
I tell you now but don't mind, don't mind,
Don't mind what the people say,
Lord don't take everybody to be your friend.

I tell you there's some people owe you money
And they see you walking this road,
When they see you now walking this road don't you
know,
They will turn off another way and go,
Don't mind, don't mind, don't mind what the people
say,
Lord don't take everybody to be your friend.

But tell you I'm traveling on now for Jesus night
and day,
But tell you I'm traveling on now for Jesus night
and day,
He is the maker of heaven
Who be born now of the Virgin Mary,
One time he been crucified,
But I know Jesus is all of these friends.
Amen.

SIDE I, Band 7: A GREAT DAY IS COMING
2'30"

Frederick McQueen, lead singer; with men from the Lisbon Creek settlement and Joseph Green. Recorded at Lisbon Creek, Andros, Bahamas Islands, August 18, 1958.

Now the sad day is coming,
Oh Lord, sad day is coming, Lord,
Sad day is coming by and by, Lord;
When them saints and them sinners,
Yeah they'll all be reconciled,
I'll tell ya I'll be ready for the great Judgment Day.

Say the sad day is coming,
Oh Lord, sad day is coming, oh Lord,
The sad day is coming by and by, Lord;
When them saints and them sinners,
All will be marching right and left,
Oh you be ready for the great Judgment Day.

Etc. . .



MCQUEEN USING HIS HAND TO HEAR HIMSELF SING.
THIS IS A DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE
BAHAMAN VOCAL STYLE. PHOTO BY S.B.CHARTERS.

SIDE TWO

LAUNCHING SONGS AND BALLADS

Band 1. LONG SUMMER DAYS

Frederick McQueen and people of Lisbon Creek.

Band 2. YOUNG GAL, SWING YOUR TAIL

John Roberts.

Band 3. PYTORIA

John Roberts, H. Brown, Charles Wallace.

Band 4. CURRY CAMP BURNED DOWN

Frederick McQueen

Band 5. CECIL GONE IN THE TIME OF STORM

Frederick McQueen, with men of Lisbon Creek.

SIDE II, Band 1: LONG SUMMER DAYS
1'50"

Frederick McQueen, lead singer; with people of Lisbon Creek settlement. Recorded at Lisbon Creek, Andros, Bahamas Islands, August 18, 1958.

Now the day is so long and the wages so small,
Long summer days,
The day is so long and the wages so small,
She's a long summer day.

I say Captain you gae launch this boat now today,
Long summer day,
I say who knows the Captain of the boat now this
morning,
Long summer day.

Captain LeRoy you now going to launch now your boat,
Long summer day,
I say everybody now is happy on the Creek now,
Long summer day.

Yeah the day is so long and the wages so small,
Long summer day,
Oh boys I say take it now easy, the crawfish is comin'
on,
Long summer day.

I say take it now easy boys, 'cause the crawfish
they're come now,
Long summer day,
Oh Lord the day is so long and the wages so small,
Long summer day.

SIDE II, Band 2: YOUNG GAL, SWING YOUR TAIL
1'25"

John Roberts. Recorded at Fresh Creek Settlement, Andros, Bahamas Islands, August 12, 1958.

Interview: (John Roberts) "Now you see a crowd of people get around the boat. You understand, and they have ropes rig out to launch the boat, the boat up on the beach. And they launch the boat and they pull and they sing. As they pull, they sing. She was 40' up from the water mark, and they pull her down 'til she get 2 feet. When she get 2 feet, they push her off and she go in the water. Then she's finished launching, a new brown boat." (Interview) "Does everybody in the settlement come out to launch the boat?" (John Roberts) "Oh yes, everybody. That's the rule up here. Any boats can be launched what's new built; everybody goes there to launch her, to put her in the water."

Young gal, go swing your tail, swing your tail
to the South West gale,
Young gal, go swing your tail, swing your tail
to the North West gale.

Everybody gather 'round,
Young gal, go swing your tail,
Everybody get 'round this boat,
Young gal, go swing your tail.

Boys and children get troubled in mind,
Etc.

Swing your tail to the North West gale,
Etc.

Everybody get converted,
Etc.

Swing your tail to the North West gale,
Etc.

Interview: (John Roberts) "See, it's short, you know. That's all of that in that launching At the last, that time, you say 'Young gal, go swing your tail', they pull. And then she goes."

SIDE II, Band 3: PYTORIA
(RUN COME SEE JERUSALEM)
4'40"

John Roberts, lead voice; H. Brown, bass; C. Wallace, treble. Recorded at Fresh Creek Settlement, Andros, Bahamas Islands, August 10, 1958.

In nineteen hundred and twenty-nine

(REFRAIN)
Run come seek, Run come seek,

In nineteen hundred and twenty-nine

(REFRAIN)
Run come seek it, Jerusalem.

There was three sails leaving out the harbor,
Etc.

I want you to tell me 'bout the three sails,
Etc.

Will you name those three sails for me,
Etc.

The Result, The Myrtle, the Pytoria
Etc.

Now they're leaving out Nassau Harbor,
Etc.

Now God send the Myrtle into Blanket Sound,
Etc.

But God send Result into Staniard Creek,
Etc.

Now we leave the Pytoria on the ocean,
Etc.

There's a dark cloud build up in the north-east,
Etc.

Now the wind and wave keep rolling down,
Etc.

Pytoria couldn't hold up for the channel,
(REFRAIN)
Now she's cut off for Standard Rock channel,
(REFRAIN)

When she get opposite the channel,
(REFRAIN)
Oh Lord, Captain George was the captain,
(REFRAIN)

He spoke to the people on board her,
(REFRAIN)
Said people, people what must we do?
(REFRAIN)

Now everybody get confused in his mind,
(REFRAIN)
Now everybody get confused in his mind,

Oh he said, I cannot find the channel,
(REFRAIN)
Oh Lord, I got to go in the channel now,
(REFRAIN)

Now the first sea hit the Pytoria,
(REFRAIN)
Thank God everybody get confused,
(REFRAIN)

The second sea hit the Pytoria,
(REFRAIN)
Now she knock little Era to Glory,
(REFRAIN)

Now she had thirty-four souls board her,
Etc.

Now the next sea hit the Pytoria,
(REFRAIN)
She leaved the people on the water,
(REFRAIN)

SIDE II, Band 4: CURRY CAMP BURNED DOWN
3'--

Frederick McQueen. Recorded at Lisbon Creek
Settlement, Andros, Bahamas Islands, August
19, 1958.

Now I was on the bay, Lord, yes I saw a fire,
I said to my Boss Man, Coakley Road on fire,
He said throw down this bag, boys,
Throw down this bag, boys, you know,
Oh Irving McFee; you know, Curry Camp burned down.

Throw down the bag, boys, don't you know,
Run to Coakley Road,
When I reached there, saw John Roberts behind me,
John Roberts is my cousin, you know,
He said unto me, oh good Lord,
Irving McFee; Curry Camp burned down.

When I get on the porch, don't you know,
I said to others at the time,
Throw down your bag, Coakley Road on fire,
Say throw down this bag, boys,
Throw down this bag, boys, you know,
Irving McFee; Curry Camp burned down.

When I did reach there, don't you know,
I said, unto him now,
Throw down the bag now, call up the people on the
farm,
Sixty-five people was working in the forest that
day,
Irving McFee; Curry Camp burned down.

We throw down the bag, don't you know,
He put the whistle to his mouth, what he say?
The whistle did blow, in the forest,
(Spoken) This is what the whistle say: EEEEEEE
When the whistle blow, glory my God,
Irving McFee; Curry Camp burned down.

Sixty-five people, don't you know,
Running on, out to Coakley Road,
Irving McFee said, won't you give me that losses,
What everybody have in this town, glory be to God,
Irving McFee; Curry Camp burned down.

Some say they lost eight pound,
Some say they lost six pound,
Some say they lost five pound,
Some say they lost four pound;
I lost an old coat, I give it for two pounds you know,
Irving McFee; Curry Camp burned down.

SIDE II, Band 5: CECIL GONE IN THE TIME OF STORM
5'--

Frederick McQueen, lead singer; with men from Lisbon
Creek settlement. Recorded at Lisbon Creek, Andros,
Bahamas Islands, August 18, 1958.

Now in nineteen hundred and thirty-three,
On a blessed Sunday day, praise the Lord,
Some souls was crossing Jordan's River's stream,
Cecil gone in the time of storm.

Tell you nineteen hundred and thirty-three,
On that blessed Sunday day, oh Lord,
Some souls was crossing Jordan's River's stream,
Cecil gone in the time of storm.

I remember that boy and his mother had a talk,
He decide to go to Mastic Point,
Take his suitcase in his hand, walking down along
the bay,
Cecil gone in the time of storm.

Lord, he get into the boat, yes he hoist the boat
sail you know,
Start to go to Mastic Point,
When the boat get confound, poor Cecil get drowned,
Cecil gone, oh yes, Cecil gone.

I remember the time passed, for eight days time,
The boy now weren't turned back home any more,
When they make up in their mind to go to Blanket
Sound land,
Cecil gone, oh yes, Cecil gone.

When they reach to Blanket Sound they met his uncle
on the beach,
Say you ain't seen Cecil nowhere?
"I believe Cecil reach all the way to Nicholas Town,
Cecil gone, oh yes, Cecil gone.

I remember these questions what my friend now did say,
I believe Cecil now get drowned,
Oh blessed Lord, that my dearest friend is gone,
Cecil gone in the time of storm.

When they a week now around, bound to Blanket Sound
land,
They met now his mother on the bay,
This is the question what Eudie now did ask,
Cecil gone in the time of storm.

I find the boat, I find the sail,
None of his body I behold?
I said, oh now my cousin, I believe Cecil drowned,
Cecil gone in the time of storm.

I remember that woman now, she fell on the bay,
She rolled all over the bay,
Said, I didn't know God would na answer my cry,
Cecil gone in the time of storm.

I remember that woman, Lord, she fell on the bay,
She rolled all over the bay,
Say, oh blessed Lord, there my youngest son was gone,
Cecil gone in the time of storm.

These the last words I remember what the woman did
say,
Oh God, make peace with his soul,
If a man live in Christ, you sure will die right,
Cecil gone, oh yes, and he's gone.

Since the 1920's the great Andros singers have composed ballads about their lives and experiences, and there has been a flowering of the ballad style. There are now five major ballads sung along the coast of Andros. McQueen composed CURRY CAMP BURNED DOWN and with John Roberts - who is mentioned in CURRY CAMP BURNED DOWN - composed PYTORIA. They are both from the settlement at Blanket Sound and John remembered that the Pytoria sank on Wednesday and on Sunday morning "... I had my song ready." McQueen has certainly developed the magnificent CECIL GONE IN THE TIME OF STORM to its present form, but it was probably created by the entire community at Blanket Sound within a few weeks after Cecil's drowning. John Robert's singing of the ballad added a few details, but it was very similar to McQueen's.

The other two ballads are from southern Andros and seem to have been composed by a singer from Long Bay Cay, Willie Bullard. They are HARCOURT DROWNED and CEDRIC. McQueen recorded HARCOURT DROWNED, but noone could be found in the Mangrove Cay area who could sing more than a few lines of CEDRIC. Bullard may have taken part in the development of CECIL GONE IN THE TIME OF STORM, since there is evidence that he sang the ballad in the 1930's. With the exception of CEDRIC and CURRY CAMP BURNED DOWN - which is regarded as McQueen's special song - the ballads all widely sung on Andros and are thought of as traditional.

The ballads of Andros are superb examples of a mature ballad style, and they have been collected at an early point, so that there is still a richness of detail and an intensity of mood. McQueen was on the beach at Blanket Sound when Eudie Newton was told that her son, Cecil, was drowned, and John Roberts had been a crew member of the Pytoria until a week before it was destroyed on the rocks at Fresh Creek. In their singing is the vividness with which they recall the scene. CURRY CAMP BURNED DOWN is a delightful example of that rare form, the comic ballad. Curry Camp was the ill-fated pineapple farm near Fresh Creek, run by a government official named Erwin McFee. McQueen paints a colorful picture of the confusion and excitement of the fire, and then solemnly recounts how the employees - including himself - cheated poor McFee when he was trying to make good their losses. McQueen sings the ballads with a moving sensitivity and expressiveness.

Recording by S. B. Charters, with the technical assistance of A. R. Danberg. Much of the recording was done under difficult conditions, and there is background noise from gasoline driven generators on at least two of the selections.