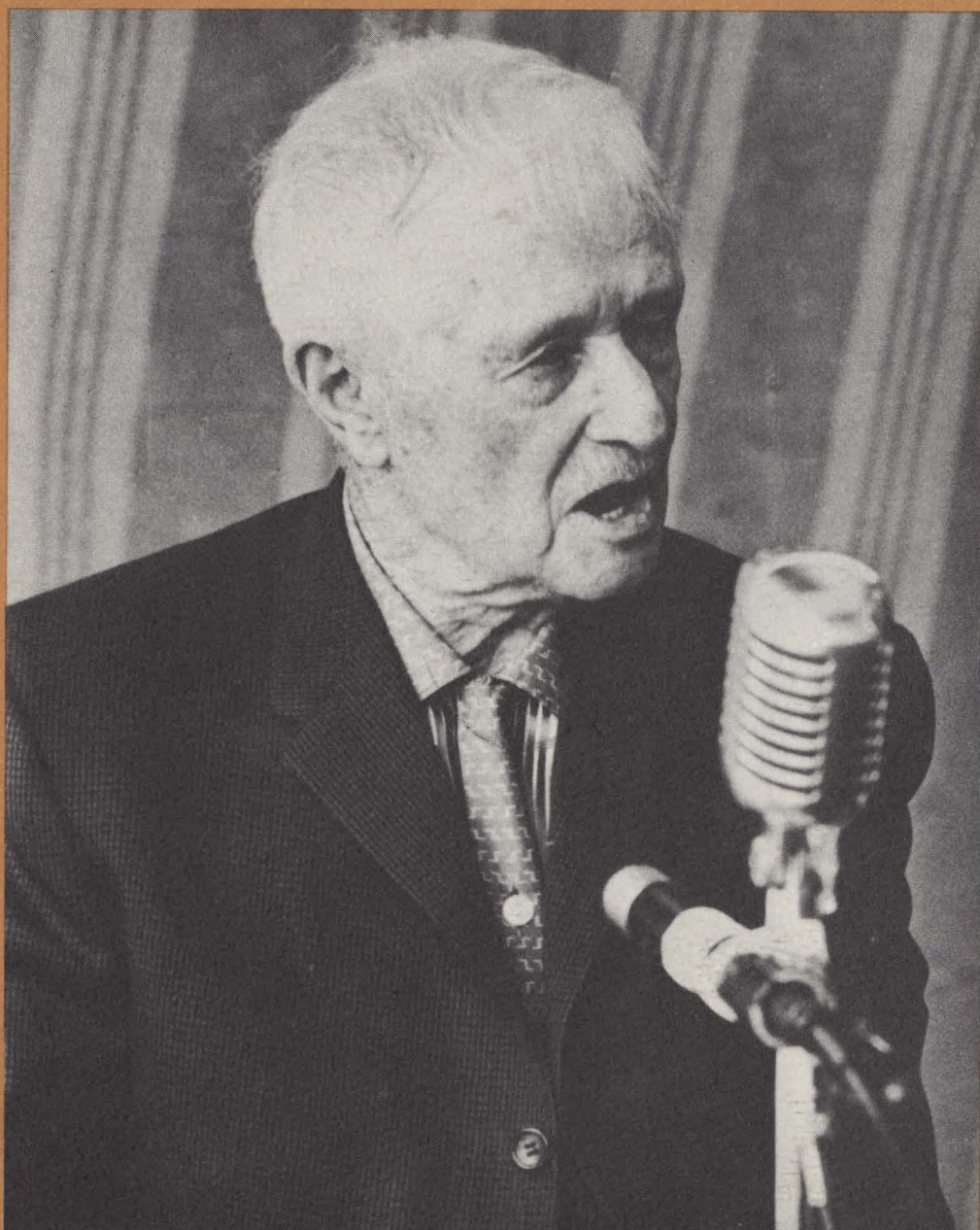


IRISH AND BRITISH SONGS FROM THE OTTAWA VALLEY SUNG BY O. J. ABBOTT

RECORDED BY EDITH FOWKE
ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY MONOGRAPH SERIES
FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 4051



SIDE I

Band 1: THE DOG AND THE GUN
 Band 2: THE GYPSY DAISY
 Band 3: THE BARLEY GRAIN FOR ME
 Band 4: TO BE A FARMER'S BOY
 Band 5: THE SILVER HERRINGS
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 Band 8: THE BUNCH OF WATER CRESSES
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SIDE II

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 Band 10: THE BOLD AND UNDAUNTED YOUTH
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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE / PHOTO BY DAVID GARH

IRISH AND BRITISH SONGS FROM THE OTTAWA VALLEY

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FM 4051

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IRISH AND BRITISH SONGS FROM THE OTTAWA VALLEY

sung by **O. J. Abbott** Recorded by **EDITH FOWKE**



Mr. and Mrs. Abbott, who celebrated their golden anniversary in 1950.

MR. ABBOTT'S SONGBAG

by Edith Fowke

Folklorists have long recognized the wealth of British folk songs that have been preserved in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, but until recently we knew little about the similar riches to be found in Ontario. In the fall of 1956 I began to track down some of our Ontario songs with a tape-recorder, and was pleasantly surprised by the number and variety of songs I uncovered.

The most exciting adventure of my collecting so far was the discovery of Mr. O. J. Abbott, of Hull, Quebec. Mr. Abbott, now eighty-five, is the finest traditional singer I've had the pleasure of meeting, and I don't expect to come across many more like him. He knows well over a hundred folk songs, and he recorded eighty-four of them for me in five days in the summer of 1957.

I first heard of Mr. Abbott when his daughter, Mrs. Ida Dagenais, wrote to me in March, 1957, after she had seen me on a TV show in which I talked about some of the singers I had found around Peterborough. She told me that her father knew a great many old songs, so I wrote back asking for the names of some of them. When I saw the list, I realized that he had a real treasure-trove of traditional songs, and decided to record them as soon as I could.

During our summer holidays my husband and I motored up to Ottawa to visit Mr. Abbott. When we arrived at his home in Hull (just across the Ottawa River from Canada's capital), Mr. Abbott turned out to be a short, chubby little man with white hair and sparkling eyes. In view of his age, I hardly expected he'd be able to sing very well, but I hoped the tapes would be good enough to preserve the words and give some idea of the tunes. Imagine my delight when I started the tape-recorder and he began to sing in a fresh clear voice, full of character and right on pitch!

For nearly a week we spent several hours a day recording a wide variety of songs from his almost unbelievable store. I'd heard from Helen Creighton about some of her singers who knew up to a hundred songs, but this was my first personal experience with a really fine traditional singer.

Although he was born in England and had come to Canada when he was a boy, the great majority of Mr. Abbott's songs were Irish in origin. The explanation is that he and his brother settled in an Irish community in the Ottawa valley where he lived for about fifteen years before moving into Hull. He worked on several farms in the area, and he spent five winters in lumbercamps in northern Ontario. (For details see Mr. Abbott's own account of his life.) Almost all the songs he knows were learned in that period, over sixty years ago.

Many of Mr. Abbott's finest songs are ones he learned from Mrs. O'Malley, the wife of one of the farmers for whom he worked. He told me that she was already an old lady when he knew her some sixty-five years ago, and that she said she'd learned all her songs when she was a little girl, which would take them back well over a hundred years. Mrs. O'Malley's parents came out from Ireland, so they had probably learned the songs there in the early years of the nineteenth century.

More than two-thirds of Mr. Abbott's songs were of British origin--most of them Irish, as I've mentioned, but a fair number from England and one or two from Scotland. The remainder were local Ontario songs or songs from the United States that had reached northern Ontario by way of the lumbercamps.

This album illustrates the breadth of his repertoire of traditional British songs. His songbag includes a few Child ballads and many street songs and broadside ballads ranging from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century; there are songs of pirates and sea disasters, of heroes and foreign wars, humorous ditties and reports of tragedies, love songs, and drinking songs. Some are well known in both Britain and the United States; some are familiar in Ireland but not previously reported in North America; and a few I have been unable to trace in either British or American collections.

It's only once in a blue moon that a ballad-collector has the good fortune to meet a singer who not only knows a great many old songs but can sing them as well as Mr. Abbott. With him there was no problem of missing lines, or scrappy fragments that tantalize by suggesting great riches just over the border of memory. His songs were almost all complete and well-rounded, and as he swung into each new song, his style and rhythm changed to express the new mood. He is a natural born singer, and he seems to have a perfect "phonographic" memory, for he could reproduce almost instantly songs he had not sung for fifty or sixty years.

Not only is Mr. Abbott a very fine folksinger--he is also a completely delightful personality, and by the end of our five days' visit we had grown very fond of him. The twinkle in his eye, his delight in hearing how "that fellow in the box" sang his songs, and his anecdotes about his early life made our visit very enjoyable. I shall always be glad we decided to take a "Busman's Holiday" to visit him.



MR. ABBOTT'S STORY

"I was born in Enfield, England, where the famous rifles were made; my father was employed there. I came out to Canada when I was about 12 with my brother Walter who was a harness-maker. We stayed with Andy Whalen in South March (8 miles from Ottawa) where Walter worked and I did later. We also worked for Pat O'Malley of Marchhurst.

"I was about 20 when I first worked in the lumber camps, for J.R. Booth Co. at South River on Lake Nipissing; the second year in the Ostabanna for Buel and Hurdman; the next winter on French River, Algoma District, for Camble and Gibson; and later near Mattawa on the Mab-de-feaux for Mackey Sons and Co.

"From 1900 to 1904 I worked for the C.P.R. on Hull Section 1, and then for the Canada Cement Co. for 4 years. I worked in the J.R. Booth paper mill as oiler for 37 years and for 2 years with E.B. Eddy Co. after they took over the Booth plants, after which I was retired by the company.

"South March is now the Connaught Ranges. There were six families in the District: the John Whalens and 4 boys, the Peter Walters and 7 boys, the Nicholas Kealeys and 5 boys, the Andrew Whalens and 2 boys, and Ed Shea's 4 boys, all first cousins. The Patrick O'Malleys in Marchhurst, the next township, were also first cousins. All these young men went to lumbercamps in wintertime, and in the spring would have lots of songs. There being no radio or TV or motor cars, we spent evenings in sing-songs. All I had to do was hear a song once and I could sing it. I went to the bush for 5 winters and learned a lot there myself. All those boys' grandfathers came from Ireland.

"Mother and I celebrated our golden wedding anniversary in 1950. We had 12 of a family, 6 boys and 6 girls. We now enjoy 18 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

"I've always enjoyed singing and playing the violin and calling square dances, and I could step dance with the best of them."

OTHER BRITISH SONGS SUNG BY MR. ABBOTT

Of the eighty-four songs Mr. Abbott sang for me, fifty-five were clearly of Old-Country origin. The remainder were local Ontario songs or songs from the United States which travelled through the lumbercamps. In addition to the twenty-three songs given in this album, here are the titles of thirty-two other British songs he sang. Those which have been listed in *Laws: AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH SOURCES* are indicated by his key letter and number.

THE BANKS OF THE DEE
THE BANKS OF SWEET DUNDEE (M-25)
BARNEY BLAKE
THE BLACK WATER SIDE (O-1)
THE BONNIE BUNCH OF RUSHES GREEN
THE BONNIE WEE WINDOW (O-18)
BY BORDEN'S GROVE
THE CRIMEAN WAR (J-9)
THE DARK-EYED SAILOR (N-35)
DONNELLEY AND COOPER
DORAN'S ASS (Q-19)
DOWN BY YON SHADY HARBOR
ERIN GO BRACH (Q-20)
FATHER O'FLYNN
THE GAY SPANISH MAID (K-16)
THE GOLDEN VANITY (Child 286)
JACK DONAHUE (L-22)
JOHNNY THE SAILOR (K-36)
THE LOVELY BANKS OF BOYNE (P-22)
THE MAID OF SWEET GURTEEN
NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL TO PARIS



Mr. Abbott and his daughter,
Mrs. Ida Dagenais

NEAR THE SHANNON SIDE THERE DWELT A LASS
THE OCEAN BEE
THE OLD WOMAN (Q-2)
THE ROSY BANKS SO GREEN
SALLY MUNROE (K-11)
TERRENCE'S FAREWELL
THREE JOLLY JACK TARS
VAN DIEMAN'S LAND (L-18)
WILLIE AND MARY (N-28)
THE YORKSHIRE BITE (L-1)
THE YOUNG MEN FROM GOLMOY

REFERENCES

Detailed bibliographical references for a number of songs included on this record may be found in the following guides:

A GUIDE TO ENGLISH FOLK SONG COLLECTIONS by University Press of Liverpool in association with the English Folklore and Dance Society, Liverpool, 1954.
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THE BRITISH TRADITIONAL BALLAD IN NORTH AMERICA by Tristram P. Coffin; American Folklore Society, Philadelphia, 1950.

The following are books which are referred to in the notes:

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ORD, John; THE BOTHY SONGS AND BALLADS OF ABERDEEN, BANFF, AND MORAY, AND THE MEARNS, Alexander Gardner, Paisley, 1930

SIDE I, BAND 1: THE DOG AND THE GUN (The Golden Glove)

This popular English ballad was printed as a broadside in the United States in the early nineteenth century and spread across the continent. It has been collected in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, as well as in many parts of the States. The texts from widely scattered areas are remarkably uniform. Mr. Abbott learned it about sixty-four years ago from John O'Malley of Marchhurst, Ontario, who probably learned it in the lumber-camps. His words follow the usual pattern except in one particular: most versions begin with a reference to the young squire whom the lady was to marry, as "'Twas of a young squire in Yarmouth did dwell", or "A wealthy young squire of Tamworth we hear". Mr. Abbott, more logically, begins with the lady who is the central character.

For references, see A GUIDE TO ENGLISH FOLK SONG COLLECTIONS: page 69.
AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH BROADSIDES, N.20

THE DOG AND THE GUN

1. There was a fair lady in London did dwell;
Few others in beauty could her excel,
And for to get married it was her intent,
When her friends and relations had given their consent.
2. The day was appointed when she should be wed;
They chose a young farmer to wait on the bride,
But when the young lady the farmer espied,
He inflamed her heart; "Oh, the farmer," she cried.
3. Instead of getting married she went to her bed,
For the thoughts of the farmer so ran in her head.
A plan for to gain him she quickly did find,
As the thoughts of the farmer so ran in her mind.
4. Waistcoat and britches next day she put on,
And she went a-hunting with her dog and her gun.
She hunted all around where the farmer did dwell,
For she knew in her heart that he loved her right well.
5. Oftimes she did fire but nothing did she kill,
Until a young farmer came into the field,
And for to converse with him it was her intent;
With her dog and her gun to meet him she went.
6. "I thought you were at the wedding," the lady replied,
"To wait on the squire and to give him his bride."
"Oh, no," said the farmer, "the truth to you I will tell.
I could never give her away for I love her too well."
7. It pleased the lady to see him so bold;
She gave him a glove that was flowered with gold,
Saying, "I picked this up while coming along,
As I was a-hunting with my dog and my gun."
8. Then for to try the young farmer's love
She put it up in handbills that she had lost a glove,
"And he that does find it and bring it to me,
I vow and declare his bride I will be."
9. When the young farmer he read of the news,
Straight to the lady he went with the glove,
Saying, "My dearest honored lady, I picked up your glove;
Now will you be so kind as to grant me your love?"
10. "It's already granted," the lady replied,
"For I love the sweet breath of a farmer", she said.
"I'll be mistress of my dairy and milking my cow
While my jolly young farmer whistles after his plough."

11. The day of the wedding she told of the fun,
How she hunted up her farmer with her dog and her gun;
"And now since I have him so fast in my snare,
I'll enjoy him for ever, I vow and declare."

SIDE I, BAND 2: THE GYPSY DAISY (The Gypsy Laddie: Child 200)

The tale of the lady who deserts her husband and baby to run away with a gypsy is one of the most popular of the Child ballads. The first British versions were noted in the second half of the eighteenth century, although the ballad is probably older. It has been collected in many parts of North America under a wide variety of titles, the most common being "The Gypsy Laddie", "The Gypsy Daisy", and "The Wraggle Taggle Gypsies". "The Gypsy Daisy" version is fairly rare, although it has been found in Nova Scotia (JAF 18: 191). Mr. Abbott learned it from Mr. O'Malley.

THE BRITISH TRADITIONAL BALLAD IN NORTH AMERICA, page 200. A GUIDE TO ENGLISH FOLK SONG COLLECTIONS, page 69. THE BALLAD BOOK, pages 539-544 (cf. Text C)

THE GYPSY DAISY

1. Oh the gypsy he came into town,
He whistled loud and clearly,
He whistled and sang, caused the wild woods to ring,
And he charmed the heart of a lady.
- REFRAIN: Laddie fal the dinko dinko day,
Laddie fal the dinko daisy,
He whistled and he sang, caused the wild woods to ring,
And he charmed the heart of a lady.
2. This lady she came tripping downstairs
With the servant girl behind her,
And in each hand a bottle of wine
To drink with the gypsy daisy.
3. Her lord came home in the middle of the night
Inquiring for his lady,
When the servant girl made this reply:
"She's gone with the gypsy daisy."
4. "Go saddle me my old grey steed;
The bay is not so speedy.
I've drove all day and I'll drive all night
Till I overtake my lady."
5. He drove along by the water's edge,
The water it being muddy,
And from each eye a tear trickled down
When he espied his lady.
6. "Last night I lay on a nice feather bed
That was both soft and easy;
Tonight I lie on the damp cold ground
And a band of gypsies round me."

SIDE I BAND 3: THE BARLEY GRAIN FOR ME (John Barleycorn)

The story of the death and rebirth of John Barleycorn has a long and interesting history. The first known printed version was as a broadside in 1620 which was described as "a pleasant new ballad about the murder of John Barleycorn". The great seventeenth-century diarist, Samuel Pepys, had a copy of it which he reckoned was old then. In 1786 Robert Burns produced a poem which he noted "is partly composed on the plan of an old song known by the same name". It has been suggested that the story had its origin in ancient vegetation rituals which originally involved human sacrifice to ensure the resurrection of the

crops. However, most of the ballads are simply detailed accounts of the planting, reaping, threshing, milling, and brewing of the barley grain. The ballad has been collected fairly frequently in Britain, but very rarely in North America. Mr. Abbott learned it from Owen McCann who worked with him on Skead's farm along the Ottawa River some sixty years ago. I have been unable to trace the place named in the first line: most versions speak of "three farmers in the north" or "three kings from the west". This version seems to have come from Ireland rather than England.

It is fairly similar to "The Barley Corn" given in IRISH STREET BALLADS, page 176. For other references see A GUIDE TO ENGLISH FOLK SONG COLLECTIONS, page 81.

THE BARLEY GRAIN FOR ME

1. Oh three men went to Deroughata
to sell three loads of rye;
They shouted up and they shouted down
the barley grain should die.

REFRAIN: Tirey igery ary ann,
tirey igery ee,
Tirey igery ary ann,
the barley grain for me.

2. Then the farmer came with a big plough,
he ploughed me under the sod,
The winter it being over
and the summer coming on
Sure the barley grain shot forth
his head with a beard like any man.
3. Then the reaper came with a sharp hook,
he made me no reply;
He caught me by the whiskers and
he cut me above the thigh.
4. Then the binder came with her neat thumb;
she bound me all around,
And then they hired a handyman
to stand me on the ground.
5. Then the pitcher came with a steel fork;
he pierced it through me heart,
And like a rogue or a highwayman
they bound me on the cart.
6. Then they took me to the barn and
spread me out on the floor;
They left me there for a space of time,
and me beard grew through the door.
7. Then the thresher came with a big flail;
he swore he'd break my bones,
But the miller he used me worse,
he ground me between two stones.
8. Then they took me out of that and
they threw me into a well;
They left me there for a space of time,
and me belly began to swell.
9. Then they sold me to the brewer and
he brewed me on the pan,
But when I got into the jug
I was the strongest man.
10. Then they drank me in the kitchen and
they drank me in the hall,
But the drunkard he used me worse,
he lashed me against the wall.

SIDE I, BAND 4: THE FARMER'S BOY

In A GARLAND OF ENGLISH POLK SONGS, Frank Kidson notes that "The pretty pastoral, 'A Farmer's Boy', is known in every district in England and is set to many different tunes". It probably dates from the early eighteenth century. It has been quite widely collected in North America, usually with very similar words but varying tunes. Mr. Abbott learned it from Mrs. O'Malley, the wife of the farmer for whom he worked, some sixty-four years ago.

A GUIDE TO ENGLISH FOLK SONG COLLECTIONS, page 66.
AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH BROADSIDES, Q.30

THE FARMER'S BOY

1. As the sun went down behind a cloud
as the dreary night was o'er,
Poor and lame there came a boy
up to a farmer's door,
Saying, "Please could you tell me
a man about here that would me employ
To plow, to sow, to reap, and to mow,
to be a farmer's boy?"
2. "My father's dead; my mother lives
with her five children small,
And what is the worse for mother dear,
I'm the eldest of them all.
Although I am small I fear no work,
if you'll only me employ,
To plow, to sow, to reap, and to mow,
to be a farmer's boy."
3. "Oh well," said the farmer, "we'll try the lad,
no longer have him weep,"
"Oh, yes, dear papa," his daughter cried,
as the tears ran down her cheeks,
"For a lad that can work it's hard for him
to want and to wander for employ;
Don't send him away, but let him stay
and be your laboring boy."
4. As the years rolled on the boy grew up,
and the good old farmer died.
He willed to the lad the farm that he had,
and his daughter for a bride,
And the lad that was once is a farmer now,
and he often thinks with joy
Of the happy, happy day he came that way,
to be a farmer's boy.

SIDE I, BAND 5: THE SILVER HERRINGS

Mr. Abbott learned this little fish-peddler's song in school in England before he was twelve. It is probably not folk in origin for it is a little too polished, although, like "Caller Herrin'" and Cockles and Mussels", it is based on the cries of the street peddlers. It seems to be the only song that Mr. Abbott actually learned in Britain--and that over Seventy years ago.

THE SILVER HERRINGS

REFRAIN: Who'll buy my silver herrings,
with silver scales so white,
With eyes like sparkling diamonds,
so pleasing to the sight?
They came from o'er the ocean
where blinding billows roar.
Who'll buy my silver herrings?,
I cry from door to door.

You meet and taste and try them,
you may steep and baste and fry them,
You may steep in oil
and call them herring red.
You may call them Yarmouth bloaters,
or silverlock fin floaters,
Or silvery gold and Digby kiper red.

REFRAIN

There's many a hungry mortal that
treads the busy street
That dine on silver herrings and
think them quite a treat;
There's many a weeping mother,
and many a crying babe
That weeps for one who sleeps
within his cold and watery grave;
There's many an anxious father
looks out his cottage door
To see the little vessel returning to the shore.

REFRAIN

SIDE I, BAND 6: THE LASS OF GLENSHEE

This is the only song in Mr. Abbott's repertoire that is definitely Scottish in origin. John Ord notes: "I do not know a more popular song than this. It has been sung in nearly every farmhouse, cottage, and bothy in Scotland for the past seventy or eighty years. The author of it was a shoemaker named Andrew Sharpe, a native of Perth, who died there on 5th February, 1817." It has been collected in several places in the United States, although it is not very well known on this continent. Mr. Abbott learned it from Mrs. O'Malley, but where that old Irish lady picked it up we can only surmise.

AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH BROADSIDES, O.6

THE LASS OF GLENSHEE

1. As I roved out on a fine summer's morning,
Bright Phoebus arose and shone over the lea,
'Twas homeward a-riding I espied a fair damsel
A-herding her flocks on the hills of Glenshee.
2. Her cheeks were like roses adorned with a dimple,
And bright was the beam of her bonny blue eye;
Her face was enchanting, her form neat and handsome;
My heart soon belonged to the lass of Glenshee.
3. I stepped up to her and says I "My fairest
creature,
If you will but come to Caledonia with me,
There's no one but you shall step forth in my
castle,
Nor none shall be clothed more costly than thee."
4. "Believe me, fair creature, Caledonia's bright
waters.
Shall alter their course and turn back from the
sea;
The bright gleaming sun will be bound down in
fethers
E'er I ever prove false to my charming Jenny.
5. "Come sit down beside me and don't talk so
lightly;
Should bullets fly around me my bride you
shall be.
This night in my arms, oh so fondly I'll
treat you."
She smiled and consented, I took her with me.
6. It's seven long years oh since we were united;
There's many a change since, but no change in she
My love is as pure as the rose that in winter
Lies out and gets withered on the hills of
Glenshee.

SIDE I, BAND 7: THE COLLEEN BAWN (Limerick Is Beautiful)

This old Irish song is another Mr. Abbott learned from the O'Malleys. It is very close to the one printed in IRISH STREET BALLADS, which Colm O'Lachlainn tells us he learned from his mother, a native of Limerick. In fact, the only major difference is that Mr. Abbott omits the last two lines of the third verse which originally ran:
 "I'd give my fleet, my golden store,
 I'd give up my armie,
 The horse, the rifle, and the foot,
 and the Royal Artillerie",
 and in place of these somewhat cumbersome lines he repeats the first half of the last verse. The song is sometimes credited to the British playwright Dion Boucicault because he introduced it into his play, "The Colleen Bawn", in 1860, just as he had included "The Wearing of the Green" in an earlier play. The Irish poet Michael Scanlan rewrote the song in a more literary form, so it is sometimes credited to him. Although well known in Ireland, it is apparently rare in North America.

THE COLLEEN BAWN

1. Oh the town of Limerick is beautiful,
 as everybody knows;
 The River Shannon, full of fish,
 through that famed city flows.
 It's not the river nor the fish
 that's drumming in my mind;
 No, nor with the town of Limerick
 have I any fault to find.
2. But the girl I love is beautiful,
 she's gentle as a fawn;
 She lives in Limerick City and
 she's called Colleen Bawn.
 Just as swiftly as the river flows
 through that famed city,
 Just as coolly and without a word
 my colleen passes me.
3. Oh, if I were made the Emperor
 all Russia to command,
 Julius Caesar, or the
 Lord Lieutenant of the land,
 I'd give my crown down off my head,
 my people on their knees,
 Likewise a fleet of sailing ships
 out on the briny seas.
4. I'd give my crown down off my head,
 my people on their knees,
 Likewise a fleet of sailing ships
 out on the briny seas;
 A beggar I would go to bed,
 and happy rise at dawn,
 If by my side all for my bride
 I'd find the Colleen Bawn.

SIDE I, BAND 8: THE BUNCH OF WATER CRESSES

Although this is another of the songs Mr. Abbott learned from Mrs. O'Malley, it seems to be English rather than Irish in origin. "Belvishere" bears no close resemblance to any English shire, but "Camberwell" is a borough of Metropolitan London. I have found no printed form of this song in either British or American collections. The phrase, "She left me with a bunch of water cresses", was popularized by Josh White in a song he recorded, but apart from the use of water cresses as a symbol of unrequited love, his song is quite different.

THE BUNCH OF WATER CRESSES

1. Oh, I am a dairy farmer, from Belvishere I came
 To see some friends and relations, and Morgan
 is my name.
 If you will sit and listen, I'll tell you
 without delay
 Of a pretty little damsel my attention stole away.
 She promised she would marry me upon the first
 of May
 And she left me with a bunch of water cresses.
2. It was on the first of April when I arrived
 in town,
 And being quite a stranger I rambled up and down
 Till I lost myself entirely, I cannot tell
 you where,
 'Twas a very quiet place near the corner of
 the square,
 When a neatly dressed young woman came walking
 up that way,
 As long as I remember I shall ne'er forget
 that day.
 She promised she would marry me upon the first
 of May
 And she left me with a bunch of water cresses.
3. Politely I addressed her and this to her did say:
 "I want to go to Camberwell, can you direct
 the way?"
 "Oh, yes sir, oh yes sir," she modestly replied,
 "Take the turn up to the left and then go down
 the other side."
 Her voice it was the sweetest that I ever
 did hear;
 Her hands were like the lily and so very white
 and clean;
 She had some early onions and half a pint of beer
 Some pickles and a bunch of water cresses.
4. I bowed to her, I thanked her, I passed by
 her side,
 I thought how neatly she would look as a dairy
 farmer's bride,
 So I gathered resolution, half in earnest, half
 in joke.
 I hinted matrimony, these are the very words I
 spoke:
 "I've a farm and forty acres stocked with horses,
 cows, and geese,
 Besides I have a dairy house of
 butter, milk,
 and cheese.
 Kind maiden, would you marry me
 and be mistress
 of all these,
 And we'll spend our days in loving water
 cresses?"
5. "Oh, yes, sir, oh yes sir, oh dear, if you
 choose,
 You are so very generous I cannot well refuse.
 I've a wedding dress to buy and some little
 bills to pay."
 I handed her a sovereign her expenses to defray;
 She promised she would marry me upon the first
 of May
 And she left me with a bunch of water cresses.
6. Next day a letter I received, I read it with
 surprise:
 "Kind sir, for disappointing you, I must
 apologize,
 But the next time you ask a stranger to partner-
 ship for life,
 Be sure that she's a maiden or a widow, not a wife.
 I've a husband of my own; his name is Willie Gray,
 And when I can afford it, your sovereign I will pay,
 But to think that I would marry you upon the first
 of May
 You must have been as green as water cresses."

SIDE I, BAND 9: THE BONNY IRISH BOY

There are three different Irish songs about "the Bonny Irish Boy", which tend to overlap, although they appear to be distinct songs. One begins: "I once loved a boy, a bonny, bonny boy, who would come and go at my request"; another, sometimes called "The Bonny Labouring Boy", tells of a girl who complains that her parents will not let her wed her "bonny Irish boy" or her "bonny labouring boy"; and the third, Mr. Abbott's, tells of a girl courted by a bonny Irish boy who leaves her to cross the ocean. The second verse of Mr. Abbott's is very similar to a verse in "The Bonny Labouring Boy", and his third verse about the "other fair maid", resembles a verse in "I Once Loved a Boy", but it is nevertheless a different story. While all three songs are fairly well known in England and Ireland, they are rare in North America. The version sung by Mr. Abbott has been reported only from Newfoundland, while "The Bonny Labouring Boy" has been found in Michigan.

BRITISH BROADSIDE BALLADS TRADITIONAL IN AMERICA (P-26 and M-14). A GUIDE TO ENGLISH FOLK SONG COLLECTIONS, page 54.

MY BONNY IRISH BOY

1. Oh once that I was courted by a bonny Irish boy.
 He calls me his jewel, his heart's delight
 and joy.
 In Dublin city where I did dwell, that place of
 noted fame.
 There is where my bonny Irish boy a-courting to
 me came.
2. His cheeks were like a rosy red, his hair an
 auburn brown,
 And over his broad shoulders his hair in
 ringlets down.
 His teeth as white as ivory, his eyes as black
 as sloe,
 He breaks the heart of all the girls, no matter
 where he goes.
3. Oh, once I kept his company, intending to be
 his bride,
 But now he's gone and left me to cross the
 raging tide,
 And I'm afraid some other fair maid will my
 true love enjoy
 While I lie low lamenting for my bonny Irish boy.
4. Now I'll pack up my clothing and in search of
 him I'll go;
 I'll roam through yonder eyrie and through yon
 frost and snow,
 And when I'm sad and tired I'll sit me down
 and cry
 And think upon the joys I spent with my bonny
 Irish boy.

SIDE I, BAND 10: DANIEL O'CONNELL

Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847) was a famous figure in Irish history, but this particular phase of his career seems to have been overlooked by his biographers. A brilliant lawyer, he is best known as the founder of the powerful Catholic Association whose pressure led to the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. The reference to "Her Majesty" indicates that this episode took place after 1837 when Queen Victoria came to the British throne, but it's hard to understand why an Irish patriot would have been so anxious to raise men for a British sovereign. Certainly the people of Ireland did give O'Connell their earnings, "though needing it bad": out of their poverty they contributed one penny a month to his Catholic Association, which brought in an income of fifty thousand pounds a year. And in the famine period of the 1840's, the "children of Ireland" were undoubtedly small and puny.

The tune is familiar: it's been used for various Irish Ballads, and another song that Mr. Abbott sang, "The Three Jolly Jack Tars", was also set to it; but so far I've found no trace of the words in either British or American collections. However, O'Connell was the kind of man who inspired legends, and many equally fantastic tales were told about him throughout the Irish villages. Mr. Abbott learned this one from a man called Johnny Hopewell in South March. The phrase, "O hainm an diabhail", in the third verse is a Gaelic oath meaning "Name of the Devil".

DANIEL O'CONNELL

1. Oh, you lovers of mirth, I pray pay attention
And listen to what I am going to relate
Concerning a couple I overheard talking
As I was returning late home from a wake.
As I roved along I espied an old woman
Who sat by the gap all a-minding her cow,
She was jiggig a tune called "Come Haste to
the Wedding"
Or some other ditty I can't tell you now;
She was jiggig a tune called the "Bouchahil
Dhoun",
Or some other ditty I can't tell you now.
2. Though in looking around I spied a bold tinker
Who only by chance came strolling the same way.
The weather being warm, he sat down to rest.
"Ah, what news, honest man?" the old woman did
say.
"Then it's no news at all, ma'am," replied the
bold tinker,
"But the child of Erin I wish that he never
had been,
It's that damnable rogue of a Daniel O'Connell,
He's now making children in Dublin by steam."
3. "Ah, children, aroo," replied the old woman,
"O hainm an diabhail, is he crazy at last?
Is there sign of a war or a sudden rebellion,
Or what is the reason he wants them so fast?"
"Then it's not that at all, ma'am," replied the
bold tinker,
"But the children of Ireland are getting so
small,
It's O'Connell's petition to the great Lord
Lieutenant
To not let us make them the old way at all."
4. "Oh by this pipe in me mouth," replied the
old woman,
"And that's a great oath on my soul for to say,
I'm only a woman, and if I were near him
I'll bet you my life it's little he'd say.
Sure the people of Ireland, it's very well known
That they gave him their earnings, though
needing it bad,
And now he is well recompensing them for it
By taking what little diversion they had.
I am an old woman that's going on eighty,
And scarcely a tooth in me head to be seen,
But if the villain provokes me I'll make better
children
Than ever he could with his engine and steam."
5. "O long life to you, woman," replied the bold
tinker,
"And long may you live and have youth on your
side,
But if all the young girls in ould Ireland
were like you,
O'Connell might pitch his steam engine one side.
I think every woman that is in this country
Should begin making children as fast as they can
So if ever Her Majesty asks for an army,
We'll be able to send them as many as Dan."

SIDE I, BAND 11: THE REAL OLD MOUNTAIN DEW

Mr. Abbott learned this old Irish drinking song one winter when he worked in a lumbercamp at French River, Ontario. The words are quite similar to the version given in IRISH BALLADS, but the tune is different, and it lacks the rollicking refrain. Donegal, Wexford, and Sligo are Irish counties. This song was of course the inspiration for the American "Good Old Mountain Dew", written by Bascom Lamar Lunsford and made famous by Grandpa Jones.

THE REAL OLD MOUNTAIN DEW

1. On every little hill there's a quiet little still
Where the smoke goes curling to the sky.
You can easily tell by a whiff of the smell
That there's whiskey near close by.
2. For it fills the air with a perfume rare
And betwixt both me and you,
When it's home you roll, take a good old bowl
Of the real old mountain dew.
3. You boozers all from Donegal,
From Wexford and Sligo too,
When it's home you roll, take a good old bowl
Of the real old mountain dew.

SIDE I, BAND 12: THE CRUISKEEN LAWN

Despite its literary flavor, this Irish drinking song has long been widely known and sung by all classes. The words appear to date from the early nineteenth century, but the tune is much older. It was used in Charles Coffey's opera, "The Beggar's Wedding", performed in 1729, and was probably old then. It's also used for the Scottish song, "John Anderson, My Jo", and Irish and Scottish musicians have long debated which country had it first. "Cruiskeen lawn" means "the little full jug", and the Gaelic phrases in the refrain mean "The love of my heart is my little full jug--the bright health of my darling girl." Mr. Abbott learned it from Owen McCann in Hull.

THE CRUISKEEN LAWN

1. Let the farmer praise his grounds
as the huntsman does his hounds,
Let them boast of the deeds they have done,
But I, more blest than they,
spend each happy night and day
With my charming little cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,
With my charming little cruiskeen lawn.
- REFRAIN: Gramachree ma cruiskeen, slanthé gal mavoureen,
Erin mavourneen lawn,
We'll have another cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,
And we'll have another cruiskeen lawn.
2. So fill your glasses high; let's not part with
lips that's dry.
Though the lark he proclaims it is morn,
And if you can't remain, may we shortly meet
again
For to have another cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,
For to have another cruiskeen lawn.
3. And when grim death appears after few but
pleasant years
And tells me that my race it is run,
I'll say, "Begone, you slave, great Bacchus
gave me leave
To have another cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,
To have another cruiskeen lawn."

SIDE II, BAND 1: A YOUNG MAN LIVED IN BELFAST TOWN

This lively tale of the difficulties encountered by the young man trying to find his sweetheart in the night is a song that Mr. Abbott learned from Jack McCann. It falls into the large class of tales of night adventures which have always been common in oral tradition but less frequently find their way into print.

A YOUNG MAN LIVED IN BELFAST TOWN

1. A young man lived in Belfast town,
Courtied a girl when she was young;
A young man lived in Belfast town,
Courtied a girl when she was young.
He asked her for a favor bright
If he might sleep with her all night.

REFRAIN: Right whack fol-the doo-a di-do-day,
Right whack fol-the doo-a di-do-day.

2. This fair maid she gave consent
And straight up to her room she went;
This fair maid she gave consent
And straight up to her room she went.
And in that room there was a chair,
And under the chair was crockery ware.
3. This young man got up in the night
Looking for his heart's delight;
This young man got up in the night
Looking for his heart's delight.
His foot did slip, I do declare,
And he tumbled into the crockery ware.
4. The old woman she got up in the night,
Ran upstairs with the candle light;
The old woman she got up in the night,
Ran upstairs with the candle light.
She says, "Young man, what do you there
A-breaking all my crockery ware?"
5. The police were sent for at break of day
To see what this young man should pay;
The police were sent for at break of day
To see what this young man should pay.
He paid nine pounds for the crockery ware
And nine pounds ten for the damned old chair.

SIDE II, BAND 2: THE PLAINS OF WATERLOO

This variant on the familiar "Broken Ring" theme is quite rare: in fact, Dr. Roy Mackenzie, who printed a very similar song in his BALLADS AND SEA SONGS FROM NOVA SCOTIA, made this comment: "The spirited old lady who sang this ballad for me prefaced her performance by assuring me with a sort of demoniacal glee that I had never heard the song before and would never hear it again, for the simple reason that the unique copy of it existed in her own proper brain. Since then I have been inclined more than once to accept her pronouncement as authoritative." He goes on to suggest that it is a modified version of the early nineteenth-century English ballad, "The Mantle So Green", which is in its turn a modified version of the late eighteenth-century English ballad, "George Reilly". Elizabeth Greenleaf also found a version in Newfoundland, but it does not seem to have been found anywhere in the United States. Both the Mackenzie and Greenleaf versions have missing lines; Mr. Abbott's, which he learned from Mrs. O'Malley, is not only complete but seems to me to be a finer version than either. The tune too is very beautiful: I will never forget the thrill it gave me when he soared into the lovely phrase that begins the second half of the melody.

The account of the Waterloo campaign is accurate enough: on June 16 the French defeated the Prussians at Ligny, forcing Wellington to retreat from Quatre Bras; on June 18 Napoleon attacked the British, and after a six-hour battle was defeated when Blucher arrived to reinforce Wellington.

THE PLAINS OF WATERLOO

1. As I roved out on a fine summer's morning
Down by the gay banks of a clear purling stream,
I espied a lovely maid making sad lamentation;
I threw myself in ambush to hear her sad strain.
Through the grove she marched along, caused
the valleys to ring-O,
The fine feathered songsters all round her
they flew,
Saying "The war is all over and peace it is
restored again,
But my Willie is not returning from the plains
of Waterloo."
2. I stepped up to this fair one and says, "My fond
creature,
Dare I make so bold as to ask your lover's name,
For I have been in battle where cannons around
do rattle,
And by your descriptions I might have known
the same."
"Willie Smith's my true love's name; he's
a hero of great fame;
He has gone and he's left me in sorrow,
it's true.
No one shall me enjoy but my own darling boy,
And yet he's not returning from the plains
of Waterloo."
3. "If Willie Smith's your true love's name, he's
a hero of great fame.
He and I have been in battle through many's the
long campaign.
Through Italy and Russia, through Germany and
Prussia,
He was my loyal comrade through France and
through Spain.
Until at length by the French, oh that we were
surrounded;
Like the heroes of old we did them subdue.
We fought for three days till at length we did
defeat him,
That brave Napoleon Boney on the plains of
Waterloo."
4. "Oh the eighteenth day of June, it ended the
battle,
And left many a fine hero to sigh and to moan;
The war drums did beat and the cannons around
did rattle;
'Twas by a French soldier your Willie he was
slain.
And as I passed by, oh, where he lay a-bleeding,
I scarcely had time to bid him adieu,
With a faltering voice those words he was
repeating,
"Farewell, my lovely Annie, you are far from
Waterloo."
5. Oh when this lovely maid heard this sad
acclamation,
Her two rosy cheeks they grew pale into one.
When I saw this handsome maid in such sad
lamentation,
I says, "My lovely Annie, I am the very one,
And here is the ring which between us was
broken,
In the midst of all dangers to remind me of you,"
And when she saw the token she flew into my arms,
Saying, "You're welcome, dearest Willie, from
the plains of Waterloo."

AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH BROADSIDES, N.32

SIDE II, BAND 3: THE GREEN LINNET

This is one of the many broadside ballads about Napoleon that circulated in Ireland shortly after Waterloo. As in most of them, the Irish sympathy is obviously with Napoleon: his English conquerors were even less popular than usual while the memory of the great 1798 rebellion was still green. The romantic theme is historically unjustified for Napoleon's first wife, the Empress Josephine, had died before him; in any case, she had been far from a devoted wife, and Napoleon had had their marriage annulled in 1809. His second Empress, Marie Louise, whom he married in 1810, abandoned him in 1814. This was another of the songs learned from Mrs. O'Malley.

THE GREEN LINNET

1. Curiosity bore a young native of Erin
To view the gay banks of the Rhine,
When an Empress he saw, and the robe that she
was wearing,
All over with diamonds did shine.
No goddess of splendor was ever yet seen
That could equal this fair one, so mild and
serene.
In soft murmurs she says, "My linnet so green,
Are you gone, will I e'er see thee more?"
2. "The cold lofty Alps you freely went over,
Which nature had placed in your way;
That Marengo Salomey around you did hover
All Paris rejoiced the next day.
It grieves me the hardships that you did undergo;
Over mountains you travelled all covered with
snow;
The balance of power your courage laid low;
Are you gone, will I e'er see thee more?"
3. "That numbers of men are eager to slay you,
Their malice you viewd with a smile;
Their gold through all Europe they sowed to
betray you,
And joined with the Mamelukes on the Nile.
Like ravens for blood their vile passions did
burn;
Orphans they slain and left widows for to mourn.
They say my linnet's gone; will he ever return?
Oh, sweet Boney, will I ever see you more?"
4. "I will roam through the deserts of wild Abyssinia,
And yet find no cure for my pain.
Will I go and inquire at the isle of St. Helena?
Oh, no, we will whisper in vain.
Tell me, ye critics, oh tell to me in time,
Or this world I'll range over my green linnet
for to find.
Was he slain at Waterloo, the Elba, on the Rhine?
If he was I shall ne'er see him more."

SIDE II, BAND 4: KELLY, THE PIRATE

Strangely enough, Mr. Abbott also learned this pro-British ballad from Mrs. O'Malley. It's a somewhat abbreviated version of an English broadside, known either as "The Bold Pirate" or "Kelly the Pirate", which has been found in both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Mackenzie gives three versions, the first of which he says is based on the original English song, and B and C represent an American song inspired by the English one. Mr. Abbott's first verse is close to Mackenzie's A version, but the rest is closer to B and C.

AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH BROADSIDES, K.31 and K.32

KELLY THE PIRATE

1. Oh come all you jolly seamen, give ear to my song
It's only a few lines, I won't detain you long,
Concerning a frigate, that ship of great fame,
That conquered the pirate, George Kelly by name.
- REFRAIN: Yo heave, you Britons, stand true,
Stand true to your colors, stand true.
2. On the eighteenth of January so clear was the sky
When the man from the mainmast so loudly did cry,
When a man from the mainmast so loudly did cry
"There's a ship in full view and she seems to
lay nigh."
3. Up stepped our jolly captain, took out his
spy glass
And gave it to the lieutenant to see who he was.
He viewed her all over and he viewed her all
round,
"It's Kelly the pirate, I'll bet sixty pound."
4. Four hours sailing brought us within shot
Of the saucy old pirate who valued us not.
Kelly's voice roared like thunder; to his men
he did say
"Place your guns in the hatches and brave boys
fire away."
5. Four hours broadside and broadside we lay,
While the wads from our guns to his mainmast
did fly,
With grapeshot and mantle Kelly's sides we
did wound
Till down came his colors, his mainmast and all.
6. Now for to conclude and to finish my song,
Here's to that stout frigate that ne'er shall
go wrong;
Here's to that stout frigate, that ship of
great fame
That conquered the pirate, George Kelly by name.

SIDE II, BAND 5: CAPTAIN COLDSTEIN

IN AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH BROADSIDES, Professor Laws notes: "The following broadside ballads about pirates have been recovered from tradition in America: 'The Flying Cloud', 'The Bold Princess Royal', 'The Bold Pirate', 'Kelly the Pirate' I and II, 'High Barbary', 'Bold Daniels', and 'Captain Kidd'. It is a small and select group." Mr. Abbott produced two ballads that seem qualified to enter this group: this tale of "Captain Coldstein", and another he called "The Ocean Bee". Miss Jackson, the librarian of Cecil Sharp House, informs me that she found "Captain Coldston" in a collection of mid-nineteenth century Irish broadsides, and from the copy she sent me it is clearly related to Mr. Abbott's "Captain Coldstein". His other pirate ballad tells of a young man who is refused by a girl because she is pledged to the captain of a ship called "The Ocean Bee". The rejected suitor then takes to piracy in an attempt to sink "The Ocean Bee", but his attempt is thwarted and he and his companions are taken to London and sentenced to be hanged. Both these songs Mr. Abbott learned from Albert Tapp, a sailor from Gaspe, Quebec, who came to Ontario to work in the lumbercamps one winter.

CAPTAIN COLDSTEIN

1. You inhabitants of Ireland that's bound to
cross the sea,
Come join with Captain Coldstein, a hero brave
and free,
Come join with Captain Coldstein, that herc
brave and bold,
Who fought his way all on the sea and never was
controlled.

2. From the eleventh till the twenty-first we
ploughed the raging sea,
For ten long days of merriment, bound for
Americay.
Our merriment being over and going to bed at
night,
Our captain went all round the deck to see if
all was right.
3. "Oh don't go down," our captain cried, "There
is no time for sleep,
For in less than half an hour we'll be slumber-
ing in the deep.
The pirate ship is coming up from the wide
western sea
To rob us of our property, bound for Americay."
4. The pirate ship came up to us and bid us for
to stand.
"Your gold and precious loading, this moment
I demand.
Your gold and precious loading, this day resign
to me,
Or not a soul will you ever bring into Americay."
5. Then up spoke Captain Coldstein, that hero brave
and bold:
"It's in the deep we all shall sleep before
we'll be controlled."
'Twas then the battle it began; the blood in
streams it flowed.
Undaunted was our passengers, and the pirate
was overthrown.
6. There was a lady on the deck with her true love
by her side.
With courage bold she fought her way along the
bulwark's side,
Saying, "Don't you fret my bonny boy, we'll
shortly end the strife,"
And with a pistol ball she took the pirate
captain's life.
7. The cries of women and children whilst in the
hold they lay,
Our captain and our passengers they showed
them Irish play.
The pirate ship surrendered just at the dawn
of day,
And we marched them back as prisoners into
Americay.

SIDE II, BAND 6: NELLIE COMING HOME FROM THE WAKE

This light-hearted little song came from Patrick Whalen, one of the many Irish cousins living at South March, Ontario. There are many similar tales of girls who are too trusting, but I haven't found this particular version in any printed source.

NELLIE COMING HOME FROM THE WAKE

1. Oh, pretty little Nellie, the milkmaid so gay,
Being fond of going unto a ball or a spree,
Says the missus unto Nellie, "I would have
you to beware,
When you go to a spree, Joe Rogers will be there.
He will take you in his arms and he will keep
you from all harm
And perhaps you might be sorry going home in
the morn,"
Mush-a-na, fal-the-day.
2. Nellie she got ready and away she did steer,
Praying all the time that Joe Rogers would be
there,
And that he would take her in his arms and keep
her from harm,
Then she knew she wouldn't be sorry going home
in the morn,
Mush-a-na, fal-the-day.
3. When she got there she got brandy, rum and cake,
She never got such usage before or at a wake.
Rogers took her in his arms and he kept her from
all harm,
Saying "I know you won't be sorry going home
in the morn."
Mush-a-na, fal-the-day.
4. Early in the morning, just at the break of day,
He laid Nellie down beside a stack of hay.
Says Rogers unto Nellie, "I laid you down so neat
Sure I'll play you 'Shoot the Cat' coming home
from the wake."
Mush-a-na, fal-the-day.
5. Eight months was over and nine coming on,
Nellie she gave birth to a darling young son.
Says the missus unto Nellie, "I will christen her
for your sake,
And we'll call it 'Shoot the Cat' coming home
from the wake."
Mush-a-na, fal-the-day.

SIDE II, BAND 7: THE BANKS OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Although "The Banks of Newfoundland" was on the list of songs Mrs. Dagenais sent me, I did not ask Mr. Abbott about it for several days, thinking it was the familiar version telling of a hard trip from Liverpool to New York. Fortunately we got around to it the day I was leaving, and then I was delighted to hear him sing this much rarer version. In *MINSRELSY OF MAINE*, Mrs. Eckstorm prints a copy that a correspondent sent her in 1926, but she found no other trace of it. This is another of the sea songs Mr. Abbott learned from Albert Tapp. Apart from the graphic description of the hardships suffered, it is of interest because its reference to drawing lots suggests a comparison with the medieval French ballad, "Sept ans sur mer".

THE BANKS OF NEWFOUNDLAND

1. Oh you may bless your happy lots, all ye who
dwell on shore,
For it's little you know of the hardships of
we poor seamen o'er,
It's little you know of the hardships that we
were forced to stand
For fourteen days and fifteen nights on the
banks of Newfoundland.
2. Our ship she sailed through frost and snow
from the day we left Quebec,
And if we had not walked about we'd have
frozen to the deck,
But we being true-born sailor men as ever
ship had manned,
Our captain doubled our grog each day on the
banks of Newfoundland.
3. There never was a ship, my boys, that sailed
the western sea,
But the billowy waves came rolling in and bent
them into staves;
Our ship's being built of unseasoned wood, and
could but little stand;
The hurricane it met us there on the banks
of Newfoundland.
4. We fasted for three days and nights, our
provisions giving out;
On the morning of the fourth day we cast our
lines about.
The lot it fell on the captain's son; thinking
the relief at hand,
We spared him for another night on the banks
of Newfoundland.

5. On the morning of the fifth day no vessel did
appear.
We gave to him another hour to offer up a
prayer.
But Providence to us proved kind, kept blood
from every hand,
For an English vessel hove in sight on the
banks of Newfoundland.
6. We hoisted aloft our signal, they bore down on
us straightway.
When they saw our pitiful condition they began
to weep and pray.
Five hundred souls we had on board the day we
left the land.
There's now alive but seventy-five on the
banks of Newfoundland.
7. They took us off the wreck, my boys, we were
more like ghosts than men.
They fed us and they clothed us and brought
us back again.
They fed us and they clothed us and brought
us safe to land,
When the billowy waves rolls o'er their graves
on the banks of Newfoundland.

SIDE II, BAND 8: SKIBBEREEN

This pathetic ballad recalls the days of the great famine in 1845, 1846, and 1847, when a blight struck the potato crop and brought disaster to the hard-pressed Irish peasantry. The people died by tens of thousands, some from starvation and more from diseases brought on by malnutrition. Others saved their lives by emigrating to America. In three years the population of Ireland dropped from eight and a half to six and a half million. "Skibbereen", subtitled "A Ballad of the Famine", is given in Volume II of Herbert Hughes' *IRISH COUNTY SONGS* (1915) as traditional in the County Tyrone. In his preface Hughes comments: "Most ballads are human (if not historical) documents, and the story told so straightforwardly in 'Skibbereen', for example, certainly falls into that category. Curiously enough, in outline and one or two details it resembles an actual incident recorded by a friend of mine in Kerry less than forty years ago, though there could be no connection between the two stories." Mr. Abbott's version is very similar to the one Hughes prints. The main variation is the addition of lines 3 and 4 in Mr. Abbott's second verse, which may have been carried over from some other song, or may represent part of an additional verse. Between verses 5 and 6 Hughes gives this extra verse:

"It's well I do remember the year of forty-eight
When I arose with Erin's boys to battle
'gainst the fate.
I was hunted through the mountains like a
traitor to the Queen,
And that's another reason why I left old
Skibbereen."

This ballad is rare in America, although another famine song, "The Praties They Grow Small", is fairly widely known. Mr. Abbott learned it from Charles O'Connor when he worked on Skead's farm near Hull, sixty years ago.

SKIBBEREEN

1. Oh, Father, I often heard you talk of Erin's
lovely isle;
You said it was a handsome place, so rich
and rare the soil.
You said it was a lovely place wherein a
prince might dwell;
Oh then why did you abandon it, the reason
to me tell.

2. Oh, son, I love my native home with honor and
with pride,
Those pleasant valleys where I roamed, those
meadows long and wide.
Throughout those rich green valleys where I
wandered when a boy,
My shamrock and shillelagh was my constant
pride and joy.
But oh a blight came o'er my crop, my sheep
and cattle died,
And when the rent it was to pay, I no longer
could provide.
3. Oh well do I remember that dark November day
When the landlord and the sheriff came to drive
us all away.
They set our roof a-blazing with scornful bitter
spleen,
And when it fell, the crash was heard all over
Skibbereen.
4. Your mother, too, God rest her soul, lay on the
snow-white ground,
She fainted in her anguish at the desolation
round.
She never spoke, but passed away amidst the
tumultuous scene,
And found a silent resting place in dear old
Skibbereen.
5. My son, you were scarce then two years old, and
feeble was your frame;
I could not leave you with your friends while
you bore your father's name.
I wrapped you in my old frieze coat; in the dead
of night, unseen,
I hove a sigh and bid goodbye to dear old Skibber
een.
6. Oh, father dear, the day will come when for
freedom we will call,
When Irishmen in Ireland will rally one and all.
I'll be the man to lead the gang beneath Erin's
flag of green,
And low and high we'll raise the cry of dear
old Skibbereen.

SIDE II, BAND 9: THE HEIGHTS OF ALMA

This song of the Crimean War apparently was widely popular throughout Great Britain, and is one of the few historical ballads that has survived in America. Robert Ford printed a version in his VAGABOND SONGS AND BALLADS OF SCOTLAND, and versions have been reported from Nova Scotia, Michigan and Minnesota.

The wording of Mr. Abbott's version is roughly similar to those found in Nova Scotia although it differs in emphasizing the part played by the Irish Guards, and his refrain is quite different. His form also differs for his eight-line stanzas correspond to six four-line stanzas in the other versions.

The Battle of Alma was one of the decisive engagements in the Crimean War (1854-6). The Alma River is northwest of Sevastopol. In the battle to which it gave its name, the allied British, French, and Turkish armies defeated the Russians on September 20, 1854. The Russian army, numbering 36,000, was firmly entrenched on the heights on the left bank of the river, but they were finally dislodged from this strategic position by the determined advance of the British troops commanded by Lord Raglan. September has been changed to November in Mr. Abbott's version, although the correct date was preserved in Nova Scotia. While losses were heavy, they fell far short of the "thirty thousand" mentioned. The Russians lost nine thousand and the British two thousand. This was another of the songs Mr. Abbott learned from Mrs. O'Malley.

AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH BROADSIDES (J 10)

THE HEIGHTS OF ALMA

1. Oh Britain's sons do well remember
The glorious twentieth of November
We made the Russian bear surrender
On the heights of Alma.
September on the fourteenth day
With life and drum and grand array
The Irish Guards they sailed away
For the heights of Alma.

REFRAIN: So me Irish boys be of good cheer,
We'll fight our foes, you need not fear;
We'll make the Russians run with fear
And hasten back from Alma.

2. All night we lay on the cold ground;
No place of shelter could be found;
With a heavier rain we were almost drowned,
To cheer our hearts for Alma.
Next morning the burning sun did rise
Beneath those blue and eastern skies
When our old chief Lord Raglan cries
"Cheer up, prepare for Alma."
3. Oh, thirty thousand I heard them say
Fell upon that fatal day,
And fourteen hundred Frenchmen lay
In their bloody gore on Alma.
The Russians in disorder fled;
They left their wounded and their dead.
The river I'm sure that day ran red
From the blood was split on Alma.

SIDE II, BAND 10: THE BOLD AND UNDAUNTED YOUTH (The Rambling Boy)

This tale about the wild lad who became a highway-man has turned up in a great many forms under varying titles in Britain and the United States. In Somerset it was known as "The Robber"; in Sussex as "In Newry Town", and in the States it is usually "The Rambling Boy". Most English versions give London as the locale and mention St. James's Square. Mr. Abbott's version is pure Irish-- St. Stephen's Green in Dublin is the fashionable park where ladies and gentlemen liked to walk to see and be seen.

Mr. Abbott learned this in the lumbercamps from an old man called Frank Cyr, from Eastview, Ont.

AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH BROADSIDES (L 12)

THE BOLD AND UNDAUNTED YOUTH

1. I am a bold and undaunted youth,
I love fair maidens to tell the truth.
I love them all so very well,
I love them better than tongue can tell.
2. In Stephen's Green where I was born,
In Stephen's Green where I died in scorn,
I served my time to the saddlers' trade,
And was a wild and roving blade.
3. At seventeen I married a wife,
I loved her better than I loved my life,
And to maintain her a lady gay
I started robbing on the highway.
4. I robbed Lord Gordon, I do declare,
And Lady Elgin of Woolburn Square;
I locked the chest and bade them goodnight;
I took their gold to my heart's delight.
5. In Stephen's Green where I did stray
With my fair lady to see the play,
I'd scarce been there an hour or two
When taken I was by Lord Gordon's crew.

6. My mother cried, "Oh my darling son,"
My father cried, "Oh he is undone,"
My darling lady she tore her hair
Just like a woman in deep despair.
7. When I am dead and going to my grave,
A decent funeral pray let me have.
Six highway robbers to bury me,
Give them broadswords and their liberty.
8. Six Dublin ladies to bear my pall,
Give them white gloves and pink ribbons all;
When I am buried you may tell the truth,
That I was a wild and a roving youth.

SIDE II, BAND 11: BY THE HUSH, ME BOYS

This unusual ballad of the American Civil War seems to be unknown in the United States. It is an interesting combination of two themes common in many Irish songs: that of emigrating, and of becoming involved in other countries' wars. Its lively tune and semi-humorous flavor make it akin to the song known variously as "The Kerry Recruit" or "The True Paddy's Song", although there the Irish lad enlists in the English army and does his fighting in the Crimea. Here he fights for Lincoln, and the "General Mahar" mentioned was probably J. R. Mahan who commanded the First Brigade under Brigadier-General O. B. Wilcox in East Tennessee.

This is another ballad that came to Mr. Abbott from the inexhaustible store of Mrs. O'Malley.

BY THE HUSH, ME BOYS

1. Oh, it's by the hush, me boys, I'm sure that's
to hold your noise,
And listen to poor Paddy's narration.
I was by hunger pressed and in poverty distressed
So I took a thought I'd leave the Irish nation.

REFRAIN: Here's you, boys, do take my advice,
To America I'd have youse not be coming.
There's nothing here but war where the
murdering cannons roar,
And I wish I was at home in dear old Erin.

2. Then I sold my horse and plough, my little
pigs and cow,
And my little farm of land and I parted
And my sweetheart Biddy McGee I fear I'll
never see,
For I left her that morning broken-hearted.
3. When we landed in Yankee land, shoved a gun
into our hand,
Saying "Paddy you must go and fight for Lincoln"
General Mahar to us said, "If you get shot or
lose your head,
Every murdered soul of you will get a pension."
4. In the war I lost my leg; all I've now is a
wooden peg,
By me soul it is the truth to you I mention.
Now I think myself in luck to be fed upon
Indian buck
In old Ireland, the country I delight in,
And with the devil I do say, "Curse Americay",
For I'm sure I've had enough of their hard
fighting.