

# LUMBERING SONGS FROM THE ONTARIO SHANTIES

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SI-PP-FW87-D c -01475  
Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties



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COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

# LUMBERING SONGS FROM THE ONTARIO SHANTIES





# Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties

*Collected and edited by Edith Fowke*

Most of the folk songs that can still be found in Ontario owe their survival to the lumber camps. With very few exceptions, the songs I've collected in the last three years have come either from men who worked in the woods in their youth, or from men and women who learned them from their fathers, uncles, or grandfathers who in their turn had gone to the shanties. Indeed, I soon learned that the best way to get what I wanted was to ask not for folk songs or old-time songs but for 'shanty songs'.

As I explained in an earlier album, "Folk Songs of Ontario" (FM 4005), the most fruitful area for song collecting I have discovered so far is the region around Peterborough, some ninety miles north-east of Toronto. There among the Irish-Canadians whose

ancestors first came to this land in 1825, I found some of the best traditional singers I have ever heard, and from that area came most of the songs in this album.

About the middle of the nineteenth century Peterborough was the centre of a flourishing lumber trade, and every little town in the vicinity had its own saw-mill. Later, when the forests there had been cut over, the shanties moved north, and many of the Peterborough men followed them. Farmers who worked their fields in the summer often spent the winter in the northern lumber camps and came back each spring with their winter's wages and a fresh batch of songs.

In the long winter nights in the shanties the men took turns in singing all the songs they could remember: old British ballads, music-hall ditties, and popular songs of the day. But most popular of all were the songs that told of life in the woods or of the adventures of other shantyboys. It is these special songs of the lumberwoods that are presented here.

Many American shantyboys came north to work in Canadian camps, and similarly many Ontario lads went down to Michigan. Thus the international border was non-existent as far as the shanty songs are concerned. Indeed, some purely American songs such as "The Milwaukee Fire", "The Brooklyn Theatre Fire", "The Texas Rangers", and "Cole Younger" seem to be commoner in Canada than in the States.

All but four of the songs heard in this album were sung on both sides of the border. The four: "Hogan's Lake", "Bill Dunbar", "The Basketong", and "Chapeau Boys", are local Canadian songs that have not been collected in American camps as far as I have been able to discover. Three others, "Turner's Camp", "Johnny Murphy", and "Jack Haggerty", are definitely of American origin. The rest mostly originated in Canada or were composed by Canadians but have also been collected in the States.

While these eighteen songs are the most representative of the Ontario crop, a number of other lumbering





SQUARE TIMBER

songs are also known here. Of the fairly widespread songs, I've recorded "Michigan-I-O", "The Little Brown Bulls", "The Shantyboy and the Farmer's Son", "The Shantyboys in the Pine", "Harry Bail", and "Peter Emery". I've also found a few other unfamiliar ballads, mostly about tragic accidents. Somewhat to my surprise, I have not yet come across any version of "Ye Maidens of Ontario" or "Ye Maids of Simcoe", or "The Shantyman's Life".

In addition to the specific lumbering songs, the Ontario shantyboys of course also sang most of the hardy favorites of lumbercamps all over America: "The Flying Cloud", "The Wild Colonial Boy", "The Cumberland's Crew", "Lost Jimmie Whelan", "The Dreadnought", "The Persian's Crew", "Fair Charlotte", and above all, "The Dying Soldier", which in Ontario was usually known as "Old Erin Far Away". They also sang an almost unlimited number of old Irish songs transplanted without change from the Emerald Isle.

The ages of the singers in this album range from 30 to 84. The oldest singers represented are Mr. Abbott, who is 84, and Martin McManus, who is 78. Tom Brandon and Joe Kelly are the youngest. Most of the others are in their sixties. With the exception of one or two who learned their songs from other shantyboys, they have all

worked in the woods at one time or another, mostly thirty or forty years ago. All except Joe Kelly, who plays a guitar, sing the songs unaccompanied as they were sung in the shanties. Several have preserved the shanty custom of speaking the last word or phrase of the song to indicate that the end has been reached: The songs of Emerson Woodcock illustrate this habit most clearly. Several of them also sing with a pronounced Irish accent, although most of them come from families who have lived in Ontario for well over a hundred-years.

All the songs were recorded in 1957 and 1958, in the homes of the singers. In some you will hear various background sounds: a phone ringing (in "Hogan's Lake"), children crying (in "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks"), and doors closing (in "Bill Dunbar"), and in several the tap of the singer's foot as he marked time to his song.

Usually the singer said that he had not sung these songs for many years, but once he started the words seemed to come back to him with very little difficulty. Several of them remarked that if they heard a song once they were then able to sing it. Certainly some of their memories were astounding: Mr. Woodcock and Mr. Spencer both sang songs that lasted for more than ten minutes, and Mr. Abbott has now recorded some hundred and ten songs.

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In Minstrelsy of Maine, Mrs. Eckstorm quotes a Maine version of this song, "The Lumberman in Town", and notes: "This is one of the finest of the old woods songs, and if nothing else showed that it came from the British provinces we might guess it from the melancholia in it; this self pity is not a characteristic of the native of Maine."

The song probably dates back well over a century for Canada changed her currency system from pounds to dollars in 1858.

#### The Minstrelsy of Maine

##### WHEN THE SHANTY BOY COMES DOWN

When the shanty boy comes down, in  
his pockets fifty pound,  
He will look around some pretty girl  
to find.

If he finds her not too shy, with a  
dark and rolling eye,  
The poor shantyboy is well pleased  
in his mind.

When the landlady comes in, she is  
neat and very trim,  
She is like an evening star.  
If she finds him in good trim, she  
is always ready to wait on him,  
And from one to two they'll sit out  
in the bar.

So the shantyboy goes on till his  
money is all gone,  
And the landlady begins for to fret.  
Then he says, "My lady do not fret,  
I will pay my honest debt  
And bid adieu to the girl I had in  
town.

"There's a gang in command, so the  
old folks understand,  
For the back woods they are bound.  
With a whiskey and a song they will  
shove their old cance along,  
Bid adieu to the girl I had in town."

##### SIDE I, Band 2: THE JAM ON GERRY'S ROCKS

Sung by Tom Brandon, Peterborough

In the early days of lumbering, life in the woods was dangerous, and a large proportion of the lumberjack ballads told of tragic accidents and sudden death. Nor were such accidents rare: men died in log jams on the rivers; others were crushed to death by falling limbs; and still others were trapped under rolling logs. Few shantyboys had not seen one of their friends killed, and they all took a very personal interest in the details of any accident. On the long winter nights when they sat around in the shanties, the songs that were called for most frequently told how some unfortunate shantyboy had met his fate. It's typical that "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks" is the most widely known of all lumbering songs.

A log jam is of course the most dramatic of the many dangers a lumbering man had to face: when the great mass of timber was floated down the river in the spring, one or two logs caught on a rock could make hundreds pile up behind them in a tangled treacherous jam. Then the sure-footed river drivers had to run out on the shifting mass and try to free the key logs with their peaveys. Often the jam would break in an instant, burying the rivermen in a thundering avalanche of logs and water. Such was the fate of "the foreman, young Monroe".

While most critics agree that the ballad was written by a Canadian, there is no agreement about the place of its origin. The most exhaustive attempt to pin down the location was made by Mrs. Eckstorm in "The Pursuit of a Ballad Myth" in Minstrelsy of Maine, pp. 176-198. Although she comes to no definite conclusion, she inclines to the belief that the accident happened at the Grand Pitch of Sebcoois in Maine.

Professor Rickaby notes: "Whatever the place of its origination, the ballad of Gerry's Rock has traveled far. It was sown through the lumber woods--west, south, north, by its roving singers. In the tide of migration it moved out onto the plains of the west and southwest, where cowboys, rangers, soldiers, freighters, and homesteaders sang it. On the same tide it threaded the passes of the Rocky Mountains to the very coast. By lesser backward eddies of a similar tide it is said to have found its way back to the British Isles."

In Ontario, as elsewhere, this was the best known of all the shanty songs. Almost every ex-lumberjack I met could sing at least part of it, but few had as smooth and complete a version as Mr. Brandon.

For comparative versions, see Native American Balladry, C 1

##### THE JAM ON GERRY'S ROCKS

Come all of you bold shantyboys and  
listen while I relate  
Concerning a young river boss and  
his untimely fate,  
Concerning a young river boss so  
handsome, true, and brave,  
It was on the jam at Gerry's Rocks  
where he met a watery grave.

It was on a Sunday morning as you  
soon will hear,  
Our logs were piled up mountains  
high, we could not keep them  
clear.  
Our foremand said, "Turn out,  
Brave boys, with hearts devoid  
of fear,



SIDE I, Band 1: WHEN THE SHANTYBOY  
COMES DOWN

Sung by Jim Doherty, Peterborough

When the shantyboys were paid off in the spring after their long months in the winter camp, they usually headed for the nearest town to spend their hard-earned money. Many of their liveliest songs tell of their sprees, but this one is couched in a muted key.



We'll break the jam on Gerry's  
Rocks, to Ellingstown we'll  
steer."

Some of them were willing while  
others they were not,  
To work on jams on Sunday they  
did not think they ought,  
Till six of our Canadian boys all  
volunteered to go  
To break the jam on Gerry's Rocks  
with their foreman, young  
Monroe.

They had not rolled off many logs  
till they heard his young  
voice say,  
"I'll warn you boys be on your  
guard, this jam will soon  
give way."

These words were scarcely spoken  
till the jam did break and  
go,  
It carried off our Canadian boys  
and the foreman, young  
Monroe.

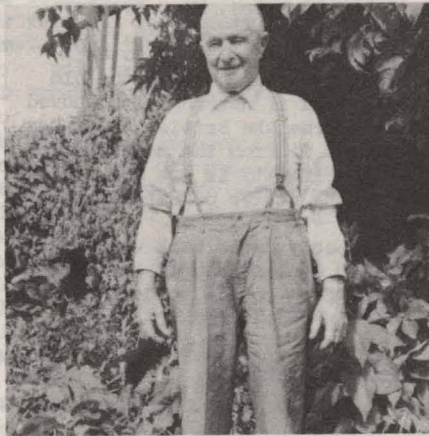
When the rest of those young  
shantymen the sad news they  
did hear,  
In search of their brave comrades  
to the riverside did steer,  
Meanwhile their mangled bodies  
a-floating down did go,  
While dead and bleeding at the  
bank lay that of young  
Monroe.

They took him from his watery  
grave, brushed back his  
raven hair,  
There was one fair girl among  
them whose sad cries filled  
the air,  
There was one fair girl among  
them, who came from  
Saginaw town,  
Her moans and cries rose to the  
skies, her true love had  
been drowned.

Fair Clara was a noble girl, the  
riverman's true friend,  
Who with her widowed mother lived  
in the river's bend,  
The wages of our foreman the boss  
to her did pay,  
Those shantyboys made up for her  
a liberal purse that day.

They buried him in sorrows' depths,  
'twas on the first of May,  
On a green mound at the river  
bank there grew a hemlock gray,  
Enscribed on this grey hemlock by  
the river side did grow  
Was the name, the date of this sad  
fate of our foreman young  
Monroe.

Fair Clara did not long survive;  
her heart broke with its  
grief.  
Only six months after that death  
came to her relief.  
When at last her time had come and  
she was called to go,  
Her last request was granted, to be  
laid by young Monroe.



SIDE I, Band 3: HOW WE GOT BACK TO THE  
WOODS LAST YEAR

Sung by Mr. O. J. Abbott, Hull

This song from the northern Ontario  
woods has been carried to American  
camps by migrant shantyboys. Beck  
reports it under the title of "Drunk  
on the Way": his version is more  
complete than this, but Dacre town  
has been corrupted to Dickertown.

The trip described probably took place  
back in the 1880's before a railway  
was built through this lumbering re-  
gion. The song is quite widespread  
in Ontario: I have found several  
versions which all follow the same  
pattern although varying considerably  
in length and detail.

The most complete version I recorded  
came from 94-year-old Mr. George  
Hughey of Peterborough, whose first  
verse ran:

"O come all you lads that'd like  
to hear  
How we got back to the woods  
last year,  
At a great big place you all do  
know,  
At a great big lake called  
Opeongo".

After mentioning that "From Arnprior  
we all shoved out", a later verse  
began: "We jogged along till we came  
to Renfrew". This maps the journey  
fairly clearly: from Arnprior (some  
thirty miles west of Ottawa, through  
Renfrew and Dacre, to Lake Opeongo in  
Algonquin Park--a distance of about  
a hundred miles.

Three versions varied in completeness  
according to the age of the singer.  
Eighty-four-year-old Mr. Abbott's  
version marks an intermediate stage in  
the transmission. It is less detailed  
than Mr. Hughey's, having lost the  
references to Lake Opeongo and Renfrew,  
but it has preserved the place names  
better than a third version which came  
from 58-year-old Emerson Woodcock, the  
youngest of the three singers. By the  
time he learned it, Lake Opeongo had  
become "a lake called Michigan-I-O";  
Arnprior and Renfrew had disappeared;

and Dacre town had become Deckersville.

Mr. Abbott said he made up the last  
stanza of his song himself: Albert  
Tapp and Jack McCann were men he  
had known in the lumbercamps. How-  
ever, a similar stanza appears in  
Beck's version, which led him to  
term it a "moniker song".

The Lore of the Lumber Camps, No. 114.

#### HOW WE GOT BACK TO THE WOODS LAST YEAR

Come all you boys who wish to hear  
How we got back to the woods last  
year.

For Arnprior we set out  
All with John Pratt to show us the  
route,

To me rant-ana, fall the diddle da,  
Rant and roar and drunk on the way.

Ob into the buggy we jerked our boots,  
You bet our teamster fed long oats,  
As through the town we drove along  
We all joined in a good sing song,  
To me rant-ana, fall the diddle da,  
Rant and roar and drunk on the way.

You may depend that we felt big,  
We were in a silver-mounted rig.  
For Dacre town we hoisted our sails  
And they all thought we were the  
Prince of Wales,  
To me rant-ana, fall the diddle da,  
Rant and roar and drunk on the way.

Old Mills came out to welcome us in,  
He handed us down the wine and gin.  
The landlord's toast went merrily  
around

And we drank a health to Dacre town,  
To me rant-ana, fall the diddle da,  
Rant and roar and drunk on the way.

Oh, supper being ready, we all took  
seats,  
Of course our foreman he said grace.  
Johnny Mornin thought long to wait,  
And Laderoute Joe shoved up his  
plate,  
To me rant-ana, fall the diddle da,  
Rant and roar and drunk on the way.

Oh, there was Albert Tapp and Jack  
McCann,  
You know he was our handyman,  
The rest of our crew you all do know,  
There was John Pratt and Laderoute  
Joe,  
To me rant-ana, fall the diddle da,  
Rant and roar and drunk on the way.

SIDE I, Band 4: JOHNNY DOYLE

Sung by Joe Kelly, Downer's Corners

Less well known than "The Jam on  
Gerry's Rocks", this tale of  
another shantyboy tragedy is equal-  
ly dramatic and colorful. Several  
versions have been collected in  
American lumbercamps under the  
title of "The Wild Mustard River",  
but I am inclined to think that it  
originated in Ontario.



It is known in Ontario in two different forms: "Johnny Doyle", as sung here, and "Johnny Stiles" (Side II--Band 4). The two are obviously based on the same incident, although there are more differences than are usually found in different versions of the same ballad. It is interesting to note that both preserve "the wild Moose River" and "The big Jumbo dam", although American versions all seem to have "the wild Mustard River" and jams of widely varying names. The difference in the victim's name suggests that "Johnny Doyle" was the original, which was corrupted into "Johnny Stiles" because of the Irish habit of pronouncing "Doyle" as "D'yle" (on a parallel with "I'se the B'y" in the popular Newfoundland song.

So far I have not been able to pin down the events described. The Department of Lands and Forests failed to locate any record of an accident that might have inspired this ballad. The Moose River which flows into James Bay seems too far north to have been the scene of lumbering operations, and the only "Jumbo Dam" known in Ontario is on Pencil River, which flows into Pencil Lake in Cavendish Township, Peterborough County.

For comparative versions see Native American Balladry, C 5

#### JOHNNY DOYLE

Come all you boys from the river,  
Come and listen to me for awhile,  
And I will relate you a story  
Of my friend and said chum, Johnny Doyle.

Way down on the wild Moose river,  
By the side of the big Jumbo Dam,  
One morning while eating our breakfast  
On the rocks we espied a big jam.

After we had finished our breakfast,  
With the pike poles and peavies made way,  
Some of the boys took the pole trail  
For none of them knew a delay.

On the river there never was better  
Than my friend and said chum Johnny Doyle,  
As the logs came he always could roll them,  
And he never was reckless and wild.

But this morning his luck was against him  
When he got his foot caught in the jam,  
And you know how these waters kept rolling  
From the flood of the reservoir dam.

We all were there in a moment  
Shortly after we heard his first shout,  
And you know how those waters kept rolling,  
They roll in but they never roll out.

We obeyed the command of our foreman  
While the sweat from our bodies did pour,  
When they drew his dead body from in under  
It looked like poor Johnny no more.

His shirt was torn into ribbons,  
Into pieces the size of your hand.  
On earth his dead body lies resting,  
While the Lord has his soul in command.

#### SIDE I, Band 5: JIMMIE WHELAN

Sung by Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough

Like "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks" and "Johnny Doyle", "Jimmie Whelan" tells of a young riverman's tragic death. However, unlike the other two, this accident can be pinned down to a definite time and place. The hero's real name was James Phalen, and he was killed in 1878 on the Mississippi River of eastern Ontario, a tributary of the Ottawa. The tragedy occurred when two rafts of logs coming out of Cross Lake collided in the swift waters of King's Chute, forming a dangerous jam. As the raftsmen worked to untangle it, Phalen slipped off a shifting log and the current pulled him under. It was an hour before his companions were able to get his body out of the raging river.

King's Chute is a small white-water section of the Mississippi which contains two particularly rapid passages known as the upper and lower falls. The Pete McLaren mentioned was a lumberman who operated in the Ottawa Valley for many years, accumulating a large fortune and becoming a Canadian senator. He died at Perth in 1910.

While not as widely known as "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks", this ballad has spread throughout Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Maine and New Brunswick, with varying names such as "James Whaland", "George Whalen", and "Whalen's Fate." Several different tunes have been used for it, but the story remains much the same. In Mr. Woodcock's version I was interested by his use of "nearerer": this was no accident for he sang it in the same way on another occasion.

For comparative versions see Native American Balladry, C 8

#### JIMMY WHELAN

Come all you ladies and gentlemen,  
I pray you lend an ear,  
'Tis of a terrible accident  
You are about to hear.

'Tis of a young and active youth,  
Jimmie Whelan he was called,  
He was drowned on McClelland's drive  
Along the Upper Falls.

The fierce and raging main,  
The waters they ran high,  
And the foreman said to Whelan  
This jam you will have to try.

"You've always been an active youth  
While danger's lurking near,  
So you are the man I want to help  
Me keep these waters clear."

Whelan he made answer  
Unto his comrades bold,  
"Supposing if there's danger,  
We will do as we are told.

"We'll obey our foreman's orders  
As noble men should do,"  
Just as he spoke the jam it broke  
And let poor Whelan through.

The raging main it tossed and tore  
Those logs from shore to shore  
And here and there his body went,  
A-tumbling o'er and o'er.

No earthly man could ever live  
In such a raging main.  
Poor Whelan struggled hard for life  
But he struggled all in vain.

There were three of them in danger,  
But two of them were saved.  
It was noble-hearted Whelan  
That met with a watery grave.

So come all you young and active youths,  
A warning from me take,  
And try and shun all danger  
Before it gets too late.

For death is drawing nearerer  
And trying to destroy  
The pride of some poor mother's heart,  
And his father's only joy.

#### SIDE I, Band 6: TURNER'S CAMP

Sung by Leo Spencer, Lakefield

So far the songs have originated in Canada or been composed by Canadians, although they are also known in the States. This ballad, however, is clearly of American origin. Beck notes that "The Chippewa River of Michigan runs from Coldwater Lake and empties into the Tittabawassee River near Midland. It is one of several streams of the once heavily timbered Saginaw Basin". One of his informants told him: "This song was composed by a boy from New York for Charlie Turner in the winter of 1871."



This belongs to the large group of songs describing life in the camps. The incidents themselves are unimportant, but taken together they convey a better picture of the shantyboys' life than many pages of description. The verses have an Irish flavor, and Mr. Spencer seems to have a smile in his voice as he sings them.

The song is not widely known in Ontario. I recorded it first from Leo Spencer's brother Bill, and I have heard only one other version, and that a very much shortened one, from Emerson Woodcock, in which Turner's Camp has been transferred to Ontario, and such Canadian places as Kinmount, Gooderham, and Tory Hill have replaced the Michigan names.

For comparative versions see  
Native American Balladry, C 23



#### TURNER'S CAMP

It is from the town of Saginaw  
That I have strayed away,  
And I landed in a town called Clara  
About eleven o'clock next day.

And it being so stumpy,  
I thought it next to hell,  
And I jumped on board a Stanley's  
coach  
And went to Isabelle.

And after dinner was over  
I thought I'd take a tramp,  
So I arrived 'bout supper time  
'Way out at Turner's camp.

Away out in the wild woods  
Where I had no time to shirk,  
And early the next morning  
They sent me out to work.

It's first they sent me sawing  
And they found that would not pay,  
And then they sent me loading,  
A-loading a darned old sleigh.

The loading of the darned old  
sleigh,

I being so awful green,  
A-rolling up the top logs  
Before I never seen.

Our teamster being in a hurry  
For to get o'er his route,  
'Twas roll the logs and turn the  
logs  
And cant the logs about.

And when the last log was on  
the sleigh,  
To the river he would go,  
And the way he made his horses  
get  
I'll tell you was no way slow.

You ought to see him drive them,  
You'd swear that he was drunk,  
He was never known to run a trip  
Without hanging on the stump.

And when the last log was off  
the sleigh,  
To the shanty he would go,  
And some would talk of curious  
things  
That happened long ago.

And some would sharpen and file  
their saws  
While others grind their axe,  
And more would mend and patch their  
shirts  
And hunt their lousy backs.

When the seventeenth of March  
rolled round  
And the weather getting fine,  
The teamsters quit their hauling  
And the boys they get their time.

The teamsters quit their hauling  
And the birds began to sing,  
The boys broke down their rollways  
And I guess that it must be spring.

The winter it's all over  
And the hard work is all done,  
We'll all go down to Saginaw  
And have a little fun.

Some will go on Stanley's Coach  
And others takes the train,  
But if you get there before me,  
You can whoop 'er up, Liza Jane.

#### SIDE I, Band 7: HOGAN'S LAKE

Sung by Mr. O. J. Abbott, Hull

Songs describing the daily routine in the lumbering camp are very common, and a whole group of songs following much the same pattern have been collected, often under the general title of "The Lumbercamp Song", or as "Jim Porter's Shanty Song", "Jim Murphy's Camp", "The Shanty Boys in the Pine", etc.

While "Hogan's Lake" is set to the tune of "The Lumbercamp Song" as sung in Newfoundland, and is of the same general type, it may, I think, be considered a separate song rather than a variant. The others follow

much the same pattern and include similar verses, while "Hogan's Camp" is quite different except for the seventh stanza.

The verses give a lively and accurate account of life in a square-timber camp as distinct from a logging camp. Until about 1870 most of the wood Canada shipped to Britain was in the form of square timber because it could be loaded on ships with less waste space. The song thus probably goes back to the 1860's, although a few square-timber camps continued up until the turn of the century. Black River is found in Quebec just across the Ottawa River from Pembroke. The "Thomas Laugheren" of the first stanza is probably a corruption of "McLaughlin", the name of a well-known firm of timber contractors operating in the Black River area.

In a square timber gang there were usually five men: the liner, or scorer, who was the boss, the hewer, who was the most expert axeman, and two choppers and a hacker who were rough workmen. The liner chose the trees, showed how they were to fall, and directed the choppers as they cut them down. Then he showed the choppers where they were to cut off the top, and drew two chalk lines down the length of the trunk to which the hewer was to come. He then made a series of fairly deep notches at right angles to the length of the tree and with wedges drove off the waste in blocks. The hacker cleaned it off roughly, and then the hewer smoothed off with a broadaxe the whole length of the tree. The process was repeated on the other side; the half-finished stick was then rolled over, and the other two sides squared up. The liner often did the timber-cruising in summer, searching out the standing timber that would be needed to fill contracts in the coming year.

"Hogan's Lake" seems to catch the spirit of the rugged north country where wild animals roamed through the woods while the men brought the trees down despite storms and snow. The last stanza pictures the evenings in the rude log shanties where the shantyboys provided their own entertainment. "The Girl that Wore the Waterfall" was a popular nineteenth-century song: the waterfall refers to a hair style in which the hair was pulled over a pad at the back of the neck.

#### HOGAN'S LAKE

Come all you brisk young fellows that  
assemble here tonight,  
Assist my bold endeavors while these  
few lines I write.  
It's of a gang of shantyboys I mean  
to let your know,



They went up for Thomas Laugheren  
through storm, frost, and snow.

'Twas up on the Black River at a  
place called Hogan's Lake.  
Those able-bodied fellows went  
square timber for to make.  
The echo of their axes rung from  
shore to shore,  
The lofty pine they fell so fast,  
like cannons they did roar.

There was two gangs of scorers,  
their names I do not mind,  
They ranged the mountains o'er and  
o'er, their winter's work to  
find.  
They tossed the pine both right and  
left, the blocks and slivers  
flew,  
They scared the wild moose from  
their yards, likewise the  
caribou.

Our hewers they were tasty and they  
ground their axes fair,  
They aimed their blows so neatly,  
I am sure they'd split a hair.  
They followed up the scorers, they  
were not left behind,  
To do good work I really think all  
hands are well inclined.

Bill Hogan was our hewer's name, I  
mean to let you know,  
Full fourteen inches of the line  
he'd split with every blow.  
He swung his axe so freely, he done  
his work so clean,  
If you saw the timber hewed by him,  
you'd swear he used a plane.

Tom Hogan was our foreman's name,  
and very well he knew  
How to conduct his business and  
what shantyboys could do.  
He knew when timber was well made,  
when teams they had good loads,  
How to lay it up and to swamp it out,  
and how men should cut the  
roads.

At four o'clock in the morning the  
teamsters would awake,  
They'd go out and feed their horses,

then their breakfasts they would  
take.

"Turn out, me boys," the foreman cries  
when each horse is on the road,  
"You must away before 'tis day, those  
teams for to unload."

If you were in the shanty when they  
came in at night,  
To see them dance, to hear them sing,  
it would your heart delight.  
Some asked for patriotic songs,  
some for love songs did call:  
Fitzsimmons sung about the girl that  
wore the waterfall.

#### SIDE I, Band 8: JOHNNY MURPHY

Sung by John Leahy, Douro

This is another song that came to  
Ontario from the United States. It  
is usually called "On the Banks of  
the Little Eau Pleine": the Little  
Eau Pleine is a small tributary of  
the Wisconsin River in Marathon  
County, Wisconsin. The author was  
W.N. Allen, a lumberjack poet who  
used the pseudonym of Shan T. Boy.  
Professor Rickaby reports that Mr.  
Allen placed the time of composition  
"somewhere in the '70's", when he  
was living at Wausau, Wisconsin.

Mr. Allen was born in New Brunswick,  
of parents who had emigrated to  
Canada from Ireland. He patterned  
his song on an old-world ballad,  
"The Lass of Dunmore", and suggested  
it be sung to the tune of "Erin's  
Green Shore".

The song is not very well known in  
Canada: I found only one other man  
in addition to Mr. Leahy who knew it.  
The "Little Eau Pleine" of the origin-  
al naturally became a "little low  
plain" in oral transmission.

This is a strange mixture of pathos  
and humor: the description of the  
lost shantyboy must surely have been  
intended to amuse the listener, and  
the hatful of water seems more akin

to farce than tragedy.

The "fifty-foot oar" of the last  
stanza refers to the long oars  
operated by several men which were  
used in guiding the huge rafts of  
logs down the rivers in the spring.

For comparative versions see  
Native American Balladry, C 2.

JOHN MURPHY (The Banks of the Little  
Eau Pleine)

One evening last June as I rambled  
All over the hills and valleys alone,  
The mosquito notes was melodious,  
How merry the whip-poor-will sang.  
The frogs in the marshes was croaking  
And the tree-toads was whistling for  
rain  
And the partridge around me were  
drumming  
On the banks of the little low plain.

As the sun to the west was declining  
It tainted the tree-tops with red,  
My wandering steps bore me onward,  
Never caring where'er they had led,  
Till I chanced for to meet a young  
schoolmarm,  
Charmed in a horrible strain,  
She lamented her lost jolly raftsmen  
From the banks of the little low  
plain.

"Pray tell me what kind of a fellow  
And what kind of clothing he wore,  
For I did belong to that river  
And I might have seen him somewhere."  
"His pants they were made of two  
wheatsacks  
With a patch a foot square on each  
knee,  
His jacket and shirt they were dyed  
with  
The bark of a butternut tree.

"He wore a red sash round his middle  
And an end hanging down on each side  
His boots numbered ten of strong  
cowhide  
And the heels about four inches wide,  
His name it was honest John Murphy,  
And on it there ne'er was a strain,  
For he loved the West Constant  
River,  
That's the reason he left the low  
plain."

"If that be the kind of your Johnny,  
'Twas him I did know well.  
The sad tiding I'll tell you,  
Your Johnny was drowned in the dell.  
We buried him 'neath the low valley,  
And you ne'er shall behold him again,  
For the stone marks the sod o'er your  
Johnny,  
He lies far from the little low  
plain.

When she heard the sad tidings she  
fainted,  
She fell to the ground as if dead,  
I scooped up my hat full of water  
And I poured it all over her head.  
She opened her eyes and looked  
wildly,



LOADING  
LOGS IN  
THE  
SPRING

*Logging the Boundary, Spring, north of Black River*



I thought she was nearly insane,  
I thought to myself "She'll go  
crazy  
On the banks of the little low  
plain."

"Now I'll desert my location  
And now teach district schools  
any more,  
I'll go where I'll never, no never,  
Hear the sound of a fifty-foot oar.  
I'll go to some far distant island,  
To England, to Ireland, or Spain  
But I'll ne'er forget Johnny Murphy  
On the banks of the little low  
plain."

# SIDE I, Band 9: THE SHANTYBOYS' ALPHABET

Sung by Sam Campsall, Toronto

Next to "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks",  
this is probably the most widely  
known of all lumberjack songs. The  
remarkable thing is that while the  
tune and exact form vary from  
place to place, the words for which  
the letters stand remain practically  
constant.

The pattern comes from the older  
"Sailors' Alphabet", and the tune  
used here is similar to "Villikens  
and His Dinah", although other  
Ontario singers used different tunes.

The iron referred to in the third  
stanza was used to place the owner's  
mark on his logs so they could be  
identified if they became mixed with  
logs from other camps during the  
river drive. The moss of stanza four  
was used to fill in the cracks between  
the logs of the shanties.

The last line in the refrain varies  
with the singer, and Mr. Campsall has  
used two common forms. The reference  
to whiskey was wishful thinking for  
liquor was usually forbidden in the  
camps.

The song appears in practically every  
lumberjack collection. Two examples  
are Shantymen and Shantyboys, pp. 207-9,  
and They Knew Paul Bunyan, pp. 33-6.

## THE SHANTYBOYS' ALPHABET

A is for axe that cutteth the pine,  
B is for the jolly boys never behind,  
C for the cutting they early begin,  
And D for the danger we oft-times are  
in.

### FIRST REFRAIN:

And it's merrily, merry, so merry are  
we,  
No mortal on earth is more happy  
than we,  
And it's hi derry, ho derry, hi derry  
down,  
Give the shantyboy whiskey and his  
head will go 'round.

E is the echo that makes the woods

ring,  
F is the foreman, the head of our  
gang,  
G is the grindstone we grind our  
axe 'on,  
And H is the handle, so smoothly  
worn.

### FIRST REFRAIN

I is the iron that marketh the pine,  
J for the jolly boys never behind,  
K is the keen edge on our axes we  
keep,  
And L for the lice that keep us from  
sleep.

### SECOND REFRAIN:

And it's merrily, merry, so merry  
are we,  
No mortal on earth is more happy than  
we,  
And it's hi derry, ho derry, hi derry  
down,  
For the shantyboy welcomes when  
nothing goes wrong.

M is the moss we stick to our camps,  
N is the needle we sew up our pants,  
O is the owl that hoots in the night,  
And P for the tall pines we always  
fall right.

### FIRST REFRAIN

Q is the quarrels we never allow,  
R is the rivers our logs they do  
plough,  
S is the sleighs so stout and so  
strong,  
And T for the teams that haul them  
along.

### SECOND REFRAIN

U is the use we put our teams to,  
V is the valleys we force our roads  
through,  
W is the woods we leave in the  
spring,  
And the other three letters I don't  
think I'll sing.

## SIDE II, Band 1: JACK HAGGERTY

Sung by John Leahy, Douro

This tale of a young shantyboy's dis-  
appointment in love was widely popular  
throughout the Great Lakes region.  
Beck tells us that it was composed in  
the late 'sixties by Dan McGinnis, a  
suitor for the hand of Anne Tucker, a  
blacksmith's daughter who lived in the  
logging town of Greenville on Flat  
River in southern Michigan. The story  
goes that McGinnis made up the song  
to get even with Anne's fiancé, George  
Mercer, who had been made foreman of  
the camp in which both McGinnis and  
Jack Haggerty worked. He used Jack  
Haggerty's name, although he had never  
been engaged to Ann.

Although the actual story it tells was  
not true, "Jack Haggerty" nevertheless  
was close to shantyboy experience. The

girls liked the roving shantyboys, but  
they usually married a steadier type.  
And their parents were not slow to  
point out that the roistering lumber-  
men seldom made good husbands.

"Jack Haggerty" is known in Ontario  
in a form very close to those collect-  
ed in Michigan, but this version by  
Mr. Leahy shows some interesting  
changes. Where the American versions  
almost invariably record that Ann was  
a blacksmith's daughter and had dark  
chestnut curls, Mr. Leahy's Flat  
River girl's name was Lucy, she was  
the daughter of a lockmaster, and  
had dark auburn curls. This suggests  
that some Ontario shantyboy may have  
adapted the American song to fit a  
local situation.

For comparative versions see  
Native American Balladry, C 25.

## JACK HAGGERTY

I'm a broken-hearted raftsmen, from  
Greenville I came.  
I courted a lassie, a lass of great  
fame,  
But the cruel heart of Cupid it has  
caused me much grief,  
My heart's torn asunder, I can ne'er  
find relief.

My trouble I'll tell you without  
more delay,  
A neat little lassie my heart stole  
away.  
She's a lockmaster's daughter from  
the Flat River side,  
And I always intended to make her  
my bride.

I went up the river some money to  
make,  
I was steadfast and steady, I ne'er  
played the rake;  
I'm a chap that stands happy on a  
log in the stream;  
My thoughts were on Lucy, she hunted  
my dream.

One day on the boat oh a letter I  
received  
Telling me from the promises she  
did relieve.  
'Tis a marriage to a young man, he  
has long been delayed,  
And the next time I see her she'll  
not be a maid.

'Tis her mother Jane Docker I leave  
all the blame,  
She caused her to forsake me, go  
back on my name,  
She cast off the riggin's that God  
would soon tie,  
She left me a wanderer till the day  
that I die.

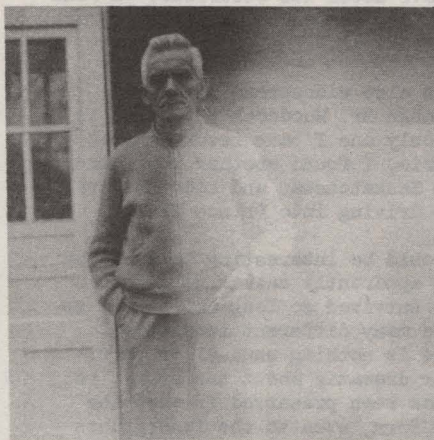
Fare you well to Flat River, for me  
there's no rest,  
I'll shoulder my peavey and go to  
the west,  
I'll go to Muskegon some comforts to  
find,



And I'll leave my own sweetheart and  
Flat River behind.

Come all you jolly raftsmen, with  
hearts stout and true,  
Don't depend on the women, you're  
left if you do.

If you chance for to meet one with  
the dark auburn curls,  
You'll think of Jack Haggerty and  
his Flat River girl.



SIDE II, Band 2: BILL DUNBAR

Sung by Emerson Woodcock, Peterborough

This is a local Ontario song that enjoyed wide popularity throughout the Peterborough region. It describes a tragedy said to have happened about 1885. Kinmount, the site of Dunbar's hotel, is a village some thirty-five miles northwest of Peterborough which was an important lumbering region at that time. Gannon's Narrows on Pigeon Lake lies ten miles west of Peterborough. Mossom Boyd, for whom Bill Dunbar worked, came to Canada in 1834 and died in 1883. He was the first man to settle in the Sturgeon Lake region, and he was very successful in the lumber trade.

One of my informants told me that two men, Billy Lyle and Dave Curtin, made this song up around 1900. Most of the former lumberjacks in and around Peterborough knew it or had heard it, and the several versions I recorded were all quite similar. It is a particular favorite of Mr. Woodcock's for he grew up in Kinmount.

#### BILL DUNBAR

Come all you sympathizers, I pray you  
lend an ear:

'Tis of a drowning accident you are  
about to hear:

The drowning of Bill Dunbar, a man you  
all know well,  
He lived in the village of Kinmount and  
he run a big hotel.

Bill Dunbar was an able man as you may

understand,  
Kind-hearted and obliging, a powerful  
able man.  
No matter what you would profess he  
would always use you well,  
There was no danger of being insulted  
in Dunbar's big hotel.

He drove down to attend the races as  
you may understand,  
And returning home all from the same,  
him and Bob Cunningham,  
The night grew dark, they lost their  
way, which is hard to relate,  
And they drove into Gannon's Narrows  
at the foot of Pigeon Lake.

The team were lost, both men were  
drowned, which is hard to  
unfold,  
'Twas then the depth of winter and  
the water piercing cold.  
Poor Bill he fought hard for his life,  
I have heard the people say,  
And he threw his mitts out on the  
ice as a token where he lay.

It being on a Tuesday evening they  
met with their sad doom,  
And their bodies wasn't recovered  
until Thursday afternoon.  
They were taken right home to Kin-  
mount; large crowds did gather  
there,  
And the people came from far and  
near when they heard of the  
sad affair.

Bill leaves a wife and one small  
child in sorrow, grief and pain,  
Likewise his brothers and sisters in  
sorrow to remain.  
In meditation they are left which  
grieves them to the heart  
That it would ever come their lot  
that he would from them part.

Bill Dunbar in his former days was  
foreman for Mossom Boyd  
And many the river he has run,  
both narrow, deep, and wide.  
He was never known to send a man  
where danger might draw near.  
But he'd boldly take the lead him-  
self without danger, dread, nor  
fear.

But he's gone the road we all must  
go, let the time be short or  
long,

So I'll drop by pen, likewise  
conclude my sentimental song,  
Hoping to meet on a brighter shore  
where dangers they are few,  
And there to live in happiness and  
old acquaintance to renew.

#### SIDE II, Band 3: THE BASKETONG

Sung by Mr. O. J. Abbott, Hull

This is another Canadian song that  
does not seem to have reached the  
American shanties. It belongs to  
the large group of songs describing  
life in a particular camp. Here  
the pattern seems to be a series of

jokes about people and incidents.

The language of the original was  
quite outspoken but Mr. Abbott  
modified it somewhat. One of  
his changes, in stanza 4, is obvious,  
and he also admitted he had reworded  
the last two lines of stanzas 5 and 6.  
"Leve", in the final line of stanza  
5, is French for "lift".

#### THE BASKETONG

It was in the year eighteen hundred and  
one

When I left my poor Kate all sad and  
alone.

Says I to my Kate, "Sure three months  
won't be long,"

But it's little I thought of the  
Basketong,  
Laddy fall the deedilero, right  
fall the dollday.

Oh we had a good foreman, Kennedy was  
his name,

To speak bad about him 'twould be a  
great shame,

For suckholes with him they had no  
great sight,

For he treated all the men in the  
shanty alike,  
Laddy fall the deeilero, right  
fall the dollday.

Old Kennedy's Dan he was jovial and  
true,

He drove a pair of colts, they were  
about twenty-two,

He'd drive fast all day and he'd ne'er  
be out late,

But he thought he'd play hell if Big  
Jack had a mate,  
Laddy fall the deedilero, right  
fall the dollday.

Old Kennedy's Dan he soon gave them  
a stroke

For the very next morning the harness  
he broke.

He took them to the shanty and that  
very fast

And told the old man to stick them  
in his eye,  
Laddy fall the deedilero, right  
fall the dollday.

We had a good loader, Morissette was  
his name,

To speak bad about him 'twould be a  
great shame.

He'd lift like a brute when the logs  
they were large

Saying "Up with them, boys, now leve  
Joe Labarge,"

Laddy fall the deedilero, right  
fall the dollday.

Oh one night we had a great talk

About the herrings that taste of the  
salt,

And the door of our shanty would give  
you a fright,

We were running up and down to the  
river all night,

Laddy fall the deedilero, right  
fall the dollday.



I think I'll conclude and finish my  
song,  
I hope you won't mind me for keeping  
you so long.  
I'll write a letter to Kate saying it  
will not be long  
Till I'll be returning from the  
Basketong,  
Laddy fall the deedilero, right  
fall the dollday.



SIDE II, Band 4: JOHNNY STILES

Sung by Tom Brandon, Peterborough

This is another form of the ballad  
given on Side I as "Johnny Doyle". It  
is somewhat closer to the versions  
collected in the States under the  
title of "The Wild Mustard River."

The two versions of the ballad show  
interesting discrepancies. The  
fact that Johnny Doyle "never was  
reckless and wild", while Johnny  
Stiles "had always been reckless  
and wild" is probably due to a slip  
of memory, but the other changes  
suggest some kind of rewriting.  
"Johnny Doyle" is shorter, simpler,  
and more realistic, while "Johnny  
Stiles" has acquired some trimmings  
that seem definitely fictional:  
certainly the nightingale of stanza  
11 has little to do with the  
lumbering woods.

For comparative versions, see  
Native American Balladry C 5

#### JOHNNY STYLES

Come all you young boys from the river,  
Come and listen to me for awhile,  
I will tell you all a sad story  
Of my friend and kind chum Johnny  
Styles.

We were camped on the big Moose  
River  
Way down by the old Jumbo Dam,  
One morning while eating our  
breakfast  
On the rocks we espied a great jam.

As soon as we'd eaten our breakfast,  
We were out on the head of that jam,  
There were two of the boys took the  
pole trail  
To break out the reservoir dam.  
We worked for an hour and a quarter,  
Our pikes and our peavies did pry,  
Never dreaming that one of our number  
This day would so horribly die.

On the river there was never none  
better  
Than my friend and kind chum Johnny  
Styles,  
He had rode the logs oftener than  
any,  
He had always been reckless and wild.

We worked for an hour and a quarter,  
The sweat down our bodies did pour,  
Till the water got worked down in  
under,  
Like lightning she pulled out of  
there.

"Ride her down, boys, ride her down  
to dead water,"  
So gladly our foreman did shout,  
Not a man in the gang who won't  
ride her,  
Not a man in the gang who'll back  
out.

Bad luck was with Johnny that  
morning,  
His foot ig got caught in the jam,  
And you know how those waters go  
howling  
From the floor of the reservoir  
dam.

But I was not far from poor Johnny  
When I first heard his wild shout,  
But you know how those waters go  
rolling,  
They roll in and they never roll  
out.

We rode it down to dead water  
As sweat down our bodies did pour,  
Till we pulled his dead body from  
in under  
And it looked like poor Johnny no  
more.

He was crushed from his head to  
his shoulders,  
His body in tatters and strings,  
So we buried him there by the river  
Where the lark and the nightingale  
sings.

He was crushed from his head to  
his shoulders,  
In pieces the size of your hand,  
On earth we'll look after his body,  
May the Lord take his soul in  
command.

#### SIDE II, Band 5: THE BACKWOODSMAN

Sung by Emerson Woodcock

This tale of a country boy's night out  
has a surprising vitality. On first  
hearing, I took it for a local ballad:

Omeme and Downeyville are both small  
towns in the Peterborough area. Then  
I found that Rickaby had noted much  
the same narrative from Mr. Bale who  
had learned it from his grandmother,  
born in Wisconsin in 1851, and she  
had learned it from her grandparents  
who, he thought, came from Connecticut.

In Our Singing Country, Lomax gives  
a version called "I Came to This  
Country in 1865" and notes: "One of  
the sturdiest indigenous folk songs,  
this ballad is said to have originated  
in the Green Mountains of Vermont.  
We have noted its occurrence in Penn-  
sylvania, eastern Kentucky, New York,  
and Michigan."

It is also widespread in Canada:  
although Mr. Woodcock's version is  
the only one I have recorded from  
Ontario, I found another that came  
from Saskatchewan and had the rural  
hero driving into Prince Albert.

It would be interesting to know why  
this apparently casual song should  
have survived so long and turned up  
in so many different localities.  
There is nothing unusual or parti-  
cular dramatic about the story, yet  
it has been preserved in much the  
same form, even to the incongruous  
detail of the father peering in the  
window, in widely separated regions  
over a period of a century or more.

For comparative versions see  
Native American Balladry, C 19.

#### THE BACKWOODSMAN

Oh it's well do I remember the year  
of forty-five,  
I think myself quite happy to find  
myself alive.  
I harnessed up my horses, my business  
to pursue,  
And I went a-hauling cordwood as I  
often used to do.

Now I only hauled one load where I  
should have hauled four,  
I went down to Omeme and I could  
not haul no more.  
The taverns they being open, good  
liquor was flowing free,  
And I hadn't emptied one glass when  
another was filled for me.

Now I met with an old acquaintance,  
and I dare not tell his name.  
He was going to a dance and I thought  
I'd do the same.  
He was going to a dance where the  
fiddle was sweetly played,  
And the boys and girls all danced  
till the breaking of the day.

So I puts me saddle on me arm and  
started for the barn  
To saddle up old gray nag, not think-  
ing any harm.  
I saddled up old gray nag, and I rode  
away so still  
And I never drew a long breath till  
I came to Downeyville.



So when I got to Downeyville the  
night was far advanced,  
I got upon the floor for to have a  
little dance.  
The fiddler he being rested, his  
arm being stout and strong,  
Played the rounds of old Ireland  
for four hours long.

Now my father followed after, I've  
heard the people say,  
He must have had a pilot or he  
never would found the way,  
He looked in every keyhole that he  
could see a light  
Till his old gray locks were wet  
with the dew of the night.

#### SIDE II, Band 6: HARRY DUNN

Sung by Martin Sullivan, Nassau

This is another of the lumberwoods  
tragedies that was widely known in  
camps on both sides of the border.  
It is strange that practically all  
the well-known ballads about shanty-  
boys who met sad ends either origin-  
ated in Canada or had Canadian heroes:  
almost the only one that is definitely  
American is "Harry Bail", and he met  
his death in a saw-mill rather than  
in the woods or on the river. It  
seems unlikely that more Canadians  
than Americans were killed, so it  
must be that Canadians were more  
inclined to record their tragedies  
in song. Perhaps some future re-  
searcher could use this as a starting  
point for a study of the differences  
in national temperament as reflected  
in folk songs.

This ballad is often known as "The  
Hanging Limb". Hanging limbs were  
less dramatic than log jams, but  
they may have accounted for just as  
many deaths. When tall trees were  
felled they often crashed through  
other trees, breaking off heavy  
limbs in the process, and those  
limbs remained suspended high in  
the air until a breeze dislodged  
them and brought them crashing to  
the ground. In The Blazed Trail  
Mr. White commended: "This is the  
chief of the many perils of the  
woods. Like crouching pumas the  
instruments of a man's destruction  
poise on the spring, sometimes for  
days. Then swiftly, silently the  
leap is made. It is a danger un-



MAKING SQUARE TIMBER

avoidable, terrible, ever-present."

Next to "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks",  
"Harry Dunn" seems to have been  
the best known of the tragic ballads  
in Ontario. Harry's home, given  
usually as "the county of Odun",  
has not been definitely located.

For comparative versions see  
Native American Balladry, C 14

#### HARRY DUNN

There's many a poor Canadian boy  
leaves friends and home so  
dear,  
And longing for excitement to  
Michigan did steer.  
I once know a charming lad, his  
name was Harry Dunn,  
His father was a farmer in the  
county of Lodun.

He'd all the wealth he could possess  
and land of high estate,  
He only wanted to have a time in  
the woods of Michigan,  
And on the morning he left his home,  
his mother to him did say,  
"Now Harry dear, take my advice, and  
on the farm do stay.

"You leave your kind old mother,  
likewise your sisters three,  
And something seems to tell me no  
more your face I'll see."  
He went into the city and he hired  
with lumbering king,  
He strayed away and took his course  
to the woods of Pennslavane.

He worked away for three long months,  
oftimes he would write home,  
Saying, "Winter will soon be over and  
then I will go down."  
He rose one morning from his bunk, his  
face it wore no smile,  
He called his comrade out of doors  
whose name was Charlie Lyle.

Saying, "Charlie dear, I had a dream  
that filled my heart with woe,  
I fear there's something wrong at  
home and there I'd better go."  
His comrade only laughed at him which  
pleased him for a time,  
Saying, "Charlie dear, come let us  
go, it's time to fall the pine."

They worked away till one o'clock  
that very afternoon,  
When a hanging limb fell down on  
him and sealed his fateful doom.  
His comrades drew all round him to  
pull the limb away,  
Saying "Charlie dear, I'm dying and  
my time has come right soon.

"Now Charlie dear go down with me  
and take my body home,  
And tell my kind old mother what  
caused me for to roam."  
His poor old aged mother, she fell  
down like a stone,  
They raised her up but her heart was  
broke when her Harry was brought  
home.

His poor old aged father, he lingered  
for a while,  
But never after on this earth was  
ever seen to smile.  
In less than three weeks after, they  
buried that good old man,  
So then you see a deathly curse lies  
over Michigan.

#### SIDE II, Band 7: THE FALLING OF THE PINE

Sung by Martin McManus, Peterborough

This fragment is all I have been able  
to find of this old woods song. It  
is included here because its tune and  
style are quite different from those  
of any other lumbering song I have  
recorded.

Mrs. Eckstorm notes: "Excepting only  
the 'Lines upon the Death of Two  
Young Men', dated 1815, 'The Falling  
of the Pine' is the oldest woods song  
known. Both go back to the old  
square-timber days, when Maine men,  
working in Lower Canada, made and  
ran rafts of square timber to Quebec.

Minstrelsy of Maine, pp. 17-21  
Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy,  
p. 82

#### THE FALLING OF THE PINE

Oh your Irish hearts are wanton  
Your golden hearts are daunted  
To prepare and go to shanty  
Before your youth incline,  
For spectators they will thunder,  
They'll gaze on you and wonder,  
How noisy was the thunder,  
The falling of the pine.

It is E.P. took the block  
And we will chop through every rock  
And those owls and wolves are  
shocked  
At the falling of the pine.

#### SIDE II, Band 8: THE CHAPEAU BOYS

Sung by Mr. O. J. Abbott

This is another local song from the  
Canadian northwoods that does not  
appear to have reached the American  
camps. It achieved wide popularity  
throughout the Ottawa valley, and  
I'm told that it may still be heard  
in Chapeau bars on Saturday nights.

Chapeau (not to be confused with  
Chapleau on the C.P.R. line just  
east of Lake Superior) is located on  
Allumette Island in the Ottawa  
River just north of Pembroke. The  
Fort William mentioned is not the  
city on Lake Superior but a tiny  
village on the north shore of the  
Ottawa. Des Joachims (pronounced  
locally as the Swishsaw) lies on  
the Ottawa River between Pembroke  
and North Bay. Black River runs  
through Quebec just north of the  
Ottawa. The Russell Hotel, mentioned



in the seventh stanza, probably refers to one of that name in the city of Ottawa. "Early roses" is a rural name for radishes. "Booth" in the second stanza would be J. R. Booth, a well-known Canadian lumber king.

The song probably dates from the 1890's. Pat Gregg, named as the composer, was a local lumberman and musician.

#### THE CHAPEAU BOYS

I'm a jolly good fellow, Pat Gregg  
is my name,  
I come from the Chapeau, that village  
of fame.  
For singing and dancing and all  
other fun  
The boys from the Chapeau cannot be  
outdone.

On your patience I beg to intrude.  
We hired With Fitzgerald who was  
agent for Booth  
To go up Black River so far, far  
away,  
To the old Caldwell Farm for to cut  
the hay.

Joe Humphreys, Bob Orme, Ned Murphy  
and I,  
We packed up our duds on the eleventh  
of July,  
Away up to Pembroke our luggage did  
take,  
We boarded the Empress and sailed up  
the lake.

When we came to Fort William, that  
place you all know,  
We tuned up our fiddle and rosined  
our bow,  
Our silver strings rang out with a  
clear merry noise,  
And Oiseau Rock echoed "Well done,  
Chapeau Boys!"

We headed for Des Joachims and got  
there all right,  
We had sixteen miles to walk to  
Reddy's that night,  
Where we were made welcome, the  
truth for to speak,  
It was our desire to stay there a  
week.

But we left the next morning with  
good wishes and smiles,  
And the route to the Caldwell was  
forty-six miles.  
North over the mountains Bob showed

us the route,  
And when we got there we were  
nearly played out.

Now the board at the Caldwell, the  
truth for to tell,  
Could not be surpassed in the  
Russell Hotel.  
We had good beef and fresh mutton,  
our tea sweet and strong,  
And great early roses full six  
inches long.

We had custard, rice pudding, and  
sweet apple pie,  
Good bread and fresh butter that  
would you surprise.  
We had cabbage, cucumbers, boiled,  
picked, and raw,  
And the leg of a beaver we stole  
from a squaw.

Haying being over, we packed up  
our duds,  
Shouldered our turkey and off to  
the woods  
To fell the tall pine with our axes  
and saws,  
To terrify the animals, the Indians,  
and squaws.

I hope we'll have luck, and on that we  
rely;  
I hope the drive will be out by the  
eleventh of July,  
And if we're all spared to get down in  
the spring,  
We'll make the old hall at the Chapeau  
to ring.

I think I'll conclude and finish my  
song,  
I hope you won't mind me for keeping  
you so long,  
But our cook's getting sleepy, he's  
nodding his head,  
So we'll all say our prayers and  
we'll roll into bed.

#### SIDE II, Band 9: SAVE YOUR MONEY WHILE YOU'RE YOUNG

This fine old song is rarely heard  
today: Mr. Doherty was the only  
singer I came across who knew it.

Of its significance in the shantyboys' life, Rickaby wrote: "Through the words and notes of this song move the dim spirit-beings of thousands of shantyboys, the story of whose improvident lives is dramatically implied

in the reiterated admonition born of sad experience, one which needs no glossing, either in our generation or in any to come. As many as old fellow sang this or heard it sung, there must have welled up and overflowed within him a poignant but unavailing regret that life for him should have come to this: all the glory and strength of his young manhood gone, his thousands of hard-earned dollars poured periodically into the fathomless tides of dissolute hours; his earning capacity far waned and more swiftly waning, but life lingering on, demanding support; all his magnificent heritage of warmth and recuperative power and the length of days miserably bartered for a mess of pottage."

Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy,  
pp. 39, 199.

#### SAVE YOUR MONEY WHILE YOU'RE YOUNG

Come all you jolly good fellows,  
I'll sing to you a song,  
It's all about the shantyboys and  
it won't take me long,  
For it's now that I regret the day  
while I'm working out in the  
cold:  
Save your money while you're young,  
my boys, you'll need it when  
you're old.

For once I was a shantyboy, oh  
wasn't I a lad!  
Now the way I spent my money, oh,  
wasn't it too bad?  
For it's now that I regret the day  
while I'm working out in the  
cold,  
Save your money while you're young,  
my boys, you'll need it when  
you're old.

And if you are a married man, I'll  
tell you what to do,  
Just be good to your wife and  
family as you were sworn to do,  
Keep away from all grog shops where  
liquor is bought and sold,  
Save your money while you're young,  
my boys, you'll need it when  
you're old.

And if you are a single man, I'll  
tell you what to do,  
Just court some pretty girl that  
to you will prove true,  
Just court some pretty girl that  
is not overbold,  
That will stick to you through life  
and be a comfort when you're  
old.

For once I was a shantyboy, oh  
wasn't I a lad!  
Now the way I spent my money, oh  
wasn't it too bad?  
For it's now that I regret the  
day while I'm working out in  
the cold,  
Save your money while you're young,  
my boys, you'll need it when  
you're old.



RIVER DRIVING