NEGRO FOLK MUSIC OF ALABAMA—RICH AMERSON, II

Recorded in Alabama by Harold Courlander

Ethnic Folkways Library FE 4472



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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

ANIMALS IN CHURCH
KING DAVID
ISRAELITES SHOUTING
DIDN'T YOU HEAR
WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE MOANING
DEATH HAVE MERCY
IT'S GETTING LATE IN THE EVENING
JOB JOB
COME ON UP TO BRIGHT GLORY
THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST TIME

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NEGRO FOLK MUSIC OF ALABAMA

RECORDED BY HAROLD COURLANDER
IN THE COURSE OF A FIELD TRIP
SPONSORED BY THE WENNER-GREN
FOUNDATION

ASSISTED BY RUBY PICKENS TARTT
AND EMMA COURLANDER

VOLUME III: RICH AMERSON, 1
VOLUME IV: RICH AMERSON, 2

INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND TEXTS
BY HAROLD COURLANDER

These recordings were made in central and western Alabama in January and February, 1950. They are presented as study materials as well as music for good listening, and should contribute fresh documentation of what American Negro folk music really is.

The deformation that such music has undergone in the process of popularization at the hands of its friends and admirers is considerable. Spirituals, for example, in becoming art songs have lost much that is genuine and inspiring. Negro singing styles that have been incorporated into popular music have become, in many instances, caricature. The trend away from the old folk style is felt even in many Negro churches which today prefer trained choirs which can "read songs from the book" to the old style of participative singing.

These albums do not attempt to cover the entire field of Negro folk music, but rather to present a number of facets of the musical life of a given area. Other recordings of American Negro folk music which contribute valuable study materials to the total picture have been gathered by John and Alan Lomax and others for the Library of Congress. And Frederick Ramsey, Jr., has documented certain aspects of Negro folk music of this general region in a series of recordings issued by Folkways Records in 1955.

The emphasis in these recordings from Alabama is upon musical content and style rather than performance. Selections have been made with a view to documentation. "Performances" have been sacrificed to make way for what seem to be more traditional folk styles. But the sheer music in many of these recordings is not easily excelled.

There are already so many writings on the subject of American Negro music that it would be superfluous to attempt to discuss the matter at length here. The controversy concerning African vs. European elements in the Negro music of the United States still goes on. It is hoped that these recordings will help to shed further light on the study of origins. While the importance of European influences on Negro singing is taken for granted, it may be interesting to note briefly some of the West African elements that appear to have played a part in the creation of American Negro music.

Handclapping as employed in church singing and children's ring games has a clear African precedent. Clapping in religious singing is common in West Africa and in the West Indies, and clapping in the children's game songs is almost universally practiced in West Africa.

Responsive singing of the kind observed in American Negro work songs, ring games, and religious meetings is also frequently in the African pattern. The existence of a singing leader and one or more "helpers" and the treatment in which the "helper's" lines sometimes overlap those of the leader, is African in conception. Many religious songs cannot be sung properly without this balance.

The rhythmic punctuation by the work gang's "hanh!" (timed to the blow of the pick or hammer), the preacher's "anh hanh!" or "my friends" in the delivery of poetic-prose sermons, and the "ah-hmm!" or "anh-hanh!" of the old field blues all derive from a style that is African rather than European.

The strong tradition for community singing of work songs is in itself African.

Older people in the South sometimes place a finger in one ear while singing, so as to better hear and thus control their own voices while participating in a group song, a practice that has been observed both in West and East Africa.

The counter-clockwise ring shout, notwithstanding all its proscriptions against "dancing", is a clear survival of the African circle dance. In a recording made of a ring shout some years ago by Alan Lomax in Texas for the Library of Congress, while the music is not African the general constellation of dancing, hand-clapping, singing, and shouting gives a rather sharp picture of the extent to which African motifs permeate the musical scene. [1]

The conspicuous value placed upon use of the falsetto voice is also in the African tradition.

Among certain non-Baptist cults, such as The Church of God in Christ, the use of the tambourine and sometimes the guitar reflects a fusion of White revivalist and African practices.

The washtub and washboard, used by small secular musical groups, are adaptions of common West African musical devices, and some of the other musical ideas employed by the washboard bands appear to have African inspiration. [2]

The humming style used in much Negro secular and religious singing is non-European. Frequently the last consonant of a word or phrase is changed to m or n for softening, producing a humming effect. Thus father is frequently heard as fathum, mother as mothum, angel as angen or angum, there as then, where as when, hammer as hammun, ark as arm, etc. This alteration of final consonants is particularly noteworthy during the singing of "moans", several of which are included in this collection. In ordinary speech this softening does not ordinarily take place, which points toward a clearly established musical principle or value in regard to the alteration. Many available recordings from West, Central and East Africa indicate similar attitudes towards word articulation in singing.

The persistence of songs of protest, recrimination, gossip, and ridicule in the secular music of the Negro has already been amply noted by such observers as Melville J. Herskovits [3] as evidence of the scope of West African cultural influence. U.S. Negro song literature, both secular and religious, shares this African inheritance with other New World Negro cultures in Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad, other West Indian islands, Surinam, Brazil and Venezuela. Looking only at one facet of U.S. Negro music, the Blues, one sees the extent and importance of this tradition. An overwhelming percentage of Blues songs is made up of songs of complaint (against an individual or the community), ridicule, gossip, or recrimination.

In religious traditions there also remain a number of disguised or diffused attitudes which are shared by other Negro communities in the West Indies, South America and West and Central Africa. Among these are to be mentioned such things as baptismal rites, which have a special non-European character, and ecstatic seizures. One perceives in possession of worshippers by the "spirit" certain unmistakable ties with West African concepts. While ecstatic seizures are universally known, the context of their appearance in U.S. Negro cult worship suggests a continuity of well-established tradition. From time to time this relationship with pre-Christian concept is projected in the words of songs such as "Lord I'm Waiting On You" (Vol. IV, Side II, Band 2).

Throughout West Africa, and among Negro communities in the West Indies and South America, one notes a widespread use of the repeated first line or first couplet of a song. This tradition is deeply rooted in U.S. Negro singing, whether it is in religious or secular surroundings. Many spirituals begin in this fashion, as do many Blues and worksongs.

People still alive in the South a decade or two ago have provided valuable documentation of the persistence of African musical and religious motifs well into the 19th Century. Some of this testimony is found in the book Drums and Shadows, compiled by the Georgia Writers' Project and published in 1940. One informant on St. Simons Island declared:

"We used to have big times for the harvest, and the first thing what growed we take to the church so as everybody could have a piece of it. We pray over it and shout. When we have a dance, we used to shout in a ring. We ain't have what you call a proper dance today." (p. 174)

The celebration referred to will be readily recognized as the yam harvest rites practiced over a large part of West Africa, and still found today in Haiti. The style of singing and dancing is clearly indicated to be of African pattern.

Another informant in the same region stated: "When we were young we used to have big frolic and dance in a ring and shout to (the) drum. Sometimes we have rattle made out of dry gourd and we rattle them and make good music." (p. 176)

The drum and the gourd-rattle referred to are, of course, the nucleus of African instrumentation. On the Island of Darien a woman described the traditional drum in a way that leaves no doubt of its West African ancestry:

"You kill a 'coon and you skin it and you tack the skin up side of the house to dry and you stretch it good till it's tight and smooth. Then you stretch it over the end of a hollow tree trunk...." She indicated that such drums were sometimes three feet high, and continued: "...It ain't good to use oak if you can help it. It too hard. You take a good cypress or cedar what eaten out on the inside, and you take it and scoop it out and stretch the skin over the end.... Alex, he make drum up to two years ago, and

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1. LC 102, "Run Old Jeremiah."

2. See notes for "Salty Dog" in Vol. I of this issue. Curt Sachs, George Schweinfurth, and others have noted the presence of the prototype of the "tub" in East Africa, the Cameroons, the Congo, and Nigeria. A portable variant of the earth bow in Haiti, closely akin to the "tub" is described in Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Haiti", the Musical Quarterly, July, 1941. Also see Ethnic Folkways Library album P407, which contains an example of the Haitian instrument.

3. The Myth of the Negro Past, New York, 1941.

we sure have big time doing the dances while they beat the drums." (p. 148)

An informant on Darien described the drums coming in three different sizes, much as they are found in Dahomey and Haiti today. (p. 155)

Nor was the metal percussion instrument forgotten. Metal plates were beaten, along with drums and rattles, apparently in the style of the West African iron bell.

Documentation of this sort must be well considered in evaluating the various elements in Negro religious and secular music as we now hear it.

One interesting field of study, as yet relatively unexplored, is the persistence of old terminology in Negro music and its prevalence in the West Indies and elsewhere as well as in the United States. One form of U.S. Negro religious singing is referred to not as a "spiritual" but as a "moan", or sometimes as a "groan" Moaning or groaning does not imply pain or grief in the usual sense; it is a kind of blissful or ecstatic rendition of a song or prayer, often interlarded with humming and spontaneous melodic variation and improvisation. The song "When You Feel Like Moaning" (Vol. IV, Side I, Band 1) states:

> "When you feel like moanin',
> It ain't nothin' but love....
> When you feel like groanin',
> It ain't nothin' but love...."

One example of the "moan" or "groan" is found in Vol IV, Side II, Band 1, "It's Getting Late In the Evening". Another is the prayer by Dock Reed and Vera Hall Ward in Vol. II, Side II, Band 4.

Of some significance is the fact that the term "groaning" is used also among some West Indian cults for ecstatic religious activity of a differing kind, but relating directly to supplication.

The term "jumping", so commonplace in our Jazz lingo, is found among the so-called Pocomania cults of Jamaica to describe "laboring in the spirit." Another Jazz term, "mamma beat", used in reference to a hard left-hand beat on a drum, has explicit connections with drumming in the West Indies and West Africa. In Haiti, Cuba, Martinique, Guadaloupe and Trinidad, for example, certain drums that take the hard stick beats are called "mamma". The same terminology is heard in Dahomey and Nigeria.

Other terms associated with Negro religious and secular music may yet be found to derive out of an old tradition, rather than being spontaneous inventions.

The discussion of surviving non-European traits in American Negro singing is not intended to create the impression that this music is "African", however. A number of the songs that may be heard in Negro communities are delivered in an English style of some antiquity, and appear to be completely outside the realm of what is sometimes called "Afro-American" music. Some "Negro music" in Louisiana is basically French in character; elsewhere it is colored by regional tradition, the phonograph and radio, as is the case with folk music anywhere.

The notation of African atavisms is intended only to point out the complicated and composite nature of American Negro music.

In the end it has to be recognized that regardless of the sources of inheritance, in general the American Negro has produced over the years a music that is clearly his own. It is familiar to all of us, yet easily distinguishable from other musical trends in America. It has maintained its own identity and integrity in the midst of the nervous disorders with which our musical life has been afflicted. And it has deeply affected not only the development of Jazz and various styles of popular songs, but it has also influenced the White folk music in the South. Studies of American Indian musical culture indicate that African elements have infiltrated some Cherokee singing (Herzog) as well as that of other tribal groups.

While the musical relationship between Negro religious and non-religious songs is evident, there is a strong prejudice on the part of deeply religious people against singing secular or "sinful" songs. Many Negroes refuse to sing not only Blues, but worksongs, ballads, and lullabies as well. But the social need for singing has created some hybrid types. Railroad workers may sing a modified spiritual in work time, or invent a work song with familiar religious motifs In a prison camp near Livingston, Alabama, when the prisoners were invited to sing, about a third of them would participate only in religious songs. Some knew only secular songs, and others had no feeling against singing both types.

Many spirituals can be sung fast time or slow time...referred to as common meter and long meter. An example of common meter is to be found in "Move Members Move", Vol. II.

The pieces included in these albums were selected from among several hundred recorded during a field trip sponsored by the Wenner-Gren Foundation. Preparation of the albums and the accompanying text was made during the course of a Guggenheim Fellowship. Special thanks are due to Ruby Pickens Tartt and Pratt Tartt of Livingston, Alabama, Thomas M. Campbell of Tuskeegee, and S.W. Boynton of Selma, whose knowledge of the countryside and its people contributed immensely to the value of the field trip.

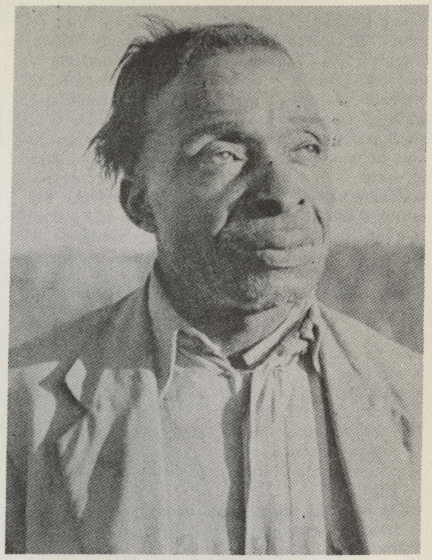
The song texts which appear in this article have been transcribed as closely as possible to conventional English, and wherever practical the suggestion of "dialect" has been avoided. It is felt that the colloquial aspects of Negro songs and speech have been overstressed in many documents. In actual fact, close listening tends to blur the seeming distinction between the dialect of the area and so-called standard English. Certainly there is no more logic in phonetic spelling of Negro speech of Alabama than in phonetic spelling of White speech of the region -- or, for that matter, of any other region. In the following transcriptions, missing vowel or consonant sounds occasionally have been indicated by apostrophes.

VOL. III, RICH AMERSON

Richard Manuel Amerson was born on a farm a few miles from Livingston, Alabama, sometime between 1885 and 1890. He is known to relatives as Manuel, and to his sister Earthy Anne Coleman, who is also heard on these recordings, as Bud. By occupation, Rich Amerson has been farmer, lumberjack, track-liner, storm pit builder, well taster and lay preacher. "Anything at all that man has to do to keep on living, I can do it," he says. "I can preach the Gospel, I can moan and groan, I can counteract conjur stuff, and I can play my mouth harp. And I can look and I can see, that's the biggest part of it all. Livingston County is full of people looking back and forth, but what do they see, I ask you? And do they understand what they see? What good is it to be born if you don't see, and if you don't understand what you see? In the ordinary sense I can't neither read nor write. But the sense God gave you don't depend altogether on schooling. I was schooled in hard work, and I read with a hoe and write with a plow." Though illiterate, Rich knows the Testament backwards and forwards, and he is able and ready to preach or sing on almost any Biblical allusion or theme.

His mind is filled with legends and tales of the old South that most of his people have long forgotten, and with riddles, animal tales, tall tales, and personal adventures to which he has imparted a flavor of the ridiculous or profound ethical values. Above all, Rich Amerson is a true story teller and bard, of a kind that has become exceedingly rare in modern society. He is always on the move, looking for "values". He disappears on foot, reappears months later on a bicycle. He goes down to the general store for groceries and is next heard of two years later living in another county.

Rich has been among the poorest of the poor most of his life. "I ain't proud to be poor," he says, "but I ain't too poor to be proud. And I'm not too poor to be rich in values Music is in everything you see and hear. Railroad, now that's music, isn't it? And church, that's music too, isn't it? And if you come right down to it, music is church too. Some folks, now, they won't sing no sinful songs. The way I see it, if a song is in you you got to sing it, and it's just another aspect of the Holy Spirit. When life is big, music is big." When Rich Amerson sings songs, secular or religious, or tells of his adventures, or dramatizes episodes of the life of Brer Rabbit, he projects not as a public "entertainer" but as an interpreter and message bearer. Sometimes he plays the buffoon -- to disarm and captivate his audience. Then, as likely as not, he gives them some "values". His sister Earthy Anne says: "Bud ain't much but breath and britches, but he sure can sing."



-- RICH AMERSON

Some examples of Rich Amerson's singing and story-telling are heard in Vols. I and II of this series of Alabama recordings. They include "Black Woman", a truly extraordinary field Blues; "Brer Rabbit and the Alligator"; "Rock Chariot"; and "Jonah". This volume and the succeeding one are devoted exclusively to Rich Amerson and his sister Earthy Anne Coleman. Earthy Anne, also heard in Vols. I and II, is two years older than Rich. She says she got her name because she was "so long growing up from the earth." But Rich says that the two children that came before her died at birth, and that his mother was advised to name the next baby after the earth. "When Annie came, my mother named her Earthy, and she survived."

SIDE I, Band 1: RAILROAD

I want to see my wife and children. Bim!
Oh yes I do, do, buddy buddy yes I do.
Captain Walker, where in the world did you come from? Bim!
When did you come here, here, buddy when did you come here?
Captain send me down a cool drink of water. Bim!
Just to heal my side, side, buddy just to heal my side.
Evalina, when you going to tell me what I asked you? Bim!
I don't know, know, know, buddy buddy I don't know.
Captain I want to go back east Colorado. Bim!
But they don't 'llow me, me, buddy buddy don't 'llow me.
Mattie Campbell, when you coming back over? Bim!
Mattie Campbell, when you coming back over? Bim!
I don't know, know, know, buddy buddy I don't know.

All right, Captain want to line track. Hoh!
Hold 'em right there! Get you six bars!

Put two bars on this side over here! All right...shake it east! All right, Rich Amerson call the track!

Oh, the Captain can't read, the Captain can't write,
Captain can't tell you when the track's lined right.
Mobile, Alabama. Bim!
Dattle datta datta...etc.
Mobile, Alabama. Bim!
Dattle datta datta...etc.

Oh ..move it, give me j'int ahead, j'ine 'em back behind the j'int ahead! Set two bars in there and hold it east! Three bars, shake it west! Oh, set it down boys, call it!

Woh, eat 'em up whiskers, one-eyed shave,
Eat 'em up by the light (.....) day.
Big boy, let's line it. Bam!
Dattle dattle...etc.
Big boy, let's move it. Bam!
Dattle dattle...etc.
Big boy, shake it over. Bim!
Dattle dattle...etc.

Oh, j'ine ahead, j'int back, ahead of the j'int ahead! All right, set 'em down and shake 'em west! Woh, set 'em down boys!

Woh, Captain when you get your section, want to be your straw,
Git your daughter, be your son-in-law..
Big boy, line it over. Bam!
Dattle dattle...etc.
Big boy, for the Captain. Bam!
Dattle dattle...etc.
Mobile, Alabama. Bim!
Dattle dattle...etc.
Mobile, Alabama.
Dattle dattle...etc.

Let 'em line the tracks up for the Captain.
That's railroad.

SIDE I, Band 2: TEXAS SANDSTORM

I was coming through Texas, and I heard a roaring coming. And I discovered to people, "What is that roaring?" They said, "One of these sandstorms." I jumped on my horse, and put him at a high speed, and run him about two miles, directly, as hard as he could go. And I saw the wind was going to overtake me. And I said 'taint no need of my getting destroyed, 'cause I got a storm pit right here in my mouth. I run that horse, and just ahead of me I had a hundred head of cows (figuring to be?) destroyed in the wind. I took that horse and hovered all that hundred head of them cows, and I run them in this hollow teeth I had in my mouth. And I didn't want to leave the horse and the saddle out there, and I snatched the saddle off the horse and run him in there, and I chunked the saddle in there and I jumped in my black self. And I stayed in that hollow teeth until the storm over with. And I taken that teeth then when the storm over with, and I spit enough posts out to put posts around ten acres of ground to wire my place in. And I taken the cow, one cow then, and skinned it and made shoes from number eight to number ten, enough for ten children. And I taken one of my shoes now and lived in it ten years for a house, a building. And I taken the horse' hoofs, listen, just the horse' hoof itself, you understand, and I farmed in it for my land, see. And I taken the horse's eye, understand, and I hung it up in the house and I used it for ten years for an electric light (.....) like that. And I took the holes, you know, where I get the eyes out of the head, and put it down and used it for my well. And that's why that's for the next twenty years me and my peoples done very well. And ever since that I been rich ever since on that farm.

SIDE I, Band 3: JOHN HENRY

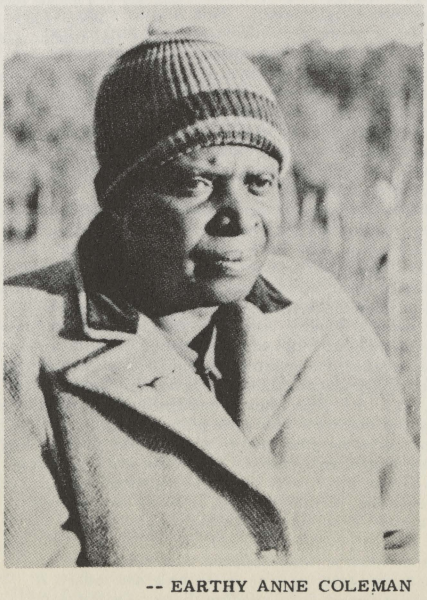
John Henry said to the Captain
That a man is not but a man.
Said before I let the stream drill beat me down
I'll hammer my fool self to death
I'll hammer my fool self to death.

John Henry had a little woman,
Well the dress she wore it's a-red like blood,
And the shoes she wore, it's a-red,
Well the hat she had on, it's a-red,
That woman's eyes they turned red with blood.
Well she come a'screamin' and a-cryin' that day,
Come a-walkin' down that railroad track.
The Captain supplied to the woman,
Said tell me woman, what's troublin' your mind.
Says I'm goin' where my man fell dead,
Says I'm goin' where my man fell dead,
Says I'm goin' where my man fell dead,
Says I'm goin' where my man fell dead.
He done hammered his fool self to death,
He done hammered his fool self to death.

John Henry had another woman,
Well her name was Pearly Anne.
Well Pearly Anne she heard about this man's death,
Well what you reckon she said?
Said before I stand to see my man go down,
Says give me a ten-pound hammer,
Goin' to hook it onto the right of my arm
Goin' to bring me a nine-pound hammer,
Goin' to hitch it onto the left of my arm.
Before I stand to see my man go down,
I'll go down 'tween-a them mountains,
And before I stand to see (my) man go down,
I'll hammer just like a man,
I'm goin' to hammer just like a man,
I'm goin' to hammer just like a man,
I'm goin' to hammer just like a man
I'm goin' to whup-a this mountain down,
I'm goin' to whup-a this mountain down.
'E says I'll hammer my fool self to death,
I'll hammer my fool self to death.

John Henry had a little baby boy,
You could tote it in the pa'm o' your hand.
Well every time that baby cried,
He looked in his mother's face.
Well his mother looked down at her baby's face,
Said tell me son what you worryin' about?
The last lovin' words she ever heard the boy said,
Mamma I want to make a railroad man,
Mamma I want to make a railroad man.
I'm goin' to die like Papa died,
I'm goin' to die like Papa died.
Son, Papa was a steel-drivin' man,
Son, Papa was a steel-drivin' man
But he hammered his fool self to death,
But he hammered his fool self to death.

John Henry had another little baby boy,
He was lyin' in the cradle kickin' and cryin',
Every time Mamma rocked the cradle bump-de-bump-a-lump,
I want to make a railroad man,
Say I want to make a railroad man.
Goin' to die like Papa died,
I want to die like Papa died.



-- EARTHY ANNE COLEMAN

Son your Daddy was a steel-drivin' man,
Your Daddy was a steel-drivin' man.
But he hammered his fool self to death,
But he hammered his fool self to death.

When Henry was 'tween them mountains
The Captain saw him goin' down.
He supplied to Henry one day,
Tried to pacify his mind,
Says Henry you knows you's a natural man.
Well what you reckon he said?
Says the steam drill drive one hammer by steam,
Says the steam drill drive one by air.
How in the world you expect to beat steam down?
He says how in the world you expect to beat air down?
Henry supplied to the Captain that day,
Steam is steam, I know air is air,
Before I let the steam drill beat me down,
Say I'll die with these hammers in my hand,
I'm goin' to die with these hammers in my hand.
I'm goin' to hammer my fool self to death,
I'm goin' to hammer my fool self to death.

When Henry was 'tween them mountains,
His wife couldn't hear him cryin'.
When she went out 'tween them mountains,
Tried to git him to lay the irons down.
He supplied to his wife that day,
Said my knee bones begin to grow cold.
Said the grip of my hand's givin' out.
My eyes begin to leak water.
Say before I lay these hammers down,
I'll die with these hammers in my hand,
I'm goin' to die with these hammers in my hand.

Take John Henry to the cemetery,
Lay him in his lonesome grave.
While she walked up there to the foot of the grave,
Cast her eyes in her husband's face,
Come a-screamin' and a-cryin' that day.
Preacher looked around in the woman's face,
Tell me woman what you screamin' about?
Last lovin' words that she supplied to him,
'Taint but the one thing troublin' my mind,
That certainly was a true man to me,
That certainly was a true man to me.
But he hammered his fool self to death,
He hammered his fool self to death.

John Henry's wife was sittin' down one day,
Just about the hour of sun,
Come a-screamin' and cryin'.
Papa said, Daughter what's troublin' your mind?
I got three little children here,
Who goin' to help me carry 'em along?
Who goin' to shoe my children's feet?
Who goin' to glove my children's hand?
Who goin' to shoe my lovin' feet?
Who goin' to glove my lovin' hand?
Papa looked around in his daughter's face,
Tried to pacify his daughter's mind.
Daughter I'll shoe your lovin' feet,
Daughter I'll shoe your children's feet,
Daughter I'll glove your children's feet (sic).
Brother he looked in his sister's face,
Tried to pacify his sister's mind,
Sister I'll kiss your rosy cheeks.
But you can't be my lovin' man,
Brother, can't be my lovin' man.
Papa can't be my lovin' man,
Papa can't be my lovin' man.
'Cause you can't file the whole deal down,
Brother can't file the whole deal down,
Papa can't file the whole deal down,
Papa can't file the whole deal down.

That's all of John Henry from the mountains, directly.

SIDE I, Band 4: CHICAGO AND ROME

Some words I want to talk about...speakin' here... does anybody understand...the kick of a cow (....) burned up Chicago and the cackle of the geese saved the city of Rome? One of 'em is a (.....), the other is a sideway word directly, though it is a city, it is made up as a city, the other is made up in the Bible.

Two sides to it here now, we'll take the city. Then after I make this goin' to make it plain. The cackle of the geese...The kick of a cow burned up the city of Chicago...that's a city, ain't it? And the cackle of the geese saved the city of Rome. You hear me talkin' to you here,

black man, don't you? Now listen...I want to make that plain, don't I.. Chicago has been a fine city, (.....) all over, just like sheep's wool. And they wasn't 'llowed to drop a match nowhere. And there was a woman had a gentle cow, known to not kick, and they was in a hurry to fix they husband's breakfast, to milk, and sot the lamp at the back of her heels to milk two teats, and the cow kicked the lamp over, and it burned up the whole city, and it exploded. That's why I meant the kick of a cow burned up Chicago.

I said the cackle of the geese saved the whole city of Rome. The city of Rome was full of boy children. And it come the (.....) to destroy them boy children, wasn't it? And it was a lake down there just before they got a mile or so of the city. And the mens who have the guns to destroy 'em come at four o'clock at that lake and some geese was come up in front of them and cackle, and they thought it was a pair of angels from Christ that wanted them to not do it, (.....). And the cackle of the geese saved the city of Rome, didn't it? Directly.

SIDE I, Band 5: CHALLENGE TO THE DOCTOR

I learned there was a whole lot to bein' ugly. But I offered eighteen dollars to change my countenance (?) and be pretty. And we got a doctor come in this state -- in Mississippi state -- about fifteen years ago, I've heard him called Dr. Readys. You've heard of him, didn't you? Says he could cure anything that a man wasn't born with. Well I liked that better than anything I did directly on earth as ever I heard. And when I heard of him I like to shouted. And I supplied to my sisters, thank God, you always been better lookin' than I am, but I'm goin' to be the best lookin' man now, because I can pay eighteen dollars and get back like I have been born.

She supplied, Bud, you was the prettiest baby of all of Mamma's children. And I says now I got five sisters livin' and I'm uglier than all of 'em, and I'm goin' now to see about it. So a car full of we men's got (...) and we went down to the (.....) in Mississippi, we got in the car and we driv' up to Dr. Ready's office, where I got that paper from.

And we lined up and walked up to that gentleman. When he got through with everybody, doctorin' on 'em, she (sic) says, now Rich Amerson, number one, walk up and give me your complaint here. Says my complaint is, Doctor, what I'm here, I want to know I say my mother mothered fifteen children, and I was the prettiest baby that's born, prettier than all the children. And I want to know now, since then I'm the ugliest thing in the bunch, since I was born pretty. Say, I want to know, can you cure it and get me back pretty like I was, that's a sick patient.

The answer he supplied to me, I'm not God. Well I says you... I been through your paper, say you can cure what a man wasn't born with. I say by that you can cure me, listen, back prettier, like I was. (.....) Doctor, said come out of the office over here by your paper. And I said, another thing, say I'm now (.....) undone sinner. I says I'm sick. I want to know, listen, can you give me advice in here (..... .....) if you can cure this beauty face and make it look beauty, say can you make the soul beauty, say can you give me a little taste of medicine here will cure this sinsick pain...and then let me be born again, and then I'm pretty again again. And he ordered me out of his office, says I'm not God. Say (.....) listen, don't make the express that you can cure what a man wasn't born with. That's directly, he says I'll give you... Say who you think, now, the fool is, me or you? I said me. He said I'm the fool, and I give it to you. And he shook hands and I walked out.

SIDE I, Band 6: DRAFT BOARD

Rich Amerson here tells of when he was called up for military service during World War I. First, he recalls that he was turned down, and then spells out how it happened. They ask him questions such as "what day" he was born, to which he answers that he doesn't know whether it was day or night. The examiners give him pictures with missing parts to fill in. He gets a rabbit without a head and with three missing legs and is told to complete the picture. Rich says he "marked that paper till it got black, and tore it up." He is asked to describe what is meant by military service, and he replies "eatin'". He is finally given a physical test. He and his buddy are told to run. When his friend falls down from exhaustion, Rich falls down too. When an army officer rides up on a white horse with a "forty-five and a blackjack," Rich is suddenly "cured". This is one of Rich's "true" stories -- based in fact but embellished with apocryphal conversations and buffoonery.

SIDE I, Band 7: RIVER, CREEK, SUN, MOON

The river's all muddy
And the creek gone dry.
If it wasn't for the woman
The men would all die.

What you reckon....Talk black, Richard, talk. Somebody tell me whether I'm right or wrong. Don't want to tell you my black self. I said the river's all muddy, if the creek goes dry, if it wasn't for the women the men would all die. God sends sunshine, the devil sends rain. If it didn't never rain three hundred and sixty-five days the sun would set the world afire. And if the moon didn't never change, that's the woman didn't rain, it wouldn't be no water in the creeks and neither the rivers, would it, and the men would all die. That's what I'm talkin' about. The moon's a woman and the sun's a man. Glory halleluja, that's directly.

(This appears to be a very old riddle, with the sun represented as a male and the moon as a female who replenishes the water of the rivers. The metaphor becomes somewhat confused and complicated by the insertion of "God sends sunshine, the devil sends rain"; this may be an interpolation from still another archaic tale or riddle.)

SIDE II, Band 1: THE CHAMPION

This is a story about slavery days, when two slave owners matched their champion fighters and wagered money on the outcome. The story begins:

The way it was, old Master went out and bought him five hundred Negroes, on this place, and the other Captain over here bought him five hundred Negroes. And buying the five hundred Negroes they had...this Master had a big Negro in there he said was stouter than any Negro that ever he bought amongst that five hundred. And he's the champion of that bunch. This Master right across the fence on the next plantation told him he had one there, listen, was stouter than that one he had there. Well, he says, the one I got will whip that one you got. Well, he said I'll bet you one thousand dollars that mine, listen, will whip that one you got, or else take his nerve so he won't fight. He said, well I'll bet you, understand, this hand of mine will fight this one and whip him or else I'll bet you five hundred dollars that when he get there he won't fight him. Says when we going to meet? He says well Friday, says let's meet 'em and let 'em fight. Say, you have all your peoples on the place to meet 'em to fight, and I'm going to have all of mine to be there. On that Friday...just before that Friday, next day, this Negro said I don't believe I can whip this other champion over yonder, he says, but I can fix it so you'll win the five hundred dollars if not the thousand (.....). This Negro come down there says, Just let me know where we going to fight at. He said, give me your shovel and give me your ax. This Negro went down in the woods and dug him up a root of a ... by the root...a water oak he could tote, a common tree. And he took a mule and toted it up there and drug it up to a hole....

In summary, what happens then is that the champion sets the tree in the hole and makes it look as though it is growing there. On the day of the fight he has himself tied to the end of a "grass line" with a weak spot in it. His master has him brought out and tied to the newly planted water oak by the other end of the line. When the neighboring slave owner comes with his fighter, the slave asks why the other champion is tied to the tree. The reply is to the effect that the champion is so dangerous he has to be tied up when he's angry. Then follows a scene of the champion tugging at the rope as though he were impatient to get at his opponent. The water oak begins to tip over, and the neighbor's fighter becomes terrified. He says to his master, "death ain't but death, I'd rather for you to get a gun and shoot me down if I've got to fight the fellow that's tied to the tree." Reluctantly he agrees to go on with the fight. But when the tied champion tugs again and the tree leans further and further, the neighbor's fighter and his friends take to their heels ("sold out"). The neighboring slave owner pays the five hundred dollars because his man was afraid to fight.

SIDE II, Band 2: BRER RABBIT TALES

One tale of this cycle of Brer Rabbit stories is to be found in Vol. I of this series. As noted in connection with that tale, Brer Rabbit stories are not designed for reading, but for oral delivery. Rarely are they delivered twice in exactly the same fashion. The story-teller brings to them his own embellishments, injects new motifs, dramatizes, and impersonates the characters as he sees fit. Rarely, too, is one of these tales told by itself. They are thought of as a series of adventures, and one naturally leads to another, so that the story session goes on until the audience or the narrator has enough. The examples recorded here, along with "Brer Rabbit and the Alligators" in Vol. I, were part of a single story session.

RABBIT IN THE HOLLOW TREE. The fox holes Brer Rabbit up in a hollow tree. Every time the fox tries to get Brer Rabbit, Brer Rabbit throws trash down in his eyes. Brer Bullfrog watches, and suggests that Brer Fox go and get a forked stick and "twist him out of there." Fox follows the suggestion, gets a stick and twists and twists, but Brer Rabbit holds out. Bullfrog suggests Fox go and get his ax and cut the tree down, and split it open. He agrees to watch the tree for Brer Fox until Brer Fox returns with the ax. "I'll charge you five dollars," Brer Bullfrog says, "and I guarantee you he'll be there when you get there." He demands the money in advance and receives it, and Brer Fox goes for the ax. When the fox is gone, Brer Rabbit cuts himself a plug of tobacco and chews it, and spits the juice in the bullfrog's eyes. Brer Bullfrog hollers "Look!" and jumps in the water. Brer Rabbit escapes. When Brer Bullfrog has washed his eyes out he hops back and continues to watch the empty tree. Brer Fox returns and cuts the tree down, splits it open and says, "I don't see Brer Rabbit, but I see his hair."

BROTHER HAWK, BROTHER BUZZARD AND BROTHER RABBIT. Hawk soars in the air and sees Brother Buzzard sitting below on the ground looking very miserable. Hawk asks him what he's waiting for, and the buzzard says he's waiting on the salvation of the Lord to feed him. Hawk derides him, says there's no use waiting on the salvation of the Lord. Tells him to watch how to get something to eat. Hawk dives after Brer Rabbit. Just as he's about to sieze him, rabbit ducks into a hollow stump and the hawk breaks his neck. Seeing the dead hawk, the buzzard says, "Thank you Lord, you answered my prayers. Quick as Brother hawk stinks a little and gets kind of seasoned I'll go down on him." And the rabbit hollers: "Come and get him, me and God will feed you."

BROTHER TERRAPIN, SLOW TRAIN TO ARKANSAS. This is the familiar story of the race between turtle and rabbit. Brer Terrapin challenges Brer Rabbit to a race, to the creek and back. Terrapin gets another terrapin to sit one mile from the creek, another at the creek itself. When Brer Rabbit gets a mile from the creek he sees Brer Terrapin there. When he

gets to the creek he sees Terrapin there. Coming back he sees the terrapin again one mile from the creek, and arriving back at the starting place he sees him waiting. "He like to run the rabbit to death, made him run six miles, three going and three coming, and the terrapin ain't moved."

BRER RABBIT AND BLACKSNAKE. Brother Rabbit is on the way to visit the girl he is courting when he sees the blacksnake lying on the ground. It is a cold morning, and blacksnake is too cold to move. The rabbit picks up the blacksnake and ties him around his neck for a necktie. When he gets to his girl's house, they sit in front of the fire, which thaws out the snake. The snake begins to squeeze. Rabbit says to his girl, "Pass my hat, I'm on some business, I got to go." He leaves the house, tells the snake he is choking him. Snake says he's hungry and is going to eat the rabbit. Brer rabbit pretends to be very concerned with Brother Blacksnake's comfort, suggests he carry him home before the eating begins, so he won't have to crawl home on a full stomach. He induces the snake to back into his hole and open his mouth. Rabbit throws sand in his eyes and runs off.

RABBIT, FOX AND THE RAIL FENCE. Fox has Brer Rabbit tied up for "eatin' up his young ones." As they are about to go over a rail fence, Brer Rabbit says he can go between the rails and does so. Invites the fox to come through the same way, but the hole is a little small for Brer Fox. So the rabbit raises one of the rails for him. Then he induces the fox to stick his head through by pretending to see a pretty girl. Then he lets down on the rail, and leaves the fox there "with his tongue hanging out, choked 'bout to death, gaggin' and hollerin' "

RABBIT AND BRIAR PATCH. The familiar incident of fox getting rid of rabbit by throwing him in the briar patch.

SIDE II, Band 3: SERMONIZING

What I want to know from you, Sister .... can you think of anything you done in your weaker days that would send you to hell? Say yes...say no. It ain't nothin' that you ever done, listen, when you in your weaker days would send you to hell. Well, it's made plain that it ain't made plain here (? ain't done nothin', then, to send you to hell, ain't that funny? Excuse me, but do you understand that? Want me to make it plain? It isn't nothin' to the Ninth Commandment, is there? There's my fine house there. Got a couple thousand dollars here. Couple thousand here, couple thousand there, couple thousand there, nine thousand, a fine house. See? What'd you rather have, listen, nine thousand, or just this ten thousand here and throw the nine away? Rather have the ten? That's how to fill all these nine commandments in the word here, and then go right over here to Jesus, understand, and fill this Tenth Commandment and go ahead on to heaven. You goin' to hell because you ain't done nothin' right here (...) Make the world richer than this one, and you ain't done nothin' for your soul right here in this Ten, and that's the reason you're goin' to hell, because you ain't done nothin'...for yourself, God and your soul. Well, that's what you go to hell (for), 'cause you ain't done nothin'. Worked in the vineyards here, this Tenth what you want to work on. And you goin' to leave this Ninth here all the profit, ain't you? What you want to do so for your soul is in this Tenth here. One prayer save you right here. I don't care how many times you shoot at a bird, one shot will kill him if you hit him right place, ain't it? Well now, a sinner's soul sittin' in the four fires. There's a fire right here and a fire right here and a fire there and a fire there, and long as you jump from four corners over this four fires, there's a great big fire in the center. Well now you jump in this fire and you ain't saved, you jump over here and you ain't saved, you jump over here and you ain't saved. And when you give up and jump in the big fire, say (.....), God knocks it right out of you, you saved. And that's what I'm talkin about right there, and that's directly again. I'm not preachin', I'm teachin'. Etc.

VOL. IV, RICH AMERSON, II

SIDE I, Band 1: ANIMALS IN CHURCH. A fragment of an Amerson sermon.

When you holler, "we got everything in churches" ... in our church I don't know (.....)...We got some dogs in there. We got hogs in there. We got cows a-lowin' in there. We got dogs a-barkin'. You want to hear the voice of what I mean of that? Listen right close. When you walk into church, if your shoes look bad you're goin' to hear a Negro say, "Umn!" Wasn't that a hog grunt? That grunt like a hog, didn't it? Look at her shoes on. And if you don't mind, you hear somebody way over there, "Aa-kaa-kaa-kaa-kaa-kaa-kaa!" Didn't that cackle like a hen? I said they had chickens there, didn't they? Yes sir. After while you goin' to hear sounds like dogs growlin' in there, didn't they? Your preacher goin' to holler, "hey-ey-ey-ah," then he go to say, "Yah-ah-ah." Ain't that a dog growlin'? (.....) isn't it? That's a dog, ain't it? Now...we got a ball game, somebody hollerin' in there, after a while a sister jump up and shoutin there, "Hey-ey-ey!" Isn't that just like the squall of a ball game? Etc.

SIDE I, Band 2: KING DAVID

You want to hear that Job one time? Or you'd like to hear King David Play On Your Harp? King David, who was the fellow that killed Goliath, you know, with the thunderbolt. And then he shout for joy. That King David mighty pretty, better let me pull that down...

King David was
Good Lord,
That Shepherd boy,
Good Lord,
Didn't he kill Goliath,
Good Lord,
And he shout for joy.
Good Lord,
Well the tallest tree
Good Lord
In paradise,
Good Lord,
Them Christians call it
Good Lord,
Their tree of life
Good Lord.

Little David play on your harp,
Hallelu, hallelu,
Little David play on your harp,
Hallelu.
Didn't you promise to play on your harp,
Hallelu, hallelu,
Didn't you promise to play on your harp,
Hallelu.

Just watch (?) the sun,
Good Lord,
How steady she run.
Good Lord,
Don't mind, she catch you,
Good Lord,
With your works undone.
Good Lord,

Little David play on your harp...etc.

You got a true way to find
Good Lord,
Mister hypocrite out.
Good Lord,
At the first thing gwine
Good Lord,
To the church and shout
Good Lord.
You goin' to meet Mr. Hyprocrite
Good Lord,
Comin' along the street,
Good Lord,
First thing he show you
Good Lord,
His tongue in his teeth.
Good Lord

Little David play on your harp...etc.

Just as soon as you cease
Good Lord,
Children, from your sins,
Good Lord,
This-a train will start
Good Lord,
To take you in.
Good Lord,
Well way down yonder
Good Lord,
By Jordan Stream
Good Lord,
You can hear God's children
Good Lord,
Tryin' to be redeemed.
Good Lord,
Ain't Jordan wide,
Good Lord,
Old Jordan wide,
Good Lord,
Well none don't cross,
Good Lord,
But the sanctified.
Good Lord

Little David, play....etc.

Sister Mary goin' to heaven,
Good Lord,
On the springs (?) of the sun.
Good Lord,
When Mary got to heaven,
Good Lord,
..... was done.
Good Lord,
Just talk about me,
Good Lord,
Just as much as you please,
Good Lord,
But the more you talks
Good Lord,
I'm goin' to bend my knees.
Good Lord.

Little David, play...etc.

Ever since my soul
Good Lord,
Children, been set free,
Good Lord,
.....,
Good Lord,
At the root of the tree.
Good Lord,
Ain't Satan just like
Good Lord,
A snake in the grass,
Good Lord,
He's always walkin',
Good Lord,
In a Christian's path.
Good Lord,
Old Satan got on
Good Lord,
Them iron shoes.
Good Lord,
It's you better mind,
Good Lord,
Don't he step 'em on you.
Good Lord.

Little David, play...etc.

That's King David, the shepherd boy.

SIDE I, Band 3: ISRAELITES SHOUTING

I want to give 'em just a little of The Israelites
A-Shoutin' in the Heaven ... You don't mind?

Oh I wonder where my sister
She is gone away to stay.
She is hidden behind God's altar,
She'll be gone till judgement day.

One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the
One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the
One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the
One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Let's groan, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Let's groan, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Umn-hmn, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Umn-hmn, the Israelites shoutin' in the

Oh I wonder where's my sister
She's gone away to stay.
Got hidden behind God's altar,
'E'll be gone till judgement day.

Goodbye, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Goodbye, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
Goodbye, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
Goodbye, the Israelites shoutin' in the
This day, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
This day, the Israelites shoutin' in the

Oh death called iron cinder (?),
Death called iron grave (?),
Death called iron band (?),
'Cause 'e (. . . . . .)
Goin' home to the promise land.

Farewell, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
Farewell, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
Umn-hmn, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
Umn-hmn, the Israelites shoutin' in the

Oh I wonder where's my father
He's gone away to stay.
He left his church that mornin',
And now he can't be found.

Goodbye, the Israelites
Goodbye, the Israelites shoutin' in
Goodbye, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
Goodbye, the Israelites shoutin' in the

Well, I wonder where's my mother,
She's gone away to stay.
She's hidden behind God's altar,
She'll be gone till judgement day.

One born, the Israelites (shoutin') in the Heaven,
One born, the Israelites shoutin' in
One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven,
One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Now let's groan, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
Let's groan, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Umn-hmn, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Umn-hmn, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Bless God then, the Israelites shoutin' in the
Umn-hmn, the Israelites shoutin' in the

Well, I wonder where's my Annie,
She's gone away to stay.
She's hidden behind God's altar,
Be gone till judgement day.

One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the
One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the Heaven
One born, the Israelites shoutin' in the

God knows I am a Christian,
God knows I'm not ashamed,
Well the Holy Ghost is my witness,
The angels done signed my name.

Etc., etc.

That's a merciful song, you see. That's the Israelites.

SIDE I, Band 4: DIDN'T YOU HEAR

What I'm talkin' now, we goin' to hear, listen...

Didn't you hear my Lord when he called?
Yes I heard my Lord when he called.
Didn't you hear my Lord when he called?
Yes I hear my Lord call.
Didn't you hear my Lord when he called?
Yes I heard my Lord call.
My Lord callin' in my soul. (4)

Didn't you hear them angels moan? } 2
Yes I heard the angels moan.
Angels moanin' in my soul. (4)

Didn't you hear them turtle-doves* moan? } 2
Yes I heard the turtle-doves moan.
Didn't you hear the heaven bells ring?
Yes I heard the heaven bells ring.
The turtle-doves moanin' my soul, (6)
The angels moanin' my soul. (2)

* Pronounced turkle-dove.

Didn't you hear them harp when it blowed?
Yes I heard the harp when it blowed.
Didn't you hear them ravens cryin'?
Yes I heard the raven cryin'.
Didn't you hear that horn when it blowed?
Yes I heard the horn when it blowed.
Didn't you hear my Lord callin'?
Yes I hear my Lord call.
The turtle-dove moanin' my soul, (4)
The harp is blowin' my soul, (2)
My Lord callin' my soul. (2)

Didn't you hear that thunder roll?
Yes I heard the thunder roll.
Didn't you see the lightnin' flashin'?
Yes I see the lightnin' flash.

Didn't you hear them saints when they singin'?
Yes I hear the saints when they sing.
Didn't you hear that brother pray?
Yes I hear the brother pray.
Couldn't you hear them sisters shoutin'?
Yes I heard the sisters shout.
Didn't you hear them preachers preachin'?
Yes I heard the preachers preach.
Preachers preachin' my soul, (2)
Sisters shoutin' my soul, (2)
Thunder rollin' my soul. (2)

Didn't you hear them organ playin'?
Yes I heard the organ playin'.
Didn't you hear them horns blowin'?
Yes I heard the horn when it blowed.
Didn't you hear them saints singin'?
Yes I heard the saints all singin'
Saints all singin' my soul. (2)

SIDE I, Band 5: WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE MOANING

When you feel like moanin',
It ain't nothin' but love.
When you feel like moanin',
That ain't nothin' but love.
It must be the Holy Ghost
Comin' down from above.
When you hear me prayin',
That ain't nothin' but love.
When you hear me prayin',
It ain't nothin' but love.
If you hear me prayin',
That ain't nothin' but love.
That must be the Holy Ghost
Comin' down from above.
Do you love everybody,
Taint nothin' but love.
When you love everybody,
Taint nothin' but love.
That must be the Holy Ghost
Comin' down from above.
When you feel like groanin', } 3
It ain't nothin' but love. }
Children, that must be the Holy Ghost
Comin' down from above.
Do you love your preacher,
Taint nothin' but love.
When you love your preacher, } 2
It ain't nothin' but love. }
That must be the Holy Ghost
Comin' down from above.

SIDE I, Band 6: DEATH HAVE MERCY

Once it was a man (who was) wicked. Death come in his room. Well, he had been promising and promising he was going to pray. But he had put it off too late.....I believe I'll sing about that man, just a few verses...

Oh Death have mercy, }
Oh oh Death have mercy, } 2
Oh oh Death just spare me over another year. }
(. . . . . .) sin
Death don't cut me down so soon,
A right young flower just in my bloom, Lord,
Uh (death) have mercy,
Oh Death git ready,
Oh Death just spare me over another year.
Here man sit,
Hurry spirit,
Hurry down soon,
Death's here walkin' all through my room, Lord,
Oh Death have mercy,
Oh Death get ready,
Oh Death just spare me over another year.
Hear Death say
Man oh man,
My name is Death,
(. . . . . .) like sin
Open the door of your heart,
Let Death walk in, Lord,
Uh Death have mercy,
Uh Death have mercy,
Oh Death just spare me over another year.
Here man sit
Death just spare me one more night,
I'll serve God I will serve him right, Lord,
Oh, have mercy,
Oh Death have mercy, Lord,
Oh Death just spare me over another year.
Here man sit
Ashes to ashes,
Dust to dust,
This old soul has got the hearses first, Lord,
Uh Death have mercy,
Oh Death get ready,
Oh Death just spare me over another year.

SIDE II, Band 1: IT'S GETTING LATE IN THE EVENING. A "moan"

All right now sister. You got anything picked out? If you ain't I've got one I'll get on right away....It's (. . . . . .) all right, it's comin out directly....Yes sir, the Holy Ghost entered me I can feel it movin'....We ought to moan one moan behind some of them, oughtn't we? We'll moan one moan for the sinner man, a few verses....

Lord, it's gettin' late over in the evenin',
Lord, it's gettin' late over in the evenin',
Children, it's gettin' late over in the evenin',
Lord, it's gettin' late over in the evenin',
The sun most down.

Don't you seal up your book, John,
Don't you seal up your book, John,
Don't seal up your book, John,
Don't you seal up your book, John,
Till you can sign my name.

Spirit says seal up your book, John,
Spirit says seal up your book, John,
I want you to seal up your book, John, heaven (?),
I want you to seal up your book, John,
Don't write no more.

People, I just keep on tellin' you,
We just keep on a-tellin' you.
We just keeps on a-tellin' you,
Sinner, I just keep on a-tellin' you,
It's a God somewhere*.

Children, you can come in my home,
You can come in my home,
Lord, you can come to my home,
You can come to my home,
Lord, and you'll find-a me there**.

I'm goin' away to leave you,
I'm goin' away to leave you,
Sinner, I'm goin' away to leave you,
I'm goin' away to leave you,
And I can't stay here.

Lord, we got to make a move,
(. . .) Have mercy Jesus, mornin' (. . . .),
People, we got to make a move, move,
People, we got to make a move,
We got to make a move some day,
And we can't stay here.

Lord, we got to go to judgement,
We got to go into judgement,
People, we got to go into judgement,
We got to go into judgement,
Sister, and we can't tell when.

We got to go, folkses, and we can't tell when.
That's the moan, special moan, we all got to go,
ain't we?

* Pronounced "somewhen" because of elision with the following hum.
** Pronounced "them" because of elision with the hum.

SIDE II, Band 2: LORD I'M WAITING ON YOU.

Oh Lord, I'm waitin' on you, (3)
Can't do nothin' till the spirit comes. } 2

Down here Lord, I'm waitin' on you, (3)
Can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Groan a little groan I'm waitin' on you, (3)
Well I can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Let's pray a little prayer, I'm waitin' on you,
Pray a little prayer, I'm waitin' on you,
Pray a little prayer, I'm waitin' on you,
We can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Oh Lord, I'm waitin' on you, (3)
We can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Down here cryin', I'm waitin' on you, (3)
Well I can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Groan a groan, I'm waitin' on you,
Groan a little groan, I'm waitin' on you, (2)
Well I can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Oh Lord, I'm waitin' on you,
Oh Lord, we're waitin' on you,
Oh Lord, waitin' on you,
Well I can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Down here Lord, oh waitin' on you,
Down here Lord, it's waitin' on you,
Down here Lord, it's waitin' on you,
Well I can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Later:

Just preach a little sermon, oh waitin' on you,
Preach a little sermon whilst waitin' on you,
Preach a little sermon, I'm waitin' on you,
Well I can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Shout a little shout, oh waitin' on you (3)
Well I can't do nothin' till the spirit comes.

Etc.

An interesting aspect of this song lies in the attitude toward "arrival" of the spirit, which appears to be one of the numerous disguised African survivals associated with religious worship. In Afro-Haitian religious practice, worshippers sing and call upon the dieties to "enter" the service; the "arrival" of the spirit or spirits is signalized by a seizure or possession. This attitude of expectant waiting is characteristic of West African practices which constitute the prototype. The ecstatic seizure in various U.S. Negro cults is also regarded as the "arrival" of the "spirit" which, however, has Christian significance. The words "I can't do nothin' till the spirit comes" appear to be an explicit statement of pre-Christian religious concepts.

SIDE II, Band 3: JOB JOB

Oh Job Job, good Lord,
Tell me how you feel, good Lord,
Oh what you reckon, good Lord,
That old Job supplied, good Lord,
That I'm feelin' good, good Lord,
Oh Job Job, good Lord,
Tell me how you feel, good Lord,
That-a Job supplied, good Lord,
I'm feelin' bad, good Lord,
Well what you reckon, good Lord,
Old Job said, good Lord,
Whilst I'm feelin' bad, good Lord,
I can't sleep at night, good Lord,
I can't eat a bite, good Lord,
Said the woman I love, good Lord,
Don't treat me right, good Lord.
Said Rock Mount Zion,
Rock Mount Zion,
Oh Rock Mount Zion in that morning.
Don't you hear the train comin',
Hear the train comin',
Don't you hear the train comin' in that mornin'.

Oh Pilate's wife, good Lord,
She dreamt a dream, good Lord,
'Bout a innocent man, good Lord,
Said who want to see (?), good Lord,
Old Pilate's (.....), good Lord,
(.....) seek the man, ahuh,
Said give me water, good Lord,
I want wash my hands, good Lord,
I won't be guilty, good Lord,
'At a innocent man, Lordy,
That Judas was, ahuh,
Not a seasoned man, ahuh,
Forty piece of silver, ahuh,
Go count it out, ahuh,
Go way in the woods, ahuh,
I'm goin' suffer be hung, ahuh,
Before I be guilty, ahuh,
To this innocent man, ahuh,
Don't you want to die easy,
Don't you want to die easy,
Don't you want to die easy in that mornin'.
Don't you want to see Jesus,
Don't you want to see Jesus,
Don't you want to see Jesus in that mornin'.

Joshua was, ahuh,
Son of Nun, ahuh,
Prayed to God, ahuh,
Stop the sun, ahuh,
Lord or Lord, ahuh,
Got my war cap, ahuh,
On my head, ahuh,
Lord oh Lord, ahuh,
Got my sword, ahuh,
Good and sharp, ahuh,
Lord oh Lord, ahuh,
Got my shoes, ahuh,
Good and tight, ahuh,
Sun stopped steady, ahuh,
(.....) the light, ahuh,
(.....) the moon, ahuh,
The sun steady, ahuh,
Work was done, ahuh.
Rock Mount Zion,
Rock Mount Zion,
Oh Rock Mount Zion in that mornin'.
Children you better get ready,
You better get ready,
Oh you better get ready in that mornin'.

God send angels, ahuh,
Heaven down, umn-hmn,
Go east angel, umn-hmn,
Veil the sun, umn-hmn,
Go east angel, umn-hmn,
Veil the moon, umn-hmn,
Sail back sun, umn-hmn,
Towards the heavens, umn-hmn,
Done your duty, ahuh,
Sail back moon, umn-hmn,
Drippin' blood, umn-hmn,
Done your duty, ahuh,
Go east angel, umn-hmn,
Hold the wind, ahuh,
God this mornin' umn-hmn,
Rule and chain, ahuh,
Go north angel, umn-hmn,
Hold the wind, umn-hmn,
Don't let it move, ahuh,
God this mornin', umn-hmn,
Rule and chain, umn-hmn,
Go west angel, umn-hmn,
Don't let it move, umn-hmn.
Say Rock Mount Zion,
Rock Mount Zion,
Oh Rock Mount Zion in that mornin'.
Don't you want to die easy,
Don't you want to die easy,
Oh you want to die easy in that mornin'.

God's son Gabriel, umn-hmn,
Go down Gabriel, ahuh,
(.....) sea, ahuh,
(.....) feet, ahuh,
Water side, ahuh,
(.....) feet, ahuh,
Dry land, ahuh,
Blow loud Gabriel, ahuh,
Seven claps of thunder, umn-hmn,
Other than the one, ahuh,
Spoke to the clouds, umn-hmn,
Sail away clouds, umn-hmn,
Make up in chair, umn-hmn.
Swing low chariot,
Swing low chariot,
Oh swing low chariot in that mornin'

See God that mornin', ahuh,
(.....) the air, umn-hmn,
Feet be movin', umn-hmn,
Feet be shinin', umn-hmn,
Like polished brass, umn-hmn,
Eyes be movin', umn-hmn,
Zig-zags of lightnin', umn-hmn,
Hair be rollin', umn-hmn,
Like pillars of cloud, umn-hmn,
Hair be shinin', umn-hmn,
Like lamb's wool, ahuh,
God this mornin', umn-hmn,
Rule and chain, umn-hmn,
Over yon comes Jesus,



--NEAR EAST YORK: KEEPING TIME

Yon comes Jesus,
Oh yon comes Jesus in that mornin'.

That's the song of the Resurrection Day, directly.

(Compare with another version of the song as sung by Dock Reed and Vera Hall Ward, Vol. V, Side I, Band 6.)

SIDE II, Band 4: COME ON UP TO BRIGHT GLORY.

You don't hear me prayin' here,
You can't find me nowhere, children,
Come on up to bright glory,
I'll be waitin' up there.
I'll be waitin' up there my Lord,
I'll be waitin' up there,
Come on up to bright glory,
I'll be waitin' up there.

You can't hear me when I pray down here, Etc.
You can't hear me preach down here, Etc.
You can't hear me when I shout down here, Etc.

SIDE II, Band 5: THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST TIME.

This may be your last time, (3)
May be your last time, I don't know.
Sister, this may be your last time,
This may be your last time (2)
May be your last time, I don't know.
Talk about me much as you please,
More you talk I'll bend my knees,
May be your last time, I don't know.
Sister, this may be your last time,
This may be your last time, (2)
May be your last time, I don't know.
Way down yonder by Jordan Stream
Hear God's children tryin' to bend their knees,
May be your last time, I don't know.
This may be your last time, (3)
It may be your last time, I don't know.
Etc., then:
Meet Mr. Hypocrite on the street,
First thing he show you, his tongue in his cheek,
It may be your last time, I don't know.
Etc., then later:
Soon as you can cease from your sins,
Train goin' to stop and take you in,
Etc., then later:
Jordan deep, Jordan wide,
None don't cross but the sanctified,
Etc., then:
If you want to go to heaven when you die,
Stop your tongue from tellin' lies,
Etc., then:
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
This old soul got to (.....),
Etc., then:
One of these mornin's, nine o'clock,
This old world begin to reel and rock,
Etc., then:
Wind blow east, wind (?) blow west,
Blow like judgement day.
Many souls have never tried to pray,
Got sight of the Lord that day. Etc.

FOLKWAYS RECORDS NUMERICAL LISTING

AMERICANA 10"

FA2001 Sq. Dances, Piute Pete
FA2002 Xmas Carols, Summers
FA2003 Darling Corey, Seeger
FA2004 Take This Ham., Leadbelly 1
FA2005 Am. Fiksngs, Seegers
FA2006 Washbrd Band, Terry
FA2007 Cumberland Mt., Clayton
FA2009 Creole Songs, Van Wey
FA2010 Lonesome Valley, Seeger, others
FA2011 Dust Bowl, Guthrie
FA2013 RR Songs, Houston
FA2014 Rock Isl. Line, Leadbelly 2
FA2019 Sea & Logger Sngs, Eakin
FA2021 Seeds of Love, Summers
FA2022 Cowboy Ballads, Cisco Houston
FA2023 Solomon Valley, Jemison
FA2024 Leadbelly Legacy 3, Early years
FA2025 Ohio Valley, Buckley
FA2028 Get On Board, Folkmasters
FA2030 Brownie McGhee, Blues
FA2032 Martha's Vine Sngs,
FA2034 Easy Rider, Leadbelly 4
FA2035 Harmonica, Sonny Terry
FA2036 Mormon Songs, Hilton
FA2037 Anglo-American, Nye
FA2038 Negro Spirit, Hall, Reed
FA2039 Joe Hill Sngs., Glazer
FA2040 Smoky Mts., Lunsford
FA2041 Lady Gay, Summers
FA2042 Hard Travelin', Houston
FA2043 Sampler, Seeger
FA2044 False Lady, Summers
FA2045 Goofing-Off Suite, Seeger
FA2046 N.W. Ballads, Robertson
FA2049 Peggy Seeger, Fiksngs
FA2070 Little Fugitive, Eddie Manson
FA2080 Ottawa, Ill., Keith Clark

SONGS OF THE STATES 10'

FA2106 Mass., Clayton
FA2110 Virginia, Clayton
FA2112 N. Carolina, Moser
FA2128 Texas, Nye
FA2132 Minnesota, Bluestein
FA2134 Kansas, O'Bryant
FA2136 Kentucky, English

AMERICAN HISTORICAL # 10"

FH2151 Revolution I, House
FH2152 Revolution II, House
FH2163 War 1812 1, House
FH2164 War 1812 2, House
FH2175 Frontier, Seeger 1
FH2176 Frontier, Seeger 2
FH2187 Civil War 1, Nye
FH2188 Civil War 2, Nye
FH2189 Heritage USA 1, Morrison
FH2190 Heritage USA 2, Morrison
FH2191 Heritage Speeches 1, Kurlan
FH2192 Heritage Speeches 2, Kurlan

MUSIC U.S.A. 10"

FA2201 Cntry Dnces, Seeger, Terry
FA2202 Creole Sngs, Van Wey
FA2204 Span Sngs, of N.M., Hurd
FA2215 Penn. Dutch Sngs
FJ2290 Drums, Baby Dodds
FJ2292 Mary Lou Williams
FJ2293 Art Tatum Trio

AMERICANA 12"

FA2305 Ballads Reliques, Nye
FA2310 Anglo-Am. Ball., Clayton
FA2312 Sea Songs, Mills
FA2314 Banjo, Scruggs Style
FA2315 Stoneman Family Banjo
FA2316 Ritchie Family, doc.
FA2317 Mt. Music of Kentucky
FA2318 Mt. Music, Bluegrass
FA2319 Am. Ballads, Seeger
FA2320 Fav. Amer., Seeger
FA2321 Fav. Amer. 2, Seeger
FA2322 Fav. Amer. 3, Seeger
FA2324 Walk in Sun, Robinson
FA2326 Country Blues, Broonzy
FA2327 McGhee, Terry, Blues
FA2330 Walt Robertson
FA2333 Women's Love Songs, Marshall
FA2334 Men's Love Songs, Ross
FA2338 American Ballads, O'Bryant
FA2346 Cisco Houston, Folksongs
FA2348 Andrew Rowan Summers, Songs
FA2354 N.Y. Lumberjack, Stekert
FA2356 Old Harp Singing
FA2357 Gospel Songs, West
FA2358 Amer. Fiksng Fest., Thomas
FA2361 Hymns and Carols, Summbeis
FA2364 Unquiet Grave, Summers
FA2369 Sonny Terry, J.C., Sticks
FA2372 Fisk Jubilee Singers
FA2389 Cat Iron, Blues & Hymns
FA2393 Mickey Miller, Folksongs
FA2396 New Lost City Ramblers
FA2397 New Lost City Ramblers, V. 2
FA2407 Folksmiths
FA2409 Country Gent. (Bluegrass)
FA2412 Seeger at Carnegie, Terry
FA2416 Rolf Cahn, Calif. Concert
FA2421 Trad, Blues #1, Br. McGhee
FA2428 Ritchie, Brand Concert
FA2429 Foc'sle sngs, Clayton
FA2439 Nonesuch, Seeger, Hamilton
FA2448 Freedom Songs, B. McAdoo
FA2452 Sing with Pete Seeger
FA2453 Love Songs, Seeger
FA2454 Rainbow Quest (Seeger)
FA2461 Music New Orl. 1, St. Music
FA2462 Music New Orl. 2, Eureka Band
FA2463 Music New Orl. 3, Dance Halls
FA2464 Music New Orl. 4, Jazz Orig.
FA2465 Music New Orl. 5, Flowering
FA2476 Snooks Eaglin, Blues
FA2480 Songs Open Road, Cisco Houston
FA2481 Bound for Glory, Guthrie

TOPICAL SERIES 12"

FN2501 Gazette, Pete seeger
FN2511 Hootenanny Tonight
FN2512 Hootenanny Carnegie Hall
FN2524 Another County, Malvina Reynolds

MUSIC U.S.A. 12"

FA2601 South Jersey Band
FA2605 1-Man Band, Blackman
FA2610 Amer. Skiffle Bands
FA2650 Music from South 1
FA2651 Music from South 2
FA2652 Music from South 3
FA2653 Music from South 4
FA2654 Music from South 5
FA2655 Music from South 6
FA2656 Music from South 7
FA2657 Music from South 8
FA2658 Music from South 9
FA2659 Been Here & Gone (Music fr South 10)
FA2671 6 & 7/8 String Band

JAZZ SERIES 12"

FJ2801 Anth, 1, The South
FJ2802 Anth, 2, Blues
FJ2803 Anth, 3, New Orleans
FJ2804 Anth, 4, Jazz Singers
FJ2805 Anth, 5, Chicago 1
FJ2806 Anth, 6, Chicago 2
FJ2807 Anth, 7, New York
FJ2808 Anth, 8, Big Bands
FJ2809 Anth, 9, Piano
FJ2810 Anth, 10, Boogie, K.C.
FJ2811 Anth, 11, Addenda

AMERICANA 2-12"

FA2941 Leadbelly Legacy 1
FA2942 Leadbelly Legacy 1
FA2951 Am. Folkmusic 1
FA2952 Am. Folkmusic 2
FA2953 Am. Folkmusic 3

WORLD HISTORICAL and SPECIALTY 12"

FW3000 Canada in Story & Song, Mills 2-12"
FW3001 O'Canada, Mills
FW3002 Irish Rebellion, House
FW3006 Scottish War Ballads, Dunbar
FW3051 Israel Army Sngs., Hillel
FG3502 Recording Indians, Barbeau
FG3505 Newfoundland, Peacock
FG3508 Amer. Folksongs, John Lomax
FG3515 Folk Songs Sussex Eng.
FG3517 Scottish Folksongs, Holland
FG3518 Irish Folksongs, Holland
FG3524 Boogie Woogie, Memphis Slim
FG3526 Eliz. Cotton, Banjo-Guitar
FG3530 Indian Ragas, Balakrishna
FG3534 Am. Guitar, Badeaux
FG3535 Memphis Slim, Vol. 2
FG3538 Tambourines to Glory
FG3540 Handy Blues, Kath. Handy
FG3544 Guy Carawan Songs
FG3548 Guy Carawan II
FG3552 Guy Carawan III
FG3557 Brownie McGhee, Blues
FG3560 French Canada, Labreeque
FG3562 Jos. Lamb, Ragtime Piano
FG3564 Eng. Sngs., Shirley Collins
FG3568 Sngs. W. Pa., Richman
FG3576 Netherland Sngs., Kunst
FG3585 Blind Willie Johnson
FG3586 Big Bill Broonzy Story
FG3591 Story of Theodor Herzl

FOLKWAYS SPECIAL 12"

FT3602 Instr. of Orchestra
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FS3801 Jewish Life, documentary
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FS3845 Bahamas Music, vocal 2
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FS3857 Piano pieces, Gershwin, Kern
FS3858 Song & Dance Man, Meehan
FS3859 My True Love, vocal, sax
FS3860 Picasso Film Music
FS3861 Henry Jacob's program
FS3862 Rawhide, program 1
FS3863 Courlander's Almanac
FS3864 Seeger & Broonzy Interview
FS3865 Gregorian Chants, documentary
FS3866 W. Colesville Story
FS3870 The Veep, interview
FS3872 Rawhide, No. 2
FS3873 Rawhide, No. 3
FS3881 Nat'l Anthems 1
FS3882 Nat'l Anthems 2
FS3890 Telemann Sngs., Wolff

ETHNIC MONOGRAPH LIBRARY 12"

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FM4001 Wolf River Songs
FM4002 Songs from Aran
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FM4009 Lithuanian Songs U.S.A.
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FE4405 Folk Music of Ethiopia
FE4406 Music of Indonesia
FE4407 Folk Music of Haiti
FE4408 Folk Music of Palestine
FE4409 Folk Music of India
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FE4411 Folk Music of Spain
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FE4472 Negro Music Ala., 4
FE4473 Negro Music Ala., 5
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FE4506 Music of World's People, 3
FE4507 Music of World's People, 4
FE4510 World's Vocal Arts
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AMERICAN HISTORICAL 2-10"

FH5001 Ballads Revolution (2151 & 2152)
FH5002 Ballads War of 1812 (2163 & 2164)
FH5003 Frontier Ballads, (2175 & 2176)
FH5004 Ballads Civil War (2187 & 2188)
FH5005 Colonial Speeches (2189 & 2190)
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FH5255 Days of '49, English - Faier
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FH5281 Songs of Suffragettes, Knight
FH5285 Talking Union, Seeger
FH5323 Folk Songs Maine, E. Ives
FH5324 Missouri Fiksngs, Cansler
FH5485 Ballads Sacco-Vanzetti, Guthrie
FH5501 Untypical Politician, Speeches
FH5524 Human Rights, Mrs. Roosevelt
FD5558 New York 19, Schwartz
FD5559 Nueva York, Schwartz
FD5560 Millions of Musicians, Schwartz
FD5562 Exchange, Schwartz
FD5580 A Dog's Life, Schwartz
FD5581 Music in the Streets, Schwartz
FD5589 Gang Songs of NY
FH5710 Patriot Plan 2-12", House
FH5717 Sngs of Civil War, 2-12"
FH5723 Cowboy, Jackson 2-12"

SCIENCE SERIES 12"

FX6007 Science of Sound (2-12")
FX6100 Sounds of Frequency, Bartok
FX6101 Science in Our Lives, Calder
FX6104 Sounds of Self-Hypnosis
FX6105 Sounds of Camp, documentary
FX6120 Sounds of South Am, Rain Forest
FX6121 Sounds in the Sea
FX6122 Sounds of the American Southwest
FX6123 Vox Humana, vocal extension
FX6124 Sounds of Animals, zoo & farm
FX6125 Sounds of Sea Animals
FX6126 Sounds of Carnival, Music
FX6127 Sounds of Medicine
FX6130 Sound Patterns
FX6136 Short version of FX6007
FX6140 Sounds of Sports Car Races
FX6151 Sounds of African Home
FX6152 Sounds Steam Locomotives, 1
FX6153 Sounds Steam Locomotives, 2
FX6154 Sounds Steam Locomotives, 3
FX6155 Sounds N.Y. Central Locomotives
FX6160 Sounds of New Music
FX6166 Sounds N. Amer. Frogs
FX6170 Sound Effects, No. 1
FX6178 Insect Sounds

FX6200 Sounds of Satellites
FX6250 Sounds of Science Fiction

STEREO 12"

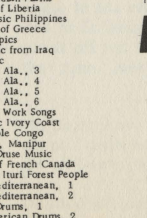
FSS6301 Highlights of Vortex

DANCES 12"

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FD5502 Folk Dances World's Peoples, 2 Europe
FD5503 Folk Dances World's Peoples, 3 Carribean and South Ammerican
FD5504 Folk Dances World's Peoples, 4 Middle East
FD5510 N. Amer. Indian Dances

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FW6805 Songs & Dances Yugoslavia
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FW6808 Calypso & Meringues
FW6809 Jewish Freilach Songs
FW6810 Argentine Folk Songs
FW6811 Haitian Folk Songs
FW6812 Chinese Classic Music
FW6814 Songs & Dances of Greece
FW6815 Songs of Mexico
FW6816 Guitar Solos, Montoya
FW6817 Scottish Bagpipe
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FW6821 Northwoods, Hemsworth
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FW6824 Gospel Songs, Bahamas
FW6825 Cantorials, D. Kusevitsky
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FW6827 Jewish Folk Songs, 2, Olf
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FW6831 Songs Newfoundland, Mills
FW6832 French Folksongs
FW6833 Creole Songs of Haiti
FW6834 Folk Music of Honduras
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FW6836 Christmas Songs of Spain
FW6837 Haitian Piano
FW6838 Dutch Folk Songs, Noorman
FW6839 Robin Hood Ballads, House
FW6840 Caribbean Dances
FW6841 Sheherazade, other Songs, Israel
FW6842 Bible Sngs., Hillel, Aviva
FW6843 German Songs, Schlamme
FW6844 Swedish, Swarin, Taube
FW6845 Xmas Songs of Portugal
FW6846 Jamaican Folk Songs, Bennett
FW6847 Songs of Israel, Hillel, Aviva
FW6848 Polish Songs, Dances
FW6853 Mexican Folk Songs
FW6856 Finnish Folk Songs
FW6857 Danish Folk Songs



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