FOLKWAYS FH 5276



Folk Songs of New York City

COMPILED AND SUNG BY JUNE LAZARE

Michael Roy - 1851

In the mid-1800's, the popular songbooks -- known as songsters -- published "The Charcoal Man" and "My Boy with the Auburn Hair." In 1856, "Michael Roy" appeared in the songster of that year, and seems to be a composite of the two earlier songs. The verses are essentially the same as "The Charcoal Man," and the chorus comes from "My Boy with the Auburn Hair" which originally read "... and his name was MacIroy."

In its composite form, "Michael Roy" enjoyed popularity over 30 years. In 1888 it appeared in a collection of songs compiled by Evert Jansen Wendell for the 22nd Harvard Club dinner at Delmonico's. It was at this time that the last verse was added, probably by Mr. Wendell.

Hicks the Pirate - 1860

In the score of years that preceded the Civil War, the usually landlocked city gangs turned their attention to the waterfronts of New York. Most of the gangs such as "The Hudson Dusters," "The Potashes," "The Gophers," and "The Daybreak Boys" operated exclusively on the East River piers, while the "Charlton Street Gang" chose the Hudson docks as their exclusive territory for robbery and murder. Indeed, so successful was this latter gang that they acquired their own sloop, flew the Jolly Rogers from the mast, and extended their activities all the way up the Hudson to Poughkeepsie, thereby really earning the name "River Pirates."

In the case of Alfred E. Hicks, the appellation "pirate" was not only undeserved, but inadvertent. Hicks, locally known as Hicksey, was a free-lance gangster with no particular interest in the waterfront. He stole wherever and whenever it was convenient.

Unfortunately for him, a fellow free-lancer drugged him one evening and dumped him onto an oyster sloop bound for Virginia. Hicks was morose when he awoke and found himself shanghaied. But, making the best of it, he murdered Captain Burr and two boys in the crew, Smith and Oliver Watts. Then he left the vessel, taking with him all its movable valuables. He was traced to a hideout where he had gone with his wife and daughter. Imprisoned and tried for the triple murder, he was convicted and sentenced to be hanged.

Public interest in the case was particularly strong, possibly because of the extremely gruesome details of the slayings. His progress from jail to the gallows on Bedloe's Island took on the aspect of a circus parade, complete with fife, and drum, and cheering crowds. Peanut vendors and lemonade stands did a brisk business around the gallows while he was hung, and a general holiday atmosphere prevailed. Soon after he was buried his body was dug up by grave robbers and sold to medical students.

Express Song - 1856

In looking through the broadsides and songsters of the 1850's, I came across at least seven dealing directly with Erastus Brooks, all highly uncomplimentary to the gentleman in question.

Brooks was editor of <u>The Express</u>, a violently pro-South, anti-Catholic newspaper. He debated widely, if not wisely, on these issues. During the Fremont-Buchanan presidency campaign of 1856, he virulently attacked Fremont for his stand against the fugitive slave law and for Free-Soil Kansas. Through the medium of his newspaper, he spread stories that Fremont was a Catholic, and illegitimate, to boot.

It was on this latter issue that this particular song was written, ridiculing Brooks. The last verse of the song refers to a debate between a Bishop Hughes and Brooks on the question of whether the Catholic Church should continue to be exempted from paying taxes on its properties.

The Two Orphans - 1876

Before the advent of multiple exits, fire laws regulating the number of exits in public buildings were non-existent. Fires were common occurrences in cities whose prime building materials were wood. Public buildings such as theatres were often the scene of spectacular fires in which scores of people were killed and maimed, often because there was only a single exit. Such was the case in the Brooklyn Theater fire of Dec. 5, 1876.

The play was "The Two Orphans," and it was playing to a packed house that evening. As the curtain rose for the last act, the dreaded cry of "Fire" created a scene of panic among the 1,200 people in the audience. The stampede for the door resulted in the death of over 350 people who were trampled and burned. Many of the victims were unrecognizable, and were buried in a mass grave in Greenwood Cemetery, where Henry Ward Beecher delivered the funeral oration.

The broadside was written by P. J. Downey and distributed by several publishers simultaneously. This particular version was collected in Texas by William A. Owens. It was sung to him by Lemuel Jeffers who had never heard of Brooklyn, and was under the impression that the fire had been set by two orphans.

The modified first and last verse was originally the chorus of the song:

"We ne'er can forget 'The Two Orphans,'
Bad luck seems to be in its wake.
It seems it were brought to our city,
The lives of our dear friends to take."

The Patriotic Diggers - 1813

At one point during the War of 1812, the British fleet lay off Brooklyn Heights. In anticipation of an imminent attack, the citizenry of the community worked together to build a breastwork along the Heights. It was on this occasion that Samuel Woodward, author of "The Old Oaken Bucket," wrote this song.

The song "caught on" and was sung for the duration of the war with other city names substituted for Brooklyn Heights.

Magistrate's Song - 1734

This song probably has the dubious distinction of being the only song ever burned at the stake. The execution took place in 1734 in New York City with



all the pomp and ceremony usually accorded human victims of such atrocities.

The events leading up to the farce are familiar to every schoolchild in this country. England appointed a governor who in turn appointed all other officials. The single newspaper in New York City supported the English policies, and the city was governed to satisfy English interests. There were many citizens who agreed with this course, and profited by it. Others, however, resenting this, wanted the right to formulate their own policies and have a voice in their own government.

When John Peter Zenger started a newspaper, these Americans subsidized this Weekly Journal in order to have the opportunity of voicing their opposition to the autocratic English rule. The first issue was printed on Nov. 5, 1733. Shortly thereafter, this song was printed on a broadside. It was promptly labeled libelous by the irate Governor Cosby. He hand-picked a jury which met on Oct. 19, 1734 to deal with the matter. They were unable to discover the printer, publisher, or author. Rather than let the matter drop, the jury ordered the song publicly burned.

Zenger was later imprisoned on seditious libel charges for articles he had printed in his newspaper. He was defended by the famous lawyer James Alexander -- who, some people believe, wrote the song -- and he was acquitted of the charges. For his part in the fight for free expression, Zenger became known as the "Father of Freedom of the Press."

Jolly Old Roger

This song was probably never sung in New York City, and is included mainly on the basis of its mention of New Amsterdam. It was collected by Eloise H. Linscott and included in her Folk Songs of Old New England. She notes that when originally sung, "the BANG" at the end of the chorus was shouted out.

The Brooklyn Strike - 1895

In 1895, when life was gay for those with means, 5,500 motormen on a Brooklyn trolley line went out on strike for 25 cents more a day. Since they were already earning from \$1.50 to \$2.00 a day, the company owners were incensed by their ingratitude and responded by importing strikebreakers from as far away as Buffalo and Syracuse. When this failed to break the strike, Brooklyn Mayor Charles A. Scheiren called in the militia. The result of this action, of course, was violence. Strikers and sympathizers were wounded and killed in furious clashes with the soldiers. The strikers eventually had to admit defeat.

The company graciously invited the men to come back to the hiring office to take their chances on getting their jobs back. Some went, and were rehired -- at the old wages. Others found jobs on the Coney Island & Brooklyn Railroad, which paid \$14.87 for a sevenday week.

The New York 'Prentice Boy

Here is an example of what was undoubtedly a fairly routine robbery account in the daily newspaper. Was

it the treachery of the girl in the case that caught the writer's interest? Or was it the apparently friendless condition of the unfortunate apprentice boy? Whatever the reason, this song was printed by J. Wrigley of 27 Chatham Street in New York City. He was a well-known publisher of broadsides, and when this one appeared, it was noted that "The New York 'Prentice" was to be sung to the air of "The Sheffield Apprentice." And so it is.

Down in Dear Old Greenwich Village - Early 1900's

When the Indians roamed the cliffs of the Hudson River, they built a small encampment and called it Sapponican. The settlers of New Amsterdam renamed it Bossen Bouwerie. When New York City was established, the homesick British renamed it Greenwich Village, and used it as a country retreat from the hot, crowded city. In time, as New York grew, Greenwich Village became a part of the city, and started to deteriorate. By the early 1900's, it was tenanted by immigrants and was known as a low-rent district.

It was this latter fact that attracted the artists of that period, and Greenwich Village became the home of such future notables as Edna St. Vincent Millay, Max Eastman, Eugene O'Neill, and many others whose names have since become bywords of American culture. They created the atmosphere and character that still distinguishes Greenwich Village, despite the present advent of high rentals and commercialization.

In the early 20th century, the villagers would often meet at Polly's restaurant on MacDougal Street for a cheap and sociable dinner. It was there that Bobby Edwards sang this song, one of many he wrote, accompanying himself on a homemade cigar box ukulele. It is amazing how the song, with a few words changed, could be the theme song of today's Greenwich Village.

Westfield Disaster - 1871

During the mid-1800's, when steamboats were racing each other up and down the Hudson River, explosions from overheated boilers were not uncommon. Such mid-river disasters always resulted in heavy casualties.

The Westfield disaster, probably caused by a faulty boiler, occurred in the slip at South Ferry, on a sultry day in July, 1871. The deck of the ferry was crowded with 250 people bound for Staten Island for a respite from the hot city.

Down in the boiler room, just under the crowded fore-deck, the fireman heard an ominous hissing. Before he could get to the boiler to investigate, it exploded, tearing a huge hole in the hull and hurling people high into the air and far into the water. Because the boat was still in the harbor, there were many sources of assistance. Even so, 40 people were killed and over 200 injured. The nearby Eastern Hotel was used as a temporary morgue, while Park Hospital on Centre Street was filled with casualties.

Despite the horror of the catastrophe, the bay was soon crowded with small boats whose enterprising owners were conducting sightseeing tours for the curious who wanted to watch for the grappling of bodies.

The song was written by A. W. Harmon who entitled it "Terrible Disaster - Boiler Explosion on Board a Staten Island Ferry Boat with Dreadful Loss of Life."

Billy Barlow - 1840

In 1847, when the population of New York City was about 500,000 people, Washington Irving described New York as "...a great crowded metropolis -- one of the most racketing cities in the world."

In this "great crowded metropolis," the Bowery was Theatre Row, and presented theatre fare ranging from grand opera to the ubiquitous minstrel show. While the area was primarily geared towards entertaining, it also served as a sounding board for songs of social and political commentary. In some of these songs, a character was introduced who commented on the events of the times. This same character continued to appear in different songs over a period of several years.

Billy Barlow is an example of such a device. He first appeared in 1840, and introduced himself with "Now you New York gentlemen how do you do," and continued with his personal wanderings and experiences. On future occasions, he reappeared in other songs with more impersonal commentaries on the times.

Billy Barlow continued to be heard right through the 1860's, and then seems to have lost his identity. The name reappeared in a children's song of entirely different character, and has also been found in a version of "Wee Cooper O' Fife," from the Adirondacks.

The Castle by the Sea - 1923

On Governor's Island, just off the coast of New York City, there stands a round, stone bastion called Castle William. Built in 1811 as a fort, it was utilized to imprison Confederate soldiers during the Civil War and was still being used as a prison in 1923. It was there that J. P. Donnelly was imprisoned following his conviction for the murder of young Moses.

Donnelly and Moses, both employees at the Sea View House Inn, had quarreled over a gambling debt, and, in the scuffle, Moses was killed. Donnelly denied hitting him but was sentenced to be hanged. His attempted escape from the ancient "Castle" was foiled when the boat that was supposed to meet him failed to arrive. He was recaptured and subsequently hanged.

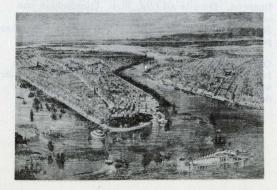
A "Lamentation for J. P. Donnelly" was written by H. J. Howard at the time of the hanging, and set to a Gaelic air. This version was collected by Charles J. Finger and printed in his Frontier Ballads in 1927.

The Three Sisters

Included in Norman Cazden's collection of nonsense songs, this song creates humor by reversing words in each stanza. A version called "Her Age It Was Red" is also found in Gilbert's Lost Chords.

Dead Rabbits Fight with the Bowery Boys - July 4, 1857

In the 1800's, the Sixth Ward of Manhattan contained some of the worst slums of the city. It was from these slums that many of the most infamous gangs developed, bearing such colorful names as the "Roach Guards," "The Plug Uglies," the "Dead Rabbits," and the "Bowery Boys." All the gangs, as





a matter of course, fought each other indiscriminately, but the latter two gangs were particularly hostile to each other and maintained a vicious feud.

The particular battle described in the song was touched off by a raid of the Dead Rabbits on the Bowery Boys clubhouse at No. 47 Bowery. The Bowery Boys successfully defended their stronghold, but, the following morning, when the Dead Rabbits wrecked their favorite hangout, The Green Dragon, the Bowery Boys came rushing furiously to battle.

The two gangs clashed head-on at Bayard St., and there followed one of the most ferocious encounters in the already turbulent history of New York City. As they fought, other gangs came rushing in to assist their allies. The melee reached such proportions that the militia was called in to assist the outnumbered police force. After two days of desperate fighting, the combined strength of the police and the militia finally quelled the conflict. After the rioters collected their dead and wounded, the inhabitants of the area crept back to rebuild their shattered homes as best they could.

The Knickerbocker Line

By the end of the 1800's, New York City was interlaced with elevated and surface lines, some of which were horse drawn. On Putnam Avenue in Brooklyn, irate residents petitioned the Mayor of Brooklyn (each Borough had its own mayor) to veto the extension of the trolley line because it disturbed the residential character of the street.

When horses were finally withdrawn from service, the rat population, who found a home in the horse stables around town, invaded the dwellings of the citizenry with such vigor as to arouse the community to violent antirat warfare.

The Knickerbocker Line is apparently a pseudonym for the New York City transportation system, as no line by that name ever existed. This song was collected by Norman Cazden in the Catskills, and published in his Abelard songbook.

The Great Police Fight - June 15, 1857

The year 1857 was a disastrous and chaotic one for New York City. Corruption in government reached new heights, and the year ended with a financial panic that resulted in disaster for banks and business houses.

Fernando Wood had been elected to his second term as Mayor of New York City by virtue of coercion and outright forceful assistance from the many gangs in the Tammany employ. The police force had become so corrupt and inefficient that the State Legislature stepped in and removed the Police Department from the control of New York City. This was done by passing a bill dissolving the Municipal Police and establishing a Metropolitan Police District which included the outlying sections of New York as well as the city proper.



Mayor Wood, fighting the will of the Legislature, refused to disband his Municipal Police, despite an order from the Supreme Court. There were now two police forces in New York City, each bitterly resenting the existence of the other. The crisis reached its climax when Mayor Wood, claiming power of appointment, named Charles Devlin to the office of Street Commissioner, for which favor Wood received \$50,000 in payment from the ambitious appointee. At the same time, Governor King had named Daniel Conover to the same post.

When Conover attempted to take office, he was thrown out bodily by members of Wood's police force. Conover immediately took out a summons against Wood. When the marshal attempted to serve it, he was thrown out too. On a second attempt, reinforced by a detachment of the Metropolitan Police, they were met by a determined force of Municipals. There ensued a battle which raged through the corridors of City Hall and spilled out into the street.

The Municipals appeared to have triumphed, having ejected the last Metropolitan from the building, when the 7th Regiment of the National Guard arrived, complete with fife, drum, and banners. The Municipals were forced to retreat and admit defeat.

Mayor Wood was arrested, but never brought to trial. Several chaotic months followed during which the gangs virtually controlled the city, for the two police forces were too busy releasing each other's prisoners, and clubbing each other, to bother maintaining law and order. The Municipals were disbanded by a final court order, and New York City settled down with its one police force.

Jim Fisk - 1872

The subtitle of this song is "He Never Went Back on the Poor." It might have been better entitled "Plaint of the Poor." Though it sings of Jim Fisk, it does so only peripherally. It is really a protest song, with Fisk, Stokes, and the murder merely as framework upon which to hang an indignation against legal injustice. In the juxtaposition of the two subjects, however, Jim Fisk, financier and finagler par excellence, becomes transformed into a public benefactor and hero.

The actual facts of the murder were the classical love triangle. Fisk, who had become exceedingly wealthy through various railroad and oil stock manipulations, came into conflict with his former friend Stokes over a woman. Helen Josephine Mansfield was Fisk's mistress until she decided that she preferred Stokes. Enraged by this desertion, Fisk had Stokes arrested on a charge of embezzling funds from their mutually controlled oil company. Stokes retaliated by having Fisk jailed for false arrest. Various financial and legal recriminations followed, which culminated in Stokes

shooting Fisk on the stairs of the Grand Central Hotel on Jan. 6, 1872. Fisk identified his murderer before dying.

Stokes was tried and imprisoned for four years. While in jail, Stokes continued to enjoy the amenities of life. His carriage was kept in a stable close by the jail, and he used it daily to ride about the city. It was this last fact which particularly enraged the public and probably resulted in the glorification of Fisk.

This particular version was collected in Pennsylvania and appeared in <u>American Murder Ballads</u> by Olive Wooley Burt.

The Shoddy Contractor - Early 1860's

During the Civil War, as in all other wars in history, certain individuals used the crisis situation to accumulate immense fortunes. One of these opportunists, satirized in song during the conflict, was the manufacturer of shoddy, inferior goods produced for army contracts.

"Shoddy" was defined "...the hideous offspring of the monster, war." From it the word "shoddyocracy" was coined, and was used to describe not only the wealthy "shoddy manufacturers," but those who amassed wealth in any disreputable way.

Mrs. Cunningham's Darling Baby - 1857

Murder cases have always held a fascination for most people, and, every now and then, one particular case will stand out from the run-of-the-mill variety. Such was the case in "The State vs. Emma Augusta Cunningham," which began on May 5, 1857, and ended on May 10, with a verdict of not guilty due to circumstantial evidence.

Public indignation at the results of the trial voiced itself in at least six songs that were written, vilifying the lady in question. There seemed to be no question at all in the minds of the writers that Mrs. Cunningham was guilty of murdering her dentist husband in order to collect a very tidy inheritance.

The facts as they appeared in the transcript of the trial were as follows: Dr. Harvey Burdell, a divorced dentist, secretly married Mrs. Cunningham, his landlady, on Oct. 28, 1856. The following month she suffered a miscarriage, giving rise to the possibility that the good doctor had been conned into a wedding he never wished for. Very shortly after the miscarriage, she seems to have taken up with a Mr. Eckel, another boarder in her house. Her relations with Mr. Eckel were, according to witnesses, quite intimate. On Jan. 30, 1857, Dr. Burdell was discovered by an errand boy, strangled and stabbed, in his home at 21 Bond St. in New York City.

Witnesses at the trial testified that Mrs. Cunningham and Eckels spent nights in each other's rooms, and that she and Burdell often had loud and violent arguments. Burdell accused her of stealing papers relating to his finances. Despite all this, Mrs. Cunningham was acquitted and she trotted off with Dr. Burdell's \$80,000, and, it is assumed, lived happily ever after, possibly with Eckels.

Oddly enough, all of the songs made reference to a false pregnancy and a (probably purchased) baby, for which I have been unable to find any supporting evidence.

FH5276

SIDE A		SIDE B	
Band 1	Michael Roy	Band 1	Westfield Disaster
Band 2	Hicks the Pirate	Band 2	Billy Barlow
Band 3	Express Song	Band 3	The Castle by the Sea (Frontiers Ballads,-Charles J. Finge)
Band 4	The Two Orphans (William A. Owens, Texas Folk Songs)	Band 4	The Three Sisters (A Book of Nonsense Songs, Norman Cazden)
Band 5	The Patriotic Diggers	Band 5	Dead Rabbits Fight with The Bowery Boys
Band 6	Magistrate's Song	Band 6	The Knickerbocker Line (The Abelard Folk Song Book, Cazden)
Band 7	Jolly Old Roger (Folk Songs of New England, Eloise H. Linscott)	Band 7	The Great Police Fight (Riot at City Hall) (J. Andrews)
Band 8	The Brooklyn Strike (Delaney #9)	Band 8	Jim Fisk
Band 9	The New York 'Prentice Boy	Band 9	The Shoddy Contractor (De Marsan)
Band 10	Down in Dear Old Greenwich Village	Band 10	Mrs. Cunningham's Darling Baby (J. Andrews)

MICHAEL ROY 1851

1. In Brooklyn City there lived a maid,
And she was known to fame.
Her mother's name was Mary Ann,
And hers was Mary Jane.
And every Saturday morning
She used to go over the river
To Fulton market where she sold eggs
And sassages, likewise liver.

For O, for O, For he was my darlin' boy, For he was the lad with the auburn hair, And his name was Michael Roy.

 She fell in love with a charcoal man, McCloskey was his name. His fighting weight was seven stone ten, And he loved sweet Mary Jane. He took her to ride in his charcoal cart On a fine St. Patrick's day, But the donkey took fright at a Jersey man And he started and ran away.

Ch.

They both did holler with all their might for the donkey for to stop
 But he overturned Mary Jane, wagon and all, right into a policy shop.
 When McCloskey saw this cruel thing his heart was moved to pity,
 So he stabbed his donkey with a piece of charcoal, and he started for Salt Lake City.

Ch.

4. Now ladies all take warning by
The fate of Mary Jane,
And never get into a charcoal cart
Unless you step out again.
The latest news from over the plain
Comes straight from Salt Lake City.
McCloskey, he has forty-five wives
And is truly an object of pity.

HICKS THE PIRATE

March 1860

- 1. A mournful tale, heartrending
 To you, kind friends, I will relate.
 The solemn truth intending,
 Of three that met a tragic fate.
 An oyster sloop was sailing
 Upon the ocean's sparkling tide.
 In the healthful breeze regaling
 She moved upon the waters wide.
- 2. But upon this oyster vessel, A pirate bold had found his way. With wicked heart, this vassal The captain and two boys did slay. He seized the gold and silver Which this poor captain had in store; His watch and clothes did pilfer, While he lay struggling in his gore.

- 3. He overboard soon threw them,
 The murdered boys and captain, too.
 The briny deep enclosed them,
 And they were quickly gone from view.
 But the eye that never slumbers
 Did follow on the murderer's track,
 And the vigilance of numbers,
 To justice brought the monster back.
- 4. In a boat he left the vessel, When he the wicked deed had done, And soon the murderous rascal Had far into the country gone. He soon was overtaken And to New York was brought again, A lonely wretch, forsaken, Who had the boys and captain slain.
- 5. By a true and faithful jury
 He was found guilty of the crime.
 Some raved and cursed like fury,
 But he had met his fate in time.
 'Twixt heaven and earth suspended,
 On Bedloe's Island Hicks was hung.
 Some thousand there attended
 To see the horrid murderer swung.

EXPRESS SONG

1856

1. Erastus Brooks of The Express
Is really nominated
For Governor of New York State.
Oh! isn't he elated?
He'll swell and strut and strut and swell,
And cut up many a caper,
And lots of dirty lyin' stuff
He'll publish in his paper.

An' a little more lyin' too, An' a little more lyin' too, An' a little more lyin' he'll be tryin', A little more lyin', too.

2. At this he's struggled long and hard And done all sorts of evil.
He sold his body to the South,
His soul unto the devil.
The Advertiser tried its hand
But couldn't hold a candle
To "Gospel Brooks" of The Express
In dealing out the scandal.

Ch.

3. Fremont's religion much concerns
This politician pious.
He swears he is a Catholic,
Does modern Ananias.
And in the face and eyes of all
The plainest contradictions
These brazen sheets reiterate
The Cook and Fulmer fictions.

Ch

4. He knows he lied within his heart, When first he penned the slander, But that old vacant squirrel hole Excites dog Noble's dander.

And though he knows there's not a man Believes him for a minute, He still keeps barking at the hole In hopes there's something in it.

Ch

The story's getting common
That our chivalrous Brooks, himself,
Is secretly a Mormon!
That he's a hundred wives at least
Kept in seclusion quiet,
That Bishop Hughes pronounced the bans.
"If false let him deny it,"

THE TWO ORPHANS

Dec. 5, 1876

- I never can forget those two orphans. Bad luck seems to dwell in their way. It seems they were sent to our city The lives of our dear ones to take.
- Oh the doors they were opened at seven And the curtains were rolled up at eight, And those that were seated were happy, Outside they were mad that were late.
- It's hark, don't you hear the cry "fire"? How dismal those bells they do sound. It's Brooklyn Theater that's burning, Alas, burning down to the ground.
- 4. The mothers were weeping and crying For the sons who had been out all night. They prayed that their souls would meet in heaven Among the innocent and bright.
- Next morning among those black ruins, Oh God, what a sight met our eyes. The dead they were lying in all shapes, Some of them you could not recognize.
- I never can forget those two orphans, Bad luck seems to dwell in their way. It seems they were sent to our city The lives of our dear ones to take.

THE PATRIOTIC DIGGERS

1813

 Johnny Bull, beware, keep at proper distance, Else we'll make you stare at our firm resistance. Let alone the lads who are freedom tasting. Recollect our dads gave you once a basting To protect our rights against your flints and triggers.
 See, on Brooklyn Heights, our patriotic diggers, Men of every age, color, and profession Ardently engage labor in succession.

Pickaxe, shovel, spade, crowbar, hoe, and barrow
Better not invade. Yankees have the marrow.

Scholars leave their schools with their patriotic teachers.
 Farmers seize their tools, headed by their preachers.
 How they break the soil: brewers, butchers, bakers.
 Here the doctors toil, there the undertakers.
 Bright Apollo's sons leave their pipe and tabor, 'Mid the roar of guns join the martial labor.
 Round the embattled plain in sweet concord rally, And in freedom's strain sing the foe's finale.

R. Plumbers, founders, dyers, tinmen, turners, shavers,
Sweepers, clerks, and criers, jewelers, and engravers,
Clothiers, drapers, players, cartmen, hatters, tailors,
Gaugers, sealers, weighers, carpenters, and sailors.
Better not invade; recollect the spirit
Which our dads displayed and their sons inherit.
If you still advance, friendly caution slighting,
You may get by chance a bellyful of fighting.

Ch.

MAGISTRATE'S SONG

1734

- 1. To you, good lads, that dare oppose All lawless power and might, You are the theme that we have chose And to your praise we write. You dared to show your faces brave In spite of every abject slave. With a fa la la la la la.
- Your votes you gave for those brave men Who feasting did despise, And never prostituted pen To certify the lies That were drawn up to put in chains As well our nymphs as happy swains. With a fa la la la la la.
- 3. And though the great ones frown at this, What need have you to care? Still, let them fret and talk amiss, You'll show you boldly dare. Stand up to save your country dear In spite of usquebaugh and beer. With a fa la la la la la.
- 4. They begged and prayed for one year more But it was all in vain
 No "wolowants" you'd have, you swore
 By Jove, you made it plain,
 And sent them home to take their rest.
 And here's a health unto the best.
 With a fa la la la la la la.

JOLLY OLD ROGER

'Twas jolly old Roger the tin-maker man,
Who lived in a garret of New Amsterdam,
And showered down blessings like rain in the
spring.
Ah, maidens and matrons, of him I would sing.

There never was yet, a boy or a man Who better could mend tin kettle or pan, Or bucket, or skimmer, or dipper, or can, Than jolly old Roger the tin-maker man. Chee wang, chee wang, chee wang Te-rattle te-rattle te-rattle te BANG.

 Now Roger's bald pate was as smooth as your nose. When buying his stockings he purchased half-hose. He had but one leg, and he wore but one shoe, And he stumped 'round his shop on a stiff timber toe.

Ch.

3. Now jolly old Roger had two pairs of eyes.
His glasses, called 'specs, " were uncommon in size.
His nose like a strawberry, racy and red,
Was a snuffer by day and a trumpet in bed.

But jolly old Roger could not live alway.
 The nippers of death cut his life thread one day.
 And down in the churchyard they trampled him in,
 Poor jolly old Roger, the mender of tin.

Ch

5. If down to New Amsterdam's churchyard you go, Be sure that you stop, it's a great place for woe. You'll find, by the tombstone, the step and the mall Where jolly old Roger lies under the wall.

Ch.

THE BROOKLYN STRIKE

1895

I strolled through Brooklyn City not many days ago.
 The workingmen were idle, for out they had to go.
 The bosses of the railroads refused them honest pay,
 Defying arbitration--Cooley bid the men obey.
 The soldiers and policemen were called to take a hand

To terrorize the motormen in this our own free land

The mayor who called for troops should ever bear in mind

That capital is never right when it attempts to grind.

Remember, we are workingmen and honestly we toil.

And, gentlemen, remember we were born on Brooklyn soil.

Nor can the pampered millionaires the spirit in us break.

The fame of our fair city is clearly now at stake.

The soulless corporations should know this lesson pat.

A fair day's work for a fair day's pay is what we're aiming at.

They cannot run their trolley lines with lazy dudes and tramps,

With safety to the public long, who detest vile scabs and scamps.

The railroad men with one accord are in this fight to stay.

They ask for what is but their right, and right will win alway.

The public all are with them, too, for weal or woe or die.

And workingmen throughout the land will heed their pleading cry.

Ch

THE NEW YORK 'PRENTICE BOY

 Come, all you wild young fellows, who live both far and near,

Pray listen with attention to these few lines you'll hear.

I once in ease did ramble, but sin did me decoy, So now up in Sing Sing is the New York *prentice boy.

It was on the fourteenth of July, a girl to me did say, "Cheer up your heart, from me depart, your master you must slay."

A knife she gave into my hands, my master to destroy,

But I said, "No, it will not do, I'm a New York 'prentice boy."

'Twas about the hour of twelve at night, I to my master went.

And for to rob and murder him it was my full intent.

I took a hundred dollars and threw the knife away, For he was a master good and kind to a 'prentice boy like me. 4. Then I returned with utmost speed unto my foolish dame,

And when she saw the money, she soon received the same.

Then I was taken to the Tombs where did my hopes destroy.

And barricaded in a cell was the New York 'prentice boy.

5. And when my trial it did come on, my heart was grieved with woe,

For the girl that I did long maintain, she proved my bitter foe.

She was dressed in silk and satin, and she was my enemy,

For she tried to swear away the life of a New York boy like me.

6. My sister came to speak to me, the only friend I have.

My parents they are dead and gone and lay long in their grave.

When my sentence it was passed for "life," it caused the court to cry,

For a scornful dame had brought the same on a New York 'prentice boy.

Then I was sent away to jail with another three or four,

But the governor he took notice of me and gave me slight employ.

Yes, the governor he took notice of me and he gave me slight employ.

But still I think on happier days when a New York *prentice boy.

DOWN IN DEAR OLD GREENWICH VILLAGE

Early 1900's

- Way down south in Greenwich Village,
 There's the field for culture's tillage.
 There they have artistic ravings,
 Tea, and other awful cravings.
 There the inspiration stops and they start silly little shops.
 You'll find them everywhere 'round Washington Square.
- 2. Down in dear old Greenwich Village, There they wear no fancy frillage. *Cause the ladies of the Square All wear smocks and bob their hair. There they do not think it shocking to wear stencils for a stocking. That saves the laundry bills in Washington Square.
- Way down south in Greenwich Village,
 There the spinsters come for thrillage,
 There they talk of "sex relations,"
 With the sordid Slavic nations.
 'Neath the guise of feminism, dodging social ostracism,
 They get away with much in Washington Square.
- 4. Way down south in Greenwich Village, There they all consume distillage, There the fashion illustrators Flirt with interior decorators. There the cheap Bohemian fakirs and the boys from Wanamaker's Gather "atmosphere" in Washington Square.
- Way down south in Greenwich Village,
 Where the brains amount to nillage,
 Where the girls are unconventional,
 And the men are unintentional,
 There the girls are self-supporting, there the
 ladies do the courting.
 The ladies buy the "eats" in Washington Square.
- Way down south in Greenwich Village Comes a bunch of Uptown swillage, Folks from Lenox subway stations

Come with lurid expectations.

There the Village informalities are construed as abnormalities

By the boobs who visit Sheridan Square.

WESTFIELD DISASTER

July 11, 1871

- Hark ye people of every nation
 To the sad tale that I've now penned
 About the Westfield, the great disaster
 Which brought many to their end.
- Full three hundred pleasure seekers, On July, the eleventh day, Went on board the steamer Westfield For excursion down the bay.
- Happy in anticipation
 Of a pleasant sail that day,
 Down the shore of Staten Island,
 Down in New York's pleasant bay.
- Passengers had crowded forward Where the breeze refreshed each heart. Eagerly they all were waiting For the signal to depart.
- When a crash like awful thunder
 In a moment rent the air,
 Changed the happy scene of pleasure
 To death, sorrow, and despair.
- Women, men, and little children Were blown up into the air.
 Some fell on the shattered steamer, Others watery graves did share.
- 7. Badly wounded were one hundred, And as many killed, or more. Horrid news to friends and parents Spreading round from shore to shore.
- Men there search for wives and children, But their searching proved in vain.
 Wives for husbands, friends, and children, But in death they all are lain.
- Yes the cause of all this suffering And the loss of life so dear Was for the want of a safe boiler And a careful engineer.
- 10. Oh our lives they are uncertain, Death is on our track today. It may take us unexpected. God, prepare us all, I pray.

BILLY BARLOW

1840

Now ladies and gentlemen, how do you do?
 I come out before you with one boot and one shoe.
 I don't know how 'tis, but somehow,'tis so.
 Now isn't it hard upon Billy Barlow?

O dear raggedy O Now isn't it hard upon Billy Barlow.

 Do show me a boarding house where I can stay, I'm so hungry and sleepy, I've ate nothing today. They'll not let me in at Astor's, I know, But a market stall's vacant for Billy Barlow. 3. As I went down the street the other fine day I met two fair ladies, just coming this way. Says one, "Now that chap, he isn't so slow." "I guess not," says the other, "that's Mr. Barlow."

Ch.

4. I'm told there's a show coming into this town, Red lions and monkeys and porcupines brown. But if they should show, I'll beat them, I know, For they've never a varmint like Billy Barlow.

Ch.

5. I went to the races on Long Island so gay.

The man at the gate then he asked me to pay.

"What, pay, Sir?" says I, and I looked at him so.

"Pass on, Sir, I know you, you're Mr. Barlow."

Ch.

6. I had been on the track but a minute or two When the people flocked round me, what I tell you is true. "Who's that little fat gentleman, does anyone know?" "Yes," says a young lady, "that's Mr. Barlow."

Ch.

7. O dear but I'm tired of this kind of life, I wish in my soul I could find a good wife. If there's any young lady in want of a beau, Let her fly to the arms of sweet Billy Barlow.

Ch.

8. Now ladies and gentlemen, I bid you goodbye. I'll buy a new suit when clothes ain't so high. My hat's shocking bad, as all of you know, But it looks well on the head of Billy Barlow.

Ch.

THE CASTLE BY THE SEA

July 4, 1923

- Silence in the castle,
 The cons were fast asleep,
 For it was well past midnight
 When Donnelly made the leap.
- Inside, and out, and all around, With sentries on patrol, While through the cell bars we counted the stars, And heard the briny roll.
- 'Twas the midnight hour by the old clock tower, And the moonbeams played on the sea, So we pinned our hope on a rotten rope And the Man from Galilee.
- The old fort's wall was smooth and tall, And sixty feet below, The sentry on his nightly beat Was pacing to and fro.
- Day by day we sawed away, With hacksaw we did hew At the bars so tough that were old and rough Till our task was through.
- From the gunport's floor, we gloated o'er The servile sentry's fate, When at early dawn we'd both be gone And we cursed them in our hate.
- 7. Then said my friend, "Give me the end, The end of the rope I mean. With all our might we'll tie it tight We'll beat this old fort clean."

Ch.

- 8. He made his boast, then like a ghost
 He vanished from my sight.
 Down, down he went like a meteor sent
 From some tremendous height.
- The devil himself must have sent the elf To cut our rope apart, And when it broke, the grisly joke Sent shivers through my heart.
- 10. Then and there I said a prayer, For I surely thought him dead. But I saw him crawl to the old sea wall While the moon shone on his head.
- 11. Up the stairs they mount to take a count In the cells where we lay like mice, But the ones who had a name, 'cause they couldn't play the game, Were the ones that they counted twice.
- 12. It was thus down the line till they come to number nine, That was called the politician's cell. They searched it high and wide, and then they ran outside, And what they found out there I'll tell.
- 13. Gunport on their left, bars broken and bereft, Bars that had seen a century through And a space two-foot square he had left behind there, When he turned to me and said, adieu.
- 14. Well I had no time to study 'cause they knew I was his buddy.
 They landed me in solitary cell.
 I still had hope and faith that my friend had made it safe,
 But the way he hit the ground was hell.
- 15. Alas, for hope and faith, when the moon was shining bright
 They captured him on the Brooklyn ferry.
 He was bruised and shaken from the fall he had taken,
 But they rushed him into solitary.
- 16. After all that's gone and past, will he try again, you ask?Will he try again for his liberty?On this I have no doubt, if they do not let him out, He will some day beat the Castle by the sea.

THE THREE SISTERS

In some time to come, I remember it well,
With a ding ting.
 In some time to come, I remember it well,
With a ring.
 In some time to come, I remember it well,
There was a fair maiden in Brooklyn did dwell.

With a ding ting over a ring ting Ding tingle a ringle a ding.

She lived all alone with her parents in Queens,
 With a ding ting.
 She lived all alone with her parents in Queens,
 And a ring.
 She lived all alone with her parents in Queens,
 Her age was quite red and her hair was nineteen.

Ch.

3. Then unto this maiden her lover did sigh, With a ding ting. Then unto this maiden her lover did sigh, With a ring. Then unto this maiden her lover did sigh, "Though I'm lame in both ears and tongue-tied in one eye."

Ch.

4. Said he, "Fly with me by the light of yon star," With a ding ting.
Said he, "Fly with me by the light of yon star," And a ring.
Said he, "Fly with me by the light of yon star, For you are the eye of my apple, you are."

Ch.

5. She answered him sadly, "Oh my only dear," With a ding ting. She answered him sadly, "Oh my only dear," And a ring. She answered him sadly, "Oh my only dear, See the passion you rouse in my cosmetic tear."

Ch

Nay, fly not tonight but go yesterday noon, With a ding ting.
 Nay, fly not tonight but go yesterday noon, And a ring.
 Nay, fly not tonight but go yesterday noon, If you never return, it will yet be too soon.

Ch

 Then this fly-by-night lover went courting next door, With a ring ting.
 Then this fly-by-night lover went courting next door, And a ring.
 This fly-by-night lover went courting next door, And the fair maiden's laughter availed her no more.

Ch

8. How tragic the tale of this maiden so fair,
With a ring ting.
How tragic the tale of this maiden so fair,
And a ring.
How tragic the tale of this maiden so fair,
Whose age was quite red and nineteen was her hair.

Ch

DEAD RABBITS FIGHT WITH THE BOWERY BOYS

July 4, 1857

They had a dreadful fight, upon last Saturday night,
 The papers gave the news accordin',
 Guns, pistols, clubs, and sticks, hot water, and old
 bricks,
 Which drove them on the other side of Jordan.

Then pull off the old coat and roll up the sleeve,
Bayard is a hard street to travel.
Pull off the old coat and roll up the sleeve,
The Bloody Sixth is a hard ward to travel, I believe.

Like wild dogs they did fight, this fourth of April night,
 Of course they laid their plans accordin'.
 Some were wounded, and some killed, and lots of blood was spilled
 In the fight on the other side of Jordan.

Ch.

 The new police did join the Bowery boys in line, With orders strict and right accordin, Bullets, clubs, and bricks did fly, and many groan and die. Hard road to travel over Jordan.

Ch.

When the police did interfere, this made the Rabbits sneer,
 And very much enraged them accordin.
 With bricks they did go in, determined for to win,
 And drive them on the other side of Jordan.

Ch.

 At last the battle closed, yet few that night reposed, For frightful were their dreams accordin.
 For the devil on two sticks was a marching on the bricks,
 All night on the other side of Jordan.

Ch.

THE KNICKERBOCKER LINE

1. Oh, I wrote my love a letter and I sealed it with a wafer

And I couldn't seal it with sealing wax for fear it wouldn't go safer,

And I couldn't send it with the mail for fear it wouldn't reach in time,

So I skipped across the gutter on the Knickerbocker

To my rig jig, my rig jig
Go a skinny me dig, a honey dew
A 'bye away to me do
D'ye go away to my honey dew
And never will come back
It's a weary road to travel
And the car jumped the track.

 As I went down the street just the other afternoon, It's there I chanced to meet her in a lager-beer saloon.

Oh there I saw the prettiest girl that ever has been seen.

She took the humper bumper from the Jersey Cow machine.

Ch.

 Oh my girl she is tailor, a tailor she is by trade, And many a pair of pantaloons at my request she's made.

She'd begin them in the morning and have them ready by nine.

She's a regular don't-you-touch-her on the Knickerbocker Line.

Ch.

4. If you want to see this pretty girl you want to go down Broadway,

For she promenades the Bowery from eight to ten each day.

But if anyone should tease her a little before the time,

She's a regular skip-the-gutter for the Knickerbocker Line.

Ch.

THE GREAT POLICE FIGHT (RIOT AT CITY HALL)

June 15, 1857

 It was in the month of June, upon the 15th day, In the City of New York they had a dreadful fray, They fought with clubs and daggers, some on the ground did lie.

'Twas big pig and little pig, root hog or die.

O go it Tom and Jerry, yes, go it while you're young.

If you cannot turn the faucet on why get it at the bung.

The Mayor of the city and Governor of the state, About the loaves and fishes got at loggerheads of late.

I saw their troops were marshaled as I was passing by.
'Twas big, etc.

Ch.

 Within the park enclosure I heard a thrilling fife, Soon like a flash of lightning they rushed into the strife.

Some thousands of spectators the battle did espy. ${}^{\mbox{\scriptsize TWas}}$ big, etc.

Ch.

 Some were wounded in the belly, and some upon the head,
 And others from the nostrils perhaps a gallon bled.
 And numbers got a wallop somewhere about the eye.
 'Twas big, etc.

Ch.

 Some think that brave Fernando will surely win the day,
 Whilst others of opinion are *twill go the other way,
 The appeals the farce will surely knock into a ginger pie.
 With big, etc.

Ch.

JIM FISK

1872

- If you'll listen to me, I will sing you a song
 Of this glorious land of the free,
 And I'll show you the difference between rich and
 poor
 In a trial by jury, you'll see.
 If you've plenty of money you can hold up your head
 And can go from your own prison door,
 But they'll hang you up high if you have no friends
 And let the rich go, but hang up the poor.
- 2. I'll tell of a man who is now in his grave,
 And a better man never was born.
 Jim Fisk was his name, and his money he gave
 To the outcast, the poor, and forlorn.
 Everyone knows he loved women and wine,
 But his heart it was right, I am sure.
 He lived like a prince in his palace so fine,
 But he never went back on the poor!
- 3. Jim Fisk was a man with his heart in his hand, No matter what people may say. He done all his deeds, both the good and the bad, In the broad open light of the day. With his fine six-in-hand, on the beach of Long Branch, He cut a big dash, to be sure, But Chicago's big fire showed the world that Jim Fisk Would never go back on the poor.
- When the news it was spread that the humble, that night,
 Were starving to death, slow but sure,
 Jim Fisk loaded up the Lightning Express
 To feed all the hungry and poor.
 Now what do you think of the trial of that Stokes
 Who murdered this friend of the poor?
 If such men go free, is anyone safe
 To step outside their own door?
- 5. Is there one law for the rich and one for the poor? It seems so from all that folks say,
 They'd hang up the poor, why shouldn't the rich
 Swing high in the very same way?
 Well they shouldn't show favor to friend or to foe,
 To a beggar or a prince at your door.
 The millionaire should pay for his crimes, also.
 We should never go back on the poor.

THE SHODDY CONTRACTOR

Early 1860's

- 1. I'll sing to you a little song made by a modern pate About a shoddy-cloth contractor who owns a fine estate
 - In a street called Fifth Avenue, where big bugs congregate,
 - And bears a good character though his hours are somewhat late,
 - This shoddy-cloth contractor of the present time.
- 2. Before "this cruel war" broke out he was what's termed a "beat,"
 - And kept his small hand-me-down store in Chatham Street.
 - His neighbors they all marked him down as "an arrant cheat.
 - But now he'll pass his poor friends by whene'er they chance to meet
 - This shoddy-cloth contractor of the present time.
- 3. Now he keeps a stud of horses, the fastest in the town,
 - Determined to outshine his neighbors Smith and
 - In Broadway you may see him daily driving up and down,
 - And often at Delmonico's sipping champagne there,
 - This shoddy-cloth contractor, one of the present time.
- He keeps his shoddy factory in a bystreet near
 - Employs several hundred hands, but gives them little pay.
 - And if a poor soldier's wife works hard she gets fifty cents a day
 - To support her little ones at home while her
 - husband's far away, From this shoddy-cloth contractor, one of the present time.
- At the sanitary fair his name is on the list Of subscribers for one hundred dollars, but, of course, that won't be missed.
 - He rents the finest pew in church and always stands the grist,
 - For the next government contract puts fifty thousand in the fist
 - Of this shoddy-cloth contractor, one of the present

- You can tell him in a thousand by his lofty mien and tread,
 - This shoddy-cloth contractor, who had his country bled.
 - But though justice may be sleeping, still she is not dead.
 - And soon will her avenging sword fall upon the heads
 - Of all shoddy-cloth contractors of the present time.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM'S DARLING BABY

1857

- They lived in New York, in days of old, A buxom widow--so I am told --Who claimed as her husband a man underground, And she for his money went "bobbing around," Ri tur ri tur ri tur ri aye, Went bobbing around.
- All sorts of plans did she devise To pull the wool o'er the people's eyes, Laid claims to the rocks, and hatched such a plan As wouldn't have done for a single man. Ri tur ri tur ri tur ri aye, For a single man.
- 3. As the suit progressed, as sure as fate, So sure her arguments gained in weight, And, truth to tell, the omens were That soon there'd be another heir. Ri tur ri tur ri tur ri aye, Another heir.
- That moment came when the baby came, To be heralded forth as a child of fame, Eclipsing far the glory of others, In that it was born the babe of two mothers. Ri tur ri tur ri aye, The babe of two mothers.
- Loud were the groans and great the pain In which the babe was born again. 'Twas a fearful noise, like the wind in frolic, But the doctors pronounced it only colic. Ri tur ri tur ri tur ri aye, Only wind colic.
- Now, all ye ladies who hope for an heir, Take warning and take particular care That the babe your hearts would wish to adore Had not been born more than twice before. Ri tur ri tur ri tur ri aye, More than twice before.

Biography

Music has always been an integral part of my life. I studied the piano for many years, attended the High School of Music and Art, and started college as a music major. While in college, I became interested in folk music, taught myself the guitar, and started my own collection of folk songs.

Several years ago I was asked to prepare a program of New York City folk songs for a meeting of the New York Folklore Society. I had none in my collection, so I spent several months of research for songs and background material. I presented a portion of my findings at the New York Historical Society, and have continued the research. I am now preparing the entire collection for publication.

In addition to this project, I sing for schools and organizations, teach piano, guitar, and recorder, and keep house for my family.

June Lazare

YOUR STATE SINGS OUT

on Folkways Records

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Above is a partial listing of the Folkways collection of Americana. The complete Folkways/Scholastic catalog also includes musical portraits of Colonial America, the Revolutior, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the American Frontier, Women's Suffrage, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, and the Civil Rights struggle.

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