

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FH 5458

DOCK BOGGS

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH

DOCK BOGGS

LEGENDARY BANJO PLAYER AND SINGER

BRIEF RECOUNT OF HIS LIFE:
BRUNSWICK AUDITIONON FIRST LEARNING TO PLAY AND
"LIVING FOR THE LORD"...AS MUCH
SO AS I KNOW HOW....IN TAKING UP LEARNING TO PLAY A
BANJO...NEGRO MUSICIANS, HOMER
CRAWFORD, HIS OWN STYLE,
DANCINGPLAYING "STRAIGHT"; PLAYS TUR-
KEY IN THE STRAW: HIS BAND"D" TUNING AND HOMER CRAWFORD:
GUITAR PLAYINGPRACTICING AND TIMING FOR
RECORDPLAYING FOR A LIVING; TRIP TO
NEW YORKMORE ABOUT LEARNING TO PLAY,
HOMER CRAWFORDCOMMENTS WHILE LOOKING OVER
SONG TEXTS HE HAS WRITTEN OR
COLLECTEDMORE ON LEARNING TO PLAY BANJO,
AND FIRST "PLAYING OUT"ABOUT DOWN SOUTH BLUES AND
PLAYING BLUES ON THE BANJO:
"I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT PLAY-
ING COMMERCIAL..." BRUNSWICK
AUDITION, PLAYING FOR A LIVING.COAL CREEK MARCH AT LAND SALE;
LEFT COAL LOADING FOR MUSIC

WHY HE LEFT VIRGINIA IN 1928

ABOUT THE NAME "DOCK"

HISTORY OF THE COAL CREEK MARCH

STORY ABOUT SINGING ROWAN
COUNTY CREW

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES INSIDE POCKET

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RECORDED AND EDITED BY MIKE SEEGER

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INTRODUCTION

This record is a companion to Dock Boggs' first Folkways record (FA 2351) and contains what is an attempt at having an articulate traditional musician document some of his life and feelings in his own words. The emphasis here is obviously on his musical life, but aside from that the editor tended to edit his editing in an attempt to present as true a picture as possible.

If there is an editorial point to be made it is primarily that an outstanding traditional musical stylist who played informally in his early years was recorded commercially, whereupon it became a profession for a short while and was occasionally given a monetary value. But his style was clearly formed considerably before he had gotten the chance to record. An attempt was made to illustrate this visually in the notes with FA 2351: 1) A handwritten invitation to a schoolhouse contest before he recorded; 2) the newspaper clipping noting that he was going to record; 3) and a couple of posters made after he had decided to follow up commercially on his records by playing "shows". This was a path followed by a majority of traditional mountain musicians who recorded commercially during the 1922-1932 era, although few had such a radically different style.

Also important of course are the influences in his music - his brother, Homer Crawford, the negro stringband, Lee Hunsucker, and the blues in general. The more difficult exposition on the esthetic which shaped these influences into such an unparalleled style is the unfortunate shortcoming of this record since Dock Boggs is often quite articulate on the subject.

Of interest also are his stories (side B #5, for example) relating the very rough life that he and apparently many others led in the southwestern Virginia and eastern Kentucky area in the twenties and thirties. It is hopefully made clear here that he is a deeply religious man and now lives a very different life than that related in some of the stories of his early days.

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Cover drawing and design by Jonathan Shahn

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The tapes from which these segments are excerpted were initially recorded for reference in writing notes for Dock Boggs' first album. The notes were to have been excerpts of a literal transcription from the tape, but in starting to transcribe the tapes with me, my wife Marj suggested that they lost a great deal of the original expression on paper and perhaps should be on a record. After some thought and a phone call to Moses Asch (who welcomed the idea and set it numerically next to Aunt Molly Jackson in his catalogue) the several days of editing began.

The editing of this record was done in consultation with Dock Boggs although he has only heard one complete side as of its release. However, he did not wish to change it in any significant way. And as with all albums of mountain musicians assembled by this editor, these two records (and obviously especially his first record of which he has sold 65 copies in the first six weeks) are edited realizing that they are not only for the Urban folk music academician and enthusiast but also for the singer and his friends. This is not apparently as true

of the notes or at least this "sentence".

Since Dock Boggs' "re-discovery" he has had an article about him in both the Norton and Bristol papers. And a man from Norton who had begun learning from Pete Seeger's banjo manual came to him to take lessons. He has also written excellent letters to Broadside (NY March, 1964) and Sing Out! (June-July, 1964) which make this record unnecessary. It is a mutual discovery.

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Except for band 8, side A (which should follow band 2, side B) all segments are in sequence as recorded. Several subjects are presented twice to show variation and expansion on certain points.

Bands 1-7 on side A were recorded on June 12, 1963 when we first met Dock Boggs. Bands 8 and 9 on side A and 1-5 on side B were recorded on July 1, 1963. Band 6 on side B was recorded September 24, 1963 and band 7 at a concert for the Philadelphia Folk Song Society, December 15, 1963. This last item although not an interview, was thought to be a good carry-over of his story-telling onto the stage.

On the June recordings the Tandberg microphone was out of order which resulted in a high hum level and static. This, added to the 3-3/4 ips speed, and sound of cars, locomotives, and children playing near Dock's home where this was recorded rate the recording high in atmosphere but very low in quality.

INTERVIEW WITH DOCK BOGGS

SIDE 1

1. BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE: BRUNSWICK AUDITION

"I was born February the seventh, 18 and 98, down here at West Norton; born in this county, the same county I'm living in. I retired out of Kentucky. I worked in the coal mines, commenced coal mining when I was just a boy. Never got to go to school too much."

DID YOUR PARENTS WORK IN THE MINES? "My father was a carpenter and a blacksmith, but I had brothers that worked in the mines, much older. I was the youngest child out of a family of ten. There's 5 boys and 5 girls. My oldest brother had a boy just lacked 5 days of being as old as me. I started working in the mines when I was 12 years old, but I went to school a little bit after that. I got a seventh grade education. I was working in the coal mines at Pardee, Virginia, for Blackwood Coal and Coke Company in 19 and 27 when two men from New York and one from Ashland, Kentucky -- a Carter, and I forget the other two men's names from New York -- (came) to pick up mountain talent through Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky and Virginia, and they came to Norton, Virginia. I borrowed an old banjo -- I happened to be in town that day -- Pardee's about 6 or 8 miles from Norton. I borrowed a banjo from a fellow, McClure, run a music store, a little cheap banjo. I started to play two pieces for them, they was in a big hurry, they was over at the Norton hotel trying out this mountain talent. They tried out about 50 or 75 musicians. They was standing around there up in the ballroom and I wondered why they hadn't signed them up for to make

phonograph records, because I stood around and pitched them high as a dollar, dollar and a half at a time -- I mean nickels, dimes, and quarters -- to hear them play. They wasn't doing nothing but playing and I was working on a coal machine. I took that old banjo up there and they asked me did I play it, and I told them I played one kind of like it a little bit. They told me to go and give them a piece. I played about a verse of "The Country Blues" -- I called it "Country Blues," it was really "Hustling Gamblers."

WHERE DID YOU LEARN THAT SONG? "I learned that from a man from Tennessee, where I don't know. Named Crawford, Homer Crawford, and he played the old way -- banjo -- in the old way of playing. So I just played a little of that and I noticed they all marked it "good" on their papers; and they asked me to play another one and I started out to play the "Down South Blues," a song that I'd learned. I heard some of it on a phonograph record back years before this. It was played on a piano, but I commenced playing it on the banjo and sang it and put an extra verse or two in it that I made myself. So I just played about two verses and I noticed they marked "good" on that, and they came around with papers wanting to sign me up to go to make phonograph records, and three weeks from that time I was on my way to New York to make phonograph records. And none of these here good musicians standing around there -- didn't sign nary a banjo player but me on the rounds they come that time. They signed about three guitar players, and there was two fiddlers."

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THE OTHERS? "They signed up John Dykes, Hub Mahaffey, and Miss Vermillion -- I can't think of her first name -- from Kingsport, Tennessee; and Hub Mahaffey he seconded on the guitar for me on some of the pieces that I played and put on phonograph records. So we went to New York and I made four records, and they offered for me to make two or three more while I was there, but I thought on the contract I was under I'd just make them four -- eight songs. So, I got two contracts for to make phonograph records for The Brunswick, Balke and Callender Company of New York. And a lot of people thought I quit on them just because I didn't have the opportunity to make more phonograph records, but I had a contract--two contracts -- one to make 12 songs with me and the guitar player -- anyone I'd want to get -- and then I could get a band of musicians if I wanted to and make 12 more -- 24 songs. And I had a little domestic trouble and I decided I'd quit and went back in the coal mines and retired out of the coal mines, and I'm a retired coal miner now. 65 years old, and I didn't think I ever would play anymore. And my banjo, I let a fellow take it to keep. I let him hold it for security for a little money I got off of him, and I went back and gave him back that money 25 years afterwards and picked up the banjo. He was a single man at the time I let him have the banjo, and he had a family and one girl married at the time that I went back to take my banjo. He was from -- a Kinser boy, at Hayman, Kentucky. His wife, she's a schoolteacher, she taught school over there. Adams girl he married, Reba Adams. So I went back to Kentucky and went to work in the coal mines and I was working for the Elk Horn Coal Corporation at Jackhorn, Kentucky, and I retired from there back when I was 60 years old. I'm 65 now and I'm drawing my welfare pension from the United Mine Workers and also my Social Security now."

2. ON FIRST LEARNING TO PLAY AND LIVING FOR THE LORD

DID YOUR PARENTS PLAY MUSIC AT ALL? "I had my oldest brother, he fiddled a little bit and he had an old banjo, he'd play it some. That was the only one to play any music to amount to anything. I got me a banjo after I was married. I married when I was young, 20 years old. Commenced playing, and I played for parties, bean stringings, and first one thing and another where they'd have a little party in the country -- used to -- and I was just playing for the fun of it. I played a couple of these

pieces for the people from New York and they gave me an opportunity to make some phonograph records, and I could have made some more but I decided to quit. I got dust on my lungs, and I've not got too good a breath. I don't pretend to play much. In fact, I belong to the church now and I'm living a different life to what I lived whenever I was younger. I'm living for the Lord as much so as I know how."

3. IN TAKING UP LEARNING TO PLAY A BANJO, NEGRO MUSICIANS, HOMER CRAWFORD, DANCING

"In taking up learning to play a banjo, whenever I was learning how to play, why there wasn't very many people that played a banjo around through the country that I ever heard. I heard one colored fellow, Negro, played in a band with a bunch of other colored fellows. They had about 4 instruments."

CAN YOU REMEMBER WHAT INSTRUMENTS? "They had a fiddle, guitar, and a mandolin and a banjo."

WAS THAT AROUND HERE? "In Dorchester, Virginia. I heard them playing for a colored dance one night and I was just a boy and I listened to that fellow pick the banjo. They was playing "Turkey In The Straw" and I watched him make the chords on "Turkey In The Straw," and I decided I'm going to get me a banjo and I'm going to learn how to play. So I just taken up playing and taken up my own method and my own way of playing. I don't play the way the fellows nowadays do at all, and I never seen another one play just exactly like me, but I learned one boy how to play, a fellow Maggard, Odus Maggard, and he's made several phonograph records but he changed playing to pretty near like some of these other fellows, these new players that are playing now."

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THE NAMES IN THAT BAND YOU MENTIONED? "I can't remember, I didn't know any of them colored fellows' names at all. I was just with some white men and I was just a boy, and I sneaked up to the door where I could hear that music. I got to hear them play three or four pieces while they was dancing and going on in there and having a big time."

WELL, ASIDE FROM THAT, WHO ELSE DID YOU EVER HEAR PLAY THE 5-STRING BANJO? "Well, I heard another colored fellow play one a little bit, name was Jim White, he's a blue-eyed colored fellow, and then I heard..."

WHERE WAS HE FROM? "He was from Dorchester, Virginia. He was around there for years. He played in a band, he played in a brass band, Jim White did, but he could pick a banjo, too. And Homer Crawford from Tennessee, he played the banjo this old fashioned -- he tuned his banjo down like I do and played in the old fashioned way a whole lot. I never did play the knock-down. I picked either with one finger, or with two fingers, and thumb. But I tune my banjo and play the piece straight, I don't play second like a lot of them do on it, and it's a different way of playing. It's some people likes it and I guess they's some doesn't like it. So whenever I got older, when this rock-and-roll and different kind of music come around, I didn't -- I never did -- like that. I didn't go for it. And don't like it yet, and of course at my age, I'm not suppose to like it. I like sacred numbers better than any other kind of music now. I love to hear hymns and sacred songs. 'Course, there's a lot of good folk songs yet. I don't -- music don't thrill me like it did when I was a boy. It used to thrill me from the top of my head to the soles of my feet. I could hear music and I'd want to dance. I used to be a fairly good dancer, danced in several contests in country theaters and I've dance, I guess, as high as 20 and 30 people, and buck-and-wing dancing just like a colored fellow. I won first prize 2 or 3 different times in dancing contests. But now my legs, each one of them seems like they weigh 500 pounds. I'm 65 years old though, makes a lot of difference though, back when I was 25 or 30."

CAN YOU REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS THAT YOU FIRST HEARD THAT BUNCH OVER THERE IN DORCHESTER PLAY? "Oh, yes, I remember that. I wasn't but about 15 years old, that's been something like 50 years ago."

THAT'S ABOUT WHEN YOU STARTED TO PLAY?
"Yes, yes, I started just after that. I started trying to learn how to play a banjo. Been playing something like 50 years. I've not... been learning to play for that long, of course. I've not learned yet like I'd like to, but still I can play a lot of pieces I like to play."

4. PLAYING STRAIGHT, PLAYS 'TURKEY IN THE STRAW', HIS BAND

I WONDER, JUST HOW DO YOU MEAN 'PLAYING STRAIGHT?' I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT. "Well, it's picking it by note, pick the notes of it. Where you just -- you're playing seconds to it on making chords, and you're picking the notes whenever you're playing it straight."

OH, YOU MEAN PICKING OUT JUST WHAT YOU'RE SINGING? "Yes, picking out just what you sing, yes. I'll give you just a little bit of that "Turkey in the Straw" the way that I make one note on it (Plays)..... Haven't played that, you know -- don't fool with it so long -- why, that piece like that, I've not played. I've let my banjo go, as I tell you, and then play just -- borrow one and play -- maybe 3, 4 times in the last 25 years, and you can forget what little you know."

YOU MENTIONED TO ME THAT YOU'D PLAYED FOR A LOT OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEOPLE, LIKE SOMETIMES YOU'D PLAYED FOR JUST PARTIES AND THEN SOMETIMES YOU PLAYED FOR HIGH-PRICED MONEY. "Well, played where we'd collect off each person come in, you know -- pay so much."

WHAT KIND OF... WAS THAT A SHOW YOU PUT ON? "Yeah, it was a show, a musical show, you know. I had other musicians with me then. I had a real good fiddler and two guitar players part of the time, and sometimes I had a girl that played a ukelele -- and she danced, too. They was four in my band one time, they danced."

WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES? "I played with Beulah Boatwright, Scott Boatwright -- both them was very good musicians."

FROM AROUND HERE? "Yes, from Scott County over here. Scott lives over there now. I think Beulah lives back over there. I played with Charlie Powers and (an) old man, his father, was a fiddler, old time fiddler. He made phonograph records, they did, for Victor back years ago, before ever I made any, and Charlie he come stayed with me for about a year and he played the guitar with me. And Scott Boatwright come stayed with me a while, and also Melvin Robnett -- played the fiddle, he's a very good fiddler. We played country theaters, schools, high schools -- schools in the country we'd have plumb full. Lot of times we'd make three, four hundred dollars a week."

ABOUT WHEN WAS THAT? "That was back in '2--, I believe it was '29."

AFTER YOUR RECORDS HAD COME OUT? "Yes."

DO YOU THINK THAT HELPED YOUR RECORDS, OR THE RECORDS HELPED THAT? "The records helped get the crowds, I'm pretty sure, because a lot of them that had my records had never heard me play in person. They came out to hear us play."

5. "D" TUNING AND HOMER CRAWFORD, GUITAR PLAYING

THIS TUNING, KEY, THAT YOU USE HERE IN THE KEY OF D, WHERE YOU PLAY 'THE COUNTRY BLUES,' DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE IT WAS YOU EVER FIRST HEARD THAT, OR DID YOU JUST WORK THAT OUT YOURSELF? "No, Homer Crawford played "The Country Blues," or "Hustling Gamblers," in that key, and there's so many more pieces I play: "Oh Death," "Drunkard's Lone Child," and "Calvary," and "Prodigal Son" -- play that all in that."

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT TOWN THAT HE WAS FROM? "I don't know what town he was from in Tennessee. He's a photograph man, made pictures for people like they used to. Carried a camera around on his shoulders. Come up through this country and went over through The Pound. Used to stay at my uncle's

over on The Pound through there. Stayed all night with me after I was married, and he could play a fiddle and a banjo both."

HE'D PLAY AS HE CAME ALONG? "Yes, if you had an instrument, why he'd stay all night with you and play some music, you know. Never did pay nothing for his lodging or anything like that. People's glad to have him because he knowed a lot of old songs. Most people liked music and they wasn't so much of it back then. They wasn't but just a few colored fellows you see played guitar then. Now, anybody you see nearly can pick a guitar. In nearly all the Holiness churches now they have guitars. Women play them a lot. We've got two people in the church, Free Pentecostal Holiness Church of God where I belong, up on Guest's River, plays music."

I WONDER IF THIS HOMER CRAWFORD WOULD STILL BE LIVING? "I don't think he's living yet. He was a great big fleshy fellow and I heard he was dead. I've not seen him for years and I think he's dead. If he was living, he'd be getting awful old, 75 probably. I have an idea he'd be 75, maybe 80 years old now. I think he's dead."

I WONDER HOW I COULD FIND OUT WHAT TOWN HE LIVED IN? "I really haven't got no idea."

SOUNDS LIKE HE TRAVELED A LOT. "Yeah, he did. You can find lots of people knowed him. He made pictures. He had an awful good disposition, turn, everybody liked him, you know. He could sing good. People liked that, too you know."

6. PRACTICING AND TIMING FOR RECORD

"Well, I practiced an awful lot, and I even took a watch and timed myself, 2 minutes and 40 seconds, and if my song wasn't hardly long enough for to go the 2 minutes and 40 seconds, why I'd alternate a verse. Just pick it open and not sing, and then -- or either I'd sing from the start go or maybe I'd alternate one, pick over a piece if I didn't have hardly enough to make a record, 'till I'd make it come out to a 2 minute and 40 second record. We had different records then what we got now. And 2 minutes and 40 seconds is all we had to do it, and we had altogether different technique and way they made the record than the way they do now, I suppose. I made records in New York the first time, in Chicago the second time, but they record them now down in Memphis, Tennessee and different places."

WHO DID YOU RECORD FOR IN CHICAGO? "For 'The Lonesome Ace -- Without A Yodel.' He's a fellow, individual, from up here at Richland, Virginia. W. E. Myers. M-y-e-r-s, Myers. W. E. Myers."

7. PLAYING FOR A LIVING, TRIP TO NEW YORK

DID YOU MAKE A COMPLETE LIVING PLAYING MUSIC FOR A WHILE? "Yeah, for a little while they was a few months that I didn't do anything when I was over in Kentucky."

IS THAT WHEN YOU WERE RECORDING, YOU MEAN? "That was just after I'd make those records and I figured on making some more. I was playing in schools and theaters, and I'd play for private dances or anything and make some money off it. I played for old Senator Brock and his family when they was visiting up in Kentucky over there, swimming pool. They paid me pretty good for playing; me and my band played for them. This Combs, this governor of Kentucky, I played some for him over there, too. I think it was Bert Combs. I'm pretty sure it was, can't hardly remember. It was before he was ever elected."

WHAT DID YOU CALL YOUR BAND? "The Cumberland Mountaineers, Dock Boggs and His Cumberland Mountaineers, I believe. I've got a handbill here, where I had printed with it. Cumberland Mountain Entertainers, Dock Boggs and His Cumberland Mountain Entertainers."

DID YOU EVER RECORD FOR THE PARAMOUNT RECORD PEOPLE UP THERE IN, I GUESS IT WAS CHICAGO? "No, I never did make no records for them."

WAS THAT YOUR FIRST TRIP TO NEW YORK WHEN YOU WENT UP THERE? "Oh, I'd never been out of

these hills, this mountain here. I studied -- I didn't know how I was going to do, or how -- I was self-conscious enough and always had thought enough about myself to care about what people thought about me, and wanted to act as near like a human being as I should, as I could. I was afraid I'd make a lot of mistakes, but I come to find out after I went with these other fellows up there, with John Dykes and Hub Mahaffey, and Miss Vermillion. Poor old man Dykes, he was a good friend of mine -- I don't want to say any harm or anything, but he pulled some awful boners."

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THEM? "Yeah, he lost his pocketbook. Got it picked in New York's Central Station in New York going in there, and didn't lose too much money, but the president of the (record) company asked him -- Brophy, I believe his name was -- asked him, 'How much did you have in your pocketbook?' He says, 'Boggs,' he turned around to me, 'Boggs, I've lost my pocketbook.' And he turned around to him and said, 'How much did you have in there, Mr. Dykes?' He said, 'Had about 12 dollars.' Said, 'Well, I wouldn't worry about that if that's all you had,' he said. 'The worst part about it,' he said, 'it was your fellows.' He said, 'Well, don't let that bother you at all.' It was theirs, he give it to him to pay the expenses, you know. And then he called the waiter around while we was in New York eating in a hotel cafe. I wasn't at the table with them at that time. Miss Vermillion was telling me about it; she said she felt like sinking through the floor. He took his finger and wiggled, motioned for a waitress to come over to the table and asked her how much she got a week!"

WHO ASKED THAT? "Well, John Dykes. The poor fellow's dead now, but I asked him if he was thinking about getting him a job doing some waitress work down there. He says, 'Why?' I said, 'You asked that waitress how much she was getting a week.'

YOU WENT UP ON THE TRAIN, DID YOU? "Yes, we went from Ashland, Kentucky in to New York on the train, and then we come back on a train from there. We -- going down there, why they was going to buy us pullman tickets like we should have went: first class, because they was paying our expenses. Old man Dykes begged me to not go -- to take the pullman. The lady's the only one to take the pullman, Miss Vermillion, and me and Hub Mahaffey and old man Dykes rode the day coach and played for every train crew, I reckon, between Ashland and New York City. I could play anything they'd play, on the banjo. So we had a banjo, fiddle, and a guitar going. We made music. And then when we got in there, why first thing off -- we got in there in the morning -- ready for me to record, wanted me to record. I told them I felt too bad, I'd have to rest over another day. I hadn't slept none and they wanted to know why I hadn't slept, and I told them Mr. Dykes wanted to take the day coach, didn't want to take the pullman. We just come on with him, what he said. I said -- I asked them -- if they had any beer there in the hotel, we got there. They said, 'No, we're out of beer,' bellhop said. I said, 'You got some liquor?' And he said, 'Yeah, whiskey; got some scotch.' 'Nine dollars a quart,' he says -- a fifth. 'Got some rye -- 14 dollars a fifth.' I said, 'Wait a minute' -- that's Prohibition Days -- I said, 'That scotch. You wait just 'till I see my buddies. That's but three dollars apiece. We'll maybe get us a fifth of that, have something to kind of spur us up a little bit.' So I mentioned to Mr. Dykes, and he said that he was going to pay off a mortgage he had against him home, said, 'I can't afford to spend nothing for liquor like that.' So I asked Hub Mahaffey. Hub said -- I let him taste of it -- I'd already got a fifth, paid for it myself -- let him get his lip into it a little. I says, 'I ain't gonna let you get in there deep until you -- if you want, help pay for it, you can get in it. It's awful good. It's scotch whiskey.' And he tasted of it and said, 'Pour me out a drink of that.' The next morning we drank that up and he hadn't ever paid me yet. And I said you well still owe for that half-fifth of whiskey, and he said, he cursed and said, 'If you're afraid of it, I'll give it to you.' And I said, 'No, just hold up a minute,' and I taken the phone down and called up another fifth. So another bellhop he just

charged us 8 dollars for that one. So then when that one was gone we called up another one and we paid 25 dollars for 3 fifths of liquor. Of course, we gave old man Dykes a drink of it since he wasn't able to buy none -- he's older than us. Give the lady a little taste."

THIS LADY, DID SHE PLAY? "She played autoharp, good singer and a fine woman."

SHE PLAY AUTOHARP WITH THE TRIO? "Yes, with John Dykes and Hub Mahaffey. She had a family, and they live over at Kingsport, Tennessee on a farm. They're fine people."

MISS---? "Vermillion, Miss Vermillion. They live on a farm over there at Kingsport. Nice people. I don't know whether she plays any music now at all."

DID SHE PLAY ANY TUNES ON THE AUTOHARP, DO YOU REMEMBER? OR DID SHE JUST PLAY CHORDS? "No, she played with the guitar and fiddle. She played the pieces they played."

WHAT I MEAN TO SAY IS DID SHE KIND OF LEAD, TAKE THE LEAD EVER? "No, they didn't allow her to. She didn't sing any. Hub Mahaffey was the only one sing any."

I MEAN ON THE AUTOHARP? "I don't think she did. In fact, I didn't pay much attention to it at the time because I wasn't interested in autoharps much."

WHEN DID YOU LAST HEAR OF HUB MAHAFFEY? "I haven't heard of him in 8 or 10 years."

HE WAS IN KINGSFORT, THEN? "He made a trip through Kentucky and stopped at my house, and I wasn't at home. Over in Hayman, Kentucky, and I don't know where I was gone. I had me a little band when I lived in Hayman, an Indian that played the fiddle and his boy, picked the guitar."

WHAT WAS THEIR NAME? DO YOU REMEMBER? "Hollands. John Holland. He went to Oklahoma, and he's dead now. He's a left handed fiddler, played over his two basses, but he could play anything I played on the banjo, and he followed right along with that fiddle -- but he played awful soft music. His boy was good, too. His boy got the end of his finger cut off working on a coal machine -- he run a coal machine -- and he can't play anymore. But he used to be awful good."

8. MORE ABOUT LEARNING TO PLAY, HOMER CRAWFORD

"I started out, I learned a little bit from my brother, my older brother. Some of those old pieces he played. And then another brother that I had was 10 years older than me. He could play a little bit, just the 'Reuben's Train,' and 'Cuba' and stuff like that. And in playing along, why, I'd pick up a little from somebody else. Then I heard this here Homer Crawford from Tennessee playing 'Country Blues' or 'The Hustling Gambler.' I heard him play it one time, it was right along about the time I got married, or maybe it was before I got married -- I been married 45 years. He come and stayed all night with me. He didn't have no banjo and I didn't even have no banjo then. At that time I don't think I'd ever got my banjo in, but I ordered it just a little while after that. But I did go borrow a fiddle for him, and he stayed all night. Then one night out at my brother Roscoe's -- he was sick then -- he had him play the fiddle and the main piece he played was 'The Poor Girl On The Pound.' Did you ever hear that?"

PARDON ME? "Poor Girl On The Pound." Did you ever hear that on the fiddle? Lonesomest piece you ever heard played on the fiddle."

WELL NOW, DID HOMER CRAWFORD, DID HE PLAY 'THE COUNTRY BLUES' AT ALL LIKE THE WAY YOU PLAY IT NOW? "Well, I don't know. I can't -- I've not seen him in 35-40 years. Last time I seen him, it's been over 40 years. I don't think I've seen him in been about 43 or 4 years, but I heard he was dead, and really I don't remember exactly. But it's pretty much the same version the way that I play, 'The Hustling Gamblers.' I don't know whether he sung as much of the song as I sing or not. But he was the main one that brought that song into this country in my knowing, is Homer Crawford out of Tennessee."

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHERE IN TENNESSEE HE CAME FROM? "I don't know. I could find out if I was to see some of my cousins, Phillipses on The Pound. I never did know. He might have told me, but I've forgotten."

AND YOU SAY HE WAS A PHOTOGRAPHER? "Yes, yeah, he carried a camera with him, one of them old-fashioned cameras. He finished his own pictures and everything. He'd get him a dark room somewhere. He'd take pictures over the country, and it was someplace where he'd be staying. He'd generally stay somewhere they loved music and maybe they'd have an instrument. He hardly, very seldom ever carried a fiddle with him or anything to play on. But he knewed people in the country where he traveled that did keep them and had them, and they were glad for him to come. They fixed him the best of meals for to eat and take care of him, treat him nice, you know. He made a little money on the side making pictures, you know. I heard he was dead; I guess he is dead, because he's a man 10 years older than me or maybe older. That would make him 75 years old now. Maybe he was older than that."

HE JUST TRAVELED ON FOOT? "Well, he come on the train up here, of course, and then on foot through these hills up these rivers and creeks and over the valleys and places -- just walked. He took his time. He'd stop anywhere and stay all night. People back then, they was very hospitable in this country, and he was well known, everybody knowed him. He was liked by everybody. When a person was known and liked by people, why they would divide their last biscuit with them nearly. That's the way people have always been. 'Course, we got some people -- anywhere it's not like that, but most people are very nice to people -- friends or strangers that come by, people that's traveling or anything like that."

9. COMMENTS WHILE LOOKING OVER SONG TEXTS HE HAS WRITTEN DOWN OR COLLECTED

WHEN DID YOU WRITE ALL THESE SONGS DOWN, DOCK, ON THESE PIECES OF PAPER THAT YOU HAVE HERE? "Oh, just all through life, ever since -- whenever I hear something I liked, why I'd get the ballet of it. There's a lot of people wouldn't give nothing for something like that, wouldn't have wanted it, whereas I kind of, you know -- a lot of it touched my heart kind of."

SIDE TWO

1. MORE ON LEARNING TO PLAY BANJO AND FIRST "PLAYING OUT"

"I don't know, seem like I'd just try so hard, and I'd sit down and practice for hours a lot of times, just trying to get some tune I was wanting to learn, you know -- so that I could play it. I would annoy my wife plenty of times. I've kept her awake nights. The first night I got my new banjo in, I set up, just me in a room by myself. 'Course, she was in the room. I don't believe she slept much -- me a flim-flamming on that old banjo trying to kind of play a few pieces. I'd already kind of learned a few, still, I learned most of my playing right on that Sears and Roebuck banjo. So, I learned several pieces, and a lot of people, several people, love to hear me play. I'd be invited out to little parties and to people's homes when they have company. Lots of times want someone to entertain them, play a little music for them. Back then we didn't have the radio, let alone television. It wasn't but a very few people had an old-fashioned talking machine -- a phonograph, you'll recall. I played music for 25 years before ever I owned even something I could play a record on."

2. a. ABOUT 'DOWN SOUTH BLUES' AND PLAYING BLUES ON THE BANJO

AND HOW ABOUT 'THE DOWN SOUTH BLUES?' CAN YOU REMEMBER WHERE YOU HEARD THAT? "Well,

I learned that off of a phonograph record. My brother-in-law -- that was when we lived over here at Sutherland working for a while for Wise Coal and Coke Company -- he was a person that bought an awful lot of these phonograph records at that time when they was selling quite a lot of them in through here. Played them on these old-fashioned machines. I guess that he had probably 2 or 3 hundred of them. He had that there "Down South Blues." If I'm not mistaken, he had "Mistreated Mama Blues" on a record. I think it was sang and recorded by Mary Martin, or Sara Martin, or some woman; and it was accompanied by a piano. Anyway, I never did hear it played on a banjo or guitar or nothing else -- any kind of string music -- 'till just I commenced learning it myself, commenced playing it. In fact, I played for years that I never heard a man play a banjo that could play any kind of blues on a banjo -- any kind. I got to playing with some boys, Scott Boatwright and another one, I believe it was Melvin Robenatt. And Scott says, 'I'm going to play a piece of blues,' and said to me, 'Dock, you can wait till we play this here piece of blues.' I said, 'You think them blues ain't on this banjo neck the same as they're on that guitar? They're just as much on this banjo neck as they are on that guitar or piano or anywhere else if you know where to go and get it, and if you learn it and know how to play it. 'Play the blues and see if I don't play them, see if I don't follow you.' And he played a piece of blues and sang them, and I went right along with him very good for the first time, hearing them while he was playing them. I don't remember what that blues was, because I had some blues myself, 3 or 4 different blues that I played then all the time -- I mean all along."

HAD YOU PLAYED 'THE DOWN SOUTH BLUES' THEN? I don't remember whether I was playing "The Down South Blues" then or not."

WHEN DID YOU START WITH THE 'DOWN SOUTH'? "I commenced playing "The Down South Blues -- must have started, oh, must have been 40 years ago, maybe. About 40 years ago, I guess."

ABOUT 1923? "Yes, I have an idea that's about -- no, I must have started before that, because I know I took my banjo and I went to Hemphill -- that's for the Elkhorn Coal Corporation -- and stayed over there a little while, had my banjo over there. I played "The Down South Blues" then, and "John Henry," and "Poor Ellen Smith," and "John Hardy," and different pieces like that, and "Pretty Polly." Then people would gather up out there. We'd get out from a boarding house and sit under a big tree, and I'd have great big bunches of men gather up to hear me play. I was working in the mines loading coal, but I had my banjo over there with me and I played a lot of different pieces at that time."

b. BRUNSWICK AUDITION, PLAYING FOR A LIVING

"I never thought about, give it no thought about, ever playing commercially or playing to record music for phonograph companies or nothing like that much. 'Till I got the opportunity. I was working here in 1927 in Pardee, Virginia, and I was working on a coal machine when I happened to come downtown in Norton here and met a friend of mine, Hughie Roland. He said, 'Dock, why don't you go up there to the Norton hotel? There's two men here from New York and one from Ashland, Kentucky, trying out mountain talent; and they're going to give them contracts to come to New York to make phonograph records.' I said, 'Well, I've not got no banjo down here, and they've got a lot of musicians down here that don't do nothing but play. I work for a living, myself, and I don't never try to play for money. Don't guess I'd have much of a chance of getting to record anyway.' He said, 'Well, it wouldn't hurt anything to try out. You can borrow a banjo up at the music store.' I said, 'Well, I don't know whether I've got hardly enough nerve to go up there and try out carrying this banjo up there in under my arm. All these fellows, lot of them, go around here and they got 2 or 3 in their bands playing and they make good music."

I love to hear them. Me going up there walking with a little old banjo ain't even got a case on it, stuck under my arm, why, I'd look awful corny -- look awful funny.' He said, 'Well, I'd go anyhow. There's a trip to New York, and you've never hardly been in a large city. It'd be a great trip for you. The trip would be worth 500 or a thousand dollars to you whether you got any money out of the record or not.'

WHO WAS THIS TALKING? 'Hughie Roland. He's dead now; he died at MacRoberts'. I said, 'Well, I believe I'll do that.' So I slipped off up on Guest's River to a place where they sold a drink and I got me a half-pint of moonshine whiskey and I drank that before I played -- 2 or 3 drinks -- try to give me nerve so I could go down and get before those people. When I went up there, there was a whole gang of musicians: I don't know, 100 or 150 maybe, up there around in that ball-room. Some of these little bunches were playing music, hammering on it. These people came running over to me and said, the man from New York said, 'Do you play that thing? Do you play that?' And I said, 'I play one like it. This is not mine, but I play one similar to it a little bit.' 'Let's hear a piece. What's your name?' I give him my name and the title of the number I was going to play, 'The Down South Blues,' and started playing. They was in a big hurry; they wouldn't listen to that much of it. They took my name down and the title of the piece -- all three of them had papers in front of them -- and I noticed that they marked 'good' at the end of the song. Then I give them 'Country Blues,' which was 'Hustling Gamblers,' the old title of it. I started to play that, and played about a verse or maybe a little over a verse. They marked 'good' at the end of that, and the next thing, here they was coming with a contract for me to sign and go to New York City in the next three weeks. It was a surprise to me. All so sudden, and I didn't get much out of it, either. Still the trip, as the man told me, Hughie Roland, said, was worth a lot of money to me just to get to go down and stay a few days in New York City when I had never been out of the hills in my life."

BUT DIDN'T YOU PLAY FOR ANY KIND OF MONEY BEFORE THAT? "No."

YOU WENT INTO THE SCHOOLS AFTER THAT?

"Yes, it was after that I played for money. I got pretty good pay for playing after I made those records. I'd get whole schools, school auditoriums, full of people. Just me and a guitar player, at different times just have a guitar player with me. We'd make real good. It wasn't much money -- they didn't pay as much wages then -- but as far as my part of it, financial end of it, why, I done real good. I was making more money, much more, than I could working, if I just went on and booked places and played regular, or either got me a manager. I did have me a manager for a while. There was a lawyer over at Whitesburg, he just quit his practice, and went out booking places for me and my gang to play at. We played that way for a few months and then, seem like some of my musicians they didn't agree, get along. It wasn't me, they didn't fall out with me or anything, but the two guitar players -- it seemed like they disagreed, and first thing I knew, why, one of the guitar players slipped off and joined the army, and he went over and got killed on Corregidor Island. Married one of those native girls and him and his wife and baby was killed by the Japs when they came in there. Then Scott Boatwright, the other one that played the guitar, he came back over in Virginia, and so did Melvin Robnett that played the fiddle. And after that a while, Melvin Robnett, he not too long after that joined the church. Become a Christian, and I reckon he still plays fiddle probably in the church. He don't play nothing but sacred numbers, and he don't play too many, I don't guess, of them. He may not be in practice like he used to be when he was a real good fiddler. He could play all the pieces that Burnett and Rutherford put out, all the numbers they played and several others; and he could play them just as good -- the way I thought about it -- as Rutherford played his fiddle. He'd play and sing right with his fiddle, and sounded good."

3. 'COAL CREEK MARCH' AT LAND SALE, LEFT COAL LOADING FOR MUSIC

AND 'THE COAL CREEK MARCH' WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TUNES THAT YOU...? "That was one of the first chording pieces that I learned."

DO YOU REMEMBER WHO PLAYED THAT? "No, I don't. I didn't learn it off of a phonograph record. I learned it -- I don't know who. I seen them chording, and I knowed the tuning that they had it in, and I just kept on fooling with it. I seen two men with banjos that really could play 'The Coal Creek March.' And they had words for the song of 'The Coal Creek March.' I never learned them. If I had wanted, and insisted, I could have got the words -- they would have given them to me, if they would have cared to at all. Back along about -- just after I made those phonograph records, I guess it may have been in '27, last of '27, '27 or '28, that I seen these fellows. They was good on that there 'Coal Creek March,' the best that ever I heard -- anybody -- 'cause they had the words to it; that's what made it so good."

DO YOU REMEMBER HOW THE WORDS GO? "No, can't remember nary a thing about that..."

WHERE WAS THAT -- THAT YOU SAW THEM? "I saw them at a land sale, auction sale, at Mayking, Kentucky. Johnny Morgan was having an auction sale over there. They was a lot of people come to that sale that day, and them two banjo pickers come there. And it happened that I happened in there, too, and somebody taken me because they knew it would be a good crowd there. My records hadn't been out very long. So they picked the banjos down there; they were playing when I got there. They had a big crowd of people listening because there wasn't any other entertainment there, only just these banjos. I never heard a guitar there or anything else. So, I taken my banjo out of the case. There was some people there that knowed me and heard me play. They wanted me to play something. I got a little bit away from them -- so not hardly to bother them to play -- and played. It wasn't long 'till I had a big crowd. They just surrounded me. One man there, I had to go home with him for dinner, and he had everything over there what I liked, you know -- plenty to eat, plenty to drink. That was the man having the land auctioned off. So I stayed there 2 days and nights with them; I just hung up. They was the best people out of Whitesburg would come up there, up to his house, and come there to hear me play the banjo. I don't know how many gangs did come up there. I made pretty well out of it. I didn't even have to hardly ask them for anything: they'd pitch me something or other to play. I don't know, I guess they gave me about 25 or 30 dollars then, just without me insisting or anything like that, just playing, just freely give it to me. I was just monkeying around, just enjoying myself traveling, you know. Had my banjo along with me. I didn't have no appointment or anything like that, to play."

DID YOU HAVE A JOB AT THAT TIME? "No, I wasn't working right then, right at that time. I most all the time kept a job, but at that time there was something wrong, or I was off, or had got off maybe to take off for a couple weeks or something like that. I never lost a job over my music, or being absent on account of making music. I did quit a job one time because I commenced getting so many calls, and so many letters, and so many invitations. I went and played a few places that was handy, close to where I was working. I seen that I'd get in so late at night that I just naturally didn't feel like getting up and going out to load coal, working hard in the mines the next day. I was getting so that nearly every night I could get to play somewhere if I wanted to play, and I couldn't see no reason for me to go ahead loading coal, and I told the man, the foreman I was working for, I explained it to him. And he said, 'Why, you're crazy for loading coal in the first place. Why don't you stick to that, and why don't you play that, and go on and play? If people wants to hear it, they'll pay you for it. What do you want to fool with loading coal for?' So I quit my job at that time and played a while along with Scott

Boatwright and Powers that stayed with me, and Melvin Robnett. There was four of us: two guitars and banjo and fiddle. I had this here lawyer managing for us and booking places for us out of Whitesburg, and we done very good. And then, first thing I knowed, my bunch was all splitting up and going first one away and then another."

HOW LONG WAS THAT? "That was along about '29, I guess."

I MEAN HOW LONG BETWEEN THE TIME THAT YOU STARTED PLAYING FOR A LIVING WITH YOUR BUNCH AND THEN STOPPED? "We didn't play long. We didn't play too long at all. Did we play 6 months? About 6 months, or maybe altogether a year -- something like that."

ABOUT WHAT AREA DID YOU PLAY? "We played over in this country now, down through St. Charles and Jonesville, come down to Jonesville. Old man John Dykes, I went with him there, but I didn't have this same gang. I was with old man John Dykes then. Just a fiddle and a banjo. Sometimes we'd hire a guitar player for to accompany us, kind of help. We played at Big Stone Gap; opened up that swimming pool down there when it was opened up -- where that Big Boy Restaurant is now. We played there for a dance one night -- they had a square dance -- and we played at the opening of that. And then we played some over in Scott County and some along into Jonesville. We went some beyond Jonesville, some down in there."

4. WHY HE LEFT VIRGINIA IN 1928

"You see, I lived -- I moved up here -- above Norton. That was whenever I had Scott Boatwright with me, and Melvin Robnett, and we was playing music around in different places. I lived right in the middle of a bootlegging district; the people in about every other house sold whiskey. We'd drink all we could get at that time. The law raided the road a lot; and we had a pretty bad law, had a very bad reputation, named Doc Cox, here. Of course, he got killed a little while after that. One of my friends killed him. They come up to my house -- well, there was some people -- I'm getting ahead of my story -- from down in Lee County, two carloads of them, come up here. They heard I lived up on Guest's River. They wanted to hear me and my bunch play a piece or two of music. They come down to my house, they's some women and men, and two men come down there and asked me was this where Dock Boggs lived. I told them, yes sir, they was talking to Dock Boggs now. They introduced themselves and said, shook hands with me and said, 'We want to hear you play a little music. We don't want you to play for nothing; we'll pay you for it.' I said, 'Well, the law's raiding this road so much, and cars all parked out here in front of my house -- you all's two cars and my car parked out there -- look's like there's a crowd down here. And I don't know what you might do or say. There's a lot of drunks pass in the road a lot of times, and maybe someone come in we wouldn't want in.' When they said 'We'll pay you for it,' one man just pulled out a dollar and he handed it to me; and some others come up at about that time and they laid \$4.85 -- on the 10th of March, 19 and 28, I won't never forget it -- in my hand and said, 'Play us three pieces and that'll satisfy us. That's all we'll ask you to play if you'll play it.' I said, 'Well, just get your company and bring them in the house.' I turned around to the boys first, though, that I played with, and I said, 'Scott, Melvin, you fellows care to help me play a few pieces for these gentlemen and their company?' And they said, 'Well, that's all right, whatever you want to do is all right with us.' 'Well,' I said, 'we play for money and they done paid me here \$4.85 to play them three pieces. We're at home doing nothing, why, that's all right, we'll just close the door and keep out the people we don't want in: drunks or anything like that coming along.' Closed the doors and locked them. The room was nearly plumb full. We started to play music, played one piece of music, and -- I'm telling it as it happened: there's a lot of people told about what hap-

pened and didn't know anything about it. They didn't come in the front gate or the door, knock on the door; they come around..."

WHO'S 'THEY?' "The officers. Bill Willis, and Doc Cox -- both of them are dead -- and Denver Short. He's living up here on Guest's River now. We was playing music and I heard the house jar and the door being buttoned and locked to, the kitchen door. My wife was in there washing the dishes. I had a .38 Special sticking in my belt, and I just reached back and got it and I handed my banjo to a person there. I told them to hold my banjo a minute. I seen him's about half-bowed, Doc Cox, going across my kitchen. Button flew off on the floor. Lock busted off, busted in the door -- didn't even knock or nothing. So whenever he seen me come in -- Bill Willis was right behind him and he had his pistol down in his hand. I had mine in my hand, had it in a pretty handy position. So Doc Cox, he grabbed my wife by the shoulders; aiming to, I reckon, to push her between me and him so he could maybe kill me and me couldn't get a shot at him. She just twisted out of his hands all at once and got over on the side and stood. He's standing there, he hadn't ever reached for his pistol yet, and I asked him why they broke into my house. They said they was the law. I told them they looked like law, a bunch of thieves, of bums come up there breaking into people's houses. I says, 'You're supposed to knock on the door if you want in anybody's house. You haven't got no more right coming up here and breaking in my house than I've got a right to come down and break into your house. We got Constitutional rights and I'm a citizen and a taxpayer.' I said, 'Now Doc, don't reach after your pistol 'less you want to.' And he had his hands about half stuck up. I told him, 'I've got the advantage of you guys,' and I cursed them and said a lot of things I wouldn't say now, wouldn't want to say now. Bill Willis says, 'I don't see how you got the advantage of us. They's three of us and just one of you.' I said, 'The reason I've got the advantage of you all's I don't care for dying as bad as you guys do,' and I says, 'I know I'm gonna get one of you if I don't get all three of you if the shooting starts, and it's going to start pretty soon if you guys don't get in the road where you belong.' I said, 'Doc, don't reach for your pistol without you want to.' They never got a drop of liquor, never seen a drop of liquor. And when they went up on the road, though, I called Bill Willis back to the house. Knowing him -- and I been with him different places before he got to be deputy sheriff -- I wasn't afraid of him shooting me without I tried to hurt him. So, he come down and said, 'Dock, you'll have to pay for this.' And I said, 'Pay for what, Bill?' He said, 'For resisting the law.' I said, 'Now you fellows looks like law, coming up breaking into a man's house. But I'll go downtown if that'll satisfy you fellows, and give bond, and I'll stand trial on it.' And when I went out to my brother-in-law's -- owned some land out there, had a nice home worth a right smart of money -- and aimed for him to go my bond, why, he deeded off all his land to his daughter was working for the telephone exchange. I didn't know it 'till I got out there, so I just turned around and said to the people, 'Open the back door. I'm not going to go nowhere.' I wasn't with Doc Cox no way, nor Bill Willis. I had Denver Short with me; he lived down below me. So, I just walked out the back door and had them take my car and fill it up with gasoline, and put me a couple quarts of oil extra in it and I drove into Kentucky that night; and I stayed in Kentucky for about three and a half years after that, 'till Ted Carter bumped Doc Cox off, killed him up there on Guest's River. I was over here the day he got killed. I didn't figure he'd live that long, the kind of life he was living, way he was imposing on people. Still, he did get by for a long time. I'm sorry he got killed, but he was electioneering for it. He got what was coming to him. As far as me, he went and before ever he got killed he couldn't get a warrant for me before the magistrate in town when he told him he broken into my house. He went before the grand jury and swore that I held a pistol on him and my wife had poured out a half-gallon of moonshine liquor, so he got

four warrants for me in swearing that there. It wasn't nothing in the world but a not-so. It wasn't true. He never got a drop of liquor, never seen a drop of liquor. There's a lot of people, the way they got it in their minds, there was liquor there and so on, and I left on account of liquor. But I left because I knew very well if he'd swear a lie for to get a warrant for me, he'd swear a lie for to prosecute me; and the other fellows were afraid to not swear just like he swore. So three officers swearing against a man like that subjects him to the penitentiary, and I didn't care nothing about going to the penitentiary, so I just went over in Kentucky and took up. I come back over here, though, and I live in Virginia now, Norton, Virginia, and I been here for the last nine years."

5. ABOUT THE NAME 'DOCK'

"They was a doctor in town here, one doctor; M. L. Stallard, Moran Lee Stallard was his name, and that's my name: Moran Lee. We had one doctor in town and he had so many calls he couldn't fill near all of them, but they wasn't many people in Norton at that time and he was out of town. So, my father thought a lot of Doc Stallard, and mother did, too; and so whenever I was born -- whenever I came into the world -- a boy, why, they named me after Moran Lee Stallard. When I was just a little toddler toddling around, why, my dad commenced calling me Dock, and all my brothers and sisters and everybody called me Dock. And even people, my acquaintances -- and when I was going to school I didn't even want anybody to even mention the name Moran Lee--M-o-r-a-n L-double-e. I thought that was awful ugly; I'd rather be called Dock two-to-one. So, after I got older, why, doing my official business and so on I signed my right name Moran Lee, and when I made phonograph records, why, I decided I'd better have my name put on there the way that everybody knowed me. And nearly everybody knowed me Dock and they didn't know anything about my name being Moran Lee or M. L. Boggs."

6. HISTORY OF 'THE COAL CREEK MARCH'

DOCK, I REMEMBER AFTER YOU PLAYED 'THE COAL CREEK MARCH' FOR ME DOWN IN ASHEVILLE, DID YOU -- IT WAS THEN THAT YOU LEARNED SOME MORE ABOUT IT? "Yes, I found -- my brother-in-law, he's from Tennessee. He was telling me where that song "Coal Creek March" originated from and how it

come about. It was made -- they had some labor trouble down in Tennessee. The men had been out on a strike and the state or government or something brought in convicts to try to run the mines with convict labor, and the people there tore it all up and turned them all loose. They had the state militia or guards or home guards whatever you call it in there, and they played up and down the road then a song they called "The Coal Creek March," and it originated from that there strike and labor trouble they had there, what I understand, and there was a song made up about it. I have never got the words of it."

WHEN YOU SAY THE PEOPLE 'TORE IT UP,' YOU MEAN--? "When they brought in this here convict labor, why, they went and turned them loose where they was in stockades, and broke it up. They was going to use the convict labor for to mine the coal and so on. They had on a strike, and the people just wouldn't stand for it."

7. STORY ABOUT SINGING 'ROWAN COUNTY CREW'

"When I was -- I started to Atlanta, Georgia, one time I come out from Ashland, Kentucky, and I was alone -- just had my banjo -- and pass off the time I started playing the banjo up through there, and I must have been going through close to where some of this trouble had happened. There's a man reached over and said, 'Buddy, if I's you I wouldn't play that through here.' He said, 'I love to hear you play, I like to hear you sing, I love to hear the song, I love to hear you play the banjo, but I wouldn't play that through here, because you know it's been years and years since that trouble happened, but up here at Prestonburg in the courthouse yard about a month or two ago or something like it a colored fellow playing that "Rowan County Crew," playing it on the guitar and singing it sitting under a tree there in the courthouse yard. One of those hotheads, boys -- must have been a distant relative or something to some of these people -- walked up to him, must have been about drunk or something or other, just pulled out a .45 and shot the whole top of his head off.' And he said, 'It's a fact and I wouldn't play it through here.' I said, 'Mister, I'll not play it through here!' So I just stopped playing it through there. So, I'm down here too far now, I don't guess that there's anybody wants to shoot me for playing it; so I'll play it for you the best I know how."

Interview transcribed by Jon Pankake



FOLKWAYS RECORDS

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