

SKIP ROPE

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Skip Rope Games



JOHN CARLIS

FP 729 Folkways RECORDS & SERVICE CORP. N.Y.C.

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Introduction by Esther Brown



Of the traditional games played by children all over the United States, skip-rope is one of the most popular, particularly among girls. Skip-rope is found in practically every community; and not only all over the United States, but it survives as a popular traditional game among children in almost every country in the world. As with other traditional games, it can be traced to its origin in ancient cultures.

The rope, along with the stick and the ball, is one of the oldest and most widespread of symbolic implements used in games. Not only for skipping with, but for jumping over, for tug-of-war, for tight-rope walking, for swinging, and in countless other ways, the rope has been used in ritual games and dances in most ancient cultures. The swinging of the rope in circles, combined with skipping, hopping, jumping, stamping, balancing, or running, is an essential characteristic of many ancient fertility rites, initiation and mating ceremonies, harvest rituals, and rain rites. As the snake, the serpent, or dragon, the rope symbolizes instinctual energy in ancient mythologies.



In Europe skip-rope was traditionally played on Good Friday, and was associated with fertility. In the spring and autumn festivals of ancient China, Korea, and Japan, skip-rope and tug-of-war, (played by the young men and women with a very thick rope made of hemp), was among many other ritual contests which formed the major part of fertility rites, as a way of choosing a marriage partner, and as rain rites.

These ancient rituals survive in the rope games played by children all over the world. Accompanying the skip-rope games is an infinite variety of rhymes which are no less ancient and widespread in their symbolism. The counting-out rhymes are an essential part of most traditional games, and numbers are the basic symbols used in them. And from numbers are derived other categories, such as the letters of the alphabet, the seasons, the hours, the elements, types of work, etc.



The themes of traditional skip-rope games are basically the same, dealing with the big and little anxieties which children experience and with the familiar images of childhood. The rope turning in circles, uniting heaven and earth, encompasses the child in his unconscious striving toward order and harmony in his inner and outer world.

Skip-rope games range between the simplest form of running and jumping over a rope held by two others, to the intricate and difficult swinging

of two ropes simultaneously at right angles, while the jumper has his own rope and manipulates all three at once. Though all of them may appear to be simple to do, actually some require the most amazing skill and co-ordination, and quick-thinking.

Skipping rope alone, with a step-hop or a jump on both feet at once as the rope is swung over the head by the jumper, either forward or backward, is something that every child tries to learn at an early age. For this there are a large number of accompanying rhymes. But even before this, a game called "High Water" or "Build a House" is a good one for beginners. In it two people hold a rope stretched straight and at first close to the ground, over which the child or children run and jump, as the rope is gradually raised higher and higher each time. Sometimes this is done with two ropes held shoulder's width apart, and the jumpers go over first one then the other. Or one rope is held low for jumping over, and the other high for running under. Another variation on this is called "Snake," when the rope is made to wiggle as the jumpers go over it. Still another is the swinging back and forth of the rope near the ground as they jump over it, and this is the prelude to the swinging of the rope in a full circle, when a child will run in, jump once, and run out again.

A certain terminology for the various figures exists, which may or may not be found in all communities, but the figures they name are certain to be. "Double Dutch" in which two ropes are turned alternately, one in each hand of the two turners, is found under the same name as one of the most popular of the London street games for girls, as it is in most sections of the United States. "Double Irish" which is the opposite of Double Dutch, is also widespread, as is "Egg Beater," in which there are four turners with two ropes turning at right angles to each other, in two separate spheres. "Wring the Dishrag" is widely known, not only in skip-rope, but in American Square Dance as well as in many other European dances. But "Peppers" is perhaps the most widely known of all the terms in skip-rope, and is simply a very rapid turning of the rope.

In some sections of the United States, "Revolving Doors" refers to the direction in which the rope is turned. If the rope is turned forward toward the jumper, it is called "Front Door," and if turned backward away from the jumper, it is called "Back Door." In "White Horse," a girl jumps in once and runs out at every turn of the rope, and sometimes two or three go in at a time, when it is called "Double Your Horses" or "Triple Your Horses."

"Touch the Ground" is a common figure, in which the jumper stoops and touches the ground in between jumps. "Climbing the Ladder" is a figure in

which the jumper progresses toward one end of the rope as she jumps, calling for higher and higher jumps. Sometimes this is done with two jumpers back to back, each moving to her end of the rope, or with partners facing each other while jumping, then passing each other to "climb the ladder" in the direction in which they are facing.

Jumping in a deep knee bend position is sometimes called "Sparrow Hop," and "Bucking Broncho" is done on all fours, with hands clearing the rope first then the feet, as the broncho "bucks." A figure known as "Pike" is when the jumper thrusts both feet straight forward on a jump and touches her toes with the tips of her fingers. Then there is a forward roll over the turning rope, and a backward roll. A "Figure Eight" is when jumpers line up beside and behind one turner and follow the first jumper through the turning rope to beside and behind the other turner and begin all over again, forming a figure eight as they do so. Sometimes the turners themselves jump the rope they are turning, one of them running around a small semi-circle to jump through her own rope.

Then there are intricate jumps performed by couples, such as the "Minuet" turn, in which partners run in holding inside hands, then one makes a complete turn under an arch formed by holding the hands high. Or when one jumper lifts her right foot to the partner's right hand, and jumps on left foot, as her partner holds her right foot. Or partners face each other and place their hands on each other's shoulders, then kick alternate legs high into the air as they jump, as in the "Can-Can." This is sometimes done with a whole row of jumpers standing behind each other, with hands on shoulders of person in front. Bouncing or passing a ball between jumping partners is done, and "Merry-Go-Round," in which six jumpers enter the turning rope together and form a circle, joining hands, is a difficult but interesting variation. As the rope swings each one jumps to the right, so that the jumps move in a circle. Two others may be moving inside the circle to the left with hands joined, as the larger circle moves to the right.

Finally, there are many gestures and mimetic movements that go with specific rhymes, such as "say your prayers," "bow-legged Dutchman," "while the hand goes around," "in came the doctor" "heel and a toe and around you go," "salute the captain," "bow to the queen," "turn your back on the dirty old king," "turn around," etc. not to mention the unlimited number of variations that exist everywhere. It would be difficult to tell which came first, the mimetic movements or the words of the rhyme.

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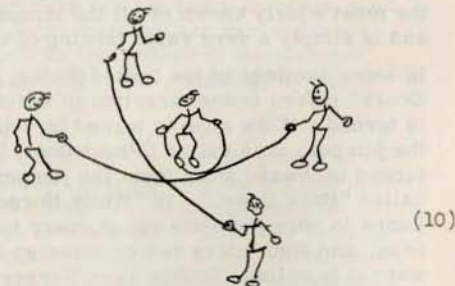
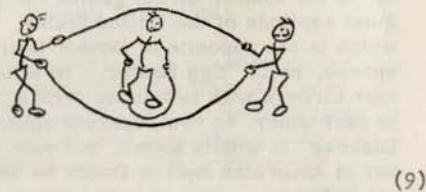
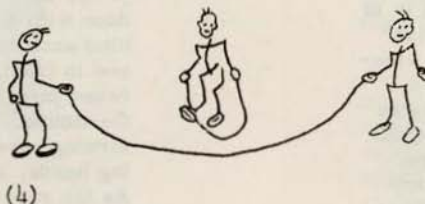
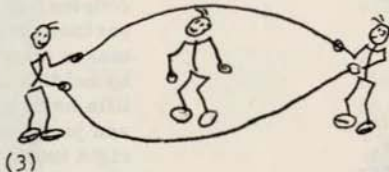
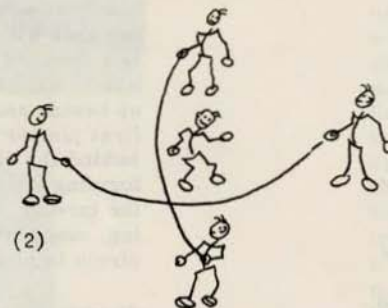
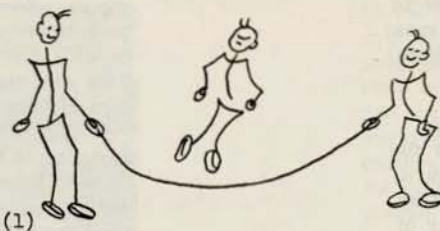
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LONG ROPE - TWO PUPILS TURNING

1. Hold rope various heights from ground--students run and jump across rope.
2. Hold two ropes shoulder width apart and same height from ground. Jumpers jump first rope, then second rope.
3. Same as 1 but one turner sends a "wave" along the rope. (Make it "wiggle" like a snake.)
4. Same as 2 but each turner sends a "wave" down the rope in his right hand.
5. Same as 1 but turners swing rope back and forth near ground. Students jump the rope.
6. Build a house. Rope is held a few inches above the ground. Each time all the jumpers complete a trial, the rope is raised higher.
7. With arms stretched sideward hold two ropes--the rope nearer the children is held low--the other rope is held higher. Students jump low rope and run under high rope.
8. Run through "revolving doors." (When rope is turned forward toward jumpers it is called front door. When it is turned backward away from jumpers it is called back door.
 - (a) Run under rope--front door.
 - (b) Run through front and back doors--(when running thru back door student must make one jump.)
 - (c) Run in (front door) jump once--run out.
 - (d) Increase to any number of jumps.
 - (e) Run in back door--jump once--run out.
 - (f) Increase to any definite number of jumps.
 - (g) Run in front door--jump on one foot.
 - (h) Run in front door--jump on alternate feet.
 - (i) Increase to any definite number of jumps but progress toward one end of rope, necessitating high jumps each time (climb ladder.)
 - (j) Increase to any definite number of jumps but do 1/4, 1/2, 3/4, and full turns in the air on each jump.
 - (k) Run in--jump 10 counts and run out on opposite side.
 - (l) Run in--jump 10 counts and run out on same side entered from.
 - (m) Touch floor with hands on every other jump.
 - (n) Partners hold inside hands--run in and jump as in (k) and (l).
 - (o) Partners run in, jump back to back and both "climb ladder", as in (i).
 - (p) Partners facing while jumping, pass each other.
 - (q) Sparrow hop. Jump rope in deep knee bend position.
 - (r) Bucking broncho. Position: on all fours--hands clear rope first then the feet as the broncho "bucks."

- (s) Place hands on hips, raise one leg keeping knee straight and toe pointed, then jump on the other foot.
- (t) Jump in air--feet forward and touch toes with finger tips (Pike).
- (v) Position: on all fours facing one turner--jump on hands and feet.
(all fours.)
- (w) Forward roll over turning rope, then a backward roll over turning rope.
- (x) Figure Eight--Students line up behind one turner. Student nearer rope runs in, jumps once, runs out and lines up behind other turner. In the meantime, the next student has entered--and so on--the rope is never empty. When all are thru, first jumper returns and others follow. This is a continuous process and the complete pattern forms a figure eight.
- (y) No's 1 and 2 start turning rope--No. 1 holding rope end in left hand, runs around a small semi-circle counter-clock-wise, and jumps the rope without changing the rhythm.

(9) Paired Jumpers

- (a) Minuet turn. Partners run in holding inside hands. Holding hands high one makes an eighth, and full turn under the arm of the other.
- (b) Partners run in, face each other, raise their right ankles to partners right hand, and jump on left foot.
- (c) Wring the dish rag. Partners run in face each other and clasp hands. They jump making continuous turns under their arms.
- (d) Partners run in, face each other and place hands on each others shoulders, then kick alternate legs high as they jump. Others may stand behind each jumper and kick as the leader does.
- (e) Partners pass or bounce a ball to each other. Both may be "in" rope--jumping--or one "in" and one "out."
- (f) Merry-go-round. Six jumpers enter the rope together and form a circle by clasping hands. As the rope swings each one jumps to the right, so that jumps move in a circle. (Two may enter the circle of jumpers, and clasping hands jump to the left as the others move to the right.)

TWO LONG ROPES - TWO TURNERS

1. "Double Dutch" -- two ropes are turned alternately, rope nearer jumper is turned front door - rope away from jumper is turned back door. See diagram 3 and 9.
2. "Double Irish" -- Two ropes are turned alternately, ropes being turned away from the jumpers (just the opposite of Double Dutch.)
3. "Egg Beater" -- (four turners) -- two large ropes are turned at right angles, simultaneously. See Diagram 2 and 10.

RACE TRACK

Use a 3/4" rope 10 feet long. If heavy rope is not available tie a soft shoe on the end of the lighter rope. Pupils in a large circle, one in center swings rope close to floor. As soon as path of rope is determined, pupils move in and jump the end of the rope as it moves past. Anyone hit on foot by rope, is out. Last one to remain is the winner.

NOTE: The following diagrams give additional information which is self-explanatory.

White Horse -- girl jumps in once and runs out at every turn of rope. We also have two girls to go in at a time and go out. Also 3 girls at a time or 4 girls at a time go in at every turn of rope and out. They must be alert and precise to accomplish 3 or 4 in a group. Timing is extra important.

THIRTY-THREE SKIP-ROPE GAMES

For jumping alone, or for two turners and one jumper: (diagrams of each)

1. Here Comes Teacher

Here comes teacher with a big red stick
Wonder what I made in Arithmetic
5 - 10 - 15 - 20 - 25 - 30 - 35 - 40
(etc., to 100, then start over again
until missing)

(simple jumping all thru)

2. Blue Bells, Cockle Shells

Blue bells, cockle shells
Evey Ivy Over
My mother says that I was born
January, February, March, April
May, June, July, August, September
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 , etc.

(swing the rope back and forth,
until "over", then it goes all
the way around)

3. Mabel, Mabel

Mabel, Mabel, set the table
Don't forget the salt and pepper

(simple jumping until "pepper",
then very fast)

4. Rock-a-bye Baby

Rock-abye Baby, in the tree top
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock
When the bough breaks the cradle will fall
Down will come baby, cradle, and all

(rock the rope back and forth
until "down will come baby" or
until "all" and then swing all
the way around)

5. My Mother and Your Mother

My mother and your mother
Lives across the hall
Every night they have a fight
And this is what they call
Icka-bicka, soda cracker
Icka-bicka boo
Icka-bicka, soda cracker
Out goes you.

(simple jumping, going out
on last line)

6. Over In The Meadow

Over in the meadow where the green
grass grows
There sat _____ sweet as a rose
Along came _____ and kissed her on
the nose
How many kisses did she get?
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - etc.

(simple jumping, until missing)

7. Fisherman

Fisherman, fisherman, you got me crazy
Up the River, down the River
One - two - three
You're a bigger fool than me

8. Cinderella

Cinderella, dressed in yellow
Went upstairs to kiss her fellow
How many kisses did she give him?
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - etc.

(simple jumping until "missing")

9. Grades

Next year I will be in the
First, Second, Third, Fourth, etc.
My teacher is
H - O - T

(simple jumping until "peppers"
on H-O-T)

10. Sally Ate a Pickle

Sally ate a pickle
Sally ate some pie
Sally ate some sour kraut
and thought she would die
Whoopsie went the pickle
Whoopsie went the pie
Whoopsie went the sour kraut
And Sally didn't die

11. Mother Sent Me To the Store

Mother sent me to the store
To get some coffee, tea and pepper

(fast on "peppers")

12. Apples, Peaches, Creamery Butter

Apples, peaches, creamery butter
Tell me the initials of your true lover
A - B - C - D - E - etc. (until missing)

13. Bubble Gum

Standing on the corner
Chewing bubble gum
Along came a little boy
And asked for some
No, you little boy
No, you dirty bum
You can't have any
Of my bubble gum



14. All Good Children Go To Heaven

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
All good children go to Heaven

(jumper stoops on "all good children",
while rope turns over her head, then
jumping is resumed on "Heaven")

7 - 6 - 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Jumping rope is fun

(same as above, but stooping on
"jumping rope" and resuming the
jump on "fun")

15. Peel That Orange

Peel that orange round and round
See how many times you touch the ground
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - etc. (until missing)

(jumper touches ground on each
count)

16. Bow-legged Dutchman

Bow-legged Dutchman walking down
the street
Bow-legged Dutchman have a little sweet
Bow-legged Dutchman drink a glass of wine
Bow-legged Dutchman close your eyes
And count to nine
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9

(jumper "bows" her legs while
jumping)



17. Twenty-four Robbers (simple jumping, until missing)

Not last night, but the night before
Twenty-four robbers came knocking at my door
As I went out to invite them in
This is the song that they begin
My birthday is - January, February, March, etc.
It will be on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.

18. Imitation

Lord Weber walks like this
Lord Weber jumped like this
Lord Weber stold a kiss
Lord Weber missed like this

(mimetic)

19. Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin went to France
To teach the ladies how to dance
Heel and toe and around you go
Salute to the captain, bow to the Queen
Turn your back on the dirty old King

(mimetic)

20. Fudge

Fudge, fudge
Call the Judge
Mother had a new-born baby
Not a girl, not a boy
Just an ordinary baby

Wrap it up in tissue paper
Send it down the elevator
First floor - missed
Second floor - missed
Third floor - missed
Fourth floor - kick it out the door

21. Gypsy, Gypsy

Gypsy, gypsy do not tarry
Tell us, tell us, whom shall we marry?

Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief
Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief

What shall we dress in?
Silk, satin, calico, rags
Silk, satin, calico, rags

(for "White Horse")
(two turners, three jumpers)

(diagram)

(one at a time, runs in,
jumps once, and runs out)

What shall we live in?
Brick house, frame house, log house, cabin
Brick house, frame house, log house, cabin

Double your Horses

Silk, satin, calico, rags (two at a time)
Silk, satin, calico, rags

Triple Your Horses

Brick house, frame house, log house, cabin (three at a time)
Brick house, frame house, log house, cabin

22. Mother, Mother I Am Ill

Mother, mother, I am ill (one jumper in)
Call for the doctor over the hill
In came the doctor (another jumper joins her)
In came the nurse (a third jumper in)
In came the lady
With the alligator purse

I don't want the doctor (all three jump together)
I don't want the nurse
I don't want the lady
With the alligator purse

So out goes the doctor (first jumper out)
Out goes the nurse (second jumper out)
Out goes the lady (third jumper out)
With the alligator purse

23. Arithmetic Lesson

One and one make two (one jumper starts and another
Two and one make three joins her) (a third jumper joins)
Two and two make four (a fourth jumper joins)
Come on girls and skip some more (all jump together)

Four minus one make three (first jumper out)
Three minus one make two (second jumper out)
Two minus one make one (third jumper out)
Now our Arithmetic is done (fourth jumper out)

24. Donald Duck (same as Arithmetic Lesson)

Donald Duck is a one-legged duck (first jumper in)
A one-legged, one-legged, one-legged duck

Donald Duck is a two-legged duck (second jumper in)
A two-legged, two-legged, two-legged duck

Donald Duck is a three-legged duck (third jumper in)
A three-legged, three-legged, three-
legged duck

Donald Dick is a four-legged duck (fourth jumper in)
A four-legged, four-legged, four-legged duck

(then the whole procedure is reversed, as each goes out)

25. Skip to My Lou (for two turners, and six jumpers, three on a side at diagonal corners. Figures are like the Virginia Reel)

Skip, skip
Skip to my Lou
Skip, skip
Skip to my Lou
Skip to my Lou, my darling

(diagram)

(one from each side skips, then out to opposite corner, passing each other at center)

Right hand
Skip to my Lou
Right hand
Skip to my Lou
Right hand
Skip to my Lou, my darling

(diagram)

(each takes right hand of opposite as they pass in the center)

Left hand
Skip to my Lou
Left hand
Skip to my Lou
Left hand
Skip to my Lou, my darling

(each takes left hand of opposite as they pass)

Both hands
Skip to my Lou
Both hands
Skip to my Lou
Both hands
Skip to my Lou, my darling

(join both hands at the center and turn once around before going out)

26. The Clock (for two turners and two jumpers)

The clock stands still
While the hands go around
One o'clock, two o'clock
Three o'clock, four
Five o'clock, six o'clock
Seven o'clock, eight
Nine o'clock, ten o'clock
Eleven o'clock, twelve

(diagram)

(one jumper stands in the middle of the rope and jumps, while another jumps around her at each count of the clock)

27. Teddy Bear (for two turners and one jumper)

Teddy bear, teddy bear
Turn around
Teddy bear, teddy bear
Touch the ground
Teddy bear, teddy bear
Show your shoe
Teddy bear, teddy bear
Scho-dooo
Teddy bear, teddy bear
Say your prayers
Teddy bear, teddy bear
Go upstairs
Teddy bear, teddy bear
Turn out the light
Teddy bear, teddy bear
Say good-night

(jumper turns as she jumps)

(jumper stoops and touches ground)



28. Wring the Dishrag

Wring that dishrag
Wring it

(two jumpers, holding hands, make complete turns as they jump, without letting go of hands)



29. Sally Over the Water

Sally over the water
Sally over the sea
Sally broke a bottle
And blamed it on me
I told Ma, Ma told Pa
Sally got a whipping
Ha! Ha! Ha!

(for Double Dutch, with two turners, each holding two ropes, one in each hand. The ropes are turned alternately, that is, when one is up the other is down, and both are turned in the opposite directions, the one nearest the jumper is turned "front door" (or towards the jumper), the one farthest from the jumper is turned "back door" (away from the jumper)



30. Irish

Green is Irish
Shamrock, too
I am Irish
How about you

(same as for Double Dutch, with two ropes and two turners, but the direction of the rope is reversed)

For two ropes with four turners:

31. Eggbeater

My mother made a cake
How many eggs did it take?
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - etc.

(two ropes, four turners, ropes at right angles to each other, turned simultaneously, that is, both are down at the same time and up at the same time)

(the number of eggs (jumpers) in the bowl can vary, sometimes, one, two, or three)

32. Grace, Grace

Grace, Grace
Dressed in lace
Went upstairs
To powder her face
How many boxes did it take?
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - etc.

(same as for Eggbeater)

(two ropes, four turners, ropes at right angles to each other)





SKIP ROPE GAMES
Recorded in Edgewood, Illinois

SIDE I

FP 729 A

- Band 1 Here Comes Teacher
- Band 2 Blue Bells, Cockle Shells
- Band 3 Mabel, Mabel
- Band 4 Rock-a-bye Baby
- Band 5 My Mother and Your Mother
- Band 6 Over in the Meadow
- Band 7 Fisherman
- Band 8 Cinderella
- Band 9 Grades
- Band 10 Sally Ate a Pickle
- Band 11 Mother Sent Me to the Store
- Band 12 Apples, Peaches, Creamery Butter
- Band 13 Bubble Gum
- Band 14 All Good Children Go to Heaven
- Band 15 Peel that Orange
- Band 16 Bow-legged Dutchman

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SIDE 2

FP 729 B

- Band 17 Twenty-four Robbers
- Band 18 Imitation
- Band 19 Benjamin Franklin
- Band 20 Fudge
- Band 21 Gypsy, Gypsy
- Band 22 Mother, Mother, I am Ill
- Band 23 Arithmetic Lesson
- Band 24 Donald Duck
- Band 25 Skip to my Lou
- Band 26 The Clock
- Band 27 Teddy Bear
- Band 28 Ring the Dishrag
- Band 29 Sally Over the Water
- Band 30 Irish
- Band 31 Eggbeater
- Band 32 Grace, Grace

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Notes by Esther Brown
Production by Moses Asch

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- 10" 33 1/2 RPM
- FP1 SQUARE DANCES, *Piute Pete*
 FP3 DABLING COREY, *Pete Seeger*
 FP4 TAKE THIS HAMMER, *Lead Belly*
 FP6 WASHBOARD BAND, *Sonny Terry*
 FP9 ALL DAY SINGIN', *A. Van Wey*
 FP10 LONGSOME VALLEY, *Folk Songs*
 FP11 DUST BOWL BALLADS, *Woody Guthrie*
 FP13 900 MILES (& OTHER RR SONGS), *Houston*
 FP14 ROCK ISLAND LINE, *Lead Belly*
 FP19 SEA SHANTIES & LOGGERS-MEN SONGS
 FP21 SEEDS OF LOVE, *Andrew Rowan Summers*
 FP22 COWBOY BALLADS, *Cisco Houston*
 FP23 SOLOMON VALLEY BALLADS
 FP24 LEAD BELLY'S LEGACY, VOL. 3
 FP28 GET ON BOARD, *The Folkmasters*
 FP30-2 BLUES, *Bronnie McOhee*
 FP34 LEAD BELLY'S LEGACY, VOL. 4
 FP35 HARMONICA SOLOS, *Sonny Terry*
 FP36 MORFON FOLK SONGS, *L. M. Hilton*
 FP37 ANGLO-AMERICAN BALLADS, *Nye*
 FP38 SPIRITUALS, *Dock Reed, Vera Hall*
 FP39 SONGS OF JOE HILL, *Joe Glazer*
 FP40 SMOKY MT. BALLADS, *Lansford*
 FP41 "LADY GAY", *Andrew R. Summers*
 FP42 HEAD TRAVELIN', *Cisco Houston*
 FP43 FIVE SEEDER SAMPLES
 FP44 "FALSB LAIKS", *Andrew R. Summers*
 FP46 AMERICAN NORTHWEST BALLADS
 FP47-1 TEXAS FOLKSONGS, *Hermes Nye*
 FP48-1 BALLADS—REVOLUTION (1767-1775)
 FP48-2 BALLADS—REVOLUTION (1775-1781)
 FP48-3 BALLADS—WAR OF 1812 (1799-1812)
 FP48-4 BALLADS—WAR OF 1812 (1812-1815)
 FP48-5 FRONTIER BALLADS, VOL. 1
 FP48-6 FRONTIER BALLADS, VOL. 2
 FP48-7 BALLADS—CIVIL WAR (1830-1861)
 FP48-8 BALLADS—CIVIL WAR (1861-1865)
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