

FOLKWAYS RECORDS  
FC 7471

FLYING HORSE  
TELL IT  
CREATURES  
OF OTHER  
WORLDS

SOUNDS OF OTHER  
WORLDS  
MONSTER  
OF OTHER  
WORLDS  
LITTLE  
ANIMALS

BE SURE AND LAUGH  
FOR ME  
SCREAMS  
DON'T KID YOUR SELF  
THEY ARE OUT THERE

DEVILS  
SOUNDLESS  
ANIMALS  
NOT LISTED  
KIDS  
HI, KIDS  
CAN YOU  
HEAR ME  
YODELING



CALLING  
DOGS  
WHISTLING  
VOICES  
ALL OF  
THEM HA  
FUN  
BARK  
SPOTTED  
MOLE  
BROWN  
MOLES  
MULE  
UNICORNS  
FIGHT  
BAND  
PICKING

3000 AND 645 WORKS OF ART  
HOWARD FINSTER - MAN OF MANY VOICES  
A CHILDREN'S RECORD  
AND CALLS, ANIMALS SOUNDS, HOLLERS, ST  
INGS FROM HIS BOY HOOD IN NORTH A

QL  
698.5  
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1985  
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MUSIC LP

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1 sound disc  
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FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7471

**HOWARD FINSTER—MAN OF  
MANY VOICES**

A Childrens Record  
Bird Calls, Animal Sounds, Hollers, Stories and  
Songs from his boyhood in North Alabama

**SIDE A**

1. Bird calls / clearing out the great American Wilderness / turtle doves courting / Howard talks with crows / bird language / redbirds calling dogs / mockingbird / hoot-owl / hunting possums and coons, dog sounds, wildcats listening, chopping down the tree, dog and coon fight / night in the cabin, Bill comes, they make a bargain / be careful when you're hunting.
2. Holler: "water" / hogs, slop / mule, Annie-go, rich in the meat house / hollering for dogs, cows, hogs / hogs never look up.

**SIDE B**

1. Chicken sounds
2. Kids' games: daredevil, follow-the-leader, knife accident / riding mules / swimming hole fun and pranks
3. Riddles
4. Howard, 14 years old, walking, talking, singing, yodelling / going to church, songs, preaching, courting, sinners outside the church, Decoration Day, Howard's tennis shoes had holes in the toes / box suppers, dancing parties, "Five to My Five," pranks on chickens, dog, cat
5. Song: "John, John, the Piper's Son"

Recorded in Pennville, Georgia, July, 1984,  
by Art and Margo N. Rosenbaum

Notes by Art Rosenbaum  
Cover Art by Howard Finster  
Photographs by Margo N. Rosenbaum

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**HOWARD FINSTER—MAN OF  
MANY VOICES**

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7471

# HOWARD FINSTER—MAN OF MANY VOICES

A Childrens Record

Bird Calls, Animal Sounds, Hollers, Stories and  
Songs from his boyhood in North Alabama

Notes by Art Rosenbaum



Rev. Howard Finster behind his "World's Folk Art Church", with solar studio and nearly completed tower, Pennville, 1984.

Here is Howard Finster's children's record. Like Howard himself, a north Georgia preacher, folk artist, musician, singer and song-maker, poet and visionary--this LP is a diverse mixture. Part of it can be described as folklore--traditional songs and riddles remembered from boyhood in the Sand Mountain region of north Alabama. Part of it is autobiographical vignette, stories of good times and hard times, of kids' games and pranks, in a transitional period in the Appalachia of a half century ago, when a clever country boy could hook up the new power of a T-model Ford battery to shock the farmyard hen out of complacency. Sometimes Howard's stories move from narration into dramatic improvisations, with dialogue and sound effects. And throughout he brings to life the calls and sounds of wild and domestic animals, and man's "hollers" used in calling to and conversing with them, heard and remembered in one of the last corners of the "great American wilderness." The listener will hear some of Howard's value system emerging from this flow of sounds, songs, and stories. Folks had to hunt and farm, and tame nature, but also they learned to love and understand nature and its creatures; and experience had a particular intensity when your fun was not a multi-million dollar theme park like Six Flags Over Georgia, but the mud slides at the swimming hole, and your music was not multi-track rock recordings, but your own voice and perhaps a mail-order five-string banjo--though Howard would not be one to disparage the "inventions of mankind." Finally, Howard is a Baptist preacher who grew up in the "old-time religion," but it was a religion tempered by humor and toler-

ance--as he says, they didn't drive the sinners out of sight, and he was among them at times in his youth. As I write I am looking at Howard's 3,589th numbered work of art, a painting on wood of the Missouri bad-man, Jesse James. The inscription, in part, reads: "Jesse James took chances, he won, and won, and then lost...theres something good about every body even Jessey James he cared for the poor... I love you Jessy I hope you made it, Howard."

In his way, Howard also took chances. Born in 1915 in Valley Head, Alabama, Howard spent most of his life farming, working in cotton mills, repairing small engines and bicycles, and preaching and running revivals in Alabama and Georgia. But after he retired from the ministry he received a "call to make sacred art." Howard filled in a swamp behind his house in Pennville, outside Summerville, Georgia, and built a two-acre "Paradise Garden": towers made of hundreds of bicycle frames carry roses above houses made of mirrors and of blue Milk of Magnesia bottles; concrete sculptures, plywood cut-out paintings, with bible passages, poems, and portraits of the famous, from Jesus to Henry Ford, Einstein, and Elvis Presley, are interspersed with trellises bearing gourd vines, and "every man-made item," a monument to the inventiveness of man. His work was rooted in shared values of his region: frontier fundamentalism, folk humor, and the poor folks' knack for recycling and reusing junk and scraps, as in patchwork quilts. But the particular form all this took left Howard's family and neighbors baffled, and Howard felt himself "a stranger in this world." Eventually Howard's genius was recognized, and by 1984 he had exhibited his art in galleries all over America, described

his work and sung his songs on the Johnny Carson Show, represented the United States in the 1984 Venice Biennale; and he was the focus of Sermons in Paint--a Howard Finster Folk Art Festival at the University of Richmond, a five-day program of panel discussions, music, workshops, and exhibits. Now his family is helping him produce the art he sends around the world, and build the fantastic museum-tower that rises above his "World's First Folk Art Church" at the edge of his garden.

## HOW THIS RECORD CAME TO BE

I am one of the many formally trained artists to have established friendship and artistic dialogue with Howard Finster. In June, 1984, Howard and I had a two-man exhibition at the Anton Gallery in Washington, D. C. On our way up from Georgia, towing a U-Haul full of paintings, cut-outs, plexiglas boxes, we stopped for the night at the Virginia home of a friend who will be surprised to hear himself described as a "rich man", though he lives in a large house with a beautiful view of the Shenandoah Valley. We played music until late at night, and I had hoped to sleep late, but was awakened at dawn by the sound of crows near the house. This "meeting" went on for an hour, and I realized that one voice was a bit different. On looking out I saw Howard, dressed in a suit and necktie, conversing with the crows in their own language. About this time they finally realized that he was not "a crow like other crows" and flew off.

As we drove on to Washington later, we asked Howard about the bird calls. I had thought I knew Howard's range of talents pretty well: his visionary art in countless media, his knowledge of old folk songs and his skill at making up new poems and songs and performing them with banjo, guitar, or piano; but I was surprised that he could not only "mock" birds and other wild animals so skilfully, but that he linked these sounds to evocative stories of his boyhood in the mountains. My wife Margo suggested that we tape some of these sounds and tales in the car. Starting with a retelling of the morning's meeting with the crows, other bird calls carried Howard back to vivid boyhood reminiscences. We agreed that there should be an LP record of this material, intended primarily, but not exclusively, for kids, who might be delighted and intrigued by this unconventional sound-picture of growing up in another place and time. We returned to Pennville later in the summer, set up our recorder in Howard's studio in the chapel in Paradise Garden, and taped the calls, hollers, songs, and stories, this time without car noises, and practically without pause or interruption. Howard learned to talk to children from years in the ministry, as well as raising his family with his wife, Pauline. Today he continues to work and relax in his garden, surrounded by grandchildren and neighbor kids who bounce to heaven and back on his trampoline, listen to his tales and songs, and help him with his projects, giving tangible form to memories, dreams, and visions.

## Note on the transcriptions

In these transcriptions I have tried to set down the character of Howard Finster's southern mountain speech and personal idiom. I have attempted to spell out phonetically the bird

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calls and other sounds when possible--otherwise the sound is designated in parentheses. However, as this is spoken rather than written language, it would probably be best to enjoy this record without following the text.

SIDE A Band 1

Bird calls / clearing out the great American Wilderness / turtle doves courting / Howard talks with crows / bird language / redbirds calling dogs / mockingbird / hoot-owl / hunting possums and coons, dog sounds, wildcats listening, chopping down the tree, dog and coon fight / night in the cabin, Bill comes, they make a bargain / be careful when you're hunting

Well, here at Paradise Garden in Pennville, we--back when we was children, the great American frontiers (-men) came and cleaned this place off, begin to clear it off, well you heard the birds. We had lots more birds than we have now. You'd walk out in the forest, a-look, there's a big pine tree, there's a whole bunch of pine trees, and direc'ly I hear somethin' like, uh (whip-poor-will call) and go a little further, hear the late evening call, hear these whip-poor-wills callin', (whistles: whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will) Now, look out, when them ol' whip-poor-wills starts hollerin', along about dusky-dark in the twilight, look out over a big new ground we're cleanin' up, stumps all over the place, logs a-layin' across the ground, and old gee-whiz, and the horses out plowin' and workin' in the new grounds and cleanin' off this great America. And then we see smoke all over the place, we're burnin' brush, and 'long we get back 'bout supper-time at the house and set out on the front porch after eatin' a few hog back-bones, and a few beans, we hear this sound, of a night, and they holler all night long: (whistles) and we hear that thing sayin' something like a "chip-out-a-white-oak" all night long, he sings, and then we hear one going: (whistles, whip-poor-will) And he hollers all night long, plumb on into the mornin', just 'fore daylight he stops a-hollerin' (whistles: whip-poor-will) And next mornin' we get up and start out. We's in Tappahannock, Virginia, not very long ago, and turtle doves, I hear'd one holler a way out a pretetty good little place out there, and , oo-oo-oo, and I got to callin' him, you know, he was huntin' for his sweetheart, and I got to hollerin' like his sweetheart, you know, and he'd come up with in, clost enough to where you could nearly see him, and oo-oo-oo-oo, and I'd holler to match him. And I'd got to hollerin' low like I's a long ways off, and get him to come in to me, and he'd start out, and he'd get to where you could just barely hear him, oo-oo-oo, and he's makin' out like he's a-go'in' away off to see if a lady bird'd foller him, and he got so far out you could just barely hear him, and her voice didn't get no higher, he'd start comin' back, and I'd holler like I's a pretty good ways off, oo-oo-oo, and I'd call her back, and when she'd come back down into the back yard and lit up on the limb lookin' fer her sweetheart, and her sweetheart happened to be me settin' in a chair. And after she seen me she flew down in the yard and flew across, and went on out. And I don't know for sure whether that turtle dove ever knew that was me a-hollerin' or not. I b'lieve she's probably still huntin' for that bird now. That's wonderful to foller out.

Not long ago I was with brother Art, we was on our way to Washington, and we stopped over in Lexington, Virginia, wasn't it? I b'lieve, and out there there was a lot of crows, and we's sort of out in the country stayin' in this big mansion, a rich feller lived out there in his big mansion, and down below the house was a big terrace, and flowers and bushes all down in there, and that mornin' I got up, and the crows was havin' a meeting down below on the terrace there, and, caw! ca! caw! caw! (etc.) I went down there, and I thought to myself, I wonder what y'all cawin' about this mornin' down there. So I went down, you know, and they had never hear'd a crow like me, when I hollered, I was gonna be a big crow, one bigger than any 't they'd ever heard, and they's

down there goin' caw! caw! caw! caw! caw! And I hollered out, I thought I'd see what they'd do, and I said CAW! CAW! CAW! And boy, I hollered so loud like a crow, till them crows didn't know what to do, they all quieten down real quiet, and they stopped their meeting, and everything! And direc'ly I seen one flew across the front yard right over me and he was a-headin' towards the ridge. He went back in where the ridge was, 'cause he'd heard this big crow, and he's just afraid of it, and ever'thing quieten down, and then I begin to holler just like a regular crow y'know, caw, caw, caw, caw, caw, caw, and direc'ly he come flyin' back thinkin' the crows was hollerin', but they wasn't hollerin', it was me. He come back down off of the ridge and flew back down in the front of the levee in front of the house, there, and they all got started again, caw! caw! caw! caw! caw! They's a bunch of 'em down there, havin' fun, y'know. And what they's doin', when they heard that big crow was goin' to the ridge, and they come back, and so after they come back, I made a big crow holler, and I said, CAW! CAW! CAW! CAW! And oh, boy, they listened to that! They all stopped their meeting, and those crows flew away. And they never come back all the time I's there. They figured that crow was such a huge big crow, that they couldn't never master him, y'know.

And it's wonderful doin' bird calls, and all of the birds they have their language, they understand one another, and if we could talk a bird language we could talk to 'em. So that's what I do, I talk a bird language and call 'em up and look 'em over, y'know, and I don't shoot 'em like a lot of people, y'know some people call up ducks, y'know, with a duck call, and then they shoot 'em. Well I don't do 'em thataway. I deceive 'em, and call 'em up, but I don't hurt birds, I love birds.

And a lot of times, I was choppin' corn, a little boy, I'd hear my ol' dog, he'd go with me, his name's ol' Brownie, you know, and ol' Brownie'd go down with me to hoe and chop cotton, and he'd track rabbits and things, and run, y'know, while I's down there, and old redbirds, they'd start hollerin', they'd say (whistles redbird call) and it went like they's callin' the dog, you know, and I've seen them redbirds actually call a dog. My dog'd start down through the field, thinkin' I's down there callin' him. And it's just a redbird, our national park bird here in Georgia. And he'd go (redbird whistle) Then a lot of other birds hollered. Y'know the ol' mockin'bird, he'd get out on the light pole in front of the house, y'know, and he'd stick his breast up, pick his head straight up, open that mouth, and he'd mock all the other birds, y'know. He'd start out (whistles various bird calls) And that mockin'bird's kind of a grey-lookin' bird, and he's absolutely fantastic! He gets out there and mocks all the other birds, mocks the whip-poor-will, he mocks different kinds of birds, and why he does that I don't know, but he mocks all them birds, and they call him a mockin'bird. You prob'ly heard the song about the mockin'bird in the window, and Mockin'bird Hill. The mockin'-bird's a pretty popular bird, y'know.

So I go out in the woodlands to hunt. I used to hunt possums of a night. And you could hear the old hoot-owl, hoo, hoo, hoo hoo hoo, and some of 'em go whoo! hoo hoo. They'd holler out so loud, sometimes, they'd scare y', and when you found that old hoot-owl, and look through those dark shaded trees of a night, and the ol' dog creepin' along behind you with his tail under his belly, and you'd say, well, Lord, there's a panther or somethin' around, I know, because he's always out barkin' and trackin' foxes and things--somethin's out and when that dog'd come in to me with his tail tucked under his belly, and him quiet and not barkin', I said, Lord, there's a panther or a bear, or somethin' out there, and we're gonna have to do somethin' about that, we go on and walk into the cabin, y'know, and all, and finally the old dog--and then all the hounds, y'know the fox hounds, and all. And we had a time huntin' of a night. One night we caught eleven possums, I b'lieve it was, and didn't get a coon that night. Get on the creek bank, and hear them dogs, you know, a-runnin' and a-hollerin', r-ooo! r-ooo! r-ooo! arr! arr! ar! ooo! ooo! They was a-

runnin' them foxes, boy, I mean you could hear 'em tearin' across them hills, and after a while, they'd tree, they'd get under the foot of that old tree, scratchin' dirt, and havin' fits, all them ol' fox-hounds, rr-oooo! ar-ooo! and some of 'em oo! oo! oo! (etc.) them ol' hounds lookin' right straight up that tree, and them eyes beadin' in on that thing, way up thirty feet high, and us comin' with the flashlights, and ever'thing, and runnin' over rocks and fallin', and tryin' to get to where the dogs was treed--with a tote sack, an old burlap tote-sack, car-ryin' our possums on our shoulder and a ax on our back, and them dogs treed away out there maybe four or five blocks, away a quarter of a mile, oooo! oo! oo! oo! row! row! row! little ol' pups, and the big 'uns and all of 'em, woo! oo! oo! whooo! (etc.) and we go on out there, y'know, and lay our ax down and go around the tree a lookin' up, away up there with a spotlight, lookin', and after a while we'd look up in there, and two big round eyes a-shinin' away up in the top of them big trees in the midnight hours! The wildcats all 'round us, just a-listenin' to see what we's gonna do. A black panther somewhere out there could leap off on us, or somethin' y'know. And finally we look, and if the tree's not too big we try to shake him out--can't shake him out. And then finally we maybe have to shoot him out. And then sometimes we'd have to cut the tree down. We take them axes, if the tree wasn't very big, y'know, we'd start choppin', y'know, boy, just choppin', choppin' down the wood (chopping sound) that bark a-flyin' all over the place, the limbs a-crashin', the dogs out there, ooo! ooo! rooo! (etc.) and them old limbs--choppin' with that ax, cuttin' that tree down, you could see them chips a-flyin', boy, when we cut that tree down, and it commenced to crashin'--Arrrrrrgh-pp!! That tree fell on the ground! Them dogs and all at the top of that tree, we didn't know what to do, that coon come out of there, them dogs got in a fight with it, oww! oww! yyy! yy! owww! They got him on the ear!

He split his ear open! That coon still standin' on his back legs a-fightin'! Here come the little dog--bow! row! row! ooo! ooo! ooo! He run out, boy he got him! Here come the big dogs--rooo! rooo! rooo! arrr! arr! (etc.) And boy, there's a fight, I'm tellin' you, that coon--finally we had to get that coon down--them dogs--and get him by the neck, and get him in a bag, y'know, where there were possums and things. And them coons, boy, they're wild, they're mean, boy they can chew you up, they'll chew y' dogs up. And them old dogs--around, made us a camp fire, y'know, and set our possums down, and we come to this cabin, an old log cabin back in there y'know, and set our possums and things down, and our coons and sacks, and the old dogs'd come in for a rest. And set down, we'd build us up a camp fire, in an old fire-place, nothin' in the house, just maybe one old table or somethin', have our lanterns, oil-lanterns, set 'em up on the table, them ol' dogs layin' around the floor restin' up, gettin' ready for the rest of the night. And we'd play a few games of checkers, y'know, a few games, and always, a big pocket full of roasted peanuts, you could hear 'em shellin' those peanuts and reachin' in their pockets, crackin' them peanuts open and eatin' them, and roast peanuts, we'd take out with us on those huntin' trips. And we's out there in that house, and maybe somethin' would come up, y'know, on the door'd start (scratchin' sound) Scratchin' on the door, y'know. "Lord, that's a big black bear!" Dogs runnin' under the bed, quieten down, you hear that scratchin' on the door. And really, it wasn't a bear that time. We went to the door: "Who is that, out there?" "This is Bill." "Who's Bill, man?" "This is Bill, I'm just actin' like a bear! Tryin' to get y'all's attention, you all in there eatin' peanuts, wouldn't let me in, I'm cold, I been huntin', I'm with the Jerry Gang." "Well I tell you, we're not with the Jerry Gang. Where y'all at? How many of y' are they?" "Well they's me and Jim and John and Terry and the little boy, and fourteen more of the little kids, and we're on a campin'

trip too, while we're out here." "Well, I tell you, mister, I don't think we can handle that many here--this cabin is awful small. And it's frightenin' in here. There's a black bear somewhere--" "Oh, there are! Open the door, Mr. Finster, let us in!" "Yah!" "Stop that baby from cryin', that bear, y' call it in! Be quiet all you all out there!" "Help, Mr. Finster, we got to get in, it's gonna eat us up, we got to get in!" "Well you just wait till I get to the door, quit knockin, then!" (knocking sounds) "I told you to quit knockin'." "Oh, Mr. Finster, a bear's gonna get us out here!" "Now if you don't be quiet out there it is gonna get y'! I've got my foot tangled up in this rope, and my possum sack's come untied, and the possums is gettin' out, will you please quit knockin'!" (more knocking) "PLEASE quit knockin'! Who are y'?" "I'm there! I want here!" "I'll be there in a minute, quit knockin', quit knockin, man! (knocking stops) OK." Yeah, well, have to open the door back here, see who it is, crack the door just a little bit. "You sure that's who you are?" "Yeah, that's who I am, can't you see? See, this is my watch, can't you remember this watch? Here's my ax!" "OK, I'm gonna let you in, now, man, you have to be quiet--you're not drinkin', are you?" "No, no, not drinkin', we have these kids with us, out here." "OK, come one in, Bill, come on in." "What y' doin' in here, playin' checkers?" "Yeah, playin' checkers, man, playin' checkers. What you doin'?" "Oh, we're huntin' a little, got fifteen coons outside, and got four possums." "Fifteen coons, man? You not gonna stay here without payin' rent, give us part of them coons. We've only got one coon tonight, and it split our dog's ear." "Aaah, can't give you over a couple of it, you have a couple--" "OK, OK, then."

I tell you, when you grow up and everything and get out and get to huntin' it's a lot of fun, but you got to be careful. About fallin' in old wells, one of our dogs fell in an old well, minin' camp--when you're out huntin', be sure and watch for these old wells--in minin' camps, sometimes you might walk out over a thing and fall seventy feet down, right in the ground. Be careful of a night when you're out huntin'. OK, boys? This is Howard Finster, tellin' you how it's done.

#### SIDE A Band 2

Holler: "water" / hogs, slop / mule, Annie-go-rich in the meat house / hollering for dogs, cows, hogs / hogs never look up

Well, when we's out to holler, sometimes we'd call for somethin', like, we's down in the field, "Water!" That old plow-handle standin', the mule sweatin', the sweat drippin' off of him, down there, and the water-boy hadn't come, and, "WATER! WATER! 00-000-00-000, Water!" And they come call for water, boy, we drunk water, back in them days. We got to ride our ol' mules to water, we rode 'em nearly a quarter of a mile, wanted 'em 'em to drink out of the branches, y'know, and they'd get to drinkin', we's afraid they'd drink too much, we'd kick 'em in the side, y'know, keep 'em from drinkin', couldn't pull their heads up. We didn't want them to drink too much while they's hot, but boy, they'd drink, they'd suck that water in! Prob'bly drunk minners 'n' ever'thing. And ol' frog settin' around on the bank, Whah! whah whah whah, all them things a-hollerin', y'know, hogs a-gruntin' and squealin'-- Wheeeee! wheee! whee! The hogs'd get hungry, y'know, we had what you'd call a slop-bucket set behind the old wood-stove, put the dish-water and all the crumbs, bread-stuff in there, dump that to the hogs, get about a ten-quart water-bucket full of scraps and dish-water and grease and stuff from the table, and take 'em over and them old hogs would get there on the fence with the hind feet on the ground and two paws up on the fence, rearin' up on the top, Raaahh! (more hog noises) Be tryin' to pour the slop over and they hit it with the side of the nose and spill part of it on me tryin' to pour it in the trough, I'd get mad and almost



Howard Finster's grandchildren, dressed for church, and Finster sculpture, Paradise Garden, Pennville, 1981.

say: "You-- ah,mmm! uh-mm!" Almost say word 'fore I could stop, and finally I get it in there, and them ol' hogs'd start (slurping noises), they just gulch it down! You can hear 'em slappin', slöppin' that water, boy, they just eatin' that water like ever'thing, and then you'd throw a few ears of corn over there, and they'd start crashin' that corn, chompin' on it, and them hogs, got 'em quieten down, then, and you feed 'em and go on back home.

And I had several different hollers. Had one mule, that mule, we called her Annie-go-rich, and ol' Annie-go-rich, we had a meat house, where we packed meat, and it's right smart o' salt had got out the front door and down on the ground, there, and the ground got salty in front of the meat house where we packed our meat for winter. Little Annie-go-rich, she'd break out of the fence and go over in the front of the meat house and stand there and start lickin' that salt in front of the meat house and we couldn't get nowhere around her. At time to plow, y'know, we'd say, "Annie-go-rich! Annie-go-rich! Come here, boy!" She'd just kick with both heels, she wouldn't let us come nowhere 'round her. My brother, he got a two-by-four, and he retched over and try to punch her in the ribs to get her away from the meat house, she was lickin' that salt. And she wouldn't get away at all, boy. He'd punch her in the ribs with that two-by-four, and she'd turn around, run him off! We like to never got that mule away from the meat house where we could harness her up and get back to the field. And old Annie-go-rich liked to get to that meat house and lick that salt, on the ground. Boy, she held her own, she'd fight y' for that salt. So we went over to the barn. Mother's say, "Don't you let that mule out. If he ever gets to that meat house, you won't work him this evenin'." 'Cause you can't get him. He won't

let you come around him." He can kick with both feet, he'd knock you down if you try to catch him around that meat house. We had the meat packed in there, my daddy made blackberry wine, he had a flour-sack cloth over that wine, five gallons of wine, and a dipper hangin' over it, and just go in and pull that cheese-cloth back off that five-gallon jar and take that dipper and dip down and get you blackberry wine, y'know, when you wanted it. And the meat was salted down there. And old Annie-go-rich just loved that salt, boy, you couldn't driver her away, you'd have to let her eat what salt she wanted, then you could get her, bridle her up, and take her on off.

Had several hollers, had some of the dogs we call different names, some of the, "Here, Spot! erp! erp! erp! Here, spot! erp! erp! erp!" And old Spot, he'd hear that call, he'd know it from anybody else's call, and you'd always call your dog. The cows, they's all out runnin' the range back in them days, people's cows run loose, and they had different soundin' bells, and you hear the sound of your herd, why you go and hunt 'em by those bells. Those bells ringin' ding ding ding ding ding ding, and the other feller's cows, his bells was ringin' dong dong dong dong, yours are ringin' ding ding ding. And you could find out where his cows was by the ring of his bells and find out where your cows was by the ring of your bells. And a lot of times we'd call the old cows up, whoooooo (cow calls) the old cow's 'd come. And we had the hogs, run in a range up in the hickory-nut forest, they eat hickory nuts, and acorns, they eat lots of acorns. And the old sow, had a big rail fence--my mother'd go out and find, where she's havin' pigs, she'd have to go hunt up the place where she'd hide out--carry leaves by the mouthful, and build her a big bed by the corner of the rail fence--the old sow'd have her pigs there, she'd have eight or ten pigs, y'know. We went to slop them hogs is runnin' loose, it wasn't in a pen fattenin' for eatable hogs, heeep heeep, woh pig! Y'see, them ol' hogs a-runnin', boy, I mean they's really runnin'. But there's somethin' about them hogs that's kindly stupid, y'know. They eat acorns all their life, never did even look up to see where they's comin' from. That's the way with some people, y'know. They eat all the food and every-thing this old earth has, and never look up to see where it's comin' from. That's the way them hogs was. They'd eat five years under them acorn trees and never look up to see where their food's comin' from. I look up to see where my food's comin' from, I'm thankful to God for my food.

#### SIDE B Band 1

##### Chicken sounds

And then we had reg'lar old billy-goats that tear out of the fence, cleaned up ev-erything you had, nearly, and then different things like that, that we'd call. And then we had our chickens run outside, y'know, and we'd feed 'em so much corn a day, and we had certain parts of the bread scraps we'd give to the chickens We'd go out, and the chickens would be out a-rangin', huntin' bugs, and things, and we'd say: Chiiiick chiiiick chiiiick! chich-o, chiiiick, chiick, Them old roosters'd be comin' in, you could hear him crowin', lot of times, find where he's at, he'd say (rooster sound) another'd say (other rooster sound) and the other'd say (first rooster sound) other'n'd say (third rooster sound). And the old hens out there, y'know, when they's scratchin' stuff for their little ones, they'd say (hen sounds) and they'd scratch that stuff around, call their little babies (chick sounds) and then some hens'd get happy, and they'd sing (hen song), and then somethin'd come up, they all got scared, y'know, the hens'd say (scared hen sound) and the rooster'd say (rooster sound) then they'd all start runnin' (excited sounds). And when

a hen layed, she always come off of the nest after she layed, we knowed when we could have a egg for dinner, 'cause when the hen layed, she'd say (clucking). When we heard that, we knowed there was a fresh egg in the nest.

SIDE B Band 2

Kids' games: daredevil, follow-the-leader; knife accident / riding mules / swimming hole fun and pranks

When I was a child growin' up we'd play daredevil, and also we'd play follering-the-leader. And some brave brat would get out there, and everything he done, we had to do it, if we joined the game. If we was one of the gang, we had to do everything he done, he was the leader. Sometimes he'd jump dangerous ditches, y'know. Say, "Y' gotta do that, if you join us. You gotta jump that ditch." And we'd try our best to jump that ditch, y'know. And if you couldn't jump that ditch, you couldn't foller the leader, you had to go back. We'd do everything we could. And then they'd say, "How many of y' can walk ten rails on the railroad without fallin' off?" You foller the leader. The leader'd walk ten rails, well you had to walk ten rails, foller the leader, to stay in the game, y'know. If you couldn't do what they done, why you was second or third, or maybe last. And the one that was the leader was the one that could do all them things, and the ones that follered was the ones that was tryin' to do all them things. And I seen one kid one time, I seen him taken a knife, a sharp knife, and layin' his finger on somethin', and he come down like he's goin' to cut his finger off, and he jerk his finger out, y'know, and hit with the knife. And he kept doin' that, he put his finger on the table and he had his knife drawn back, big ol' butcher knife, he'd lay his finger out there like he's gonna cut it off, he come down with that butcher knife (sound of knife hitting table) like that, and he'd draw his finger back ever' time, just 'fore the butcher knife got to it, y'know. Well I's playin' daredevil one day by myself, and I's just a little feller, and I stuck my little finger, this 'n' right here, up on the iron latch, and I come down with that butcher knife and jerked my finger out, and I come down, I didn't get my finger out, and it cut that finger off right there, Art, and it was hangin' down, straight down, just with a little hide on it--hit it right in that knuckle, cut it off. And my sister come down there and tuck a piece of flour sack and wrapped that up, and put a bandage around it, and I'm not settin' here if that didn't grow back on there. That finger grew back on there and that's it I'm a-wigglin' right there now. And they just happened to hit it on the knuckle, and cut it apart where the knuckle was, and she done it up with a flour sack cloth had been washed clean, and doctored it, and that grew back. So you guys that's playin' daredevil out there, follerin' the leader, watch about what you doin', be sure you get your finger out from under the butcher knife before you ever come down on it, 'cause I didn't get mine out, and cut it off! (editor's note: better learn Howard's lesson and don't try this at all)

And then, playin' the daredevil, we'd get on them old mules, y'know, me and J. B. White, one of my school-feller-man, one time, we's playin' up in the woods in the hog-lot, a-ridin' these old mules. There's a log of old wire, old tage-wire, layin' around, pieces of it on the ground--we'd get on that mule, and he go to trottin', and we'd go to bouncin' up and down about six inches off his back and get tickled, you know. And we got down through there one day a-trottin' on that ol' mule, and he got tangled up in that wire and started fallin' and seemed like he stumbled ten or twelve feet, and tryin' to get up, and us slidin' off, and finally we fell off and J. B. fell across the fence on his back and pushed the bob wire down, I fell down under the mule's feet, her tryin' to get up (mule

hoof sounds) her feet just about like that, that old mule tryin' to get up, I's afraid she's gonna stomp us to death. He's layin' across the bob wire fence, I's a-layin' down under her feet. But y'know, she got up without even hurtin' us! And we quit laughin' when she started fallin'. We thought she wasn't never gonna get to the ground, she started fallin'! And we'd ride mules and play daredevil and jump ditches, all of that, and we'd go to the swimmin' hole, we just went out to the main streams, and we'd pull off--strip nekkid, us kids would, and it's in behind bushes and things, and the creek went through the wood-lines, and we'd go on there and strip off and go in swimmin', and be a bunch of mean boys together down there havin' fun, and we'd throw water up on the bank, and we'd skate bare-footed on clay mud, we'd skate up to twenty feet on clay mud, just throwin' water up on the bank, and skatin' on our bare feet. I remember one day a-skatin' down through there, and fell and bumped the back of my head, and it give me the headache. And a lot of times when we'd go in swimmin' we'd leave our clothes up on the bank, y'know, and so, if some of 'em 'd want to go home, say, "I've got to go home, I've got to get up in the mornin', go to school." And the ones that's in the creek wouldn't let 'em go home, 'cause when they get out on the bank and start puttin' their clothes on, they'd take a big dab of mud and throw and hit 'e right in the back, splatter mud all over them, and they couldn't put their clothes on! So they'd have to come back in and rinse that mud off 'fore they could put their clothes on, they'd come back in and swim a while, and then they'd try to slip out. They'd slip out through bushes and get out of the water and get in there and have one leg in their pants y'know--somebody'd pick up a big bunch of mud and throw and hit 'em right in the belly again! And they'd have to pull their clothes back off and come back in the branch--they called it what they's makin' them 'em stay in there with 'em by throwin' mud on 'em. Wouldn't let 'em get out till they got out. And all that stuff. That's in country days of old, y'know.

SIDE B Band 3

Riddles

Oh, I could set around and tangle you up from now on with riddles--uh, what is this? Six legs down and three legs up, throwed all around like a little pup. That's a man a-ridin' a mule with a wash-pot on his head.

Alright, what is this? It's high as a house, b'lieve it or not, it's high as a house, then again it's low as a mouse, and it's bitter as gall, and it's good after all! What is that? Well, you don't know what that is. That there's black walnut. When it's in the tree it's as high as a house, when it falls down on the ground it's low as a mouse, and the first cover on the wall, it's as bitter as gall, and when you get into the kernel it's good after all. Ha ha ha!

And what's this? Blackie went in blackie left whitey. Whitey was in blackie while blackie came out of blackie. Don't know that'n'? Well that there's a black hen went in a black stump and layed a white egg and come out. Ha ha ha ha ha, whoooo!

SIDE B Band 4

Howard, 14 years old, walking, talking, singing, yodelling / going to church, songs, preaching, courting, sinners outside the church, decoration day, Howard's tennis shoes had holes in the toes / box suppers, dancing parties, "Five to My Five", pranks on chickens, dog, cat

This is Howard Finster walkin', and a-talkin' (sings) out in the forest. I'm a-goin' down the trail, tell a little story

carryin' a pail, when I was about 14 years old. Oh deedle-oh-a-lay-ee-oo (continues yodelling) On down that trail I walked and I talked and I carried my little pail. Went on out. And what are we goin' to talk about? Do you remember what we's goin' to talk about? We was goin' down this trail out to tell about the experience of life from a boy 14 years old, walkin' out this trail, and yodellin' this song right on down, out to the church-house where they was singin' them old songs:

Shall we gather at the river,  
We're right standing to the o'er--

And sing and old song:

When the trumpets of the Lord shall sound  
And time shall be no more,  
And the morning breaks eternal, bright  
and fair--

And there set the old church-house, and they's a-havin' meeting, and that preacher up there preachin': "Hey, you people out there gonna hafta straighten up! You gonna hafta get on hyeah! and get to the line of the Word of God-ah! Some of y'all not livin' it to-DAY, gonna hafta do better! Know if I can do it you can do it. Come on, now, people! Whooooie! Hallelujah! Amen! With glory! Glory! Yeah you gonna hafta get out there and do it like I do it, what I'm tellin' you to do! And you gonna hafta straighten up, you gonna meet that GREAT Judgement Bar, you gonna hear that Gabriel's trumpet BLOW some day, and then, LOUD, people hafta be ready for it--" They's singin' them old songs:

Come to this fountain so sweet and ri--  
Put out at-ee, at the Savior's feet

And you hear 'em a-hollerin' "Hallelujah! Amen! Whooooo, glory! Hallelujah!" And them revivals goin' on, you could hear 'em for miles, and them old wagons, we'd ride as high as six miles, just goin' to a church, make no difference what kind of church it was, jus' so we could get there and hear that preacher preachin' and hear them people shoutin'. Runnin' over the church and havin' a big time in the Lord. Singin' them old songs. They'd hitch your horses up--you could hear them wagon wheels a-crushin' gravel for two miles, seemed like, almost. Them old wagons, you could hear them a-comin', and we done all of our courtin' on them wagons. They'd haul a whole wagon-load of people goin' to church, we'd get to sit by our girl-friend, six miles, on a wagon, it'd take half of the night to get there and back. Some of us, all we went fer, just to court, and be together. Didn't care nothin' about no meeting. On the outside of the church, you'd see a whole--most all of the sinners was there. They's out there tradin' pocket-knives of a night and drinkin' whiskey, and gamblin', while the preacher was runnin' a revival. 'Fore that revival's over, a lot of them old gamblers'd come peepin' in the winder, and the first thing you know they'd fall on that altar and get saved. We didn't run the rebels off, they stayed on the outside, played games, had fun. I used to be on the outside with 'em. I remember when they'd fight, have fights outside the church, and cuss, and raise the devil, raise hell out there while the preacher's carryin' on a revival. And after--before the revival was over a lot of them old boys'd get saved, and get out of that stuff, and be baptized. These days we live in in 19 and 84, they hear about somebody doin' somethin' wrong, they don't even want 'em around, y'know. Well we didn't do that. They hung around with us, and they'd finally get saved, y'know. Sometimes you might have to call the law and quieten 'em down, but most of the time they'd get far enough from the church, they wouldn't disturb the church. But we all come together, had big dinners, y'know, had Decoration Day, memorial services. And I remember one particular time that they's havin' a Decoration Day and a big dinner over at Filin' Hill, and I was so pore back then I didn't even have no shoes--my tennis shoes had holes in the toes of 'em. And my mother wouldn't let me go that day,

on account of my tennis shoes had holes in 'em. I'll never forget that. And all of my friends a-join' by to the big all-day dinner-on-the-ground and ever'thing, and Howard Finster settin' there with his little ol' tennis shoes, holes in the toes of 'em. My mama wouldn't let me go, she said I didn't have fit clothes to wear. That's one day that that almost killed me, to miss all my friends and that big dinner and that good time all day, just on account of havin' a pair of tennis shoes with the holes in the toes of 'em. Y'know.

And then, the way we build our churches a lot of times, we'd have box suppers, y'know, and the ladies would fix a nice dinner in a box. They'd usually take a shoe box and decorate it up with crepe paper and make it look like a beautiful box, and put flowers on it, and put a good supper in it, and the women, the pretty women'd bring out their boxes, and then the boys would bid on their box. And the one that bid the highest got the box, and if you bought a pretty girl's box, you'd get to eat supper with her, no matter who she was. So them boys'd bid on a box, they'd catch a feller's girl-friend with a box, and bid agin him, y'know. Try to get to eat with his girl-friend. And some of them boxes'd sell up to seven dollars a piece, seven and a half, in hard times. On up to seven, eight, and some of 'em brought ten and eleven dollars, bid on up to ten, eleven dollars, buy that girl's supper and that box to get to eat supper with her, y'know. And it raised money to build schools and churches like that. And we had a lot of fun. We had dancin' parties, on Saturday night. "Well, we gonna have a dance at Finster's Saturday night, next Saturday night we gonna have a dance at Bill Johnson's." Ever' once in a while a drunk'd come in, we'd have to take a broom and run him out, but most of the people didn't drink too much, they'd bring in their fiddles and their ban-jers, and they'd start playin':

Five to my five is twenty-five,  
Six to my five is thirty,  
Seven to my five, thirty-five,  
Eight to my five are forty.

And we'd sing the multiplication tables. And ever'body could learn 'em. Kids could learn 'em. And they'd learn the multiplication tables by singin' that song. And the end of it says:

Swing your partner 'round and a half  
And swing your partner round and a half

And all like that. And me and my brother, we'd get an old car battery, a T-model coil, and we'd charge a water-bucket. And people didn't know nothin' 'bout 'lectricity--a girl come up one night, picked the dipper up, throwed it down right quick, says, "Lord, somethin's wrong with my arm!" And she got shocked. It's the first time she'd ever got shocked--she didn't know what it was. Me and my brother just rolled with laughin'. We had fun like that 'n'. We tuck that old car battery and that old T-model coil and fixed up a piece of tin out in the yard, and put some wet dough on it. The chickens come up, y'know, and an old hen start to peck that wet dough, and a blue blaze flew to her bill, and she went right straight up--whoo, cck cck cck! And she sailed plumb out in the field, she went so high. And we had a lot of fun, just shockin' things, y'know. Maybe put out some-thin' there, and ol' dog'd come up, he'd start to eat it, and a little spark'd fly to his nose, and he'd jump Owwwww! ooo! ooo! And he run off under the house, y'know. We'd take a newspaper, double the corner of it up, tie a string to it, bore a hole in a grain of corn, put the other end of the string in that grain of corn, the old chickens would come out and we would throw a lot of corn out there, and the old rooster got that'n with a string on it, and he swallowed it down, he put his foot up to the side of his mouth, try to scratch it out, d'irectly he tuck up the slack in the string and shuck the news-paper and excited all the whole flock. They got to runnin', that old rooster got it right up over their back, and that made for the

house, went under the floor. When it went under the floor they just swep' under there, like a tornado. When they went under there for refuge, and that newspaper went right on in after 'em. And I run to the other side of the house--and instead of stoppin' under the floor for refuge, they went on out on the other side, 'cause the newspaper was right behind 'em under there! Ha ha ha! We had fun. Ever' time we'd catch our mama gone, we'd have fun. And we had an old cat, and our table was nine feet long, and we'd got our first linoleum--linoleum rugs come out. We got our first linoleum in that big kitchen in there, and there's a stairway there, we get that old tom-cat in there and mop that floor, get him started 'round the table, watch his drivers slip! Then we get right in behind him, his drivers a-slippin' and his feet, just pa-waa-wa-wa-wa trrrr, like that! And that's right on his tail, y'know, and the closet door come open, and he finally got ahold of the bottom step, and he run off and left us. And we done things like that when we was kids and we catch our mother gone, y'know.

#### SIDE B Band 5

Song: "John, John, the Piper's Son"  
Sung with five-string banjo

Used to know a little song called "The Piper's Son", first song that I prob'ly ever heard, and it goes like this:

John, John, the piper's son,  
Stole a pig an away he run;  
Pig got loose and killed a goose--  
Put ol' Johnny in the calaboose.  
Put ol' Johnny in the calaboose.

(repeat first four lines)

And that's "John, John, the Piper's Son", the first song that I heard done.

#### NOTES

For background on Howard Finster, including an exhaustive bibliography, list of exhibitions, discography, and several articles on various aspects of Finster's work, including one by the writer of these notes on Finster's music, "The Music and Song of Howard Finster", see Oppenheimer, Ann Frederick, and Susan Hankla, eds. Sermons in Paint: A Howard Finster Folk Art Festival, Richmond, Virginia: Marsh Gallery, University of Richmond, 1984.

See also Rosenbaum, Art, with Margo N. Rosenbaum, and musical transcriptions by Béla Foltin, Jr. Folk Visions and Voices: Traditional Music and Song in North Georgia. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983, chapter on Finster, pp. 218-233, with transcriptions of texts and tunes of four songs including "Five to My Five."

Two cuts of Howard's singing with banjo can be heard on the LP companion to the above book: "Some Have Fathers Over Yonder" and another performance of "Five to My Five." Rosenbaum, Art, Folk Visions and Voices: Traditional Music and Song in North Georgia, Vol. 2. Folkways FE34162, 1984.

#### Riddles

Howard Finster's riddles are widespread in the oral tradition. For other southern U.S. variants of "Six Legs Down", see "Old Black Joe" in Brown, Frank C. North Carolina Folklore Vol. I., Durham: Duke University Press, 1952, pp. 288-89 (No. 6); and "Three Legs Up", Roberts, Leonard, Sang Branch Settlers (KY) Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974.

Howard's black walnut riddle has been traced back to the 17th century. See Brown, *Ibid.*, p. 299 (No. 62) for several references and a North Carolina variant nearly identical to Finster's.

For "Blackie", see Brown, *Ibid.*, p. 297 (No. 50b); and Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

#### Song

Howard Finster's "John, John, the Piper's Son", as he says, the first song he learned as a child, is a thoroughly Americanized version of the English nursery rhyme, "Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son." See Opie, Iona and Peter, eds. The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, London: Oxford University Press, 1951, No. 510, p. 411, where several appearances of the rhyme in chapbooks, from the 18th to 20th centuries, are given.

Recorded in Pennville, Georgia, July, 1984, by Art and Margo Rosenbaum.

Notes by Art Rosenbaum

Photographs by Margo N. Rosenbaum

Cover Drawing by Howard Finster

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Howard with banjo, 1983,